



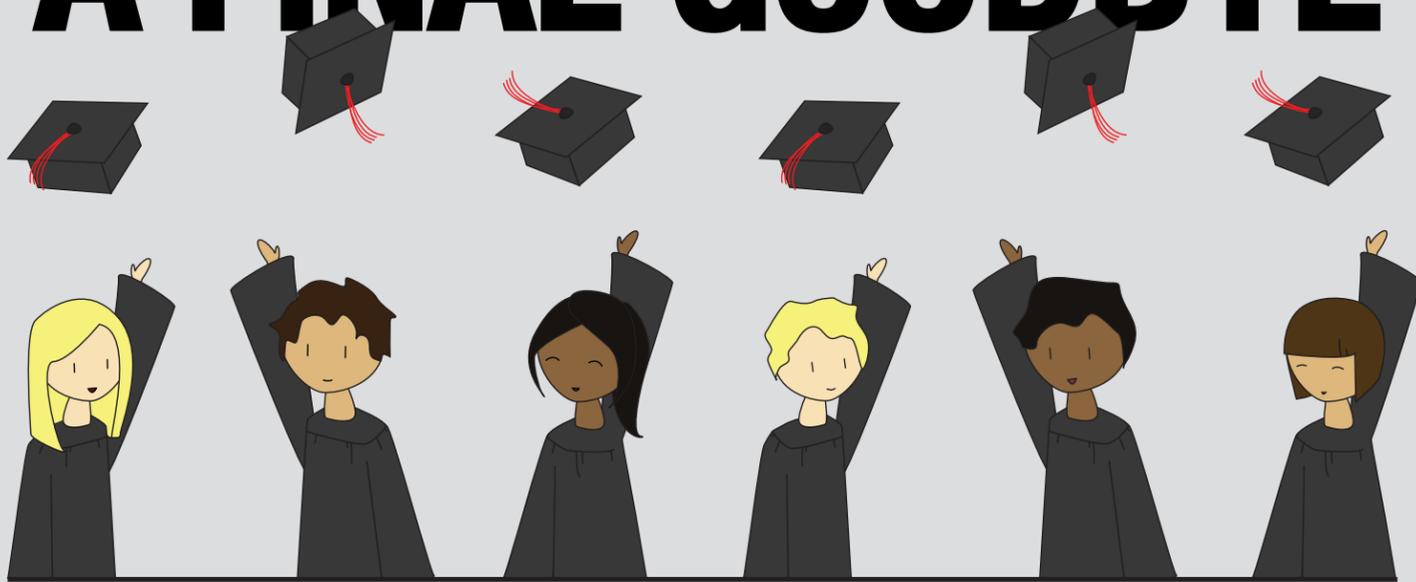
the saratoga falcon

Saratoga High School | Saratoga, CA
An Independent School Publication

saratogafalcon.org

Thursday | June 3, 2010
Vol. 50, No. 12

A FINAL GOODBYE



Alex Ju

SENIORS RELISH PAST, LOOK TO FUTURE

by David Eng and Emily Williams

It's almost that time of year again: summer vacation. But for the class of 2010, the month of June brings with it more than just waning days of a concluding school year.

Parting words

Graduation is around the corner and the ceremony is all in order. According to assistant principal Karen Hyde, the ceremony will be very similar to ones held in previous years. "Nothing new under the sun," said Hyde. "But let's

hope it's sunny. It's going to be nice; it's not going to rain."

Graduation proceedings start at 3 p.m. on June 10 and include several student-delivered speeches.

"The requirement to speak [does not include being] the best speaker," said Hyde. "We want diversity and a meaningful message from the class."

But perhaps the most emotional and satisfying moment for many seniors will be receiving their high school diplomas, a document that signifies a bittersweet end of a chapter in

see GRAD, p. 5

GRADS STEER THE COURSE TO COLLEGE

by Karen Yang

On May 1, senior Cindy Chang sealed her fate for her next four years as she signed her Statement of Intent to Register for Stanford University. After wavering between Yale and Stanford for several weeks, Chang finally chose Stanford for its location, weather and atmosphere.

"When I was deciding, one day it was Yale, one day it was Stanford," Chang said. "For a few days after [I decided], I had to let it sink in, and I was

see COLLEGE, p. 4

FALCON FIGURES

300 The number of seniors surveyed.

30 The percent of seniors who are venturing to private schools.

35 The percent of students who are attending UCs in the fall.

35 The percent who are attending CSUs, out of state public schools or community colleges.

District weighs new tax

PARCEL TAX WOULD HELP RELIEVE 2011-2012 BUDGET WOES

by Rebecca Nguyen and Anna Shen

Next year's budget woes may be solved, but the Los Gatos Saratoga Union High School District (LGSUHSD) is now facing a \$3 million deficit for the 2011-2012 school year.

The budget deficit for 2010-11 has been solved by cutting courses and programs, implementing a salary freeze and a pay cut, withdrawing money from the reserve and instigating teacher layoffs. As a result of these changes, some class sizes such as English 9 will increase by one or two students.

But the programs LGSUHSD has decided to cut have only postponed the deficit problem to the following year.

School officials are proposing the idea of a parcel tax, an additional tax on property that is implemented to provide funding for schools and the district.

If the district receives enough community support, the school board will decide to place the parcel tax on the regular November ballot during its next meeting at Saratoga High on June 15.

If the parcel tax is not approved, the district will either consider to withdraw more money from its strategic reserve or ask for more parental support for schools.

Although residents who do not have any connection to the schools, such as the elderly, may not want to support the additional tax, Anderson feels that it is in everyone's best interest to support it.

"It would be nice of both communities to share the burden of making sure [that] the school is funded correctly because the value of a home in a town has a lot to do with the quality of the school," said Anderson. ♦

Freshman wins big at science fair

by Anoop Galivanche and Abhi Venkataramana

Freshman David Zarrin wants to change the way people think about bicycles. With a first place prize in engineering from the International Science and Engineering Fair under his belt, he may very well do so.

"I learned of the issues of today's bicycle through experiencing them myself as I rode my bike," Zarrin said. These prob-

lems, he said, primarily relate to limited gear ratios, no backwards pedaling capability, and inefficient gear shifts.

Zarrin eventually spent more than 600 hours on the project from October to March—brainstorming, building proto-

types and tweaking them. The final product, a contraption he calls the Smart-Bike, improves upon the energy efficiency of contemporary

bicycles by an estimated 50 percent.

Science fair judges agreed that it was a big deal: Zarrin's bicycle was one of just a handful of projects to qualify to the International Science Fair (ISEF) from the regional Synopsis Science Fair, and went on to win a first place prize in the engineering category at ISEF out of more than 200 projects. ISEF is one of the most competitive science exhibitions in the world, with projects from over 59 countries.

see ZARRIN, p. 2



ZARRIN

Zarrin's design to improve a bike's efficiency by 50% earned him \$5,000 and his own asteroid.

OPINION pg. 6

South Park sparks controversy



LIFESTYLES

THAT'S WHAT S(HE) SAID!

pg. 10-11



SCHOOL SCOPE

TOGA ROOTS

pg. 12-13



ENTERTAINMENT

YouTube's brightest stars

pg. 14-15



SPORTS

Power Rankings

pg. 17



NEWS BRIEFS



Students honored at CSF Awards Breakfast

Two sophomores and 11 juniors were honored at the CSF Awards Breakfast by their teachers, who nominated students for their dedication and willingness to learn.

This event took place during the collaboration period on May 19, when teachers and their nominated students gathered for breakfast and the awards ceremony.

Junior Nick Renda was among those nominated, as he was selected by his English teacher Suzanne Herzman to receive the Brown Book English Skills award for his ability to understand strong literature and for enjoying reading.

"It's really an honor; at the ceremony there only about 13 students, and it was really an amazing thing that I happened to be one of the people sitting there," said Renda.

The ceremony recognized students in multiple subjects such as English, leadership, math and social studies.

Other students recognized at the breakfast were sophomores Anika Jhalani and Shriya Nagpal, and juniors Daryl Chang, Sarah Blegen, Anthony Sutardja, Shannon Galvin, Kevin Mu, David Wang, David Zeng, Neya Vishwanath, Alex Chan and Nina Mohanty.

But with such a large honor comes hard work. To be honored as a CSF Award winner, students must establish their dedication and passion in their respective subjects. It may require a lot of effort for many students to do so, but this was not the case for Renda and his passion for English.

"I have a lot of fun in English class, and I feel like [Herzman] knows me well, and when I'm in that class, I can do well by just being me," said Renda.

—by Roy Bisht

Class officials elected

Six future class officers ran unopposed in this year's class elections on April 30, making the elections less competitive than those of previous years.

The senior class officers for the 2010-2011 school year are: Michelle Wang as president, Aditya Dev as vice president, Karthik Annaamalai as treasurer, Erin Wong as secretary and Leah Capek, Allison Buchanan, Chris Chung and Tim Rollinson as class representatives.

The junior class will be led by president Anika Jhalani, co-vice presidents Shivani Chadha and Nicole Shadman, secretary Izzy Albert and treasurer Chris Jones. The officers will, with the help of class representatives Michael Chen, Stephanie Shimizu, Mac Hyde, Varsha Ramesh and Megan Kao, look to coordinate Saratoga Idol and Junior Prom.

Leading the sophomore class along with Mirzadegan are Shireen Kaul as vice president, Joanna Lee as secretary and Evelyn Lee as treasurer, with class representatives Andy Fang and Sasan Saadat.

Despite the lack of candidates in this year's student council election, the incoming class officers display an immense amount of optimism for the upcoming school year.

—by Izzy Albert and Karthik Annaamalai

Teachers share pregnancy experiences

Morning sickness. Food cravings. Maternity clothes. For four faculty members, it is all part of the successive stages of pregnancy. Science teacher Kristen Thomson recently had her second child on April 20, and speech pathologist Ronda Vierra, English teacher Natasha Ritchie and math teacher Jennifer Mantle are due in the fall.

Thomson delivered a healthy baby girl, named Isla Lily, and will be taking maternity leave for the remainder of the school year as well as one month of next year. Substitute Mr. Slayton will be filling in for her until she returns.

"[Isla Lily] means Island Lily and my husband is from the Orkney Islands in Scotland," said Thomson. We also wanted some nature-like sort of name to go with it as well."

Other teachers have had to work to find the balance between teaching and the ups and downs of pregnancy. However, despite these minor setbacks, the faculty members have received positive reception of their pregnancies from their students.

Many of the teachers have also found that once they begin showing, they are treated with more kindness and respect in public.

"I noticed more people opening doors and offering to help with things like carrying groceries to the car [during my first pregnancy]," said Mantle. "I'm not showing that much yet, so it's hard to tell right now. Definitely more people are interested in, 'How are you feeling?' I get asked this question a lot!"

Vierra said she and her husband have been hoping to have a child for four years. "At 41, I wasn't sure we would ever be blessed with a child," she said. "I am thrilled and can't wait to meet this baby!"

—by Serena Chan and Sarah Hull



Juniors Pamela Lee, Krista Chow, Aaron Rhee and Nick Renda with their display on Walt Disney at the state competition on May 1.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

15 JUNIORS HEAD TO PASADENA FOR STATE HISTORY DAY

by Albert Gu

After advancing from the county competition in April, 15 juniors traveled to Pasadena in early May to participate in the State History Day competition.

Junior Steven Louie was a semi-finalist with his paper on Eunice Kennedy Shriver, and junior Shannon Galvin took third place, becoming the alternate to the national competition with her website on John Marshall and judicial review.

History Day is a competition with four levels: the school, county, state and national fair.

At each level, a panel of judges selects the participants who will advance. There are five divisions: research paper, exhibit, performance, documentary and website.

The competitors started their projects in September and worked on them for almost the entire school year.

"At first, my intention for doing History Day was to get extra credit for APUSH," said Galvin, who made a website by herself for the competition. "But it turned out to be a good experience, and I'm glad the extra credit inspired me to do it."

The research process itself was long and involved. Each individual or group first had to choose a topic in accordance to this year's theme: Innovation in History. They then used the

school's online databases as well as off-campus resources to put together background information. Several, including Galvin, went to interview professors at universities around the Bay Area.

The trip was led by history teacher Matt Torrens and principal Jeff Anderson.

All of this year's participants came from Torrens' APUSH classes because he actively encourages and helps his students in the process.

"The students here at Saratoga don't have a lot of opportunity to practice their research skills," said Torrens. "I think it is important that they get the chance to practice research in their social studies class, and History Day is a great opportunity to do this." ♦

Cochrum named teacher of the year

by Anoop Galivanche

When science teacher Lisa Cochrum received a call from principal Jeff Anderson at her home one night recently, she was alarmed.

"Usually I only receive calls from Mr. Anderson at my home when something bad happens," Cochrum said. "I pulled up a chair and prepared myself for the worst news."

The news she got was anything but bad: she had been named Teacher of the Year for 2010-2011 in the Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School district.

"When he said I was named Teacher of the Year, I was so surprised," she said.

Cochrum's students, however, were not. Her teaching and sense

of humor has been delighting students since she started teaching in the district in 1993.

"I wasn't sure whether I'd like biology or not, but Ms. Cochrum's class has definitely made me interested in it," said freshman Rohil Taggarsi.

The award, however, is a different sort of recognition of Cochrum's abilities as a teacher since it is teachers, not students, who decide.

"This award means a lot because it's as if my respected colleagues are giving me the nod," she said.

Out of all the activities she is involved in, the endeavor Cochrum takes most pride in is her work with special education students. It is a cause that she is well acquainted with; her grandparents established schools for children with special needs in

the '50s and '60s, and her mother worked as a special education teacher until recently.

"[Teaching special needs children] is something that is close to my heart since my family has been so involved in it over the years," Cochrum said. Accordingly, she teaches a science course with a special education teacher for students who would otherwise go without science curriculum.

"I think the thing that makes Ms. Cochrum so special is that she is somebody who reaches out and connects with a variety of kids," Anderson said. "She's a really open and giving person."

Junior Cortney Fields, who is one of these students, said about Cochrum, "She's crazy, but she's an amazing teacher."

And that's why students love her. ♦

Cochrum will be recognized at the May 18 LGSUHS Board meeting, the District's Opening Convocation on Aug. 27 and the Santa Clara Office of Education Teacher

ZARRIN | Pedaling to success

continued from pg.1

"It was an amazing feeling to be up there on the stage with the brightest students in science from around the world," he said.

For his ISEF prize, Zarrin won \$5,000 and has an asteroid named after him. The merits of participating, and winning, in the science fair span far beyond monetary awards and personal

celestial bodies, Zarrin said. Rather, it is the experience and attained knowledge that are the greatest benefits of doing the science fair.

"[Participating in the science fair] has helped tremendously with my confidence as a public speaker," Zarrin said. "It has also taught me how to convey a complex idea to somebody

without any knowledge on the topic in a short time." Zarrin has had a lot of practice having participated in the science fair since sixth grade.

With his breadth of experience, Zarrin has advice for the aspiring scientist. "If you have an idea for a science project, enter the science fair," he said. "It is a great experience." ♦

SHS STUDENTS SHOWCASE ART

But bias judging at District Art Show stirs controversy

by Izzy Albert and Cullan McChesney

This year, several students from Saratoga and Los Gatos High Schools were given the opportunity to showcase their art at the annual District Art Show put on by the Los Gatos Museum of Art, which ran through most of May. The exhibit covers many different artistic mediums including ceramics, drawing, painting, and photography.

"It definitely had a lot of variety in terms of artwork, which was really cool to see," said sophomore Jeffrey Kuo, whose pencil sketch, grid drawing and sand painting were all displayed in the show.

But despite receiving positive feedback about the art itself, the show stirred controversy when the judge, a local Los Gatos artist, announced the winning pieces of art in each category. One major complaint was that the judging was not based on any clear criteria but rather on the judge's personal tastes, according to sophomore Spencer Perry.

"I enjoyed the show and liked seeing

the art," said Perry, "but I was disappointed that the judge seemed to be biased."

Perry noted that it is impossible to please everybody with art due to its subjective nature, but some students said it was evident that the judges were favoring the art from the Los Gatos students.

Art teacher Stephen McCue felt it was a shame that the judging controversy distracted from what was otherwise a well-run art show that gave many young artists an opportunity to show what they had accomplished throughout the year.

"The art in this year's art show reflects originality, creativity, and a great deal of craftsmanship," said McCue. "The artwork created doesn't imitate anyone else's; it's original."

Saratoga High students who placed include: Hannah Brown, 1st place in photography; Ally Doles, 2nd place in photography; Wesley Tai, 3rd place in drawing; Chris Cha, Honorable Mention in painting; Alicia Lee, 1st place in ceramics; June Kwon, 1st place in sculpture and Dillan Pak, Honorable Mention in ceramics. ♦

ARBIZU VENTURES ON

by Emily Williams

After one year at Saratoga High, English teacher Valerie Arbizu will be leaving the classroom next year to take on a job as an assistant principal at Los Gatos High. Arbizu will help manage discipline and curriculum instruction at LGHS.

Arbizu was picked over 100 other applicants for the job. She applied for the position because her job at Saratoga was put in jeopardy by district-wide budget cuts and by the fact that she was a new teacher at SHS.

"The position was posted online and information went out to district employees first," said Arbizu. "We were told if we were interested to throw in our hat. I thought, 'I don't know if I'm going to have a job next year so maybe this is something that I should give a shot.'" Arbizu has been pursuing her interest in administration for some time. This past July she received her master's degree in educational administration. Nonetheless, Arbizu wanted to make sure the job was the right fit, so she talked to Los Gatos principal Markus Autry before she applied.

"The staff over there are really excited to work with [Autry], and he has some really specific goals," Arbizu said. "His leadership philosophy matched mine."

In addition to attaining her master's degree, Arbizu's leadership experience includes her four-year run as English department chair and professional development coordinator at Evergreen Valley,

where she taught for seven years. Arbizu attributes her luck at landing such a good position to her leadership experience, her background in professional development and pure luck.

"Those are the gaps that they want to fill over there and those are the skills that I bring to the table," she said. "I just happened to be at the right place at the right time with the right credentials and the right attitude."

Although she loves working with students, Arbizu has a true passion for helping teachers develop interesting and updated curricula to keep students engaged.

"Helping support teachers in learning how to keep their teaching strategies fresh and engaging to students and to themselves is very important," Arbizu said. "Education just keeps changing so much and our students change year after year."

Arbizu knows she will face challenges but she is not afraid. "I'm looking for a challenge, and I think that will be a little bit more challenging to be outside of the classroom," she said.

Arbizu is very excited about her new job, but she is also disappointed at not being around to see her three freshman classes grow throughout high school. Despite the adjustments, she plans to embrace this job wholeheartedly.

"I'm looking forward to being much more hands on with the school. I didn't really get a chance to get as involved as I wanted to [at Saratoga], so I'm really looking forward to doing that over there." ♦



Arbizu

College-bound athletes celebrate



The college athlete recognition ceremony took place on May 7th. Eric Gast will be playing tennis (JC Irvine); Nicole Gragnola, volleyball (Sonoma State); John Lambie, tennis (Santa Clara); Michael McGinnis, tennis (Boston College); Elizabeth Murray, swimming (LMU); Megan Nolet, swimming (LMU); Lauren Opatrny, swimming (Brown); Mika Padmanabhan, tennis (Emory); Alysia Patel, volleyball (Case Western); Anna Schroeder, field hockey (Vassar), and Alan Yen, wrestling (Stanford).

Mohnike scripted as new drama instructor

by Christine Bancroft and David Eng

Next year will be one of change and adjustment for drama students, as current English teacher Kerry Mohnike has volunteered to teach two classes of drama after Chris Mahle, who has led the program for four years, was not retained by the school.

Many students were disappointed about news of Mahle's departure, which was revealed during a drama club lunch on April 6 by assistant principal Karen Hyde. Junior Hannah Harter said the news was "very upsetting" and was surprised to hear it.

"I'm disappointed," said Mahle. "I think next year would've been my strongest year. This year, I've gotten a handle on the art of teaching, and I've become more confident. I think next year I would've hit my stride."

Senior Sung Park, who took drama all four years, said, "The drama program is shaky, but he's done a lot of work to bring it back."

With a dwindling drama program at Redwood Middle School, there are fewer students applying for similar classes at SHS.

With the future of the drama program uncertain, many students were thrilled to hear students that Mohnike would step in to keep the program afloat, alleviating some of the students' concerns.

"When I heard we didn't have a drama teacher for next year, I was a little worried about the drama program at Saratoga," said Mohnike. "With the budget crisis, we were kind of cutting down in several areas. Drama was an area that I just didn't want to see go away."

Coupling this with a greater passion for working with "the amazing pool of talent" in the drama department, Mohnike visited principal Jeff Anderson, expressing her desire to assume the role of drama teacher.

"If he didn't have anybody who was jumping up and down to do it, I had a great interest to get in and participate," she said.

Anderson emphasized the difficulty of filling that particular position. Although many may intuitively consider drama to be a visual performing arts class like band or orchestra, the credential required to teach the elective is in fact an English degree.

"It's hard to find a person that's interested in doing drama that is also interested in teaching English," said Anderson. "So to have her step up and not only say 'Yes, I'll do it,' but 'Can I do it and would you let me?' was great."

Mohnike will continue to teach English 11 MAP in conjunction with being the Media Arts Program coordinator. However, she will not teach English 11 next year.

"We have great teachers who are currently teaching English 11 Honors, so I'm not worried about students who are going to be in the honors program next year," she said. "I'm looking forward to having a different part to my day. I've been teaching English for almost 20 years, so having English in a different realm sounds very exciting."

Despite drama's future being more secure than it had been April 6, a teacher has not been announced for Mahle's digital film classes. Drama student said the fall and spring productions are likely to be taken over by guest directors. ♦

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COLLEGE | Taking the next step

continued from pg. 1

deciding, one day it was Yale, one day it was Stanford," Chang said. "For a few days after [I decided], I had to let it sink in, and I was thinking maybe I would regret my decision, but I told myself not to, so now I'm fine with it."



Chang

After considering the location, safety and weather of each school, Chang, who will be studying english, psychology / neuroscience or human biology in the coming fall, decided that Stanford's relaxed yet motivating atmosphere appealed more strongly to her. While Stanford's proximity to home was the biggest factor in her decision, she also took into account the advice from her family and friends.

"For me, Yale was always my dream school," said Chang. "But my sister went there, and she told me out of her own experience, it took her a while to adjust, so she said she wished maybe time spent adjusting to the East Coast could have been spent diving into her classes."

"For me, Yale was always my dream school, but my sister went there...she said she wished maybe time spent adjusting to the East Coast could have been spent diving into her classes."

—senior Cindy Chang

Chang is just one of the many seniors who struggled with making college decisions. Other factors that affected the decisions include tuition and name recognition.

Of a surveyed 300 college-bound SHS seniors, 30 percent are venturing to private schools and 35 percent are attending UCs in the fall. The remaining 35 percent are attending CSUs, out of state public schools or community colleges. Because of the California budget crisis

and the decreased acceptance rates of the UCs, fewer seniors are attending UCs and CSUs than in previous years. As a result, there has been a slight general increase in the enrollment of seniors in private schools and out of state public schools.

Assistant principal Brian Safine noted a lower acceptance rate of students into UC Santa Barbara, Davis and Irvine. Whereas students with 3.7-3.9 GPAs in past years were successful in getting into these three schools, these admissions now depend more strongly on chance.

As for next year, Safine encourages students to broaden their focus and research colleges that may not be as well known as the Ivy Leagues or the UCs.

"The most selective colleges in the United States right now are taking seven

percent, which is a historic low," Safine said. "Students who have their hearts set on the most selective colleges are setting themselves up for disappointment. You have to apply broadly, and you have to look for colleges that may not be brand name colleges, but might fit your needs."

Said Safine, "[Acceptance rates] will continue to be around 16-20 percent at Berkeley, LA, and 6-8 percent at your Stanford and your Ivies. Those numbers aren't going to change, so we have to think about colleges beyond those names." ♦

An unforgettable prom



Courtesy of Ally Doles

Seniors Taylor Maia, Ally Doles, Alexa Francis, Paxton Barco and Nicala Pedicini pose for a picture before going to their senior prom in San Jose.

by Grishma Athavale and Vivien Lu

For the first time, senior prom was held at Dolce Hayes Mansion in San Jose, a luxurious 4 star mansion turned hotel. The memorable evening was held on May 15 with around 300 attendees to enjoy the food, dancing and friends.

"The most enjoyable part about prom was being able to spend it with all of my friends," said senior Andy Berman. "I got to share lasting moments with them. Also, the location was so beautiful."

The senior class made money from the event, as the bid price ranged from \$98 to \$103. "The biggest issue was selling enough bids to cover the cost of the entire event," said senior class treasurer Ameeka Shenoy, "but it all worked out very well, and we were able to cover all of our costs without a problem."

This year's theme was "Don't You Forget About Me," based on a song by Simple Minds from the '80s.

"The theme was very well incorporated into the dance because we're all leaving a mark as seniors," said senior Lauren Opatry. "We will never forget Saratoga High, and we don't want to be forgotten either."

Similar to junior prom, one problem seniors encountered was the size of the dance floor.

"It could have been bigger," Berman said. "The spacing wasn't too great and there was an issue with fitting onto the dance floor."

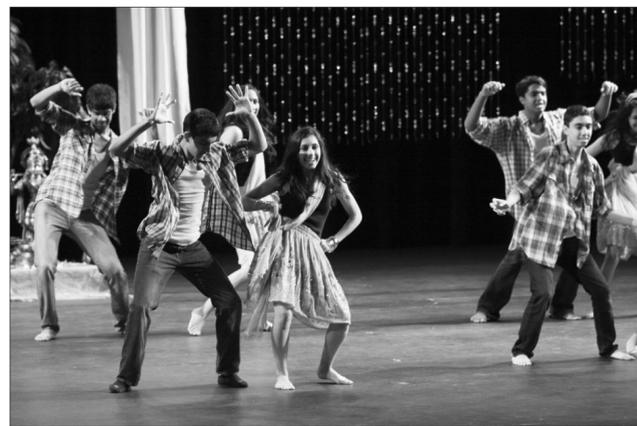
Like any restaurant, the dinner composed of bread, salad, main course, and dessert.

"It felt like just another meal to me," junior Kyle Fukui said.

However, these minor setbacks did not hinder the overall experience.

"Prom was especially special this year because it was such a good way to end the year," Opatry said. "Everyone is emotional because we're graduating and we won't really see each other again. It was like one last time to get dressed up and spend a night together." ♦

'BOMBAY IN THE BAY' ENTHRALLS AUDIENCE



Jordan Waite

Sophomores Paras Unadkat and Shivani Chadha dance at Bombay in the Bay on May 1. The sold-out event raised over \$7,000 for the Vijay foundation.

by Aanchal Mohan

This year's annual Bombay in the Bay, a night of Indian singing and dancing that was held on May 1 in the McAfee Center, proved to be more popular than ever. In fact, tickets were sold out in just a matter of days.

"It was a great show," said senior Yash Doshi, the president of the Indian Cultural Awareness Club (ICAC). "We sold out 563 tickets in 6 days and a lot of people wanted to come but couldn't. I guess that shows how good we are."

According to Doshi, all proceeds from ticket sales, which total nearly \$7,000, were donated to the Vijay Foundation, which provides help for needy people in India.

While the event is usually held sometime in late March or early April, the senior officers of ICAC this year decided to move the date to May due to scheduling conflicts with the McAfee which caused many other factors of the show to be affected.

"We debated back and forth [about having it in March or May]," said senior and ICAC secretary Saniha Shankar. "We decided we would rather have a better show later on in the year than go along with the tradition of having it in March with the show not being as good."

With the date changed to May 1, the club was unable to serve dinner since the quad was booked for the music department's annual Pancake Breakfast. Instead, they had snack boxes at intermission.

"This time we had snack boxes which cost around \$3 or \$4 out of a \$12 ticket," said Shankar. "This way, more money was given to charity, whereas if we had dinner, not as much money would have been given."

Even with the setbacks, organizers received positive comments as the student performers sang and danced their hearts out.

"The show was great," said Doshi. "We got a lot of positive feedback from the audience and participants."

Year after year, Bombay in the Bay, (BNB) continues to be a dazzling cultural event that never fails to disappoint.

Said sophomore participant Viraj Parmar, "I like [Bombay in the Bay] because it's a great way to become part of a community and be proud of my culture." ♦

GRAD | Seniors moving on

continued from page 1

their lives.

"It's not going to hit me that I'm done with school as I know it forever," said senior Nihal Ruparel, who will be attending University of Washington-Seattle in the fall. "But after a day or two, I guess it'll be bittersweet. I'll truly miss the best parts about high school, but I'm really looking forward to the college experience."

The Last Hurrah

After the ceremony, students will celebrate at the parent-sponsored Grad Night from 9 p.m. June 11 to 5 the following morning. Although the theme is a surprise until the actual event, parent coordinator Maya Baba said the night would be filled with games, Karaoke, a DJ, food and the Senior Video.

This year's organizers, Baba, Carolyn Doles, Elaine McInnis and Pragati Grover, have been planning this special night since May of last year and have been meeting monthly since October in preparation for the event. Their goal is to get every student to attend; so far there is about 80 percent attendance.

"It's an event that we hope that all the seniors will attend as their final party together," said Baba. "I think the students like it because it's a kind of nostalgic evening; it really gives them some type of closure of their high school career."

A class to remember
Even after seniors graduate on June 11, they will leave behind many deep

impressions and keep countless high school memories.

"They care deeply, they are highly motivated, they're very determined, they work hard and they are very goal oriented," said Hyde of the senior class. "They're like Alice in Wonderland. They just know where they're going."

The praise for this year's graduating class does not end there. In fact, the administration only has positive things to say about this year's seniors.

"The thing that's great about Saratoga is there's not been any graduation class I would characterize anything but positive, full of a lot of positive people," said principal Jeff Anderson, who got a chance to meet many of this year's seniors at last year's inauguration field trip to Washington, D.C.

"This class isn't any different."

Hyde also stressed the unique qualities of this year's seniors. "It's a unique class in many ways," said Hyde. "They have many different elements; I can't say that everyone is really passionate and I can't say they are all diverse, but I can say they embrace each other like a coat of many colors."

"They're a class with a heart. When [Hurricane] Katrina came, they ran book drives. They collected money in classes for Haiti," said Hyde.

Hyde also highlighted the raucous basketball game versus Lynbrook, the senior-produced talent show and the colorful prom as defining events that will always remind her of the class of 2010.

"When they decide they want to, they can do it," said Hyde. ♦

"It's not going to hit me that I'm done with school as I know it forever. But after a day or two, I guess it'll be bittersweet."

—Senior Nihal Ruparel

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CENSORING SOUTH PARK BLASPHEMOUS

by Alex Ju

“South Park” is no stranger to offending people. The show has long been renowned for a complete disregard of boundaries. Creators Matt Stone and Trey Parker take pride in utilizing crude language, violence and overall immaturity in essentially every episode. The show has made fun of countless politicians and celebrities, as well as events and holidays.

Recently, in episode 200, “South Park” touched upon a topic that resulted in widespread backlash when it pictured the prophet Muhammad. Muslims find it highly offensive to depict the prophet Muhammad in any visual way, much less in the media. Hence, the prophet Muhammad was featured in a bear suit on the show, making fun of the media’s careful attempts to avoid upsetting Muslims.

As a result, Revolution Muslim, a radical Islamic organization based in New York, published a message for the “South Park” creators. The message warned Stone and Parker that they could go the way of

Theo Van Gogh, a Dutch filmmaker who was murdered in 2004 by an extremist for his depiction of Muhammad in his film about the abuse of Muslim women. Though allegedly not a threat, the post included the addresses of Comedy Central’s network offices and the production studio in California where “South Park” is made. It also included a link to a Huffington Post story that described the two’s Colorado mansion.

Consequently, Comedy Central censored the second half of the episode when it aired a week later on April 21. Muhammad’s name was bleeped throughout, and his image was replaced by a large black block labeled “censored.”

Censoring “South Park” is preposterous. Having run rampant since 1997, the creators are no stranger to controversial issues. Not only had they depicted

prophet, along with other religious figures such as Jesus, previously in a 2001 episode titled “Super-Best Friends,” but did so without conflict. While reacting to a potential death threat makes sense, censorship plays directly into the hands of the radical threat makers. In addition, the show was censored without the consent of the creators.

Extremism can be a very serious threat. However, the creators were willing to stand behind their work, despite the controversy, and defend their right to free speech.

But, the network went in with a red pen and slashed the episode, even bleeping Kyle’s speech at the end about intimidation and fear, which did not actually mention Muhammad at all.

While Comedy Central’s fear was understandable, the reaction was not. Every issue has

radicals, and sometimes it is necessary to point out their ridiculousness. The show’s intent is to raise issues, not to smooth over them. If anything, it is unfair to cater to certain beliefs, such as Islam, when religions such as Christianity and Judaism are constantly made fun of on the show.

In addition, fear-based censorship is still censorship. Not even being allowed to post the controversial episode on their website, Parker and Stone’s freedom of speech have been compromised.

A silver lining to this censorship issue, however, is that it revealed the awkward tension of the media’s relations with Islam.

Since, 9/11, the media has been perpetually nervous of offending practitioners of the religion. This has left them unsure of how to cover Islamic topics.

Censorship, in any form, squashes the right of freedom of speech. “South Park” should be let alone by Comedy Central and allowed to continue unhindered in its quest to broach political and pop cultural topics with humor. ♦



Courtesy of Joanna Lee

Craigslist needs to crack down on prostitution ads

by Denise Lin

When Craig Newmark created Craigslist in 1995, it began as a way to inform his friends of various local events in San Francisco. He had no idea that the site, an online network for classified advertisements, would eventually become one of the most popular websites in the country. And certainly, he was largely unaware that it would become a forum for the prostitution industry.

Over the years, the website has become the home of a plethora of sex advertisements. Beginning in late 2008, at least 200,000 have been posted in Chicago alone.

The ads are expected to earn an estimated \$36 million this year. The profits from the sex ads were at first donated to charity, but Craigslist now no longer promises to continue doing so. The noblest course of action would be to, first, resume donating the existing profits to charity; the money was earned through illegal services and therefore is not really rightfully theirs.

New measures taken

Last year, in an attempt to better regulate the site, the former Erotic category on Craigslist was changed to an Adult Services category, and the highly suggestive photos sometimes posted on the site were subject to review and editing. Jim Buckmaster, chief executive of Craigslist, also stated that new employees would be hired

to scan the new category for prostitution ads and other illegal material. Buckmaster also mentioned a \$10 beginning fee for postings in the Adult Services category.

However, these measures have proved insufficient to stop the flow of sex ads. The Adult Services category is essentially the same as the former Erotic category; it will take much more than superficial changes to seriously battle the growing predicament. The manual inspections practiced by employees to minimize illegal material have failed to make a significant impact on Craigslist.

As for the fee, a measly \$10 has not and will not put a stopper on the prostitution advertisements; for those who earn thousands of dollars off the business, \$10 is a small price to pay.

Protected by law

Despite the offensive and dangerous nature of the sex ads, Craigslist has won numerous legal cases. For example, according to ABC News, in October of last year, Craigslist was deemed not legally responsible for the content of its postings, and was allowed to keep the sex ads.

Such rulings are largely because the Communications Decency Act of 1996 protects websites, stating that they are not legally responsible for content provided by their users.

Although Craigslist has been protected by this law time and time again, it has indeed become a source of violence and prostitution. In order to eliminate all

gray area, executives would need to eliminate the Adult Services category entirely, for given the difficulty of regulating such an immense site, there will never be enough employees to fully eliminate scandalous ads, and there will always be one too many loopholes available to perpetrators.

Changes are inadequate

Craigslist did take some preventative measures last year, making it mandatory for erotic services advertisers to submit both a phone number and credit card to Craigslist. That is the equivalent of asking a robber to leave his contact information and all 10 fingerprints neatly on the nearest table; perpetrators and sex offenders can easily submit false information; even if their actual information is documented correctly, it is impossible to tell what is true and what is false. Rules dependent on the honor system are unlikely to be effective.

The sex ads have earned a whopping amount of cash for Craigslist, but they are illegal and against Craigslist’s policy anyway.

While Craigslist would earn signifi-

cantly less profit with their removal, employees would eventually adjust, as they survived previously with the absence of the ads.

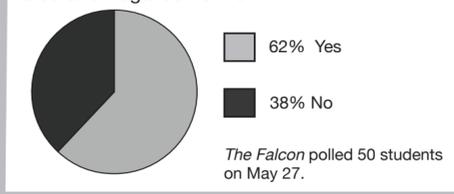
Danger on the horizon

Furthermore, Craigslist’s former Erotic Services Category was a source of violence. In one case, a man, Philip H. Markoff, was arrested for supposedly killing a masseuse he met via Craigslist. While such cases remain relatively rare, they should not be happening at all.

And even though this would in no way put a damper on the prostitution industry as a whole, it would move sex advertising to a less public domain.

Craigslist may never be directly pressured by the law to eliminate its Adult Services category, but that is what needs to be done if its executives and staff want to keep themselves out of hot water. ♦

Should Craigslist be held responsible for the X-rated and illegal content on it?



ROAD TO SUCCESS HAS NO SHORTCUTS

With Kimbo Slice’s career in limbo, the former YouTube fighter just doesn’t cut it

by Cullen McChesney

It took years for Kevin Ferguson, or “Kimbo Slice,” a mixed martial arts fighter, to promote himself enough to secure a UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) contract. It took just 10 minutes for his career to come grinding to a halt.

Slice’s opponent Matt Mitrione took little over four minutes to batter Slice until the referee finally had to stop the fight. Slice’s spirit, however, was defeated long before then.

Slice was a pioneer of a new generation of athletes creating a name for themselves on Internet sites such as YouTube and Facebook. He won’t be the last online sensation to do that, but, for the sake of quality entertainment, I hope he will be.

In theory, the Internet should provide people with the opportunity to promote themselves as well as allow talented individuals to make the classic journey

from rags to riches. However, the key phrase in this claim is “in theory.”

In reality, events often don’t work out quite so smoothly. Anybody can post a video of himself doing some amazing dunk or knocking out a 6-5 behemoth. It’s one thing to accomplish an amazing feat once in front of a few friends with a cell phone camera.

It is another to do that same task in front of thousands of screaming fans, on national television and against opponents who know how to fight.

This idea is illustrated by Slice’s meager display in his MMA debut, in which he barely scraped a win in his first four fights and was fired by Dana White, the president of the UFC, after his loss to Mitrione.

It’s immediately evident that while Slice looked rough and tough in his backyard brawl videos, he was vastly unprepared for the level of disci-

pline and training that it takes to compete with athletes who have been training for years.

It’s not to say that every rising YouTube sensation is unprepared for the top level, but it would be a wise bet that most are. Not much can prepare these Internet hopefuls for reality, but those who have accomplished their “talents” honestly will have an easier time adapting.

It’s insulting to the professionals who have spent their entire lives going through the process of getting recruited and working their way up the ladder instead of just knocking out one guy and being the next big thing.

The fact that Kimbo Slice took a shortcut and was put in his place gives assurance to those participating in sports at all levels, especially high school, that they won’t lose out on opportunities to those who take a shortcut to fame. It can be frustrating for those working hard and patiently waiting for their turn to prove themselves to have someone do what would be analogous to cutting in line.

Promoters should keep an eye out for someone they honestly think will last and not just another way to make money and stir up controversy, which would allow people who may not be entirely marketable—or market themselves through a public video site but who have worked harder to shine. ♦

Don’t hate the player, hate the game

DISGRACED GIANT GOLDMAN SACHS MAY NOT BE WHOLLY TO BLAME

by Anoop Galivanche

just one bank.

Less than a year ago, Lloyd Blankfein was the envy of every banker on Wall Street. At a time when most banks were struggling to remain solvent, his firm Goldman Sachs had reported the largest profits in its 140 year history.

Employees gleefully made down payments on yachts and Ferraris as Blankfein announced the company would dole out at least \$23 billion in bonuses—or \$600,000 on average per employee. Blankfein himself made more than \$140 million, telling *The Sunday Times* that he was doing “God’s work.”

Without warning, the tide turned. On April 16, Goldman Sachs was charged by the Securities Exchange Commission with failing to disclose serious conflicts of interest. As its stock fell from more than \$200 a share to \$170, the SEC followed through with criminal fraud charges against its senior executives. All major investment advisories have changed their rating of Goldman Sachs stock from a vehement “buy!” to a dismal “sell,” and the *Wall Street Journal* editorial board, among many others, has passionately called for the resignation of Blankfein from his capacity of chief executive. The Obama administration has even used Goldman as a poster child for why banking reform is necessary.

From an ethical standpoint, Goldman is unquestionably a rogue, shamelessly taking advantage of market conditions at the expense of millions of families’ financial security. Legally, however, the fact that a government bureau is targeting Goldman has dangerous implications. In charging Goldman with financial crimes, the SEC has circumvented the real issue of Wall Street reform and has turned it into some thing it is not—a problem with

Media Muddling

The exact reasons behind the SEC’s misgivings about Goldman have been obscured by the media, which seems bent on denigrating Goldman Sachs, regardless of whether it did anything legally wrong. Most outlets agree that Goldman overstepped ethical boundaries when it chose to continue bro-

kering collateralized debt obligations, despite the fact that it was short-selling them itself. The SEC was quick to point out that Goldman also should have warned clients not to purchase CDOs. But the fundamental flaw in these condemnations is that Goldman Sachs was a market maker, a broker of sorts, rather than an issuer—and therefore had no obligation to warn its clients. Its sole responsibility was to ensure that the trades were being made.

Gold Mine

And trades were made—albeit lucrative ones. In fact, Goldman’s true merit was that it was able to make money during the crisis, so much money that a more appropriate name for the bank would be gold mine. As Blankfein acknowledged in a Congressional pre-hearing, Goldman initially was an issuer of CDOs, but when it realized they were going to crash, it quickly set up short-sell schemes. Goldman shareholders were exposed to record low immediate risk, and its stock was able to hover around pre-boom prices while banks such as Citigroup and Bank of America ran to the government for help. This America ran to the government for help. This

THE BIG IDEA

Sinking stocks and disgrace

MEDIA MUDDLING: Media agrees that Goldman overstepped boundaries.
GOLD MINE: Goldman’s ability to make money during a financial meltdown may be cause for concern.
WHO’S TO BLAME? Paulson and Co., ACA Management and other Goldman clients all played roles in the crisis.

pecuniary shrewdness, at once brilliant and immoral, used to be applauded on the Street. Now, it is apparently a criminal offense.

Who’s to Blame?

But there was a third facet to this convoluted financial engineering. Another Goldman-advised contingent—Paulson and Co.—was short-selling the securities. The SEC alleges that Goldman allowed Paulson and Co. to also choose what mortgages would be packaged into the CDOs. Paulson and Co. would then choose mortgages that were doomed to fail, thereby reaping huge profits. Yet the

SEC, and in turn the media, have ignored the fact that Goldman cannot be held responsible for this

conflict of interest because the actual packager of the CDOs, a company called ACA Management that is also a client of Goldman’s, should have realized this conflict of interest.

Making Goldman a scapegoat will set a dire precedent for future financial reform. Not only do esoteric lawsuits muddle the agenda set by capitalism, but targeting Goldman will hurt the current weakened and struggling economy, as well as the hard-working people and consumers that comprise it. ♦

New Editors’ Edition
The Saratoga Falcon

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

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

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

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OIL SPILL HIGHLIGHTS NEED TO CURB DRILLING

by Arnab Dugar

Oil is being used everywhere around us, from the cars we drive, to the power plants producing electricity for the appliances that have become ingrained into our daily routine. We all know the environmental downside to the consumption of oil, yet we just can't seem to stop using it.

The reason for its ubiquity is simple: It is the cheapest form of energy available. Cheap, at least for Joe Six-Pack, but there lies a hidden cost, waiting to erupt, just as it did with the Deepwater Horizon oil drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico.

It's almost impossible to estimate the environmental and economic repercussions of this accident. Regardless of the effects of global warming, oil is taking a direct toll on marine wildlife. In addition, the \$2 billion seafood industry in Louisiana, for example, is already feeling the full effects of the adulterated seawater. Amid the economic crisis the country is facing, the crisis will have a lasting effect on the country's quality of life, especially if the slick continues to grow.

Yet the psychological impact of this disaster on the world transcends the relatively tangible financial impact, teaching us a valuable lesson. Just as the Three Mile Island meltdown sent a wave of nuclear phobias through the United States in the 1970s, halting any

development in nuclear energy production, the potential of a damaged drilling rig will firmly push legislation away from offshore oil exploration projects.

This reaction, dubbed as the "not in my backyard" syndrome, will reappear among coastal residents near drilling rigs, fearing the same plight as the Louisiana fishermen. But these fears are not going to help solve the problem.

As environmentalists shudder at the slightest notion of the pristine Alaskan coastline doused in a repulsive black slime, millions of barrels of oil are still being imported yearly and often from places where threats to the environment do not receive as much attention as it does in the United States.

In Nigeria, for example, oil spills have become commonplace, happening every year since 1969. In a situation where the impoverished state cannot afford to make environmental considerations, no action can be taken to improve the standards for drilling, not even through foreign aid.

In comparison to the commonplace needs such as food and shelter, things we often take for granted, the environment is a minor issue in such places because it is cheaper for them to lose oil through spills than to invest in their prevention. The lives of many Nigerians are so dependent on the oil they export that there are no margins for safety precautions as they would decrease production and consequently curb revenue.

Simply shifting oil drilling demands away from the United States and placing them on countries that cannot handle the oil demands in an ecologically friendly way is worse for the environment.

This dependence on foreign oil is another contributor to the excessive net imports into the U.S. However, a rise in oil prices due to foreign control over U.S. oil prices may just be the bitter medicine the U.S. needs to move away from a primarily oil based energy industry. This has already been illustrated by the sudden development in alternative energy as a result of the oil price peak in May of 2008. Still, a substantial peak may come too late.

Overall, the implacable human thirst for oil has manifested itself in the Louisiana seafood industry collapse, the environmental damage caused by poor safety standards in places like Nigeria, the economic impact of oil imports, and the Deepwater Horizon crisis itself.

The volcano of oil is not just a message for the United States to ban oil drilling along its coasts, but for the entire world to reduce oil consumption.

Every time a credit card is swiped at a gas station, although invisible to Joe Six-Pack, a much more profound cost is being incurred on society as a whole. Every oil consuming citizen is partially to blame for the disaster, and it is up to each of us to learn from our mistakes and move toward more environmentally friendly solutions. ♦

THE BIG IDEA

Oil Spill In The Gulf

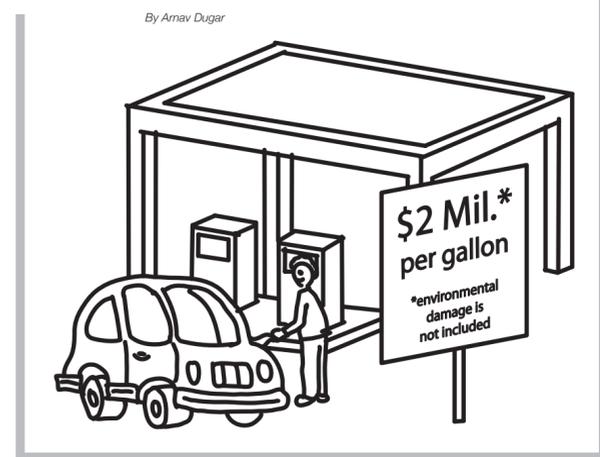
SITUATION: Oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico dumping millions of barrels of oil

EFFECTS: Negatively impacting marine wildlife and industries

PROPOSED FIX: Highlights need to ban offshore oil drilling and reduce American dependency on foreign oil

CANDID CARICATURES

By Arnab Dugar



ARIZ. BILL UNJUST

LAW FORCES MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS TO CARRY PAPERWORK, BORDERS ON RACIAL PROFILING

by Parul Singh

Imagine a person walking down a street, minding his own business, when suddenly a police officer appears out of nowhere and detains said person for the sole fact that they look Mexican. Sound unfair? Discriminatory? Well, under a new state law passed in Arizona, this is exactly what law enforcement personnel could do.

Aimed at reducing the number of illegal immigrants, the law would allow police to detain people based on "reasonable suspicion" to check if they were in the country without authorization. It would also allow the police to charge immigrants with a state crime for not carrying immigration documents.

The term "reasonable suspicion" used here is vague and could mean a variety of different things. A legitimate fear is that it can be easily exploited by racist law enforcement personnel. Because of this fact, the bill could result in increased racism near the border and many people against the bill argue that the harassment of Mexicans would undoubtedly increase as well.

Although illegal immigration is a major problem, instead of resorting to racial profiling and extreme measures, the government should be investing in less discriminatory alternatives. One such alternative could be making it easier for immigrants to obtain the proper paper-

work legally and also to educate Mexicans about the consequences of illegal immigration itself.

This controversial new bill has sparked outrage throughout the country. Thousands of citizens across the Bay Area itself took to the streets on May 1 to protest Arizona's new immigration law. The protesters argue that although there is an illegal immigration problem in the United States, solving this problem through the means of racial profiling undermines the values of equality that our country upholds.

Several prominent members of the Arizona community also do not support the new immigration policy. The Phoenix Suns chose to wear "Los Suns" on their jerseys in the Western Conference semifinals to honor the "Latino community and the diversity of [their] league, the state of Arizona, and the nation."

The outrage over this bill has stretched from coast to coast and from ordinary citizens to basketball players. One protester mocked that "we might as well give each of them a bar code."

The truth in this protester's words is apparent since forcing every Mexican in the state of Arizona to carry their immigration papers is actually not far from giving each of them a bar code.

It is clear that this type of racial profiling should not be allowed and the Arizona state government should revoke this bill immediately. ♦

Students grAPple with late final exam testing

At Saratoga High, the AP season at the beginning of May defines academic life on the school campus. After a long year of hard work, juniors, seniors and a handful of select sophomores or freshmen demonstrate their knowledge during the two weeks of testing.

However, the end of APs does not always signal the end of the road for students. Many have noted a growing tendency of AP teachers to administer finals at the end of the road for students. Such a policy not only unnecessarily increases student stress but also proves counterproductive to the goal of an AP classroom.

When students sign up for an AP class, they are generally doing so with the understanding that the intent of the class is to prepare them to take the AP exam. With this understood, it is not logical to administer a cumulative final after the test has already been taken as it serves as no help to the student's goal of earning a passing score on the AP test.

That being said, it is fairly reasonable that AP classes administer cumulative finals just as regular classes do, even if it is not very popular among students. However, these finals should be given before the AP exam.

By adhering to this policy, teachers would not only have a fair method by which to evaluate a student's performance in the class, but also would achieve the goal of helping the student succeed on the actual AP examination and obtain a passing test score on the exam.

It is acceptable practice for non-AP teachers to administer finals at the end of the school year because their material is independent of the AP test.

AP teachers, however, are given the task of preparing their students with all the information necessary for the AP test. Because AP students essentially learn all new material before the AP test, it would not make sense for teachers to administer final exams after the college-approved tests given that they don't aid in preparation for the exam itself.

At the end of the day, AP teachers are certainly justified in giving final exams. However, we would call for the school to simply standardize a policy of administering such exams before the actual AP test.

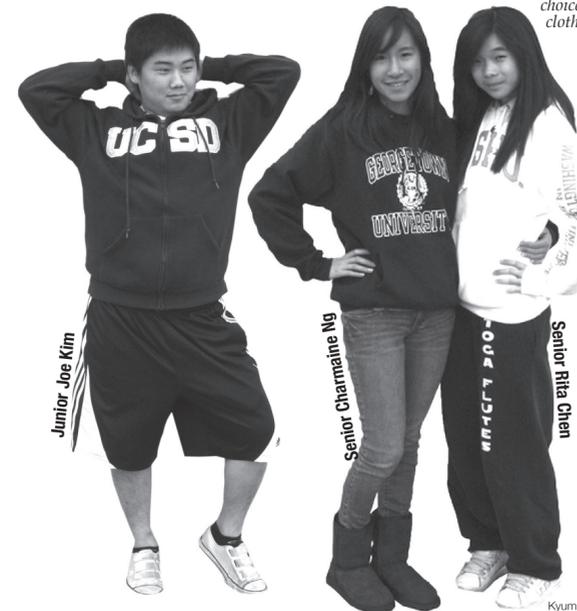
This would serve the two-pronged purpose of helping students prepare for the AP test and also relieving their stress. Such a policy would be welcomed with open arms by stressed out students. ♦



TRACK THE TRENDS

COLLEGE APPAREL

As seniors prepare to head off for college, students represent their school of choice through the clothes they wear.



Junior Joe Kim

Senior Charmaine Ng

Senior Rita Chen

Kyumin Shim

THE CRITIC

Yolatea

EATERY COMBINES DELICIOUS FOOD WITH A CONVENIENT HANGOUT SPOT

by Kyumin Shim

I stopped by Yolatea on a sunny Saturday as I walked home through downtown Saratoga. There was a display of a different flavors of gelato along with the options of Pearl Milk Teas and crepes.

My friend ordered a strawberry Pearl Milk Tea and I got a Nutella and Banana Crepe, an amazing combination of flavors.

I had expectations for the food, since I heard rumors about the quality of the crepes.

My friend drank his Pearl Milk Tea and I enjoyed it as well. We had to wait a bit for the crepe because there was only one worker there.

I gave three falcons for the location of Yolatea. I was able to grab a quick snack instead of driving

farther to popular frozen yogurt stores. The store is within walking distance from the school that even the underclassmen can enjoy themselves.

The only drawbacks are the overpriced crepes and ice cream, which led me to take off one star. The thin pancakes are a delightful snack, but it made me wince when I saw the final price of nearly \$6. A scoop of gelato cost me a bit over \$3.

My mouth was happy, but my wallet was slightly in pain for using about \$10 for a snack.

My conclusion is that Yolatea is a great place to indulge in sweets and to hang out with friends. While it is a strain on the wallet, the food is a good quality and perfectly satisfies anyone's cravings for a healthier alternative than a Frappuccino or an ice cream. ♦



Yolatea
Drive from SHS: 2 mins
Location: 14482 Big Basin Way, Saratoga, CA
Phone: (408)-647-2285

layin' out in the sun

LOCAL BEACHES WILL PROVIDE FUN AND RELAXATION FOR SUMMER VACATION

by Karen Yang

As summer draws near, the sun, sand and waves of the beach beckon to students in need of relaxation. Although the beaches of the Bay Area are not as glamorous as those in southern California, there are several local beaches that are less than an hour away from Saratoga and can satisfy the needs of stressed students. Students will be able to enjoy the beach no matter what they do.

"I like to go to the beach so that I can run around crazily and no one will care if I sing loudly," said sophomore Courtney Hsu.

Main Beach

Main Beach, which includes Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, offers an abundance of activities for all. As one of the oldest surviving amusement parks in Calif., the Boardwalk contains timeless roller coasters, including the famous Giant Dipper. In the summer, the Boardwalk often sponsors free concerts on the beach, and there is plenty of food available on the pier and along the street. Main Beach is also popular for learning how to surf, and it provides volleyball nets along the shore.

"I like Boardwalk because of its a combo of an amusement park and a beach," said junior McKenzie Toh.

Capitola Beach

Another popular beach less than 30 miles from Saratoga is Capitola Beach, which provides beach goers with volleyball nets near the pier and rents fishing boats, boogie boards, wetsuits, umbrellas, beach chairs and other beach accessories in the summer. Its warm waters make it an ideal hot spot for surfers and swimmers.

"It's a great place to have fun with your friends, like surfing, swimming and just chilling," said junior Cid Diaz.

THE BIG IDEA

Beaches

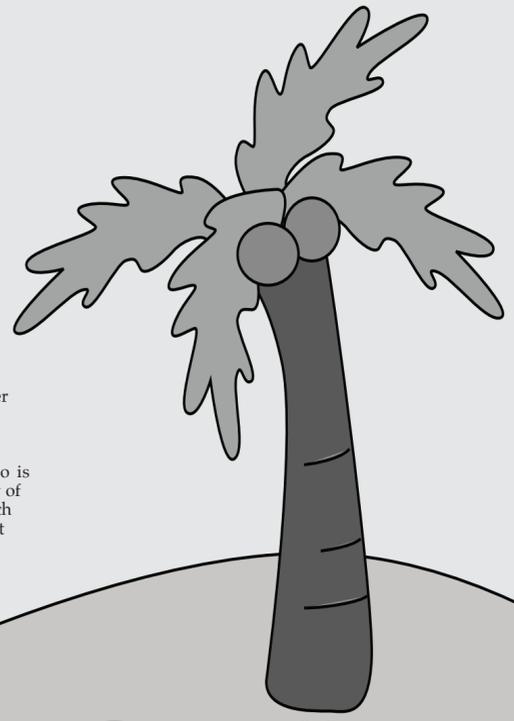
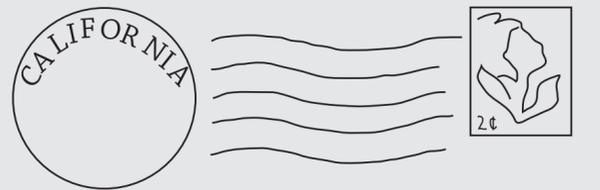
- Main Beach:** Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and concerts
- Capitola Beach:** Volleyball and warm water to rent fishing boats for
- Ocean Beach:** Awesome waves for surfing and skimboarding
- Baker Beach:** A perfect spot for sunbathing and fishing

Ocean Beach

For those who prefer the foggy weather of San Francisco, the waves of Ocean Beach offer surfing and skimboarding. Although swimming is not recommended because of the heavy surf, local residents flood the area to fly kites, play volleyball, go fishing or just to take a romantic walk along the beach. Ocean Beach also allows bonfires for groups of fewer than 25 people.

Baker Beach

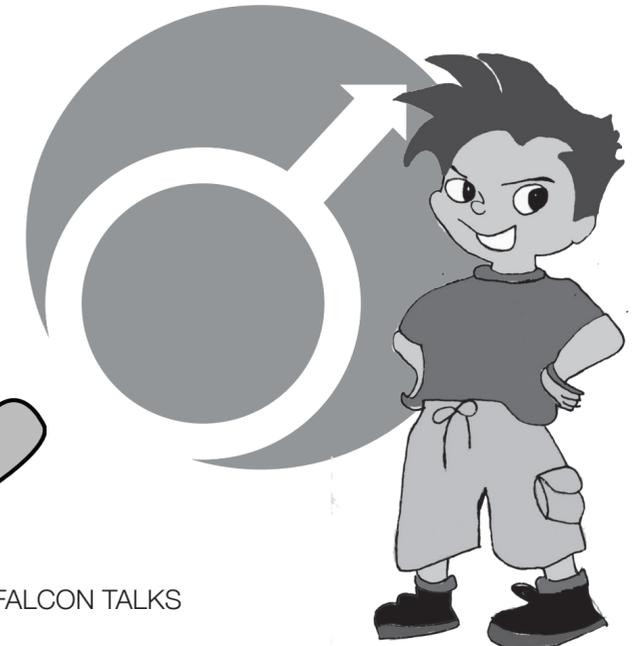
Another popular beach in San Francisco is Baker Beach, renowned for its beautiful view of the Golden Gate Bridge. Although Baker Beach is not suitable for swimming, it is a perfect spot for sunbathing and fishing. Besides the usual beach side activities, hiking is also an option. On sunny weekends be prepared for crowds and parking congestion as it is a very popular beach. ♦



Alex Ju



That's What S(H E) Said



Arnav Dugar, Apeksha Sharma, and Alex Ju

WHETHER THEY ARE HOBBIES OR INTERESTS, GUYS AND GIRLS ARE ALWAYS THOUGHT OF AS COMPLETE OPPOSITES. THE FALCON TALKS TO STUDENTS TO SEE WHETHER GUYS AND GIRLS ARE TRULY THAT DIFFERENT.

Seniors

Tanya Valluri

What is your dream vacation?
Santorini, Greece

Who is your favorite movie character?
Sanka Coffee from "Cool Runnings"

What do you think of girls asking guys out?
I feel like boys should do it, but in some cases the girl has to take action



Describe yourself in three words
Big, blonde and beautiful

What is your dream vacation?
To live in Costco for a week by myself

Who is your favorite movie character?
Pumba from "Lion King"

What do you think of girls asking guys out?
Call me (408)-621-0149

Describe yourself in three words
Tall, dark and handsome



Kirin Kumar

Varsha Ramesh

What is your best pickup line?
I wish I were sine squared, and you were cosined squared because together we could be one

What is your dream vacation?
Swimming with sea turtles in Greece

What do you look for in a best friend?
Someone who's funny, fun to be around and someone who always has my back

What do you think of girls asking guys out?
Negatory



Sophomores

What is your best pickup line?
Kiss me if I'm right but isn't your name _____?

What is your dream vacation?
Europe

What do you look for in a best friend?
Loyalty, Honesty, Someone you can tell stuff to

What do you think of girls asking guys out?
It should be done more because it is not that easy for guys, and girls should take initiatives sometimes



Justin Fang

Juniors

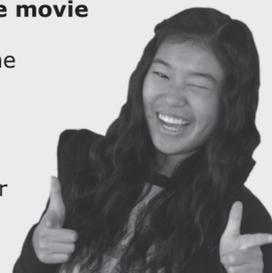
Grace Kim

What is your idea of a perfect date?
I should just be typical and go with dinner and a walk on the beach to get to know the guy.

What is your biggest turnoff?
A guy who tries to be cool instead of acting like himself

What is your favorite movie character?
The main guy from "The Notebook"

Describe yourself in three words
Optimistic, hard worker and spunky



What is your idea of a perfect date?
She is a lot of fun. We get along well and we share a lot in common. Just a good time.

What is your biggest turnoff?
Girls spitting

What is your favorite movie character?
Forrest Gump

Describe yourself in three words
Spirited, weird and fun



Aditya Dev

Haley Wong

What do you look for in a best friend?
Someone who I can trust

What is your idea of a perfect date?
Laughing a lot and just having fun

What is the cutest way to ask someone to a dance?
Go to a store and then when they are paying they get a free coupon that says Sadies?



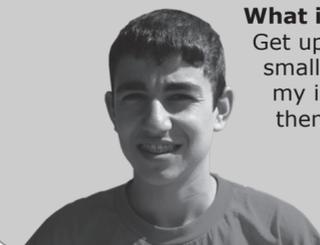
What is your morning routine?
Waking up, brushing my teeth, putting on makeup, then changing

Freshmen

What do you look for in a best friend?
A person whose mom makes really good food

What is your idea of a perfect date?
Going to the movies or something afterwards

What is the cutest way to ask someone to a dance?
Make a huge banner and put it up across the school



What is your morning routine?
Get up, take a shower, eat a small bowl of cereal, listen to my iPod, put on deodorant, then go to school

Amin Mirzadegan

From middle school classes to SHS courses

by Arnav Dugar

For every academically rigorous high school, there must also be an equally rigorous feeder school. Such is the case in the Saratoga school district.

The school boasts one of the highest API (Academic Performance Index) scores in the state: 933 out of 1000. Given that this standard of excellence is established at the lower levels, it's no wonder that Saratoga's feeder schools also boast abnormally high test scores.

The number of students who transition into Saratoga High after graduating from Redwood Middle School dwarfs the number of students from schools outside the district. For every four students who have come from Redwood Middle School, only one student comes from another middle school in the Bay Area, and just a handful from out of state, according to registrar Jeanne Jameison.

The large percentage of students coming from Redwood allows for coordination between courses the students take in middle school and high school. Several classes that Saratoga High offers, namely those in the mathematics and language departments, have prerequisites offered at Redwood. These prerequisites directly translate

into high school credits, often allowing freshmen to take higher level classes.

Mathematics track made clear

The math classes a high school student can take are largely determined by decisions made in middle school.

At Redwood, incoming sixth grade students are separated by proficiency in mathematics into three groups. Students who skip sixth grade math qualify to take geometry in eighth grade and Algebra 2 as a freshman, while those who do not skip sixth grade math take geometry during their freshman year.

"I think I'm pretty lucky that I'm ahead, because I never really had to try for it since it was up to my 5th grade teacher what math to put me in in 6th grade," said freshman Evelyn Lee. "I never really had any control over it, but I appreciate being a year ahead now."

Success in high school math courses is also strongly dictated by the algebra and geometry foundation formed in middle school.

Middle School world languages courses important beginnings for SHS program

Redwood students also have a similar option regarding world languages. Many students opt

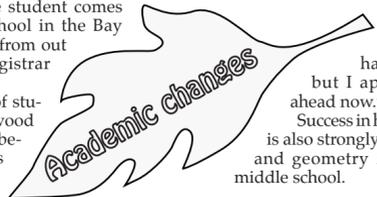
to take either Spanish 1 or French 1 as electives in seventh and eighth grades, ultimately taking the high school equivalent class split into two less demanding courses. After completing the first level course, students are then able to move onto the second level in their freshman year.

"It creates a much smoother transition between the middle school classes and the high school classes," said sophomore Jocelyn Takahashi, who took Spanish 1 in middle school and continued on to take Spanish 2 as a freshman. "Especially because there is a direct continuation from what we were learning in eighth grade into high school."

However, Takahashi also notes that the transition isn't completely seamless, as some concepts in middle school are taught in unnecessary detail while others do not fully meet the standards required of the actual high school course. Still, she maintains that spending two extra years learning a language at Redwood was beneficial.

In fact, since the world language classes at Redwood are spread out over the course of two years, Redwood students are sometimes better prepared than those who take the one year equivalent in high school.

"I find that almost all the students that come into Spanish 2 as ninth graders from Redwood are very well prepared for the class and are among the best students I have," said Spanish teacher Bret Yeilding. ♦



REDWOOD BAND A PRELUDE TO TOGA MARCHING BAND SUCCESS, AWARDS

by Sarah Hull and Aanchal Mohan

Question: What is the secret behind the success of the school's award-winning marching band?

Among the many possible answers—tireless nights spent rehearsing on the football field, determination to achieve and school-wide appeal. But perhaps the most important reason is the preparation that takes root at Redwood Middle School.

Current band members recall the passionate guidance of now-retired Redwood music director Vicky Wyant, who introduced and instilled into them the work ethic and mind-set required to perform successfully in high school, thus making their adjustment to Saratoga High band a lot smoother. SHS alumnus Jon Jow took over Wyant's position in 2009 and has sought to retain the program's high standards.

"Mrs. Wyant definitely prepared us discipline wise," said freshman clarinet player Maya Nag. "We learned the basics of music at Redwood so that when we got to high school we didn't have to learn them all over again."

The step up from the middle school band to the high school band is a big one to say the least, but the fact that Saratoga High's band is so highly recognized makes the transition even more nerve wracking.

To ease this transition, the band hosts a two-week band camp to teach both the new and old members the intricate steps and notes required to upcoming year's field show

"It didn't take me too long to adjust to high school band because we had band camp before the real season started," said Nag. "I thought those two weeks prepared me pretty well."

Even with band camp, it is still difficult for members to learn all the necessary material they need to be ready for marching band season. Band members recognize that one of the key differences between middle school and high school bands is the field show, which is performed during football games and at competitions.

FALCONFIGURES

178 current Saratoga High students are marching band members

79.8% of those students were also members of the Redwood Middle marching band

4 out of four drum majors, Flora Chang, Zach Jacobs, David Mandell and Jason Shiuan, were also drum majors in middle school.

—by David Eng and Aanchal Mohan

"The field show was the toughest because you have to memorize way more music than you did for Redwood," said sophomore alto saxophone player Kushal Raj. "You also have to memorize all the formations for moving around, while in Redwood you just had to march forward."

Although these field shows prove to be hard to perfect for freshmen, they have many fellow peers to help them along the way.

"When I was a freshman, the seniors were really cool," said Raj. "They made me feel welcome in the school and less awkward. They showed me how to do a lot of stuff and they told me funny stories."

The challenging pieces of music students were required to play at Redwood also contributed to how well prepared

they were for the Saratoga High music program.

"We played a lot harder music than what middle schools normally play," said junior drum major Jason Shiuan. "Because of this, we got a good taste of what high school would be like."

In addition to more challenging music, high school band members enjoy the liberty and independence that the high school setting offers.

"It's a lot more relaxed in high school as opposed to middle school where everything's a little more structured," said senior baritone player Gautam Srinivasan. "One of the biggest differences is that Mr. Boitz treats you like an adult."

Students appreciate the changes that have come with being part of the Saratoga High band and under the music department's guidance have been able to develop as individuals and collectively.

"Both middle school and high school band are really fun, but as you grow as a musician you want harder music and that's what you get in high school," said Shiuan. "You get things that challenge you, and you also get different styles of music that you don't normally hear." ♦



Toga Roots

Strong beginnings lead to extracurricular success at Saratoga High

Arnav Dugar

WEB leaders 'Link' into SHS welcoming program

Link Crew commissioner explains the transition from WEB

by Emily Williams

Commitment, enthusiasm and friendliness are just some of the qualities that guidance counselor Frances Saiki looks for when selecting Link Leader applicants, qualities that are also important in Redwood Middle School's WEB program.

But Link Crew, which pairs upperclassman leaders to a group of eight to ten freshmen, is not the first mentoring experience for many Link leaders. Many current Link leaders and applicants participated in a similar program called WEB, or Where Everybody Belongs as 8th graders at Redwood Middle School. WEB trains student leaders to welcome incoming sixth graders at Redwood.

"We have always asked on the [Link] application why a student is interested in being a Link leader," said Saiki. "More often than not I see responses of students saying [it is because of] their experience with WEB."

Although Link and WEB are not directly connected, they are very similar programs. Students' training through W is a great basis for the training they receive as Link leaders.

According to senior Carolyn Chen, a Link Commissioner and former WEB leader, most people who did WEB in 8th grade also applied for Link unless they didn't have time to do it. Those student leaders were consistent with helping the school, and it was easy to tell who they were.

Although the experience gained from WEB is not necessary for Link, Web does provide students with confidence as a leader and experience helping out other students.

"Obviously with WEB training, I'm hoping that [the students] know what it takes to be a good peer leader, mentor and advocate," said Saiki. "If they learn these qualities through Web, I think that is a great quality to have. A combination of these qualities and their own experience and creativity is really powerful."

The positive, encouraging attitude that Saiki looks for in Link Leaders is also valued and fostered in the WEB program.

Many of the tactics and games used to connect to freshmen are employed by WEB leaders as well with incoming sixth graders because WEB and Link are so similar.

"(In WEB) you learn to be receptive and friendly to sixth graders," said Chen. "It's the same concept when you come up to high school; we are all a level matured, but it's still the same. You have to be ready to

FALCONFIGURES

WEB or Where Everybody Belongs, Redwood Middle's program to welcome incoming sixth graders.

Link Crew Saratoga High's program which pairs upperclassman leaders with eight to ten freshmen.

101 Link Crew leaders for 2009-10 school year.

77.2% Percentage of those Link leaders who were also WEB leaders at Redwood Middle School.

—by David Eng and Sarah Hull

outgoing and friendly to them. Once you're warm to them, they'll open up to you."

The preparation as a leader through the Web program proves a great basis for Link Leaders to build from. Saiki hopes that students who have been through both programs will be able to bring suggestions from their experiences as freshmen and WEB leaders, combining the best of both trainings to provide the most welcoming environment for freshmen.

"We do value the experience that students had from Redwood and from being on WEB," said Saiki. "We would love to have those suggestions more and more to incorporate in our Link Crew. We have always been open to that."

This idea of combining the best of both programs and using past leadership experiences is helping to improve the Link program every year, but in some cases, even past experience can't help student leaders.

The program has received mixed reviews from freshmen this year and years past; some students form close bonds with their Link Leaders and greatly benefit from the experience, while others say it was a waste of time.

"WEB was less organized and in Link we had to go to tutorial, which I found kind of annoying," said freshman Courtney Schlossareck.

Junior Taara Rangan, who has gone through both the WEB and the Link programs, offers a different perspective on the programs' benefits and shortcomings.

"I never talked to my WEB leader but I had a lot more connection with my Link leader. I really enjoy the sense of camaraderie that Link inspired among all of us," said Rangan.

The programs, although geared toward helping incoming students, also benefit the leaders throughout their life. The confidence and leadership students learn in WEB helps them throughout their high school experience.

"With WEB and Link you get to see all these different personalities and learn how to reach out to them," said Chen. "It helps transitioning into ninth grade when you get to meet all these new people, since not everyone is from Redwood. I feel like I could deal with situations with different people that I met better. I think it also helps your confidence as a leader in other endeavors in your life." ♦



Pool of new experiences for swimmer



"DACA has pushed me to realize my true swimming potential over the years."

Serena Chan

For the past decade, I've been swimming two hours a day, six days a week and 11 months a year with DACA (De Anza Cupertino Aquatics) up until roughly two months ago. Am I crazy about that? Possibly. Since then, I put club swimming on the back burner for a couple of months and started practicing exclusively with the school team. It's been ... different.

Changing teams has ultimately allowed me to appreciate my memories of club swimming, and I also have a greater appreciation for all that it has done for me. DACA trained me to be fluent in the swimming language and familiar with the culture since I was six. There is no way I would be on the varsity team if I had not been part of the club team.

My memories from my decade with DACA are endless, ranging from breakfast at Hobee's after morning practices and Coach Carol's group skit. But perhaps more importantly, D A C A has pushed me to realize my true swimming potential over the years, and I truly appreciate all the coaches who have guided me along the way. The never-ending hours of excruciating practices that I constantly complained about drove me to become the swimmer I am today. Personally, I don't know how coaches can put up with all our groaning.

Current varsity swimming coach Christian Bonner also coached me briefly at DACA all the way back when I was 10. When it came to joining the high school swim team, the fact that I already knew the coach made the transition much smoother. It was comforting to see that the workouts were not too different from the club practices I grew up with.

Simple things we do during school practices are a piece of cake to me, like days when we practice flip turns. I haven't had to practice turns since ... elementary school. But, most definitely, the toughest part of switching teams was meeting my new teammates.

Last year, it was hard enough to get to know people on the team as a freshman. I also practiced entirely with my club team, spending only a measly three hours with the school team whenever a meet came around. Even then, I spent most of that time with buddies I already knew from DACA.

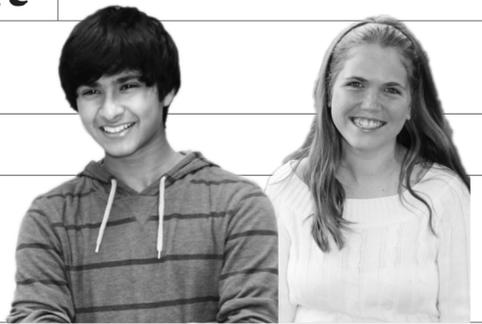
But this season, I was determined to make the most of my non-club swimming. I wanted to feel like I was actually a part of the Toga team. In the two short months I spent with the school team, I gained experiences that I would have missed out on if I still swam with DACA. The "jammer boys" grew up and donned Speedos for the first time in their lives. Ms. Thomson's birthday cake got consumed by starved, chlorine-dripping savages. Sophomore Mac Hyde, the boy who claims to know everything about this school since he practically grew up here, managed to trap himself in the storage room.

Swimming is probably the only high school sport where athletes on the same team may not know anything about each other. No matter how hard we try to bridge that gap between club and school swimmers, it will still be there. And having jumped from one side to the other, I know the two are actually not that different.

At meets I can be seen with my DACA parka draped over my shoulders but my Toga cap clutched in one hand. Sometimes I hang out with Toga swimmers (who aren't DACA swimmers); I also join the DACA swimmers (who aren't Toga swimmers) and my fellow cross-overs. I know I'll always have a bit of both teams in my swimming memories. I still miss my DACA roots and teammates, but I guess change is good. ♦



YouTube Stars



Search

Spotlight: Our Local Stars

C-WALKING TO THE TOP



by Jordan Waite

More than 30,000 people have viewed one of freshman Sharuay Agrawal's "C-walk" dance videos, and many more of his videos have over 1,000 views. With his smooth dance moves, Agrawal is a local upcoming YouTube star. "I'm not a star yet," said Agrawal, "but I'm getting more subscribers each day." "C-walking" is a style of hip-hop dance that is sweeping across the nation. It focuses on rapid movements of the feet and legs. "I like C-walking because it's fun to do," said Agrawal. "You get so into the music you feel like you're part of it." Underground music is an important part of "C-walking." However, dancers' videos that contain mainstream music get removed from YouTube due to copyright issues, according to Agrawal.



Agrawal

Every "C-walker" posts their videos on YouTube. Agrawal has about 30 videos on his channel, and he frequently adds new videos. "I just go straight into making videos and posting what people want to see," said Agrawal. Agrawal's videos average from one to three minutes long, and each video he posts has a different theme. He has multiple videos that are based on particular songs, a birthday dedication for his friend, a dance crew tryout video and mix tapes that track his progress over a period of the months. Agrawal already has over 650 subscribers, and he hopes that number will grow with time. He doesn't plan to stop making "C-walk" videos anytime soon. "I want to get at least 1,000 subscribers someday," said Agrawal, "maybe more than that if I get lucky." ♦

FIELDS BLOGS EMOTIONS



by Jordan Waite

For most students, YouTube is a source that offers a diversion from homework, but for junior Cortney Fields, YouTube is more than just that: It is a way for her to express herself. "I started making YouTube videos after I saw other people making videos, and I thought it was a cool idea, so I tried it out and ended up liking it," said Fields. Fields made most of her YouTube videos in her freshman year, but has still posted in the past few years. So far, Fields has published videos on a variety of topics, ranging from inside jokes with friends to discussions about whatever is on her mind. According to Fields, her first videos didn't have a purpose beyond pure entertainment, but her later, favorite posts are the videos with strong moral



Fields

messages. Teen pregnancy, child abuse and suicide are some of the heavier topics that her videos address. With the controversial topics that Fields discusses in her videos, there are almost always people who disagree with her stand. Fields did have some disagreeing viewers, but her videos have also attracted some people who enjoy and appreciate her opinion. "I liked watching [Fields's] videos," said junior Mary Edman. "Her insightful views were interesting to listen to." To Fields, the joy of publishing videos and spreading important and valuable messages on the Web is more important than the number of subscribers and comments. "I learned about the value in hard work," said Fields. "If you work on something really hard and it's done and looks good, it holds more value than if you did it in five seconds." ♦

YouTube music artists' novelty factor attracts subscribers

by Vivian LeTran

Because if I look into your eyes, then I'll have to say goodbye and that'll break my heart. These lyrics from YouTube singer David Choi's original song, "I Won't Even Start," have been heard by over 1 million people from across the nation. Choi, a singer, songwriter and producer, started YouTube several years ago. Since then, his popularity has risen dramatically. YouTube singers are generally unsigned musicians whose covers of hit singles have attracted many viewers. Sophomore Chris Vu, an avid follower of YouTube singers, said their success mainly results from a novelty factor. "YouTube singers attract so many fans and viewers because they offer something different from all the similar mainstream music," said Vu. "[The music] is all different and all good in their own way."

as Traphik, is a comedian and a rapper. His channel includes crazy skits, random advice and remixes of popular songs. Traphik rewrites song lyrics, replacing them with clever versions of his own that always impress the YouTube community. Boasting more than 300,000 subscribers and achieving a rank of the 52nd Most Subscribed (All Time) on YouTube, Traphik has made videos such as "First Asian Boy," a parody of American Boy by Estelle and a cover of "Baby" by Justin Bieber with Legaci, an R&B singing group. "I thought the cover that he did with Legaci was a lot better than the original song," said freshman Tiffany Yung. "Traphik did a really good job of rewriting the lyrics. They were a lot more meaningful and [easy to listen to] than Ludacris' lyrics." Traphik also has released an album, called "Rush Hour," which is now available on iTunes. With his creative and some-

times comical lyrics, Traphik offers a breath of fresh air from the stereotypical rapper. **AJ Rafael** Another YouTube star and a favorite of many is singer, songwriter and performer AJ Rafael, a talented musician who plays the piano, ukulele, guitar and drums. His catchy beats and original lyrics make his songs easy and fun to listen to, establishing him as a huge hit. AJ Raphael recently collaborated with WongFu Productions, an independent production company, to create a music video of his original song, "When We Say (Juicebox)." This music video was a huge success, attracting over 800,000 views in less than a month. He currently ranks 28th Most Subscribed (All Time) Musicians with over 150,000 subscribers.

“ YouTube singers offer something different from all the similar mainstream music.”

—sophomore Chris Vu

From its creation in 2005, YouTube rose to international fame in a few years. It is an accessible platform for people to post all kinds of videos. Many SHS students are adamant followers of Youtubers and post their own videos as well.



All photos on the page have been taken from the Internet

Videos being watched now

Youtube comedians collect laughs

by Vivien Lu and Ashley Tang



Who knew five years ago that people would make household names for themselves from right in their bedroom, but with YouTube, hundreds of people have found this success. Two of many people who use this method to broadcast themselves online are Kevin Wu (KevJumba), a sophomore at UC Davis, and Ryan Higa (Nigahiga), 19, who attends the University of Nevada. These teenagers strive for publicity with no ad promotions. Their fame is achieved through YouTube, where any video can spontaneously gain views until it becomes one of the most popular videos on the web. KevJumba and Nigahiga have succeeded in becoming famous on YouTube, still trying to gain more subscribers. Nigahiga generally posts videos of himself trying on several costumes and acting as different characters. He has a short series of "how to" videos such as "How to be Gangster,"

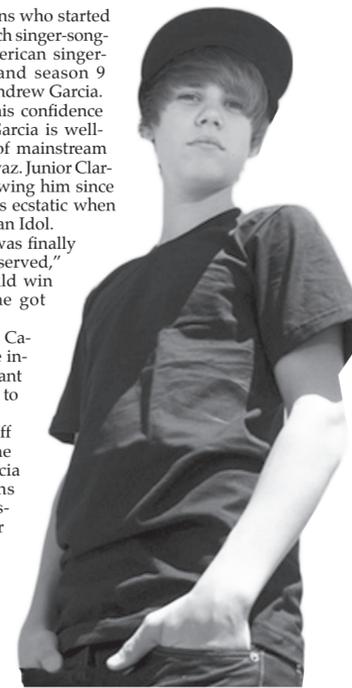
million views. KevJumba's videos consist of him talking to his webcam while he incorporates a few dance moves. His dad, shown joking around and lecturing him, is often a guest star in his videos. Videos like these have made KevJumba the 11th most subscribed of all time and the seventh most subscribed comedian. "The reason why I find KevJumba hilarious is because others try really hard to make people laugh by using special effects and bizarre props," said sophomore Kylie Tseng. Wu also has another popular channel, JumbaFund, which has about 500,000 subscribers. As a partner channel, JumbaFund earns ad revenue everytime someone watches a video. Every two months, JumbaFund donates all the revenue earned from the videos to a chosen charity. Nigahiga, on the other hand, takes first place for most subscribed of all time, and is the 6th most subscribed comedian. Since he started in 2006, Nigahiga has over two million subscribers. "With his creativity, Nigahiga produces tons of videos that are funny," said sophomore Tim Ling. "His blunt humor, combined with his acting, really makes me laugh." Although they have different methods of making videos, both achieved fame through making their own creative videos on YouTube. ♦

Bieber, Garcia rise to fame through YouTube

by Izzy Albert

And I was like baby, baby, baby ohhh, like baby, baby, baby noo, like baby, baby, baby ohh, I thought you'd always be mine, mine. This over-played jingle stuck in many teenage girls' heads is sung by Justin Bieber, the squeaky-clean 16-year-old Canadian sensation. After being discovered on YouTube and signing a deal with Usher, Bieber rapidly rose to become an international phenomenon. He released his first single "One Time" and many people worldwide found themselves diagnosed with the "Bieber Fever." His beginnings were relatively modest. When Bieber was just 12, his mother posted a video of him singing for all of his friends and family to view on YouTube. She found that thousands of viewers were tuning in to these videos and so continued uploading more videos. Bieber soon was discovered by an executive at Island Records, and within months he began recording his debut album, *My World*. It reached platinum in the U.S. and Canada and silver in the U.K. Many hardcore-Bieber fans around the world, including senior Deepthi Raghavan, were excited to be able to witness his rise to fame. "When I first saw him on YouTube, I knew he was bound to make it big," said Raghavan. "He has the voice, looks and lovability factor." Since his big break, Bieber has done virtually everything any aspiring musician wishes and hopes to be able to do. He has sung for President Obama, hosted Saturday Night Live and performed on shows such as "The Ellen DeGeneres Show."

Other successful musicians who started out on YouTube include Dutch singer-songwriter Esmée Denters, American singer-songwriter Marié Digby and season 9 American Idol contestant Andrew Garcia. Garcia, 24, first gained his confidence and fans off of YouTube. Garcia is well-known for singing covers of mainstream songs, such as "Replay" by Iyaz. Junior Clarence Le who has been following him since his early YouTube days, was ecstatic when Garcia made it onto American Idol. "I was stoked when he was finally getting the publicity he deserved," said Le. "I thought he would win it, so I was upset when he got voted off." Growing up in Compton, Calif., both of his parents were involved in gangs; he didn't want to get involved so he turned to music for his escape. Although he was voted off American Idol recently, the experience has taught Garcia many valuable life lessons such as "living in the present rather than the future or past," and to never change for anyone. Bieber and Garcia are just two examples of how with some talent, individuality, and a YouTube account, stardom is within reach for anyone. ♦



Most Suscribed



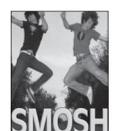
#1 Nigahiga
2,279,913



#2 Fred
1,746,501



#3 Shane Dawson
1,542,672



#4 Smosh
1,505,568



#5 RayWilliamJohnson
1,336,439

TOGATALKS

Who is your favorite YouTube star?

KevJumba because his videos are creative; his dad is hilarious and reminds me of my dad as well. junior Navneet Ramesh



sophomore Sophie Kang

Nick Pitera because he can sing both parts of *A Whole New World*. That was amazing and I wish I could sing as he can. junior David Wang



Freshman year opens up new doors for alumnus

by Christine Tseng and Denise Lin

Michael Chen was at the top of his game in high school—salutatorian, head of the Key club, and editor-in-chief for the school newspaper—just to name a few of his impressive positions. He continued this remarkable streak by getting accepted to Harvard University.

Acceptance into Harvard University is a goal that many top students aspire to. Not only is it hard to be accepted, but the classes there are difficult as well, even for the supremely gifted. However, Chen finds that life at college is not as daunting as he had feared.

“College is a lot of fun,” said Chen. “You have a lot more freedom than you did in high school because you’re able to choose from a much wider of variety of courses with much fewer restrictions on what you can take.”

The acceptance into Harvard last year was a pleasant surprise, as he was not really expecting to get into the school.

“To be honest, Harvard wasn’t even really on my radar when I was applying to schools,” said Chen. “I didn’t think I had even a small chance of getting in and just

kind of applied for the [heck] of it.”

Chen speculates that the reason his application was chosen out of so many was not only because of his stellar grades, but also because of his positive recommendation letters.

“I actually had a chance recently to go in and see the summary notes written by the people who read my application,” said Chen. “They mentioned the high level of support I got from my letter writers, who apparently wrote some nice things.”

Between college and high school, there is much more freedom in the former, as well as a focus on projects rather than classwork.

“You’ll be hard-pressed to find someone who puts classwork at the top of their list of priorities. It’s still important to most, but a lot of people are much more concerned with the activities in which they’re involved [and] their work.”

Since Harvard has an extremely large

endowment, \$25 billion, it has sufficient monies to fund initiatives that would be too expensive for most other schools, so there are numerous grants to fund research projects and what Chen calls “crazy things.” This large budget has also played a role in the quality of Harvard classes and professors.

“There are a lot of incredible classes being taught by world-famous people,” said Chen. “When a lot of people decide not to study abroad, it’s because they’re concerned about missing out on stuff going on at school, not because they don’t have the chance.”

Along with the work in college comes the precious opportunity to pursue true interests—especially because many college professors are leaders in their field.

“One of the greatest things about college is probably the ability to really explore your interests without penalty,” said Chen. “At Harvard, we have a ‘shopping

period’ at the beginning of every term, where we stop in and out of classes that we’re interested in. This gives us time to really check out classes beforehand.”

Chen is developing mentally and academically through his first year at Harvard.

“I think the exposure to people with different interests and ideas has really helped me develop as a person,” said Chen. “It’s important and useful to have a good grasp of other fields.”

College has been an eye opener for Chen to the plethora of diverse students and experiences.

“You get diversity of these life experiences, so you can really mix with people who have radically different ideas. It’s been a blast,” said Chen.

Chen encourages incoming freshmen to take advantage of their first year in college. It particularly helped him, he says, because it has given him a sense of what he wants to do in life. He has found new hobbies, and has been exposed to a lot of new ideas.

“Don’t feel tied to anything just because you think you should or because it’s always been ‘your thing,’” said Chen. “If you’re doing what you’ve always done, chances are, it’s time to look around.” ♦



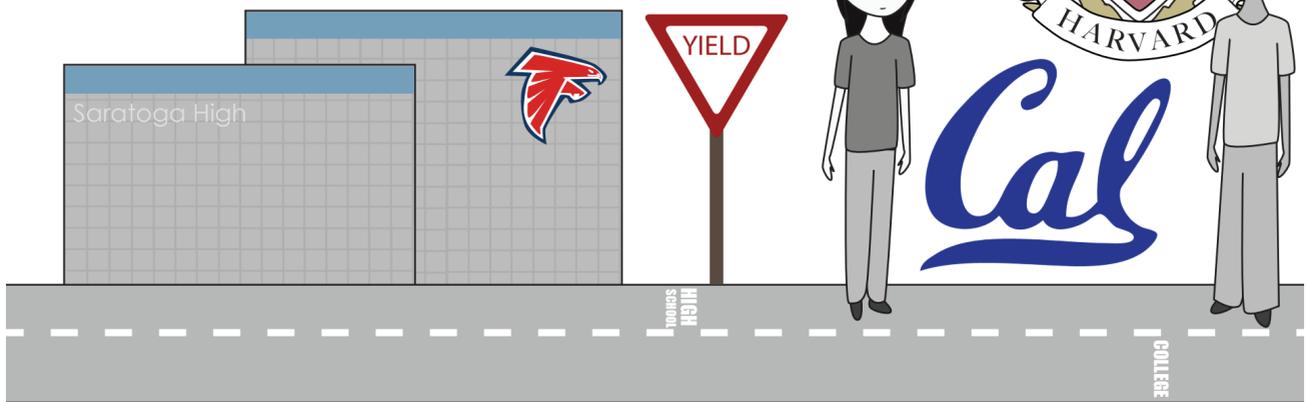
Chen

“Don’t feel tied to doing anything just because you think you should or because it’s always been ‘your thing.’”

—’09 alumnus Michael Chen

CHANGING LANES

Last year’s seniors share useful advice so that incoming college freshmen will not have to make any U-turns in their path to college.



Alex Ju and Arnav Dugar

After roller coaster of year, alumnus finds college enriching

by Roy Bisht

After graduating from Saratoga High last year, alumnus Kirstie Lee was eagerly anticipating starting at UC Berkeley—but was also unsure of what her first year of college would hold for her. Many friends told her freshman year was great; others said it was horrible. A year later, Lee is the one doing the advising—and she’s come out with a positive impression.

“Honestly, the transition from high school to college isn’t as difficult as people make it out to be,” said Lee.

Amidst the horror stories of living alone in college and campuses full of strangers, Lee believes that it is not nearly as bad as everybody makes it out to be. Even though people rarely know each other, Lee claims that it is easy to make friends since everybody is willing to interact and meet new people.

“I think it is important to remember that your whole class is coming in as not knowing anyone else, and therefore it is a

lot easier making friends than you would think,” said Lee.

Lee believes that college freshmen are so open and welcoming to each other because most arrive virtually alone. College is also “true to the cliché that it is time to ‘start over,’” according to Lee.

As far as roommates go, Lee had a good experience with hers. Lee and a roommate from Davis were flexible and friendly, compromised easily, and never got into fights.

Another fear is living without parents. According to Lee, there is no better and easier place to learn how to do this than college. Having such a good roommate has also helped, Lee says, because it makes living away from home comfortable.

“Living on your own is not as hard as you think. Learn to do laundry, learn to wake yourself up, learn to feed yourself and you should be fine,” said Lee. “I think parents become less of an influence as you grow up in high school and you just need to make small transitions in college.”

Even though the social and personal aspects of college are simple enough,

academics are demanding. But Saratoga High has a large population of overachievers. At competitive colleges like Berkeley, it seems everybody strives for perfection, Lee said.

“Here [at UC Berkeley], everyone is a hard worker and everyone is your competition. It’s frustrating and it’s stressing, but that’s definitely not to say it’s unfriendly competition,” said Lee.

Even though the academic competition at UC Berkeley is at a high level, Lee claims that the competition is also common at Saratoga High. Saratoga may have prepared her for school, but because of the wealthy environment that she grew up in “it is pretty shocking to meet people who had a 97 percent drop out at their high school.”

Her first year of college was a whirlwind of new experiences, people, and a new lifestyle, but Lee claims her freshman year has been one to remember.

“This year has been great; college may have been a roller coaster of new things both good and bad, but it adds up to become really good experiences,” said Lee, who is anticipating next year. “It has been a great year, and I’ve had a lot of fun.” ♦



Lee

THEWEB

College tips from alumnus Aaron Garg at Stanford

BE HONEST: When filling out the rooming applications, be completely honest, because roommates are selected based off these requests and it’s difficult to switch.

MONEY SMARTS: Buy used textbooks off Amazon.com or borrow them from friends who no longer need them.

JOIN CLUBS EARLY: Clubs are a good way to meet people who have similar interests as you, but most team-building occurs first semester, so join early.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Read Garg’s full interview at saratogafalcon.org.

Power Rankings

The Falcon evaluates the year’s sports teams based on a variety of criteria to see which team is the best.

—by Ren Norris and Abhishek Venkataramana



Sport	Rank	Team
Boys’ Tennis (7t)	1	Tie
Girls’ Tennis (1)	2	Padmanabhan/Nguyen
Boys’ Swimming (2)	3	Hinshaw
Field Hockey (3)	4	Schroeder
Girls’ Volleyball (15)	5	Nielson

Sport (last year’s ranking)	Campus Presence (1-5)	Physical Demand (1-5)	Improvement (1-3)	Winning Percentage (1-20)	League Title (+1 for lower league, +2 for upper)	CCS (0-5)	Star Factor	Total	Evaluation
6. Boys’ Soccer (23t)	5	5	0	13	1	3	Ashe	27	We definitely weren’t expecting a CCS debut from this team. Sophomore power!
7. Girls’ Soccer (18)	5	5	3	10	1	3	Guy	27	They went to CCS for the first time in 8 years... a score of 3 for improvement is an understatement.
8. Boys’ Track (9)	2	4	2	16	0	0	Teerlink	26	Despite a strong lineup of runners, the team didn’t manage to send any runners to CCS.
9. Badminton (21)	3	4	2	15	0	3	Kuo	26	Two words: Jeff Kuo.
10. Girls’ Swimming (7t)	3	3	2	12	0	4	Nolet, Murray	24	While the girls’ swim team had a successful season, they weren’t able to top the guys.
11. Girls’ Basketball (13t)	4	5	2	9	0	3	Gragnola	23	Nicole Gragnola: 42 points in one game. Can you say WNBA?
12. Girls’ Track (4)	3	4	2	10	0	3	Bellegarda, Conway, E. Nguyen	22	Can somebody say Usain Bolt? These runners may not be from Jamaica, but they sure can run fast. They dominated their league and sent runners to CCS.
13. Wrestling (6)	3	5	2	9	0	3	Yen	22	Alan Yen may be graduating, but don’t lose hope. With a strong line of underclassmen wrestlers, the team should send many more athletes to CCS.
14. Boys’ Lacrosse (25)	5	5	2	9	0	0	A. Lee	21	One of the only teams, apart from the chess team, to beat LG.
15. Football (15t)	5	5	1	10	0	0	Thomas	21	With strong offensive performances and a strong defensive line, maybe we can finally beat LG next year.
16. Girls’ Cross Country (13t)	2	4	2	9	0	3	Scholssareck, Wai	20	Despite several injuries, they had a great season filled with strong performances from some of the team’s younger runners.
17. Boys’ Basketball (17)	5	5	1	8	0	0	Chou	19	With the loss of seniors, next season could be challenging.
18. Boys’ Golf (19t)	1	1	2	12	0	3	Cho, Paisley	19	A strong season filled by solid performances by Andrew Cho and Kent Paisley.
19. Boys’ Water Polo (5)	4	4	1	8	0	0	K. Rollinson, J. Chen	17	They weren’t able to live up to last year’s success, but there’s always next year.
20. Boys’ Cross Country (10t)	1	4	1	9	0	2	Fukui	17	With solid performances, this team will be climbing up the rankings next year.
21. Girls’ Golf (19t)	1	1	1	11	0	2	Sivaram	16	The performances may have been a bit under par, but not bad for a second year team, just not as good as the guys.
22. Girls’ Lacrosse (22)	4	3	2	5	0	0	Block	14	At least they beat Harker (wait who doesn’t beat Harker?)
23. Baseball (10t)	3	2	1	7	0	0	A. Berman	13	They managed to score 1 run against LG. But LG scored 25.
24. Girls’ Water Polo (10t)	4	3	1	4	0	0	Kynsh, Borsum	12	Hopefully they have good incoming players because it’s going to take a miracle to save this team.
25. Softball (26)	3	1	1	4	0	0	Gragnola	9	They might be nearly winless, but at least they had good team bonding!
26. Boys’ Volleyball (11)	1	2	1	4	0	0	J. Kim	8	Yes, we have a Boys’ Volleyball team! Stop asking!

Spring Season Wrap-Ups

As the spring season winds down, get to know the best and worst moments of their seasons.

SPRING CCS sports SHORTS



Boys' Swimmers earn third consecutive top 5 finish in CCS

Coming off a momentous season, the boys' swim team made its mark again by earning a third consecutive top-five finish, placing fifth place and emerging as the top public school at the CCS finals meet on May 21 at Santa Clara International Swim Center. Bellarmine won its 26th consecutive title.

Hinshaw was the lone champion, finishing first in the 500-yard freestyle with a time of 4:22, less than a second away from the CCS record set in 2009 by his brother Ben, who swims for Cal. He joked that his older brother stabbed him with a lap counter during the race to prevent him from breaking the record. This standout performance at CCS completed Hinshaw's undefeated season in the event, which also included a new league record.

Hinshaw also finished second in the 200-freestyle at 1:37. Sophomore Ian Burns finished third in both the 100-freestyle and 200-individual medley. His times were :46 and 1:50, respectively. Junior Justin Chung took fifth in the 100 backstroke, nine places better than last year, at :52.

The only relay to final was the 400-yard freestyle relay, which finished fourth with a time of 3:11. Hinshaw and Burns returned from a relay that swam a national record time of 3:00 last year. They teamed up with Chung and senior Kyle Borch for a top-five finish this year.

"I am really happy with how we swam," said Hinshaw, "and we will be even stronger next year."

-by Tim Rollinson

Badminton doubles team places second at CCS

All eyes were on boys' doubles players freshman Derek Chao and sophomore Jeff Kuo, bationally ranked players who led the badminton team this year as they made their way to CCS.

After three days of intense competition, the underclassman pair claimed second place in boys' doubles after falling to Gunn High School in the finals on May 27.

Kuo said he is convinced they can do a lot better in the future if they are paired up.

"I think we did all right," he said. "[Derek and I] could have done better if we practiced together more."

Senior Annie Lee, after winning third place at SCVAL league finals, entered CCS as the school's sole representative for girls' singles. Although she did not place, she viewed her last high school tournament as a positive and fun experience.

"I've been trying to get to CCS for four years now, so this experience was a nice way to end my high school badminton career," Lee said. "I made a lot of friends that I didn't expect, and I'm happy with the way things turned out."

-By Kevin Mu

Boys' tennis places second at Norcals

Faced with the loss of several key players, the boys' tennis team nevertheless closed out their season strongly with a second place finish at the CIF-USTA Norcal Boys Team Tennis Championship, held May 21-22 at the Notomis Racquet Club in Sacramento.

The Falcons lost to Menlo, their main rivals, 6-1 in the finals. The Falcons lost depth and experience at Norcals because juniors Nikhil Jayashankar and Deepak Sabada, the No. 3 and 4 singles spots respectively, were unable to attend the tournament due to a conflicting national tournament. Both Jayashankar and Sabada won their matches against Menlo at the CCS finals match, in which the Falcons lost to Menlo 4-3.

The team beat Rio Americano High School (Sacramento) in the quarterfinal round 6-1, and Monte Vista in the semifinal round 5-2 before falling to Menlo.

-Karthik Annaamalai and Jason Wu

Girls' Tack sends two underclassmen to CCS finals

After qualifying at CCS trials, freshman Melodie Bellegarda and sophomore Ailene Nguyen hoped to continue on their winning streak into CCS finals.

Bellegarda placed fifth out of eight competitors at the CCS trial in the 400m.

"I just really wanted to run my race and get another [personal record]," said Bellegarda, whose current personal record is 57.58 seconds.

Bellegarda, who has proved herself to be a front runner, has had an amazing season running the 200, 400 4x1 and the 4x4. In fact Bellegarda has been one of the top point contributors for the team along with Nguyen.

Nguyen, who qualified for CCS and state last year in the triple jump, qualified this year for the long jump with the hope of placing in the top six, which would land her a spot on the podium. She also hoped to break her personal record of 17 feet 10 inches. One step from the podium, Nguyen and Bellegarda hoped that they would emerge victorious once again. Results of CCS could not be printed in this issue but will be available at saratogafalcon.org.

-Aanchal Mohan

Girls' Lacrosse



Amanda Yi

Junior Vanessa Block cradles the ball on March 10.

Season Record: 4-12

Highlight: "Our best game was Harker because it felt great to win and because everyone put 100 percent into it and more," said senior Jodi Huang.

Lowlight: "Our very last game was against Los Gatos was disappointing because it was our very last game and we lost," said Huang.

Captains: Seniors Sophia Cooper and Jodi Huang

Coach's Quote: "Although our season record wasn't exactly what we had hoped for, we grew closer together as a unit and really worked well as a team," said Cooper.

MVP: Junior Vanessa Block

-by Synthia Ling

Baseball



Amanda Yi

Junior Dillan Pak pitches to Homestead on March 31.

Season Record: 10-20

Highlight: An 8-3 victory over Monta Vista. After finishing 7th in the regular season, the team had to win to stay up in the upper League.

Lowlight: Losing by a combined score of 47-6 in two games against rival Los Gatos.

Captains: Seniors Grant Thomas and Andy Berman

Coach's Quote: "There's going to be a big turn-around as we keep fighting in this league," said coach Manny Steffen.

Stats: Batting Average: Grant Thomas, .337

Hits: Kyle Dozier, 33

MVP: Senior Grant Thomas

-by Roy Bisht and David Eng

Boys' Golf



Amanda Yi

Junior Kent Paisley reads a putt during a Mar. 29 match.

Season Record: 7-5

Highlight: Beating Monta Vista even with many sick team members

Lowlight: Losing at Deep Cliff against Milpitas and Monta Vista on Mar. 15

Captains: Junior Kent Paisley

Coach's Quote: "I think the season went quite well, but I would have liked to see the whole team go to the post season. However, we have four freshmen, two sophomores and two juniors on varsity so everyone's coming back and we'll have a good chance next year," said coach Bill Drennan.

MVP: Junior Andrew Cho

-by Sarah Hull

Boys' Track



Pro Image Studios

Senior Andy Johnson lands a jump at the Cupertino meet.

Highlight: The highlight of the season included the high number of athletes who participated in the CCS trials.

Lowlight: The team lost a lot of runners due to conflicts with band, which took a toll on the team's performance.

Captains: Senior Trevor Teerlink

Coach's Quote: "As a team, I'm proud of how we did. We had a great season in terms of individual athletes breaking their personal records and a great season as a whole team."

MVP: Senior Trevor Teerlink

-by Pia Mishra

Badminton



Amanda Yi

Sophomore Lawrence Chen backhands the birdie on April 1.

Season Record: 5-7

Highlight: On the team's senior day, the Falcons were able to come from behind and nab an emotional win over rival Monta Vista.

Lowlight: Saratoga suffered a tough loss to Lynbrook 16-14 in mid-season after many close matches went to three games.

Captains: Sophomore Jeffrey Kuo and seniors Guillaume Bellagarda, Steve Chang, Connie Chiou, Angeline Lee, Annie Lee and Gautam Srinivasan.

Coach's Quote: "We grew as a team this year and next year we will do even better," said head coach John Phung.

MVP: Sophomore Jeffrey Kuo

-by Kevin Mu

Boys' Lacrosse



Jordan Walls

Senior Adam Oreglia runs past a defender on March 9.

Season Record: 8-11

Highlight: The team beat Los Gatos 6-4 and Archbishop Mitty 11-10 on March 26 and April 17 respectively.

Lowlight: Losing to Menlo Atherton 11-4 on April 23.

Captains: Seniors Danny Baldwin and Adam Oreglia, junior Marcus Hoffman and sophomore Eric van Noorden

Coach's Quote: "The team did struggle a bit this year, but I think they really persevered and pulled through," said coach Larry Boehm.

MVP: Senior Andrew Lee

-by Kim Tsai and Parul Singh

Softball



Amanda Yi

Junior Heather Gummow hits on April 1 against Lynbrook.

Season Record: 3-13

Highlight: A season's worth of work paid off in the team's senior game against Los Altos on May 11, finishing with a score of 3-2 where they pulled ahead in the 10th inning.

Lowlight: "For some games, we'd be playing, but we wouldn't really be there. We'd go into the game knowing we'd lose so no one would really try," said senior Cathryn Paolini.

Coach's Quote: "The team worked together like family and the softball season was inspirational," said coach Ray Sisco.

MVP: Senior Nicole Gagnola

-by Olivia Chock and Vivian LeTran

Girls' Swimming



Pro Image Studios

Senior Megan Nolet swims during practice on May 9.

Season Record: 3-3

Highlight: At CCS, the Toga girls ranked 6th overall. Lauren Opatrny, Natalie Cheung, Elizabeth Murray and Megan Nolet swam the 200 Medley Relay and placed third. The 400 Free Relay swam by the four seniors Christine La, Elizabeth Murray, Megan Nolet and Lauren Opatrny placed fifth.

Lowlight: The team lost coach Kristen Thomson mid-way through the season due to her pregnancy.

Captains: Seniors Megan Nolet, Elizabeth Murray, Lauren Opatrny, Priyanka Hardikar, Barbara Huynh

Coach's Quote: "I think the girls tried very hard this year and did very well," said coach Christian Bonner.

-by Serena Chan

Boys' Volleyball



Amanda Yi

Sophomores Steven Sun and Brandon Pak dive for the ball.

Season Record: 1-11

Highlight: The match against King's Academy went to 5 games, instead of the usual two or three. In the last game, Saratoga won by only 2 points. Sophomore Brandon Pak thought it was "one of the most intense games of the season."

Lowlight: The overall season didn't meet the team's hope. Captain James Kim was disappointed "seeing my team slowly start to give up towards the end. It just sucks watching your team get killed."

Captains: Seniors Daniel Chou and James Kim.

MVP: Senior Daniel Chou

-by Ashley Tang

Girls' Track



Pro Image Studios

Senior Karen Wai pulls ahead in the Cupertino meet.

Season Record: 4-2

Highlight: At the league meet, Freshman Courtney Schlossareck won the mile with a last minute kick. Also sophomore Ailene Nguyen won the Long Jump at SCVAL on her last try.

Captains: Seniors Danielle Conway and Sarah Guy for sprints; Karen Wai for distance.

Coach's Quote: "If you work hard, good things will happen," said head coach Archie Ljepava. "If you put in the time and dedication the sport will pay you back. I am a firm believer in Karma."

Stats: Sophomore Ailene Nguyen and freshman Melodie Bellegarda scored the most points.

-by Aanchal Mohan and Denise Lin

Boys' Tennis



Jordan Walls

Senior John Lambie goes for the ball in a match on Feb. 22.

Season Record: 23-5, League Record: 12-0

Highlight: The boys tennis team won the Wawona Peach Tree Classic, took third at the 11th annual Corona Del Mar National All-American Invitational, and took second at both CCS and Norcals. All losses in the season came from matches with Menlo.

Lowlight: Losing to Menlo 4-3 in CCS Finals due to several injuries (cramps) to key players. The Falcons hoped to take home the title this year.

Coach's Quote: "This season had its ups and downs, but the team managed to keep it together, and end with many positive experiences," said head coach Tom Ueyehara.

MVP: Senior Michael McGinnis, with a 27-1 record.

-by Karthik Annaamalai and Jason Wu

Boys' Swimming



Pro Image Studios

Senior Victor Wong swims during a practice on May 9.

Season Record: 1-5

Highlight: Top 5 finish at CCS with Adam Hinshaw winning 500 free, and the League meet winning 5 of 8 individual events.

Lowlight: Only winning one league meet against Homestead.

Captains: Seniors Kevin Rollinson, Victor Wong, Kyle Borch and Joey Persico

Coach's Quote: "We struggled during the league season because we only had a few boys scoring lots of points, but CCS proved that quality is more important than quantity," said coach Christian Bonner.

-by Tim Rollinson

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The Skinny

What's Hot Online
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- Opinion:** "Whitman not fit to lead" by Vijay Menon
- News:** "Summer vacation not for all" by Christine Tseng

TOPTEN REASONS NOT TO GO TO COLLEGE

- 10** Sammy Adams hates it. On the other hand, Asher Roth loves it.
- 9** There is so much you would miss out on in Saratoga. Street Dance, anyone?
- 8** You can stay and laugh at the juniors' homecoming.
- 7** College ladies don't make sandwiches like Mom.
- 6** Parents won't have anyone to run over in the student parking lot.
- 5** You get to watch our football team almost beat Los Gatos again.
- 4** You already graduated from Saratoga High, that is basically an Ivy League education.
- 3** Do you really want to be a freshman again? Fifth year senior is much cooler.
- 2** All the hot chicks in Saratoga.
- 1** McDonalds may not pay great, but think how many free happy meals you could get.

— Tim Rollinson and Uttara Sivaram

THECRITIC
Lost Series Finale



For six years, a group of fans have avidly watched the ABC show "Lost," following the exploits of a group of stranded castaways. Questions, such as why the survivors are on the island in the first place, are left to the imagination of viewers, as well as the complex alternate universe depicted by the "flash-sideways," revealed to be Limbo for the islanders. As Jack dies, several characters escape on an abandoned plane. While the show has been cryptic at best, the finale successfully bids aloha to a complicated piece of pop culture.

—Christine Bancroft

Saratoga Snapshots



Jordan Waite



Olivia Chock



Olivia Chock



Jordan Waite

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: BEFORE AND AFTER SENIOR DREW HSIEH PIES SENIOR BRYCE DOZIER AT THE LAST RALLY MAY 28. SHE IS NO MICHELLE KWAN JUNIOR KENNY SONG WATCHES JUNIOR ANNA SHEN AS SHE LOSES HER FEET TO THE ICE DURING HEARTSKATE ON MAY 23. THOSE WILL BE THE BEST MEMORIES JUNIOR PAM LEE SIGNS A FRIENDS YEARBOOK DURING SPANISH CLASS DID SOMEONE LOSE A TOOTH? SENIOR NATHAN KIM SKIPS AROUND THE HALLS ON SENIOR SLAVE DAY, MAY 28, LED BY HIS MASTER, JUNIOR GRACE KIM.

Student finds comfort from doing unusual activities

“Some of my security blankets may be eccentric, but they have an almost guaranteed success rate.”



Nandini Ruparel

Who has never had a bad day? Put your hand up. No, put your hands down and don't lie. Everyone has had one of those days where everything seems to go wrong, the world has turned upside down and there's no end in sight. When that happens, all you can do is hope you can go home so that you can curl up into a little ball and cry yourself to sleep.

But wait! There is something else you can do if you're about to buckle under the weight of the world. You can take refuge in one of those things called security blankets. Security blankets aren't necessarily blankets, but they're things that make you feel a little bit better inside if you're feeling like that guy from Simple Plan singing "Welcome to my Life." Some of my security blankets may be eccentric, but they have an almost guaranteed success rate. They include:

1. Watching Avatar: The Last Airbender

Yeah, I know it only plays on the Nicktoons channel and is generally aimed at kids ages 5 to 13. But honestly, don't tell me there isn't something endearing about a bald boy with an arrow on his head trying to save the world with his two Water Tribe friends. And who doesn't love Prince Zuko's lovable uncle and his obsession with tea?

2. Reading things in a British accent

British accents are cool. Reading is cool. So how can reading things in British accents not be cool? Try opening up any book to a random page and just read the first dialogue on you see there in a British accent. You'll find it to be one of the most amusing things to do because it's simply too ridiculous for you not to have fun doing it. For bonus points, add a sinister tone and pretend you're Draco Malfoy.

3. Playing your favorite song

Whether it's "Hey Soul Sister" by Train or Lady Gaga's "Bad Romance," your favorite song is the best recipe for making your day just that much better. I prefer iTunes, but you can rock out to it on the radio or look it up on YouTube and go nuts for a little while—because, dude, that's your song!

4. Eating ice cream

Because no matter how many Yogurtlands or Pinkberrys pop up all over the Bay Area, sometimes you just need some hardcore, creamy and delicious ice-cream to bring your spirits up. Eat it in a cone, a cup, or right out of the box with a spoon, because the taste is what really matters in the end.

5. Making origami figures

It's OK if all I know how to make is a dream catcher, a boat and a plane, because my little paper creations can turn a bad day into an adventure involving pirates, corrupt airplane pilots and a fortune teller with a deadly secret.

You might not do some of these things. In fact, you might not do any of these things. But however you cheer yourself up doesn't make a difference as long as you know that you're secure in your little world of madness and joy for those few moments. Congratulations! You've just turned your bad day into an amazing—OK, well, not-so-bad one. ♦

buzzworthy

Football star grad turns into rap artist

Alex "Loggy" Lagemann is not your typical Saratoga High graduate. The class of '07 grad may be a tremendous football player, playing for Cal as a wide receiver, but more unusual, Lagemann is an accomplished rapper, a feat unheard of for most former Falcons. Rhymes about calculators and B+'s in AP science classes are nowhere to be found on Loggy's impressive new mixtape "Up All Night." Rather, Loggy belts out snappy verses about late night parties and the effects of consuming inordinate amounts of alcohol.

After first hearing rapper Eminem as a middle schooler, Lagemann has been honing his flow. "Since [I first got involved in music], I've always kept notebooks, journals and now word documents full of lyrics, ideas, and other things that I've used to create my songs," said Lagemann, who is finishing up his junior year at Berkeley.

As his passion for hip hop and rap continued, Lagemann started to write down his own

lyrics. The result is a hip-hop sophistication that is still uniquely Californian, perhaps even uniquely Saratogan. And that's one of the top reasons, apart from its catchiness and inclusion of hip-hop heavy weights like Shwayze, that "Up All Night" is so ubiquitously appealing.

Along with local fame and tremendous reviews for his mixtape, Lagemann also had the opportunity to perform on Comcast Sports Net's "Chronicle Live" earlier this month. According to him, performing live to a televised audience was all that it is cracked up to be, and more.

"'Chronicle Live' was awesome. It was a blast getting to know the crew over there, and they showed us a really great time. Performing was a little nerve-wracking, but as the show went on I got into a rhythm and it ended up great," said Lagemann.

He may only be in college and is still a student of hip-hop, but who knows? Maybe in a few of years, we will see him in both the NFL and on the stage at Grammys.

—Roy Bisht and Anoop Galivanche