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Courtesy of Christine Ma

Counter-clockwise from upper left: Freshman Ian Burns and seniors Matt Murray and Ben Hinshaw line up at the starting block; the winners stand at the podium; Saratoga begins the relay race with speed. The fourth swimmer was sophomore Adam Hinshaw.

District weathers state crisis

by Jenny Zhang

As many schools across the state prepare to let teachers go and cut programs next year, SHS students will have much the same school experience as they had this year. Though bracing for additional cuts this summer, the Los Gatos Saratoga Union High School District (LGSUHSU) put together a balanced budget for next year that eliminates no staff and keeps classes roughly the same size as this year.

Adding to the problems schools face was the failure of Propositions 1A-E on the May 19 ballot. This will force the state legislature and Arnold Schwarzenegger to come together in Sacramento later on in June or July to do a budget adjustment and most likely make another cut to the categorical programs of schools, said LGSUHSU superintendent Cary Matsuoka.

"We're sending the budget problem to the governor and legislator group that isn't working very well," said Matsuoka. "So I don't have any hope that they'll fix the problem."

Currently, the only definite cuts made to the district budget have been in categorical funding: 15 percent this school year and 20 percent next school year. The school district has already absorbed the cuts made for this year, according to Matsuoka, but the 20 percent cut for next year was made based on a balanced budget the state built on the five propositions that did not pass.

see BUDGET CUTS, p. 3

NATIONAL RELAY RECORD BROKEN BY TOGA SWIMMERS

by Tim Rollinson

"We are going to go out there and crush that CCS record," senior Matt Murray said. "We are going to show Bellarmine and everyone else here that we are the best team in CCS."

This is the speech Murray gave to teammates senior Ben Hinshaw, sophomore Adam Hinshaw and freshman Ian Burns before the final event, the 4x100 freestyle relay, at the CCS meet on May 16. At that point, it was mathematically impossible for the Saratoga team to overcome the deficit, but what came next defied all predictions.

The relay team swam and beat the Bells in the 16-lap race in 3:00.68, a national record, crushing the previous record of 3:01.80 set in 1999 by Bolles

Academy of Florida.

Not only did the team beat the national record, but they also destroyed the CCS record of 3:03.27 set by Lynbrook in 1980. This was the oldest standing CCS record and former national record.

Coach Christian Bonner recalls laying out goals at the beginning of the year with the swimmers on the relay. Ben Hinshaw mentioned the possibility of breaking this record.

"I told some of my coaching colleagues that it was a goal of there's and they literally laughed," said Bonner. "I think I was the only one that didn't dismiss the thought because I knew how fast this group is."

Murray, who swam his 100 yards of the relay in 44.83 seconds, started off with a bang. As the leader of the relay,

Murray's regular start was considered a real 100-yard race, giving him the third fastest time 100-freestyle at the meet.

He was followed by Burns, who swam his leg in 45.45 seconds, A. Hinshaw who went third with a time of 46.35 seconds and B. Hinshaw, who anchored the relay swimming in 44.05 seconds, the second best relay split of the day behind current CCS record holder Shayne Fleming of Valley Christian.

Sports writer Emily Mason, from Swimming World Magazine speaking on the former record, said "[the former record holders] put themselves in the record books by crushing all relay performances, past and present. Their record hasn't even been threatened in [a decade]."

For a video of the record-setting swim visit www.saratogafalcon.org. ♦

FALCON FIGURES

10 The number of years the previous record set by Bolles Academy in Florida lasted.

3 The number of minutes in which Murray, Burns and the Hinshaws swam the 4x100.

5 Number of record-breaking events B. Hinshaw and M. Murray swam at finals.

Student poet wins award, national recognition

by Lauren Kuan and Pia Mishra

Like many students in high school, current senior Jason Huang experienced confusion in deciding which classes to select in high school. After completing English 9, Huang was encouraged to continue writing by poetry teacher Judith Sutton and moved on to take Poetry 1 his sophomore year. Huang, however, never could have imagined how much he could achieve in poetry, winning one of the most prestigious poetry prizes in the nation this year.

The Cult Award, the most prestigious award give by the California Federation

of Chaparral Poets, is reserved for the best overall poet in their annual nationwide poetry competition. The Cult Award has only been won once before by a Saratoga student. Huang said that he was surprised that he had won, especially since the poem he submitted, titled "Masterpiece", was written during his sophomore year.

Huang enjoyed his first year of poetry, but, he was unable to continue to Poetry 2 because of scheduling conflicts. In fact Huang was unable to fit poetry into his schedule again until second semester of senior year.

"I was planning on just relaxing second

semester, but then it turned out that I actually had to focus for class," said Huang.

When the deadline for the submissions came around, Huang picked what he felt were his top poems and submitted them to the contest. The poem was one about his younger brother, Vincent.

"I wasn't thinking too much about chances. I just submitted what I liked and hoped for the best," said Huang.

After winning awards in multiple categories, Huang said he hadn't expected to win. Much to his surprise, however, after travelling to Modesto to attend the California Federation of

Chaparral Poets convention, Huang was presented with the Cult Award.

"My mom told me that we were going to Modesto and I didn't really know why but I didn't say anything," said Huang. "By the time I was presented with the award, I realized that my mom had been in on it the whole time because she had already found out."

Sutton was not surprised, as Huang's talent had been clear from the start.

"Jason is a very talented young man and I was extremely proud when I had found out about the award," said Sutton. "This was not only an achievement for Jason, but an achievement for Saratoga as well." ♦



Huang

NEWS BRIEFS



The show won't go on: Oscars cancelled once again

For the second year in a row, the Saratoga Oscars has been canceled because of a lack of entries. Although the video class is visibly frustrated, one person is perhaps the most upset by this situation—senior Alex Ren, who had been looking forward to this event since the idea was formed last year.

For the past two months, teachers and announcements have informed students to submit their entries. Many teachers assign video projects, and therefore, Ren expected more submissions than those submitted.

Despite this, however, the entries will still be shown and feedback will be given, but not in a formal setting as previously intended. Awards will also be given to participating entries, and Ren expects them to receive the awards before the end of the year, including a gift certificate for participation.

Nonetheless, Ren believes that there will be more submissions in the coming years.

“With the emerging MAP program, I think that perhaps the event could be more successful next year,” said Ren.

Yearbook delayed due to publishing errors

The distribution of the school’s award-winning yearbook, *The Talisman*, was delayed past its scheduled release date of May 27 due to major errors on the part of the printer, Walsworth Publishing Company.

When more than 1,200 books arrived at the school on May 21, yearbook editors Shawn Cho, Sonali Dujari and Stacy Ku saw that eight content pages had not been printed, including half of the football spread, half the field hockey spread and others.

Although the yearbook staff was not very happy about the situation, yearbook adviser Mike Tyler was particularly disappointed to hear about this huge mistake.

“It was hugely disappointing that [the yearbook staff] spent hours working on the book and that they had a poor result,” said Tyler. “It was not [the yearbook staff’s] fault at all. Somebody in the yearbook plant at Missouri did not do their job correctly.”

Walsworth was extremely apologetic about the whole situation and agreed to reprint the book. The new date for distribution was scheduled for June 3.

Speaker inspires students at HeartSkate event

The Skating Club held its annual HeartSkate event at Logitech Ice Rink on May 24. It included a silent auction as well as skating.

According to senior club president Katie Wang, 60 people attended the event—more than last year.

Cardiac arrest survivor Jack Grogan appeared at the event and spoke about the importance of Automatic External Defibrillators (AED). Grogan was rushing to catch a United Airlines flight from Chicago to Hartford to see his family. The last thing he remembered was catching the plane was waking up in a hospital. On the plane, he had stopped breathing and his heart stopped beating. A flight attendant attached AED pads onto his chest. With just one shock, his heart was restarted. With more AEDs installed public places, Grogan believes more lives can be saved.

Wang said that the event went well, raising \$2,000 with donations still coming in.

The money goes to the American Heart Association, Heart Rhythm Foundation, Sudden Cardiac Arrest Association and the Global Ischemia Fund.

Doles awarded as Volunteer of the Year

At 6:00 a.m. on May 11, PTSO co-president Carolyn Doles was fixing breakfast for teacher appreciation week in the staff lounge when she received a call from superintendent Cary Matsuoka. Matsuoka told Doles she was given the award of Volunteer of the Year.

“He seemed to think the award was most befitting at that point,” said Doles, “since when he called to tell me, here I was volunteering that very moment!”

Principal Jeff Anderson nominated Doles. The new award will rotate between SHS and Los Gatos High School each year.

Doles has been heavily involved in Saratoga High for the past two years. Along with other events, she chaired a “Just Do It” Reception, helped start Safe Rides this year with students and was recently elected to School Site Council. Doles also was the primary helper for junior prom, coordinator for teacher appreciation and the hospitality chair for Career Day.

“All our parents give a lot to our school in many capacities,” said Doles. “We’re so lucky to have them as all these jobs take lots of effort.”

—by Uma Sambasivam, Girish Swaminath and Tiffany Tung



Amanda Yi

Sophomores Cid Diaz, Victor Zhang, Matt Cresci and Erin Wong place their votes for class officers and school site council representatives in the quad on May 22 with the help of members of the Election Commission.

ASB holds elections in quad

by Girish Swaminath and Tiffany Tung

There’s a first time for everything. This year was the first time in a decade that voting for ASB officers took place in the quad. Almost 300 students voted in the election.

Junior Haley Zarrin was elected president along with sophomore David Mandell as vice president, junior Annie Lee as treasurer, junior Cindy Chang as secretary and junior Natalie Tkalevic as board representative. The newly elected officers hope to increase participation and improve the school environment.

The ASB used the quad this year to set up optional voting booths instead of handing out ballots in classrooms. Zarrin was one of the current ASB members

who supported this change.

“The voting in the quad actually eliminated the people who randomly vote,” said Zarrin. “Only people who actually cared and took the time to vote.”

Zarrin said this system enhanced the efficiency and quality of the election process and gave

“There’s too little publicity and people don’t know about it.”

Elections for class officers and school site council representatives were on Friday, May 22.

The senior class elected Mady Renalds as president, Chelsea Sabella as vice president, Ameeka Shenoy as treasurer, Aveena Shenoy as secretary, Stephanie Borsum and Brian Kim as class representatives. Junior class officers will be Tim Rollinson, Michelle Wang, Pamela Lee, Jay Lee and Chris Chung. Sophomore class officers Izzy Albert, Anika Jhalmi, Krishnan Raman, Vasha Ramesh, Shivani Chadha and Nicole Shaman were chosen.

School site council representatives will be junior Jan Iyer, sophomores Synthia Ling and Pia Mishra and freshman Anshu Siripurapu. ♦

“A lot of people will vote for you in class, but they won’t go out of their way and vote for you [in the quad].”

—junior Cindy Chang

students a better understanding of how voting really works.

Others, such as Chang, however, disliked the new method.

“A lot of people will vote for you in class, but they won’t go out of their way and vote for you [in the quad],” said Chang.

Joint art show showcases local talents

by Nandini Ruparel

When junior Madeline Rothenberg arrived at the Los Gatos and Saratoga High School Art Show on May 17 with her mom, she was surprised by the congratulations people gave her. She had arrived a little bit late and had missed the awards ceremony. Soon enough, however, she found out that she had won first place in the ceramics division of the art show.

“I was really surprised, because I didn’t even know that I was a competitor,” Rothenberg said. She won the award for a blue and rainbow-colored sculpture.

The Los Gatos and Saratoga High School Art Show took place from May 7-29, showcasing the combined works of students from both schools. It was held at the Los Gatos Mu-

seum. On May 14, an awards ceremony gave prizes to the students for their work. Divisions included painting, drawing, photography, ceramics and sculpture. This was the first time the event had occurred in nine years.

Participants from Saratoga High came from art classes, including Art 1 and 2, advanced art, digital photography, and ceramics.

Multiple Saratoga students took home prizes, including senior Cynlie Wang, who also won first prize for drawing. Third prize went to Yvette Young, from Saratoga High. In photography, senior Ekaterina Alexandrova won first prize and Los Gatos High student Lucy Dill placed first in painting.

The first prize in the sculpture category was awarded to the Saratoga and Los Gatos

Collaboration Project, a magnificent work of art piece created by six Saratoga students and 13 Los Gatos students who worked in conjunction to construct the sculpture. According to sophomore Emi Ichikawa, who worked on the project, the sculpture is a collage of different pieces of clay, color, and glaze. It will be a permanent art fixture in the Los Gatos Museum.

“It was fun working on the project,” said sophomore Nikki Fukuda, who worked on the project as well. “We stayed in our bubble and they stayed in theirs, though.”

Thanks to the success of the event, teachers plan to continue the event for many to come.

“We’re hoping this is an ongoing thing now,” said art teacher Leah Aguayo. “We are hoping that we can do it next year.” ♦

Speech and debate sends students to states

by Karthik Annaamalai and Vijay Menon

The speech and debate season came to a close as the team competed in the California State Tournament in Culver City from April 24-26. The club sent three members from a team of over 30 participants—juniors Varun Parmar and Saniha Shankar in Student Congress and sophomore David Mandell in Humorous Interpretation.

The three earned their bids by winning in a competitive qualifying tournament.

Although none of the debaters managed to go past the preliminary rounds, speech and debate members were pleased with the season as a whole.

“Everyone has worked hard all season, and I’m proud of our entire team,” said team captain Farid Jiandani.

Mandell missed breaking to the semi-final round by only one point.

“I can’t believe I did not get to advance to the next round because of one point,”

said Mandell. “I thought that my performance was one of my best this year, but I guess it wasn’t good enough for the judges.”

Mandell, who is only in his first year of speech, is looking to build on his success heading into next year.

“I know that I can do better next year,” said Mandell. “Naturally it took me some time to get adjusted since it was my first year. But next year, that’s a whole different story.”

Shankar and Parmar were slightly disappointed with their performances, but they hope to improve in their senior year, which will be their last opportunity to attend states.

“The results might not have reflected our abilities, but going to states was a

great experience in itself, and I can’t wait for next year,” said Shankar.

Coach Erick Rector was happy with his team’s performance and hopes the success carries into next year.

“I was proud of our kids,” said Rector. “I think many of the results were based on judging preference rather than student performance, which is unfortunate.”

As the team looks ahead to the next debate season, they will likely have to adapt to many coaching changes.

Because the team depends upon college students as coaches, many will not be able to continue their commitment into next year, and Rector is looking for new coaches to fill the vacancies for the team.

“The majority of our student coaches

will not be able to continue with us next year,” said Rector. “I’m currently in the process of looking for new coaches, and I will be back next year.”

Speech and debate has been hampered by constant coaching changes over the last several years and this instability has made it difficult for the team to match the success of such powerhouse schools as Bellarmine and Leland.

While Rector does not envision such success in the upcoming year, he feels that the team is headed in the right direction and will prosper with good coaching.

One idea that Rector has for next year is collaboration between the drama department and members of the speech team.

“[Mandell] is an example of someone who came from drama and did really well in his first year of speech,” said Rector. “I’m hoping that we can build off of that for next year.”

With the right combination of luck and talent, Rector hopes that the team’s success will continue into next year. ♦

BUDGET CUTS | School surviving the storm

continued from p. 1

This leads Matsuoka to believe there will be future cuts in categorical funding. Even if the state decides to cut 20 percent from the categorical budget of LGSUHSD, the district will still be able to make ends meet, he said.

As a Basic Aid District, LGSUHSD will not be affected as heavily by state cuts as will some other school districts in the state because only 15 percent of the \$36.8 million district budget for the next school year comes from state and federal categorical funding. The remaining, majority portion comes from local property taxes.

The district monitors property tax collections closely, especially looking ahead to next year, said Matsuoka. Although property prices have not decreased, property sales in Saratoga and Los Gatos have dropped, slowing down district income.

“[Our property tax income] didn’t grow as fast as we’d like,” said Matsuoka. “We’ve adjusted our income growth projections for next year, [but] it’s putting pressure on balancing the budget for next school year.”

In order to help balance the district budget, Saratoga and Los Gatos High will be taking a cut in their School and Library Improvement Program (SIP)/Block Grant categorical funds. This money may be used for any department but has traditionally been used for staff development. Next school year, SHS and LGHS will be getting \$40,000 and \$50,000, respectively, in their SIP/Block grants, which is significantly lower than the \$96,503 and \$127,923 they received respectively for the current ‘08-’09 school year.

LGSUHSD will not be affected as heavily by state cuts as will some other school districts in the state.

Since the district has an unprecedented flexibility next year in the use of categorical funds, it will combine previously separate funds in an effort to maintain a balanced budget. Matsuoka said funding will be cut back on some technology, and there is currently no money being set aside for new textbooks.

Another income source that will help the school in the current budget crisis is the economic stimulus package signed into law by President Barack Obama on Feb. 17.

The amount the district will receive could be as much as \$400,000, but a portion of this one-time money will be used to supplement special educational programs and other categorical programs with midyear cuts in funding, according to Matsuoka.

The remaining portion will be used to cover any future cuts rather than spending it on new items.

On a hopeful note to students, and contrary to earlier indications, the 20:1 student-teacher ratio for freshman English and algebra I classes will still be in place for next year, which reflects the district’s top priority to keep the cuts from hurting classes.

For teachers, some funding has been cut. Staff development days that take place in August before the start of the school year, also known as “buy-back days,” will no longer be funded by state categorical funds.

Although Matsuoka fully expects future cuts in categorical funds later this summer, it will be too late to make changes.

“We have a budget plan for next year based on the current information,” said Matsuoka. “I can’t build a budget on what somebody’s going to do in July or August.” ♦

FALCON FIGURES

Budget Cuts

15 The percent of the categorical budget cut this year.

\$40,000 The amount of money SHS will be getting in block grants next year.

\$96,503 The amount of money SHS received in block grants this year.

\$400,000 the amount the district could receive with the economic stimulus package signed by President Barak Obama.

—by Jordan Waite

Falcon Photo of the Week | by Felix Tuan



Courtesy of Felix Tuan

Sophomore David Mandell and juniors Maggie Lin, Sonia Siganporia, Cindy Chang, Haley Zarrin, Natalie Tkalevic and Annie Lee flaunt their outrageous costumes for ASB initiation day on May 22.

‘Court of dreams’ to be ready for players next school year

by Karthik Sreedhara

It was April 2007 when girls’ basketball coach Mike Davey first strolled across a promotion for the “Sport Court” at the NCAA Division I Men’s Basketball Final Four while chatting with his father, then-Santa Clara University head coach Dick Davey.

At that moment, the solution to several years of gym space issues and overlapping seasons for SHS basketball and volleyball players hit him: right then he knew the school had to build the “Court of Dreams.”

“We have a lot of kids who want to play at lunch and after school, and there is no place to play,” said Davey. “There are also seasons that overlap to a certain extent of volleyball, basketball and badminton.”

The “Court of Dreams” will be built next to the track, behind the scoreboard, adjacent to Herriman Avenue. The construction is planned to start in late July and be finished by the beginning of the next school year.

The school initially estimated the cost of the courts to be \$100,000 but the cost has been finalized at about \$400,000 for

two courts.

Part of the money was funded by the school and Saratoga Sports Boosters and the remainder was fundraised by Davey.

Davey believes that the courts will not only be advantageous to the teams themselves, but also to the physical education classes and the community.

“The courts are also for people in the community who want to come over any time during the week and just play,” said Davey. “It will be open to the public.”

He feels that the courts will enhance the look of the school, replacing the “ugly area of dirt in the front of the school.”

In addition, the Sport Court is a much cheaper alternative of building a new gym.

He hopes that with the courts, the McAfee Center, a new Media Arts building, new weight rooms and the planned remodeling of the front of the school, SHS will fulfill its “vision of a modern and state-of-the-art school.”

Davey believes it will specifically help basketball players because it will give them more time to practice and they will not have to worry about space conflicts with other sports teams. ♦

SARATOGA MAKES HISTORY AT HISTORY DAY

by Alicia Lee and Maggie Lin

While most juniors were taking their SATs the morning of May 2, juniors Cindy Chang, Layla Daryan, Vicki Ni, Karen Wai, Erika Ye and Haley Zarrin were in Sacramento, serving up a hot slice of history.

The Constitutional Rights Foundation hosted its annual History Day Competition on May 2.

AP United States history and world geography teacher Matt Torrens calls History Day "a research project hosted by the national competition of research projects," emphasizing the seriousness and degree of work done for the project.

This year's theme was "The Individual in History: Actions and Legacies." Students chose a topic, made a thesis and used a project to prove their point. The competition is offered to students in fourth through 12th grade.

Categories for projects includ-

ed writing a historical paper, exhibit, performance, documentary and web site. Judging was based on three categories: historical quality, adherence to theme and quality of presentation.

Getting students motivated

Although Saratoga High had the best results this year out of the six years the school has participated, Torrens still deals with problems of motivation.

"[Turnout] has always been low. It's because I only teach juniors and freshmen and it's difficult for freshmen to write a history research paper in geography," said Torrens. "The juniors I teach are all taking my AP class along with others so they're stretched pretty thin. If I didn't offer extra credit, no one would do it."

Finding time to work

For the participants, their schedules were already filled with academics and other extracurricular activities, making it difficult to spend time on their

projects.

Daryan and Zarrin chose to do a group competition together and put a lot of work into their exhibit about architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

Chang, on the other hand, opted for an individual project on famed photographer George Eastman, a decision she made while flipping through a photo album.

"I was tired of doing school-work one day and decided to look through some photo albums," said Chang. "I remember back then, when my mom would use her bulky black Kodak camera to take pictures instead of the digital cameras we have today, and started feeling nostalgic."

She decided to further her interest by researching the history of photography and why people use it to record their memories. After searching the internet, she finally decided on George Eastman.

Chang, like Daryan and Zarrin, dedicated significant time to her project and had to deal

THE BIG IDEA | History Day

WHO: Six juniors from teacher Matt Torrens' AP United States History classes.

WHAT: The annual History Day Competition. Students create projects—historical paper, exhibit, performance, documentary and website.

WHERE: Sacramento, CA

RESULTS: All reach semi-finals, one runner-up for semifinals.

with her own set of challenges.

Originally, Chang had planned on writing a research paper but switched to doing an exhibit. It took her many sleepless nights to make the display board, especially since she had to remake it because it was too heavy the first time.

Getting past the obstacles

At many other schools, especially in Southern California, teachers are greatly involved with the process, with school districts heavily funding the competition. Students here, how-

ever, are much more independent.

"I just did very, very little as far as guiding them and I let them come to their own conclusions and make their own presentations," said Torrens. "All things considered, our kids were able to compete really well as all three groups competed strongly in the [most popular] exhibits category."

Hard work paid off for Chang as she was chosen for semifinals, making her a potential candidate for the final round to participate in the national competition. However, after the next round where judges reviewed the semifinal group again, Chang was not selected to move onto nationals.

"I thought I had done a good job, but didn't expect to make it into the semifinal round just because there were so many other really good displays," Chang said. "Although I didn't make it to nationals, I'm satisfied." ♦

Chess team takes fifth consecutive state title

by Amalie MacGowan

Standing at the podium while holding the State championship trophy has become almost routine for the SHS Chess Team. This year, the team walked away with their fifth consecutive championship against much competition.

On May 2 and 3 the SHS Chess Club participated in the CalChess State Scholastic Championships.

"The nearly empty ballroom rocked from the enthusiasm as the team members jumped on stage," said Michael Aigner, who coaches many of the players over the Internet while living in Davis. "Although it was the fifth straight championship, it meant a lot more to everyone."

Several individual team members also won trophies, with junior Charles Sun taking 4th place, freshman Brian Wai placing 7th, incoming freshman Evan Ye in 10th, senior Jeff Young, last year's co-champion,

came in 13th and Sankash Shankar finished in 17th.

Although Ye, Wai and Shankar were newcomers to the championship, they contributed to three of the top five individual scores for the team.

"For the first time in about four years, Saratoga was not favored to win the High School Championship," said Sun. "Mission San Jose was top seed this year and we were wary of the competition. Although, before the last round, we almost knew for certain we had the state title."

According to assistant coach, 2008 alum David Chock, it doesn't take a huge budget or lots of equipment to form a good team. A good chess team can come from anywhere, and it isn't easy to tell where the next top team will be from.

"[This competition] was a great learning experience," said Ye. "It was really cool to beat the toughest competitor."

Although the students came in with slightly lowered expectations, they inadvertently pulled



courtesy of Stayton Chock

Junior Charles Sun, senior Jeff Young, freshman Sankash Shankar, freshman Evan Ye, sophomore Amol Aggarwal and freshman Brian Wai take their trophy for their fifth straight championship.

out on top.

"This is the fifth consecutive win, meaning that a whole high school generation has elapsed since the first win," said Chock. "That makes this states win especially sweet."

Most of the players have been playing chess since at least

seventh grade, and the team hopes to recruit more students from Redwood Middle School to become part of the team as they move on to high school.

Next year, the team will lose some of its key members to graduation, including Young, Alex Lun and Avinash Kumar,

but this doesn't discourage the team.

"We learned that we're still a strong team despite graduating seniors," said Sun. "I have high hopes for next year and believe we will still be a major contender for the state title in years to come." ♦

Poetry students earn national recognition

by Lauren Kuan and Pia Mishra

In the recent National Youth Poetry Contest, 14 of Saratoga's poets from the Creative Writing: Poetry class won top prizes in multiple categories. The poets won more prizes than any other school in the nation, a great accomplishment for the poetry program.

The contest is sponsored by the California Federation of Chaparral Poets, Inc., the oldest and largest poetry organization in California.

Although the CFCP is a statewide organization, the contest was held nationwide.

Seniors Sarah Tang, Raphael Kung, Steven McLellan, Connie Shang, Kara Wang and junior Flora Chang all won top prizes in this contest. Seniors Jason Huang and Sarah Tang placed first and second respectively in the Roscoe Fortson Memorial Award which focused on the topic "I Remember."

The results came as a surprise for most of the poetry students. "At first I thought it was only a state thing; so when I won first

place, I wasn't too excited," said Huang, "but when I found out it was against the whole nation, I was really proud of myself."

Students first submitted their poems on Feb. 28; however, results were not announced until April 24.

The competition was judged by the members of the CFCP organization.

"The poets work very hard throughout the year; they learn to turn writing into an art—thus come the awards of which they are well deserving," said poetry teacher Judith Sutton. ♦

STAFF TRANSITIONS

Teachers retire, switch schedule assignments for the 2009-2010 school year

Page, Bingham to retire from SHS

by Mira Chaykin and Rebecca Nguyen

At the end of this school year, students will not only have to say goodbye to the seniors but also to retiring English teacher Paul Page and math teacher Larry Bingham. Both have decided to leave SHS in pursuit of relaxation and other passions.

Page taught music, journalism and English part time

Page, who has been at SHS since 1973, previously worked as both the music director and the journalism advisor.

He is an honored member of the English department and will be missed tremendously when he moves on.

"I knew he would retire one of these days, but I am still very saddened," said English teacher Cathy Head.

Although Page can be considered one of the older English teachers, he is usually the first to supplement new technology.

"He's been the flag bearer for technological innovation in our department," said Head.

Page plays podcasts in his class and was the first user of *www.turnitin.com*. He was also a pioneer in having a teacher website, which includes vocabulary lists, Internet forms of books, study techniques and other features.

"He tries new things, whether it be a teaching technique, an electronic gizmo, or travel on foot to the bottom of the Grand Canyon or a foreign country," said English teacher Kerry Mohnike.

After he retires, he plans to read all the books he could not during his teaching career for lack of time.

"He is the model of a life-long learner," said Mohnike. "He has

been a great mentor to me in a myriad of ways."

Page has always valued the education of his students and he will miss them the most when he retires.

"Kids that are excited about learning get me up in the morning. I come for the students that like to come to school and like to learn and expand their horizons," said Page.

In addition to going through his reading list, Page plans to maintain focus on being a musical composer and spending more time with his family.

"I have three grandchildren that I spend an awful lot of time with, so I can be even more involved with them," said Page.

His grandchildren will be pleased, but the Saratoga High staff will miss him.

"He's a fantastic, versatile and talented man. Saratoga High has been lucky to have him."

—English teacher Judith Sutton

Bingham follows his dreams

Bingham, who will retire from teaching mathematics after teaching eight years at Saratoga High in addition to a total of 30 years at Branham, Blackford, and Lee, has plans to take classes at Sacramento City College to become a conductor engineer.

"I've always been fascinated with railroads," said Bingham. "From a little kid building railroads to taking my kids to see railroads, I just enjoy it."

Even through his career as a teacher, Bingham's fascination with

railroads has been a prevalent part of his life such as volunteering to drive antique trolleys in historical San Jose.

Unfortunately, being a railroad engineer requires a massive time commitment, so Bingham had to make the choice to stop teaching full time.

"I plan on teaching summer school instead of subbing if I can, so that I have a class to teach," said Bingham. "That way I'll still be involved."

There is no doubt that Bingham will leave a significant gap to fill.

"It's just wonderful to have someone like that in the department who's willing to teach whatever needs to be taught and you can always count on him to do a good job," said math teacher Audrey War-muth. "He will be missed."

One of his most important contributions to the math department was his organizational ability, which was useful at the beginning of each new school year.

"We don't know how we will cope without him because we try to ignore the fact that he is not coming back next year," said math teacher Seema Patel.

Like Page, Bingham will be missed for the diversity he brought to his respective department.

"He has a lot to offer outside of just teaching," said Patel. "He's passionate about teaching and still passionate about having a life. There's a lot to learn from Mr. Bingham."

Bingham will continue to follow his passions through his retirement, mainly by pursuing his railroad ambitions.

"Life is a bunch of phases. I'm just entering a new phase," said Bingham. "It's a little bit scary, but it's always exciting. So we'll see how it goes." ♦

—math teacher Seema Patel

THE BIG PICTURE

RETIRING



Math teacher Larry Bingham



English teacher Paul Page

BEING ADDED



Year II MAP



Environmental Science A.P.

GOING PART TIME/FULL TIME



Physics teacher Bill Drennan Part Time



Physics/Business teacher Kirk Davis Full Time

—by Tiffany Tung

Faculty prepares to adapt to new classes on campus

by Pia Mishra

The addition of new classes has caused several teachers to shift their schedules in order to accommodate new classes for next year.

The science department will be experiencing some major changes in an effort to fit the new AP classes into its schedule. Chemistry and physics teacher Jenny Garcia will no longer be teaching physics in order to cover an open biology class previously taught by Kristen Thomson, who will teach AP Environmental Science.

"It has been tough trying to fit in the new class and moving around the teachers, but it's something we have to do to accommodate the new classes," said Garcia.

Physics teacher Bill Drennan is also preparing to switch to part time for the 2009-2010 year and physics teacher

Kirk Davis, who currently works part time, is preparing to make the transition into a full-time job.

Besides the science department, math is rearranging its staff as well with math teacher Larry Bingham retiring next year.

Math teacher Debra Troxell will be teaching a new AP Computer Science A course in addition to her current Computer Science class. This course will be in between the difficulty of the AP Computer Science AB class and the regular level course.

The media arts program will be acquiring history teachers Kim Anzalone and Margarita Lozano to teach MAP history classes at the junior level. English teachers Cathy Head and Kerry Mohnike will be teaching MAP English classes as well. The English department is also expecting two new teachers next year to pick up classes. ♦

Former SHS administrator named Los Gatos principal

by Ben Clement

In early April, the Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District announced that former SHS assistant-principal Markus Autrey will be replacing Doug Ramezane as principal at Los Gatos High School next year.

Autrey was hired at Saratoga High in 2005 by principal Jeff Anderson.

After a little more than a year at Saratoga, Autrey left to become the head of the guidance department at LGHS. Having worked in the district for only a little over three years, Autrey is excited to assume his new position.

"It's a great opportunity for me and I'm honored to be given the chance to work with this staff and the students of Los Gatos High School," said Autrey.

Autrey's experience at Saratoga High and with Anderson also bodes for a better, more cooperative LG-Saratoga relationship.



Autrey

"I'm very excited about it," said Anderson. "I think he will be a very strong principal for Los Gatos, which is great for them and the fact that he used to work at Saratoga will hopefully make for more involved relations between the schools."

Anderson is also hopeful of more collaboration between the staffs as well as more student interaction.

"Saratoga and Los Gatos, beyond the differences of the schools, are really two different cities, and it's really easy to sort of ignore each other and do our own thing," said Anderson. "But there's a number of things that I think it would be fun to collaborate on." ♦

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FALCONFOCUS

Yim institutes changes to improve Math Club

by Albert Gu
and Anna Shen

Some students may not realize a math club exists on campus. Fortunately for all the math lovers out there, math teacher PJ Yim is attempting to change that.

Although a newcomer to the school this year, Yim has taken on the responsibility of being the math club's adviser. Rather than doing the bare minimum of letting students use his room, Yim does his best to play a significant role as a mentor, leading to the math club's success in distinguishing itself as containing some of the best mathematicians in the country.

"At first, I tried teaching [the club] math tricks and stuff, but I think they got the impression that it was becoming another class, so later I just became a support role and an advising, mentoring role," said Yim. "I'm trying to be the kind of math club adviser I wish I had."

In the past, the math club simply participated in math competitions

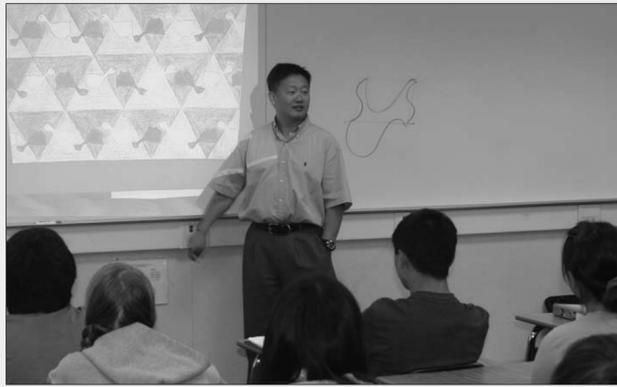
and did not do very much more than that. Meetings were sporadic, and few people showed up. To change this, Yim spent several months pushing the club to develop better communication and a more structure, in order to encourage more members to join.

"When I first showed up [at SHS], there were several kids that were really, really bright, but they were a collection of individuals," said Yim. "They were socially inept and couldn't get along really well. My main emphasis is team—never individual goals, but the team aspect."

Yim instituted major changes, such as assigning new officer positions, organizing meetings every Friday after school and developing new fundraisers, such as selling Krispy Kreme donuts by the dozen.

"[Yim] visually transformed the math club," said sophomore David Wang, an active participant of the math club. "[The club] has become a lot more organized and consistent, and he enticed more people to become interested in math."

Yim wants to guide members to break free of stereotypes that have dogged them, like "math geek" and "nerd."



Jordan Waite

Math teacher PJ Yim goes over problems with his geometry class.

"I would like to kill that stereotype," said Yim. "I think very soon people will start seeing that they're not just math geniuses who can't look people in the eye. They could be viewed as the leaders of Saratoga High School and represent our school."

In the future, Yim wants to see club members as people who are more than calculus whizzes or geometry geniuses. Instead, he genuinely hopes that the math club will inspire students to become

strong leaders and take advantage of new opportunities.

"In high school, [I] never had the opportunity to organize and stuff, and that's something that I personally liked," said Yim. "I get a lot of joy [out] of looking at [the members] being the leaders that [they] are. I also want to ensure that students make use of the even better opportunities offered out there compared to when I was in high school." ♦

CLOSER YOGURTLAND, CHIPOTLE LOCATIONS OPEN

by Tim Rollinson

Two popular restaurants have expanded to new locations closer to campus. Yogurtland opened a new location in the Westgate West shopping center while a Chipotle Mexican Grill is slated to open just across the street on the corner of Saratoga Avenue and Prospect Road.

New Yogurtland closer to campus

Last December, Yogurtland opened in Cupertino, drawing out-the-door lines. This year, the popular frozen yogurt bar held an official grand opening of its new Saratoga location on April 10, and the new location was also welcomed by large crowds.

"I have already been there four times since it opened," said sophomore Kaitna Shankar. "[Yogurtland] is truly amazing, especially because it is closer."

Many students used to go to Cupertino merely to eat at Yogurtland. They mainly love its self-serve style and low prices. It offers a wide variety of toppings including candy, cereal and fruit. Some of the yogurt flavors offered include vanilla wafer cookies and cream, New York cheesecake and taro.

"It is awesome having a Yogurtland so close now," said Shankar. "Also, it costs 30 cents an ounce, which is extremely reasonable."

The new location is only eight minutes from the Saratoga High campus as opposed to the 10 to 12 minute trip to the Cupertino location.

"It is a lot more convenient now,"

said sophomore Arianna Paranzino. "Before it took forever to drive all the way to Sunnyvale, but now it's barely even a trip."

Chipotle gives students more options

Chipotle is opening a restaurant in the shopping center across the street from the new Yogurtland. However, the plaza has seen many different restaurants come and go, which makes junior Kirin Kumar question the location.

"It seems like everything in that shopping center goes out of business, but maybe Chipotle will bring in more people to the whole center," said Kumar.

Although the location is two miles closer to campus than its counterpart, some students say they will continue to visit the current hotspot on Saratoga Sunnyvale Road.

"I'm used to the old one," said junior Victor Wong. "I will probably try out the new one, but I think I will stick to what I'm used to."

Others couldn't be happier about the new establishment.

"Chipotle is even closer now," said sophomore Chris Chung. "It will make the other store less crowded."

Upperclassmen will also have more time to go to Chipotle and back during lunch, which allows students to have a relaxing lunch.

"I can take more time going to Chipotle now," said junior Joey Persico. "There is less of a need to rush and get there, so I am much less likely to get a speeding ticket now." ♦



Jordan Waite

Top to bottom: Customers help themselves to frozen yogurt at Yogurtland; a "soon" sign hangs in front of the shopping center in Saratoga where Chipotle is set to open.

Seniors direct end of year drama shows, host 'Night of the Stars'

by Pia Mishra

Drama student senior James Arroyo is used to being on stage acting. Recently, though, he was one of several students to have the opportunity to try out the director's chair and gain experience from behind the scenes.

Students directed the Children's Show in April and more recently showcased talents in "Kaboom!" Traditionally, the seniors in Drama 4 Honors have a set of "senior shows" directed

by seniors as their last mark in the drama department. This year, drama teacher Chris Mahle decided to change the schedule and split the senior-directed shows throughout the year. The majority of seniors had directed their shows during the Children's Shows and Arroyo finished off with his self-directed show, "The Flying Doctor."

"Kaboom!" was a series of small plays put together and performed in the Little Theater. The plays took place on May 15 and 16 and drew sizeable crowds

as there was no entrance fee. "I had a great time directing my show. It really gave me a great perspective on what it's like working behind the scenes," said Arroyo.

Arroyo was in charge of casting, directing and making sure the show ran smoothly.

"James definitely did a great job casting the parts. Jay Lee was fantastic for his part," said sophomore Joyee Woodrow.

The mini-plays appealed to a greater number of students with a more immature dialogue than

previous shows.

"The shows were interesting because they were short but still funny," said Woodrow. "There were some things they said that might have been awkward for the parents, but it was hilarious for the students."

The shows took about four weeks to prepare but showcased much of the drama department's talent.

Apart from "Kaboom!", the drama department hosted the "Night of the Stars" on May 22. The drama department recog-

nized many of its outstanding students, awarding titles such as Best Supporting Actress and Actor, Best Dramatic Actress and Actor and Best Comedic Actress and Actor. There were also acts performed in between each award, selected by various members of the drama department.

"It was really fun to see the people I knew win the awards," said sophomore Kaitna Shankar. "It was great to see people who worked so hard through the year achieve what they deserved." ♦

Concerts wrap up year

by Kavya Nagarajan

The music department recently hosted its annual Pancake Breakfast to treat the community with pancakes, sausages and music while raising money for Music Boosters.

The event took place on May 3. The SHS orchestra, band and choir performed, along with the Redwood Middle School band, color guard and choir.

The quad was packed as hundreds watched the performance while enjoying breakfast. This was band and orchestra teacher John Zarco's last pancake breakfast before he moves to Minnesota this summer to begin a PhD program.

"I've known some of them for four years now, and we're like a big family," said Zarco. "I'm really going to miss everyone a lot."

The various choirs also recently competed in CMEA (California Music Educators Association). Three judges evaluated

the women's choir, concert choir and chamber choir as they performed pieces that they have been preparing since the beginning of the year. The competition also includes several pieces the choirs had to sight read. All three choirs scored above 90, on a scale out of 100.

"It was fun and successful because we've worked so hard," said junior Evelyn Tang, a member of the concert choir.

As the school year comes to a close, the music department has also put on several concerts in the past few weeks to wrap up the year. The choir featured their talents in the Spring Concert on May 20.

The choir students and the band students also performed at Madrona Cemetery on May 25 for Memorial Day. The band and orchestra had their final concerts on May 28 and 29 to conclude the year.

"We've worked so hard this entire year," said Zarco. "Now that it's done it feels good to have gotten through another successful year." ♦



Jordan Waite

Senior Mara Couch performs at the band concert on May 28. The band and orchestra had their final concerts on May 28 and 29 to conclude the year.

Benefit concert planned

by Kavya Nagarajan

Four music students are preparing a benefit concert scheduled to occur next fall. Juniors Cindy Chang, Kevin Hsu, Annie Ting and Claire Chu have been working to put together a show they hope will occur in the McAfee Center on Sept. 3.

Currently, only the four organizers are scheduled to perform; however, they are hoping to feature other students in the concert. The lineup right now includes a piano trio, a string quartet, a duet and some solo pieces. Although the program appears to focus on classical music, organizers are hoping to incor-

porate a variety of music styles.

"We've always thought music was a gift and, looking around us, we've realized just how lucky we are to be able to play our instruments and share music with other people," said Chang.

The concert was arranged in hope of a way to "document our achievements on our instruments, and to use it as an opportunity to give back to our community," according to Chang.

The benefactor for the concert still hasn't been chosen, but Chang says a decision will be made soon. Money may go to the SHS music department or possibly even to victims of the Australian Wildfires. ♦



courtesy of Charmaine Ng

Junior Kevin Yao helps out at the car wash on May 16, which was planned by juniors Rita Chen and Charmaine Ng. They raised over \$1,000 for their service project.

Section leader hopefuls give back to community

by Kavya Nagarajan

For the first time, band section leader hopefuls are expected to not only submit their applications, but give back to their community as well.

Juniors Rita Chen and Charmaine Ng worked together to organize a car wash at the Valero gas station on De Anza Blvd. on May 16 for their project. They raised over \$1,000, which will go towards buying plexi-glass sheets to hold down sheet music during practice.

The numbers of students applying to be a leader in each section may vary, but the total number of applicants is around 30.

Each applicant must complete a

service project in addition to an application, which will be evaluated by band and orchestra director Michael Boitz.

"I think our car wash was really successful," said Ng, who is applying to be leader of the baritone section. "But we still don't know who will get the position."

Junior Felix Chiu, who is also applying to be a section leader for the clarinet section, created a wagon that carried basic necessities for band practice. Chiu said that it's "sort of like a first aid kit that they can take to practices. If anyone ever needs anything, like a reed, the wagon will have extras."

Chiu has already turned in his application but said that he is nervous because he is being judged against about 10 other potential section leaders. ♦

Music department plans Europe trip for summer

by Kavya Nagarajan

The music department is taking a group of about 240 students from the choir, band and orchestra to Europe for two weeks this summer, from July 6 to July 20.

This trip only takes place once every three years, so many students signed up as soon as they had the opportunity to. Parents and school administrators will accompany the students, making the size of the group about 300.

"I think it will be a lot of fun," said sophomore Kaitna Shankar. "It will be my first time traveling outside of the country without my parents, and I'll learn how to be independent and responsible."

The trip's cost totals to about \$4,000 per traveler, and the instruments will be insured either by the school or by homeowners insurance. They will visit Zurich, Switzerland; Interlaken, Switzerland; Salzburg, Austria; Vienna, Austria;

Schladming, Austria; and Munich, Germany. Apart from evening concerts at Casino Kursaal, Murzzuschlag Church and the Dachstein-Tauern Halle, the group will also be competing in several music festivals such as the Vienna International Youth and Music Festival, the Mid Europe Festival and the Jungfrau Festival.

Also, they will have a chance to personally explore the cities they will be visiting. Choir teacher Jim Yowell, along with band and orchestra teacher Michael Boitz and music secretary Janet Verson, have spent much time organizing this trip to ensure that the students will enjoy it. They have planned several guided tours so that the students not only get to see the different countries, but learn about them as well.

"I think it's a really good opportunity for us," said junior Joshua Liu. "We could perform in festivals here, but by going to Europe, we get to experience different cultures and have a chance to see another part of the world." ♦

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BARACK



Media coverage creates celebrity out of President

by Karen Lyu

As soon as word leaked that first lady Michelle Obama shopped at J. Crew, the clothing conglomerate's website was attacked by online shoppers. Images of shirtless Barack Obama in Hawaii can be found by simply Googling the terms "Obama" and "beach," thanks to the crazed paparazzi who followed the family on a vacation. The New York Post's Dec. 23 issue had a front page dedicated to the in-shape president with the same shirtless pictures, stating "The sun glinted off chiseled pectorals sculpted during four weightlifting sessions each week, and a body toned by regular treadmill

runs and basketball games." Merry Early Christmas, Obama fans. On Jan. 20, America inaugurated former U.S. Sen. Obama as her first African-American president. Although Obama's presidency is no doubt momentous for a variety of reasons, it is unnecessary for the world to follow the first family as if they were Brad and Angelina. The ridiculous coverage began before Obama was even elected and has now proliferated further, spreading to the rest of the family. It is more important to inform people of Obama's work in the White House than to discuss his well-toned abs. Some media are devoting their Obama-related coverage to the personal life of the first family,

seemingly pushing the far more important political aspect to the side. The Obamas seem to be embracing their popularity and sometimes taking it too far. Obama is the first president to ever appear on "The Tonight Show" and Michelle Obama is the second First Lady to appear on the cover of Vogue magazine. This is sending the wrong message. The media do nothing for the U.S. if they continue to report on the first family's daily lives. All the publicity will instead influence the Obamas in a negative way. There is a limit to how much of the Obamas' lives should be covered and how much of a celebrity status they have. When Obama and his vice president take a burger break

and the lunch date ends up being reported on to the preciseness of exactly what they ordered and in what fashion they ordered in, the "news" broadcast becomes laughable. Michelle Obama hopes for her daughters to live as normal as a life as possible but while dolls are made to idolize the two first daughters and the paparazzi follows the two to school, her hopes are thrown out the window. The world is watching the steps the new President and the First Lady will take. The media should publicize stories on how the presidential couple is performing to resolve the problems they have inherited instead of focusing on distracting stories that are irrelevant. ♦

AROUND THE CLOCK

Obama should beat around the bush

by Nandini Ruparel

When President Barack Obama went to Europe this year, he did so with a mission: to reconcile America and the European countries that have often been at odds in recent years. He said, "There have been times when America has shown arrogance and been dismissive..." This, coupled with bowing to the Saudi Arabian king, has made it seem our president has set himself up for criticism from the country by looking weak in front of our allies. However, Obama is doing the right thing. George W. Bush strained in Europe,

as a result of his foreign policy. The U.S. is viewed as a bully, and that impression can be damaging.

In times of need, one turns to their friends for help. Without allies supporting us, it will be difficult for us to prosper. Obama is doing whatever he can to rectify America's mistakes.

Obama is doing whatever he can to rectify America's mistakes.

Acknowledging one's past errors is necessary but is only the first step. Now it is important for us to act upon our promises. Because of the fragile relation-

ship we have with the European nations, we must do our best to do good without making enemies of the rest of the community. Obama is our president, but he is not all-powerful.

One apology or one sincere regret will not completely erase what America has done in the past, nor will it make up for any mistakes that we commit in the future.

In fact, Obama has already started to produce results by fulfilling his promises to both the American people and America's allies elsewhere. Not only has

he signed an executive order to close Guantanamo Bay, he has eased travel restrictions for Cuban Americans and has lifted a few of the embargo restrictions.

He plans to end the war in Iraq by pulling out troops. This shows that he really does want to change America's image to rest of the world, not just by words, but by actions too.

Obama is correct in apologizing to the other world leaders in his tour of Europe. As it is, it seems he was successful in winning the trust and the confidence of the other European countries. If he (and America) continue on this path, there is only one way to go—up. ♦

TOGATALKS

How well has Barack Obama done thus far?

He's followed through with the creation of some more jobs, especially in stem cell research.

freshman Ruchie Bhardwaj



sophomore Adam Hinshaw

Obama hasn't followed through on his promise of pulling out troops from the Middle East.

Things have to get a little worse before they get better; he has done as well as he can in the given circumstances.



junior Eric Gast

OBAMAREPORT

Promises Kept

- The creation of a \$10 billion dollar fund in order to diminish the risk of foreclosure for homeowners, providing incentive for refinancing loans
- Abiding by his campaign promises, Obama excludes fraudulent investors and speculators
- He granted Americans full rights to visit family and send money to Cuba—diplomatically, Obama tries to ease the tension between the U.S. and the latter country.

Promises Currently In-the-Works

- Pulling the U.S. troops out of Iraq—Obama is withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq and plans to evacuate all by August 31, 2010.
- Abolishment of Bush's higher income tax cuts—Obama is continuing to raise the taxes on the top 3 percent of taxpayers in order to make his health care more affordable.
- Creation of 5 million "green" job opportunities—Obama is changing the country's orientation from foreign oil to renewable energy, which should stimulate the "green" energy sector and jobs in that sector.
- Short-term reduction of global warming with creation of cap and trade system—a regulatory plan charging polluters proportionally to curb carbon emissions

Promises Forgotten

- No action has yet been taken to reduce oil consumption by 35 percent by 2030—During this 20-year time span, Obama hopes his policies will cut U.S. oil consumption significantly.
- A National Health Insurance Exchange has yet to be created. The intention was meant to provide all Americans with either private or public health plans.

—by Mary Mykhaylova and Anna Shen

New Cyber Security bill hints at socialism

by Amalie MacGowan and Mary Mykhaylova

Big Brother, a fictitious character created by George Orwell in his book "1984" as a representation of a totalitarian system seems to be making a return appearance in our own government.

The Cyber Security Act of 2009, consisting of new Senate bills 773 and 778 proposed by Democratic Senator Jay Rockefeller of West Virginia will establish cybersecurity and help prevent attacks by providing President Barack Obama with the power to access private online data, regulate the cybersecurity industry, or even shut down the Internet in the case of a "cyber emergency." Apprehensively, the working copy of the bill fails to provide an accurate definition of what makes an emergency, leaving it up to the discretion of the president. Though this proposal, reminiscent of the Patriot Act, may appear to hold public interest in mind, it is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

There are many positives and negatives to these bills. One positive is that it will help alleviate many of the attacks against secure information and provide Internet safety, strengthening the nation's infrastructure. Conversely, however, who is to say that this "ultimate cyber power" will not be abused? With the government yet again breaching privacy and once again sticking their noses into the lives of millions of innocent civilians, the bill is nothing more than the United States taking another baby step toward an increase in governmental control.

Privacy is not a privilege. It is something that should be unconditionally granted to all citizens. If these new bills are passed, who knows what will come next—a limit of what is aired on television

THE BIG IDEA | Cyber Security Act

BILL: Gives Obama power to access and regulate private online data as well as the ability to shut down the Internet.
POTENTIAL PROS: Strengthens nation's infrastructure
POTENTIAL CONS: Abuse of power and breach of privacy

or the radio or prohibition from leaving the country?

Obama's recent decisions have been conspicuous bricks on a road to socialism. As coined in a headline in the National Post, "In 100 days in office, Obama neglects 100 years of history." Measures such as nationalizing banks and setting salary caps have already been taken.

For the last century, United States has channeled billions of dollars into programs meant to prevent socialist practices on its soil and simultaneously either contain or prevent them in other nations. It seems inconsistent to all of a sudden start to retrace these steps.

Under a mask of this new plethora of potential "emergencies," the government is encouraging new programs that will change the nation's basis make-up dramatically with little discussion.

The Cyber Security Act would provide the government with the power to view private information such as health or bank records devoid of cause or warrant, violating Amendment IV, which stands against unreasonable search and seizure.

Whether this is the intention or not, at least some of this recent "change" is leading the country in harmful directions. The government should think twice before implementing such harsh, intrusive and arguably unconstitutional restraints. ♦



Election results hang education, welfare out to dry

by Gautham Ganesan

California voters—at least the paltry few who bothered to show up—once again decided to cast ballots in the best interest of their wallets rather than the community, rejecting six different budget propositions May 19 despite Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger’s warning of sweeping cuts in the event of such results.

So while they may have saved themselves tax dollars in the short term by toppling the proposals, voters essentially signed the death warrants for the majority of the state’s social welfare programs, if speculation regarding the governor’s plans to combat the deficit is any indication. CalWorks, which caters to over 500,000 underprivileged families and Healthy Families, a program

that provides medical aid to nearly 930,000 children and teens, is both being eyed for termination.

While voters certainly can’t be entirely blamed for the years of fiscal mismanagement that have led to the current budget crisis, their overturn of the election proposals will undoubtedly have grave consequences. In addition to welfare cuts, the state is also targeting education through the slashing of CalGrants, a financial aid program for middle- and lower-class college students, the reduction of \$600 million in UC and CSU funding and the potential decreasing of the

While they may have saved themselves tax dollars, voters signed the death warrants for the state’s welfare programs.

school year for public high and middle schools.

Along with the astronomical immediate impact of these cuts, California will likely be subjected to the repercussions of the election’s result and Schwarzenegger’s retaliatory slashing for years to come. Wall Street investors and venture capitalists alike are undoubtedly less than happy about the prospect of continuing or pursuing investments in a state unable to reach a consensus solution to its myriad budgetary issues. With the California job market already embroiled in a rough patch, that can’t be good

news for the work force of a state once fertile with employment opportunities and booming businesses. Particularly concerning is that the state’s proposed education cuts will erode funding for a system that already spends less money per student than any other state.

California’s budget crisis has finally come to a head and the results look to be horrifying. The veritable dismantling of government services as fundamental as welfare and education will prove devastating to the status of this once-proud state.

It’s a shame that an election that could have potentially veered California away from that course was not only met with prevailing apathy by the majority of the populace, but selfishness by the few individuals who made it to the voting booths. ♦

The Saratoga Falcon

STAFF POLICY

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END OF SRI LANKAN REBELS COMES AT HUMAN COST

by Uttara Sivaram

Muffled pleas for help were once heard from the Northeast sector of Sri Lanka, an island off the coast of India, where 50,000 civilians had been trapped within a four-square mile area, held as human shields by a few hundred of the most deadly terrorists in the world—the Tamil Tigers.

Government plans for the Tigers’ destruction began earlier in the year when it started a major offensive against the rebels. The Sri Lankan government began taking control of the situation, pushing the rebels farther and farther north while flushing out resistance from the South. These rebels, representing the Liberation of Tamil Tigers Eelam, or (LTTE), wanted the Tamil minority to be independent from the socially and politically privileged Sinhalese, who make up the majority of the Sri Lankan population.

The government was successful in sequestering the rebels in the far northeast region of Lanka. However, the ones that survived the initial onslaught were the most seasoned, lethal and virulent of the pack. Along with them were tens of thousands of innocent Sri Lankan civilians who drew the shortest straw, residing in an unlucky location during an unfortunate time. The Tigers were using these innocent civilians as human shields to protect themselves from the government troops.

Now, however, the Tigers’ surrender on May 17 has liberated Sri Lanka at last, allowing the Sri Lankan people to enjoy and experience the freedom

from violence that they have been deprived of for nearly three decades. The Sri Lankan government was by no means the knight in shining armor in this situation. Not only did they carelessly bomb the Northeast, they also shelled a public hospital without any concern for the citizens being held in those areas. The warfare between the rebels and the nation’s army was effective in wiping out the majority of rebels, but it also resulted in horrific deaths and damage to the civilians caught in the surrounding area.

No matter how dire the situation, civilian casualties cannot be justified for the sake of the greater good—the Sri Lankan government would do well to remember that. Government terror cannot be an answer to the rebels’

terrorism.

Sri Lanka, however, will have countless opportunities to redeem itself. For although the rebels and a significant number of their leaders have been killed in the fighting, the Tigers’ spirit is by no means completely extinguished. Reports are circulating that the Tigers’ leader, Velupillai Prabhakaran, was dragged out of a truck, dead, on the last day of fighting. If this is true, then this is a major step forward in exterminating these terrorists, as Prabhakaran was a major rallying point for the rebels. However, there is no escaping the fact that any of the loyal, remaining rebels can easily take the place of Prabhakaran and fan the flames of civil war in Sri Lanka yet

again. The Tigers were the pioneers of suicide bombing and can easily revert to their old ways to do what they do best—inciting terror.

If the government does not change its ways and create a secure and fair environment for both the Sinhalese and the Tamilians, the indignation of the resident Tamilians may flare up yet again and in even deadlier forms. Sri Lanka must be cautious but firm in creating a balance between the Sinhalese majority and Tamilian minority so that there will be no future struggles for a separate Tamilian homeland.

Though the war has been won, it is by no means over. In regards to the equality of all peoples residing in Sri Lanka, the government will have to tread carefully to ensure that its bloody history does not repeat itself. ♦



Texas voting procedures exemplify racist climate

by Sulmaan Hassan

At the crux of America is its plethora of cultural diversity that is sometimes referred to as a “melting pot” or “salad bowl.” However, quite surprisingly (or, perhaps, not so surprisingly), Texans of Chinese descent were recently faced with a dilemma that utterly contradicts this foundation of coexistent acceptance. These citizens were turned away from the polls because the names on their IDs did not correspond with those on the incompetently assembled voter lists.

In an attempt to propose a solution, Texas State Rep. Betty Brown proposed that Chinese-Americans should legally alter their names so that “Americans” can manage them better. According to Brown, if these people don’t classify as “Americans,” then why should they get to vote?

Many celebrities have given their kids profound names such as “Apple,” “Pilot Inspector” and “Bronx Mowgli” for the sole purpose of differentiating them and drawing attention to their individuality. Native Chinese names are also different from stereotypical American names and deserve the same respect.

If the government is seeking to dis-

criminate and single out just one group of people to change their names, then there should be an all-encompassing law requiring all ethnic groups to change their names. Sound ridiculous? It’s the next logical step in Brown’s argument.

Instead, the government needs to make a basis for non-standard people’s names.

The problem that these Chinese-Americans encountered was that their transliterated names that appeared on the voting rolls were different than their adopted names used for ease in communication with society.

To solve this problem, government workers should be trained to properly transliterate names so immigrants, who are unfamiliar with the standards of America, do not just make up their own spellings and cause confusion between passports, driver’s licenses, and any other means of identification.

Government officials have two options: to either grow a brain or stop being ignorant and insensitive to foreign cultures. It is because of their ineptitude that is affecting the lives of citizens of various ethnic groups and is going against much of what this nation stands for. ♦

New ASB voting system results in poor turnout

Typically, the election process for ASB has been held in the classrooms and administered by teachers. This year, voting was held in the quad in an attempt to lower the burden on teachers and find a more democratic election method; however, this new routine resulted in a dearth of student participation.

The new voting system presents a frustrating challenge for the election commission: most high school students are too lazy to vote when a ballot is not spoon-fed to them. Juniors breeze by the voting tables, rushing toward their cars during lunch. Most underclassmen couldn’t care less, since most of them don’t personally know the upper-classman candidates running for ASB positions. With fewer students voting, the importance of student elections is greatly diminished.

But don’t take our word for it—the voting numbers speak for themselves. Only 350 to 400 students voted this year, as opposed to last spring’s majority vote when voting took place during class. Since roughly three-fourths of the student body is comprised by the freshman, junior and sophomore classes, this means that only about 40 percent of eligible students cast their ballots. This may be due to lack of publicity for the new voting method, but

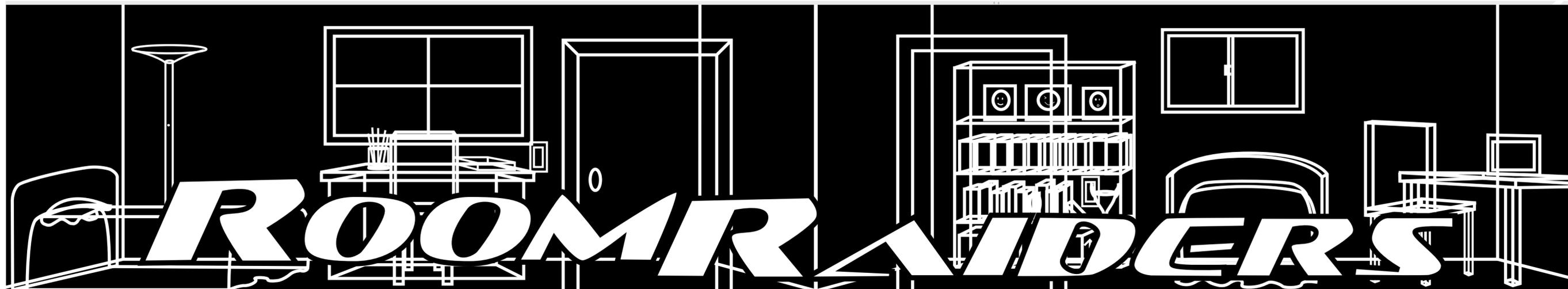
the main reason for the lack of participation is that most students don’t vote when it requires “work.”

The school should either find ways to alter the voting system in a manner that would increase student turnout or simply stick with the previous tried-and-true style of voting in the classroom. This type of voting also provides a better sense of students’ preferences. When students are forced to take the initiative to vote, only the students who strongly support a particular candidate participate.

Some would argue that voting in the quad is more democratic because it allows people who truly care about student government to express their opinions in a manner akin to real-world elections, and prevents school elections from becoming a popularity contest. The problem is that the elected ASB members should represent the opinions of the entire school, which includes those who choose not to make the trip to the quad to cast their ballot.

A main reason for the new system is that the elections are disruptive and take away from precious class time; however, a mere five minutes annually are at stake here and, in return, the students gain from a more diverse and fair pool of voters for their ASB members. ♦

STAFF EDITORIAL
Opinion of The Falcon
editorial board



graphic by Brandon Yang

Kushal Shah

Boy's hidden qualities exposed

by Karen Lyu

After braving a crazy drive up Big Basin Way, I arrived at senior Kushal Shah's house.



Kushal Shah

My first reaction was at how incredibly neat it was. (I realized, however, that Kushal probably cleaned it before I came.) I was disappointed because anything mischievous had probably been hidden well.

My search for any out of the ordinary items was based on the opinions of other people I talked to. I've never met Kushal personally before. When I was assigned to his room, a couple of people told me their impressions of him and the most common statement was that he has a confident personality. As I ventured into his room, I had a certain image in my head as to how it would look. Turns out, I was really wrong.

On a shelf high above his desk, I expected to see tons of "tough guy" stuff. I saw many small stuffed animals instead. His room has soft blue curtains and a balcony that looks over the large backyard. The bed was made, which surprised me the most, and a basketball sat on the covers. Various clues around the room, like

the Nike poster on the wall, pointed out that Kushal enjoys sports and is an athletic person. In his room, there are also two desks. The smaller desk holds a computer and the other has random objects. Overall, the room had a comfortable vibe to it. From that, I could tell that when Kushal had friends over, it was easy for people to feel at home.

Two things stood out and caught my eye. They told me a different story, one that I had not heard about at all. They told me about Kushal as a person.

The first was a pink piece of paper taped to the wall above the larger desk that said, "You rock, Kushal! You're the best bro," and had a picture of a face on it. It was adorable and made me think that Kushal is someone who values his relationship with his family.

The second thing I spied that caught my attention was a recording equipment stand on which a microphone and headphones hung. From there I could see that Kushal also likes music and maybe records his own songs sometimes.

Because someone's room can tell you a lot about that person, his room gave away the fact that despite his cool act at school, he has a soft side. I also reflected that he made his living space his own and that to me, was one of the most important things. If you can't be yourself at home, then where can you? ♦

THE FLOOR SCORE

NEATNESS: It is surprisingly clean, not what one expects.

ORIGINALITY: The recording equipment and posters set his room apart from most.

STYLE: The stuffed animals mixed with Nike posters show that he has an all-around personality.

PROS: It seems like an easy place for friends to come and hang out.

CONS: It might be a little hard to find your way up to his house

SCORE: 5/5



Karen Lyu



Karen Lyu

On the left: Stuffed animals find a comfy home above senior Kushal Shah's room. On the right: Recording equipment show Shah's passion for music.

A neat personality in utter chaos



Alicia Lee

The One and Onlee

Take a look at my bedroom; it's the only one I got. Not much of a bedroom, it just seems to hold a lot.

I'm a Virgo, the perfectionist of the skies. I am known for being organized, and anyone reading my horoscope would expect my world to be a color-coded, straight-edged haven. But not so.

Not only is my bedroom the messiest and most disorganized in the house, I make no effort in changing it. As a one-way portal

into a person's thoughts and persona, a bedroom speaks loudly in visual representation. From my desk covered in a layer of papers and random things I find to the insane amount of post-its I doodle on, my desktop has not been entirely visible since the beginning of second semester, clearly showing how I defy the stars.

Even my closet is amazingly cluttered with clothes and transparent boxes. Despite it being easier for me to find things, my stuff is out for the world to see. With travel-sized shampoo bottles from hotels and giant Mickey Mouse gloves, you can pretty much call me a pack rat. So much for keeping order. Over time, certain items have mingled with each other and landed in different spots.

Although my intentions are organized, most of the time,

cleaning projects fail a few minutes in. While many people will assume that I am an organized and dainty person on account of my awesome note-taking skills and neat binders, they are shocked once they take one look into my room.

Gaze at the heaps of stuff everywhere. There are stacks of papers around my bookshelf that date back to as early as third grade, empty shoe boxes, and, not to mention, a pile of clothes on none other than my Thinking Chair. That's right—I have a legitimate Thinking Chair à la Blue's Clues. Be jealous.

And while everyone stops and stares at my messy floor, I ease down on my Thinking Chair, contemplating the severity of my messes and soaking in all the disorder. Who cares what other people think...this is how I live my life, in utter chaos. ♦

THE FLOOR SCORE

NEATNESS: Everything has its place in the room.

ORIGINALITY: Aspects of her personality show through her things. She has sports and movie posters and pictures.

STYLE: Dox's room has her own touch to it. Items reflect her fun personality.

PROS: Her room really visually reflects her personality. Color schemes are bright and welcoming.

CONS: At times, the room looks crowded. She was organized but it is all out in the open, making her room look busy.

SCORE: 5/5



by Lauren Kuan

Fun, energetic, outgoing. When I first entered junior Emilie Dox's room, these were the three words that popped into my head. There were posters and pictures plastered all over the walls from concerts she had attended. There were three autographed SAP Open brochures, a local men's tennis tournament, sitting on her desk. Having been to so many events, I thought that she must be a very sociable person.

I was immediately drawn to her tennis trophies and pictures, which show her dedication for the sport. I could tell that she was someone who loved to play tennis and was a part of the tennis team. Sitting atop of her trophies was a tennis ribbon that had her nickname written on it. Dox had pictures of her and her friends since she was young until present day.

In a corner of her room, I found a picture of her with actor Kellan Lutz, known for playing the role of Emmett in "Twilight." At that point, I was amazed that she could find the time to play a sport and have such an exciting social life. Not to mention that she has been able to meet a celebrity from the Twilight phenomenon that would make a lot of teenage girls jealous of her.

Next I moved on to the laptop where I perused through her music playlists and discovered that she really enjoys listening to random remixes of songs like the *Hot N Cold* LMFAO Remix.

Scattered all around the room, I found souvenirs and items from countries she had traveled to. It looked like she had been all around the world.



Emilie Dox



Uma Sambasivam

Photographs, necklaces and books make junior Emilie Dox's room a unique haven.

Dox's room followed the stereotype of what people believe is a "girl's room" by being neat and organized. The room was a relaxing and calm place, helping her unwind after a long day. ♦

Emilie Dox

THE FLOOR SCORE

NEATNESS: There is a lot of stuff which makes the room look cramped.

ORIGINALITY: There is a lack of decorations.

STYLE: The video games portray a fun and entertaining style.

PROS: No moldy sandwiches or sweaty socks!

CONS: There is nothing that immediately catches the eye

SCORE: 4/5



Apeksha Sharma

Nick Renda's Room featured a large variety of video games.

Nick Renda

Clean oasis defies stereotype

by Apeksha Sharma

A boy's room often brings images of countless video games, sports jerseys and sports trophies. As the stereotype goes, underneath the bed lie sweaty socks and moldy sandwiches. The room is so dirty it's hard to breathe without a gas mask. This is what most people think of a boy's room, but upon entering sophomore Nick Renda's room with gloves in hand, I was proved wrong.



Nick Renda

This room was cleaner than most girls'. The bed was

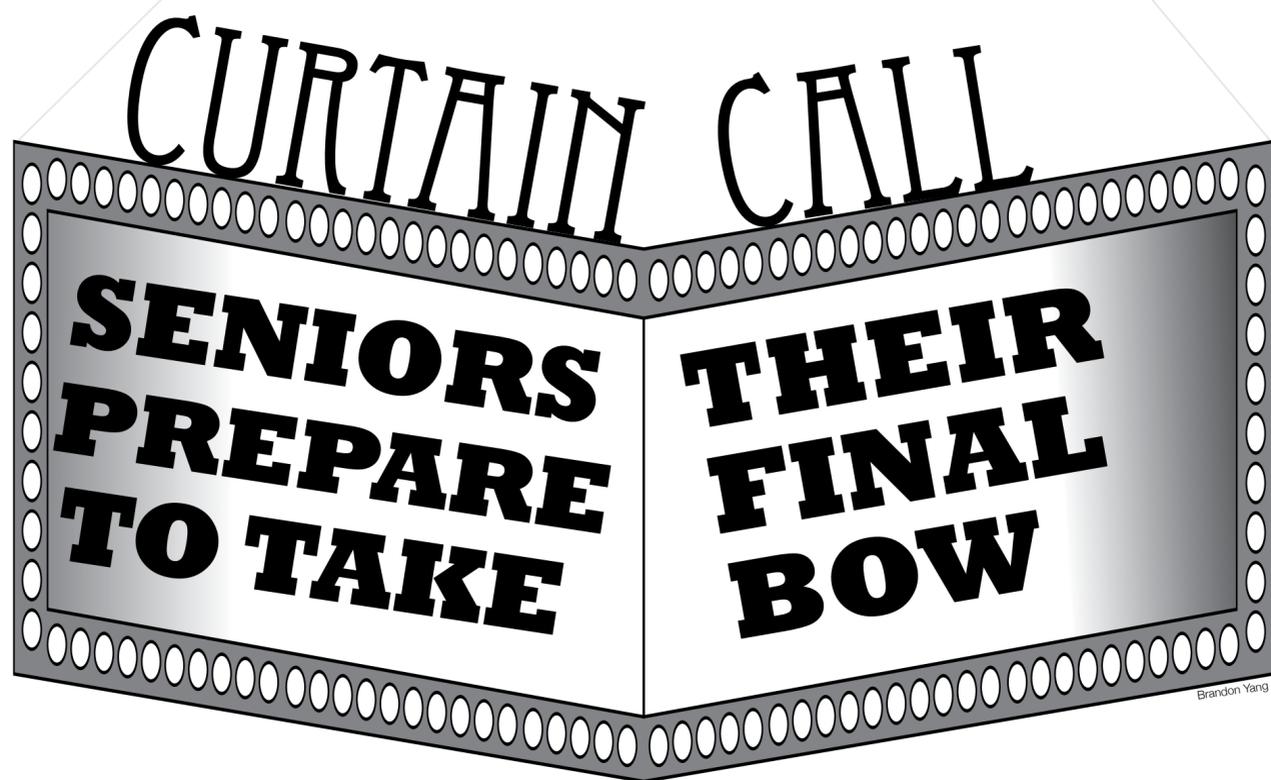
neatly made with a pillow resting comfortably underneath. Next to the bed, a nightstand was filled with various magazines all checked from the local library. This told me he cared about reading.

A guitar and music stand in the corner of the room next to a shelf of boxes that was used to store miscellaneous household objects. A clean white table was filled with several SAT prep books as well as other school textbooks.

I carefully inspected the room, hoping to find a hidden haven of dust, but failed to catch even a minuscule dust bunny. The messiest the room got was a compilation of stickers on one of the dresser drawers. The drawers containing video games were neatly arranged by size and console. Hoping to find unrecognizable rotten food under the bed, I got on my hands and knees, but my hopes were soon crushed, as the contents under the bed were as clean as the rest of the room.

Although this room is undoubtedly clean, it still wasn't perfect. The drawers were too filled to hold any clothes, which explains why they were in a separate room. The walls were plain white, just asking to be spiced up with some posters.

Despite the fact that the room needed more decorations, it was still able to maintain the guy factor without moldy sandwiches under the bed. The room makes it easy to have a friend over, since the video game console and slide out bed are located right across from each other. This room has the tools to relax and watch the TV without fear of an unknown rodent sneaking up. A clean room is something that all guys should aim to achieve. ♦



Goodbye, Good night, Good Luck

Seniors give their farewells and best wishes to their departments before leaving high school for college

by *Synthia Ling*

When seniors finish with their last year of high school and graduate, they will not only be leaving behind the school, but also their teachers and the friends they have made. They will be forced to experience the hardest part of graduating—saying goodbye.

For senior Aaron Garg, band was a significant part of his high school life. His teachers and fellow band members were like a family to him. At the end of the year concert, the band seniors traditionally give gifts and signatures to their teachers, and after graduation Garg is going on a trip to Europe with his friends so they will be able to continue spending time over the summer.

"It will be really sad because you put so much time in your four years into band," said Garg.

"For a lot of people that is where they spend most of their time, and it's the people that you hang out with too. It will definitely be emotional because you're saying bye to something that was a part of your life for so long."

Garg, however, will be close enough to visit whenever he can because he will be attending Stanford University.

Senior cheer captain Harriet Russell feels the same way about leaving the cheer team and her friends to attend Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. Although all sports have senior days to celebrate the last home game that the seniors will be participating in, it is not the seniors' final goodbye because they continue seeing their teammates around school even after the season ends.

"I still see all the girls on cheer every day, so saying goodbye to them will be just like saying bye

to my other friends," said Russell. "[Having been] on cheer for four years, it will be weird to leave, so I will definitely be visiting a lot. In general, I will be sure to spend time with each person before I leave."

Over the summer, Russell will be going on two trips. One will be a farewell trip to either Mexico or Hawaii with about 15 of her friends. The other will be to Europe for two weeks, with one of her best friends. Fortunately, they will be attending the same school so bidding each other farewell is not yet necessary.

Senior Eddie Zhang says he isn't too sad to leave drama because he will continue participating in theater at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania.

At the end of the year, there will be a drama awards picnic where awards such as Best Supporting Actress and Best Actor will be given out. Zhang said it is

like their "version of the Oscars." There will also be silly awards such as "Person with the Most Excuses" and "Person with the Biggest Ego."

For many seniors, graduating is bittersweet. They will be celebrating the beginning of the rest of their lives, but at the same time they will be going their separate ways to various colleges, departing from teachers and friends.

"I am happy to graduate. [I have] definitely been waiting [for] four long years for that, but it is going to be hard for sure," said Russell, "especially with people who I know but aren't best friends with. I feel like some of those relationships will be harder to keep intact."

Although most teachers will remain at the school, watching seniors graduate each year is also exciting and difficult. Journalism teacher Michael Tyler gives a journalism graduation ceremony

where each senior in *The Falcon* newspaper and *Talisman* yearbook staff is given a staff photo to have other members of the class sign it.

"For all us teachers, it is very gratifying and exciting that [the seniors] have gotten this far," said Tyler. "It's tough to see them go because as a teacher you're used to having them around. They contributed in so many ways to the publication I think for them and those of us who teach them it's one of those moments you realize things have a limited time."

Tyler, however, knows that the seniors are ready for the next chapter of their lives

"It's sad, but by the time [seniors] graduate they've been through the Saratoga High School experience," said Tyler, "And they've gotten a lot out of it and they're really ready for a new kind of experience." ◆

Seniors serve their masters

After being auctioned off to their peers, senior volunteers agree to follow orders for one day

by *Robin Liu*

Senior Michael Chen knew he was in for an experience when sophomores Lauren Kuan and Pia Mishra purchased him for \$3 as a senior servant. Little did he know that he would be wearing a pink wife beater, tight shorts, and hot pink flip-flops. Mishra and Kuan, who are on the third-period Falcon staff with Chen as the editor, also wore shirts that said, "We love Michael."

"I wanted to be able to dress him up," said Kuan. "We've gotten really close throughout the year, and we always take orders from Michael, so we want him to take orders from us."

A longstanding tradition, Senior Servant Day raises money for the senior class Grad Nite. This year, 104 seniors were servants, raising over \$500.

When preparing for the event, junior Kandice Wong planned her bought seniors, Melody Zhang and Adela Chang, to good use. Wong had her servants cook her breakfast and take her off campus for lunch.

"It was really nice having someone to boss around. It was definitely worth the money," said Wong.

Some students went to extremes and purchased numerous senior

servants. Sophomore Tim Lycurgus first bought 15 seniors, of whom he only knew two, for a total of \$41. He then sold several, while one refused to serve under him, leaving him with 10 seniors. With so many servants, Lycurgus plan used them to his advantage and humiliated them.

"I had this big chair, and they had to carry me around in it all day," said Lycurgus. They were struggling with it because it was a big wooden chair. When I got hot, I had two fans that they could fan me with, and when I was in the sun I had a blanket that they had to put over my head to shield me from the sun."

In addition to making his servants perform physical work, Lycurgus did his best to embarrass the seniors.

"I had posters that said 'Make way for the king' and the girls had to hold them up at the side, and they all wore wife beaters with nicknames on them. I had my boom box with two songs in it and they had to sing when they walked."

Prices for senior servants normally range from \$1 to \$10.

All the money made goes to activities during the Grad Nite party, but the memories from the day of humiliation are sure to last long past the unforgettable night. ◆

Grad Nite provides lasting memories

by *Pia Mishra*

Year after year, students peer at the quad wondering what goes on during Grad Nite but never find out what mysteries lie within until they are seniors. Organized by the PTSO, Grad Nite is planned every year by the senior parents who commit dozens of hours into creating a memorable night. The party begins at 9 p.m. and continues until 6 a.m. the following morning.

"I'm really excited because as a freshman, sophomore, and junior I always saw the quad roped up and now I'm finally going to get to go," said senior Mara Couch.

PTSO co-president Shinku Sharma said the planning for Grad Nite starts over the summer of the before. More than

30 parent volunteers work in their committees dealing with activities, decorations, and administration. Monthly meetings help track the progress each committee has made. Any issues that a committee is having gets addressed at one of these meetings.

"It takes many hours and many people to put everything where it is supposed to go," said Sharma. "I feel our kids are very lucky to have such dedicated parents to put all this work into making their last party at school so much fun."

As with planning any event, the parents have had to deal with a number of challenges. One of the main obstacles has

been the budget. The total cost of Grad Nite runs somewhere around \$51,000 with additional money added through donations from parents and local vendors. The decorations alone cost over \$10,000. The PTSO bases the budget for the night on about 300 students attending, but so far this year bid sales are behind for the \$150 tickets.

Getting parents to come help with the decorations has also been tough. The decoration committee has been working on the decorations all year long, meeting every Saturday for few hours to work. Parents work the day before and the day of the party to put everything together. All the props are ready but putting the decorations up takes over 12 hours.

The theme of Grad Nite is kept a secret from the seniors all year long. They don't know the type of adventure the parents have planned until they walk into the quad that night.

During Grad Nite, seniors spend their time in the quad which is completely transformed. The seniors play the activities planned by the parents and enjoy the food provided all night long.

Many of the seniors are looking forward to this night as a chance to say goodbye to many of their friends.

"I know that this night will be really emotional and it might be the last time I see some of these people," said senior Aaron Garg. "I definitely would not miss it." ◆

"I know that this night will be really emotional and it might be the last time I see some of these people. I definitely would not miss it."

—senior Aaron Garg



From left to right: Sophomore Kyle Dickson poses for a quick picture with his servants, seniors Phillip Chen and Lily Dickson.

Sophomore Adrienne Eller enjoys being carted around by her servant, senior Eddie Zhang. Junior Jennifer Zhang joins in the fun.

Seniors ascend the rock climbing wall at last year's Grad Nite. Such attractions are commonly seen at Grad Nite. This year is bound to have more fun activities similar to the rock climbing wall.

TOGATALKS

What was your favorite part about senior year?



Rishi Taggarsi

Participating in the Homecoming dance because it was cool how our class came together.

For me, it was probably senior day for softball because the girls made it awesome. I had a lot of fun.



Satomi Ishikawa

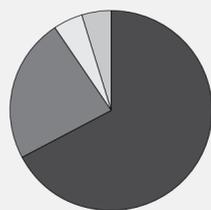
Spending some last minute time with friends before going off to college. We have had some good times.



Jocelyn Ye

FALCONPOLL | Senior Fun

Which event will be the most memorable when you think back to senior year later down the road?



- 68% Grad Nite (June 11)
- 23% Senior Prom (May 23)
- 4.5% Ditch Day (May 26-27)
- 4.5% Senior Slave Day (May 29)

The Falcon polled 88 seniors on May 28

Administration attempts to bury ditch day tradition

by *Tim Rollinson*

One popular Saratoga High tradition involves seniors having one last adventure before they graduate, leaving teachers lonely and wreak havoc on the attendance office.

This, of course, is the infamous senior ditch day, which falls the first school day after prom every year. Seniors throw caution to the wind and head to popular hangout spots, such as the beach. With the switch to block schedule four years ago, this tradition has even become a

two-day event.

Some teachers trying to prevent the drastic drop in attendance schedule tests on the designated day. This technique has had little success, as the attendance of seniors on "Ditch Day" has stayed consistently low.

The most popular adventure for seniors is to drive over the hill to Santa Cruz. Students can make their long awaited trips to

the beach because of the good weather in May. Senior Lisa Chang is also planning on going to the beach; Chang and some friends are planning to do a bonfire at night.

Seattle. At first his family was skeptical on leaving town on a school day but when Rateau explained that he would be missing school anyway, they agreed that

it would be appropriate.

"No one is going to be at school anyway so my family and I decided it would be a good time to take a trip," said Rateau.

The administration has made steps to inform parents about the day. This year an e-mail was sent to parents and students saying the day is not a sanctioned school event and students were expected in class as usual. Some teachers try to combat the tradition by scheduling projects and tests on those days.

The administration said teachers have a curriculum to cover and a full block period can af-

fect a student greatly. They also believe that it can be very harmful to students with attendance issues.

"The administration does not recognize a senior ditch day," said assistant principal Joe Bosco. "Each student will face appropriate consequences for missing the day."

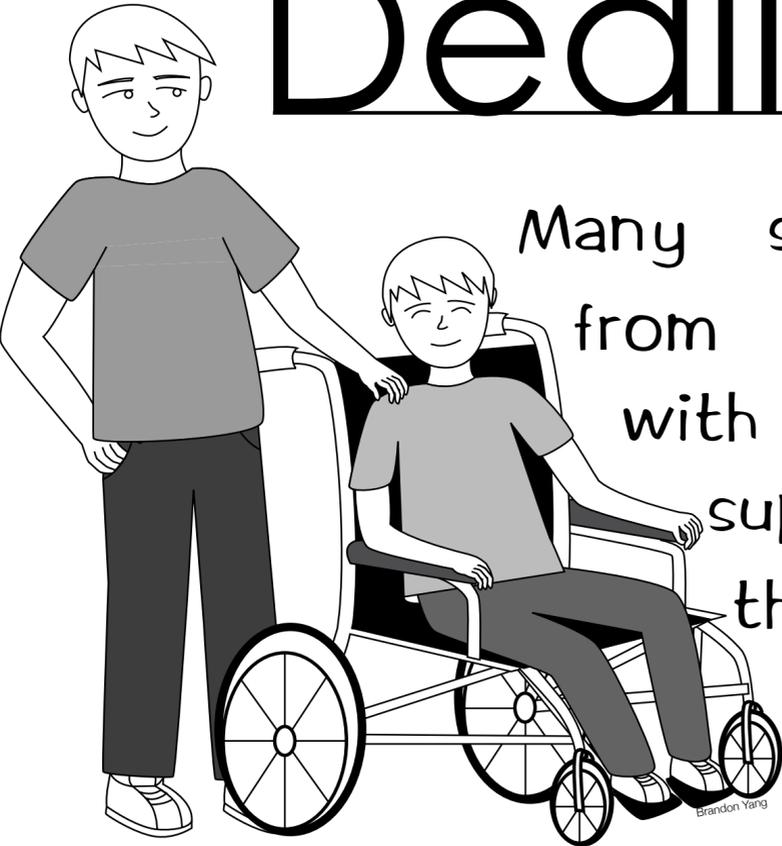
This tradition will most likely continue for years to come or at least until the administration can find a way to force students to attend school.

"It doesn't matter what is going on at school," said senior Casey Farmer. "I'm going to the

"The administration does not recognize a senior ditch day."

—Assistant Principal Joe Bosco

Dealing with



Many students suffer from disabilities, but with the love and support of siblings they can conquer every challenge

Disabled sister inspires senior to help others

by Uma Sambasivam and Girish Swaminath

They say nothing can break the bonds of sisterhood. Senior Sacha Maniar and her older sister, Sabina, 25, are living proof of that. Three weeks ago, Sacha promised Sabina that she would make cupcakes for her birthday but forgot her promise as a result of the stresses of senior year. Ever since, Sabina reminded her daily that Sacha owed her cupcakes and refused to change the subject. Sacha appreciates the fact that her sister holds her to her word and remains persistent until she gets what she wants. Sacha feels that her sister's adamancy is what makes her a truly special person.

Sacha has countless other stories to tell about her sister, who was diagnosed with Down Syndrome at birth. Although Sacha constantly deals with this situation, she feels that she personally has not been hurt by her sister's disability. She has grown to accept it, as she has lived with it throughout her life. Sacha still is able to do the same activities with Sabina that sisters normally do.

"My responsibility in the family is to take care of [Sabina when I] come home immediately after school and ensure that she is all right," said Sacha. Sacha believes that her sister is quite happy despite her disability.

"Compared to other people with special needs, she really is quite healthy," said Sacha. "The only thing is that she pretty much acts like a little kid because, mentally, she is a second grader." Sacha feels that her sister gets a bit

more attention from her parents because of her disability but does not carry any ill sentiments with her.

"My sister gets what she wants most of the time, but she doesn't necessarily want a lot of stuff," said Sacha. "My mom knows how to handle such a situation better than most because she teaches students with special needs."

Sacha does not think that she loses anything as a result of Sabina's disability.

"I know many people whose siblings get everything they want, but they don't get anything," said Sacha. "It is true for a lot of people but not for me."

Sacha's parents have also accepted Sabina's disability and don't think of it as something with which they must cope with. It simply became a part of their lives.

"Sometimes, there are parents who put extra pressure on their healthy kid to do well because their disabled kid can't," said Sacha. "[My parents] don't put that kind of pressure on me and I don't think that Sabina's condition has negatively impacted anybody's life."

Sabina's disability has motivated Sacha to make a difference to improve the lives of others like her sister's. Sacha is president of the Perfect Pals program on campus, which pairs up special education children with their peers to mentor and encourage them and to establish lifelong friendships between them.

"Initially, my mom pressured me to join Perfect Pals, but after I gave [joining] some consideration, I decided to become a member as I could really feel for these kids." ♦

Sibling relationship thrives despite autism

by Uma Sambasivam and Girish Swaminath

Picture the backseat of the Nast family car as they drive to Disneyland. Senior Katie Nast, then 7, anxiously jiggles her legs in the backseat. She "[bounces] off the walls with excitement" as the family nears the coveted Magic Kingdom, much unlike her brother, Ryan, who felt quite ill and "overwhelmed" even on the way; as a result of Ryan's intensifying illness, the family had to return home to seek medical attention.

Incidents like these assured Katie that she would not always get what she wanted. She had to make some adjustments in her life just for the sake of Ryan, who was diagnosed with autism at the age of three and had to go through a series of testing "ever since he was ten months old."

"I was disappointed but I realized that life sometimes doesn't work out perfectly," said Katie. "It is pointless to get upset with anyone."

Katie feels that Ryan has impacted her personality by making her more self-reliant. She is "more responsible and aware of others' personalities and attitudes."

"I became very protective and mature at a young age because I grew up helping my parents take care of Ryan," said Katie. "I am also quite responsible, because I know that if I make a bad or selfish choice, I could really upset or endanger my brother."

Moreover, Katie has developed many selfless qualities due to her experience.

"My entire family loves Ryan and does an enormous amount of things to help him," said Katie. "I grew up watching every adult in my life making sacrifices just for the sake of Ryan. I myself developed this quality because of my constant exposure to it."

Katie realized that situations might not turn out favorably for her unless she learned to behave responsibly.

"My parents always expected a certain standard of behavior and I realized from an early age that I would not always get things my way and I just had to roll with the punches," said Katie.

Sometimes, she feels like a third parent to Ryan because she is "expected to help take care of him and take some of the responsibilities off of my parents' hands."

Over the years, Katie has come to accept her brother's autistic condition.

"I have gotten so used to handling Ryan's disability that I don't even give it a second thought," said Katie. "Despite his condition, Ryan has a lot of talents such as typing and completing puzzles, and I love him the way he is."

She rarely feels embarrassed about her brother's condition, despite some awkward moments.

"When Ryan has a tendency to pull his pants off in the library or run screaming through a store, most of the smaller things don't even faze me," said Katie.

Katie feels that her relationship with Ryan has helped her feel more empathetic to those with autism or any other physical condition and has allowed her to mature more rapidly than her peers. ♦



KATIE NAST

Katie and her autistic brother Ryan have developed a close relationship. Ryan's disability has taught her to be selfless and understanding.

Disabilities

Sister's love keeps family in high spirits

by Albert Gu and Anna Shen

For the Lauro family, even a routine trip to the grocery store can bring unexpected results. During one trip, Michael Lauro was humming happily to himself when a passing shopper stopped and gave a cold glare.

"I'm sorry," his mother apologized. "He's autistic. He can't help it."

The man coldly replied, "Well, I'm artistic too, and I don't grunt like a gorilla."

Few people understand what being disabled really means. Disabilities come in many forms, and autism is just one of them. Autism, a brain development disorder that affects one out of 150 children worldwide, is identified by a lack of social interaction and restricted, repetitive behavior. This disability personally affects senior Christina Lauro, the older sister of autistic junior Michael.

"[Having an autistic sibling] is really difficult, but I think it's made me a lot of who I am today," said Christina, who is just a year older than Michael.

Michael, currently a middle-functioning student enrolled in regular but slowed down classes, was not always autistic. Michael was a normal child until he was diagnosed with autism at age two after his parents noticed a lack of response from him. Along with autism, Michael has mild symptoms of Tourette's syndrome, a condition that causes sporadic tics, and obsessive compulsive disorder.

"When [Michael] was young, he used to not talk and wave his hand around. Now, you can ask

him a question and he'll answer you," said Christina. "He understands you more, and he'll start conversations himself, which is really big."

Siblings Bond Together

Christina and her boyfriend Holden Sparacino spend a lot of time hanging out with Michael, bowling at Strike! and playing games at the video arcade. Michael enjoys their company and loves to be around people.

"I think [Michael] is aware that he's different. He likes hanging out with people as much as he can," said Christina. "He's just starting to get that he's not like everyone else, but I think he's happy."

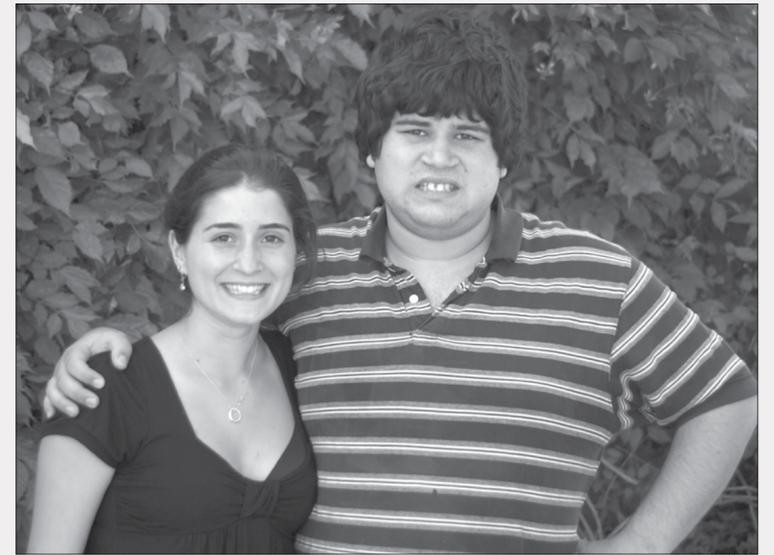
But because Christina has spent much of her life looking out for her brother, who is unable to normally communicate, their relationship differs from a typical sibling relationship.

Overcoming Challenges

"Sometimes, I wonder maybe if [Michael] wasn't autistic, I would be able to have that brother-sister relationship," she said. "It's like being an only child without all the attention, because all the attention goes to the special needs kid."

Although Christina cares for and supports Michael, she admits there were, and still are, numerous times she would get jealous of Michael because of the special treatment given to him.

"There were plenty of times when I was like, 'That's not fair!'" Christina said. "Because he can't help it, he got away with a lot more than I did. When I was younger, I understood he had a disability, but it would just be so frustrating for me. Even now, I do admit I get



Jordan Waite

Senior Christina Lauro and her brother Michael, who is autistic, share an extremely close relationship.

jealous sometimes; I'm used to it though."

Embracing the Differences

Michael's autism has taught Christina to accept people with disabilities and look at them differently from how she normally would have if she did not have an autistic brother. Christina acknowledges that special needs people should not be treated any differently from others.

"What frustrates me the most is that people don't understand that these kids did not choose to have special needs," said Christina. "They just were born that way, so we

shouldn't mock them." The most common derogatory remark toward autistic people Christina has to put up with is the phrase, "That's so

retarded," which offends her. "I get really offended with that [phrase], and I try as much as I can to say, 'Hey, my little brother's autistic, [and] if really

offends me when you do that,'" Christina said. "Sometimes I'll get the whole, 'Well I wasn't meaning to be rude about that; it's just slang,' and I'm like, 'No, it's not just slang.'"

Without Michael's autism, Christina probably would not have volunteered so many hours of community service, including helping with the Special Olympics committee. As a senior ready to go off to college, Christina is undecided on whether or not her future will involve research for autism, but one thing's for sure—Christina will never stop supporting her brother. ♦

—Senior Christina Lauro

Saratoga community provides supportive, caring environment for disabled students

by Vijay Menon and Kevin Mu

For most, the term "disabled" is seen and heard. It evokes a sense of sadness and sympathy, but the

harsh reality of the word escapes them. Junior Burton Cohen knows "disabled" all too well—his sister, freshman Alejandra Cohen, suffers from a disability that damages her left arm and leg and also leaves her mentally handicapped.

Having a disabled sibling is never easy, yet Burton grew up supporting and loving Alejandra no matter what.

"I act as a role model for her and take care of her," Burton said. "My parents have always [said] family comes first."

Burton is one of the "estimated seven million 'typically developing' American children who have siblings with disabili-

ties," according to the New York Times. These children constantly have to make sacrifices based on the needs of their siblings and know that they will never be the center of attention.

Students also face "stress, resentment and anger" in such a relationship, according to Saratoga High psychologist Mark Atkinson.

Many of the children put in this situation must take on extra responsibilities. For Burton, who sees it as a duty to help

care for Alejandra, this means that sacrifices must be made.

"On weekends, I sometimes take her to appointments instead of going out with my friends," he said.

Additionally, some students may feel

embarrassed of their disabled siblings leading to a sense of insecurity and low self-esteem. They often feel neglected because of the large amount of attention people with disabilities require.

A study from the University of Wisconsin-Madison even suggested that siblings of the disabled are far more likely than their peers to experience bouts of depression in life.

There is, however, a more positive side to the story. Many teenagers like Burton have learned to accept their individual scenarios with maturity and compassion.

"Many siblings at SHS are incredibly well adjusted," Atkinson said. "They're doing a tremendous job taking care of their siblings, and I really don't see the embarrassment and jealousy play out that much because I think the parents do



Alejandra



Burton

Cyber-entertainment versus in-store bargains

by Amalie MacGowan

Empty wooden shelves now line plenty of commercial bookstores across America and the local rent-a-video store now sits uncomfortably barren, with hardly any customers.

Why bother? All the simple steps to instant entertainment are right beside you, on the Internet. With websites like Netflix and Amazon, all you need to do is point and click and a DVD, book or CD will show up within your mailbox in 3 to 5 business days.

While the world becomes comfortable with more convenient methods of receiving entertainment, stores like Borders, Barnes & Noble, Blockbuster, Hollywood Video, and independent stores slowly lose clientele to their cyber competitors.

"I only use Netflix now," said sopho-

more Mikaela Burton. "You can get a better deal for your dollar. I download movies all the time and watch them on my computer since they have half their stock online [and] ready to download. I don't even bother going to Blockbuster anymore."

In addition to its convenience, Netflix has many TV series and classic films that most video rental stores lack. Subscribers can order DVDs that will come directly to their home and keep them for any amount of time.

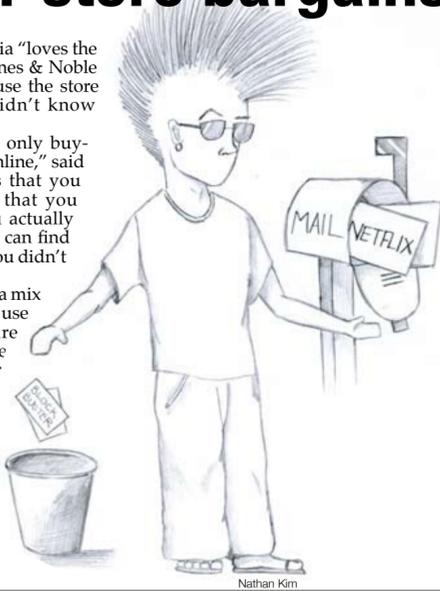
However, some people find it easier, and more enjoyable, to go to the video stores themselves and randomly choose a movie. For sophomore Kathryn Nobles, it's much easier to hop in her car, drive to the local Blockbuster and pick up a movie for the night.

People also feel the same way about slowly dying chain bookstores like Borders and Barnes & Noble. For instance,

freshman Sanjana Chetia "loves the feeling of going to Barnes & Noble and being able to peruse the store for something you didn't know about."

"The problem with only buying books and music online," said junior James Kim, "is that you have a specific book that you are looking for. If you actually go to a store, then you can find something good that you didn't know about."

In truth, there exists a mix of people who strictly use the Internet to procure entertainment and those who are tied to their local stores. Someday, even though some of us persist in visiting the bookstores and the video stores, these stores may no longer exist. The question is will the world be worse off because of it? ♦



Nathan Kim

"The problem with only buying books and music online is that you have a specific book that you are looking for."

—Junior James Kim

Does looking good matter?



Nandini Ruparel

So Many Worries

If by chance, you come to school one morning and your orange shirt doesn't match your green sweatshirt, you immediately become the talk of the school. If your jeans look exactly like the ones that your friends have on except that they're lacking that infamous moose on the corner, you may just be shunned for the rest of the day.

Looks are important to all of us. After all, according to Darwin, the better-looking you are, the more likely you are to pass on your genes to the next generation. And since supposedly the only purpose of our lives is to continue the human race, it logically follows that your appearance would be a matter of concern. Even for people who aren't looking for a chance to reproduce, the way you look makes a difference in whatever you're doing.

Take viral video sensation Susan Boyle for example—she wowed the crowd and the judges with her rendition of "I Dreamed a Dream" on the popular UK show *Britain's Got Talent*. But the millions who watched her both during the show and on YouTube afterwards were also impressed with her determination to sing, even though the judges and audience were against her because of her appear-

ance. Soon enough, though, the pressure of the paparazzi ("Never-Kissed Woman Wows Cowell," courtesy of CNN) caught up to her. Her new haircut with brown highlights and her expensive Burberry scarf signified that she was changing the way she looked just in order to improve her appeal to the audience and the judges.

I have always kept "looking good" low on my priority list. I don't wear makeup regularly, I don't shop at American Eagle or Hollister, and I don't wake up at four in the morning to straighten my hair before school. Should I change my style for the sake of appearance or not? Every time I go to the mall, this question is at the back of my mind. There's no right or wrong answer.

When I sat down to write this story, I was wondering how to best approach this issue. After all, appearance is a definite "hot topic"—especially at our school. Even with the downturn in the economy, nothing has stopped people from buying \$200 jeans and even more expensive whatever (fill in the blank here). But as the economy gets worse, the amount of expensive clothing will inevitably go down. And nobody really knows what exactly will happen to our unshakable style fetish.

Style is—and always will remain—a personal choice, I can't tell anyone what exactly to do next. However, I can say that you shouldn't change for any other reason than pure personal choice. When you change for other people, that's when your fashion goes out-of-style. ♦

Summer franchises return

Host of new sequels headline this season

by Grishma Athavale

Summer marks the beginning of a long and well-earned vacation for students. For movie producers; however, it is one of the busiest times of year busy with plenty of red carpet premieres, that is.

Students this summer can expect to see long-awaited movies such as "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," the release of which was originally slated for November 2008 but has been postponed to later this month. Based on the sixth novel in the bestselling series, this penultimate installment shows Harry in a darker, deeper way and reveals a haunting secret.

Sophomore Taara Rangan, an avid fan, has awaited the sixth "Harry Potter" film since last year and is anticipating its release this summer.

"I'm curious to see how the new actor, Jim Broadbent as Horace Slughorn, the new Potions teacher at Hogwarts, [who have not been in the previous movies] will live up to his character role," said Rangan.

In May and June, students will be able to see "Angels and Demons," a prequel to "The Da Vinci Code," starring Tom Hanks as professor Robert Langdon. Also premiering in June is "Transformers 2: Revenge of the Fallen," starring Shia LaBeouf and Megan Fox. A new conflict emerges in the sequel to the 2007 hit, as Decepticon (a robot) forces return to Earth on a mission to capture Sam Witwicky (LaBeouf) after he learns the truth about the pre-

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Year One: With the hilarious combination of Michael Cera and Jack Black, this film will not disappoint.
500 Days of Summer: For all girls who enjoy chick flicks, be sure to catch this indie movie with Zoey DeSchanel and Joseph Gordon-Levitt.
Harry Potter: Most everyone has been waiting for this sixth installment; it will be hard to miss.

historic origins of the machines.

Many students are awaiting the release of "Transformers 2" and one such student is senior Lauren Christensen.

"I loved the first movie, so I can't wait to see the second one," said Christensen.

Also set to premiere in mid-July is "Taking of Pelham 1, 2, 3" starring Denzel Washington and John Travolta. This remake of a '70s movie depicts a group of innocent civilians who encounter a subway heist and how the NYPD tries to outsmart the villains.

In July and August students can anticipate: "Land of the Lost," "Year One" (a comedy starring Michael Cera and Jack Black), "My Sister's Keeper," "500 Days of Summer" (a romantic comedy which debuted at the Sundance Film Festival in Jan.), "Inglorious Basterds" (a new action/adventure film from director Quentin Tarantino) and "H2: Halloween 2."

With a variety of movies to choose from this summer, there will undoubtedly be something for everyone. ♦



some of the bands featured this summer: (From Left to Right) Less than Jake, Nickelback, Coldplay, Beyonce, Paramore.

With all-new books, movies and concerts in the Bay Area, it'll be impossible to avoid some...

Summer Lovin'

Sounds of summertime

by Mika Padmanabhan

Summer, the time of hot sun, beaches, cold ice cream, and doing nothing. For music hungry fans of all tastes, the summer also consists of concerts as their favorite bands pour into the Bay Area for a tour.

To kick off the summer, alternative fans can anticipate the 14th annual Van's Warped Tour in San Francisco. The concert will take place on June 20 and will showcase the bands 3oh!3, The Maine, We the Kings, Less than Jake and many others. The tour will return to the Bay Area on Aug. 20 at the Shoreline Amphitheatre. Tickets can be purchased online for \$30 or for \$40 at the door.

"What I like about Warped Tour is that you hear a lot of bands you don't know," said junior Max Snyder, whose music tastes include many underground bands. "With at least 40 bands playing and maybe six stages there is always going to be good music playing."

Before the tour arrives, on July 25, the Shoreline Amphitheatre will host No Doubt, in their reunion tour, with Paramore as an opener.

Beyonce will be performing at the Oracle Arena in Oakland on July 10. She intends to promote her new album, "I Am... Sasha Fierce," but is scheduled to perform many of her previous hits as well.

"I like a lot of her songs," said junior Erika Ho, who plans to purchase tickets for the concert. "She is a really good performer so [the concert] is definitely something to look forward to this summer."

Three of the most popular

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Vans Warped Tour: The Warped Tour is noted as one of the most anticipated concert tours of the summer.
Coldplay: The band will be splitting up after their current tour for album *Viva La Vida*.
The Fray: They will promote their self-titled album opening with Jack's Mannequin.

rock bands in the world will also come to the Bay Area this summer. The summer of rock legends begins with Grammy winner Coldplay on July 13 and The Fray with Jack's Mannequin on Aug. 1. The Canadian sensation Nickleback will conclude the jam-packed

With at least 40 bands playing [at Warped Tour] and maybe six stages there is always going to be good music."

—junior Max Snyder

summer on Sep. 1. All three concerts are sure to be successful and will take place at the Shoreline Amphitheatre with ticket prices ranging from \$35 to \$100.

Junior Kimberly Dimicco plans to attend the Coldplay concert although she saw the group when they toured last year.

"My cousin is the media manager for Coldplay," said Dimicco. "She got us good seats last time and I think we might actually be able to meet the band this time around."

This summer looks to be promising for fans of all different music tastes. Most of the polar genres and bands are well represented, and tickets will likely be sold before the concerts take place so, get 'em Fast. ♦

These books don't burn

Non-mainstream reading doesn't disappoint

by Kavya Nagarajan

What do you do when you're bored? The most common answer to this question is probably "watch a movie" or "see what's on TV." Sometimes people just surf the web, go on Facebook or YouTube, maybe listen to music, etc. For some people, however, their escape from boredom is to simply pick up a good book.

No, I don't mean one of the Harry Potter or Twilight series. Believe it or not, there are other novels out there that are just as good, if not better than those books.

Junior Kimberly Dimicco is an avid reader and likes to read books that aren't mainstream.

One book she recently read, that most people probably haven't heard of, is "The Host" by Stephenie Meyer.

Dimicco says she prefers to read fiction over any other genre, and within that, usually adventure, but she doesn't like "trashy teen novels."

"I really like reading because I feel like I can procrastinate and not feel guilty about it, because I'm still doing something sort of educational," said Dimicco.

Another book she liked reading was "Wicked" by Gregory Maguire. After reading the book, Dimicco had the chance of seeing the play on Broadway in New York, and again in San Francisco last month.

"I was really excited to see the play after reading the book," said Dimicco. "I had heard so much about how good it was supposed to be."

Junior Eleanor Davis is also a big reader and a fan of fiction. She said that reading is really "relaxing" for

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East of Eden by John Steinbeck: Steinbeck delivers with imagery that draws the reader in to the Salinas Valley.
The Runaway Jury by John Grisham: Grisham has become a master of legal thrillers; this is one of his best.
Freddy and Fredericka by Mark Helprin: Helprin creates two witty characters whose playful banter make for an entertaining read.

her. "I get to just take a break from reality once in a while," said Davis. "Even if it's not for very long, I try to read a little every day."

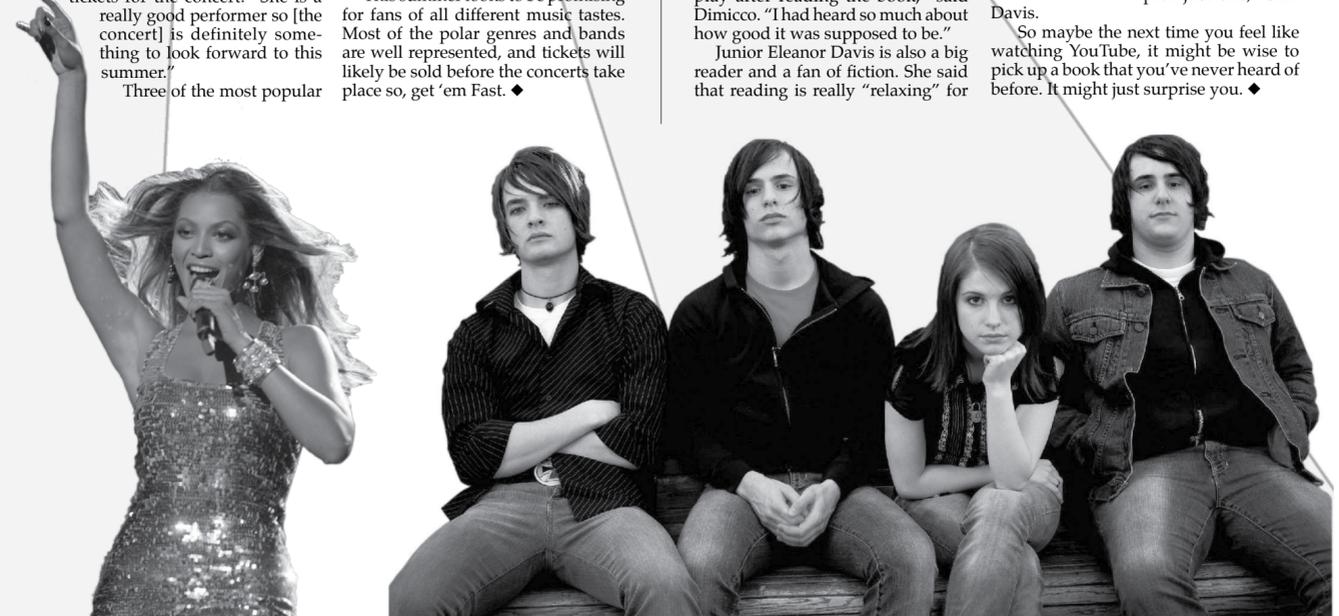
One book she recently read, "When the Elephants Dance," by Tess Uriza Holthe, is set in the Philippines during World War II. Davis said what she enjoyed most about the book was the author's unique style of writing. Unlike in most books, the story is told from four different characters' points of view.

"Even if the plot is really interesting, I can't read a book if it's badly written," said Davis. "A good book needs strong and consistent language."

When asked what her favorite book was, Davis struggled to come up with an answer.

"I've read so many books over the years, and so many of them have been really good, I can't pick just one," said Davis.

So maybe the next time you feel like watching YouTube, it might be wise to pick up a book that you've never heard of before. It might just surprise you. ♦



The Falcon objectively ranked all 26 of SHS's sport teams, leading to absolutely flawless results.

- by Sophia Cooper, Tim Rollinson and Abhi Venkataramana

Power Rankings



Girls' Tennis

Campus Presence: 3
Physical Demand: 3
Improvement: 3
Winning %: 18
League Title: 2
CCS: 5
Star Factor: Marsh/Wang
Total: 34

Leagues: first; CCS: second; Nor Cal: second. These girls are amazing.

Boys' Swimming

Campus Presence: 3
Physical Demand: 4
Improvement: 3
Winning %: 17
League Title: 0
CCS: 5
Star Factor: B. Hinshaw/Murray²
Total: 32

They broke a 29-year-old CCS record and the national record. Enough said.

Field Hockey

Campus Presence: 5
Physical Demand: 4
Improvement: 4
Winning %: 13
League Title: 0
CCS: 5
Star Factor: Darchuck/Douglass
Total: 31

Keeping up their tradition of excellence, these girls placed second behind rival LG.

Girls' Track

Campus Presence: 3
Physical Demand: 3
Improvement: 2
Winning %: 18
League Title: 1
CCS: 3
Star Factor: Yates/Dolbec/Guy
Total: 30

They dominated the league, but had some issues with senior prom vs. CCS.

Boys' Water Polo

Campus Presence: 3
Physical Demand: 5
Improvement: 3
Winning %: 18
League Title: 0
CCS: 0
Star Factor: Mortazavi/Winningham
Total: 29

Close team bonding and hard work led to a stellar season filled with beastliness.

photos courtesy of Kevin Rollinson, Prolmage Studios and Uma Sambasivan

Sport (last year's ranking)	Campus Presence (1-5)	Physical Demand (1-5)	Improvement (1-3)	Winning % (1-20)	League Title (+1 for lower, +2 for upper)	CCS (1-5)	Star Factor	Total	Evaluation
6. Wrestling (10)	3	5	3	13	0	4	Nguyen/Loren	28	They sent multiple athletes to CCS and even state championships.
7 (t). G Swimming (4)	3	4	2	15	0	3	Nolet/Opatny/Murray	27	They had a solid season and managed to do well at CCS. Just not as good as the guys.
7 (t). B Tennis (1)	3	3	2	17	2	0	Jayashankar	27	They would have won CCS had they not gotten themselves disqualified last year.
9. B Track (12)	2	4	2	14	0	2	Teerlink/Clarke	24	Led by strong individual performances, the team had a good turnout at CCS.
10 (t). B Cross Country (14)	2	4	2	12	0	3	Banks/Menezes	23	They missed making states by one spot. Keep training, guys, you'll get it next year!
10 (t). G Water Polo (15)	3	5	2	13	0	0	Norris	23	After a good season, the team lost key senior Alison Norris and has to revamp for next year.
10 (t). Baseball (19)	3	2	3	13	1	1	Biederman	23	They managed to clinch the league title, despite being the league's smallest roster.
13 (t). G Basketball (2)	4	3	1	10	0	2	Slavos/Cole	20	The season was plagued with injuries, but they still made it to the first round of CCS.
13 (t). G Cross Country (13)	3	4	1	10	0	2	Nast	20	The team sent two girls to state, but the rest of the season was blah.
15 (t). Football (5)	5	5	1	8	0	0	Spencer	19	We (almost) beat LG!
15 (t). G Volleyball (17)	4	3	1	10	0	1	Dolbec	19	An appearance at CCS, but that's about it.
17. B Basketball (9)	4	3	1	8	0	1	Pak/Hsia	17	Lots of spirit can only get you so far, and they need to work on the other half: skill.
18. G Soccer (10)	4	3	2	7	0	0	Guy	16	The team improved from last year and placed second in leagues, but still have a way to go.
19 (t). G Golf (N/A)	1	1	N/A	8	N/A	N/A	Sivaram	15	The team did well for its first season and has a lot of promise for next year.
19 (t). B Golf (21)	1	1	2	10	0	1	Hoffman	15	Despite being one of the more secluded teams on campus, these boys sent two golfers to CCS.
21. Badminton (16)	2	3	1	6	0	2	Jeff Kuo	14	A freshman prodigy couldn't save the team.
22. G Lacrosse (N/A)	4	3	N/A	8	N/A	N/A	Parker	13	In this case, the girls were way better than the guys.
23 (t). B Soccer (18)	2	3	1	5	0	0	Chung	11	The team struggled despite having talent.
23 (t). B Volleyball (7)	1	2	1	7	0	0	James Kim	11	We have a boys' volleyball team?
25. B Lacrosse (N/A)	4	4	N/A	1	0	N/A	A. Lee	9	Sure they went 1-13, but give them a break, it was only their first season.
26. Softball (22)	2	2	1	0	0	0	Ruddy	5	Loud cheers, not so loud scoring.

COLLEGE BOUND

NCAA



Front (Left to right): Kara Wang, Kelly Lamble, Lindsey Marsh; Second: Katie Nast, Alan Menezes, Kiersten Dolbec, Katie Gasik, Lily Dickson, Stephanie Douglass; Back: Alison Norris, Brad Murray, Matt Murray, Joey Avery; Not Pictured: Ben Hinshaw, Jasper Loren, Nathan Nguyen. These 16 seniors are the most recruits SHS has ever had from one graduating class.

16 seniors to play NCAA athletics next year

by Sophia Cooper

"Class of '09, so fine." Their sophomore class shirts said it all. This year's graduating class will send an amazing 16 seniors to 12 different colleges across the United States to excel in Division I, II and III for eight different sports.

Going the furthest away from home are swimmers Matt Murray and Brad Murray, attending University of Virginia and Georgetown, respectively. Fellow swimmer Ben Hinshaw will be at UC Berkeley in the fall. After recently breaking the national public high school record for the 400m relay, swimming DI is no big deal for these three.

The girls' tennis team also produced three collegiate athletes. Lindsey Marsh has signed with the DI Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo team, and Kara Wang will play DIII tennis for Pomona College. Kelly Lamble will play for Santa Clara University's DI team on a scholarship. As a junior and senior, she played highly competitive club tennis instead of playing for the school team.

SCU also offered water polo player Alison Norris a partial scholarship, and she signed on to play for them in the fall due to the DI athletes and the friendly atmosphere.

"Santa Clara is a top 10 team, so I will be playing at a high level," said Norris. "The coach is hilarious."

Attending the University of the Pa-

cific in the fall, Stephanie Douglass was recruited to play field hockey goalie. She is the only SHS player who has signed on to NCAA athletics, but some other players might walk on to their schools' intercollegiate or club teams.

Kiersten Dolbec signed on to DI UC Santa Barbara early in the year, originally just for high jump. But after the UCSB coaches started watching her, it became apparent that her athletic talents were also useful in volleyball, leading her to be a dual-sport athlete for the Gauchos.

"This shows that we're not just brilliant; we're also brilliant athletes."

— assistant principal Karen Hyde

"I was being recruited for track and all the coaches had to watch me, and the volleyball coach just all of a sudden heard of me," said Gasik. "Then she called [my current volleyball coach] and they offered me a scholarship."

Also heading south is Alan Menezes, a cross country and track runner who has brains and speed. Menezes will be running track for the academically elite California Institute of Technology, a DI program. Runner Katie Nast will be attending University of California, Davis, definitely running for DI track and hoping to walk on to the cross country team.

Lily Dickson, a member of the Los

Gatos Rowing Club, will start off her first summer after high school by missing her graduation. Her crew team has qualified for nationals, a well-earned accomplishment that helps her prepare for rowing on a scholarship at University of California, Davis next year.

"I am excited to have that really close group of teammates in the beginning of college when I am first meeting people, said Dickson.

Wrestlers Jasper Loren and Nathan Nguyen will be continuing on into college. Nguyen will be wrestling at West Point, while Loren has three offers and has yet to decide where he will attend.

Joey Avery, a pitcher, will be playing DI baseball down at the UC San Diego. Katie Gasik heads the opposite direction, moving north to Chico State to run the 400m hurdles for the school's DI track team.

"My entire family went there, and my dad actually ran track [at Chico State]," said Gasik. "I got into the school early for [track] and I get to stay in the athlete's dorms."

Assistant principal Karen Hyde expressed her excitement for these 16 athletes, saying that it "speaks volumes about our superior kids" at SHS.

"Saratoga is always known as the academic school, ... [but] we're not the athletic school," said Hyde. "This shows people that we're not just brilliant; we're also brilliant athletes."

For more coverage on these athletes, visit www.saratogafalcon.org/sports.

Moving Up...

- Joey Avery** – UC San Diego, Baseball
- Lily Dickson** – UC Davis, Rowing
- Kiersten Dolbec** – UCSB, Track/Volleyball
- Stephanie Douglass** – UOP, Field Hockey
- Katie Gasik** – Chico State, Track
- Ben Hinshaw** – UC Berkeley, Swimming
- Kelly Lamble** – SCU, Tennis
- Jasper Loren** – Undecided, Wrestling
- Lindsey Marsh** – Cal Poly, Tennis
- Alan Menezes** – Cal Tech, Track
- Brad Murray** – Georgetown, Swimming
- Matt Murray** – University of Virginia, Swimming
- Katie Nast** – UC Davis, XC
- Alison Norris** – SCU, Water Polo
- Nathan Nguyen** – West Point, Wrestling
- Kara Wang** – Pomona College, Tennis

BASEBALL



Jordan Waite

Sophomore first baseman Greg Johnson eyes a pitch against Mountain View on May 12. The team won the El Camino league title for the first time since 1994.

FALCONS CLINCH LEAGUE TITLE, FALL SHORT AT CCS

by Karthik Annaamalai
and Abhi Venkataramana

Although roster size has always been a problem for varsity baseball coach Manny Steffen, the dedication and perseverance of his players never has. Despite having fewer players than most teams, the team managed to clinch the El Camino League's division title, a feat that hasn't been accomplished by Saratoga since 1994. They sealed the deal with a 5-3 home win over the Fremont Firebirds on May 7.

The team looked to do even better at their first CCS game against Monterey on May 21. In order to combat the lack of players, Steffen promoted freshmen Thomas Ishikawa, Matthew Ishikawa, Kushal Raj, Roy Bisht and Eric Wang from JV to varsity

for the game in hopes that they could add more depth.

"I was really excited when [the coach] told me I was getting pulled up," said T. Ishikawa. "It was a great experience and I had a lot of fun playing with the varsity guys."

The new additions to the team, however, weren't enough to help the team win at CCS. They ended up losing 3-0 to Monterey after Monterey managed to score three runs late in the seventh inning.

"We played very well the whole game," said sophomore first baseman Greg Johnson. "It was tied 0-0 going into the sixth in-

ning, but then we made some errors which cost us the game. I was proud of the team but at the same time a little disappointed because I knew we could have won."

Although the team was disappointed that they could not fulfill their expectations of advancing in CCS, the Falcons came a long way from last season and has improved substantially, said Steffen. Though the Falcons only had 13 active players for the majority of the season, the team had a 12-3 league record.

The team hopes to build off this season's success and carry it into next year. The team, however, will have some big

holes to fill next year as they will be losing seven seniors to graduation. Senior pitcher Christian Biederman especially impacted the team with an impressive 56 strike outs and an overall 6-2 pitching record. Senior Marcus Lefton led the team's offense with a strong batting average of .367 and over 20 RBIs. With standout performances this season, however, young players including juniors Grant Thomas and Jonathon Hurrel and sophomores Gregory Johnson and Dillan Pak could potentially be the ones to fill these holes and lead the team to even more success next season.

"All the juniors and sophomores have a lot of experience now, which will definitely help our team in the long run," said Johnson. "Next year, we can use this year's success as a starting point and continue it into next season." ♦

"We can use this year's success as a starting point and continue it into next season."

—sophomore Greg Johnson

GIRLS' TRACK

Dolbec, Nguyen jump to states

by Nandini Ruparel

After an injury derailed her junior season, senior Kiersten Dolbec returned to CCS to reclaim the championship trophy she won sophomore year. She jumped 5'6" and placed first in CCS for high jump. She will be going to the State Championships from June today and tomorrow in Clovis along with freshman Ailene Nguyen. The team as a whole placed fifth.

Nguyen placed third in triple jump and second in long jump with a distance of 17-9.75, but remains apprehensive about states due to her relative inexperience.

"I'm really nervous," said Nguyen. "I know I won't place very well, but I'm excited to go anyways."

In order to compete at CCS, the team first had to qualify at the CCS trials at Gilroy High School on May 23.

Nguyen placed third in the triple jump and sixth in the long jump and Dolbec qualified for high jump with a final jump at 5'2".

Freshman Crystal Yen placed 11th in both the 100m hurdles and also the 300m hurdles. She was third alternate for making CCS. Senior Ashley Cole placed ninth in the long jump and was chosen as

first alternate. Senior Katie Nast placed 13th and was chosen as first alternate in the 3200m run.

In order to compete at the CCS trials, the team had to place at the Silicon Valley Athletic League Qualifier Meet (SCVAL). For the 4x100m relay race, the team, consisting of senior Katie Gasik, junior Danielle Conway, junior Sarah Guy and Nguyen, placed fourth. This same team placed third in the 4x400 relay. Yen placed second in the 100m hurdles. In triple jump and long jump, Nguyen won first place. Dolbec took the first in the high jump. The sole thrower on the team, senior Baylee Yates, placed sixth in shot-put.

The varsity girls did an outstanding job at the El Camino All-League, with many placing as league champions. In the 4x100, Gasik, Conway, Sullivan and Guy placed second. Junior Karen Wai placed third in the 1600m run. Yen was league champion in the 100m hurdles. In the 300m hurdles Gasik was also league champion.

Three school records were broken just this season alone. Gasik broke the record in 300m hurdles, running in 46.93 seconds. Nguyen broke two records, in triple jump (36'2") and long jump (17' 10 1/4"). ♦

BADMINTON

Default shatters title hopes

by Karen Lyu
and Kevin Mu

The Saratoga badminton team's CCS hopes were extinguished May 28 when its sole representative, freshman singles player Jeffrey Kuo, defaulted in his semi-final match against Monta Vista's Gary Wang by arriving seven minutes late to his match.

Kuo got out of school later than he wanted and ran into lots of traffic, leaving him crushed that he couldn't compete.

Despite the default, Kuo placed 4th in CCS, an impressive feat for the freshman. Still, Kuo said that he had wanted to finish at least 3rd.

After a strong showing at Leagues, Kuo was optimistic heading into CCS. "I was confident and was determined to perform well," he said.

Coach John Phung sent 10 of Saratoga's top-ranked players represented Saratoga during the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League Playoffs (SCVALS) held from May 15-23, but Kuo was the only player to advance to CCS after placing second.

"I had originally expected more participation in CCS," said Phung. "I expected Kuo to make CCS though."

Doubles player junior Steve Chang,

who played with junior Derrick Cheng in SCVALS, felt that the tournament was a good experience, despite failing to advance to the final rounds.

"The non-seeded teams were all around the same level so the games were really close," said Chang. "The competitive atmosphere pushed us to play better."

Despite a paltry finish for the Falcons overall, Kuo was satisfied with his second place performance at SCVALS, citing a competitive 15-12, 9-15, 3-15 match against the heavy favorite Terrence Pang from Homestead High School, who is on the Junior Olympics team for singles.

"Leagues was fun. I think I played really well against Terrence Pang," he said.

Senior prom, which took place on the same day as SCVALS, also contributed to the Falcon's lackluster performance. With 10 seniors missing, the Falcons flew into the tournament lacking key players.

The badminton team's overall season record this year was 4-8. Phung attributes the less than inspirational results to "a lack of discipline and leadership among the athletes." However, he did see "improvement from some of the younger players towards the end of the season" and hopes to do better next season. ♦

BOYS' TRACK

2 make CCS; thrower just misses

by Jordan Waite

Shoulder and back muscles straining, junior shot-putter Connor Clarke held the cold, 12-pound shot put against his muscular neck, spun to build up momentum, and then hurled the massive lead ball down the range, falling only an inch and a half short of qualifying for CCS finals.

Clarke threw his personal best of 48'4.5," placing ninth in the CCS trials on May 23, one and a half inches away from finishing eighth place and moving on to the CCS finals a week later.

"[Eighth place] was the last guy and it depended on him, and he threw it an inch and a half farther [than I did]," said Clarke.

As disappointing as this was for Clarke, other members had more luck in the trials. The team had two athletes who qualified for CCS finals on May 29, seniors Alan Menezes and Kian Banks.

Menezes ran the 1600m, getting a new personal record of 4:24.27 and finished in fifth place.

Banks won his heat of the 800m in 1:56.66, putting him in third place, easily qualifying for the finals.

[The Falcon was not able to publish the results of CCS finals due to printing deadlines].

"My goal right now is to win CCS finals," said Banks.

Banks has a rival who has been a close competitor all season, Jake Arveson of Monterey High, who he beat in the CCS trials and looks forward to racing in the finals.

"[Arveson] beat me pretty badly earlier this year but I got revenge by running faster than him in the trials," said Banks. "I want to beat him in the finals."

Due to a schedule conflict with senior prom, the 4x400m relay team didn't do as well as they hoped. Menezes and Banks both went to the senior prom, leaving relay team members junior Trevor Teerlink and sophomore Matt Cresci with new teammates junior Matt Marshall and freshman Troy Doles.

"The [relay] team got rocked because we didn't have [Menezes] and [Banks]," said Teerlink. "[Marshall] and [Doles] stepped up and did the best that they could and that's just how it goes."

Boys' track had a successful year, sending stars Banks, Menezes, Teerlink, Marshall, Clarke, Cresci and Doles to CCS trials and Banks and Menezes to the finals, a total of five events.

New strength, conditioning and track coach Andy Arness and returning distance coach Jerry Banks inspired the athletes to that success.

"I think this year's coaching staff has been great," said Banks. They have really helped the team out." ♦



courtesy of Prolmage Studios

Junior Connor Clarke throws the discus earlier in the season. He missed making CCS finals by 1 1/2 inches.

SWIMMING

Records smashed at CCS

RELAY TEAMS BREAK NATIONAL AND CCS MARKS

by Lauren Kuan
and Tim Rollinson

The Falcons came out in force at the CCS meet on May 16 at the Santa Clara International Aquatic Center. Of the 21 athletes representing Saratoga High at the meet, 12 placed in the top 16 in at least one event.

The girls' team finished eighth overall, scoring 136 points. They were the No. 5 public school. The boys' team finished second, 61 points behind winner Bellarmine. Despite winning seven events to Bellarmine's one, the lack of divers and finalists for SHS led to the loss.

The 200-yard medley relay kicked off the meet with the girls' team of freshman Natalie Cheung and juniors Lauren Opatrny, Elizabeth Murray and Megan Nolet finishing fifth with an All-American time of 1:48.07. The boys' 200 medley relay of freshman Ian Burns and seniors Matt Murray, Brad Murray and Ben Hinshaw followed, receiving first place and a new CCS record in 1:31.84.

After the strong performance in the first relay, the Falcons dove into the individual events. M. Murray and Hinshaw led the boys' team with two victories each. Hinshaw took the 500 freestyle in 4:21.54 and the 200 individual medley in 1:46.96, setting CCS records in both.

M. Murray was equally impressive in capturing the 100 butterfly title in 48.45 and breaking his own CCS record by almost two seconds in the 100 backstroke swimming a time of 47.97. He also placed seventh in the 500 freestyle.

Sophomore Adam Hinshaw earned

All-American times in the 200 and 500 freestyle when he placed fourth and second, respectively. Burns placed fourth and sixth in the 200 IM and 100 freestyle, respectively, both All-American times. Sophomore Justin Chung rounded out the effort finishing 11th in the 100 backstroke.

"The 500 [freestyle] was really a highlight for our team," said A. Hinshaw. "It was a really close race, but we finished with three people in the top seven which is huge."

On the girls' side of the pool the trio of Nolet, Opatrny and Murray led the way. Nolet placed seventh and eighth in the 100 and 50 freestyle, respectively.

Opatrny placed sixth in both the 200 IM and the 100 backstroke capturing All-American times in both. Murray placed 12th in the 200 freestyle and fourth in the 500 freestyle.

Sophomore Lauren Gardanier was the only diver at the meet for the Falcons. She placed sixth in one-meter diving, the only diving event at the meet.

Both teams finished the day strong in the 4x100 freestyle relay. The girls team of Murray, Opatrny, Nolet and junior Christine La finished sixth, swimming two seconds faster than their previous best and earning All-American honors. The boys' relay of M. Murray, Burns, A. Hinshaw and B. Hinshaw swam the 16 laps in 3:00.68, a national record time (see story on page 1).

"We knew the meet was out of our reach at that point so we were really motivated to show what we could do," said A. Hinshaw. ♦

GOLF

Season end disheartens sophomore

by Brian Kim

Shooting 74 in the individual qualifier, sophomore No. 3 player Andrew Cho placed seventh at CCS trials on May 16 at Rancho Cañada golf course in Monterey. Senior No. 2 player J.B. Lee also represented the Falcons at the event, but did not move on to finals alongside Cho.

Despite performing well in qualifiers, Cho said he struggled on an unfamiliar course while competing in finals.

"I really did not do well," said Cho. "There were a lot of penalties for hitting everywhere. There were a ton of trees [at Rancho Cañada], so a lot of [my hits] went out of bounds."

Because only the top eight move on to CCS finals, Lee, who shot 76, placed 17th and was unable to advance.

"It was fun and competitive, and I'm pretty disappointed," said Lee. "I think I could've done better."

Part of the problem was unfamiliarity with the course, because Lee had played [at Rancho Cañada] only a couple of times, leading to poor shots.

While Lee plans to compete in tournaments during the summer, he is still undecided on whether he will play for UC Davis next year. Cho still plans on playing for the Falcons next year.

"I want to return to CCS," said Cho. "I hope that [coach Bill Drennan] stays for next year."

The Falcons placed third in the El Camino Division this year. ♦

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TGIT: Thank God it's Thursday

Sophomores Chris Chung, Aditya Dev and Brandon Pierce like to stand out. That is why it surprised no one when the three of them, along with a group of friends, showed up to school on April 23 in board shorts, visors, sandals and pooka shell necklaces.

"The first Thursday was a college-aged, southern California 'bro,'" said Dev.

The three enjoyed the day so much that they decided to do it again the next week. This time the theme was Country Club. Informed the night before through a Facebook group, around 20 students showed up to school in collared shirts, sweaters, khakis and carrying golf clubs.

"Every Thursday we have a new theme and Thursday has become the best day of my week," said Chung. "Some of the outfits are completely ridiculous, especially the one [sophomore] Tim Lycurgus wore for beach day."

Brandon Pierce

Dev and Chung say they plan to continue the weekly event through the end of the year and into next year. Some other themes include college wear, animals and mythical creatures and ninjas and pirates.

"We want the club to increase school spirit," said Dev. "Next year we are having red pride days on the day of every football game."

Friend and Nedderson add to their families

English teacher Jason Friend and his wife, Lauren, welcomed a new member into their family on May 2. The baby boy, named Samuel Aaron weighed 7 pounds and 1 ounce, is named after Friend's grandfather.

Friend said he was "simply amazed and overwhelmed with love" when he saw his son for the first time.

"It's an amazing experience," said Friend of becoming a father. "It's even more amazing than you think it would be, to realize that you've created this whole new life."

Although Friend admits that a new baby takes a lot of time and care, he hopes that it will not affect his work too much.

"Since I sleep a lot less now, I might be even crazier than normal," he said with a grin. "[I'll be] a little more out of it."

Since the birth, the new family has been doing very well, according to Friend, although he and his wife are extremely tired.

"We're getting a little tired from the sleep deprivation, but we're doing good," he said. "This is [my wife's] first child and she's already a fabulous mother."

The baby is nicknamed "Piglet" because of the silly little grunting noises he makes, said Friend.

On May 17, special education teacher Patrick Nedderson also welcomed a baby boy named Evan Christian.



Friend

—by Karen Lyu and Tim Rollinson

FALCON FREEZE FRAME



Amanda Yi



Amanda Yi



Amanda Yi



Synthia Ling



Synthia Ling

Clockwise from top left: **vote or die** Juniors Chris Renalds, Krishna Nayak, Mary Mykhaylova and Aveena Shenoy vote for junior class officers at lunch on May 21. **piece of my heart** Junior Dale Everett pieces together a puzzle to ask senior Lisa Clark to prom. **a treat for coaches** Junior Sam Li and sophomore Vanessa Block enjoy the chocolate fountain at the sports boosters' coach appreciation event on May 28. **fire it up!** Sophomore Talia Balma and Junior Simin Ghahghahi prepare for next year's cheer season on May 28. **kucer clones** dressed in white shirts and khaki shorts, juniors Kirin Kumar, Chiyo Hartley, Tanya Valluri and Girish Swaminath pose with Mr. Kucer before the AP Bio test on May 11.

TOPTEN

GREAT THINGS ABOUT SUMMER

- 10 You can make some money with a summer job. Or you can eat peanut butter and watch cartoons all day.
- 9 You get a break from your AP classes...oh wait, you have homework over the summer.
- 8 Studying for your SATs. Wow, Saratoga is lame.
- 7 Working on a real tan instead of the fake ones the ladies got for prom.
- 6 Pancakes for lunch—all day, every day.
- 5 Not worrying about paying visits to Mr. Bosco for three months.
- 4 Free air conditioning at the mall and more conditioning for fall sports.
- 3 You can keep dressing up to "Thursdays" by yourself to practice for next year.
- 2 Nice legs, Daisy Dukes.
- 1 Skinny dipping. Just make sure you have a permit or else you might get caught by Jeanine.

—by Karthik Annaamalai and Tim Rollinson

French 'famille' must say 'au revoir'



Annie Lee and Sophia Cooper

Ooh La La

"Bonjour! Qu'est-ce que vous avez fait ce week-end?"

Every sixth period in Room 408 starts calm and collectively with Madame Bergkamp leading a discussion of the past weekend or plans for the weekend to come. However, what follows for the next 90 minutes in our French 4 Honors class is unpredictable; sometimes we can be found reading magazines, singing in French, playing vocab tag, doing yoga or eating lots of food.

From when we started learning the alphabet rap in sixth grade exploratory French in Redwood Middle School, our French "famille" has grown to include new recruits into the program. Together, we've suffered through the imperfect verb

tense, possessive pronouns and extra credit nights with French students from Los Gatos. But these experiences have made our bonds tighter than an overstuffed crepe.

Sadly, our beloved French department has been threatened with extermination in recent years, but each year our "famille" gets closer as we struggle to keep the flame alive. Although French is the language class with the least participation in our school, we will always cherish it and hope that it continues to bring happy memories to future students.

Some of our favorite memories have come from this class. We love poking fun at the Renalds' bickering and Madame Bergkamp's attempts at whiteboard pictures. And we can always expect amazement when Jessica and Vickie present their art projects, which honestly could be displayed in a museum. Maddy also never ceases to amaze when she stands on chairs to get a better angle from the air conditioner.

Despite all the fun times, our "famille" has lost members over

the years. We miss Matt's constant grammatical errors and Ron's wonderful accent. Next year, we'll lose our seniors and some lame juniors who no longer have time to learn the "language of love". But most importantly, we're losing our queen bee: Madame Bergkamp.

Madame has taken care of us for the last two years. We won't be continuing with her as we wrap up our French 5 AP lessons with Madame Lizundia, the same teacher who bravely took us in as scared little freshmen. Teaching our rowdy class has not been easy. We talk out of turn, want to watch movies every day, and burst out into random choruses of "Joyeux Anniversaire." Even through the craziest times, Madame Bergkamp has put up with us and kept us on track. We'll definitely miss her a lot next year.

Don't worry, Madame Bergkamp, we know you'll miss us, too. That's why we're taking a trip to France together next summer, right? Oui! ♦