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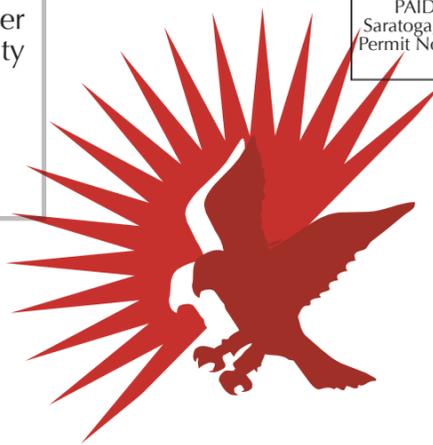


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Reporters explore gender inequality



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Singing the night away

SARATOGA IDOL >> Senior Katie Cummins sings at her March 5 audition for Saratoga Idol. Cummins is one of 10 contestants who qualified to participate in the annual competition.

WHAT: Students selected by junior class officers will exhibit their vocal prowess and vie for first place in this annual competition.

WHEN/WHERE/COST: March 21 at 7 p.m. in the McAfee Center. \$5 with an ASB card and \$7 without.

WHO: Sophomores Manini Desai, Nikhil Goel and Nina Jayashankar; junior Erik Martin; seniors Penny Burgess, Shayda Khorasani, Tiffany Tu, Chelsea Venuti, Katie Cummins and Jimmy Zheng

COURSE OPTIONS

'Double English' available

STUDENTS GIVEN CHOICE OF BOTH AP LANG AND LIT

By Edward Dong & SanjNalwa

Saratoga has long been recognized as a school centered on math and science, and numerous students have complained about the lack of humanities options.

Next year, however, a select few seniors will have the option, given available space, of doubling up on AP English classes—both English Language Composition and English Literature.

"We made the change because we wanted students who are truly passionate about English to have an opportunity to take two classes," English department chair Jason Friend said.



Friend

>> AP ENGLISH on pg. 7

NBA CELEBRITY

Connecting to 'Linsanity'

SENIOR, ALUMNUS SHARE LIN MEMORIES

By KarenSung

He scored more points in his first five starts than any other player in NBA league history. More than Michael Jordan. More than Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. More than Shaquille O'Neal.

And he grew up just 17 miles away in nearby Palo Alto.

Since his breakout game on Feb. 4, Bay Area native and current NBA basketball player Jeremy Lin has risen rapidly from relative obscurity to national fame and carried the previously hapless New York Knicks to seven consecutive victories, spawning a phenomenon known simply as "Linsanity."

Local basketball fans in particular have followed the rise of Asian-American Lin, a 2006 Palo Alto High school graduate.

Senior Daniel Tang, for one, has been paying special attention to the "Linsanity." After all, his family and Lin's have been close friends for as long as he can remember—ever since his older brother and Lin's younger brother first became best friends in elementary school. Before Lin moved to New York, the two families made an effort to spend time together a few times each month.

My favorite memories with him are playing basketball together. It's ... intense.

>> Senior Daniel Tang

"My favorite memories with him are playing basketball together. It's ... intense," recalls Tang, whose profile picture on Facebook is a snapshot of himself with Lin, their arms around each other's shoulders. "We're always destroyed."

The two last hung out during the NBA lockout back in November, when they played Laser Quest. Even now

>> LINSANITY on pg. 4

INTEL SCIENCE FAIR

Senior Alissa Zhang makes top 10 in prestigious contest

By AllisonChang

When senior Alissa Zhang learned that she had been chosen as one of the finalists in the Intel Science Talent Search (STS) on Jan. 25, she was overwhelmed and overjoyed.

All the finalists flew to Washington, D.C., to attend the awards gala held by the Society for Science and the Public which would determine the top 10 finalists.

On March 13, she learned that she had finished in ninth place and won \$20,000. There were 40 other finalists.

The first-place winner was Nithin Tumma from Fort Gratiot, Mich., for his research on a more direct and targeted method of breast cancer treatment and won \$100,000.

All of the students presented their work at the National Geographic Society, where they explained their research projects to visitors.

Additionally, they were given the opportunity to meet with prominent scientists and political figures and toured historical sites.

Their projects were judged in the course of their presentations by top-notch scientists.

Zhang's entry was an alternative method for monitoring glucose levels in the body.

Zhang was mainly hoping to benefit younger diabetes patients, who often fear the pain which accompanies the finger prick, necessary for drawing out blood for testing.

She was inspired to pursue this project because of her many family and friends who are afflicted with the disease.

"I am also very thankful to all the support from my teachers and mentors, both past and present, through this whole process," said Zhang.

In the future, Zhang plans to continue her career in science and become a research scientist. ♦



Zhang

news >> briefs

Bombay in the Bay to spice up spring break

The Indian Cultural Awareness Club (ICAC) will host the annual charity event, Bombay in the Bay, on the first Saturday of spring break, April 14, and it will combine Indian dancing, singing and food into a night of fun and entertainment, senior secretary Ruchie Bhardwaj said.

In order to increase attendance, last year's ICAC officers chose to offer two shows for the first time. Officers this year have chosen to continue to hold two, at 2 p.m. and 6 p.m.

"The decision to host two shows worked really well last year," Bhardwaj said. "We want a lot more people to be able to come because in the past years, many people couldn't come because the show was sold out."

It is tradition for the proceeds of the event to be donated to a charity of the students' choice. In previous years, money has been donated to charities such as the Shankara Eye Foundation and the Susie Nagpal foundation, but a charity has yet to be chosen for this year.

"I think a reason this event is so great because we get to enjoy our culture while helping others at the same time," senior co-president Sneha Shivkumar said. "We have a lot of charities that are sentimental to the people in the club and we don't want to rush the decision."

Bombay in the Bay will celebrate its 11th anniversary this year, and it continues to entertain the Saratoga community and draw in students to participate in the event despite the stress of school.

"Having practices is going to be very stressful with junior year," junior participant Parth Shah said. "Despite the stress, all the hype and hanging out with all of my friends makes it worth it in the end."

— Anchal Mohan and Jay Mulye

School upgrades Research Center computers

Students entering the Research Center in the library for the first time this semester may be surprised to find that the large Dell desktops under the computer desks are missing. In their place, brand new Mac minis have been inconspicuously attached to the sides of the 62 desks in the Research Center. This upgrade, according to librarian Kevin Heyman, has been long awaited.

The Mac mini is a \$600 unit from Apple designed to be ultra-compact and powerful. The total cost to upgrade all 62 computers in the Research Center was about \$37,200, paid for by the SHS foundation, according to Heyman. The monitors, keyboards and mice used with the Dell desktops were reused for the Mac minis to reduce costs.

The immediate reason for the replacement of the Dells was their problematic performance that made them unreliable, according to Heyman.

"[IT Manager] Ms. Grenier, who secured the funding for the upgrades, had been spending an inordinate amount of time rebuilding and repairing the Dells," Heyman said.

Heyman said that another underlying reason for the upgrade is the school's increasing technological demands, and the possibility of incorporating e-books into the school's resources in the future.

"A lot of what we do is in the cloud," said Heyman, "so we need the Internet for databases, Noodlebib, and if we go to e-books, which we may be doing soon, we just need more power."

— Paul Jung

>> upcoming events

March 16 SWE/SBI & SB II Concert

March 17 Benefit Fashion Show

March 21 Saratoga Idol

March 23 CMEA Band/Orchestra Festival

>> correction

The Falcon Figures infographic on page 2 in the Feb. 17 issue listed the average API scores for Asian-Americans, Hispanic/Latinos, White/Other and Multiple Ethnicities in California. In fact, the average API scores are for Asian-Americans, Hispanic/Latinos, White/Other and Multiple Ethnicities at Saratoga High. This error resulted from an editing problem.

>> picturethis



PLAYING WITH HAIR >> In preparation for "South Pacific," freshman Conall Mac Fhionnlaich gets a crewcut in the quad on Feb. 28. Multiple performers participated to publicize the drama production.

>> falconfigures

Where are exchange students coming from?



INVISIBLE CHILDREN

Loggy concert cancelled

By Grace Ma & Karen Sung

When the first scheduled Word for the Heard dance was rescheduled last fall, some students were disappointed. Now the cancellation of the dance has disappointed many more students who were planning to attend.

Thanks to multiple difficulties, the Invisible Children club's Word for the Unheard dance, also known as the Loggy dance, won't take place this year. Club presidents junior Haley Wong and Mary Johnson are currently devising a way to refund the prospective attendees' money.

Plans for the dance, which was going to feature the rapper Alex Loggerman (a Saratoga High graduate whose rapper name is Loggy), had been in the making since last school year, but the club could not find an opportunity to host it. It was originally scheduled in November, but once again, the officers faced difficulties.

"A concert takes a lot of technology and since there [was] a band competition on the [original November] date

we had planned, all of the people at our school who would have set it up were going to be gone," Johnson said.

The alternative to this would have been to hire outside help to set up the dance, but the cost would have surpassed the profit made from the tickets.

Most of the complications arose due to issues in the details of planning and set-up. The dance was first postponed to February, but the officers decided it would be better to cancel the event for this school year after a scheduling conflict with a possible Media Arts Program hosted dance in the same month.

Eventually, Johnson and Wong decided to put off the plans for the Word for the Unheard dance for the rest of the school year.

"We would have loved to do it sooner, but as a lot of people may know, it is close to impossible to schedule anything this late in the year since the calendar is so booked," Johnson said.

The lack of student enthusiasm also contributed to the final cancellation of the event. However, many students who

did plan on attending were disappointed.

Sophomore Katie Truong, who bought a ticket for the dance earlier this year, was disappointed to find out about the cancellation.

"I was excited to go to see the live performance by Loggy and to have another dance [at school]," Truong said. "[But] I understand that there was no good time this year to put the dance."

Freshman Jessica Uong also was looking forward to the dance.

"It sounded fun, and it's for a good cause. [I was excited] because it wasn't going to be just another dance, it'd be a concert as well," Uong said.

Though the dance is off for this year, Johnson says that the dance is confirmed for the next school year.

"We don't have an exact date yet, but we're working on it," Johnson said. "There have been a lot of misunderstandings, and I hope it's clear that Haley and I have been trying really hard. We have devoted a ton of time into making this happen for the sake of Invisible Children." ♦

FALCON FOCUS: IVAN FRANCE



Sophomore Ivan France fixes a wooden component of his robot during a Robotics competition at Archbishop Mitty High School.

MSET member takes charge

By Minu Palaniappan

It is 9 p.m., and the campus seems empty, minus one room with light filtering through the window shafts. In a small room off of the music quad, diligent members of MSET (Mechanical Science and Engineering Team) tighten bolts, drill holes and cut metal. At the peak of their build season, robotics members regularly work with machine-oil grease coating their hands and sawdust clinging to their sleeves.

Despite the chaos in the room, sophomore Ivan France, the vice president of the team, calmly directs the design team to drill the final holes on the robot. Quickly the members plug in the air-powered hand drills to the bright orange pneumatic tubes. France yells, "Turn on the air compressor!"

Hoping to work as a mechanical engineer one day, France came to Saratoga High last year determined to make a mark on the robotics team. He joined

MSET and proved to be one of the most useful freshmen.

France built a major component of last year's robot. This work required expertise with several materials including wood and metal. He designed, built and tested the vital component within just a few weeks. Soon after, France was able to assist Cordell Hollingsworth, the previous MSET president, with many of the other aspects of the robot.

During his freshman year, France was supported by his parents since his dad has a strong engineering background and his mom helped to lead the team in finances and communications. Their support allowed France to donate many hours a week to MSET.

Now in his sophomore year, France is leading the 2012 build season. After Hollingsworth graduated, the team was deprived of an experienced member who orchestrated last year's build season.

"Even with Cordell, there had to be

a certain level of initiative to get everything else done to get in the room and be a helpful asset to the team, and I think that taking a leadership position has required more initiative than the loss of our fellow Cordell, although the two are somewhat connected," France said.

During this season, France has been able to spend productive hours in the room, focusing on improving components of the robot or leading discussions with robotics members.

As France heads into his junior year, his leadership skills will have an impact on the success of the entire team and perhaps take the team to a successful win at the St. Louis National Competition.

If the team's robot can perform well at the upcoming regionals, France hopes MSET could emerge as a future contender among traditional powerhouse teams such as Bellarmine and Mountain View. ♦

ACADEMIC COMPETITIONS

'Team Pikachu' falls at Stanford Math

32 STUDENTS WHO TOOK AMC 10 AND 12 QUALIFY FOR AIME

By Jackie Gu & Brandon Judoprasetyo

The school's mathletes recently competed in the annual Stanford Math Tournament (SMT) on Feb. 18 and broke their winning streak. Unlike the past three years in which the team placed second, third and first, respectively, the team did not place as a whole this year.

"I thought it was a pretty good experience because it was an eye-opening one in getting to know the other teams in the Bay Area," senior officer Evan Ye said. "There were some very strong competitors this time, and even though the results were disappointing, the competition was fun."

The team, nicknamed "Pikachu," consisted of seniors Brian Wai and Evan Ye; juniors Amanda Chow, Jackie Gu and Edward Dong; sophomores Matthew Yee and Edgar Chen; and freshman Kevin Chiang. Although as a whole the team did not place, Wai placed second individually in the advanced topics category.

The team had several hardships coming into the competition. On top of the loss of "the big three" (2011 alumni Albert Gu, Amol Aggrawal, and David Zeng), senior club co-president Alissa Zhang was unable to compete.

"I think the major thing is that we lost major mathletes," Ye said. "They were a pretty integral part of our team

in previous years because they pulled us through the power rounds."

Although many members of the team were disappointed with the results, club advisor PJ Yim had a more positive view of the tournament.

"Actually, the result is good," Yim said. "I think we've been spoiled in the previous years. We went, but we didn't place because they only announced the top three teams."

Yim feels it was important to remember just how intense the competition was. Present at the tournament were teams from San Diego, New Jersey, and even China.

"At Stanford, all the schools that show up are all good schools. Really sure, good schools," Yim said. "I'm sure at least one or two teams showed up from China, and there were teams from San Diego, which has some of the top schools [in the country]. If you think about it, this is not a local contest at all."

Yim believes that the large numbers of engineers that the Bay Area and San Diego have attracted attribute to the competitiveness of this area. According to Yim, the middle school contests are simple examples as to how strong the bay area teams are.

"For the past two years running, the national Math Counts competition has been won by the California team," Yim said. "Each team is represented by four

members. Of the eight different members who were on the team in the past two years, seven were from the Santa Clara chapter."

Yim feels that the improvement to math club sessions this year outweighed the results achieved at SMT.

"Don't get me wrong, I'm happy if we place really high, but what I really care about is the kind of camaraderie we have this year," Yim said. We don't always win, but it's okay."

AMC exam results in 32 qualifiers

In addition to competing at SMT, 32 school mathletes who took the American Mathematics Competition (AMC) on Feb. 7 and Feb. 22 qualified for the American Invitational Mathematics Exam which will take place on April 15.

Qualifiers from the AMC 10 include freshmen Landon Chow and Chiang and sophomores Edgar Chen, Jeffrey Chen, Robert Eng, Matthew Lee and Reggie Wu.

AMC 12 qualifiers were juniors Kabir Chandrasekher, Eugene Che, Justin Chiang, Chow, Dong, Kevin Garbe, Gu, Brian Kim and Nole Lin and seniors David Eng, Wai, Ye and Zhang.

"Our numbers are above average, but there were definitely a number of student who I thought should qualify who didn't," Yim said. "We have room to grow still." ♦

BUDGET POLICY

District drafts contingencies for worst case

By Edward Dong, Joanna Lee & Sanjwalwa

Several new initiatives for taxes supporting education in California have emerged in competition with the proposal of Gov. Jerry Brown.

The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District has considered the consequences of the rejection of all three initiatives and has identified the need to develop contingency plans involving the reallocation of funds.

"Should the tax measures fail, trigger cuts in the amount of \$370 per student are a possibility," superintendent Bob Mistle said. "We could see potential reductions of \$550,000 each year for two years, beginning in the 2013 to 2014 school year."



Mistle

However, Mistle said that if reductions become necessary, they will be made "as far away from the classroom as possible."

After last spring's ratification of a parcel tax, the school board has set up a solid list of feasible ways to alleviate possible budget crises without affecting services for students.

These goals include the preservation of a 4 percent general fund reserve, the holding of a reserve held at 10 percent of general fund expenditure, and the creation of a balanced budget trend.

Principal Jeff Anderson said the school district's budget is in "pretty good shape [and is] looking much better than that of previous years, mainly because the parcel tax was passed."

In addition, Los Gatos and Saratoga High are "Basic Aid" schools, meaning that the amount of money they receive from the state is not based on the number of students enrolled, but on property tax revenue in the community.

"We've given back all of the money that the state used to give us," said Anderson.

When public schools across the state take a hit, Basic Aid schools such as Saratoga feel obligated to relinquish an equal percentage of funds to the state.

"[Most] other schools don't run a system like ours," Anderson said. "As a school, we decided that we would take a cut on our categorical money because we already have our property taxes to compensate for the loss."

Although the school has given about \$1.4 million to the state, the parcel tax had raised close to \$900,000 to make up for the financial loss, therefore ensuring a stable school budget.

Anderson believes that the budget will be steady if the school follows its current spending and saving policies.

"We're very grateful to be in a school that is pretty well-off in comparison to schools in different districts," said Anderson. ♦

>> bigidea

Jerry Brown's Taxes

Potential initiatives The district knows that it needs to reallocate funds.

The district's considerations The superintendent assures budget reductions won't affect education.

School Budget The parcel tax has atoned for the financial loss.

LINSANITY >> Senior, alumnus knew Lin before fame

continued from pg. 1

that Lin is living in New York, Tang still closely follows his friend's playing and success.

Lin's sudden rise in fame hasn't changed him as a person, according to Tang. He described Lin as "authentic," not putting up a masked exterior during his interviews and for the press.

"He's thankful for the opportunity and wants to make the best of it," Tang said. "He's still the same humble and nice guy he was before he became a pro athlete."

And as for knowing someone famous, Tang said it's definitely cool, but he stopped caring after a while "because it's not actually you."

"My friends all think it's really awesome, though," he said.

Glory days
2006 Saratoga graduate Ryan Mat-

suura first played against Lin in eighth grade as part of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) basketball leagues. A point guard himself, Matsuura distinctly remembers Lin as "undoubtedly a leader." He reflected on playing against Lin.

"A fair number of players were better because they were bigger, stronger and faster. [Lin] wasn't like that," Matsuura said. "I doubt you would find many kids who were 'intimidated' by him, but he had a rep. Our team knew he could ball."

Matsuura also clearly recalls Lin and his teammates dunking on his own teammates a few times, which "wasn't very fun."

He never played against Lin in high school. Years later, Matsuura had the chance to see Lin play for Harvard while doing student radio work for Boston University.

"[He] put up mediocre numbers and didn't really wow as a future NBA'er before his junior year," Matsuura said. "But



NBA phenomenon Jeremy Lin poses with senior Daniel Tang, his family friend. Lin recently rose to fame for his performance as the New York Knicks' point guard. This is Tang's profile picture on Facebook.

he [later] broke out with great games against Boston College and University of Connecticut."

Lin's friends have supported him step by step throughout his basketball career,

and often voicing their support through social media, according to Matsuura.

"I've always liked the Knicks," Tang adds. "But his presence on the team only made me like them even more." ♦



CHARITY FUNDRAISER

Benefit Fashion Show prepares to take the stage

By Allison Toth

Students dressed in prom dresses and sports gear will strut their duds at the annual Benefit Fashion Show on March 17 in the Large Gym. The event, usually scheduled for May, takes place earlier because of scheduling conflicts.

"We could not find a May date, and the latest one we could get is a March [date] which is two months earlier," co-head commissioner Annie Barco said. "It's really hard for us planning [the

show] because it's happening way faster than we expected it to."

Benefit Fashion Show, a student-organized fashion show, raises money for St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital. According to Barco, this year, 120 students are participating in the show. The Head Benefit Commissioners this year are Barco, Kari Clark and Anika Jhalani.

"The show consists of eight to 10 walks of different themes, led by different theme heads, and with different models for each theme," Jhalani said.

According to Barco, the most popular categories of apparel are prom and college wear.

"We usually keep the main [categories] consistent like Prom and there is usually a Girls' Night Out and Bromance category," Barco said. "And this year we are adding a hometown sports theme so like Sharks apparel, Giants, and Niners, and we also tried to add in a teacher walk."

According to Jhalani, the main purpose of the show is to raise money for

a specific charity that is chosen by the head commissioners of the club.

"We knew we wanted to focus around something that is aiding children and then we narrowed it down," Barco said. "Ultimately we couldn't decide so we wrote the names down on the back of sugar packages at Starbucks and mixed them around and chose one and it was St. Jude's."

VIP tickets will cost \$25, general tickets \$20, student tickets \$15 and bleacher seats for \$10. ♦

Mexican exchange students to experience SHS culture

by Edward Dong

For 31 years, world languages department chair Arnaldo Rodriguex has taken Saratoga exchange students to Cuernavaca, Mexico; this year, Mexican students from the "City of Eternal Spring" will finally return the visit.

Twelve to 15 high school students from the Universidad Internacional in Cuernavaca will visit for two weeks in October and possibly mark the beginning of a new tradition.

"What I would like to see in the future is to become a sister school," Rodriguex said. "The more we know about other people, the better we can fit in the world."

According to Rodriguex, the exchange will certainly be "an eye-opener" for both schools.

"Getting to know kids your age and just spending time with each other, finding out that kids are kids all over the world... That's the way we break stereotypes and barriers," Rodriguex said.

"Sometimes it's hard to bring [foreign students] here every single year," Rodriguex said.

Senior Viraj Parmar, who hosted one of the Costa Rican students, remembers gaining "a real-life window into another culture."

"I would introduce [Cristian Salazar] to one of my friends, and he'd kiss her on the cheek," Parmar recalls. "She'd be taken aback, and he would get confused."

For his second semester, the teenager arrived in the San Jose region, where he would later attend a university.

Today, he teaches Spanish at Saratoga and arranges the annual trip to Mexico.

"I really enjoyed my experience as an exchange student," Rodriguex said. "It's never easy, but obviously I enjoyed it, 'cause now I'm here."

According to Rodriguex, his year abroad exposed him to aspects of society that he had never witnessed before.

"I had not really dealt with discrimination. My country didn't teach me that,"

Rodriguex said. "Where I went, the Hispanics were here, the blacks were there, and the Caucasians were there, and there were fights all the time between them. It was a huge eye-opener for me."

Invaluable lessons like this one motivated Rodriguex to present his own students with the same opportunity.

For four decades, he has fostered relationships with institutes in various Latin American countries.

"That's one thing I've always done as a teacher," Rodriguex said. "Ever since I started working at this district, I've taken groups of kids every single year."

In addition to taking students abroad, Rodriguex has often invited students from Chile and Costa Rica to Saratoga.

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"I would introduce [Cristian Salazar] to one of my friends, and he'd kiss her on the cheek," Parmar recalls. "She'd be taken aback, and he would get confused."

Junior Shireen Kaul also appreciated the openness of her Mexican classmates. After she sang Adele's "Someone Like You" with senior Shayda Khorasani at a talent show toward the end of the trip, many of Kaul's new friends gave her warm compliments.

"They were really sweet and very well-mannered, and they weren't exclusive," Kaul said. "They would come up and be like, 'Can we take a picture with you?' Now, we're all friends on Facebook."

During the outdoor fiesta that followed the talent show, Mexican and exchange students alike began dancing to "Party

tended classes with younger students.

"The group Ivan and I joined was in a phase where they specialize right before going college," Parmar said. "I was in the social humanities track, and the highlight of my experience was learning Greek in an etymology class."

However, curriculum was not the only aspect that surprised Parmar. Like Salazar, he also discovered a large disparity in the teaching style.

"Students and teachers would openly share stories and feelings with the class and seek advice," Parmar said. "If people saw this sort of thing in America, they'd immediately think it to be a counseling session as opposed to a school."

According to Parmar, he found himself "highly impressed with this open environment" and even "thought America was inferior in that sense."

"But then I considered the fact that the students were basically homogeneous," Parmar said. "So that kind of openness is much more easy in a place like Mexico."

It made me realize how different demographics can affect the culture of different countries."

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During the outdoor fiesta that followed the talent show, Mexican and exchange students alike began dancing to "Party

Rock" by LMFAO.

A group of Mexican students then tried to teach their peers popular dances.

"I love to dance, and I think the dance is the best way to communicate," Mexican student Paolo Morales said. "[It] does not matter, the languages."

The dance also offered Saratoga students an opportunity to test the skills they learned in their two salsa lessons.

"I was so ecstatic to see some of our kids dancing salsa with the Mexican students," Rodriguex said. "I remember seeing [senior] Linus Johansson just dancing so well with this Mexican girl, and I was overwhelmed with happiness."

October, 2012

Rodriguex hopes the students who will come in October will enjoy an equally illuminating experience and an equally welcoming student body.

Kaul would love to host a visitor, and students like Morales have already expressed their desire to come.

"Of course!" Morales said. "I learned a lot of things, but most important is we are not too different."

Parmar, who has participated in the trip to Cuernavaca twice, believes that inviting students from the Universidad Internacional will not only allow Saratoga to "give back" but also "encourage us to keep in touch with them and maintain relationships."

"We won't any longer feel like it's a one time thing, where we practice our Spanish and then say goodbye," Parmar said.

Rodriguex agrees that cultural exchanges promote understanding.

"The music that they like is similar. The movies they like, similar. We learn to live with each other and understand each other," Rodriguex said. "At the end of the day, we're all people!" ♦



Rodriguex

CRITICAL READING CLASSES

SAT English
Saturdays, March 24 to May 26, 9 am - 12:30 pm \$825
Monday to Friday, April 16 - 20, 9 am - 12:30 pm* \$425
*The Spring Break course is an accelerated reading-intensive course, focusing on vocabulary development and critical reading skills. Instructor consent may be required.

Sherlock Holmes in A Study in Scarlet
Saturdays, March 24 to June 16, 4 - 5 pm \$360
Monday to Friday, April 16 - 20, 12:30 - 3 pm \$350
Class focus: Vocabulary building (560 words in text, 240 taught), reading for tone and visualization.

Shakespeare's Richard II
Wednesdays, March 21 to June 13, 7 - 8 pm \$360
Monday to Friday, April 16 - 20, 9 am - noon \$350
Class focus: Vocabulary building (399 words in text, 133 taught), reading, reciting, using historical context.

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SCHOLASTIC COMPETITION

Students win awards in national art writing contest

By Edward Dong & Grace Ma

Digging dandelions from her lawn at her parents' request, freshman Yvonne Ye cautiously holds each tuft of seeds.

"You have to be careful so you don't accidentally knock some seeds back onto the lawn," Ye said. Otherwise, she will have to pull out the pesky plants all over again next year.

Unfortunately, after 30 minutes of labor, Ye discovers one dandelion that has already lost half its head. She knows exactly what this means.

"I just decided, 'What the heck,' and I blew that one," Ye recalls.

Little did she know, this experience would inspire a poem,

"Dandelion Wish," which she would include in a collection worthy of a Regional Gold Key in the 2012 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards.

Junior Sophia Zhu inspired not among dandelions but in her stuffy SAT preparation class, also achieved this award for her colored pencil drawing.

The Scholastic Art and Writing Awards has recognized young creative thinkers since 1923; its annual contest begins on the regional level and awards Gold Keys to the top 7 to 10 percent of submissions, which go on to compete nationally.

Zhu found inspiration for "Anorexia," the piece she submitted, through her hunger during a 7 to 9 p.m. SAT class. The idea came to her when she noticed

that the water bottle in front of her resembled a person, she said.

"Anorexia" depicts a dying fish in an unfilled water bottle. A running tap is right next to the water bottle; however, the bottle rests just out of reach.

"The fish is human life. The tap is food—the tap is life," Zhu said. "The water bottle just isn't taking in that life, even though it's right there. And so it's going to die."

According to Zhu, the symbolism in her piece carries the message.

"The stream of water is right there, but as a water bottle it can be extremely difficult to move there on [its] own, because bottles can't move," Zhu said. "And that is the thing with eating disorders, right? It can be

extremely obvious to the people around them, but that doesn't make it necessarily easy to fix."

Hunger also inspired part of Ye's submission; her winning collection of three poems included one titled "War and Piece (of a Cake)."

"I was hungry, and I started writing a deconstruction poem about cake," Ye said. According to Ye, she then "started drawing metaphors with war and cake, and [the poem] just happened."

Ye enjoys writing poetry because she often finds spewing her thoughts onto a page "therapeutic and calming." She began creating poems in third grade.

"I started writing these tiny little quatrains, which were kind of just short, cute and pretty stupid," Ye said. "But I loved

doing those."

Ye won her first Gold Key for poetry just four years later. Despite her talent, however, she does not plan to make writing a career.

"I'm definitely interested in English, but I don't think I want to make [writing] a profession," Ye said. "When I get inspiration, I just get on my laptop and start writing. It's not really a constant thing. It's more of a creative emotional outlet."

Zhu shares similar feelings toward art.

"I have fun doing [art], and it's great stress relief, but I honestly do not know if I wish to continue pursuing [it] when I grow up," Zhu said. "If I had to do it every day, it might just get boring." ♦

History Day contest: Revolution, Reaction, Reform >>> BY Anushree Dugar



PRESENTATION >>> Above: Junior Sanjna Verma presents her project about the Tiananmen Square on Friday, Feb. 16. "History Day was at first just an extra credit opportunity for APUSH, but when I realized I could research one of my favorite historical events, I was more inclined to pull through with the project," Verma said.

TEACHING >>> Above: History teacher Matt Torrens comments on a junior Allison Bruno's History Day poster. According to Torrens, History Day "is a really good opportunity for kids to research a topic they are very passionate about and get excited about." Torrens hopes that the History Day competition will inspire students to continue studying history.



READING >>> Left: Junior McKenna Galvin browses through a paper about the Constitutional Revolution of 1937. Papers were dispersed around the school library for people to read.

WEBSITE >>> Right: Junior Maggy Liu views another student's website on the library computers at the History Day competition.

SCIENCE BOWL

Senior team comes third in final round

By Anushree Dugar

At the Regional Science Bowl Competition at the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center (SLAC) on Feb. 11, the science bowl team of seniors Arnav Dugar, Chris Jones, Hansen Qian, Alissa Zhang and Myron Zhang placed third among 24 teams from 20 other high schools from the Silicon Valley.

These A Team members, along with B Team members sophomores Nolan Chen and Robert Eng, juniors Amanda Chow and Jackie Gu and senior David Eng, started preparing

for the competition last October under the guidance of chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu. They met about twice a month to practice.

Nakamatsu gave the students tips, but she mostly encouraged the teams to teach one another.

"I was more of an observer, and if I noticed they were doing something and the student-coach didn't point it out, I would point it out," Nakamatsu said.

During their sessions, the two teams competed against one another in practice rounds

answering both multiple-choice and short-answer questions related to chemistry, physics, Earth and space science, biology and energy.

This practice helped them develop not only their knowledge of science, but also strategies on how to divide the work and be most efficient.

According to Qian, the students also prepared presentations on topics none of the other members knew anything about in order to increase their breadth of knowledge.

The A Team won all five rounds of their round-robin

division, placing them in the upper bracket where they then placed third in the final round.

Nakamatsu was pleased with the performance of the students, crediting the success of the A Team mainly to their preparation and diverse knowledge.

"They prepared very well," Nakamatsu said. "It was a good mix of strengths. People brought different things to the table, which was good."

According to the A Team, the pairing of opponents also helped them succeed. "We were very fortunate

not to have been placed into a morning round robin comprising of the powerhouse teams, since that might have psychologically intimidated us and affected how we approached our competition," Qian said.

Team B, on the other hand, felt that some of the brackets were unfair because they competed against some of the best schools.

"The competition took a tremendous amount of collaboration," Dugar said. "Each of us had our own strengths, and we were all dependent on each other for success." ♦

APPLICATION DEVELOPERS

Club members offer computer science classes

By Minu Palaniappan

At the Application Developers Club's first few meetings in October, ideas were aplenty. However, when these ideas were ready for implementation, club members with little programming experience had little to contribute.

"Instead of having them simply sit around, why not fill the gaps in their knowledge about coding?" club co-president Su-

jay Khandekar recalls asking himself.

For the past two weeks, the club has hosted tutorials during Wednesday lunches during which students learn the programming language Java.

Vice president Kabir Chandrasekhar first introduced the idea of offering coding lessons when the club's weekly lunch meetings grew unproductive. Instead of utilizing meeting times for programming collabo-

ration, members would simply lounge around and maybe explain their ideas on an abstract level.

With just nine of its members familiar with Java, Python and C, the club welcomes the possibility of a greater number of capable programmers.

The instructor of these sessions, senior Evan Ye, has taught a few foundational concepts but intends to introduce abstract ones in the future.

"Teaching others my knowledge? I love it!" Ye said. "It's really fun to formulate your skills in an interesting, digestible way. I also try to incite creativity and passion, and it's really rewarding when students succeed."

Ye plans to teach students a broad understanding of Java. From syntax and semantics lessons to algorithmic problem-solving and application development, students who grasp Ye's lessons will enter AP Com-

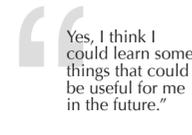
puter Science with a head start.

"I think this teaching experience allows students to get an exposure to the underside of our growing technological world," Ye said. "It's useful to attend these short classes to gauge your affinity and interest in this complicated field."

The club hopes to influence more students to take computer science courses and, in turn, contribute to the mobile apps that the club is developing. ♦

>>> togetalks

Are you interested in learning Computer Science from the Developers Club?



junior Doug Jones



junior Phillip Singer



senior Eren Veziroglu

FACE AIDS

Leadership against AIDS

STUDENTS FORM CHAPTER, RAISE AWARENESS

By Michael Lee

Her name was Mama Katele. Out of the thousands of people in a Zambian refugee camp, she was the only person who was openly HIV-positive. Everyone else was too fearful of the societal shame associated with the disease.

When three Stanford students—including Saratoga alumna Lauren Young—traveled to Zambia to volunteer in 2005, they met Mama Katele and learned of her struggles against disease and disgrace.

Mama Katele inspired the three students to form FACE AIDS, an organization dedicated to fighting HIV by "building a movement of young leaders dedicated to global health equity and social justice," according to their website, faceaids.org.

On Jan. 26 Young returned to Saratoga and spoke to the Leadership class about FACE AIDS.

Her cause inspired junior

Sasan Saadat to work with seniors Alison Knysh and Stephanie Shimizu to form their own FACE AIDS chapter at Saratoga High.

In over 200 American high schools and colleges, the organization has established chapters that lead awareness campaigns and raise money for health care.

"A big part of what they're doing is trying to get more funding and more awareness ... but also to show Saratoga students what young people are capable of," Saadat said.

Seniors Mac Hyde and Joshua Harris and sophomore Erland Hollingsworth, all of whom work with the drama department, have also started planning a 24-hour-long "play in a day" to help support FACE AIDS.

"A lot of kids have wanted to do this, but [FACE AIDS] enables kids to say, 'Look, I'm doing it, and it's for a good cause,'" Hyde said.

Hyde described two differ-

ent approaches to the "play in a day": either the students involved would use a traditional script or they would write, memorize and stage an original, student-written play.

"I personally would prefer the latter, because it would be completely student-produced," Hyde said.

Saadat appreciates the value of communal contribution—whether it is through a walk-a-thon, a marathon play or simply raising awareness about a cause—that FACE AIDS preaches.

"There's this quote by Sydney Smith that's like, 'It is the greatest of all mistakes to do nothing because you can only do little—do what you can,'" Saadat said.

He added, "It was really cool that every little bit you do—just telling more people about it or raising just a little bit of money with a bake sale, you know—even though we're young people. And, of course, it's a good cause, too." ♦

ENGLISH >>> Benefits, warnings for doubling

continued from pg. 1

Friend said that the department decided to offer this option in response to desires expressed by students and parents. But the class is only open to students now enrolled in English Honors who have undergone a thorough review process; they will be able to take their second choice AP English class on a space-available basis.

Junior Sasan Saadat is one of the five humanity-oriented students who are hoping to double up on English classes next year. He chose to double up for several reasons.

"I basically wanted to show colleges that I'm really passionate about English and the humanities," Saadat said.

Saadat also said that taking both AP English courses would allow him to fully develop his reading and writing skills.

"In the Silicon Valley, because a lot of our parents are generally engineers and doctors," Saadat said. "There's a huge slide towards those kinds of classes."

Saadat, who is highly involved in school activities, said that his English teacher, Suzanne Herzman, was concerned that he would not have enough time next year to handle the rigorous coursework that doubling up entails.

"She said, 'I know that you're very involved in other aspects of the school and that's going to have to take a back seat [if you double up on English].'"

According to Friend, the workload for students doubling up will be "very intense."

"I would recommend it to a small band of devoted and hardworking students who love the humanities and relish the thought of drowning in a sea of reading and essays," Friend said.

Saadat believes he can handle the immense amount of reading required in the two classes.

"It's going to be a difficult task," Saadat said, "But I'm really committed."

Friend said that students who chose to double will not be excused from assignments that seem similar in nature. ♦

ShareWorld Learning Center advertisement for SAT & AP Test Prep, including contact info and class details.

New Things to Wear advertisement for prom dresses, featuring a 10% off offer and contact information.

"I believe that everyone should have a sense of self-pride and have pride in one's hometown, but I don't believe such a problem should be debated as much as it is. Most of the high-schoolers who are so adamant about being Taiwanese simply get their ideas from their parents."

sophomore Jason Li

"Sorry, you guys have Yao Ming. We got the Lin-sanity."

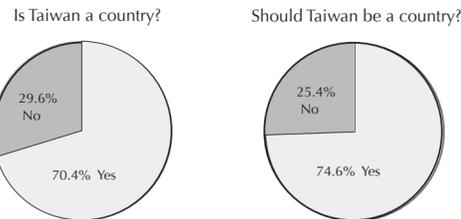
sophomore Gloria Liu

"Honestly, I really hate how we Chinese have to differentiate between mainland and Taiwanese. I'm sure Jeremy would agree with me and that he would not want to be called specifically Taiwanese or mainland Chinese. We are all Chinese and shouldn't differentiate what type of Chinese people we are. Jeremy is Chinese."

senior James Huang

Sun and Stars The Chinese stars and Taiwan's sun; both are on the countries respective flags

>> falconpoll



The Falcon polled 71 students. The similarity in numbers suggests that students are somewhat polarized over the issue.

"Just like China wants to claim Jeremy Lin for their own, China wants to claim Taiwan for its own. It's a case of nationalistically fueled greed—China is just being greedy."

sophomore Kristie Lin

The Great Debate

By Samuel Liu

The Knicks point guard Jeremy Lin's recent rise from obscurity to basketball stardom has cast a spotlight on ethnic disagreements between mainland Chinese and Taiwanese. The question is, is Taiwan a legitimate country?

The conflict, especially relevant in Saratoga since Chinese and Taiwanese Americans coexist, originated when the communists rose to power in mainland China. With American support, the nationalist government fled to Taiwan, where they call themselves the Republic of China.

However, mainland China's government claims that Taiwan is part of China and disregards Taiwan as a country, spawning a major point of contention between the two sides.

I want to ease into this. If you're Taiwanese or feel strongly about the issue, grab a chair and find a comfortable place. Think happy thoughts. Grab a bite to eat. Remember, happy thoughts.

Ready? OK, here's the answer. Taiwan is not a country. (You're either vomiting or burning this paper right now.)

Stay calm. Remember, I love Taiwan and nearly all of my friends are Taiwanese Americans. Give me some time, and I'll convince you.

It was 1949, and with American support, the nationalist government fled to Taiwan, where they became the Republic of China. The problem is, mainland China's government continues to claim that Taiwan is a part of China.

Mainland China's position on Taiwan

JEREMY LIN'S NATIONALITY HAS BECOME A NEW TWIST IN THE TAIWAN-CHINA DEBATE. IS TAIWAN A COUNTRY? READERS WEIGH IN.

the U.S. does not recognize Taiwan, or the "Republic of China."

The U.S. also uses a "strategy of ambiguity" with China; it never specifically says that it won't help Taiwan in armed conflict.

Taiwan is a valuable asset to America in that it is westernized and a democracy, in contrast to China's restrictive communist ways. Still, America does not want to risk conflict with China, which views the Taiwan Relations Act as "an unwarranted intrusion by the United States into the internal affairs of China."

America's affinity for Taiwan has directly influenced Saratoga High. Although Taiwan is minuscule in comparison to China, the Taiwanese population in the Bay Area outweighs the Chinese population.

I am a first-generation Chinese-American; my relatives are all from mainland China. At the risk of becoming pariah in this school where Chinese-Americans are a minority, I'm going to go out on a limb and say that Taiwan is by definition not a country; but it should be. I'll hold the Constitution as my defense, and a criticism to the United States' hypocrisy. Government, the Constitution states, derives "their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed..."

If Taiwan acts as a country, then it should be recognized as a country. But by strict definition, Taiwan cannot yet be considered a country. ♦

"I'm really proud of being Chinese, I'm really proud of my parents being from Taiwan."

point guard Jeremy Lin

>> falconfigures



>> Wikipedia and Time

Teachers' different ways of grading unfair to students

In a classroom on campus, a teacher says: "All right class, you have 30 minutes. Time starts now!"

Just next door, another teacher says, "40 minutes for the test, now go!"

Teachers within the same department will often assign different versions of a test and use different grading methods. This lack of uniformity is unfair to students, especially if teachers of the same subject do not collaborate with each other, because it gives some students an advantage over others.

Although all California teachers are required to adhere to certain teaching standards that must be met during the course of the school year, teachers have the freedom to decide how they wish to meet those standards. Teachers create their own tests, curriculum and assignments.

When teachers are allowed to devise their own way of teaching, it often

gives one student an advantage over another student taking the same class with a different teacher. For example, some teachers offer A+'s to their students, while other teachers of the same subject do not.

This irregularity is unfair, for if two hardworking students had different teachers, only one of them would have the chance to earn an A+. Colleges would then only see the A+ on the transcript, without taking the circumstances behind the grade into consideration. Grades should objectively reflect the student's knowledge, not unfair differences in grading policy.

The formats of tests should also be taken into consideration. The use of calculators and time limits for tests should especially be regulated, because variations between these would give some students an advantage over others. Tests taken with Scantrons and multiple choice options are easier to guess on compared to

short answer tests. Certain departments on campus are already standardizing the way teachers teach subjects. For example, AP U.S. History teachers Kim Anzalone, Margarita Morelle and Matthew Torrens meet regularly to collaborate to create the same rubrics for grading essays and create similar classroom activities, such as role simulations.

The benefits of collaborating on the same curriculum are endless. Students can approach any teacher during tutorial, giving the student more opportunities to receive help if their own teacher is busy.

Additionally, standardized curriculum and grading techniques prevent students from complaining that one teacher is "easier" than another. In APUSH, in which three teachers teach the subject, all students from any teacher are equally prepared for the AP exams.

More departments on campus should start to follow in the footsteps of the APUSH teachers, in order to ensure that any teacher students are assigned to allows them an equal chance to earn a high grade. ♦

Some teachers offer A+'s to their students, while other teachers of the same subject do not.

>> Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editor-in-Chief: David Eng; Opinion Editor: Jason Wu; Reporter: Grace Ma

The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 35-4 in favor of standardized grading.

Sparknotes OK if utilized properly

By Karen Sung

>> candidcaricatures

Here's a typical conversation between two students while at school: "So did you read the English book for homework?" "Nope, I just Sparknoted it."

Sparknotes is famous in high schools for being the go-to resource for students when they are piled under a mountain of homework and want to save time by taking a shortcut in their English reading.

The truth of the matter is that high-school students often don't have enough time or energy to endure 70 pages of "All Quiet on the Western Front" or to decipher the intricacies of "Hamlet."

With Sparknotes, a website that offers thorough summaries per chapter for well-known novels, students are able to save themselves from sleepless nights (or falling asleep at their desk, using the school book as their pillow) and headaches from reading tiny printed text. No wonder Sparknotes is so popular; instead of reading pages of complicated literature, they can simply scroll through one page on the website and understand the gist in just a few minutes.

However, to the disappointment of some students, Sparknotes isn't always an easy way out. Teachers have come to realize the aid it provides and have learned to design their assignments so that just reading Sparknotes will leave students no less confused and frustrated while taking tests and quizzes.

They have good reason to do so; Sparknotes' original intention was to provide a study guide but by now, most students



KAREN SUNG

rely on it as a shortcut that borders on cheating, as they avoid reading the actual material itself and instead use Sparknotes as a way to escape homework.

Even so, Sparknotes is often a useful tool to help students connect the dots between the words they read and the actual meaning behind them. After the summary of each chapter, the site offers a detailed section analyzing the content. Or in the case of No Fear Shakespeare, an extension of Sparknotes, students can read transcriptions of Shakespeare's plays into modern day English, which many students consider to be a life saver, or at least to their English grade.

The best method when finding the balance between Sparknotes and an intimidating English novel is to first scan

the online summary for a general idea, read the novel itself and then refer to the analysis to fully understand each section. With the benefits of reading both the assigned chapter and the online analysis, students will also earn more participation points when they raise their hands and share their knowledge in class, thanks to Sparknotes.

Although teachers often dislike the fact that students may merely be sprouting off the words and ideas of Sparknotes, reading the website does lead to an enhanced understanding of the novel and leads to more productive class discussions.

After all, Sparknotes's slogan is, "When your books and teachers don't make sense, we do." ♦

>> togotalks

Should students be allowed to use Sparknotes?

"It is reasonable to let the students use it because it helps students analyze reading."



sophomore Susanna Lee

"Can we stop students from using it? No. Does it prevent students from thinking on their own? Yes."



teacher Natasha Ritchie

THIRD PERIOD

STAFF POLICY

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

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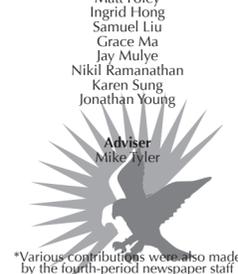
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Favoring minorities unfair for everybody

by GraceMa & SanjNalwa

Proposition 209, passed by ballot in California in 1996, amended the state's constitution to bar public institutions from considering race, sex or ethnicity in any publicly funded activity, including employment and education.

In the meantime, critics of this proposition have been trying to circumvent it for years. For example, in October 2011, Bill SB 185 almost became law in California. It would have allowed the CSU and UC systems to give certain races preference in admission.

The only thing that prevented California Gov. Jerry Brown from signing this bill into law was his belief that the courts should decide whether such a law should reverse amendments to the state constitution.

Affirmative action unconstitutional

Instead of seeking preferential treatment for certain races, critics of Proposition 209 should devote their energies to providing better opportunities for minorities to help prepare them for college.

Race-based quotas—the practice of reserving a percentage of admission slots for certain minorities—were declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1978 in Bakke v. Regents of UC Davis.

Even though race was allowed to be one of many "factors" in university admissions by the Supreme Court in 2003 in Gratz v. Bollinger, in a 5-4 decision, that decision too is likely to be overturned this fall.

On Feb. 21, the Supreme Court decided to revisit Gratz v. Bollinger by accepting a case seeking to overturn it. This acceptance implies that five of the current nine justices believe that there is a reasonable chance that Gratz v. Bollinger will be overturned.

Affirmative action is racist and undermines what we cherish most about our country: being a meritocracy in which the incidence of birth is relatively unimportant, unlike in some older cultures.

Better alternatives already exist

Lastly, race-based affirmative action should be eliminated because tried and tested alternatives can accomplish the same goals.

For example, California's Early Academic Outreach Program targets underprivileged kids and gives them the education they need to succeed academically. Unlike race-based affirmative action programs, this program is not race-based, but rather caters to financially deprived children.

Another alternative to race-based affirmative action is the 10 percent plan instated in Texas. This plan admits the top 10 percent of each high school class to state schools, regardless of ACT or SAT scores.

The 10 percent plan is known to be successful since it resolves many issues simultaneously: It is not racist, and yet it gives those who are in less privileged circumstances the opportunities they well deserve.

These programs and plans are proven to work. Affirmative action, as we know it, can be done away with, and it will not be missed. All that is lacking is the political will to stop giving advantages to various races. ♦

Saving paper a team effort

by MichaelLee

>> candidcaricatures

According to the American Forest and Paper Association, the average American uses about 748 pounds of paper per year. That amounts to over 900 million trees per year that need to be cut down to supply wood pulp for America's paper industry alone. Each mature tree can absorb about 48 pounds of carbon dioxide and 60 pounds of other pollutants from the air annually.

Do the math. That's a lot of carbon dioxide that stays in the atmosphere, contributing to the greenhouse effect—the trapping of heat in the Earth's atmosphere. This extra heat that re-radiates back to the Earth's surface is slowly but surely raising the average temperature of the planet. Glaciers are melting, biomes are changing and certain species are approaching extinction.

Saratoga High and its students can play their part by cutting down on paper waste. The excessive amounts of handouts are not needed. History classes in particular should cut down on their 100-plus worksheets and packets, but all classes in general need to limit their waste of the copy room's supply. For a teacher to print a one-page handout for three normal-sized classes, he or she needs about 90 to 100 sheets of paper.



Teachers and students alike can cut down on this paper usage by using other resources. Students can use whiteboards or overhead projectors to do classwork. Outside readings and other non-worksheets assignments can go onto a teacher's website as online files; students can then print them out on an as-needed basis.

Nine students and the administration cannot tackle this job alone; everyone needs to play his or her part.

Teachers can also make homework assignments completely digital: using turnitin.com, Google Docs or even email, students can then submit their completed work without wasting paper.

While occasionally more expensive than its non-green counterpart, recycled paper allows the wood pulp from trees to be reused, greatly limiting the amount of trees a corporation needs to cut down. Additionally, recycling paper derivatives such as cardboard, unused napkins and boxes keep paper in the current supply and out of landfills.

The school has done its part to help the environment through its "Green Team," a student-run commission that has moved to install solar panels, thermal pool heating and air conditioning improvements. However, nine students and the administration cannot tackle this alone; everyone needs to do his or her part. ♦

>> togatalks

What do you think the school should do to be more environmentally friendly?

"There should be more recycling bins and teachers should have to print papers double-sided."



senior Christine Liu

"I think the school should use tools like Turnitin to do more assignments online."



sophomore Prachi Dholakia

PIPA: Right idea but wrong methods

by ParulSingh

>> candidcaricatures

The newly introduced PROTECT IP Act, or Preventing Real Online Threats to Economic Creativity and Theft of Intellectual Property Act, PIPA for short, has caused a storm of controversy in the Internet community. And while the Senate's intentions are sound in creating this act, their methods infringe upon basic freedoms that Americans hold dear.

The bill introduces two methods of fighting online piracy facilitated by foreign websites. The first method aims to force Internet service providers such as Comcast to block the domains of copyright-infringing sites.

While the need to protect intellectual property is pressing, forcing private companies such as Comcast to bear the burden of protecting this property is unfair. Additionally, according to the provisions of the act, the site could still be blocked even if the illegal content was user submitted.

This effectively infringes on online freedom and irrationally holds websites accountable for material the operators did not even post. If PIPA is passed, it will result in the immediate blocking of over hundreds of websites for no fault of their own.

This in turn will result in websites disabling their user participation features altogether, stemming free speech by instilling fear of online communication and sharing.

In an increasingly global community, interactions among people from differing countries become more and more important. Governments should not be



trying to restrict Americans from creating bonds across nation lines. Already people of different nationalities are interconnected through websites such as Twitter and Facebook, the enactment of PIPA will effectively restrict their means of communication.

PIPA's second method of enforcement is to remove all access to offending sites by mandating that search engines remove all links to the website in question. Once again, this places the burden on search engines to moderate their content when in fact the government should prosecute the offending sites. However, because America has no jurisdiction over foreign websites this is the only way the government can respond.

In both methods, PIPA seeks to block American users from accessing illegal

foreign content rather than attacking the problem at its source. The loss of American users will not diminish the power of these websites as they have user bases in multitudes of other countries.

Film-making industries currently support PIPA because they wish to recover profits that are currently being leeched away by the availability of free content online. If PIPA is enacted, however, the economic consequences will be much more dire. Millions of dollars will have to be spent by the government in enforcement, and also by individual websites to safeguard their content against piracy.

Until America negotiates with foreign countries to control the content on their websites, punishing American citizens and companies is not the answer. ♦

lifestyles

saratogafalcon.org/features

Can you ... nap in a mattress store?

by JackieGu

As a junior, my idea of a thrilling adventure is to get over six hours of uninterrupted sleep. Even more daring, however, is my regular practice of taking lengthy naps... on weekdays.

But taking naps at home isn't always so desirable. Having recently inherited my brother's (larger, warmer, nicer, etc.) room, my new queen-sized bed is now the home of textbooks, papers and binders during the day, so I always run the risk of rolling over in my sleep and squashing my APUSH notes. And since I drool in my sleep, waking up to find damp spots on my crushed notes is always slightly awkward. (Sorry, Ms. Morelle...)

Then one day I heard on the radio a commercial for Mancini's SleepWorld. "Come on in and try our mattresses out!" they blared. This offer had intrigued me for years (Mancini's SleepWorld com-

mercials had regularly interrupted my Pokemon marathons on the WB as a child, so I was fairly familiar with their boastful claims.) So I finally decided, in all seriousness, to take them up on that offer.

I walked into the mattress store on a Saturday afternoon, wearing clothing that toed the delicate line between extremely-comfortable and looking-like-a-sleep-deprived-hobo. I told my mom (who was, as it happens, actually looking for a new mattress) that I would meet her back in the store in a few hours; then, I looped around her and found a secluded corner in the store. In my ensuing hunt for the perfect nap-taking mattress, I finally found The One: it was 1) sheathed in enough voluminous blankets and pillows that another lump on the bed (me) would go unnoticed, and 2) hidden away from the watchful eyes of employees on the prowl for vagrants like me. It was perfect.

Surprisingly, I actually managed to fall asleep. It probably should not have come as a surprise, because although I do have insomniac tendencies in my own room I am exceedingly good at falling asleep in places I shouldn't. (Again... sorry, Ms. Morelle.)

The nap only lasted about an hour, disappointingly. I was rudely awoken by an employee who was evidently trying to rearrange the pillows and blankets on the bed. When she tried to move one lump and found me instead, I awoke with a start; she stared at me and

asked what I was doing. If my life were a sitcom, I would have made some witty quip and used my endearing charm to weasel my way out of the awkward situation. Instead, I mumbled some quick, barely audible excuse about "just testing it out" and quietly tried to slink away inconspicuously.

That episode effectively ended any future mattress-store escapades, although it certainly was nice while it lasted. Sleep as a whole has become a rarity... I'll sleep when I'm dead, quoth Macbeth. Or in a mattress store. ♦



>> togatalks

What is the weirdest place you have fallen asleep?

"I had a internship at a Cancer Research center in Texas last summer and one time I fell asleep in the hallway for who knows how long. When I woke up all the doctors were all whispering around me so that I wouldn't wake up."



senior Vishal Goel

"My dog has a really nice heater that she uses and one day I was feeling cold so I decided to sit next to her. I was petting her while reading a book when all of a sudden I fell asleep on her bed."



junior Candice Suh

Home cooking from outside

by VivienLu

As the child of working parents, I find myself constantly scavenging for leftovers in the refrigerator or cooking a narrow variety of food for myself, ranging from toast to french toast.

After what became too routine, I recently found salvation in a completely different and more fortunate alternative.

Chef Xu's Private Kitchen located in Saratoga serves authentic Chinese cuisine specially designed to provide affordable food for families with busy parents who have no time to cook.

While many choose to eat fast food or microwaveable dinners, being the health freak I am, I could not bare to eat such unhealthy food.

Chef Xu's is a family-style catering business that tries to provide healthy, clean dinners, which means less oil, less salt and absolutely no MSG. This family-owned business has a goal to provide assistance to families with no time to cook, but still want their children to be able to have a home-cooked dinner every day.

I found their mission to be genuine with good intentions, so I automatically trusted the quality of the food.

The ordering procedure is pretty simple: There is a set menu for every weekday of the month and one orders one day in advance. I found this system a little inflexible and challenging because I wouldn't have much choice but to eat what they are offering that specific day.

The food is then either delivered to the customer's house or it can be picked up. Each set menu is enough to feed four people and includes a meat entree, vegetables,

a dish of meat and vegetables and rice for \$23.

Individual dishes can also be purchased, but I would suggest simply ordering the full meal because each set has a nice balance of meat and vegetables, which satisfies all nutritional needs.

Specialties consist of Hangzhou stew duck in soy sauce, jellied pork leg and sesame green onion pancake.

Chef Xu cooks food from the Zhejiang Province, more specifically Huangzhou, which is known as the "land of fish and rice." The cuisine is not greasy and is fresh and tender. The chef even flavors dishes with a special sauce.

I found this traditional view to be exact as a lot of the dishes are braised, resulting in tender and flavorful meat.

Normally, the problem with eating food not made in my own home is that I cannot trust how clean it is. Restaurant food is generally more expensive and has unbelievably high caloric value and fat—just check online, it'll shock you. However, the food is made in another family's kitchen, and the family acknowledges these concerns and holds the same values.

The food is generally pretty simple, and there is nothing at all extravagant about the food. My mother could probably cook the same food, but the difference is that when time becomes such a scarcity, this truly becomes a good deal. For the little time I put in to order the food, I get quality food that is not detrimental to my health or my wallet.

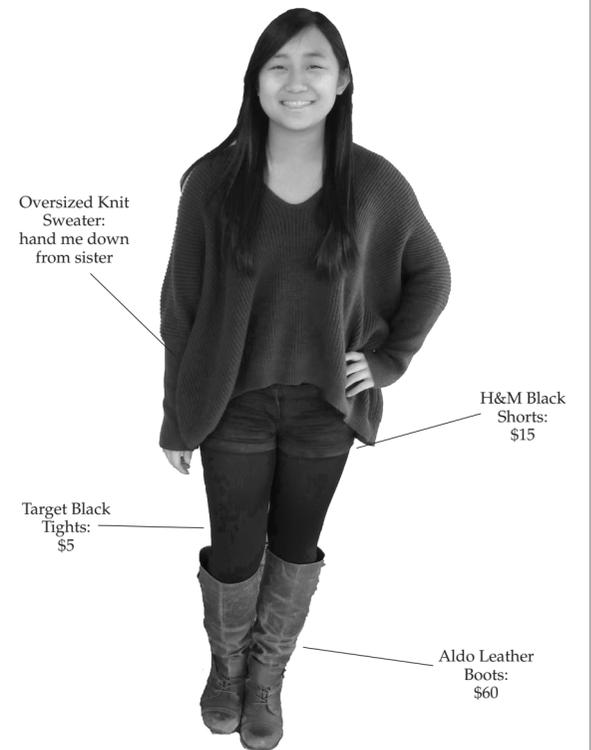
Orders can be placed by emailing hangzhouxuj@gmail.com or calling (408) 872-1410. ♦

Chef Xu's

(OUT OF FIVE)

To order: (408) 872-1410
Type of food: Chinese
Price range: \$
What to get: Coca-cola chicken

STYLE FILES



Oversized Knit Sweater: hand me down from sister

H&M Black Shorts: \$15

Target Black Tights: \$5

Aldo Leather Boots: \$60

Samantha Cheng, 11

FALCON // BRANDON JUDOPRASITTO

March 16, 2012

History behind St. Patrick's Day

BY Ashwini Velchamy

Whether it's a "Kiss Me, I'm Irish" T-shirt or a delicious spoonful of "Lucky Charms" cereal, Americans have their own thoughts about what represents St. Patrick's Day.

"Probably green and leprechauns and four leaf clovers!" freshman Sonal Pai said.

"Pots of gold? Irish? Pinching people?" junior Shreyas Doshi added.

To most people those words capture the essence of St. Patrick's day: a holiday when people run around in green, searching for four leaf clovers and chasing leprechauns. Sound familiar?

According to a 2009 survey, to 1 in 5 Americans, St. Patrick's Day is just a day to get drunk. About 1 in 10 go to parades while 1 in 13.58 go to parties.

But as publicized as drinking alcohol and pinching people are, these are only the commercialized aspects of a holiday that started out as a religious event.

The belief is that St. Patrick, who is now the patron saint of Ireland, started out as a slave brought to Ireland. After he escaped, he returned to Ireland to bring Christianity to the people. From around the 10th century, the Irish celebrate his Roman Catholic feast day on March 17.

Wearing green

The traditional color of St. Patrick's Day is not green, but blue. Green just gradually became the color associated with the holiday because of the shamrocks, or three leaf clovers, that were symbols of St. Patrick himself.

Pinching people for not wearing

green started out in America in the 1700s because of the idea that those not wearing green were visible to leprechauns. Leprechauns tended to pinch humans, so to warn others of these creatures, people decided to pinch each other too.

Four-leaf clovers

In fact, four-leaf clovers are not traditionally associated with St. Patrick's Day at all. Instead, three-leaf clovers, or shamrocks, represented a certain philosophy of the Irish which was represented by St. Patrick. These three-leaf clovers were considered items of good luck and good fortune.

Leprechauns

At least at some point in their preschool or elementary school careers, most students have made little leprechaun traps in hopes of snaring one of these Irish fairies. Leprechauns were hunted by

gold and treasure seekers who desired the pot of gold hidden by the leprechauns. Apparently, a close eye had to be kept on these mythical creatures after they were caught because looking away for a second could make them vanish forever.

Although more than just another Americanized holiday, most of what Americans today celebrate on St. Patrick's Day does indeed have roots in the traditional, original purposes of the day. ♦



Growing out of green?

IRISH BROTHERS DISCUSS CELEBRATIONS

BY Jonathan Young

On March 17, a sea of green sweeps through all of America as people celebrate the most famous Irish holiday. Although America often associate St. Patrick's Day with the traditions of wearing green and pinching those who don't, in reality, the holiday is supposed to celebrate the arrival of Christianity in Ireland.

One family that has celebrated St. Patrick's Day in the past is the MacFhionnlaich family. Junior Feargus celebrated the holiday all through elementary and middle school and his brother, freshman Conall, still celebrates it today.

Conall said that he would try to wear as much green as possible on St. Patrick's Day.

"We used to go to Party City and buy hats and green shirts. I had an earring a while ago and I got big four leaf clo-

ver earrings," Feargus said. "My mom would dye the milk green, so when we had cereal, it'd be green. I think we used to buy Lucky Charms, it was really cliché."

Feargus no longer celebrates the holiday because he "grew out of it," but when he did, he loved setting traps. "I looked forward to building leprechaun traps for school. I loved doing that because I was totally convinced leprechauns were real," he said.

Feargus said that much of his family lives in Ireland and the way they celebrate the holiday is very different from the way that people celebrate it in America.

"Here, it's more like a Hallmark holiday with decorations. Over there, there's a parade in Dublin and you eat foods like Shepherd's pie," he said. "One year they even dyed the River Liffey, the river running through Dublin, green." ♦



FALCON // DYLAN JEW



Carrying on traditions

ST. PATRICK'S DAY Q&A WITH SENIOR CLAUDIA WALSH

In Saratoga, St. Patrick's Day seems much like a normal day, if only distinguishable by more green shirts and sweaters, but for Claudia Walsh, the child of two Irish parents, the day holds cultural significance.

How do you celebrate St. Patrick's Day?

Every year my family and I watch really funny Irish movies in the evening on St. Patrick's Day. The funny thing about St. Patrick's Day in the United States is that people do the whole leprechaun thing, but in Ireland people get kind of annoyed and somewhat offended by it. In Ireland people just party all day.

Has the way you celebrate St. Patrick's Day changed over the years?

When I was younger, I was really involved in Irish Dance, so around St. Patrick's Day and on St. Patrick's Day I would dance with my dance school at fairs, festivals, weddings, retirement homes, and Irish bars or restaurants every year. But since I don't dance anymore, it's more laid back and my family usually just has corned beef and cabbage and watches movies.

Why is St. Patrick's Day important to you?

My parents have celebrated St. Patrick's Day for their whole lives, because both of them are from Ireland and St. Patrick's Day is a really big holiday over there (about as big as the 4th of July is in the United States). Kids in Ireland get the day off on St. Patrick's Day and shops are closed, so most people in Ireland just get together and have huge parties.

Do your friends celebrate St. Patrick's Day?

Yes, actually a lot of my friends who aren't Irish celebrate St. Patrick's Day, which is pretty funny to me! One of my friends who is of Mexican descent has a big party every year for it with her family and friends.

-As told to Cecilia Hollenhorst



FALCON // DANIEL MERRITT

topten

WAYS TO CELEBRATE ST. PATRICK'S DAY

- 10 Make a leprechaun trap. Take a look at this page for some good ideas.
- 9 Wear green. Or just tape a leaf onto your shirt to avoid being pinched.
- 8 Drink up! Apple juice, of course.
- 7 Speak in an Irish accent all day. Your attractiveness will increase tenfold.
- 6 Catch a leprechaun. Or a freshman, who can tell the difference?
- 5 Change all the lights in school to emit green. Sorry, Gatsby.
- 4 Search for a four leaf clover. After all, holiday clichés are a must.
- 3 Eat Lucky Charms. Because that's clearly traditional.
- 2 Attempt to do every unlucky thing possible to see if the luck of the Irish is with you. "YOLO"
- 1 Go to the Benefit Fashion Show. Celebrate the holiday in style

>> Ingrid Hong and Allison Toh

How to Catch a Leprechaun:

— Minu Palaniappan

Step 1

Gather some materials:

- Glue
- Scissors
- Construction paper
- Cardboard box
- Pipe-cleaners
- Fake gold

Step 2

Cutting and gluing: Cut construction paper into large strips. Paste them around the cardboard box to give it a colorful cover, and cut out a different color of construction paper into little rectangles to act as the windows. Paste two on each side.

Step 3

After giving the cardboard decorations, cut out a flap in the center of one side of the box to serve as a door. Last, cut out a large rectangle, and write something likely to lure a leprechaun. Paste this on the very top of the box, so it acts as a billboard.

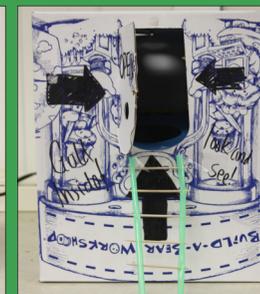
Step 4

Pipe cleaners: The last step is attaching pipe-cleaners on each side of the box. Take assorted colors of pipe cleaners and tie them to the top of each side of the box. The colors should correspond to the colors of the rainbow.

Wait to catch one!



>> Leprechaun trap made by junior Venkat Munukutla



Learn about this leprechaun trap made by senior Jasmine Grant at saratogafalcon.org/features

GRAPHICS BY ALEX JU

JUST DANCE!

GRAPHICS BY ALEX JU

FALCON REPORTERS KAREN SUNG, DYLAN JEW AND VIVIEN LU SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES COMPETING IN A DANCE-OFF ON FEB. 28. EACH LEARNED A ROUTINE FROM AN SHS STUDENT DANCER. TWENTY-ONE FALCON STAFF MEMBERS VOTED.



Seniors Alex Chiang and Peter Hsieh teach members of the Dance Club during lunchtime at a meeting on March 9.

Second year of Dance Club brings in new dancers, talent

By Lillian Chen

Leading out a sea of people in club onto the quad, seniors Peter Hsieh and Stanton Ho awe the audience during Homecoming week on Senior quad day, bursting into a mash of hip-hop choreography. A few minutes later, senior Megan Kao leads a large group of girls dressed in pink with purple stripes, astounding the audience surrounding the quad with her fluid dance choreography.

Envisioning a club that would bring people with common interests together and that would allow newcomers to learn to dance from experienced dancers who would share their knowledge, Hsieh and Kao and alumnus Ricky Chiu created the Dance

Club during the spring of 2011.

"We felt that SHS didn't have much of a dance scene outside of individuals and small groups of friends," said Hsieh, the current co-president.

The club meets every Friday during lunch in the dance studio, alternating between student-taught dance combination and free practice sessions.

Sophomore Ethan Chiu, an avid breakdancer, loves attending the club meetings.

"I think it's a really great club," he said. "There are a lot of different styles so we can all learn a lot of different aspects of dance."

Chiu sees dance as a hobby and views it as a great way to express himself.

"It makes me feel more free," Chiu said.

Hsieh developed his interest in dance just before high school after he started to follow TV shows "So You Think You Can Dance" and "America's Best Dance Crew," in addition to dancers on YouTube. Hsieh's dance style involves some hip-hop styles such as popping and locking as well as hip-hop choreography.

"I enjoy dancing because it's a hobby that allows me to be active and interact with music," Hsieh said. "I also like it because of the friendships it can create."

In college, Hsieh plans on joining a dance crew to keep his social life interesting.

"In the future, I hope Dance Club will survive and grow more popular so that dancers here will benefit from having a strong dance community," he said. ♦

>> falconQ&A

DANCE CLUB B-BOYS

Jonathon Huie, Freshman



Q: How did you find out about the club?

A: At Club Day, and I decided to join because it was a good opportunity for dancing.

Q: What is the favorite dance style you learned at the club?

A: Probably the Cat Daddy.

Q: What is your favorite aspect of the club?

A: There are some really good teachers, and I learned a lot of different dances.

Patrick Huynh, Freshman



Q: Why do you enjoy about the club?

A: I like going there to see other B-boys, and we can show off our new moves or perfect ones we just learned.

Q: Do you have any suggestions for improving the club?

A: I wish we would have more dance club meetings each week so we could have more opportunities to dance.

Wesley Sun, Junior



Q: Why did you join Dance Club?

A: I joined Dance Club because I enjoy dancing and the club is very open to teaching you how to improve.

Q: What sets Dance Club apart from other clubs?

A: Instead of one person leading it like a normal club meeting, different members of the club can lead it too and teach us different dances.

>> Grace Ma

SUNG
Karen



FALCON // LILLIAN CHEN

>> falconrating

8.5 /10

"I thought Karen's dance was unique and turned out well."
— Senior Vivian LeTran

TEACHER:
Trishika Shetty

JEW
Dylan



FALCON // LILLIAN CHEN

>> falconrating

7.2 /10

"I thought Dylan had a lot of guts to do the dance."
— Junior Kelly Liu

TEACHER:
Peter Hsieh

E
Vivien



FALCON // LILLIAN CHEN

>> falconrating

7.6 /10

"I liked how a lot of emphasis was put on having the [shoes'] sounds match up with the dance steps so the dancing could look and sound fluid."
— Senior Sabrina Cismas

TEACHER:
Rachel Le

Bollywood dancing: Getting my Indian side on

I'm not trying to toot my own horn (or maybe I am), but way back in first grade, I had pretty impressive skills when it came to Indian dancing.

After performing in that year's variety show at Argonaut Elementary, all my Indian friends' moms patted my head and told me I had a natural inclination for Indian dancing.

Nearly a decade later, though, I've discovered that all my self-proclaimed talent has vanished down the drain. After being assigned to learn a new dance for a newspaper dance-off between me and two other reporters, I chose to revisit my Indian dancing roots and asked to temporarily join the sophomore Bombay in the Bay (BNB) group.

When I first arrived for BNB practice, hosted at sophomore Trishika Shetty's house, everyone was already partnered up and dancing away to Bhangra music, which first originated in the Punjab region.

Shetty, who helped everyone with the dance, said she especially enjoys Bhangra because it is "upbeat and fun to dance to."

"It's a really energetic dance, and every time I hear the music, it pumps me up," she said.

Unfortunately, I soon realized that I was clearly out of my league when the girls took me off to a corner to teach me the beginning of the dance. Walking around on a daily basis already presents enough of a challenge for me; trying to balance my hand and foot movements for the dance proved extremely

difficult. I mainly relied on mimicking the dance steps of the people in front of me, which explains why I always seemed to be a beat behind everyone else.

I never realized the dance would require so much shaking and rotating of the hips. The low point of the entire practice was when I tried to do a body roll. "Tried" is the key word.

Nonetheless, I had fun bonding with my Indian sisters and moving along to the catchy music. I'm not sure what the songs are called, but I do know that the mash-up is

titled as "LEGIT" on my friend's iTunes account, so there's an idea.

As sophomore Sachi Verma aptly described it, "You're getting your inner Indian pride on, Karen!"

After multiple practices and aching feet (bouncing around barefoot on hardwood floor is not a good idea), I finally performed the dance in front of the newspaper class during third period, but not before stressing out to everyone in my general vicinity.

I think the dance turned out pretty well, though by then the choreography was mainly just muscle memory.

One effect of all this dancing is that I can't seem to stop humming to the tune of the mash-up, even though I have no clue what the lyrics mean.

I'm not the only one, however; I've had more than one person come up and ask me for a download link to the music. After two weeks of hard work, I've realized that Indian music is pretty incredible. ♦



Hip-Hop dancing: Who's your (Cat) Daddy?

"CAT DADDY ..." I could feel my heart racing and my hands perspiring. As the high-pitched introductory words of the Rejectz song reverberated around the Journalism Room, I suddenly grew scared that I would blank and forget my routine or lose sync with the music. But, after I started, my body took over and each move led to the next.

I have never thought of myself as a dancer, nor as someone who enjoys performing in front of a crowd.

When I first saw my teacher, senior Peter Hsieh, who has been dancing since the summer of 2008, perform the routine, I was intimidated and found myself thinking, "How am I going to be able to do those moves?"

Fortunately, Peter had experience teaching others from his participation in Quad Days and Dance Club.

He told me that teaching is a good

way to improve his own dancing skills since it forces him to break down moves in ways that other people understand.

He believes that each dance style is learned best in its own way.

For dances such as ballet or contemporary, classes are generally the best way to learn.

For freestyle and dances like mine, however, classes are not necessary and they can be self-taught.

Peter learned to dance on his

own, from tutorials and videos from YouTube. His advice to me was to start with basics to develop a strong foundation before moving onto any difficult moves.

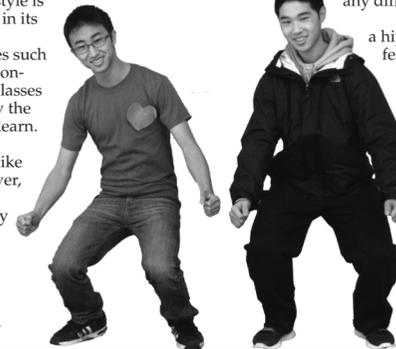
My dance was a hip-hop routine, featuring moves such as the "Cat Daddy" and the "Doggie." It was choreographed by Peter, who timed the moves to the lyrics and the beat.

This made the moves easier to remember, but sometimes it was hard to be fluid while performing them.

My performance turned out better than I expected. I would never have thought I could learn some of the complex moves, but I was able to learn them through practice. Of course, my performance could have been more fluid if I had spent more time practicing it.

Before I started, I had no idea how much time people spent to learn and perfect their dance routines. Learning my own dance routine gave me an appreciation for all the work that dancers like Peter put into their work.

Dancing smoothly and with rhythm turned out to be challenging, but with practice my routine improved. Although it was not anywhere close to Peter's level, at least I will have a clue the next time "Cat Daddy" is played at a dance. ♦



Tap dancing: Dance taps its way into my heart

With the noisy tap shoes, I began to produce an entirely new sound. Stomp, hop, shuffle, step, flap, step, stomp and repeat—one of the simplest routines for any tap dancer. It took me an hour to memorize this routine in the correct order and still I looked like an off-balance leprechaun, ungracefully clomping my large feet all over the place.

I have never really used my feet for anything that required such detailed movement besides occasionally wiggling them around out of boredom. It was not until senior Rachel Le tried to teach me how to tap dance for a dance-off against my fellow newspaper reporters that I realized how incapable of grace my feet really are.

Rachel broke down each move for me, but whatever foot she told me to stomp, I would move the opposite one.

It was not that I did not listen or could not process what she directed me to do; movements that required so

much control over my feet were just too foreign for me.

"While I was teaching, it was difficult and took a lot of patience because the moves that I do mindlessly made no sense to Vivien," Le said.

Foot dexterity has been engraved into Le's mind. Le was brought to her first tap dancing class when she was 3 years old and has been doing it for the past 14 years. With a couple hours of practice each

week, she first took a part in a dance recital when she was 6.

"Since I was so young when I started," Le said, "I picked it up easily, like how toddlers can pick up a new language, so I didn't realize

how tricky it was for people starting now."

This does not mean, however, that it is impossible to start at a later age.

Le advises a beginner to "practice until it becomes a rhythm because the two things to make tap look and sound good are speed and accuracy."

Before I tried it myself,

I always thought tap dancing was impressive, but not interesting enough to grasp my attention for too long. It looked pretty easy to clack my feet around the ground to produce a noise.

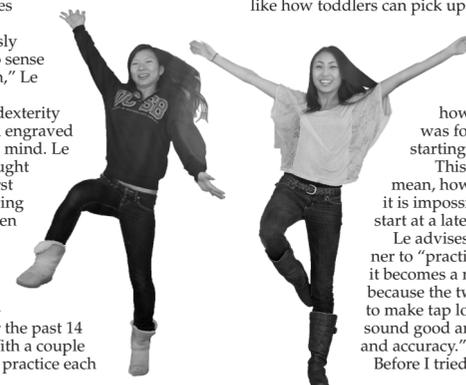
According to Le, people assume tap is always jolly and old-fashioned; however, it can be modernized and performed to pop music just like any other style of dance.

"The funnest part about tap is being able to create so much noise with only my feet," Le said. "Once you get the routine, you'll hear it, and it's a really satisfying feeling."

I was momentarily blessed with this feeling during the dance-off in which I produced a video of all that I had learned.

This experience changed my mind as I gained a whole new appreciation for this form of art.

"I think Vivien did very well and she really learned how to appreciate it," Le said. ♦



>>> **teachertalks**

>> Band teacher Seth Jones



The Strangest Request:
It was hard to convince coworkers, parents and students that I was knowledgeable when [I looked really young my first year of teaching.] I was told by my principal to grow a beard.

>> Anatomy, Health and Drivers' Ed teacher Amy Obenour



Past Jobs:
I used to deliver [Little Caesars Pizza] around my college campus and fraternities. Now I can't walk into a Little Caesars because I can't stand the smell of the grease.

>> History teacher Jeffrey Scott



My Inspiration:
My dad...When he would come home, I'd ask him what he would get out of teaching these kids. When he was able to see them understand a concept...I could tell he got a ton out of it.

>> History teacher Kirk Abe



Worst Teaching Experience:
When the classroom TV set fell on my head...I had to leave class to go see a [doctor,] but I have such a hard head that there was more damage to the TV than to my head.

>> Math teacher PJ Yim



If I didn't teach...
Not sure... perhaps a laid-off engineer, a naturalist, a hermit or a Buddhist monk?

>> English teacher Kerry Mohnike



Funniest Teaching Experience:
A couple of years ago a few teachers...sent [Mr. Torrens] on a scavenger hunt...He then had to sign an agreement that he would play absolutely no pranks on the teachers involved.

>> Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguez



Weirdest Thing A Student Has Asked Me to Translate:
I can't pinpoint anything specifically, but it usually has to do with English idiomatic expressions/slang such as 'swag,' 'sick,' 'chill' and others...

>> Science teacher Jenny Garcia



Past Jobs:
I used to be a phlebotomist and then I was an office manager/stock administrator for a start up company.

>> Chinese teacher Mariam Fan



Why I Teach:
I have a great respect for teachers and I feel like they're great role models. When I was younger, I had really good teachers so they've really influenced me.



Before entering the classroom, educators caught the desire to teach.

Lizundia falls in love with the language of love

by SanjNalwa

French teacher Laura Lizundia never expected she would do what she does. It just so happened that way.

"In seventh grade, we were given the option to take either Spanish or French and I chose French for no particular reason—little did I know that my random choice would eventually lead to my current profession," Lizundia said. Lizundia said that she "knew French would have to figure into any future job" she would take after spending her junior year of college in France.

Her experiences in the University of Montpellier in southern France gave her what she would never have been able to pick up from a textbook.

"I learned so much about the people and culture; I was excited to share my experiences with others," Lizundia said. "Back in the States, I went to [graduate] school in French Literature."

However, Lizundia said that before delving into the world of education, she wanted to experiment with other jobs.

She worked for nine months for a global non-profit, interned at the San

Francisco Bay Guardian and held a variety of temporary jobs in law offices. She decided the office job was not meant for her.

"I wasn't really using my French much and I missed interacting with a lot of people and the routine of school," Lizundia said. "So, I returned to school, got a degree in secondary education and here I am 20 years later!"

Lizundia said she finds teaching very rewarding, especially teaching a foreign language. "The great thing about teaching a language is that it's about so much more than teaching the mechanics of the language (vocabulary, grammar, etc.)," Lizundia said. "It's about learning a new culture and ways of thinking



French teacher Laura Lizundia calls on a student in class to answer a homework question on March 7.

about the world at large."

Lizundia said that some of her best teaching days are when things don't go as expected.

"My favorite part about teaching is that every day is different," Lizundia said. "Some of my best teaching days are those in which I have to throw out my original plans [for the day] and think on my feet." ♦

What type of teacher would you be?

1. If you had no lessons planned for the day, what would you do?

- a. "Pop in a movie for them to watch!"
- b. "Entertaining story time with the addition of a review session."
- c. "Pop test, awww yeah."

2. One of your students failed your test and asked you what he or she can do about it. You respond:

- a. "Don't worry, I'll give everyone the option of replacing this test's score with the next one's."
- b. "Test corrections are available for those who score below 70 percent."
- c. "What you get is what you get."

3. How is homework graded?

- a. Full credit as long as completed.
- b. Full credit with most homework, but some are graded on accuracy.
- c. Graded on accuracy.

4. Do you curve your tests?

- a. "Of course, the top two scores always become 100 percent."
- b. "Only if the class does poorly in general will I consider it."
- c. "Nope, the students should have studied harder for this material then."

5. You learn that half the class has two tests/projects on the same day as yours. What do you do?

- a. Postpone your test for the next class.
- b. Give the test with more considerable curving and plan on asking students beforehand what tests they have ahead of time so your tests don't fall on those dates.
- c. Give it anyway and continue to disregard students' test days in order to keep to your teaching calendar.

If you had the most A's, you are the easygoing teacher.

You are approachable, flexible and able to sympathize with a student's situation. You realize that strictness can intimidate and prevent students from enjoying learning. Such teachers are reliable enough to be the student's friend and guide.

If you had the most B's, you are the fair teacher.

You set the bar high enough for students to work for the grade. You may not be the easiest teacher around, but you inspire students with your wit, humor and charisma. Students feel like you believe in them, motivating them to not slack off.

If you had the most C's, you are the strict teacher.

You are tough on students, demanding effort in every assignment a student does. You always keep the students on their toes, and their noses in their books. Such teachers feel like the extra push will benefit students in the future.

Davis settles to teach after years in engineering, business

by EdwardDong

In his first year of teaching, physics teacher Kirk Davis watched with apprehension as a student demonstrates a project, a homemade Rubens' tube (which uses flammable gas.) Minutes later, Davis rushed students out of his room—the contraption had caught fire.

"[It] almost burned the building down," Davis jokes. In reality, it did not set off the smoke system and presented no serious hazard for the building.

Now in his fifth year as a teacher and tackling AP Physics in addition to the regular course, Davis blames this early episode on his inexperience.

"My first year, I knew absolutely nothing," Davis said.

However, although he could boast of nearly no classroom experience, Davis had plenty of knowledge about industries in the real world.

"I always try to relate [concepts] to what's going on out there," Davis said, "so you can translate what you're learning on paper into how it's used in the real world."

Davis had worked in chemical engineering for three years and in health care for roughly 20. As an engineer, Davis helped a now defunct company with projects such as designing a corn ethanol plant during the energy crisis of the late '70s.

However, he found himself "more interested in the business side of things." He attended business school and found work one summer in the health care industry.

"I was enthralled. There was no business cycle really," Davis said. "You're doing good stuff. You help people. Nice profit margins."

Thus, after graduating in 1984 from business school, Davis spent two de-



Physics teacher Kirk Davis demonstrates how water is attracted to a charged pipe to seniors Christopher Vu and Connie Chien on March 7.

cadres in health care, working in sales, marketing and general management. But he grew dissatisfied when, in his later years, he began to deal with "a very political environment" and "a lot of really big egos."

Then, after settling down in the Bay Area with his wife, Davis started to consider teaching.

"Each of [my three children] had a crummy math or science teacher at some point, and it put them off of science and math," Davis said. "I thought that was a shame, so I felt there was a need for more math and science teachers."

Though he had not dealt with academic subjects for many years, Davis was willing to give "this teaching thing a bit of a try." He volunteered at the tutorial center at Saratoga High and tried substituting, which he enjoyed.

Soon afterwards, the then-assistant principal Gail Wasserman informed Davis that the school needed an additional physics teacher.

"Wow, physics. I hadn't looked at a physics book in 30 years," Davis said. "Didn't really recall enjoying it either. But [I thought,] 'Yeah OK, I'll give it a try.'"

In his first year, he taught an introduction to business course in addition to physics at Saratoga. He also attended Jenny Garcia's physics class "probably 75 percent of the time."

Davis then decided to obtain a teaching credential and has now taught for five years. He still enjoys teaching, especially when he succeeds in helping students understand difficult concepts.

"The thing I really enjoy is when some kid finally says, 'Oh, now I get it.' You feel like you helped them get it," Davis said. ♦

Educator's previous office jobs too dull

by AmyJan

Going through four jobs before attending college, math teacher Michele Drouin started her first job at age 13. She taught children how to bowl.

Drouin was adept at bowling, having learned the skill at age 4, and enjoyed working with children. She did not feel like it was work, and perhaps was the first few steps towards her teaching career today.

Drouin started working at an early age because the allowance her parents gave her from doing chores was not enough. She wanted to spend money that she earned herself. According to Drouin, she didn't attend college right after graduating from high school. In fact, she almost did not graduate because of her lack of interest in academics.

Just out of high school, Drouin's first full-time job was a receptionist for a heating and air conditioning company in San Francisco. Later, she worked as an accounts payable clerk for a purchasing agent at a different company and lastly as a leasing agent at an apartment complex. From these jobs, Drouin understood what she wanted out of her life.

"I learned more about myself than anything," said Drouin. "I learned that I wanted to have a job that I enjoy, where I can be active and have interaction with people, and that will be different every day in some way."

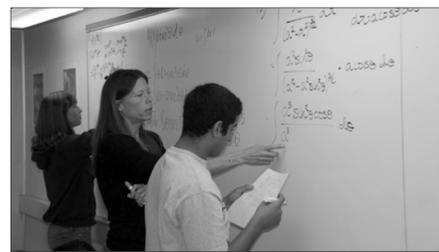
According to Drouin, after a certain point in her life she realized that she did not want to sit behind a desk every day doing paperwork and filling out the same reports over and over. The tedious desk jobs motivated her to go back to school and search for her passion.

"The jobs were just that. Jobs. They were jobs that I could do and those I could do," Drouin said.

While studying at UCSC, Drouin majored in math with no intention of teaching. She got involved with a fellowship program through the university where a group of college students went to a local high school to help out in classrooms.

"I found that I really enjoyed working with the students. Math was not my strong subject in high school. Ironic, I know," said Drouin. "The time was coming for me to figure out what I was going to do once I graduated, so I decided to give teaching a try."

Drouin has been teaching at SHS for 12 years and currently teaches AP Calculus AB and Geometry. The biggest conflict that Drouin had to overcome was



Math teacher Michele Drouin guides junior Neal Siganporia through a Calculus AB homework problem on March 7.

her fear of public speaking, but she was determined to overcome that obstacle in order to teach.

"I was the student that sat in the back corner of the room hoping the teacher would not call on me," Drouin said. "I still do not like speaking in public. [Lecturing on] to my students is different somehow. Ask me to speak in front of a different audience and I get really nervous."

Even her distaste for grading papers did not prevent her from being the best teacher she can be. Drouin enjoys how each day can bring a new experience to her classroom.

"The chemistry of a class that grows over the school year is an experience in itself that is different in every class. And it is different with each new group of students every year too," said Drouin. "So while I do have some aspects of my job that I do daily, it's never the same experience." ♦

Words of Wisdom

Teachers dish out one piece of advice they wish they knew when they were in high school.

"The advice I would give my high-school self, who wore all black and drove too fast, is all about getting a little perspective on what really matters.

I wish I knew that compassion, empathy and thoughtfulness are actually way more important than my clothes, my test scores and my social status. It is hard to see outside the high school bubble where sometimes small problems wrap into bigger issues than they need to be.

I wish I knew that the amount of what I learned back then was actually dependent on me and how I approached learning it, maybe if that was the case I would remember more!



English teacher Natasha Ritchie

"When I was a high school student I wish I had known to invest in Apple Computers and not 8 Track Music Systems.

Actually, I wish I had known how fast time passes. My dad told me that all the time, but I couldn't appreciate how right he was.



Spanish teacher Bret Yielding

"I had an English teacher who brought me to tears and refused to let me transfer out of his class, but he ended up being a great teacher who taught me a lot.

So I wish I knew that when a teacher challenges you, it's not because they're trying to be mean and make life harder for you... It's because they believe in you!



Math and psychology teacher Laressa Ridge

"Buy Apple stock—at any price—and never, ever sell. And when the stock price plummets to \$14-a-share as it did in 1985—when everyone is writing Apple's epitaph—go long on Apple."



Economics teacher Todd Dwyer

BOTH SIDEBARS BY INGRID HONG

BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP

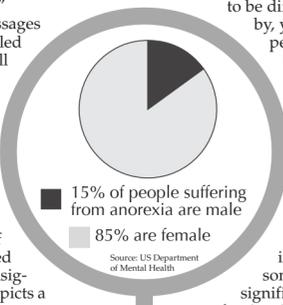
The plight to be perfect: boys and girls alike seek 'ideal' appearance

By GraceMa

"I'm fat. I don't eat ... I hate myself ... I want to die."

Under this message scrawled in the band quad bathroom, somebody else had written, "God made you beautiful, and know that. Jesus loves you because you are perfect in his eyes. You're wonderful, don't forget it."

Several more messages in the thread, scrawled onto a toilet paper roll in the band quad's girls' bathroom, read similarly: "Trust me, we all have a distorted view of ourselves. Chin up, beautiful." The girls had somehow found a chain of unity in anonymous words of encouragement, tucked into this seemingly insignificant thread that depicts a much larger-scale issue.



Body image in Saratoga

Even inside the so-called "Saratoga Bubble," students still feel the pressure to attain the publicly accepted image of "perfect."

The ever-present pressure for girls to be thin and beautiful is continually increasing, and the deadly results are skyrocketing. Statistics from the South Carolina Department of Mental Health show that almost 80 percent of girls by age 13 have attempted to diet, 9 percent of 9-year-olds admit to vomiting to lose weight and 50 percent of girls age 11 to 13 see themselves as overweight.

For girls, common eating disorders include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge eating. Anorexia is characterized by the obsessive fear of being overweight, which results in under-eating, sometimes to the point of starvation. Bulimia involves the uncontrolled eating of large amounts of food, which the person will later binge, or purge their bodies of the food via laxatives or forceful throw-

ing up of the food.

Despite all the support programs for youths, only one in 10 people with eating disorders receives treatment.

Sophomore Maggie Sun feels that these horrifying statistics are a result of people's instinctive longing to be socially accepted.

"I think it comes from not wanting to be different. If you're chubby, you're made fun of, so people stay skinny to be like everyone else," Sun said.

Teen author Lucy Howard-Taylor, who wrote "Biting Anorexia," almost met death several years ago after battling the disorder. According to Howard-Taylor, eating disorders represent something much more significant than the result of vain girls attempting to lose weight. "This isn't about weight, or a diet, or a figure," she wrote. "Somewhere along the line I've come to equate fat with failure and weakness. Weight loss is merely symptomatic of the greater psychological problem."

She claims that the real problem is the longing to fit in and to be accepted by the general public.

It's not just the girls

Girls are not the only ones to feel this pressure; more and more teenage boys are becoming victims as well. Although only 10 percent of people who battle eating disorders are men, the number is slowly rising. At any given time, 25 percent of men are dieting.

"Guys are definitely affected by their stereotypical image," sophomore Jason Li said. "Of course all of us want to be buff and strong, but not all of us want to work for it."

However, men's battles with insecurities do not commonly result in anorexia

or bulimia, since their goal is usually to bulk up rather than slim down.

"Guys aren't afraid to be big—sure we'd rather be ripped, but guys are usually like, 'Oh I'm 300 pounds, nobody messes with me,'" Li said. "So we don't really care if we're heavy."

Apart from the girl-dominated disorders of anorexia and bulimia, Li claims that guys still fall prey to stereotypes, though they do not come up in the spotlight as often. Such pressures include being fit and muscular, having good looks and wearing the latest trend of clothes.

"I used to only have one pair of shoes at a time. I wore Styrofoam slippers I got from a hotel to school everyday for all of elementary school," Li said. "I always knew TV had commercials about new Nike Airs or Jordans or Reeboks, but I never really cared."

But once Li reached high school, his friends' ridicule finally got to him. "People noticed I only had one pair of shoes, so I decided to actually get some real sneakers. I now have three pairs of shoes, [but] if it wasn't for my friends, I might still only wear one pair of slippers to school," Li said.

Either way, the ways in which people try to attain perfection are endless, but the much healthier alternative is to accept one's imperfections.

According to Jeanne Segal, an expert in eating disorders, many who struggle with the problem have an "inner voice that whispers that you'll never be happy until you lose weight, that your worth is measured by how you look." These voices are often the hardest to defeat in the process of recovery from anorexia and bulimia.

Whether it be the life-threatening eating disorders or pressures dealing with image, the first step in dealing with



them is to accept yourself for who you are.

"The first thing you should do is recognize that your body is your own," body image expert D'Arcy Lyness said. "No matter what shape, size or color it comes in."

"It's no one's business but your own what your body is like—ultimately, you have to be happy with yourself." ♦

>> stereotyperoots

Is it true that women are worse at navigating a vehicle than men? Scientists think early men developed a better sense of navigation because they had to hunt for food. Essentially, those who were spatially challenged died off.

In a study from Iowa State University, 4-year-old boys were surpassing 4-year-old girls in spatial ability by a ratio of 4:1. While girls did fine at seeing two dimensions in the brain, boys could see a third.

Not surprisingly, women have more car accidents. Women average 5.7 accidents per million miles driven, while men average 5.2.

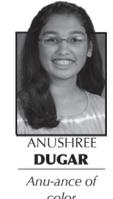
However, men are far more dangerous drivers. Studies show that 73 percent of all people killed in accidents are men.

"I see that in my parents," junior Emily Che said. "My mom sucks and actually has had a few accidents. My dad's faster and has better control, yet he did run over my mom's foot once."

"It's gotten much better and we have many more girls in our club now ... but its no denying that there are more guys than girls." ♦

Social pressure main cause of gender divide in career fields

No one will deny the fact that males and females are biologically different, each producing different hormones and wired to behave differently in similar situations. But the notion of blaming a person's genes or gender on the aptitude of a person's intellect is preposterous. Why, then, does it seem that there exists a strict gender divide in certain fields of intellectual interests?



According to the U.S. National Library of Medicine, women are currently well represented in certain scientific fields, such as medicine. Half the graduates of the nation's medical schools are women. But it is also apparent that in certain sciences, such as physics and engineering, women fill only a tiny fraction of all jobs.

Thousands of experiments have been conducted across the world studying the reason for this, trying to identify differences between the intellectual interests of males and females. Yet none of the tests have gathered convincing and reliable evidence that overlaps with data from other experiments to accurately answer why there are fewer women in certain fields.

In a meta-analysis of statistics gathered from 1963 to 1988, researchers from the American Psychological Association concluded that the gender differences in mathematics performance are small, and that females outperform

males by a negligible amount. Experiments indicate that females show a slight superiority to males in computation in elementary school and middle school, until high school and college when differences favoring men emerge.

Another study from Barnard College, an all-women's school in New York, however, suggests that males outperform females at some intellectual levels because of social factors, the lack of female role models and possible innate capability differences.

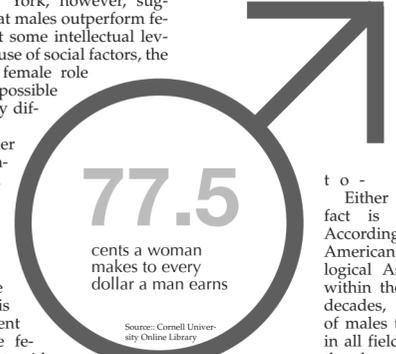
In yet another experiment conducted by Dr. Jay Geid from the National Institutes of Health, researchers concluded that the male brain is about 10 percent larger than the female brain, but with relation to the sizes of men and women in other respects, everything is proportional. According to Geid, the male and female brains are indistinguishable.

It seems clear that no consensus can be reached about whether or not the brains of men and women are indeed wired differently. Sophomore Eric Taw believes that the mental capability of men and women are the same, and both have the same potential.

"I think both are equally strong in academic areas," Taw said. Junior Maggy Liu also believes that "girls and guys are equally intelligent," and attributes the misconception that their brains are innately wired differ-

ently to false stereotypes created many years ago.

"I think religion may have been the catalyst for these stereotypes because many religions assign roles to the genders, which makes sense for early civilizations," Liu said. "It's so much neater when people have specific roles to play, especially when the roles are backed by divine command."



According to Liu, these roles have influenced the interests of men and women.

Either way, one fact is for sure. According to the American Psychological Association, within the last few decades, the ratio of males to females in all fields — from the humanities to the sciences — is decreasing steadily,

signifying that the magnitude of the gender difference has been declining over the years.

The increase in women in these fields, according to an analysis by CBS News Correspondent Elizabeth Kaledin, suggests that indicates that gender probably does not affect the ability and skill of a person.

Instead, stereotypes that have been placed on women for centuries play a major role in the lack of females in certain fields of science. Fewer women work in the sciences not because of a lack of aptitude, but rather the attitude of their surroundings. ♦

Gender minorities in clubs prevalent

By LillianChen & SamuelLiu

Junior Neal Singaporita, a member of the yearbook staff, is quite the ladies' man. So, according to him, yearbook is perfect for him.

"I definitely noticed the large amount of girls in yearbook in comparison to guys," Singaporita said. "And at first I was taken aback because it's definitely kind of daunting."

"But I've grown to like it, because all the guys in the class are chill and having three times the ladies makes me three times the ladies' man."

Yearbook does indeed sport a 3-to-1 "ladies" to "guys" ratio, so Singaporita is correct in his mathematical deduction.

The only male in guard

Such gender imbalances are common place in many organizations on campus, such as chess club, Heart Skate (female dominated), where there is a conspicuous discrepancy between the number of

boys and the number of girls.

Similar to yearbook, boys are rare in Color Guard or Winter Guard. Senior Michael Woodruff coexists with 30 or so members of the opposite gender this year.

Woodruff, who has been in guard for two years, joined because the guard instructor wanted to get more males in guard.

"I wanted to try something new that looked like a fun challenge," he said.

Although guard is traditionally considered more feminine because of many aspects that focus on dance, this has never discouraged Woodruff, who said that most guards of comparable size have more boys.

"I feel fine about being the only male. Some of the girls respect my courage for joining," he said. "My love for guard outweighs anyone's opinions."

Chicken soup for the worried club president

For club presidents worried about

having all members of one gender, senior Sophie Kang's story provides reassurance.

Kang, who joined Model United Nations as a freshman, said she was the only girl during her first two years.

"I think it's just the nature of these public speaking extracurriculars that tend to draw more guys," she said.

"When I first walked in the door, I was a little bit apprehensive. However, once the meeting began I started to feel more at ease because the club was relatively small and casual."

I kind of realized that most, if not all, the members were Indian guys," Kang said, laughing. "But it wasn't particularly obvious or detracting from the atmosphere of the club."

Now, Kang said, the imbalance has almost evened out, which she thinks is for the better.

"It's gotten much better and we have many more girls in our club now ... but its no denying that there are more guys than girls." ♦

>> togotalks

What do you think of the 'gender gap'?

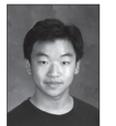
Math and science are stereotyped 'nerdy,' and I think girls are more sensitive to those labels."



It's most prevalent in clubs like robotics, where there's nary a sight of a double x chromosome."



Tech executives are mostly male, while the women who get the most press coverage are typically in the humanities."



Does the kitchen need to be female-only territory?

I love cooking. No, I'm not talking about scrambled eggs, cereal and toast, but "real" cooked food: pasta incaciata (penne with pork and cauliflower in a red wine and tomato sauce), sushi (California rolls are a favorite with my family) and sweet potato spoon bread (great for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners).

When I was younger, I would often forgo watching television to sit in the kitchen with my mother, learning how to crack eggs with one hand and knead bread dough. Too bad "cooking is for girls."



I feel that we, the children of this generation, have been robbed of our ability to express ourselves freely, independent and entertainment, exposing children to societal stereotypes and bias before they can make their own choices. This part especially bugs me. If I want an Easy-Bake Oven to create moist, mouth-watering pastries, then give me an Easy-Bake Oven, dang it!

and entertainment, exposing children to societal stereotypes and bias before they can make their own choices. This part especially bugs me. If I want an Easy-Bake Oven to create moist, mouth-watering pastries, then give me an Easy-Bake Oven, dang it!

and what's with these nonsensical jokes about women and kitchens? I say to make room; some of us guys want in. "Make me a sandwich," ha! I have one word: gladly.

In all seriousness, though, this societal suppression of expression extends much further than my love of cooking.

To tear down the gender barrier ingrained in society, we must first question their validity.

I guess if I've learned anything from my affinity for cooking, it's that we should not let the misconceptions of other people deter us. In order to tear down the gender barriers ingrained in our society, we must first question their validity.

Now, excuse me as I go "make me a sandwich." ♦

BOYS' SWIMMING

Senior aims for Olympic level times

BY Michael Lee

"Races are won by one one-hundredth of a second. That really is just a fingernail," senior Ian Burns said.

Some may find frustration with sports like swimming, where athletes endeavor to improve their times by seemingly trivial amounts—what's a tenth-of-a-second difference, anyway? For swimmers at Burns' level, every hundredth counts.

Burns has been swimming for most of his life, but he started swimming competitively at the local Santa Clara Swim Club in the fifth grade.



Burns

Through his "hard work and perseverance," Burns has trained himself to the point of consistently placing in the top eight at CCS in his best events, which include the 100-yard freestyle, the 200-yard IM and the 100-yard butterfly.

Olympic aspirations

In addition, Burns is close to qualifying to go to the 2012 U.S. Olympic Swim Team Trials from June 25 to July 2 in Omaha, Neb.

"Last year I was a few tenths of a second off of my Olympic Trials cut," he said. "I'd like to at least get those times. Even if it's not in time for the Olympic Trials, I'd like to reach those goal times."

Currently, Burns plans to attend the University of Arizona to study psychology or art.

"Right now they're the fastest team in the country, and they're trying to win the NCAA championship, but they have a really large team, so I'm only going in as a walk-on," Burns said. "What that means is I get all the benefits of a regular team member, just my education is not being paid for."

Physical and mental toughness

Burns' coaches admire his great passion for his sport.

"Besides having great genetics, he does have a wonderful work ethic," varsity swim coach Kristen Thomson said. "He does go to practice; it's his number one priority. He's incredibly serious about the sport. When he swims, any observer can tell that he's in his element and his true passion lies in the sport."

Swimming, like all sports, is no walk in the park. In order to achieve his current level of skill, Burns had to struggle both physically and mentally.

"[The hardest aspect of swimming is] the fact that it's not only physical; it's also mental," Burns said. "The way you're pushing your body, you're using every single muscle, down to your toes [and] your fingers."

He added, "[The key to success is] perseverance and hard work, because there are a lot of swimmers that have a lot of talent."

No limits

Still, the rewards of the sport outweigh the challenges for Burns. Competing at such a high level may be tough, but Burns loves the challenge.

"I really love trying to go as fast as I possibly can and pushing myself over limits that some people think they have," Burns said. ♦

TRACK AND FIELD

Bryan aspires to lead team

BY Minu Palaniapan & Jonathan Young

Runners gasping for air sprint as fast as they can toward the finish. Sophomore Drew Bryan is among those using their last bit of energy to finish the two-mile race, but when he finishes, he feels the sense of pride and accomplishment.

Even though many runners dread distance races such as the two mile, Bryan finds it to be one of his favorites.

"I like running [the two mile] better because you have longer to pace yourself so even if you make a mistake, you have a chance to change it," Bryan said. "Even if you run a slow first lap, you can fix that in the next seven laps."

Bryan started running competitively in sixth grade. Since then, he has steadily improved from year to year.

Sophomore Daniel Martin, a runner alongside Drew, has enjoyed being on the team with him.

"I think he's a great runner. He knows how to lead the team. He keeps on trying," Martin said. "When we're slacking off he tells us that we need to pick it up and do better, so his work ethic not only helps himself but also helps the team."

Bryan thinks he can shave seconds off his times. "My mile time right now is 5:19. But last year, when I ran the two mile, it was 11:55. I haven't run it this year, but I'm hoping to improve on that," said Bryan.

Even though he is only in his second season of high school track, he believes that he has made significant progress from his first day.

"We haven't had any meets yet, but I can already tell that I'm improving," Bryan said. "I'm hoping to eventually run an under five [minute] mile and



Courtesy of EREN VEZIROGLU

Sophomore Drew Bryan sprints to the finish during a meet against Monta Vista last year.

hopefully a 11:02 two mile."

Spring is not the only time that Bryan can be seen flying around the track. Along with track, Bryan also runs cross country and feels that between the two, track is more demanding.

"We have a lot more workouts [in track] and there are a lot more speed workouts and sprints," Bryan said. "It's a little bit more serious because we have meetings before every practice and it's a lot more time based whereas cross country is more endurance based."

Bryan, beyond being a good runner, is an excellent teammate.

"He's a great friend and is always encouraging," Martin said. "We're really

lucky to have someone like him on the team because of how much he contributes as a runner and a leader."

While Martin believes that Bryan is an excellent competitor, Bryan maintains that running is nothing but fun for him.

"The meets are really fun because you get to see a bunch of people run," Bryan said. "It's also great when you finish running and you get to cheer the rest of your teammates on afterwards."

For next year, Bryan hopes to lead the team and encourage new runners to work harder. "I just want to encourage people, and encourage them to try harder even though they're tired," said Bryan. ♦

GIRLS' SWIMMING

Junior admires her sport's 'personality'

BY Ashwini Velchamy

When junior Stephanie Chen joined swimming, she thought it was just another sport her parents were making her try. Now years later, she is a varsity swimmer on the Saratoga High swim team.

Chen originally began swimming because her parents signed her up for every sport when she was younger.

"I found out that swimming was the thing I was best at, and my parents were like, 'you're pretty good at this.' So, I kept doing it, and finally I'm here," Chen said.

While Chen struggled a bit at first, she gradually improved and learned how to compete at a higher level. Through the years, Chen has grown to love her sport.

"I just really like swimming and being in the water," Chen said. "It's just really aerodynamic."

Even though swimming is commonly perceived as an individual sport, Chen loves the team aspect of the sport.

As for swimming with a team, Chen really enjoys "swimming's personality."

"I feel like different sports have different personalities," Chen explained. "I like how people in swimming are really outgoing and creative compared to other sports."

According to Chen, this year's team is very small, and she believes it will be really tough to win any events.

"Most of our swimmers have to swim in four events, which is the most that you can do," Chen said, "and because of that it's harder to get more points since the other team has more swimmers."

"I think our team's goal this year should be to try to beat [Palo Alto], even though they have really strong swimmers," Chen said.

Along with Palo Alto, the team will go against schools such as Gunn, Homestead, Los Gatos, and Monta Vista before heading off into SCVAL's.

She also believes that this season's

star swimmer will be senior Natalie Cheung, although there is some freshman talent on the team.

"We have Yayla Sezginer, a freshman, who's a good backstroke," Chen said. "We lost our backstroke last year, and [Sezginer] is really good."

With the tremendous underclass talent the team has, Chen expects that the team will be very strong

in the future. This year Chen will be swimming the 100 freestyle and 200 freestyle.

"My personal goal is to make CCS finals this year," Chen said.

The next meet is today at Gunn High School. ♦

I like how people in swimming are outgoing and creative compared to other sports"



junior Stephanie Chen

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BASEBALL

Horn succeeds at high school level

BY Derek Sun

Hard work pays off.

Many athletes acknowledge the importance of this axiom, but never truly understand it. Some, like senior third baseman and pitcher Brady Horn, live by it.

As a Little Leaguer first learning to play the game, Horn was never "the stud player" of any of his teams; however, he set lofty personal aspirations and constantly tried to improve.

After years and years of struggling in Little League, Horn finally saw his effort translate into his games during his second year in the Saratoga Pony League, a league for players 13 to 15 years old.

"I was horrible until I played my second year in Pony," Horn said with a chuckle. "Then I found a new found comfort in the game that I hadn't felt before. I finally felt in control on the field."

He carried his success from the Pony League into his first season in high school. As a freshman, Horn started every game at third base for the JV team. Although his offensive numbers were impressive, he continued to develop his hitting and defense. Adding to the list, Horn started weight lifting to turn his gap-to-gap power into more consistent home run power.

At the turn of sophomore year, Horn

walked on the baseball field confident and ready to compete.

"At the time, I felt the best I ever had about myself as a baseball player. I had the most important trait: confidence," Horn said.

As a sophomore on JV, Horn hit .440 and even hit two home runs. He also captured a First Team All-League Award to go with his Team MVP award.

In his junior year, Horn ascended to varsity and was appointed co-captain. Despite being a quiet person, Horn led by example. His focused work ethic rubbed off on the younger players: work hard and never stop practicing. Although Horn did not hit as well as he wanted, he still collected a respectable .275 batting average with one home run; however, the most impressive feature of Horn's game that year was his defense.

"[Brady's] the best defensive third baseman in this league," head coach Adam Varteressian said.

Horn had a fielding percentage of over .900, an impressive feat for a high school player.

Horn entered the off-season prior to his last high school season hoping to upgrade his offense, deciding to harden his workout during the off season. He worked hard with his coaches to continue his quest to be the best on the field.

"I based my workouts to include more cardio instead of strength to increase my speed and make [myself] a better overall



FALCON // SARAH HULL

After starring as a pitcher and third baseman last year, senior Brady Horn looks to lead his team to victories in the tough De Anza League. The Falcons went 12-19 last year.

player rather than just a better hitter," Horn said.

Horn entered his season confident that he had put in the hard work to make this a great season. "It feels awesome to be back on the field. I'm going to cherish my last season and enjoy it,"

Horn said. In Saratoga's first league game on March 7 against Los Altos, the Falcons beat the Eagles 9-6. Senior first baseman Will Dennis had two hits including a two-run home run to push the Falcons to a respectable victory. ♦

SOFTBALL



FALCON // SARAH HULL

Sophomore Hera Tang, who hit .333 last season, will lead an improved softball team.

Tang hopes to repeat strong offensive season

BY Jay Mulye & Nikil Ramanathan

For most freshmen, the transition from lower level sports to high school sports is drastic and rocky. While many struggle to make the JV team to begin with, starting on the varsity team is a feat that is even more difficult to achieve.

By contrast, this change was not difficult for sophomore Hera Tang. As a freshman, she defied the odds and started on the varsity softball team.

Tang, who plays third base and pitches has been playing softball since she was 9 and enjoys every minute of it. "I really like pitching," Tang said, "it's always challenging and overall pretty fun actually."

Pitching may be Tang's favorite position, but it is not the only one she excels at. Facing much older competition last year, Tang hit .333 with 1 home run and 13 runs batted in.

Looking at the team this year, Tang sees reason for optimism.

"The team looks great," said Tang, "there are more players with experience, and everyone gets along very well so I

think we are going to have a fantastic season."

Even though Tang personally feels that she has not improved much from last year, she believes that the team has significantly improved from last year.

"As a team, I think we're stronger as most of the girls have improved immensely, there are more club players, and everyone works really hard," Tang said.

Tang's versatility on the field makes her an integral part of the team.

"Hera is a great pitcher and she is a great batter as well. She hits with a lot of power and her support and cheerfulness make her a great teammate all around," sophomore shortstop Mandy Lee said.

As a whole Tang enjoys softball, but one of the things that stands out the most to her is the team aspect.

"My favorite part of softball is bonding with the team," Tang said. "As we all get to be better friends, we also improve in games, which is always fun to see." ♦

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GIRLS' LACROSSE

Team amped up with Guarino

JUNIOR ATTACK LEADS UNDERCLASSMEN-FILLED TEAM IN THIRD YEAR ON VARSITY

by Ingrid Hong

Although junior Jenny Guarino may be quiet in the hallways, she knows how to make a presence on the field. Having been on varsity since her freshman year, she's become an essential part of the girls' lacrosse team.

"Jenny is such a talented player," sophomore midfielder Casey Takahashi said. "On the field, I know that I can count on her to catch my passes and make smart decisions."

With her powerful and accurate shots and quick speed, Guarino helps guide the team with her skills and experience. She says she got into lacrosse at an early age.

"When I was in elementary school, my brothers got into a boys' lacrosse program at their middle school," Guarino said, "so I was interested in starting up, too."

Her brothers further encouraged her interest in lacrosse by practicing with her. Later on, she joined club teams in order to play competitively.

Playing for so many years prepared Guarino for the competition of high school lacrosse. She played on two other club teams for five years before high school. When she tried out during her

freshman year, she made the varsity team.

"The upperclassmen were really welcoming, mostly because I was the 'cute freshman,'" Guarino said.

Although there was pressure of being the youngest on the team, she says that "being a freshman on varsity made [her] a much better player."

Even though she had already been playing many years, she was getting exposed to a much more competitive environment.

"My freshman year was kind of hard at first because I had to get along with people older than me. But after a few days I had made a bunch of great friends," Guarino said. Her goals that year were really to have fun and make new friends.

To her, all the running, drills and long practices are worth it.

"My favorite aspect of lacrosse is the novelty of the sport; it's fairly new on the West Coast," she said.

Guarino likes the good times she has had with girls on team. She also has a good feeling about this upcoming season.

She said, "At our jamboree at Menlo

>> scoreboard

Feb. 25

Menlo-Atherton Jamboree

The Falcons won four out of five games. They beat Woodside, Justin Sienna, Harker and Mercy.

March 2

Saratoga 16, Notre Dame 3

This was the girls' first victory against Notre Dame in three years.

March 7

Saratoga 18, Santa Catalina 3

Senior Carolyn Choi led the team to victory with her quick, accurate shots. She led the team with five goals.



Courtesy of SCOTT JEWELER

Junior Jenny Guarino sprints past a Notre Dame defender during a March 2 away game.

High School, we won four out of five games."

The Falcons defeated Woodside 12-0, Justin Sienna 6-2, Harker 6-2 and Mercy 5-4 at the Menlo High Jamboree on Feb. 25. Their only loss was a 3-2 game against St. Francis.

With only four seniors, the team is young and made up of mostly sophomores and juniors. However, returning veterans such as Guarino are key to

holding the team together and maintaining continuity between years. The team also thinks that they are prepared well for future years with the young players.

The Falcons are confident on making CCS this year due to their mix of athleticism and experience.

"I think we're a lot more organized and in better shape than the previous years, so I predict a successful season," Guarino said. ♦

BADMINTON

Nation's No. 1 player leads Falcons

by Vivian LeTran & Grace Ma

With only three years of badminton experience, sophomore Bryan Chow has already gone from a novice to the best of the best.

On Feb. 18-20, Chow won the Northwest Super Regional Junior Badminton Tournament in Seattle, placing him as the No. 1 boys' singles player in the nation under the age of 17.

"The whole tournament was pretty difficult, but it felt like all the long hard days of training have finally paid off," Chow said.

Chow plays the varsity boys' singles No. 1 spot on the school team. He used to train every day, but now trains four times a week outside of school, for about three hours a day.

Between training for badminton, playing in marching band and doing school work, Chow admits that he does not have much free time.

"Yeah, it's a lot. During band season I don't have a lot of time, so I skip a lot of [badminton] practices," Chow said.

Chow's passion for badminton has been noted by school coach Alex Chan.

"Bryan is competitive, [but] he doesn't let his skills and achievements get to his head," Chan said. "He is also willing to play other players of lower skill level for fun, which is important."

Chan also claims that though Chow does not train as often as he used to, he does see improvement from last year.

"The difference is subtle, but he has definitely improved. With experience comes confidence and consistency," Chan said.

The area of greatest progression, according to Chan, is in the way Chow plays his matches mentally.

"Badminton requires you to read your opponents' movements. You've got to be faster physically and mentally," he said. "Bryan has improved on both."

Although Chow receives strong support from his parents in badminton, he says that school always comes first for him. If badminton were to ever distract him too much from school, he would have to quit in order to focus on school.

This year, the badminton team has played two scrimmages so far, beating Newark Memorial on Feb. 28 by a score of 19-11 and losing to Mission San Jose on March 1 by a score of 24-6. The team's next game and first league match was against Wilcox on March 15.

Chan hopes that Chow will lead the school team to a victory at CCS.

"I look forward to seeing him in CCS singles and winning it," Chan said. "If he doesn't get injured, he has a good chance." ♦

>> scoreboard

Feb. 28

Saratoga 19, Newark Memorial 11

The entire boys' double lineup won all of the games, and sophomore Bryan Chow won his number one singles match.

March 1

Mission San Jose 24, Saratoga 6

Senior Jeff Kuo and junior Derek Chao won their varsity No. 1 doubles match, but the team was unable to win.



FALCON / LILLIAN CHEN

Sophomore Bryan Chow leaps in the air to smash the birdie back to his foe from Mission San Jose on March 1. The Falcons lost 24-6.

BOYS' TENNIS

King of the tennis court

SOPHOMORE KIAL KAISER PILOTS BOYS' VARSITY TEAM AT NO. 1 SINGLES

by Brandon Judoprasertijo

No. 1 singles: the slot in tennis held only by the best singles player on the team.

While most would expect such a revered position to belong to an upperclassman or one of the captains, this year's singles one position belongs to sophomore Kial Kaiser.

"Kial is a strong presence on the team and always keeps our spirits up," senior captain Krishnan Raman said. "He's definitely improved and he continues to be mentally tough and is constantly adding to his game, becoming a complete all around player necessary to compete at top levels."

Kaiser first picked up the tennis racket at age 8. In addition to playing for the school team, he practices six to seven times a week for three to four hours each time and has placed in national tournaments such as the United States Tennis Association (USTA) National Clay tournament and the USTA Spring Easter Bowl Tournament.

When he was 14, Kaiser was ranked No. 1 in Northern California and 12th in the nation among his age category. Currently, he is ranked No. 4 in Northern California and among the nation's top 120 in the age 16 category.

"I like the competitive nature of the sport and how no one can really change what you do but yourself," Kaiser said. "I don't like losing and also the fact that

sometimes it's hard to play all by yourself."

Kaiser feels that the team had a great season last year; however, Kaiser also believes that with the loss of key alumni Deepak Sabada and Nikhil Jayashankar the season will be a lot tougher this year.

"We had a solid force last year, and everyone gave their full effort," Kaiser said. "The matches will definitely be more challenging this year, but it'll be fun representing the team at the No. 1 spot."

Kaiser's teammates have acknowledged his talents and appreciate his presence on the team.

On March 2-3, the team placed third in the Fresno tournament that features the top 16 teams in the state. Also present at the competition was Monta Vista, who will be the Falcons' main rival for first in leagues this year.

The team opened on March 2 with a 7-0 win over Dana Hills along with a 4-3 win over a very strong Santa Barbara team. On March 3, the team lost 7-0 to Menlo in the semi-finals before coming back with a 6-1 victory over Gunn.

Kaiser demonstrated his talents at the tournaments and won three out of his four matches, losing only by a small margin to the No. 1 singles player from the Menlo, who later won the tournament.

"It feels pretty cool to represent the team as a sophomore," Kaiser said. "I just need to perform well." ♦



Kaiser

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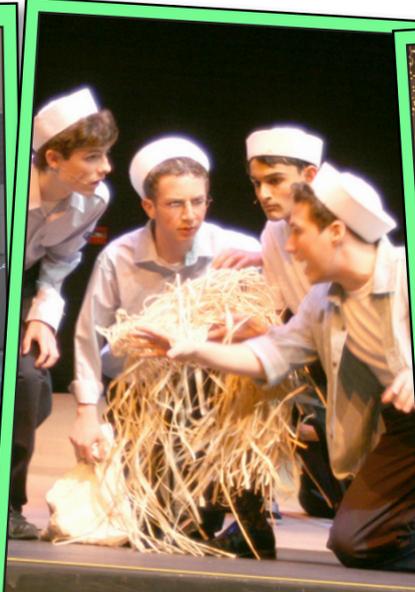
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FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

Juniors Neal Signaporia and Amin Mirzadegan model during a fall preview of the Benefit Fashion Show, which will take place March 17 in the large gym.



FALCON // DYLAN JEW

Freshmen Jack McCarthy and Andrew York and seniors Joshua Harris and Arjun Desai perform in "South Pacific" on March 9 in the McAfee Center.



FALCON // KELLY LIN

Seniors Valerie Peterson and Austin Sevilla dance the night away at the Jazz Cab on March 3.



FALCON // DYLAN JEW

Junior Jenni Miller helps distribute soup for the Souper Bowl on Feb. 29 with her ceramics class with teacher Leah Aguayo.

Chickens the Sequel: A dog versus the skunk and the stink

My news editor once asked me, "Samuel, do you live on a farm?" Though the owner of nine chickens and a dog, I have to say, somewhat regretfully, that I live in the suburbia of suburbias, right next to Redwood Middle School.



SAMUEL LIU
Chicken Man

If you're my avid fan (notice the singular noun), you'll realize that I've lost a chicken, as in my last chicken-related column, I stated that I had 10 chickens. I'm sure you're wondering what happened to that chicken, so here goes.

It's a Sunday night, and I am madly rushing to finish my homework. All of a sudden, there is a muffled disturbance from the backyard, kind of like when someone farts in a really crowded classroom, but then no one can get out

so everyone starts panicking. Bad comparison? You'll understand later.

I walk outside, flashlight, my wiry 105-pound frame and blue belt Karate credentials ready for a fight. I sweep the flashlight to the chicken coop, and I see the culprit right away.

There's my dog, growling deeply, hair raised. Standing about four feet away is a skunk, eyeing her suspiciously, rear end raised like a cop with a gun.

Let's analyze the match up.

My dog is considered a more intelligent breed and weighs a solid 50 pounds; the skunk probably weighed less than Shaquille O'Neal's left toe. In the world of survival of the fittest, those extra pounds can mean life or death.

But the skunk is related to the "crazy nastyass honey badger," an Internet

meme popularized by a viral YouTube video. Apparently, the honey badger is quite the fighter. Fearlessly, the honey badger is shown killing cobras and eating honey from a bees' nest, even as the bees swarm around him.

My dog takes a hesitant step forward. Like with two western cowboys locked in a duel, the tension is palpable, and every movement brings a reaction. The skunk raises its behind in reaction; my dog flinches and backs down. I can see my dog calculating the situation. Do I run away? Do I lunge and kill it? I try to call my dog over, but she doesn't notice me. She quivers, hesitates and then promptly pounces on the skunk with all her force. All chaos ensues.

The situation is frantic. My dog is yelping and whimpering wildly, the skunk's spray causing momentary blindness. My dog was not fast enough;

the skunk released its gas right before my dog could disable it.

Strangely, the skunk wasn't moving. I approach it. Like I said, no worries, I know Karate.

I had just decided on finishing the skunk with a club when it raised its tail, aimed, and ... kept it raised.

Fortunately for me, my family and my international fan base, the skunk seemed to be out of gas.

Realizing it was fatally injured, I left it to die in dignity. Unfortunately for my dog, though, she smelled for two days like ... well, there really is no word for it. Maybe the smell of burning natural gas.

And thus ended the saga, going badly for the small guy, as usual.

What, you want to know what happened to my chicken?

Two words: noodle soup. ♦

topten

REASONS TO BE MAD IN MARCH

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>10 Powderpuff. <i>Guys wearing short shorts for cheerleading? Uh....</i></p> <p>9 The only month with no break. <i>No explanation necessary.</i></p> <p>8 Daylight savings. <i>Even less sleep than usual.</i></p> <p>7 Allergies. <i>Have to bring a tissue box for every test.</i></p> <p>6 St. Patty's day? <i>Green day with red bruises.</i></p> | <p>5 Not getting asked to Sadies ... <i>Embarassing.</i></p> <p>4 Nothing grinds your gears more than watching your favorite team lose.</p> <p>3 The SAT. <i>There's one Saturday ruined.</i></p> <p>2 College acceptances... <i>and college rejections.</i></p> <p>1 Weather confused: <i>wearing short shorts in 30 degree weather?</i></p> |
|---|--|

>> Derek Sun
Jonathan Young

buzzworthy >> The cinnamon challenge

BY Samuel Liu

Sophomore Nikil Ramanathan stood outside of chemistry teacher Bob Kucer's classroom, coughing, gagging and nearly vomiting. This wasn't because of Kucer's notoriously challenging tests, or even an upset stomach. Ramanathan was merely suffering from the effects of the self-imposed cinnamon challenge.

The cinnamon challenge is a competition in which a person attempts to eat or swallow a spoonful of ground cinnamon without drinking anything.

"I saw YouTube videos [of people doing the cinnamon challenge] and thought they were just weak and that I could do it," Ramanathan said. "I've learned my lesson."

Ramanathan's fateful challenge began over Facebook. Students brazenly pledged to do the challenge if they received an A on the Kucer test. Ramanathan, however, said he did it even though he did not receive an A on the test.

On a Monday tutorial outside of Kucer's classroom, sophomore Jason Li, who had also pledged to do the challenge, poured out ground cinnamon onto a green spoon and handed it to Ramanathan.

As Ramanathan prepared to eat the cinnamon, a crowd gathered around to witness the feat.

Kucer, standing by the doorway, questioned the safety of the experiment. In the YouTube video, he can be heard asking, "Is this safe to do?"

"Mostly, maybe," students responded.

Ramanathan put the cinnamon in his mouth and swallowed tensely for a few seconds. Then, his face contorted in agony, and he started spewing clouds of cinnamon.

"He's smoking cinnamon!" Kucer exclaimed.

Ramanathan later said, "My mouth was extremely dry, and all I could feel was a burning sensation at the back of my throat. Luckily for me, Mr. Kucer (who was not involved in the challenge) was nice enough to give me a water bottle after watching my wretched experience." ♦

