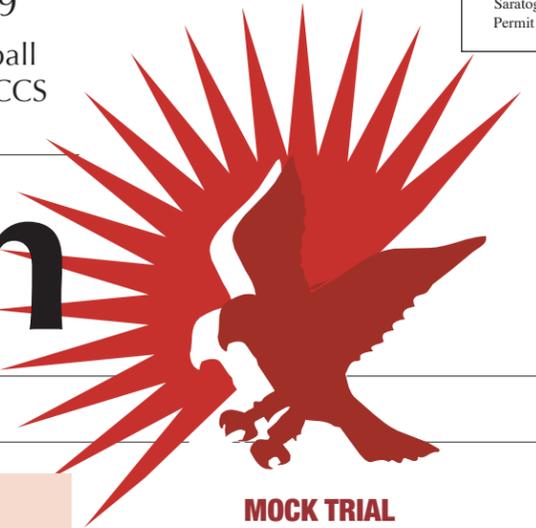




THE saratogafalcon



Vo. 51 >> Issue 8 >> Friday, March 4, 2011 >> Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA >> saratogafalcon.org

March, a busy month for student performers

SARATOGA IDOL



FALCON // ARCHIVES

Saratoga alums Eric Sun and Lauren Henderson sang their hearts out at last year's Saratoga Idol in the McAfee Center.

Saratoga Idol judges will be using rubrics this year to make the competition more fair. Contestants will sing in the McAfee Center on March 16 from 7-9 p.m. for \$5 with ASB and \$7 without.

JEKYLL & HYDE



FALCON // LILLIAN CHEN

Seniors Jay Lee and Dylan Teter rehearse after school on Feb. 25 for the musical "Jekyll and Hyde."

The drama department will perform "Jekyll and Hyde" March 10 through March 13 at the McAfee. The show times for the 10, 11 and 12 is 7:30 p.m. and there will be a 2:30 matinee show on the 13th. Tickets will be \$12 for students and \$15 for adults. There will be student productions in the Little Theatre on March 31 and April 1.

CARNEGIE HALL



FALCON // ARCHIVES

Band director Michael Boitz conducts the string orchestra at the Winter Concert on Dec. 7 in the McAfee Center.

On March 8, the Symphonic Wind Ensemble and Advanced Orchestra will perform at The Isaac Stern auditorium in Carnegie Hall. One hundred four students will be performing on stage and an additional 14 seniors will be accompanying the department to New York. The group leaves tomorrow and will return on March 9.

JAZZ CABARET



FALCON // ARCHIVES

Former assistant band director Duane Otani conducts the Advanced Jazz Ensemble at last year's Jazz Cabaret.

Saratoga Music Boosters will host its annual Jazz Cabaret and Swing Dance from 7-10 p.m. on March 19. Tickets will be \$10 for students with ID, performers and staff; they will be \$20 for adults. It will feature swing and old school music.

>> Full stories on pg. 5

FALCON FOCUS

Chemistry teacher finds solace in writing

BY David Eng

Tragedy befell chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu in 2002 when her then-husband Jayson Chang fell victim to multiple myeloma, a cancer of the plasma cells. She remained by his side during his final days, but eventually he passed away later that year.

Suddenly estranged and emotionally calloused by this traumatic turn of events, Nakamatsu sought mediums by which to cope with her deep loss. One of these methods she found particularly therapeutic was writing.

Nakamatsu had always been an avid writer, an amateur author of fictional short stories. In fact, prior to her hus-

band's bout with cancer, Nakamatsu habitually wrote murder mysteries solely for her own enjoyment, never once publishing her light-hearted tales of time travel or mystery-solving dogs.

Now, having lived through an event many would never dream of confronting, the chemistry teacher is breaking out of her backroom-closet fictional mentality and taking steps to convey her own life experiences in print, in the form of a memoir.

"With this particular piece that I'm working on, the memoir, it's actually very cathartic," she said. "My husband's death was very traumatic and a difficult

time in my life, so to write about it has helped me heal."



Nakamatsu

Despite her relative inexperience with the autobiographical genre, Nakamatsu feels determined to improve, enrolling in a weekly writing course at Stanford University this year and attending various other writing circles over the past few years. She has found that collaborating with other writers has been instrumental in her own emotional transformation as a writer.

"I actually wrote about what happened to my husband in the version of a

>> **TEACHER** on pg. 4

Making the case

TEAM PLACES SECOND IN COUNTY FINALS

BY Sabrina Cismas

Saratoga High has some successful lawyers in the making on the mock trial team, which secured second place in Santa Clara County finals out of 22 schools, losing by a mere three points to Prospect High School on Feb. 22 at the Superior Courthouse. It was the best performance ever by a Saratoga High mock trial team.

Throughout their season, the 12-person team won all four qualifying rounds, the quarterfinals and the semifinals, preparing the stage for the defense mock trial team who competed in the finals. If they had won, they would have gone on to the state competition, and a victory there would have meant a spot in the national competition in Phoenix.

"The finals all came down to the flip of a coin," senior captain Shannon Galvin said. "The other team was really good."

It has been many years since the SHS team competed in finals, meaning that some magic had happened during their limited once-a-week practices.

"A lot of other school teams have mock trial as a class during school or they meet multiple times a week," Galvin said. "All we do is meet once a week."

Galvin credits some of the success to the team's improved attitude, as they were able to work together more successfully and comprehensively, whereas

>> **MOCK** on pg. 4

>> upcoming events

March 5 Crab Feed

Support athletes by enjoying a crab buffet and jazz music at the Community Center from 7-11 p.m.

March 16 Saratoga Idol

Come listen to your peers as they belt it out from 7-9 p.m. in the McAfee Center.

March 19 Jazz Cabaret

Dance the night away with jazz music from 7-10 p.m. in the Large Gym.

inside the falcon

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D.C trip now open to sophomores

Sophomores this year will be allowed to join the upperclassmen on the six-day excursion to Washington, D.C., during spring break. Twenty students will visit and learn about the nation's capital and the various monuments in the National Mall.

This change resulted from fewer upperclassmen signing up for the trip than anticipated. Many seniors spend their spring break touring colleges to make their college decisions by May 1.

"We felt that this trip would be great for sophomores as it would be a head start for U.S history," said history teacher Matt Torrens.

Torrens is organizing and chaperoning the field trip along with English teacher Kerry Mohnike. This semi-annual trip takes turns with the Wild West Trip in which students go to Utah.

—Grishma Athavale

Students say goodbye to limos

This year students going to prom will find that their limos and party buses have been replaced with chartered buses. The main reason for the change is to quell the drama that usually accompanies the planning of the limo and party bus rides, according to assistant principal Karen Hyde.

"There have been concerns [surrounding limos and party buses] for a number of years and it was reiterated at the [proms] last year," Hyde said. "There are two parallel issues. One is: Limos are expensive. And party buses are a concern—nobody checks for alcohol."

Contrary to the rumor that the buses will be sorted alphabetically, students will instead sign up for the bus they want to go on. Members of the junior and senior class officers agree with the administrative decision.

"There is always so much unnecessary drama that comes along with limo situations and the buses will solve all of it," senior class secretary Erin Wong said. "[They are] also going to save people a lot of money because the cost is going to be split up between everyone in the class."

Junior class co-vice president Nicole Shadman also said that the charter buses will give students the chance to be more relaxed with pre-prom planning.

"I think that having buses definitely eliminates the awkward moment where all of your friends are going in one limo and there's not enough room for you and your date," Shadman said.

Most of the student leaders seem to approve this decision. Junior prom will be held at the Corinthian Grand Ballroom in San Jose on April 23. The location of senior prom, which takes place on May 21, has yet to be revealed.

—Megan Benzing & Allison Toh

Students keep one eye on the Class Cup

The Harry Potter-inspired class cup, introduced in the beginning of the year, has fueled school spirit through the year.

Students can earn spirit points for their class in a variety of ways, such as winning games at rallies and dressing up on spirit days.

Currently, seniors stand in first place with 263 points, juniors in second place with 222 points, sophomores in third place with 107 points and freshmen in fourth place with 53 points.

"I think [the class cup] has increased spirit at school because kids like a bit of competition between the grades," junior Zara Sheikh said.

However, some students believe that their peers are not as concerned with the competition itself.

Senior Esha Roy feels that it is more important to increase the spirit of the school as a whole, rather than within different grades.

"My main motivations during spirit days, rallies, and Homecoming are to have fun and see what the other grades bring to the table," Roy said.

Nevertheless, the competition is an attempt to bring a healthy dose of rivalry to the school scene.

Students will have an opportunity to earn points for their respective classes during Spring Fling week, the first week of April.

There will also be a variety of other spirit days and activities, such as a Class Cup Tournament which spirit commission and rally commission will be hosting at lunch on April 8th. The tournament will include quirky games like those from the TV show "Minute to Win It."

—Denise Lin

>> picturethis



FALCON // ARNAV DUGAR

Junior Hansen Qian presents his History Day poster about Nixon's 1972 visit to China in the Saratoga High library on Feb. 9. This year, a record 92 students participated in History Day. They chose from project options that included making a documentary, building an elaborate poster and doing a performance either in a group or individually. Twenty projects went on to the County Fair, which will be on March 19.

falconfigures <<

Driving ticket prices in the state of California

\$114	Pedestrian Violation of "Walk" or "Wait" Signals	\$380	Failure to Stop at Stop Sign at Railroad Grade Crossing
\$146	Failure to Furnish Name and Address to Officer Upon Request	\$400	Speeding (26 or more miles over speed limit)
\$146	Failure to Stop at Stop Sign	\$400	Minor Driving With Blood Alcohol Level of .05 or Greater
\$154	Failure to Yield Right-of-Way on Sidewalk to Pedestrian	\$570	Passing School Bus With Flashing Signals
\$154	Speeding (1-15 miles over speed limit)	\$600	Knowingly Allow Another to Drive Vehicle Without Valid License
\$154	Failure to Sign Driver's License	\$950	Parking in Bus Loading Area
\$280	Unsafe Passing on Right Shoulder	\$950	Parking at Curb Constructed to Provide Wheelchair Accessibility
\$280	Speeding (16 to 25 miles over speed limit)	\$1,200	Driving While Suspended or Revoked License
\$280	Minor Driving With Blood Alcohol Level of .01 or Greater		

—Arnav Dugar

Source: California Rules of Court, November 2010 Edition

>> falconfocus

Student unites school to aid LG crash victim

BY OliviaChock

During announcements in fifth period January, students heard about the plight of a Los Gatos High sophomore named Shea Shaw. They learned that on Jan. 13 Shaw had been run over by a hit-and-run driver while crossing a street and that her parents lacked health insurance and needed financial help.

The result: \$2,500 collected in a single day from students who put small amounts into envelopes. The person behind this effort was senior Brandon Pierce, who has made his mark on campus through his various extra curricular activities.

Though busy with planning for the rally commission, singing for the school choir, organizing the Benefit fashion show, playing on the volleyball team and being the co-president of Faithwalk, Pierce found some spare time to chat with assistant principal Karen Hyde about the accident.

"To be honest I don't really know what motivated me to do this," Pierce said. "I heard

about the accident from [senior Pia Mishra] since she volunteers at Good Samaritan Hospital with some Los Gatos students so I brought it up to Ms. Hyde."

Since Pierce knew the Shaw family was in a terrible situation, he thought the best way to help was to start a fundraiser. Although the idea was simple, its efforts immensely helped the Shaw family.

In addition to the first \$2,500, and with an added \$1,000 from the Winter Ball fund, Saratoga High students provided a total of \$3,500 for Shaw thus far.

"It has been mind-blowing how successful the fundraiser has been," Pierce said. "I was hoping we could make a couple hundred dollars. I prayed we'd make maybe \$1,000."

Because of the combined efforts of the Saratoga Los Gatos community, Shaw's family has been donated a substantial amount of money. Through the community's generous gesture added onto money they've scrapped up themselves, Shaw will be able to pull through.



FALCON // OLIVIA CHOCK

Senior Brandon Pierce counts the donations made to Los Gatos student Shea Shaw in Hyde's office.

Saratoga high students have made a grand total of \$4,100 through Pierce's fundraiser. However, Shaw is still in a coma.

"It feels amazing that our school has come together for someone we've never met before," Pierce said. "She's a part of our community and we should be supportive." ♦

MATHLETES

Math club adds to previous successes

BY Brandon Judoprasertijo

The school's math stars have been busy taking tests and bringing home prizes in recent weeks:

- 17 of the 79 students who took the American Math Competition (AMC) qualified for the American Invitational Mathematics Exam (AIME).

- A team led by three seniors placed first overall in the Harvard-MIT Math Tournament (HMMT) on Feb. 12.

- The math club's team A in the Stanford Math Tournament (SMT) placed second overall on Feb. 19.

Sophomores and freshmen had the option of taking either the AMC 10 or 12 while juniors and seniors were required to take the more difficult AMC 12. Both tests were composed of 25 multiple choice questions and were hosted in the Small Gym on Feb. 8 and Feb. 23.

"It wasn't super hard; it was probably normal difficulty," freshman club member Matthew Lee said. "Most people in the club should have at least done pretty well."

Participants were able to qualify for

the AIME by scoring at least 117 points on the AMC 10 and at least 93 points on the AMC 12.

According to senior club officer Albert Gu, only around two and a half percent of AMC 10 takers and around one percent of the AMC 12 takers qualify for the AIME. Each correct answer was worth six points, while problems left unanswered were worth one and a half points and incorrect answers were worth zero points.

>> THE big idea

Math Club

Recent successes: About one-fifth of the AMC-takers qualified for the AIME, high overall scores in the HMMT and SMT

What's next: The math club has a slew of future competitions, including the AIME and the Santa Clara Valley Mathematics Association Field Day

Qualifiers included seniors Amol Aggarwal, Albert Gu, David Zeng, Kevin Mu, David Wang, juniors Alissa Zhang, Brian Wai, Evan Ye, David Eng, sophomores Jackie Gu, Amanda Chow, Edward Dong,

Justin Chiang, Brian Kim, Kevin Garbe and freshmen Jeffrey Chen and Matthew Lee.

The second competition to come was the HMMT. Led by Albert, Zeng and Aggarwal, the team comprised of eight Bay Area students beat some of the nation's top schools including Phillip Exeter Academy, Phillips Andover, Lehigh Valley and the New York City Math Team. In order to come out on top, the team



FALCON // LILLIAN CHEN

Junior Alissa Zhang reviews her AMC 12 test in math teacher P.J. Yim's room on Feb. 25.

gathered points from individual testing scores, two team tests, one proof test and one speed test.

"I had always wanted to go to this because it is one of the biggest competitions," Albert said. "To actually win this was an amazing experience."

The last of the results came from the SMT, which is a variant of the HMMT. The competition provided a variety of tests on a wide range of subjects such as advance maths, geometry, algebra and general mathematics for its participants.

According to sophomore club member Nessa Kim, who entered the general mathematics test individually, the test was harder than last year's because of the competing teams from countries around the world such as Beijing and Iran.

"Everything was really hard," Kim said. "You did really well if you got at least five out of 20 or 25."

The team that placed second overall was the math club's A team named after an inside joke, "Fattening Grub."

During the power round, in which teams worked on problems revolving

around this year's topic of Coordinate Geometry, Fattening Grub came out on top taking first place. After writing up mathematical proofs together in the team round and completing other problems in the individual round, the team finished only behind "AAST," a team from New Jersey that has won first place several times in the past already.

"We managed to work together nicely on the team rounds," Albert said. "I don't think we were expecting to beat AAST. We did better on the team round, but they had many strong individuals."

Although the club had just finished two important competitions, more have yet to come. However, regardless of the seemingly never ending competitive events that come up for the math club, the members maintain good attitudes and high spirits.

"Personally, I do it for the experience because I'm still learning," Kim said. "The only pressure is to get better and work on your skills as well as trying to help others in the club. I think that's the basic idea of the math club." ♦

CULTURAL EXPERIENCE



FALCON // JORDAN WAITE

Spanish students make a traditional and common Mayan dish, *xek*, which is a type of fruit salad.

Spanish students journey to Yucatan in annual Mexico trip

BY Grishma Athavale & Priyanka Nookala

Instead of the usual stay in Cuernavaca, 61 students and four SHS teachers traveled to Mérida, Yucatán, for this year's February break trip to Mexico.

Students who went on the 10-day trip attended a school in Mérida. Students lived with host families in groups of two and three during their stay in Mérida.

The families provided beds, meals, showers and the chance for students to improve their fluency.

"The trip is a great chance for students to experience the culture and improve their language," said language department chair Arnoldo Rodriguez.

Students traveled to nearby cities, visiting the famous

pyramids at Chichen Itza and Uxmal, witnessing the Mayan ruins at the Temple of Warriors and swimming in cenotes, or natural wells, in addition to partaking in salsa dancing, taking cooking lessons and attending city tours.

In spite of their visits to all these exciting places, the trip was not all fun and games, since their week of instruction at the Institute of Modern Spanish consisted of a daily two hours of grammar, conversation and cultural studies with a 10 and 20 minute break.

"The classes were pretty interesting and interactive," junior Sachi Dholakia said. "The curriculum wasn't too fast-paced and was easy to follow."

At the end of the trip students had a graduation ceremony where they received

a diploma and Mayan zodiac signs. A party with a hammock maker, a trip to Celestun Beach and time at a petting zoo with iguanas, scorpions and ferrets marked the last day.

Senior Kyle Fukui felt that there were some differences between the trip to Mérida and last year's trip to Cuernavaca.

"The main difference was the language institute. Last year there were college students at the language institute, but this year it was just our school," Fukui said.

Sophomore Eric Castronovo, who went on the Mexico trip for the very first time, said, "Speaking Spanish was hard for me because I'm in Spanish 2, [but] overall it was a good experience. Swimming in the cenote was very cool. I'm definitely going [on the Mexico trip] next year." ♦

GUIDANCE

Online registration saves more paper, speeds up process

BY Serena Chan

For upperclassmen, filling out course request forms for the following year is a familiar ritual. Those sheets went to guidance counselors, who then handed the information into computers, creating the complex puzzle that led to the following year's master schedule.

This familiar ritual is no more. Starting this year, guidance is now having students type in their course requests online using Aeries.

Ideas for the improvement began at the beginning of the school year. Los Gatos High tried online class registration for the first time last year. Since everything went smoothly, the Saratoga High Guidance Department decided to give it a try, according to guidance counselor Alinna Satake.

"Practically speaking, it saves us a ton of paper and a ton of time processing paper," Satake said. "And I think it also gives students more ownership over the classes that they sign up for."

Instead of visiting English classes for the course presentations, counselors covered the

usual topics during a mandatory tutorial period. Grade by grade, counselors introduced next year's classes, important

"And I think it gives students more ownership over the classes they sign up for."

>> Guidance counselor Alinna Satake

goals and the online registration procedure.

Presentations for incoming seniors were on Feb. 21, for incoming juniors Feb. 25 and for incoming sophomores Feb. 28.

After presentations, students can sign up for classes on Aeries. Revisions can be made to students' course selection until the window closes today, March 4, giving plenty of time to choose carefully.

Lastly, the multiple sheets of AP/Honors contracts have been condensed into one contract. Guidance changed the contracts to create one organized list for the student and parent signatures.

All of these changes will reduce the amount of paper used during the class registration process and, counselors hope, will increase efficiency as well.

"Come on, it's the 21st century. We have to get on board," Satake said. "Colleges do it, so we should do it this way too."

For more information, visit the guidance page at Saratoga High's website, www.saratoga-high.org. ♦

TEACHER >> work published

continued from pg. 1

short story, using my life experiences to write fiction," she said.

Nakamatsu has been working on her memoir ever since, and an excerpt of it was published in the "Fallen Leaf Anthology," a collection of short stories that "speaks boldly of life."

Nakamatsu submitted her memoir, along with another short story, for publication via The Write Retreat at Stanford Sierra Camp, one of the writing seminars she attended over the past few years.

The anthology, advertised as 40 works of fiction, nonfiction and poetry ranging from humorous anecdotes of childhood to endearing tales of final days, was published in early February.

"It was kind of a contest," she said. "They selected several short stories and both of mine were accepted."

When Nakamatsu finally received her hard copy of the anthology, she just stared at it in awe.

"I kept staring at it and I read my

stories again and I just kept looking at my name. It was very exciting," Nakamatsu said.

With two to three chapters of her memoir already written and 12 more chapters outlined, Nakamatsu feels confident that she will eventually send it to a publishing agent. Nakamatsu hopes that sharing her past accounts with the public will "help someone who has lost a loved one."

"When my husband died, it was a really sad time for me," Nakamatsu said. "I almost wished I had something like this to turn to and tell me it was going to be all right."

Now happily remarried, Nakamatsu has successfully taken her life-long passion for writing and shifted it to a medium of solace. What began as an introverted hobby serving as "an outlet for an active imagination" has become a vital channel of emotional healing.

"Now that I've started going, I don't know how much longer it will take to finish," she said. "But yes, the hope is to be a book." ♦

"I kept staring at it and I read my stories again and I just kept looking at my name. It was very exciting."

>> Teacher Kathy Nakamatsu



Chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu wrote one short story and an excerpt of her memoir, both of which were published in "The Fallen Leaf Anthology."

MOCK >> No. 2 at county

continued from pg. 1

in past years cliques usually formed between the different roles.

"We've come a long way, looking back to where we were two years ago," Galvin said. Unlike previous trials where three judges preside, the finals had six judges eyeing the teams, with one of the judges currently involved in a working rape case.

"Our coach was telling us that some of the [information] that was in our fake case was relevant to what the judge was working on right now," said senior Grace Kim, who played the part of a witness.

Adding to the stress of the realistic environment, cameras were installed in the courthouse to film and document the whole procedure.

Kim said the environment was much more intimidating and the addition of three judges made the experience more nerve-racking because it was harder to tell whether they were winning or not.

The lawyers on the team had prepared ahead of time scripts with dialogue with each witness, but during the real trial, improvisation and tailoring of the script according to the other team's responses needed to happen in order to make the trial more realistic, Galvin said.



Freshman Jennifer Werner shows the jury the evidence for the case at the Old Courthouse in downtown San Jose on Feb. 22.

"You do a lot of thinking on the spot," Galvin said. "If you combine speech and debate, drama, and add what people learn in three years of law school, you end up with mock trial."

True to its name, mock trial is a trial held by students, with the same routines and atmosphere that exist in a real one. The only difference is that the cases are fake, usually revolving around current issues and pressing matters.

The team's trial for the finals was about an assault with a deadly weapon case. The defense team was defending a student who hit another student with a brick in the head.

Points were awarded by the judges, who are judges in reality, based on the quality of the team's performance. The team lost to Prospect 514 to 511 points. Even with the defeat, mock trial participants were thrilled with their results.

"It was a good end because none of us got the experience of going to finals before; we didn't even get to semifinals last year," Kim said.

Galvin is excited that the team was able to make their coach, Dr. Hugh Roberts, proud.

"It's Dr. Roberts last year as a coach, and he's done it for so long," Galvin said of the former social studies teacher who has guided the program since the 1980s. "It was nice to give him that accomplishment." ♦

>> thebigidea

The Trial for Finals

The case: The trial was about a student who injured another student in the head with a brick.

The judges: Six professional judges evaluated the mock trial teams, awarding points for the quality of performance.

The results: Toga's team lost to Prospect 514 to 511 points, finishing in second place.

>> togatalks

To what do you attribute your success in mock trial this year?

Honestly, our Mock Trial coach [Dr. Hugh Roberts]. He's so educated in law and also really good at constructive criticism.



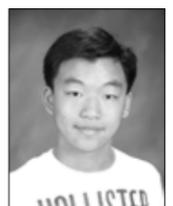
senior Grace Kim

Probably experience, since most of the team were seniors.



senior Shannon Galvin

We were a very closely-knit group and we had very good chemistry.



junior Michael Chang

SPEECH & DEBATE

Team shines at Norcal debate tournaments

BY Karthik Annaamalai

February break was no break for speech and debaters this year since they spent most of the nine days off at national tournaments held at Stanford and Berkeley. But feel sorry for the team's members since they brought home the best results in those tough tournaments in a decade.

Debate, speech go strong at Stanford

During the first weekend of break, from Feb. 11-13, Saratoga traveled a short distance to Stanford University to take part in the annual debate tournament. The speech team had particular success with senior Vance Lindholm advancing to the semifinal round in Impromptu, junior Alex Mabanta advancing to the semifinals in Congress, sophomore Venkat Munukutla advancing to the semifi-

nals in Oratory and sophomore Ishaan Kolluri advancing to the semifinals in Impromptu. The team of juniors Anoop Galivanche and Anshu Siripurapu advanced to the double octafinals in varsity parliamentary debate. Meanwhile, freshman Akshay Mandhani placed second in the junior varsity division of Domestic Extemp.

"This tournament was perhaps our strongest yet," Kolluri said. "Both our speech and our debate teams did very well and we hope to continue this success throughout the rest of the debate season."

Continuing success at Berkeley

But the team's success did not stop there. Saratoga travelled to Berkeley from Feb 18-21 to take part in Cal's annual debate tournament, regarded by the

National Forensics League as the second most difficult tournament in the nation. Having spent the majority of the past few weeks preparing for the competition, the team headed into the tournament hoping for the best, yet preparing for difficult opponents.

The speech squad again had a triumphant weekend. Lindholm, Mabanta, Kolluri and Munukutla were successful in their respective events yet again, for the second straight week, by advancing past the quarterfinals. Other notable speakers were junior Sankash Shankar, who qualified to the semifinals, senior David Mandell, who placed 7th in Dramatic Interpretation and junior Viraj Parmar, who advanced to the quarterfinals of Foreign Extemp. In the junior varsity division, sophomore Aneesa Mazumdar placed 1st in Foreign Extemp.

"When they posted the listing of who was advancing to the out-rounds, I saw our school listed in almost every category," said Extemp captain Parmar. "I was very excited when I saw my name on the list of those who broke and wasn't expecting it at all mainly because of how tough the competition was."

In the debate part of the tournament, juniors Ruchie Bhardwaj and Parul Singh took 9th place out of 96 teams from around the nation with an 8-1 record in Public Forum.

"Our kids did exceptionally well at [Cal and Stanford]," head coach Erick Rector said. "I could not be more proud of them. Our speech and debate team has been growing at an enormous rate and the future looks bright. We hope to continue this momentum into the state tournament." ♦

Music department to play at Carnegie Hall

BY Anshu Siripurapu

The Isaac Stern auditorium in Carnegie Hall seats 2,804 patrons in its five levels, and its uppermost balconies sit loftily 137 steps above the stage.

Perhaps the most prestigious stage in the world, Carnegie Hall is the home of the renowned New York Philharmonic. It is the site of the debut of numerous works and has been graced by the performances of both classical and popular musical giants.

This is the very stage on which the SHS Symphonic Wind Ensemble and Advanced Orchestra will perform on next Tuesday.

"It's common for high school groups to play in Carnegie Hall at 'dark hours' like 10 in the morning," music department chair Michael Boitz said. "But to be invited to play as a showcase for an evening concert is a really momentous occasion."

One hundred and four students from the advanced band and orchestra will be performing on stage and an additional 14 seniors will be accompanying the department on tour to New York. The

group leaves Saturday and will return next Wednesday.

The tour was organized by World Projects, an educational travel company, as part of their New York Wind Band Festival, which takes place on Tuesday during the day.

"Throughout the day, bands and orchestras will be playing and being adjudicated," Boitz said. "In the evening, all those groups will attend the evening concert, which is part of the schedule Carnegie concert series."

Originally, SHS was originally supposed to open for the Orange County Symphony, a professional group, but due to lack of funding, the group cancelled its performance, making SHS the evening showcase concert.

"If you go to Carnegie Hall right now," Boitz said. "You'll see our name on one of the billboards, and as it gets nearer to the concert date, they move it closer and closer to the center; it's really quite cool."

As the featured attraction, the groups will be performing with solo violinist Alex Shiazaki, an SHS alumni and a student at the Julliard School of Music.

Shiazaki and Nan Ashi, a piano performance major at Julliard, will be featured with the String Orchestra, who will then play an additional three pieces.

The Symphonic Wind Ensemble will open the concert with four pieces, the first of which will be conducted by assistant band director Seth Jones.

"I was really nervous when Orange County cancelled because I was worried the ticket sales would be low," Boitz said, "but World Projects told me they've had the highest ticket sales since they've been running the festival."

In addition to their performance at Carnegie Hall, both groups will be playing and adjudicated in the New York Bands Festival earlier that day. They will also perform a casual, pop style concert in the Central Park Bandshell on Monday.

On Sunday, the Symphonic Wind Ensemble will have the chance to participate in a workshop on with Dr. Anthony Mazzafero of Fullerton College, and the Saratoga Strings will work with Virginia Allen of the Julliard School.

The trip will not be all work. Students will attend a Broadway show of "Spider

>> THE big idea

Performance at Carnegie Hall

Who: 140 students from the symphonic Wind Ensemble and Advanced Orchestra

When: March 8

Program: Four pieces from the Symphonic Wind Ensemble, three pieces from the Advanced Orchestra

What else?: Students will perform in the New York Bands Festival earlier in the day. Students will also attend a workshop for their respective group. They will also attend a Broadway show and a dinner cruise.

Man: Turn Off the Dark" on March 6 as well as a festival dinner cruise on Monday night.

"I'm really excited to have this opportunity," junior saxophone player Vikas Nookala said. "Playing in Carnegie Hall is something we'll remember for the rest of our lives." ♦

Saratoga Idol develops fairer judging system

BY Olivia Chock

To avoid the controversy over judging in recent years, juniors who are organizing the Saratoga Idol singing competition are having judges use a rubric to score contestants. Auditions took place Feb. 24 and 25 in the McAfee Center.

"Last year, some people complained that the judging wasn't fair," president Anika Jhalani said. "With rubrics, it will be a fair grading system."

In addition to the new judging system, the junior class will have APUSH and History in Film teacher Kim Anzalone and three junior class officers judging the preliminary round and helping to pick contestants for the final round.

Another change the junior class has made is barring the competitors' families from voting at the show. Instead, students attending Saratoga Idol have to bring ID cards in order to get a ticket to vote.

"Some people brought their entire extended families, and it wasn't really fair," junior class vice president Nicole Shadman said. "However, we still encourage families to come support their child."

Saratoga Idol will be held in the McAfee on March 16 from 7-9 p.m. for \$7 with ASB and \$9 without.

Proceeds will go to junior class funds, 20 percent of which the class will donate to the Make-a-Wish Foundation. ♦



FALCON ARCHIVES

Alumnus Eddie Zhang executes a soulful melody at the annual Saratoga Idol two years ago.

Dancing to the jazz

MUSIC BOOSTERS TO HOLD JAZZ CABARET FUNDRAISER MARCH 19

BY Vivien Lu

The Large Gym will be transformed to look like a 1950's prom later this month in an effort to raise money for the music department.

The Saratoga Music Boosters will host its annual Jazz Cabaret and Swing Dance on Saturday, March 19, from

7-10 p.m. The event usually draws 400 to 500 people.

There will be featured performances by Jazz Band 1, Advanced Jazz Band,

Concert Choir, Men's Choir, Women's Chorale, the Redwood Middle School jazz band and the jazz band from West Valley College. In addition to the performances, a variety of desserts and coffee will be complimentary for all guests.

Tickets will be sold for \$10 for students with ID, performers and staff; it will be \$20 for adults.

"Jazz Cab is an event where everyone dances to old school music that the jazz bands plays," sophomore trombonist Justin Hang said. "Also, it raises money for our music program."

The music choice for the jazz band has some "pretty catchy tunes to it," Hang said.

"Jazz Cab is a really fun event where everyone dances to old school music that the jazz bands plays."

>> Sophomore Justin Hang

S o n g choices for Jazz 1 are "Big Noise" by Lunatica and "Hot Chocolate" from the movie "Polar Express."

For Jazz 2, "Rachel" by American Patrol and "Prelude to a Kiss" are currently some options.

"They're all swing charts so people will have a chance to get on the dance floor," said music teacher Seth Jones. "We also put in some slow songs."

Students and teachers are excited for this fundraising event, which has been successful every year. ♦

Drama's 'Jekyll and Hyde,' Shakespeare to be staged

BY Anika Jhalani

"Jekyll and Hyde" and Shakespeare. Both are famous and have turned into blockbuster hits. This year the drama department will perform both in the spring musical and the student productions.

First up on the schedule is "Jekyll and Hyde." Based on the novella "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" by Robert Lewis Stevenson, the stage version was originally produced by Steve Cuden and Frank Wildhorn.

"The musical is the exception to anything we've ever done before," senior Mikaela Burton said. "It's about good and evil, alternate personalities, and it's really edge-of-your-seat theatre."

The show will feature 40 cast members, and many veteran performers are looking forward to a new kind of show.

"I am excited to play Jekyll's fiancee in the show, a role I am new to and glad to learn," junior Madison Emery said. "I have seen a lot of students being introduced to new roles, so this show has definitely expanded the types of character played by each performer."

Senior Jae Lee will play the lead role as Jekyll and Hyde in the musical. Junior Madison Emery will play his fiancee Emma, senior Hanna Harter will play Lucy Harris, senior Chaz Main will play

John Utterson, and senior David Mandell will play Sir Danvers Carew. The show is directed by Jeff Hicks.

There will be three shows held March 10-13. Shows take place at 7:30 p.m. in the McAfee Center; a 2:30 matinee occurs on March 13. Tickets will be \$12 for students and \$15 for adults.

Aside from "Jekyll and Hyde" the drama department will be performing multiple student productions. Sasan Saadat will perform in one of these, a three-man show of "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)."

The student production is an amalgamation of characters and plays by Shakespeare, put together and performed by three actors who each embody different characters. Although new to drama, Saadat will be working with veteran performers Josh Harris and David Mandell.

"I think it's really nice to get involved in drama and see the work that goes into each show," Saadat said. "It's especially interesting to get involved in a student production. I feel lucky starting my career in drama alongside such an interesting case, in such an intimate setting."

There will be various student productions, including "The Complete Works of Shakespeare (Abridged)" performed on March 31 and April 1 in the Little Theatre. ♦



JOANNA LEE

Alumni's kids don't deserve leg up

BY Jason Wu

Jian Li scored a 2,400 on the SAT, graduated in the top 1 percent of his class at Livingston High School, N.J., and participated in a host of extracurricular activities.

Despite his impressive resume, Li was rejected by Princeton University in the spring of 2006. It is easy to conclude that he simply suffered a bad break — thousands of similarly well-qualified applicants are rejected by top tier universities every year, and Princeton rejects about half of applicants with a 2,400.

Racial discrimination

However, Li decided that his race — he is Asian American — played a decisive role in his rejection after he read a study by Princeton researchers which claimed that ending affirmative action in university admissions would lead to 80 percent of placements currently offered to black and Latino students instead being given to Asian Americans.

In November 2006, he filed a civil rights complaint against Princeton. In the suit, which has not yet been resolved, he called for the suspension of federal aid to Princeton until it discontinued discrimination against Asian Americans by eliminating race and legacy preferences.

Although the fairness of affirmative action has been heatedly debated in years past, the issue of legacy admissions has received relatively little public attention, having been litigated only once. By comparison, discussion of race-based affirmative action programs has spawned

hundreds of books, law review articles, numerous court decisions and several state initiatives to ban the practice.

Legacy preferences, which provide an edge in college admissions to applicants who are the offspring of alumni, are employed at almost three-quarters of selective research universities and almost all elite liberal-arts colleges.

Studies estimate that legacies account for 10 to 15 percent of class sizes at Ivy League institutions, and that the overall admissions rate for legacies is almost twice that for others.

Legacies emerged in the aftermath of WWI in the wake of backlash against an incoming flood of immigrant students, especially Jews, into America's selective colleges. At first, universities trying to fight the influx implemented Jewish quotas because Jewish students would consistently beat their traditional constituencies on merit-based criteria. When these explicit quotas became hard to defend, they began using more subtle methods to limit Jewish enrollment, including considerations of legacy.

Financial effects

Although many major universities say that legacy preferences aid fundraising efforts, their contention has not been supported by the data — after adjusting for alumni wealth, a study by Winnemac Consulting found that in institutions with legacies there was “no

evidence that legacy-preference policies themselves exert an influence on giving behavior.”

Furthermore, legacy preferences are dubious at best with regards to tax law. If one assumes that they do influence alumni into giving more money, then IRS regulations dictate that these donations should not be tax deductible as the arrangement then violates a tenet of charitable deductions: that donations to nonprofits do not “enrich the giver.”

These IRS regulations put universities in sticky situation. If donations are not linked to legacy preferences, then their basic rationale for legacy admission cannot

be true. However, if giving is linked to legacy preferences, then these donations should not be tax deductible.

Although legacy preferences are the norm for many American universities, they are the exception rather than the rule for higher education — as an almost exclusively American custom, they are virtually unheard of in other countries. That this uniquely American institution should also violate one of America's most cherished ideals — fair play — seems almost too perfect an irony.

The debate over the fairness of legacy admission may perhaps be settled by considering the late American philosopher John Rawls' idea of the veil of ignorance. To apply it, one imagines that the everyone's status in life is currently

unknown, and will be arbitrarily re-determined at some later date — societal roles and personal traits will be completely reshuffled, and so those that are currently wealthy may become poor, the beautiful may become ugly and princes may end up paupers.

This thought experiment proposes that the morality of something may be fairly judged only when one is forced to view the issue through the perspective of others. For example, if people did now know whether they would end up male or female, then they would be unlikely to advocate for sexist policies.

After putting on the veil of ignorance and considering affirmative action and legacy admission, one would likely support the aid that affirmative action provides for marginalized members of society (whom one could conceivably become), but would certainly reject a policy of legacy admission that would benefit the lottery winners at the expense of most students.

For the most part, American higher education has made admirable efforts to democratize, welcoming an influx of women, minorities and the financially needy. Legacy preferences are the exception to this trend, and their abolishment would do much toward advancing the admissions process into something more democratic.

In the meantime, high achievers who are “victims” of legacy admissions can take solace in the fact that, bias or not, they will likely still find a college appropriate for their abilities — Li himself now studies at Harvard. ♦

Studies estimate that the admissions rate for legacies is almost twice that for other candidates.

>> togatalks

What do you think of legacy admissions?

I find it's overrated...it doesn't count that much in admissions, in my professional opinion.



senior Kent Paisley

I think it makes sense for colleges to do legacy admissions, but I do think it's unfair. However, legacy admissions are almost a non factor.



junior Michael Chang

Well I don't think it's that big of a deal. It's only for private schools anyway.



junior Danielle Hata

E-learning does not trump real learning

BY Denise Lin & Kelly Liu

>> candid caricatures

On the first day of school, Naomi Baptiste of North Miami Beach Senior High School stepped into her precalculus classroom ... and was faced with a room full of computers. She soon learned that she would be learning math from a machine. In fact, the only adult figure in sight was a "facilitator" whose main role was to keep the computer programs running.

For Baptiste and more than 7,000 other students of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, "e-learning" is a new and unfortunate reality.

Florida's e-learning labs can be blamed on the state's Class Size Reduction Amendment, which limits the number of students allowed in classrooms. Many of the state's school districts have turned to e-learning labs because they are not applicable under this restriction. The online courses, made by Florida Virtual School, are composed of text with some graphics and an access to online instructors for help through call, e-mail or text. If this is the future of education, we all have to be worried.

Despite the popularity of some online courses among high school students, online education should not be taken to the extent some Florida schools are doing. Technology can never replace the harsh reprimand of a teacher, nor a flattering, hand-written comment on top of one's English paper.

Even worse, e-learning labs are starting to trickle down to the middle schools and K-8 schools as well. This is particularly harmful because younger students are not only taught crucial core classes, but also important morals, discipline, social behavior and other important values when they are young.



Elementary teachers teach kids to not fight, but to share, to thank kindly and to respect their peers and the teacher. Learning with a teacher delves beyond more than just concept after concept, and an inadequate computer cannot imitate those lessons.

That said, online learning does have its place in the modern world. When students must complete certain academic credits but do not have the room in their schedules to take the necessary classes, one or two online courses often fit the bill nicely.

Online classes are also a great means of learning more about subjects to prepare for possible career paths. Virtual learning should be used as a supplementary tool, and also sparingly as a "back-up" plan.

However, the Miami-Dade County Public Schools are causing online learning to become the rule, rather than the exception.

It is no secret that recent budget cuts have sent a rippling effect throughout California, including at Saratoga High. However, replacing flesh-and-blood teachers with virtual ones should never be acceptable, no matter what the financial situation of the school is.

Mild increases in class sizes and class cuts are highly preferable to being taught by machines. It is disheartening to see the American education system settle to a whole new low with schools having no other option but to host e-learning labs. One cannot blame Florida's school districts because of budget cuts and a maximum limit of class size. But everyone can remember that one time when a teacher touched their hearts, inspired them to learn or changed them as a whole — impressions which even the most advanced software can never convey. ♦

It is disheartening to see the American education system settle to a whole new low with schools having no other option but to host e-learning labs. One cannot blame Florida's school districts because of budget cuts and a maximum limit of class size. But everyone can remember that one time when a teacher touched their hearts, inspired them to learn or changed them as a whole — impressions which even the most advanced software can never convey. ♦

Teens may think the behavior displayed by characters on "Skins" is normal and therefore might feel tempted to follow the show's lead. Teens who watch this vulgar show may try drugs displayed on "Skins" because it looks like a good way to enjoy oneself and relax. In reality, drinking and taking drugs are temporary remedies that may result in dangerous addictions and lifestyles. Teens risk getting caught by authorities and injuring themselves or others while intoxicated or high. Other television shows, such as "90210" and "Gossip Girl," which send the correct message to their audience, a message that not only cautions against drugs and alcohol but also promotes abstinence from both substances. "Skins", however, advertises the use of these substances as normal teenage behavior. If "Skins" continues to air, its producers need to consider the impact the show has on the nation's youth. ♦

THE saratoga falcon >>

FOURTH PERIOD

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The Saratoga Falcon is published five times per semester by the Advanced Journalism classes of Saratoga High School, 20300 Herriman Ave., Saratoga, CA 95070. Views expressed in The Saratoga Falcon are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the administration, faculty or school district.

MISSION STATEMENT

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.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Saratoga Falcon welcomes all signed letters of opinion, which are subject to editing for length, accuracy and grammar. Please send them to editors@saratogafalcon.org. For ad information, phone (408) 867-3411, ext. 222.

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MTV showing too much



BY Megan Benzing & Olivia Chock

"It's embarrassing," said Tony. "It's totally normal for a kid of 16 not to have had sex—" said Stanley. "It's embarrassing, Stan."

There has been a plethora of media response about the recent debut of MTV show "Skins." It has been deemed by most critics to be a far too explicit show that could have a negative influence on impressionable teenage viewers. In addition, there are claims that the show borders on child pornography.

The premise of the first episode was a good indication of the nature of "Skins," as it featured one of the characters, a junior named Stan, on a mission to lose his virginity with the help of his friends. When the plan goes astray, Stan's friends tell him he's an embarrassment for not getting "the job done" instead of supporting his decision to wait for the right girl.

Later on in this episode, another

character passes out from an overdose of pills after a wild house party. However, on the way to the hospital, she wakes up and laughs about her near-death experience.

These are a few examples in the pilot episode that negatively influence teens by instilling an image in their minds that doing drugs and partying on a school night is "fun" and "cool."

Teenagers supporting the "Skins" say it illustrates the reality of teenage lives, but to a slightly more extreme level. A majority of teenagers, at least at Saratoga, have never heard of the reckless, uncontrollable and irresponsible lifestyles displayed in "Skins."

However, "Skins" does depict reality in other less fortunate areas, which is the reason for MTV's decision to air this vulgar show. According to pregnantteenhelp.org, 750,000 teens get pregnant every year in the United States. Though MTV is reflecting reality, they should make an effort to show the grim reality of some promiscuity and drug

usage.

Teens may think the behavior displayed by characters on "Skins" is normal and therefore might feel tempted to follow the show's lead.

Teens who watch this vulgar show may try drugs displayed on "Skins" because it looks like a good way to enjoy oneself and relax.

In reality, drinking and taking drugs are temporary remedies that may result in dangerous addictions and lifestyles. Teens risk getting caught by authorities and injuring themselves or others while intoxicated or high.

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Seniors need week off for college apps

BY Will Edman & Aanchal Mohan

The most stressful part of a student's career is arguably the first semester of senior year. During this time, seniors must navigate through their toughest classes and maintain grades that colleges will certainly view, while additionally completing college applications.

Although these applications pile on top of the schoolwork that must be completed, seniors are given no respite in class to work on their college applications.

A week off for seniors in the fall

would give them the opportunity to focus on their college applications without the pressures of school. These applications take several hours each, and directly affect students' futures, determining students' admission into colleges.

Although a week dedicated solely to applications might not be feasible, the two days prior to Thanksgiving Break could be given to seniors. Since this week is largely unproductive, having an entire week off to work on applications would only be beneficial to seniors.

Next year, administrators will im-

plement a new schedule that will place first semester finals before the two-week winter break.

A consequence that the administration might not have considered is that seniors could be working on college applications while studying for finals concurrently. The college applying seniors will have to choose between having a stellar college application and mediocre grades or vice versa.

Seniors should not have to choose between one or the other. After four years of work, seniors should be able to have both: a stellar application and stellar grades. ♦

More gun control means less violence

BY Alex Ju
& Ren Norris

"Guns don't kill people, people do." The National Rifle Association's slogan is a famous call for relaxed control regarding arms possession. However, recent events have cast a dark light on the issue.

On Jan. 6, Arizona congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords was shot in an attack that killed six people. Locally, on Jan. 15, a murder-suicide took place outside a Peet's Coffee and Tea shop on El Paseo de Saratoga.

These killings could have been avoided, or at least hampered, by stricter gun control. Currently the process of getting a registered weapon is relatively simple, and owning a weapon for protection is fairly common.

Jared Loughner, the shooter in the Tucson attack, obtained his gun from Sportsman's Warehouse on Nov. 30. Loughner had to fill out an ATF form 4473, which was used to run a National Instant Criminal System (NICS) background check. Sportsman's Warehouse promptly approved his request and sold him a firearm.

Many citizens feel the need to protect themselves in emergencies by owning a gun, especially in areas where crime is a serious

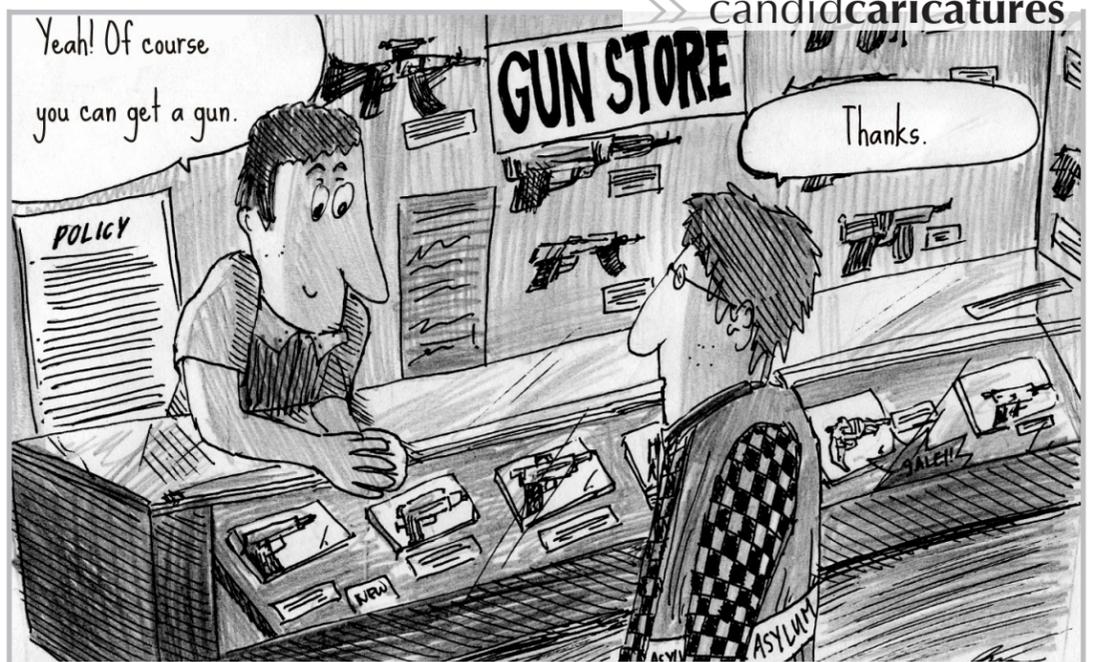
issue. However, it is unlikely that citizens would have time to access their gun in a situation such as a home invasion.

In addition, a gun at home could lead to accidents with children or teen suicides. Though it may appear safer to have a weapon available, the possession of a firearm can cause violent incidents to proliferate unnecessarily, defeating the purpose of owning a gun.

Establishing thorough background checks as well as discouraging the ownership guns for "protection" could reduce the distribution of guns, preventing dangerous situations such as spur-of-the-moment slaughters.

On the night of Jan. 15 in the El Paseo Shopping Center in Saratoga, Wayne Sanchez, age 52, shot Maurice Nasmeh, age 46, before turning the gun on himself. According to the San Jose Mercury News, Nasmeh had been a suspect in the disappearance of Sanchez's sister in 2001, but the charges had been dropped. Sanchez saw Nasmeh by coincidence at the El Paseo Shopping Center and proceeded to go home, retrieve his gun, come back and kill Nasmeh and himself.

Though there is no excuse for this extreme action, it prompts



FALCON // JOANNA LEE

the question that if Sanchez had not had a gun in his possession, would he still have murdered Nasmeh?

These rapid, rash decisions to kill someone can only be carried out if a gun is available, and stringent gun control could reduce the possibility for reckless homicide.

Increasing regulation may be seen as a violation of the Second Amendment, which states, "The

right of the People to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed upon." However, though the Constitution guarantees the right to bear arms, that right can be stripped if an individual is a danger to the safety of society. The Constitution may be the cornerstone of America, but it is not impervious to time and culture.

One small anti-gun step would be for California to pass

the law requiring all purchases of handgun ammunition to be registered. While it may seem minuscule, any obstacle created that make it more difficult to operate or shoot a gun could discourage citizens from owning one.

While it may be true that guns are not solely responsible for deaths, making them less available could make murder less frequent and convenient. ♦

Parcel tax necessary

MEASURE WILL MAINTAIN EDUCATION

Schools are the foundations of communities. Towns unite around their school's football team, service-driven students give back to their communities and high performing schools attract the best and brightest to the community.

So it is only in the community's best interest to help a district like the Los Gatos-Saratoga Unified High School District when it is struggling financially. Financial woes have been brought on by California's budget crisis, which has caused state categorical funding to dry up and a historic drop in property taxes, the primary revenue source of the district. To maintain the educational quality of our schools, Saratoga citizens should unite to ensure the passage of the parcel tax that will appear on a special ballot in May of this year.

If the parcel tax fails to pass, the district will be forced to make \$942,000 of cuts to balance the budget for the 2011-2012 school year. This deficit will only widen in future years. Currently, the district has been able to avoid major cuts that affect the classroom, but those options are running out. As all the fat is trimmed from the budget, future cuts become more painful.

Proposed cuts for the 2011-2012 year include increasing freshman Algebra and English classes from 24 to 26, reducing athletic sections and eliminating classified employees.

After exhausting all the possible options of savings through increased efficiency and restructuring, future cuts will inevitably target the classroom and end up affecting the educational quality of our schools.

The proposed six-year parcel tax is minimal, a mere \$49 tacked on to property taxes, not an inordinate expense for most Saratoga families. The parcel tax would provide \$800,000 for the district annually, money that would prevent cuts to the classroom. In addition, the parcel tax includes a senior exemption reducing the impact on elderly citizens. Despite this, support for the parcel tax is still only marginally above the required two-thirds majority, according to a poll conducted by the district in early December.

For years, LG-SUHSD has enjoyed a high quality of education but now that quality is being threatened. Without the parcel tax providing much needed revenue, the district could look different from its former self.

Every student deserves a quality education and the community should work together to realize that. Not only will that ensure that our students are successful, but, more practically, high performing schools also increase local home values. It is clearly beneficial for all members of the community that a parcel tax be adopted, and we must work together, students and adults, to realize that goal. ♦



STAFF EDITORIAL

>> Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

The Saratoga Falcon voted unanimously 36-0 in favor of the parcel tax.

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Students ignore advice, take stressful AP path

BY Denise Lin
& Michelle Shu

Time and time again, we hear teachers and administrators warning us not to overload ourselves with honors and AP courses. They tell us to balance our schedules, making time for academics, extracurriculars, a social life and sleep.

But their warning cries remain unheeded as students continue to sign up for more and more of these classes. In fact, we are among the ones guilty of this.

Students often enroll in these courses simply for the credits and GPA boost, turning a blind eye to possible consequences and later suffer through stressful days and sleepless nights. Today, AP classes are the standard choice for many; in 2009, 440 students took AP exams and last year, 449 took AP exams.

And although not overloading yourself with APs seems like the smarter path to take, it is still difficult to follow, as we can attest.

We are in our sophomore and junior years, in the midst of academic stress, physical exhaustion and social stress. Despite the dangers, we are both taking multiple AP classes in the next school year.

Why are we ignoring teachers' and administrators' pleas?

Part of it is an innate, somewhat stubborn, desire to challenge our mental capabilities and not fall behind the "pack."

Part of it is the community's high expectations of students to take AP classes when available.

Part of it is because signing up for these advanced classes seems like the "normal" decision to take. In addition, we feel that taking AP classes makes us feel more prepared for college, even if we may end up overloading academically.

However, do not think that we are

simply ignorant teens being pushed around by our family and peers. Most of the AP classes we enrolled in are courses that we wish to go more in depth with and challenge our abilities in. Due to the high-level thinking required in AP classes, students are able to gain new insights into subjects they enjoy.

The hope is that once you experience the challenging and demanding nature of AP classes, you emerge stronger and more skillful than you were before.

There is also something satisfying about conquering a subject that is challenging, and not having to ponder "what ifs" when you reminisce about your studies afterwards. By taking these advanced courses, we hope college will seem less intimidating and the material will seem less foreign.

It is true, though, that such a mindset often leads to an exhausting year.

Depending on the way you see it, taking the forbidden AP path is either the result of a stubborn mindset or an ambitious, but possibly foolish, attempt to challenge ourselves.

In the end, it's not about how many AP classes you take, or how much you can boast about the difficulty of your schedule. It's about what you gain from each class and the knowledge you'll retain even after your GPA value is just another number. ♦

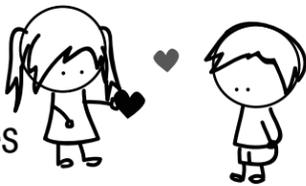
>> THE bigidea

AP Classes

Problem: Students ignore the constant pleas to not overexert themselves and enroll in several AP classes without considering consequences.

Why?: Pressure and high expectations from both college admissions and parents.

Results: Classes taken with wrong incentive in mind.

♥411♥ for the ladies: ♥ How to ask a guy to Sadies  ALEX JU AND MICHELLE SHU

1. If you have a bunch of pictures with the guy you are asking, put a few in a small album and on the last page, have it blank with only the words "Picture this: You, me, Sadies?"

2. Leave a shoe at his house with a note that says, "Meet me at the park to find out who your princess is." Then invite 3 of your friends to a nearby park and have him try out the shoe on each one of you. When he gets to you, the shoe should be a perfect fit.

3. Put a muffin in a decorated paper bag and write on it, "There's muffin I would like more than to go to Sadies with you."

4. Sneak into his classroom and put a toy frog on his desk and say, "Out of all the froggies in the lake, you're the prince I want to take."

5. Give him a bag of tootsie rolls and a hidden note inside that says, "Hey tootsie, wanna roll to Sadies?"

How were you asked to Sadies?



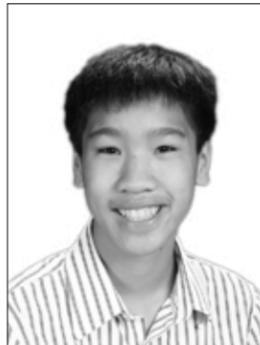
>> senior James Hadid

[She] took my keys while I was in class and then she ran to my car and decorated it. Then when I walked out she was on top of the car with a sign that said, "James Hadid, I sit atop your noble steed, but for Sadies you are all I need."



>> junior Vishal Goel

She brought in a remote-controlled car and it had a bunch of inside jokes stuck on it with a note that said to come outside. The car didn't work, though, so someone had to push it and and she was waiting outside to ask me.



>> sophomore Cody Cai

When I went to my locker one day in the morning, I opened it and found a brown teddy bear holding a heart and inside of my locker there was also a card and it said, "Will you go to Sadies with me? Please respond by the end of the day."



>> senior Pav Dhanota

She took me on a scavenger hunt; she gave me the first clue at my house which led me to school, and the second clue led me to my locker. The third clue led me to Starbucks and the fourth clue led me to Wildwood Park where I was led to my car, and she was sitting in it and asked me.

The Story of Sadies



The tradition of Sadies, believe it or not, began from a comic-turned-musical, Lil' Abner. In the comic strip, there was a day in November when all the unwed women could chase around eligible bachelors in hopes of marriage. As legend has it, for Miss Sadie Hawkins, this day was one

of the best in the year but one of the worst for the unmarried men of the town. Eventually, as the comic became increasingly popular, a holiday was inspired by the forever companionless Sadie. Today, schools across the U.S. celebrate this dance. Sadies will be help on April 2, 2011, in the small gym.

\$15 a-day:

What & How Much?

Will Edman



- Breakfast: \$1.95 donut
 - Lunch: 2 Double cheeseburgers \$0.99 each, small fries \$1.07
 - Dinner: \$5 big box
- Total: \$10.00

Aanchal Mohan & Allison Toh



- Breakfast: Asiago bagel, \$0.69 with cream cheese, \$0.25
 - Lunch: Basil Mozzarella Tomato sandwich, \$4.38
 - Dinner: Steak Burrito, \$6.83
- Total: \$12.15

Grishma Athavale



- Breakfast: Veggie Egg English Muffin sandwich with coffee, \$2.50
 - Lunch: Bean and Cheese Burrito with salad, \$4.59
 - Dinner: 3 Vegetarian Tacos, \$5.45
- Total: \$12.54

Top six ways to save money

1. Turn off the TV and all the lights to save electricity and play hide and seek.

2. Stuff your pockets with free salt, ketchup, and other condiments when you go out to lunch.

3. Wash your car at the gas station with squeegees.

4. Take extra napkins from fast food restaurants to save on toilet paper.

5. Train your dog to beg for food from strangers so you won't have to buy dog food.

6. Act sick after eating at a restaurant, then accept your refund with a complimentary meal.

~Apeksha Sharma & Pia Mishra

Could you survive?

Where?

The Bottom Line:

- Starbucks
- McDonalds
- Taco Bell

It wasn't too bad having only \$15 to spend, because fast-food restaurants have deals that can provide lots of food for a small amount of money. This experience helped me in saving money and realizing that if I only spend a little more time looking at the deals that food places have to offer, I can save a lot of money.

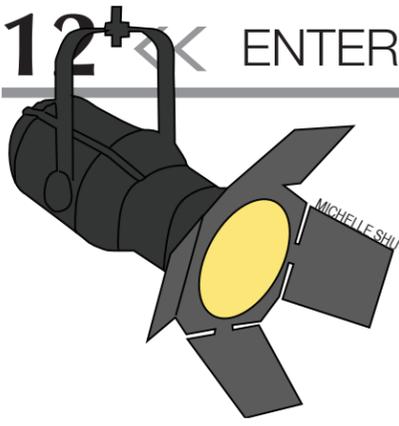
- Safeway
- Bell Tower Bistro and Patisserie
- Chipotle

By having a budget we became much more aware of how much we were spending. It wasn't too bad having just \$15, because some of the places that we went to offered specials and deals on their foods. Overall, this experience has made us realize that we can cut our spending by eating at different places.

- Subway
- Aquis
- Chipotle

I started my day by grabbing breakfast at Subway; I indulged in a warm, toasty veggie egg English muffin and a coffee for a measly \$2.50. Everywhere that I decided to eat had reasonably priced foods, so it made the budget easier to follow. At the end of the day, I realized that it is easier to spend less than most people think.





With the Oscars taking place last Sunday, *The Falcon* had its own take on the Oscars and Razzies.

THE

OSCARS

'Inception' grabs minds

BY Olivia Chock
& Will Edman

Since the Golden Globes took place a couple of weeks ago and the Oscars will show next week, we thought it was only appropriate to do a movie review ourselves.

The two movies that were all nominated for Best Motion Picture, Best Director, and Best Screenplay in the Golden Globes were "The Social Network" and "Inception." Although "The Social Network" won all three of these awards, we think "Inception" is the better movie.

Both of us found "The Social Network" a tad boring and hard to enjoy because all of the characters were arrogant jerks. Not only was it degrading to females, but also crass since it showed people willing to do anything for money. There were no memorable scenes in "The Social

Network" since it lacked action.

"Inception" suffered from none of these flaws. Never has a movie ignited so much rancor as "Inception" has. The blockbuster's ambiguous ending has a penchant for creating convoluted debates about dreams and reality (no spoilers here). However, the genius of the movie goes far beyond the mind-bending conclusion; in fact, it should be considered the movie of the year.

Christopher Nolan manages to create a masterpiece that exceeds "The Dark Knight." In "Inception," a film that is the sum of the protagonists from "Titanic" and "Juno," innovative special effects and a crazy scene in the mountains where viewers learn that Leonardo DiCaprio and company cannot only steal dreams but are also professional-caliber skiers.

The movie's virtues are numer-

ous, but its thoughtfulness and ability to stimulate the mind stands out above other movies.

Blockbuster action flicks are known for explosions and car chases, which "Inception" provides liberally, but Nolan's innovative idea of shared dreaming leaves the viewers' heads spinning and yearning for another view (three for me). As "The Social Network" and "The King's Speech" prepare to dominate movie award season, "Inception" plays the role of a dark horse, despite the cultural phenomenon that it spurred. Although "Inception" might not receive the Academy's ultimate acclaim, it earns our nod as the movie of the year. ♦

AND THE MOVIE OF THE YEAR IS...

Inception vs. The Social Network

76 votes

24 votes

'Toy Story' tops all animated films

BY Elijah Yi

A great lineup of animated movies in 2010 such as "Despicable Me," "Toy Story 3," "Tangled" and many others were presented to audiences worldwide. Looking back at them, they were all great, heartwarming movies that attracted audiences of all ages. But in my opinion, "Toy Story 3" was number one.

"Despicable Me" was one of the most anticipated animated movies of 2010. I had set high standards for the movie after watching the many commercials.

But to be honest, after I watched the movie, I was disappointed. The movie was enjoyable, but after seeing the commercials, it seemed to me that I had already seen the

whole movie.

Disney's "Tangled" was also among the top animated movies this year. At first, the movie seemed to be another classic Disney princess movie that only appealed to the likings of girls. However, when some guys declared it to be a great movie, I decided to go check it out.

"Tangled" turned out to be a wonderful take on the original Rapunzel story, and had a good plot as well as the perfect happy ending.

Though it had some typical lovey-dovey musical moments, it was an original movie.

But Pixar's "Toy Story 3" was, in all honesty, the best animated movie, if not one of the best movies in 2010. The movie offered a great storyline, one that connects its prede-

cessors in the trilogy but tells a completely novel story.

Every part of the plot was unique and unexpected, keeping viewers on their toes for the entire two-hour show. The movie introduced many new characters and further developed those that had already been introduced in previous movies.

Some of those new toys include Lotso, the deceptive teddy bear, and the Ken doll whose "metrosexual" personality acts as a complement to Barbie's.

The characters in the movie have a way of captivating the audience and creating an emotional connection with the toys. This movie was a perfect ending to the movie trilogy that many of us had such great memories with as children. ♦

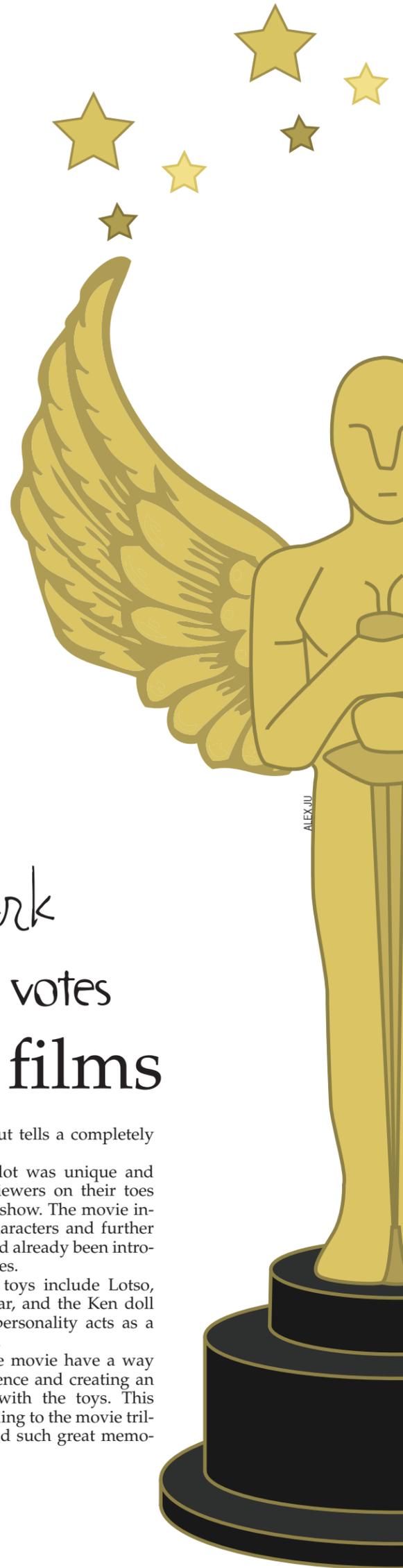
AND THE BEST ANIMATED FILM IS...

Toy Story 3 vs. Despicable Me

65 votes

35 votes

THE FALCON POLLED 100 STUDENTS FOR EACH CATEGORY ON FEB. 6.



SARATOGA

RAZZIES

Vampires suck the life out of elemental world

BY MichelleShu

Occasionally, a movie is released that gains the title of the worst movie of the year. This past year critics have been lavishing this "honor" on movies like "Meet the Spartans" and "Tron," but I feel like "Avatar the Last Airbender" and "Twilight" were the worst movies of the year.

Perhaps this was because both movies had an original series to be compared to, but they disappointed viewers either through their content or the actors chosen.

The plots, transitions and effects in both movies seemed to be weak and choppy. In "Avatar," the movie only covered about one-fourth of the original cartoon series because the producers were planning on making a trilogy. However, with the lack of character development and a strong plot, the movies will not get many viewers if the subsequent films even do come out.

"Twilight," on the other hand, covered more of the events mentioned in

the book series; however, the dialogue and interactions between the characters were poorly executed.

For instance, almost every time Bella and Edward, the main characters, tried to have a conversation, all they did was stare at each other, barely saying a word. In my opinion, it was a bit creepy rather than romantic.

Both movies had their own weaknesses, but they both shared a talent for poor graphics and one-dimensional actors.

The "Avatar" series is successful predominantly because Aang, the main character, learns how to control different elements (air bending, water bending, fire bending and earth bending)

Yet the movie, which may have been a better success had it properly employed its immense budget for special effects, failed to impress.

"Twilight" may not have required many special effects, but the few that were in the movie were badly made.

For example, the werewolf transformations looked really fake and seemed

like an animated wolf appeared out of thin air.

What made "Twilight" harder to watch was the choice of actors for Edward and Bella.

Many who admired Edward Cullen after reading the series considered their images of him destroyed by Robert Pattinson.

Rather than a young, dangerous yet charismatic high school boy whom the book depicted, Robert Pattinson looked far too old for the part and sported as much make-up as the heroine.

"Avatar" also had bad casting, like having Noah Ringer as Aang, although it had more fitting actors than those in "Twilight."

Many movies have been released that can be dubbed as a "bad movie," but most viewers came to a consensus that both "Twilight" and "Avatar the Last Airbender" were box office embarrassments. ♦

AND THIS YEAR'S WORST MOVIE IS...

Avatar the Last Airbender vs. Twilight
 44 votes vs. 56 votes

Cowboys or aliens? How about both?

BY AnshuSiripurapu

The trailer opened with Daniel Craig awakening in a remote desert. A group of men on horseback, bedecked in old western clothes surrounded him. Needless to say, Craig declined . . . violently.

My interest was piqued as I figured this was the next installment in the notorious James Bond series. It became apparent that Craig was not returning as the suave, secret agent but as a notorious robber of the Wild West.

Fine, I said to myself, perhaps this is a remake of an old Clint Eastwood movie, but soon after, things took a turn for the bizarre, as alien gunships swooped in, scooping up flailing cowboys with tractor beams. After

several seconds of intense battle involving revolvers and futuristic weaponry, the movie title finally appeared on screen: "Cowboys & Aliens."

Directed by the mastermind behind the comic-book inspired hit "Iron Man," and produced by Steven Spielberg, "Cowboys and Aliens" is a highly anticipated summer blockbuster. The plot is of a group of cowboys and Native Americans who must defend their homeland from aliens seeking to enslave humanity. Their only hope lies in a man, Craig, who cannot remember his past but has been gifted with a chic alien blaster.

While it may not consist of thought provoking drama, the movie will certainly achieve Hollywood's primary purpose: to

entertain. Hopefully, the directors will stay true to the movie's action-driven plot and not try and make serious substance out of a hilarious premise.

Another anticipated summer blockbuster is the next installment in the Transformer saga, "Dark of the Moon." However, Megan Fox will no longer be appearing, and since she was the primary reason for seeing the films in the first place, this addition to the Transformer family may lose some of its flair, making Cowboys and Aliens the most awaited debut this summer. Comparisons aside, both movies should make for two very entertaining evenings. "Transformers" is set to release on July 1 and "Cowboys and Aliens" on July 29 and you can bet I'll be first in line to buy tickets. ♦

AND THE WORST ANTICIPATED FILM IS...

Transformers vs. Cowboys and Aliens
 59 votes vs. 41 votes



EDUCATION

(BACK IN THE DAY)



To some, moral learning has more intrinsic value

BY Albert Gu

The world changes rapidly, but it has seldom transformed as fast between two generations: ours and our parents'. Esther Park, mother of sophomore Tim Park, grew up in a small farming town in South Dakota during the '70s, before the information technology revolution. Even though she was a second-generation Korean American, her world had a completely different attitude toward education between her time and ours.

Park came from a typical Midwestern high school with about 750 students in grades 10-12. According to Park, her school did not offer AP classes or even subjects such as calculus. Their most difficult classes were considered "college track" courses, which included sciences such as chemistry and physics.

In place of advanced academic classes, they had classes such as home economics, cooking, drafting and many art classes. From a culture of farmland, some kids took agriculture classes and joined clubs such as the Future Farmers of America.

"There was not much academic pressure," said Park. "Aside for studying for tests, there was no homework assigned, especially not on weekends; it was a matter of if you didn't finish work in class it became your homework."

According to Park, high school was much more social for students then. Even though there were the typical cliques such as jocks, drama kids and music fans, it was such a small town that all students were close. The whole town would turn up to watch every football or basketball game. There was more interaction between different grades, and students got to know teachers well. It wasn't uncommon to live next door to a

teacher or even the principal.

In terms of education, Park said that it is hard to compare those days to the present, because back then America didn't have as much competition. It wasn't a given that everybody should go to college; there were even some parents who were anti-college, because in those days people could get a decent job just out of high school. Many students had part-time jobs such as working in a movie theatre or restaurant, and some even helped their parents in the fields.



Park

"The basic emphasis was on being a good human being as opposed to a superachiever," Park said.

Even though the students did not have as many academic opportunities, Park said that "the overall quality of life was better then, just because it was not as stressful. We had a lot more leisure time, a lot more time to really 'live your life.'"

Park's upbringing has influenced her own parenting. Tim, the youngest of three children, Tim said his parents pushed him more when he was younger, but gradually gave him more freedom as he grew up.

"My mom is pretty relaxed about most stuff," he said. "As long as I'm getting decent grades, she gives me space to do what I want as long as I'm not wasting too much time."

From her experiences, Park takes the point of view that the most important thing as parents is to care about your children, and try to do what is best for them, not what you traditionally assume is the only best way.

"From what I hear, I think all of the people from my old high school were pretty successful and content," said Park. "They're not necessarily very rich, I think they are all healthy mentally and psychologically, they are content." ♦

Mother understands kids' academic woes

BY Cecilia Hollenhorst

What could an all-girls public high school in New York City have in common with Saratoga High? Judging by the experience of Hedy Yuen, junior Sofia Chang and senior Arthur Chang's mother, more than one may expect.

An immigrant from Hong Kong at age 11, Yuen at first struggled to make the transition to life in America. While attending the inner-city Washington Irving High School near Union Square, Yuen felt the same pressure to excel academically as many students here; however, her stress did not have the same origins as that of her children and other students. To Yuen, good grades not only meant pleased parents or a good future career, it meant opportunities that could change her life.

"As a struggling first-generation immigrant, I knew that education was my ticket out of poverty," Yuen said. "Whatever pressure I felt to do well in school was strictly self-imposed."

Although her school had few resources and no AP classes, Yuen strove to learn as much as she could and tried her best in order to ready herself for college, drawing pressure from within instead of from a competitive atmosphere such as Saratoga.

"I think there is a lot more pressure on high schoolers nowadays to succeed, especially in Saratoga," Sofia Chang said. "My mother didn't have that sense of competition around her."

Even without the pressure from other students, Yuen always harbored a desire to attend a good college, making both taking the SAT and earning high grades very important, leading her to the title of her class's valedictorian and a spot at the prestigious Radcliffe College.

"I resisted taking the easy route of relying on my natural affinity for math and science," Yuen said. "I pushed myself to work harder in subjects that were more difficult for me."

Yuen's schedule was possibly even more jam-packed than that of a typical Saratoga student.

"I worked most evenings in a 'sweatshop' in Chinatown," Yuen said. "I was involved in math team competitions, science fair, Girls Scouts, and peer tutoring." Even with so many responsibilities, Yuen was able to sleep for an average of six hours a night, similar to many Saratoga students.

With the lessons she learned through her self-motivation and goal-setting in life, Yuen now strives to maintain realistic standards for her children, urging them to "take responsibility for their success" and find a "meaningful career based on interests." Following her own advice, Yuen went on to work at several art museums before becoming a mother.

While Chang believes that some parents do not understand that "sometimes high schoolers want a life outside of preparing for college," she feels "lucky that my mom's expectations are just for me to do the best that I can." ♦

Comparative Thinking: Saratoga High in the 1980s vs. today

	# of clubs	Languages offered	Unique sports	# of AP's offered	# of people in orchestra
1980	2	3	Gymnastics	0	12
2010	52	4	Lacrosse	17	120 (total)

Blast from the past



A home-economics class being taught at Saratoga High, circa 1971, and what looks like a sewing machine or mechanical whisk.



The drama department puts on "As You Like It", a Shakespearan play, for their spring production, circa 1971.

1970s SHS was crazy?



>> **Megan Benzing**

Who doesn't want a Benz?

You know, back when I went to Saratoga...," "During my childhood here...," "I never had to deal with...". These are all the typical conversation starters for each time I get told about how high school was so different back in the '70s. And I don't just get this from one parent, I get it from both. Yep, that's right. Both of my parents went to Saratoga High for high school.

My dad, Jeff Benzing, has been in Saratoga since he moved here in third grade from New Jersey. He went to Argonaut Elementary, Redwood Middle and Saratoga High. He then moved on to UC Berkeley, and then Stanford. So there's your typical Saratogan.

My mom, then named Janet Hootman, moved to Saratoga from Arcadia in Southern California for her junior and senior years and actually lived her childhood in a house two houses away from the one I live in now.

The funny thing is that my parents had no idea that the other existed until after high school, even though they were in the same grade. In fact, they met at a party after graduation. My mom just never had a class with him, and since she was new, she didn't know many people.

Back then, there were just different cliques. According to my dad, three main groups of students were present: the athletic/cheerleader set (the jocks), the ones who smoked pot (the loadies), and the middle-of-the-road group.

There was also a huge differ-

ence in electives. They had auto-shop, where there was a separate class for girls that was much easier and much less technical. They had a cooking class and offered German as an elective for language. You had to take P.E. all four years, a class that was also gender-exclusive. There were no AP/Honors classes. And they didn't even teach calculus at high school—you had to go to West Valley to take it.

In one class my mom took, called "Directive Reading," your entire grade in the class was just showing up, reading a book the entire period, and being able to tell your teacher about your book. Doesn't that sound nice? I could get all my English reading done! OK, maybe not.

Not many students were focused on getting a 4.0, the highest GPA you could get back then. The competition to get into colleges was far less intense than it is today. As for the SAT, most people only took it once and didn't study very hard for it, and there was no essay section. There were also about one to five Asians and one to two Hispanics in the entire school.

The party scene back then was "hoppin'." There was at least one party every weekend and everyone was invited. It was totally normal to go crash a party and have it grow to include more than 100 people. My question is: Where did that whole thing go? I mean, half of us are too busy doing homework to even think about hoppin' parties.

Oh, and apparently the best part of the '70s was the streaking. During their graduation ceremony in 1974, which used to be held in the inner quad, four students, two boys and two girls, climbed up on the roof, stripped down to just their tennis shoes and ran up on top of the library, flashed the audience, and then ran off. Totally normal, right? Yeah, maybe not. I guess a lot has changed in the past 40 years. For better or for worse? I'll let you decide. ♦

Safety in

Increase in crime has residents changing habits

BY Priya Nookala
& Will Edman

The thieves had left her house in such appalling disarray that the junior girl still could not erase the memory from her mind two years later. All the drawers and closets were open and almost nothing was undisturbed. Some jewelry along with hundreds of dollars of electronics, were missing — leaving their house feeling empty.

The girl, who asked to remain anonymous, said, "Everything was open and just lying all over the house. They stole some of our electronics like laptops, cameras, video cameras and my mom's earrings."

Occurrences like this have sparked an interest in safety in the community, but many people are unaware of how to best prevent crimes like these.

According to the Sheriff's Department, creating a Neighborhood Watch program is one of the most effective ways to stay safe. The Neighborhood Watch is a crime prevention program in which neighbors work together for "mutual as-

sistance." Citizens are trained to detect and report suspicious activity within their neighborhood to prevent crimes before they occur.

Families who have heeded the sheriff's advice to form watch groups have found them immensely useful in staying informed about crime in the neighborhood.

Like a Usenet group, members of neighborhood watches promptly e-mail each other about incidents occurring in the neighborhood and nearby areas. They also bring any pressing safety concerns to the attention of the police and watch over each others' homes.

Freshman Nina Jayashankar has found her Neighborhood Watch to be very beneficial. "It's nice to know that the Neighborhood Watch Program is there [and] just that we're looking out for each other."

The Sheriff's Department also offers

general safety precautions to help citizens avoid being the victims of burglary and other crimes. Due to Saratoga's reputation as a safe city,

students are under the illusion that locking their doors and windows is not imperative. However, deputies emphasize the need to take such cautionary actions, regardless of location.

"There haven't been any crimes that I know of where I live, but my family has still started taking more precautions like making sure at least one light is on at night because of the recent burglaries," senior Brian Vo said.

Vo and his family are among the many Saratogans have tried to follow these guidelines. Senior Emily Hsia, who lives in the Bellgrove Circle neighborhood that was victim to multiple robberies in November, said that her family is more careful when they leave home.

"We never go out without turning on

the alarm now. The neighborhood also forced us to get new locked mailboxes, and they might install video cameras along the street," Hsia said.

Bolstering the efforts of individual neighborhoods, the Sheriff's Department has been working harder than ever to ensure the security of its constituents. But the Sheriff's Department is also quick to note that the job of staying safe is a collaborative effort — requiring citizens to take precautions in addition to the responsibilities of the sheriff.

If faced with a dangerous situation, the sheriff's deputy Steve Gricenti advises citizens to react calmly and examine the situation. If safety is an immediate concern, he strongly recommends calling "911" as soon as possible.

Gricenti said he often makes calls to report anything "out of the norm," but people should make sure they are aware of potential dangers.

"Saratoga is a safe city, but crime rates have escalated," Gricenti said. "Students should be aware of how to stay safe both in their neighborhoods and in their communities." ♦

"Students should know how to stay safe in their neighborhoods and communities."

>> sheriff's deputy Steve Gricenti

Saratoga
Statistics
for 2009

97 burglaries

12 aggravated assaults

263 total property crimes

Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Statistics

School supervisors maintain campus safety together

BY Anika Jhalani
& Paul Jung

The school staff plays a large role in the safety of Saratoga students on campus.

Jeanine Sevilla, one of the school's two campus supervisors, says that the school takes many precautionary measures to ensure the students' safety. Some of these measures include making sure students do not loiter during class time, reporting suspicious persons on campus, requiring visitors to wear special badges on campus and checking the parking lots regularly.

"It's kind of like a second nature," Sevilla said. "If we see someone suspicious, we automatically report it."

Mark Hernandez, the other campus supervisor, says that safety for students is his paramount concern.

"Mainly I watch over students, and look over campus behavior, but I also

make sure students maintain safe behavior at school," Hernandez said.

Hernandez also discussed how he ensures that uninvited persons stay off campus.

"We need to look out for dangerous people in our school community," Hernandez said. "Any suspicious people are noted."

Hernandez and Sevilla keep in touch with the Sheriff's Department to note any unusual circumstances. Doing so ensures a coordinated response.

"We make sure to stay communicated, and of course work together to protect students," Hernandez said.

According to Sevilla, dangerous situations at Saratoga High are not common, and a real threat to safety at the school rarely occurs.

"We feel so secure, and I think we do a good job keeping the school safe," Sevilla said. "But nowadays, we just have to be cautious." ♦



School supervisors Mark Hernandez, left, and Jeanine Sevilla, right, patrol the campus and report abnormal happenings in order to maintain safety.

>> togatalks

What are you and your family doing to be safer?

We haven't really changed anything because we don't think crime in Saratoga is a real concern yet. Not any more than before, at least.



senior Clarence Le

We upgraded our home security system, which is able to detect break-ins through windows. Our old one couldn't.



junior Alex Amato

We make a point of setting our alarm every day to prevent break-ins. I guess we're more careful than before.



sophomore Cori Posadas

Saratoga

Safety Checklist

by Security Consultant Chris E. McGoey, as told to reporter Olivia Chock

- Do you have a family security plan?

Take time to review your present lifestyle and discuss ways to keep the family safe at home, work, school, or when out in public. You'll be surprised how easy it is to spot risky behavior when you talk about possible scenarios.

- Is your home or apartment reasonably safe?

Our home is our only real sanctuary where we have the most control over our environment. Inspect all accessible doors and windows and fortify them as required by the level of risk. Discuss family routines for locking doors, setting alarms, and answering the door. Many police agencies will conduct free home security surveys and offer safety solutions.

- Do you have a safety routine when out in public?

Talk about the realistic crime risks associated with where you work, go to school, shop, play, or seek entertainment. Establish safer routines for all these locations. A good routine significantly reduces your exposure to crime risk.

- Are you aware of your surroundings?

Most street crime victims say that they never saw the attacker prior to being confronted. Being alert while in public places greatly reduces your risk of harm. An alert mind will make better decisions about the relative risk of a situation and allow you to act more appropriately.

- Do you plan ahead for safety?

Create what if scenarios based on the daily routine of each family member and try to anticipate high risk activities and locations. Plan ahead for safer behavior to avoid the risk. For example, plan to shop as a group, walk to school with friends, arrange for transportation, or park in a safer locations even if farther away. While traveling a little advanced planning can locate safer hotels in better neighborhoods.

About the author

Chris McGoey is an internationally renowned security expert, who has authored over 90 articles on personal safety. He has consulted with or appeared on Good Morning America, The Today Show, 60 Minutes, Dateline NBC, and CSI. Visit his website, CrimeDoctor.net, for more information about home, corporate, and personal security.

-Anoop Galivanche

With discretion, Tasers can offer ample protection to civilians

BY Kelly Liu

How far are we willing to go in order to feel safe? Sure, we can legalize all sorts of "self-defense" tools and weapons, but are they doing as much good as we want to believe? Is a deadly weapon like a Taser a powerful self-defense option or are there too many instances where its use has been misdirected or abused?

In light of the dangers that ordinary citizens must protect themselves from, many turn to self-defense weapons such as guns, mace and pepper spray in order to have a sense of security. However, for those feeling unsafe in Saratoga and many other places who cannot see themselves carrying a gun, a rather different weapon may be another story: a Taser, one hand-held stun gun with a range of 15 feet.

A Taser is a device that delivers a jolt of electricity throughout a target's body, inflicting temporary paralysis, minor to moderate pain and contractions of muscle tissue. Unlike all other tools that can be overcome by drugs, alcohol and determination, the Taser takes away the ability for a target to be mobile for up

to 30 seconds. It is meant to stun, not harm.

Tasers have been widely used by the law enforcement. According to Steve Tuttle, the vice president of Communications of Taser International, as of last September, Taser International has sold approximately 514,000 TASER® brand electronic control devices (ECDs) worldwide to more than 15,800 law enforcement and military agencies.

"[Police use Tasers] to safely subdue dangerous or violent individuals or may cause harm to others, themselves or the public," Tuttle said.

According to Tuttle, more than 225,000 civilians in America have purchased Tasers since 1994. Consumers can use a Taser C2 or Taser X26C, with the price varying from \$379 to \$999. Forty-three states allow Taser ECD devices, as long as the owner is at least 18.

The advantages to owning a Taser are four-fold: It buys enough time to escape from attackers and contact the police, does not injure the attacker, avoids prolonged and bloody confrontations and is perfectly legal in 43 states. Even if one misses the attacker from long distance,

the Taser can have the same effect when placed against the target.

On the other hand, there has been much controversy regarding the use of these weapons, especially because of their frequent use by the police even when unnecessary.

According to CNN World, there was an incident in which an unarmed man in police custody was Tasered 14 times after refusing a strip search last October. This was called "unacceptable and extremely disappointing" by a senior Australian police chief. Another incident was when an Iranian-American UCLA student, Mostafa Tabatabaiejad, was stunned multiple times by the campus police for refusing to be escorted out of the Powell Library in November 2006. Tabatabaiejad filed a lawsuit pressing charges on the officers he claims to have violated the American with Disabilities Act (his being racial profiling).

A Taser can be powerful enough to trigger heart attacks, paralysis and even death. Also, since it is legal to use a Taser (under self-defense conditions), if a Taser gun falls into the hands of the wrong person, it can be used for the wrong rea-

sons. This may not be very common, but there are no real regulations regarding the ownership of a Taser. Taser International only has an age requirement, and state governments have a law to permit Tasers.

Some Saratoga students are looking into other forms of security, whether it be owning a Taser or purchasing pepper spray, especially when they graduate and explore the real world. Some people claim a Taser is a great alternative to conventional self-defense, as long as it is used with responsibility and common sense. However, the many misuses of Tasers are a reminder that it is still a deadly and dangerous weapon. ♦

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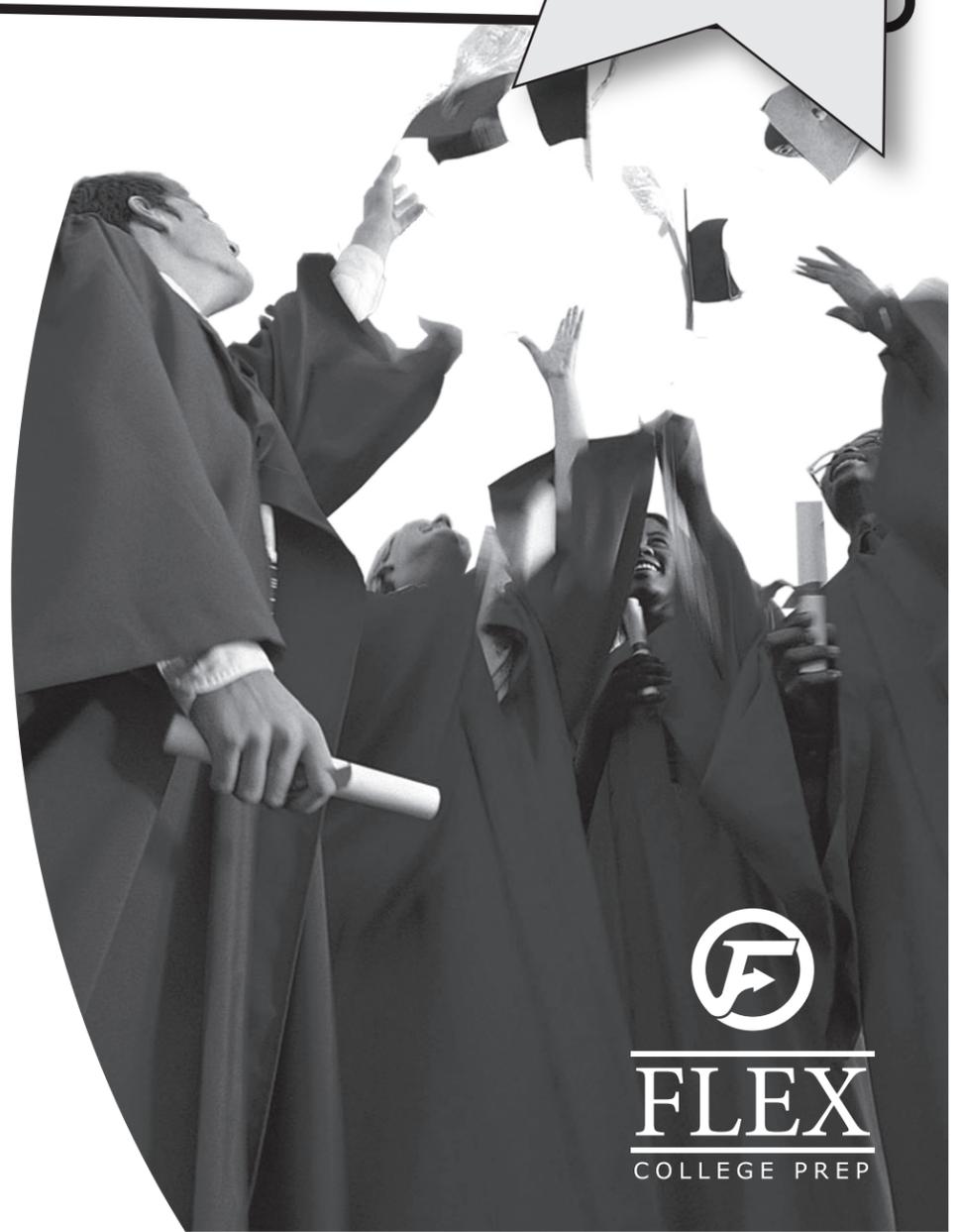
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CCS GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Falcons end with loss to San Mateo

BY JoannaLee

After going undefeated in the B division in the El Camino League, girls' basketball players wanted to extend their dominance to CCS. But their season ended Feb. 24 with a second-round, 50-36 loss to San Mateo.

They started out strong against their first CCS opponent, Hillsdale, with a 58-46 victory on Feb. 22. The win against Hillsdale came as a surprise to many players.

"We won our first round, which was a pretty big deal because I don't think we were expected to win," said sophomore guard Hannah Johnson. "[Shriya] Nagpal had a really good game; everyone contributed, but I would say she is the one who did the most damage."

Despite the absence of their key point guard, the girls still committed to their first game with stellar defense and offense.

"We were a little worried beforehand," said coach Mike Davey. "[Senior] Arya Parhar was sick with the flu, so [sophomore] Kimberly Chou subbed in, and she played great."

During the game, Johnson scored 18 points and grabbed 13 rebounds, while Nagpal played strong defense, bringing down 11 rebounds and getting 8 steals.

Senior captain Amber Arroyo said that in the first half of the first game, the team had a bad start.

"We were able to motivate ourselves,

though, and coach Davey helped motivate us at halftime. So at the second half we just came back and put the other team out in the first two minutes and won the game."

The second game proved to be less fortuitous, however, as the lack of focus in the first half led to a loss.

Arroyo said that playing easy opponents in league did not prepare the Falcons for tougher CCS competition.

"In the second half we realized we would lose, so we played our hearts out. Even though we were down by 11 points and even though we lost I don't think we had any regrets," she said.

Despite their loss against San Mateo, Davey pointed out some positives.

"Compared to last year's 'senior-oriented' team, this year's team is full of talented underclassmen," said Davey. "And our defense definitely helped us a lot during CCS."

During the season, the team's major rivals included Milpitas, Pioneer and Fremont High Schools. After playing with hard offense and defense, the Falcons defeated both Milpitas and Fremont twice, yet lost twice against Pioneer during their preseason games.

Although the girls were disappointed by their CCS loss, they said the season set a positive precedent for future teams.

"We gave it our all," senior Tasha Patel said. "Even though we came up short, this was a great season that we will all remember." ♦



TALISMAN // ADITYA DEV

Junior Shriya Nagpal chases the ball in the first round of CCS on Feb. 22 against Hillsdale. The Lady Falcons won 58-46, but lost their game on Feb. 24 50-36 to San Mateo.

CCS GIRLS' SOCCER



FALCON // OLIVIA CHOCK

Junior Kari Clark makes a quick pass to junior Meghana Rao during the first round of CCS against Burlingame. They lost 3-0 after an undefeated league record of 10-0-2.

Burlingame triumphs 3-0

BY ShivaniChadha & OliviaChock

Entering CCS with a 10-0-2 record and winners of the De Anza League, the girls' soccer team lost in the first round of CCS to Burlingame 3-0 at home on Feb. 23. The team made it to the quarter-finals of CCS last season and had hopes of finishing higher this year.

Senior defender Laura Mighdoll said the team always tried their best to improve with each game.

"We gave it all we had in the CCS game, but in the end we just couldn't get a goal in," Mighdoll said.

The team felt nervous entering the CCS game and didn't get into their groove until 30 minutes in. By then, however, the Panthers had already scored two goals. The last goal was scored in the last 3 minutes of the game.

"The other team's players were a lot bigger and stronger," junior midfielder Anna Ashe said. "There wasn't really anything we could do better physical-wise. We worked our hardest."

Key players for the Falcon defense this season were senior Ren Norris, juniors Antara and Meghana Rao, and sophomore Megan Doles. Leading the

offense was juniors Sneha Shivkumar, Kari Clark and Courtney Brandt and freshman Lindsay Webster.

The girls' senior game against Fremont on Feb. 11 ended in a 1-0 win for the Falcons, with Ashe scoring the only goal.

"Senior day was really fun," Mighdoll said. "They dressed us up as Tel-tubbies at school, and we had a great game against Fremont."

The team felt a landmark game was playing Milpitas on Feb. 9, which ended in a 0-0 tie.

"We played really well that game, even though we tied," Ashe said. "That outcome allowed us to win the league, so we were pretty excited."

The girls attribute their season's success to new head coach Molly Flanagan.

"Molly really made a difference this year," Brandt said. "We would not have had such a great season without her."

Despite their short-lived run in CCS, the team is satisfied with their undefeated league record and overall performance this season.

"This was an amazing last season and I couldn't have asked for a better team to finish high school with," Mighdoll said. ♦

>> scoreboard

Feb. 4	Feb. 9	Feb. 11
Saratoga 5, Lynbrook 0	Saratoga 0, Milpitas 0	Saratoga 1, Fremont 0
The Falcons put in 5 goals for a win against the Lynbrook Vikings.	Saratoga dominated the game but was unable to put the ball in the net.	Anna Ashe headed in a corner kick by Kari Clark for the game's only goal.

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SAP OPEN

Pros for a day: *Falcon* staffers cover tennis tourney

>> Lauren Kuan

The Lauren Kuanicles

The highlights of being a professional sportswriter are mind-blowing: terrific seats at the greatest sporting events, access to athletes and an opportunity to be paid just by talking about sports. Of course, there is far more to the profession, but I got a taste of just how rewarding the job can be when I participated in the SAP Open tennis tournament at San Jose's HP Pavilion on Feb. 9, as part of the High School Writers Day.

The day started with a tour of the pavilion where we were able to see the announcing booth and press suites. We then sat in the tennis press box, located about 10 yards from the action on the court. The match featured Croatian Ivo Karlovic and American Ryan Sweeting.

As the match progressed, I hastily jotted down notes on my notebook, which gave me insight on how hectic a journalist's work can really be. My head shifted left and right continuously until one of the players strategically hit a winner. I was secretly rooting for Karlovic because he was the underdog, due to his recent Achilles heel injury.

Every time Karlovic hit an ace, I would quietly cheer while still keeping my composure as a professional journalist. The match was close as each player won his service game, but Karlovic was finally able to shut Sweeting down with his strong first serves that reached up to 135 miles per

hour. Gaining a total of 19 aces throughout the match, Karlovic came out victorious, winning 6-4, 6-4.

As we 20 aspiring journalists continued our day, we participated in a press conference with the match winner Ivo Karlovic. I asked Ivo what his usual morning regime is before a crucial match, and he answered back jokingly that "eating Frosted Flakes cereal" was the key to success.

When I stood up to congratulate Karlovic on his win and thank him for his time to answer my questions, I took a step back as he towered me with his 6 foot 10 stature, making him the tallest man in professional tennis. After joking around with Karlovic about tennis, I realized the true importance of connecting and forming relationships with such athletes.

Afterwards, we had a panel discussion with SAP Open directors and professional sports journalists, photographers. I learned about the challenges and rewards of each role in the sports world and gained an appreciation for the work they do in the background.

The SAP Open High School Writers Day was a great experience for both my tennis and journalism personalities as I got to sit down with San Jose Mercury News writer John Ryan and discuss sports media along with being able to interview pro tennis player Ivo Karlovic. I learned that there is a lot more behind sports journalism than I once took for granted when I was the one being interviewed. The SAP Open High School Writers Day was a truly unforgettable and enjoyable experience that I am thankful to have been able to have participated in. What a match for me! ♦



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: **LUNGING FOR A SAVE:** AMERICAN-RYAN SWEETING GOES FOR A BACKHAND SLICE. **POWER PLAY:** SWEETING CRUSHES HIS OPPONENT WITH A BACKHAND. **FOCUSED SHOT:** CROATIAN IVO KARLOVIC RETURNS THE BALL BACK TO SWEETING WITH A FOREHAND HIT. ALL PHOTOS BY JORDAN WAITE

WRESTLING

Four compete at CCS, none prevail

BY Brandon Judoprasertijo
& Deborah Soung

Having overcome numerous challenges throughout the season such as inexperienced newcomers, injury and the loss of players, the wrestling team stayed strong and sent four of its wrestlers to CCS at Independence High School on Feb. 25 and 26. Those wrestlers were juniors Graham Grant and AJ Murabito and sophomores Zach Hansen and Henry Wei.

During the tournament, sophomore Zach Hansen went 0-2, sophomore Henry Wei went 2-2 placing in the top 8, freshman Graham Grant placed in the top 8 and senior Alfred Murabito placed fourth going 5-2, losing to his opponent from Alisal High School by only one point. None finished high enough to move on to the state tournament.

"As a team, I thought we wrestled pretty well, but not as well we could have," Wei said. "I feel the referees stole the match from Alfred. He's the hardest worker on the team and he deserved to go to state."

The team ranked fifth in the DeAnza division and ninth overall despite having to combat the difficulties posed by wrestlers leaving the team throughout the season.

"[Members quitting] was mainly a chain reaction," Wei said. "One person, and then another and another until most of them had quit. It really hurt our ability to score points."

However, what the team lacked in numbers was made up for in strength, finishing ninth at the league finals with only six out of 14 members.

"It is the nature of our sport that we finish with less than we start," said coach Joe Pele, "but those who stay become the sharp end of the spear."

No freshmen proceeded to CCS, partially because the younger members had to wrestle stronger, more experienced wrestlers in the upper divisions, accord-

ing to Wei.

"At the end of the year we had only one senior and one junior who had three years of high school experience, while we had a majority of first years who couldn't really contribute to team scores on the varsity level," Wei said. "In terms of varsity wrestling we really only had six or seven contributors to the team score."

However, the freshmen still show promise, and their youth was seen in a positive

light by Pele.

"We are becoming what we wish to be, not what was left behind."

Pele said. Although it has been a rough season, the team has a positive attitude and looks to improve and send wrestlers to the state tournament next year. At the end of his first year of coaching at Saratoga, Pele looks at the team with respect.

"They share the strength that comes from being part of an elite crew," said Pele. "They're the best Saratoga has." ♦

"We wrestled pretty well, but not as well as we could have."

>> Sophomore Henry Wei

>> online extra

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BOYS' SOCCER

Going down kicking in quarterfinals

DESPITE VALIANT EFFORT AGAINST LIVE OAK, FALCONS LOSE 1-0 HEARTBREAKER

BY Anshu Siripurapu

Despite numerous injuries, the boys' soccer team ended an excellent competitive season with a narrow 1-0 defeat to Live Oak High School in the CCS Quarterfinals last Saturday at Prospect High School.

The team went into the match confident in their ability to win.

"We thought we had a pretty good chance because we scouted their team at the first game," defender and junior Stan Ho said.

Live Oak picked up their first goal early in the first half with a free kick off of a header.

Despite efforts from the Saratoga offense in the second half, they couldn't break through Live Oak's defense.

"We played well but we just couldn't finish," captain and junior Manish Raghavan said. "They didn't even get into our side for the entire second half."

Regardless, the team had an outstanding regular season, losing only four games. Players agreed that the highlight of the season was beating Los Gatos twice—both at home and away.

"The first time we beat them under the lights at home, with [junior] Troy Doles scoring a goal in the last minute," Ho said. "The second time [junior] Javi Llera scored the winning penalty kick to beat them on their own field."

A slough of injuries impacted the team during both regular season and CCS. Most of the team was injured at some point with Doles, Pav Dhanota, Max Dorling, Rajiv Ramakabir, Jon Junqua, Kyle Clark, Alex Chiang, Raghavan

and Ho all sustaining injuries.

The Falcons fought through these setbacks.

"We never miss a game due to those injuries," Ho said, "but we might have to sit out during a game because of them."

During the game against Live Oak, several players were still recovering from injuries.

Coach Adam Clarke was impressed with the players' performances this season and how each player stepped up their level of play.

"We have been at our best many times this season. All of our players have helped us this season, each and every one!" Clarke said.

Both players and Clarke agreed that captain Manish Raghavan was the team's inspiration throughout the season.

"Our leader, hands down is Manish," Clarke said. "Most teams have two or three captains, we have Manish. He keeps us in every game. Incredible player, awesome person."

"Manish was definitely our MVP," junior midfielder Nabil Arbouz said, "He was a great captain, showed a lot of heart and pride on the field and is just a great soccer player."

Looking forward to next year, the team's dynamic will remain virtually unchanged, an asset which helped them this season.

"We'll be losing one of our starters, [senior Pav Dhanota]," Raghavan said. "But other than that our team is virtually the same."

This season, the team benefited from retaining the majority of their players from last year, losing only Sean Ashe



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAROLYN DOLES

Junior captain Manish Raghavan slides for the ball against a Live Oak player on Feb. 26.

With the team relatively constant for two years in a row, the boys will have excellent chemistry and cohesion looking forward to next season.

"I think we really have the perfect set of conditions for a great season next year, with all of our returning players," Raghavan said. "I'm ready for a CCS championship." ♦

>> scoreboard

- Feb. 9
Saratoga 2, Los Altos 0
- Feb. 11
Saratoga 0, Mountain View 2
- Feb. 26
Saratoga 0, Live Oak 1

BOYS' BASKETBALL

CCS run cut short

BY Karthik Annaamalai & Roy Bisht

Although the boys' basketball team lost to Mills 59-43 in round two of CCS on Feb. 24, their season was filled with highlights such as beating cross-town rivals, the Los Gatos Wildcats, 57-47 and crushing the Monterey Vikings 73-56 in the first round of CCS.

For senior point guard Alex Chan, this season was perhaps the most memorable out of the four years he has played basketball for Saratoga.

"Winning against a rival always feels good," said Chan, "especially when it's a team like Los Gatos."

Despite overcoming Mills' stout defense earlier in the season in a 50-30

preseason win, the Falcons were unable to put points on the board during their CCS match-up. The Falcons' offense stalled until well into the second quarter, and they still only scored six points.

"We had a tough time out there," senior guard Tyler Jew said. "We weren't executing well and had poor shot selection. Our offense picked up in the second half, but it was too late by then."

In the first game against Mills, sophomore Steve Berman scored with ease, accounting for 20 of the team's 50 points. However, in the CCS game, Mills center Phillip Rognerud held Berman in check, allowing him to score 10 points, while scoring 12 of his own.

Down by nine entering the final quarter, the Falcons looked to pull off a fourth-quarter comeback, but were unable to as the Mills resilient defense ex-

tended the team's lead to 19.

"Mills played smart and worked well as a team," Jew said. "And we lacked the fire and spirit that we had during the first CCS game [against Monterey]."

The Falcons' first round game against Monterey on Feb. 22 was a whole different story. Berman led the red-hot offense with 24 of the team's 73 points, a season-high for both Berman and the Falcons. Berman, usually known for his low-post game, also hit three three-pointers in the contest.

Berman has been a constant force by providing both size and skill. The Falcons will be able to count on Berman next year as well as sophomore guard Kyle Dozier.

According to junior guard Brandon Pak, Dozier "became the go-to man" after senior guard Chris Guengerich suffered an ankle injury midway through the season.

"[Dozier] has the ability to find holes in the defense," said Pak, "and is great at driving to the basket when he sees those holes."

Despite losing in the second round of CCS, senior forward Jasneil Nat labeled their season as a success. They improved in almost every single category from the previous year, placing 3rd in the league with a 16-10 record. Not only did they qualify for CCS this year after failing to do so last year, they also won their first CSS game in three years.

"After starting off league with a record of 1-3, we showed a lot of improvement," said Nat. "But since I'm a senior, [last Thursday] was my last basketball game and I am devastated." ♦



Berman



Dozier

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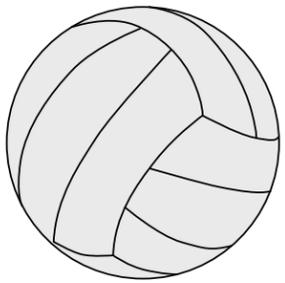


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BASEBALL



FALCON/ARNAV DUGAR

Senior Kevin Darchuk practices hitting on Feb. 24.

As the spring sports season approaches, the baseball team is working harder than ever to prepare. Disappointed from last year's mediocre 10-20 record, many players on the team feel the need to redeem themselves with the upcoming season.

"We lost a lot of games last year, so we're much more serious during practices this season," sophomore catcher Stevie Berman said.

One major change from last year is the addition of new head coach Adam Varteressian, who also coaches for Kali Baseball, a local youth baseball organization.

"He's a lot more strict and he's all about discipline," junior right fielder Eric Wang said.

The team is also focusing more on defense this year, hoping to hold off other teams through tough defense.

"Our team isn't really a power team offensively, so we've got to work on playing good defense," said Wang.

Senior Dillan Pak will play an important role this season as a returning pitching ace from last year. Key hitters for the team this year are senior outfielder Kevin Darchuk and junior infielder Will Dennis.

Tough opponents for the Falcons this season are Los Gatos, Palo Alto, and Wilcox. However, because they are in the A-Division, no school is likely to be an easy victory.

"It's going to be a tough season, but hopefully it'll turn out well," Berman said. ♦

—Dylan Jew and Paul Jung

BOYS' VOLLEYBALL



TALISMANI/KEVIN BOHLINSON

Junior Brandon Pak sets the ball in a match last year.

Last season the boys' volleyball team was powered by the leadership of a handful of seniors.

This year, with a new varsity coach and a fresh new start, the team is looking to fill the gaps left by the seniors and rebound from last year's 1-11 record.

The varsity team will be coached by the former JV coach Jenica Priest and is led by the two seniors, Brandon Pierce and Garrett Huening.

The seniors both have had experience playing in the varsity level of volleyball and will be guiding a team made up of mostly juniors including the setter, junior Brandon Pak.

"We are a pretty young team so we need to pick it up a little, but I feel that we can have a good season. Everyone is getting the concepts, and applying advice from the coaches, which is a good start," said Pierce.

The team will begin to play exhibition matches in the next couple of weeks and is getting ready to face familiar rival schools from the De Anza League such as Los Gatos.

"We don't have the team chemistry yet, but that will come in time. Right now we need to bring the focused mentality onto the court, and that will instantly improve our game," said Pierce.

Preseason began with a match against Leland on March 3, but the result could not be included due to publication deadlines.

The Falcons also take on James Lick tonight at home. ♦

—Elijah Yi

SOFTBALL



FALCON/ARNAV DUGAR

Senior Megan Brading takes a swing on Feb. 24.

It seems the softball team will have to rely on its younger players after losing their star seniors to graduation, said assistant coach Dave Gragnola, referring to players such as last year's MVP Nicole Gragnola.

But the team looks to benefit from freshmen such as Hera Tang, one of the pitchers, who can "already hit balls over the fence," Gragnola said.

"The freshmen help a lot because they have energy and a lot of experience playing club ball," Gragnola said. "This team has been lacking players that play full time the last several years. Now we have a lot of more experience, so overall we have better pitching and hitting."

Senior pitcher Megan Brading is a key player as No. 1 starting pitcher and senior Heather Gummow looks to be a strong hitter.

The girls are in the El Camino Division in the Santa Clara Valley Athletics League.

The Falcons' major rival is Gunn High School, who has one of the best pitchers in the county. Another rival is Santa Clara High School, but Saratoga expects to beat them after a strong performance against Santa Clara last year.

The team was scheduled to open the season on Feb. 25 against Lincoln High School but the match was cancelled due to rain. Visit saratoga-falcon.org/sports for coverage of the make-up game.

They are starting getting in more experience pre-season so "everyone can play different positions and feel comfortable if we needed to make adjustments on the field," Gragnola said. ♦

—Vivien Lu

BOYS' SWIMMING



TALISMANI/SHREYAS DOSHI

The boys' team prepares for laps on Feb. 24 practice.

With the spring sports season charging, boys' swimming team encounters a few new changes. Along with returning coaches Christian Bonner and Kristen Thomson, Brett Slayton, Courtney Crase and Heather Bridges will join the staff.

Several new members, such as freshman Sasha Samilov and Mitch Miller, will also add their prowess to the team.

"[Miller] will be a good addition because he's a good short distance swimmer, just like [Samilov] is," Bonner said.

Key swimmers remains the same as last year with seniors Adam Hinshaw and Justin Chung and junior Ian Burns, according to Bonner.

Hinshaw will most likely swim distance freestyle and possibly the individual medley (IM). Chung will swim the 100 yard backstroke and the short distance freestyles. Burns can "swim anything," Bonner said. "It's really going to depend upon what the other teams look like this year."

Tough opponents are the usual suspects: Los Gatos and Palo Alto.

"Los Gatos [is a major opponent] just because it's a rival school in the same school district. They are also practicing with us this year, at least while their boiler is down," Bonner said.

About half of the meets this year will be home and the other half away. Saratoga will also host the League Championships meet this year.

"This year we're going to have a really good year, because we didn't really lose any key swimmers last year," Bonner said. "Guys' swimming in this area right now is really, really strong." ♦

—Michael Lee & Stanley Yip

GIRLS' SWIMMING



TALISMANI/SHREYAS DOSHI

Sophomore Maggy Lin and junior Emily Williams rest.

After a solid season last year ranking 6th overall in CCS, the girls' swimming team has high expectations for this season, led by all seniors: backstroker Debbie Lin, freestyler Sophie Heyman, freestyler Caroline White and diver Lauren Gardanier.

Despite the influx of 10 incoming freshmen and one new sophomore, there are only 24 this year because of the graduation of a large senior class. This will be a challenge to the team since they are still in the same division, De Anza, and facing last year's major opponents, Monta Vista and Palo Alto High School. The first meet is at home against Gunn High School on March 11.

"Everyone is a formidable opponent this year," said coach Kristen Thomson. "We're just going to have to see. The size will be challenging, but I think we will do well."

Along with veteran coaches Thomson and Christian Bonner, new coaches Brett Slayton, Courtney Crase and Heather Bridges will join the staff. Crase also coaches the water polo team, and is coaching swimming again for a second time.

With more coaches and a smaller team, they will have to adapt from their accustomed large team and two coaches, along with competing against teams that are more challenging. Yet the team's small size doesn't dishearten swimmer sophomore Maggy Liu, who sees this as an opportunity for the team members to bond, especially between JV and varsity players.

Thomson also puts a positive spin to this in her goal for this season.

"This is a fun group of girls. They'll be a tight group," Thomson said. "What we lack in size, we definitely will make up in spirit." ♦

—Kelly Liu and Ashwini Velchamy

BOYS' LACROSSE



Varsity lacrosse players scrimmage on Feb. 24.

The parents who pleaded the district to start a lacrosse program at SHS three years ago knew that lacrosse was a fast-growing sport, but no one expected the team to grow and succeed as much as it has. Only two seasons ago, the lacrosse program had to recruit in order to make a full team, but this year, players were cut from the varsity team in order to have the optimal-sized team of 22 players.

"Sophomore year we didn't think that were going to do well," said senior midfielder James Hadid, "but [head coach Larry Boehm] turned the program around."

After a tough first season, Boehm used the players' desire to win to bring the team a 8-11 record, a remarkable amount of success for the young program's second season. Boehm taught the fundamentals of the game and "lit a fire" in the players that continues into this season.

"[Boehm] knows that we're willing to work at it," said Hadid, "and he's taking advantage of that."

The players are working hard to prepare for another successful season by conditioning, learning more plays and practicing the fundamentals. Key players include senior attackman Rick Wilson, senior captain and defenseman Marcus Hoffman and junior mid-fielders Nick Doyn and Eric Van-Noorden. Their ultimate goal is to land a slot in the CCS playoffs this season, an accomplishment that would take the program to a new level. ♦

—Jordan Waite

GIRLS' LACROSSE



Senior Ellen Scott cradles at practice on Feb. 24.

Starting their third year as a team, the girls' lacrosse varsity and JV teams are yet adjusting to new coaches for the third year in a row. This constant change has been tough, but the team believes these coaches are here to stay.

This season, returning to coach the varsity team as she did in 2009 is Merryl Geisse, who played for Bucknell University, a Division 1 school, for three years. With her coaching varsity is assistant coach Gurpreet Sidhu, who played at Leland High School for four years.

The JV head coach is Eric Wong, who graduated from SHS in 2006 and coached a boys' lacrosse team in Michigan, and the JV assistant coach is Molly Jordan, who graduated from SHS last year and played lacrosse for two years.

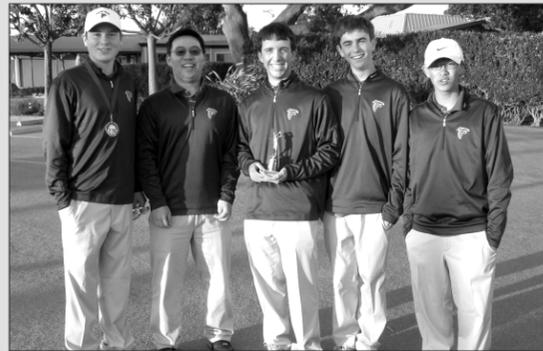
The team is in the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League Division, with major competitors being Los Gatos, Palo Alto, and Menlo-Atherton. The team began preseason on March 1 with a game against Norte Dame and has their first league game March 17 against Los Gatos.

"We're still getting to know each other and preparing for our league games," said senior Kat Nobles. "We have a lot of potential and we will continue to improve as the season goes on."

Returning key players this year in offense are seniors Vanessa Block and Ellen Scott and sophomore Jenny Guarino. Returning in defense are seniors Abby Frankola and Nobles and junior Stephanie Shimizu. ♦

—Megan Benzong

BOYS' GOLF



The team poses after a tournament on Feb. 28.

Team captain senior Kent Paisley has been spending his Monday afternoons practicing golf at the golf team's home course, the Saratoga Country Club. Paisley has high hopes for the season given the player roster.

"Last year we did not have any seniors on the team. This year two of our top players are seniors who are more experienced and we didn't lose anybody important, so we can only get better," Paisley said.

The top players this season are Paisley, senior Andrew Cho and sophomore Robbie Parden. The team is still determining who the 5 starters will be.

An early setback for the team is an injury sustained by Cho, who is looking to be back to full strength as soon as possible.

On March 7 and March 15, the team will face Los Gatos and Milpitas respectively. Both of these teams are rivals of Saratoga in the El Camino league and will be important matches for the Falcons.

Cho feels that these matches may be challenging for the team.

"I don't know how well our team will do, but hopefully we'll pull out with a win," Cho said.

The team took on Santa Clara on Feb. 28, but the result could not be included due to publication deadlines.

For the full coverage visit www.saratogafalcon.org/sports. ♦

—Priyanka Nookala

BOYS' TENNIS



Freshman Kial Kaiser hits a forehand on Feb. 24.

After second place finishes at CCS and Norcals last year, the boys' tennis team is looking to replicate its performance in the upcoming season.

Repeating the team's dominant title run at the California High School Tennis Classic will be more difficult this year with the absence of five starters from last year, including top singles players John Lambie and Michael McGinnis, who now play at Santa Clara University and Boston College, respectively.

The team will look for leadership from star No. 1 singles player senior Nikhil Jayashankar, who will play for Northwestern next fall, and No. 2 singles player senior Deepak Sabada.

"Although our team isn't as strong as it was last year, I think we still have a pretty good shot at winning CCS," said sophomore Andrew Lo, who plays No. 3 singles.

Coach Tom Uyehara will be returning for his fourth season and will be aided by new assistant coach Florin Marica.

"We are going to be playing without some of our key players from last year, but we are still the favorites to win our league and do well at CCS," Uyehara said.

The team plays in the De Anza League, and was scheduled to open the season on Feb. 24 with a match against Los Gatos, but did not due to rain. The boys will face Gunn away on Feb. 29. Check out the Falcon online for coverage.

The players' strongest rival will be once again be Menlo, the school that accounted for their only losses last season. The team will also face challenges from Bellarmine and Monte Vista. ♦

—Jason Wu

BADMINTON



Junior Stephanie Ong lunges for the birdie on Feb. 24.

Badminton players are seeking to improve on last year's mediocre ranking in the SCVAL league.

"This year, I expect Saratoga to finish top three in our league," said coach John Phung.

Phung and Alex Chan, who both coached at Saratoga last season, will be sharing the coaching responsibilities for both the JV and varsity teams.

For the girls' team in particular, a lack of experienced players seems to be the biggest concern.

"Having lost many crucial female athletes from the 2010 graduating class, this year is definitely a developing year for our female team," said Phung. "However, we have a strong freshman class. Some of them will play on the varsity team immediately."

For the boys, seniors Darren Sun and Gavin Chu, junior Jeffrey Kuo, sophomore Derek Chao and freshman Bryan Chow are key players and leaders this season, playing singles, doubles and mixed.

For the girls, juniors Jennifer Yang and Christine Tseng look to be main contributors, playing doubles.

"These athletes will provide support in conditioning training, game management, and serve as intermediaries between the coaches and players," said Phung.

Gunn High School, consisting of well-trained and disciplined returning players, will be the biggest threat for Saratoga in league.

The preseason began yesterday, March 3, with a match against Cupertino High. ♦

—Lillian Chen

TRACK



Sprinters train on the turf at practice on Feb. 24.

With fewer seniors in comparison to previous years, this year's track and field team is considered relatively young. However, as long distance coach Danny Moon puts it, chuckling, perhaps "the strength is in the youth."

Head coach Archie Ljepava's main focus this season is for track to grow as a program.

"We should be pretty competitive. Our varsity girls' program should be top notch this year. We should end up competing for a league title," Ljepava said.

Seniors Andrew Wong, Kyle Fukui and Eric Chuang are expected to boost the boys' varsity scores. Chuang and Wong both sprint and jump, and Fukui runs long distance.

"[The biggest challenge is] keeping motivated and keeping dedicated to the team," Chuang said. "[Being a senior] kind of puts pressure on you because you're one of the few that want to lead the team and have some pride."

Juniors Ailene Nguyen, Crystal Yen and sophomore Melodie Bellegarda are expected to lead the girls' varsity team. Nguyen is competing in long jump, triple jump, 100 meter and the 4 by 100 meter relay. Yen is participating in 100 meter hurdles, 300 meter hurdles and 4 by 100 meter relay. Bellegarda is competing in the 400 meter, hurdles and relays.

As for long distance, Moon believes that having fun and improving are the keys to success.

"What I'm looking for is the athlete who has a desire to run and participate. It's not about winning; [it's about] success with each individual," Moon said. ♦

—Denise Lin and Justin Huang

>> photo reel



TALISMAN // MARY EDMAN



FALCON // JORDAN WAITE



Courtesy of Ayna Agrawal



FALCON // LILLIAN CHEN

WOULD YOU DO IT FOR A SCOOBY SNACK? SENIOR PIA MISHRA HUNTS FOR SCOOBY'S SNACKS DURING THE DECADES RALLY ON FEB. 4. **A WONDROUS TRIP** THE MEXICO GROUP LISTENS TO A TOUR GUIDE AS HE EXPLAINS THE CULTURE OF CHICHEN ITZA, ONE OF THE SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD, ON FEB. 12. **SAVING LIVES** SENIOR UTTARA SIVARAM HELPS A POTENTIAL BONE MARROW DONOR REGISTER HIMSELF DURING THE DRIVE ON FEB. 26. **EVERY BILL COUNTS** SENIOR KYUMIN SHIM DONATES TO THE "ONE DOLLAR FOR LIFE" BOX IN THE JOURNALISM ROOM.

It's not considered creeping if you're having fun, right?



>> **Megan Benzing**

Who doesn't want a Benz?

Is it totally wrong to just absolutely love staring at people from a distance with complete fascination with their lives? OK, it sounds pretty creepy. But I can't be alone in taking such joy out of simple people watching.

The other day, I was sitting in the food court at the mall, enjoying my delicious Rubio's, when I saw this group of three girls, probably around seventh or eighth grade, walking past in cute skirts. I couldn't stop wondering why they decided to wear skirts in the middle of winter.

I heard some boyish chuckling, so I turned my head ever so casually and saw this group of four guys about the same age blushing and laughing to themselves. Then it hit me: I was caught in the middle of a middle school crush connection.

At first I felt awkward, like super awkward. But then I just leaned back a bit and let the show begin. Needless to say, these girls walked by at least five more times, and these guys

never moved. I kept wishing some verbal connection would occur, but when it was never established, I felt the disappointment on both sides. Oh how I did not miss the awkwardness of middle school relationships.

Another episode of people watching-indulgence occurred at the Starbucks by Safeway when a huge guy with tattoos and very large muscles walked in. Since he had his back to me, it wasn't until after he ordered that I noticed he had a purse. And if that wasn't unusual enough, he had a Chihuahua inside. It was a great moment. For the rest of the day I couldn't get him out of my head as my thoughts were consumed with wondering who he was, if the Chihuahua was his, and if this man-purse/satchel was truly his.

Whenever I am in any public transport location, an airport or on a plane, a train or a bus, or even a parking lot, I make up stories about the people's secret lives behind their appearance. I can make them secret agents, stay-at-home dads, models, book worms or sudoku masters. Everyone has a secret aspiration or life dream that comes out through their way of being. You just have to look deep enough.

I don't see a problem with not thinking about your life for a while and putting yourself into someone else's. It gives you a chance to make a television show out of everyday life without vegging in front of a TV. It can be very entertaining. Just don't get caught staring. ♦

Cutting costs on haircuts

By AmyJan & VivienLu

Last October senior Brian Vo was ready to try a buzz cut hairstyle for the first time, and he knew where to go. His friend, fellow senior Jesse Yung, had started cutting people's hair a month earlier and was getting better. Vo put his head in Yung's hands.

Being the first to buzz Vo's hair became Yung's most memorable moment. Yung learned on his own how to cut hair, mostly from watching YouTube videos, and has been trimming his friends' hair for the past year.

"I started with other people's hair cutting tools until I bought my own clippers on Amazon. I started with scissors because I noticed that's what the barbers used," Yung said. "I practiced on myself first until it looked decent, and after giving myself three or four successful haircuts, I gave them to my friends."

Yung took up cutting his hair for fun, but never knew he would go anywhere with it.

"I just wanted to try it. I like it because it gives me practice to do my own hair and lets me try different styles," Yung said. "I definitely expected it to be easier, though."

The first person to receive a haircut from Yung was his friend, senior Alex Wei. Since the two have similar hair styles,

Yung could manage to style Wei's hair just the way Wei wanted it done. After that he started cutting his other friends' hair.

"I think Jesse's haircuts are very fashionable because he cuts them exactly how I want it," senior Clarence Le said. "He cuts hair because he thinks it's fun."

Whenever a friend needs to get a cut or trim, they notify Yung, who makes his way to the person's house.

"We don't have to pay because as customers we provide the location and he provides the service," Le said. "He comes over every two weeks to cut my hair, but since other people have buzzes, they get it cut more often to keep it maintained."

With practice comes mistakes.

He has messed up on haircuts on more than one occasion but he says that he has learned how to hide it from his clients.

"I don't think Jesse's ever messed up on a haircut; however, we all like to mess with people's hair before he buzzes it. No one minds because we're all close friends," Le said. "For example, we gave [senior] Darren Sun a gentleman's haircut before Jesse buzzed it. Sometimes, we even leave patches on people's heads, but Jesse always fixes it."

Cutting hair has become a enjoyable hobby for Yung.

"My advice to people who want to start cutting hair is to be ready for failure and to be ready to call it something else if it doesn't work out," Yung said. "The best way is to just start with a pair of scissors and go from there." ♦



Yung



topten

CLASSES WE WISH WE HAD

- 10 **AP Naptime:** Enjoy the art of sleep.
- 9 **AP Premonition:** Learn about the new way to cheat
- 8 **Autoshop:** Fast and Furious: Toga Drift
- 7 **Cafe-fighting:** A valuable life skill.
- 6 **Cooking:** The best way to pick up girls.
- 5 **Stress Management:** The highest grade is a B+.
- 4 **Quidditch:** All the Ivies have it.
- 3 **College admission:** Stress together.
- 2 **Procrastination:** Actually, take that next year.
- 1 **Comedy:** Maybe someday these top 10s will actually be funny.

>> Aanchal Mohan, Anshu Siripurapu and Allison Toh