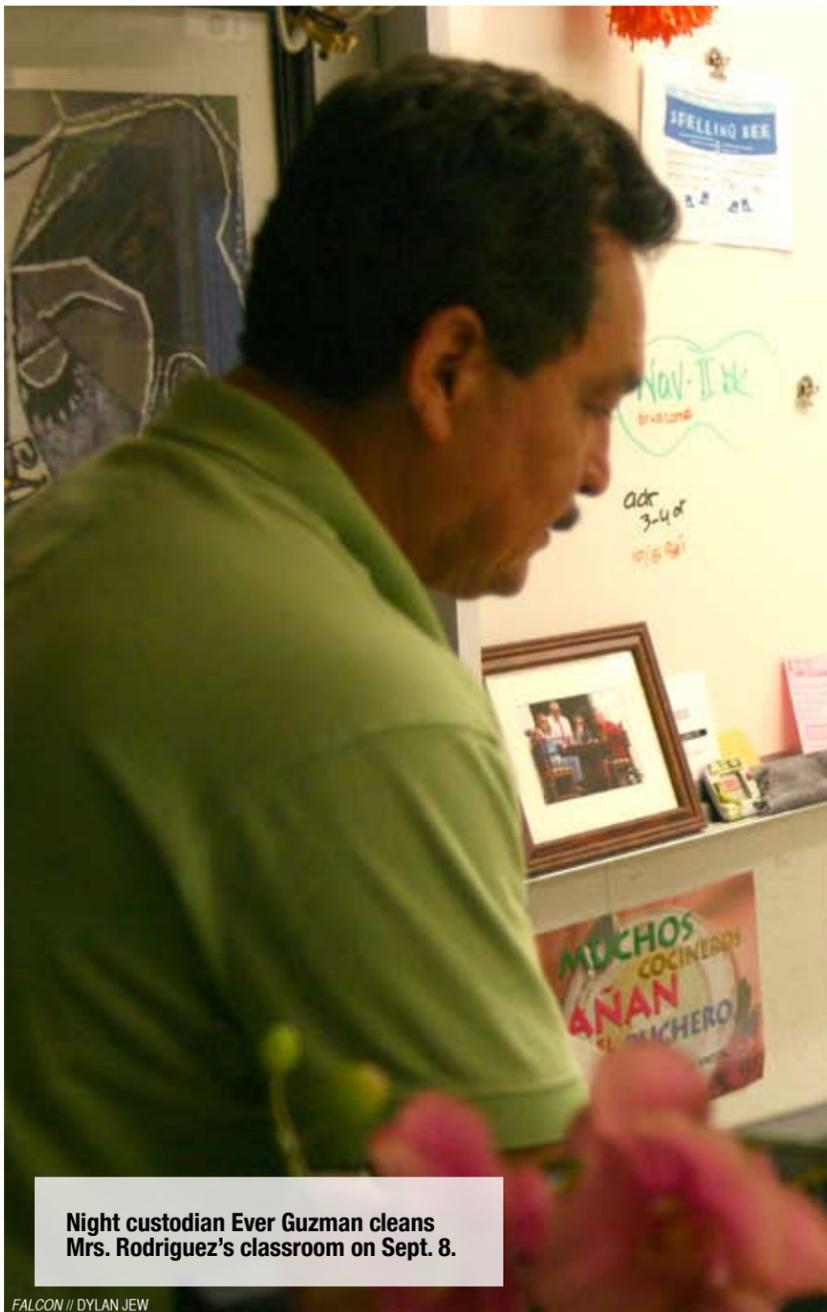


# THE saratogafalcon

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## DISTINGUISHED EMPLOYEE

# Forever Helpful Ever Guzman

HEAD NIGHT CUSTODIAN FIRST FROM SARATOGA TO WIN DISTRICT AWARD

BY SanjNalwa

The bell rings. Students stream out of their classrooms—off to sports, speech and debate, band, home. Teachers lock up. It's the end of the day. However, for one Ever Guzman, the day is just beginning.

Guzman, the school's head night custodian, was awarded "Classified Employee of the Year" on Aug. 20. The recip-

ient of the award is chosen by the SHS staff for his or her excellent work and attitude. Guzman is the first recipient of this award.

"It was nice," Guzman said. "There were more deserving people [than I]. But I couldn't say no. It would be impolite."

Guzman did not, however, administer a speech when given the award. He

>> **GUZMAN** on pg. 7

Night custodian Ever Guzman cleans Mrs. Rodriguez's classroom on Sept. 8.

## The Classified Employee Award

>> Award **Recipients**

'10-'11	'11-'12
Ricardo Alas	Ever Guzman
Los Gatos	Saratoga

>> **What:** A district award given annually to an employee who "demonstrates exceptional work ethic and attitude"

>> **Who:** Teachers and staff vote for the recipient

## DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

# Matsuoka takes new position

BY Edward Dong & SanjNalwa

On June 30, while faculty and students alike enjoyed the long-awaited summer months, a quiet but significant change occurred at the district office: Cary Matsuoka left his post as superintendent of the Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District after nearly five years.

At a board of trustees meeting earlier that month, Matsuoka gave his resignation. He had accepted an offer from the Milpitas Union School District and started his job as superintendent there on July 1.

"I wanted to try a larger challenge and a larger district," Matsuoka said. His new position also offers him a higher salary.

Unlike the Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District, which is composed of two high schools, the Milpitas Union School District holds 13 schools and serves roughly 10,000 students. Of those 13 schools, two are middle schools

and nine are elementary.

"I have never worked in an elementary school setting, and it's been a long time since I've worked in middle schools, so it's a brand new environment," Matsuoka said. "Now I'm educating kids from age three, up to high school graduation."

Additionally, Matsuoka found himself attracted to the ethnic diversity of Milpitas schools. The high index of immigrant families offers a rewarding challenge.

"I've also been learning about literacy. Say your parents tell you that you need to move to Spain, and then all of a sudden all the instruction is in Spanish," he said. "Imagine learning AP Biology in Spanish."

Matsuoka first began to work for the district in 1984 at Saratoga High School, where he taught science until 1997, when he became the assistant principal for Lynbrook High School. In 2006, he returned to the district as superinten-

>> **MATSUOKA** on pg. 7

## POPULATION INCREASE

# Hallways, classes crowded

MANY STUDENTS EXPERIENCE SCHEDULING WOES

BY Allison Chang, AmyJan KellyLiu & AksharaSekar

When March rolled around last year and schedule preferences were made, senior Thomas Ishikawa requested a free sixth period because of conflicts with baseball. However, upon receiving his schedule this year, the school said that he had to take seven classes during his final year in high school.

"I took government over the summer so that I could have an open sixth just second semester, since that's when baseball is," Ishikawa said.

When Ishikawa received his schedule, he discovered that he had a free first period second semester rather than the sixth period.

Similarly, many students started off the year plagued by numerous scheduling conflicts and endless amounts of frustration.

Although his situation was eventu-

ally solved, Ishikawa had to work outside of the guidance department to find a way to switch.

"One of my friends had the same exact schedule that I wanted and then he wanted the schedule I had so we did what we went in and switched all our classes," Ishikawa said.

Personally searching for other students who would swap classes with him was the only way he could adapt his schedule for his extracurricular activities.

These scheduling conflicts stem from recent budget cuts and an increase in the overall student population. This has caused the class sizes to increase.

Over the past seven years, class sizes have oscillated to about 330 students on average—the current freshman class of 371 far exceeds this number.

According to guidance counselor Eileen Allen, the school bore an influx of

>> **POPULATION** on pg. 6



Ishikawa



**Activities Office to implement credit card system**

The Activities Office experienced some major changes this summer, with the introduction of a new credit card payment system and the temporary leave of usual secretary June Lamm.

The administration has decided to implement a system in which students and parents will be able to use their debit or credit cards to pay for items such as dance bids and sports fees.

"The credit card system will make it easier for students to pay for their many activities," Activities Office secretary Anne Ybarra said. "It will give students more options on how they would like to pay."

The implementation of a credit card option also improves the efficiency of the Activities Office, which is frequently inundated with droves of students purchasing bids for school dances.

"I'm glad the [Activities] Office is creating the option for people to pay with their credit cards," senior Shayda Khorasani said. "It makes the transaction a lot faster and much easier for us students."

The exact date when this system will be implemented remains to be determined. However, the administration aims to have it running in time for Homecoming.

—Aanchal Mohan

**National merit: an honor for Saratoga students**

38 students were notified by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) on Sept. 2 that they were among the top 1 percent of all scorers on the PSAT, the guidance department said.

To qualify for national merit, students must take the PSAT in their junior year. Of the 1.5 million students who take the test, approximately 50,000 high scorers qualify for program recognition. Those students are then either recognized as commended students or national semifinalists.

Of these commended students, roughly 16,000 receive the honor of being semifinalists. In February, the top 15,000 semifinalists are recognized as finalists, to whom scholarships are awarded based on letters of recommendation, extra-curricular activities and a final essay.

Of all the finalists, 8,300 students receive one of three types of scholarships: the National Merit \$2,500 Scholarships, corporate-sponsored scholarships and college sponsored scholarships.

—Derek Sun and Jonathan Young

**School gains 2 points in API average**

The district's updated Academic Performance Index (API) score released on Aug. 31 revealed that Saratoga was awarded a total of 933 points and Los Gatos 883, marking a two- and 10-point improvement to each school's score in the previous year.

Overall, the district's score was 904 points, 191 points above the average score of 742 of all other California high schools and a six-point increase from last year's score. Latino students in the district boosted their score by 53 points to 848 points as did students with disabilities, who raised their score by 19 points from 658 points to 677 points.

"Our special education group was particularly impressive," assistant principal Kevin Mount said. "Typically the state target is around 5 points per year, so for our special education group to go up 19 points is really excellent."

Ever since the Public Schools Accountability Act began being enforced in 1999, California has been using the API in order to track the academic progress of schools within the state. Each score is calculated by comparing a student's academic achievements in various subjects to the API scale.

In addition to scoring the API of all students in each school, the system also calculates API scores for different subgroups such as ethnicity, students with disabilities, English Learner Status students and the socioeconomically disadvantaged.

"We benefit from a number of factors here at Saratoga High," assistant principal Brian Safine said. "If you add in all the parental expectation, student drive and dedicated staff, it's no surprise that we continue to do real well. It's gratifying to know that the students in the classroom take tests seriously."

—Brandon Judoprasertijo

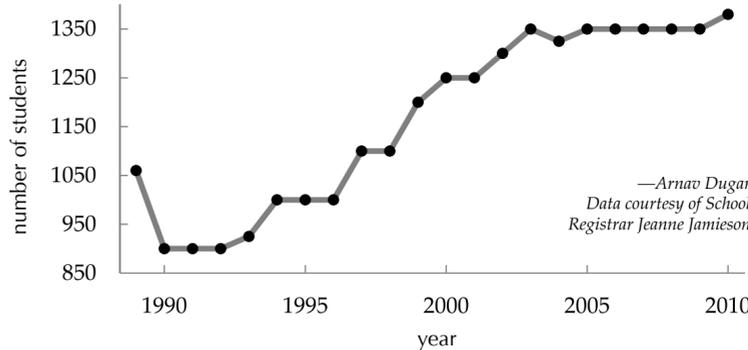
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Parent volunteers serve burgers to a line of students at the annual Back to School barbeque. Held on August 26, the barbeque was an hour-long closed-campus lunch that served the entire staff and students.

>> falconfigures

Student population over the years (1990-2010)



—Arnav Dugar  
Data courtesy of School Registrar Jeanne Jamieson

>> quoteoftheissue

**Having a DJ who's our age was pretty cool. He was great and the dance was really boppin'.**

>>> Senior Eric Wang, referring to the Kickoff Dance held on Aug. 26

**Saturday school gets serious**

by Cristina Curcelli

Thinking about texting your friend during a history lecture or cutting math to avoid a test? Give it a second thought.

Saturday school is going to become stricter this year, according to assistant principal Kevin Mount.

The Saturday school system is used as a consequence for students who break the school's code of conduct. The most common offenses that merit a Saturday school are cell phone usage in class and attendance issues.

Six tardies equals one Saturday school, as does any three cuts in any one class. Less common offenses that lead to Saturday schools are lower classmen leaving campus at lunch, defiance or disruption and cheating of any form.

The sessions are held at school about 12 times per semester. Teachers who sign up to supervise Saturday school sessions in their classrooms are paid to do so.

The administration feels that too many students have been coming to Saturday school unprepared and not ready to work. The disregard for cell phone regulations and

lack of respect of rules in some cases have led to this change.

Mount said that this year's students will be expected to come to Saturday school prepared to work. Electronics of any kind and talking are not allowed, and poor behavior will not be accepted. Students must

>>> **bigidea**

**Saturday School**

**What**  
Saturday school is going to be stricter this year

**Why**  
To make students take school rules more seriously and deter repeat offenders

**How**  
Students will be required to bring work of some kind

comply with their supervisor; otherwise, further punishment will follow.

"You're going to do work for four hours," Mount said. "It is not a party."

Although it is acceptable to relax and there is no intention of creating a prison-like atmosphere, students are there for a reason.

"We can be kind," said Mount. "But we don't want it to be a reward. That doesn't sound right, does it?"

It is also essential that students come ready with homework to complete during the session.

"Kids need to understand that they do need to come with work, prepared to work for the full time," Mount explained.

Failure to follow these rules will result in being sent home from Saturday school for the day, and the student will meet with Mount to discuss the situation.

"It just makes sense," Mount said, "that if you are going to be there, use the time wisely and do your school work and make it work for you."

Mount says numbers of attendees tend to increase as the year goes on because of the decline of attendance records. By the semester's end, Saturday schools are usually full.

Ultimately, the school hopes that the number of Saturday school attendees will decline.

"Our goal is not to have a bunch of kids in Saturday school every Saturday," said Mount. "I'd love it if it was empty every Saturday. It'd be great." ♦

FALCON FOCUS: LEAH AGUAYO

**Spicin' it up with Mrs. A's Famous Salsa Buena**  
CERAMICS TEACHER'S SALSA BUSINESS THRIVES IN MORE THAN 100 STORES

by SanjNalwa

Ceramics teacher Leah Aguayo has so many bags of tortilla chips stacked up against her desk in her office, adjacent to the ceramics room, that one might think she owns a salsa company. In reality, she does.

Aguayo, who has worked as a ceramics teacher at Saratoga High for the past 29 years, also leads a double life as the head of Mrs. A's Famous Salsa Buena, a company she founded seven years ago at the urging of her students.

For years, she has rewarded her students by bringing in food, including her salsa. Students apparently were so enamored of the salsa that they convinced Aguayo to start producing it commercially.

"The class told me, 'You have to market this. We can't wait for you [to bring it in]. We want to be able to buy it,'" Aguayo said.

Aguayo thought about the idea for weeks. Then, Daniel Yang (class of '02) approached her. He wanted to design her label. Yang advised Aguayo to buy samples of all her competitors' salsas, and then used those as inspiration to designing her own.

"We had a class discussion about the name," Aguayo said. "[We liked] Famous Amos and Mrs. Field's. OK, it's got to be Mrs. A's Famous Salsa Buena. Within three months we were ready to go."

Aguayo said she first had to take

something from her kitchen to the marketplace.

To start her business, she had to learn about bar codes, trademarks and the nutrition of her product. Not only that, she had to produce the salsa in a commercial kitchen, not in her home.

Aguayo began going to various stores and asking them to buy her salsa. She fondly recounted her dialogue with the first vendor whom she visited.

"I had a container of salsa, and a bag of chips, and I went into my local market. I can remember the two owners just standing down an aisle. They were smiling at me. I was a customer, I spent money in their store," Aguayo said. "I said, 'Can I have you taste something? I'm thinking about marketing this.'"

After sampling her salsa, the managers immediately said that they would be her first store.

Since that initial exchange, more than 100 stores, including Whole Foods, have sold or now sell her salsa.

"It took me three years to get into Whole Foods," Aguayo said. "And only in Northern California, because [each chain] has regions."

Aguayo said she hopes that Mrs. A's will be picked up by a couple of major chains.

"I'm still chasing Safeway," Aguayo said. "I've been in Safeway's corporate offices several times. I've been close several times, waiting for the call that doesn't happen. Trader Joe's is another one I've called."



Ceramics teacher Leah Aguayo has been making her homemade salsa for seven years.

Aguayo said she has been cooking since she was 8. She learned to make salsa from a family friend about 20 years ago.

"I can't stand to go shopping," Aguayo said. "But I can spend hours in a grocery store, just going down the aisles looking for food."

Recently, Aguayo recruited Yang, now a designer in Los Angeles, to redesign the brand's label.

Aguayo has come a long way from

making salsa for her high school ceramics classes. She holds high hopes for the future of Mrs. A's.

"The creation of Mrs. A's Salsa Buena and its success has been a group effort—from my students, who sparked the entrepreneur in me to my family and friends who have supported this adventure," Aguayo wrote on her website, [www.mrsafamous.com](http://www.mrsafamous.com). "I would like to thank everyone for their smiles and support." ♦

HOMECOMING

**Children's books revisited in this year's themes**

by Allison Toh & Rohan Rajeev

"Alice in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll tells of a girl named Alice who falls down a rabbit hole and finds herself in a strange world where everything is complete nonsense. On Sept. 30, a variation of this narrative will be performed by the school's seniors, who selected Carroll's work from among four novels fitting this year's Homecoming theme of "Children's Storybooks."

Nicole Shadman, the senior class president, knows that her class must step up and perform better than it has for the past three years.

"During my freshman year, the seniors put on such an amazing Quad Day and I have yet to see a performance as good as that," Shadman said.

This year's senior class has consistently struggled in the school's past three Homecoming festivities. Now in their final high school year, the class hopes to ameliorate past quad day disasters, according to Shadman.

"Our year is very academic, so our Homecoming performances haven't been as good as they could have been in the past," Shadman said. "[But this year] we're getting many more participants in the performance, we made sure that all students and parents knew the exact rules so there would be no discrepancies," junior head Homecoming commissioner Priscilla Chu said. One of the commission's new regulations clarifies that the presence of any person under the influence of alcohol at the Homecoming dance will result in a cancellation of Sadie Hawkins or another dance.

"Unlike past years, we made sure that all students and parents knew the exact rules so there would be no discrepancies," junior head Homecoming commissioner Priscilla Chu said. One of the commission's new regulations clarifies that the presence of any person under the influence of alcohol at the Homecoming dance will result in a cancellation of Sadie Hawkins or another dance.

who participate by spreading the word and encouragement to help out, it will compensate for the homework and tests that might prevent someone from making a practice or a meeting," junior class president Benedict Chiu said.

Even with the added extracurricular work, Chiu is confident and excited about his class's upcoming performance, scheduled for Sept. 29.

"We look forward mostly to the end result," he said. "We [also] really like the theme. The Wizard of Oz is a classic story that has many elements in which we can incorporate into our decorations and our quad dance."

Additionally, Chiu agrees with the Homecoming commission's recently introduced restriction on parental assistance.

"These rules were violated by parents of last year's freshmen, but it's good that something was learned from that," Chiu said, referring to the controversy surrounding the role played by parents in Homecoming decorations.

The Homecoming commission has also revised and edited other rules to make the judging guidelines clearer.

"Because of these tighter rules, Chiu expects Homecoming to have more positive spirit and less miscommunication. Also, for the first time in four years, the teachers will participate in a teacher dance, which takes place on the Monday of Homecoming week during lunch.



Top-left: Juniors Rohan Cotah, Moriah Chermak and Sasan Saadat work on their script for their "Wizard of Oz"-themed Quad Day. Top-right: Senior class president Nicole Shadman discusses various plans for Homecoming at the class meeting on Sept. 1. Bottom: Some juniors rehearse their Quad day dance on Sept. 11 at junior Heather Sabel's house.

other dance. Because of these tighter rules, Chiu expects Homecoming to have more positive spirit and less miscommunication. Also, for the first time in four years, the teachers will participate in a teacher dance, which takes place on the Monday of Homecoming week during lunch.

The commission has made many additions to this year's Homecoming festivities as well, composing written

guidelines intended to reduce bias in the class point system. For example, seniors and juniors now share an equal chance of placing first.

Freshmen will perform "Rumpelstiltskin" on Sept. 27. Sophomores will perform "Where the Wild Things Are," written by Maurice Sendak, on Sept. 28.

Homecoming week takes place Sept. 26 to Oct. 1. The Homecoming game on Sept. 30 will pit the Falcons against the Los Altos Eagles. ♦

# Warm welcome extends beyond BBQ

NEW BUDDY SYSTEM AIMS TO HELP NEW STUDENTS ACCLIMATE ALL YEAR

by Michael Lee

In their first few weeks of school, many incoming freshmen find themselves lost in a vast, foreign campus. With their middle school acquaintances, however, they do not have to face high school alone.

Without the assurances of friendship and familiarity, students new to the district arguably have a tougher time adjusting to life at Saratoga High. To help welcome about 60 students, the new student commission held its annual "New Student Barbecue" on Aug. 19.

"It's pretty much like Link's [freshman orientation] except it's more selective because it's just the new students," said

senior Nicole Shadman, who co-heads the new student commission. "We have them play bonding games and meet the administrators. Then we take them on a tour of the school with their schedules."

Shadman and co-head commissioner senior Ruchie Bhardwaj said the barbecue is a nice first step into Saratoga High.

"At the start, everyone was a bit nervous, but towards the end there were lots of conversation," Bhardwaj said. "It was just nice to see all the new students we had and some of the old students we invited just meshing together,

making each other feel welcome."

This year, Shadman and Bhardwaj developed a "buddy system" to supplement the barbecue and help even more students feel welcome.

"Last year, I can say that I saw a couple of the new students who didn't know each other before the barbecue hanging out throughout the year," Shadman said. "This year, I wanted to increase that. I wanted to see them hanging out with more people versus just by themselves, walking through the halls, which I saw a lot last year."

This system will match each student with a new student com-

missioner, a member of ASB or someone who was new to the district in previous years. This buddy will occasionally eat lunch with the student, check up on him or her and generally help him or her acclimate to the school.

"We're thinking it could go the entire year, just have events for all the new students—even just like having lunch a couple of times throughout the year," Bhardwaj said. "Just to make sure that their first year goes smoothly."

Shadman encourages people to welcome their new peers as they adjust to high school life.

"If anybody wants to help or is interested in helping out the new student commission, then they should definitely contact

us," Shadman said. "[We're] always looking to make everyone feel at home here."

Assistant principal Karen Hyde, who works closely with the new student commission, recognizes the additional challenges new students face and hopes the buddy system will ease their transitions.

"I think one of the hardest things to do would be to come to a [new] school—leaving a community that you're familiar with, friends that you had established and a home that you have known—and have to navigate that place on your own," Hyde said. "This is a tough place to be, and this is just one way that we're hoping we can make [the switch] a little softer." ♦



Shadman

## Join our club! >> BY Dylan Jew



Left: Junior boys pump up the crowd; their spirit and enthusiasm entices students to join their exciting club. Design Club utilizes graphic design programs to produce items and commodities such as flyers, T-shirts and Homecoming bids. From left to right: Representatives Shreyas Doshi, Rohan Rajeev, Eric Tang, Brandon Judoprasertijo, Parth Shah.

Right: Junior Joyce Wang provides viewers with details regarding Anime club and its goals. Anime Club meets and creates anime style artwork.



Above: S.P.A.R. club president junior Sasan Saadat and junior vice president Shireen Kaul beckon for prospective members to come sign up for their club.

Left: Senior Shaun Chung advertises California Scholarship Federation, a community service club that awards scholarships to high school students. CSF is always a hot club to sign up for due to the benefits it provides for its members.

# Link Crew helps 390 freshmen adjust to high school

by Deborah Soung & Sierra Smith

Excited and eager for high school, 390 freshmen started the school year a little early on Aug. 19 at freshmen orientation. One hundred fifteen maroon-clad Link Crew leaders led their respective groups of freshmen through the school's hallways to familiarize the freshmen with the school.

"I felt that Link Crew went very well this year," counselor Eileen Allen said of orientation. "The students seemed like they were having a good time, and I was very impressed with the leaders this year. They were very mature, and they had a very positive and enthusiastic attitude."

Allen, new counselor Lisa Kellert, the Link Crew and a team of six Link Crew commissioners organized both the Link Crew training and the freshman orientation this year.

"There are inevitably things that do

not go perfectly, so Ms. Kellert and I have to be ready for anything. The commissioners are a huge help to us with planning. We couldn't have done it without them," Allen said.

Commissioners spent several hours per day with the counselors during the week leading up to orientation. The six seniors helped behind the scenes with organizing the details of orientation.

"Prior to Link orientation, we had to set up all of the freshman groups and then pair them with all of the Link leaders," Link Crew commissioner Ali Kothari said. "It was just a huge task, because we basically just had a huge list of freshmen and we had a bunch of leaders, so we had to pair them all up and group them."

Commissioners and leaders had to cooperate closely with the counselors in order for the Link Crew to accomplish its goals. Fortunately, according to Kel-

lert, orientation ran smoothly.

"I have worked with Link Crew clubs at other schools and must say I am thoroughly impressed with the Link Crew program here at Saratoga," Kellert said. "SHS kids are so reliable, committed

and responsible, going above and beyond to not just complete the task at hand, but to do it well and with panache."

Despite having to wake up early on a summer morning, both Link Crew members and freshmen seemed to enjoy orientation.

"I really liked my Link kids," Kothari said. "It was really nice because all of my kids already knew each other, so they were all really comfortable and there was no awkwardness. We played [games] pretty much the whole time, and we just hung out."

Most freshmen, including Rebecca Lee, found orientation to be helpful and fun. Lee said she "would probably be

lost without orientation."

Link Crew will continue to aid and support their freshmen throughout the school year, starting with "Freshmen Focus" groups during the second and third Monday tutorials of the school year.

"Basically the tutorials are just for answering more of the students' questions, to make them feel a little more welcome and to let them know that we're still checking up on them," Kothari said.

The Link Crew will maintain connections with their freshman groups throughout the year through events such as a movie night and the "Coffee and Cram" group study time before first semester finals.

"We are trying to make sure the freshmen understand how important it is to Saratoga High students to be kind and respectful of one another," Allen said. "You can be a great student, but it is important to be a great person too." ♦



Allen

DRAMA

# Little Theater renamed to honor supporter

Students, parents honor Cathie Thermond; theater department welcomes new drama teacher Karin Babbit

by Lillian Chen

Amidst hype for the first drama production of the year and a competitive audition for the fall play, the drama club has set aside time to honor one of its most committed supporters.

On Sept. 13, the Little Theater was dedicated to producer and costume designer Cathie Thermond for the incredible amount of work and time she invests into the drama department. The theater was named the Cathie Thermond Drama Center.

Thermond's role in the drama department began around five years ago when both her son and daughter attended the school and also participated in the drama department. Thermond began as a volunteer who helped out with costumes and now plays a major role in the drama department, producing shows and working on many aspects of the department. Even after her children graduated from Saratoga High, Thermond continued to volunteer and aid the department.

"Without her, shows would not happen," drama club president senior Penny Burgess said. Each time there has been a new teacher, Thermond has helped

keep the program going.

"She produces and makes costumes for most show and has a huge part in making every show happen," Burgess said.

The official naming ceremony was followed by student performances and a reception with food.

In addition to the renaming of the Little Theater, the drama department also welcomes a new teacher. Although her teaching philosophies are markedly different from her predecessors, new drama teacher Karin Babbit has been well received by students. Previously, the drama department was more student-run between all members.

"She has a very different style than we're used to," Burgess said. "Ms. Babbit has put a lot of work into changing the drama department, both the class and the shows, into a more professional environment. A lot of the ways she deals with things reflects real-world industry behavior."

Babbit will be directing both the spring and fall plays. Despite this change, Burgess believes that the club's dynamic has actually gotten better. "We're a lot closer as a department this year," she said.

The first drama production of the year, "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," showed the weekend of Sept. 9. Burgess, who directed the play, said the musical is about "six young people in the throes of puberty, overseen by grown-ups who barely managed to escape childhood themselves, who learn that winning isn't everything and that losing doesn't necessarily make you a loser."

The production featured freshman Natalie Miller and Matt Nobles, juniors Gabby Crolla, Mia Hammond and Laura Hannibal and seniors Josh Harris, Mitchell McGuire, Marshall Westall and Jimmy Zheng and is rated PG-13 for some mature content.

"I'm so incredibly excited for Spelling Bee because I've wanted to do it since my sophomore year," Burgess said.

Auditions for the fall play called "Tartuffe" were held the



Freshman Madison Sloan practices acting exercises by performing a monologue in her Drama 1 class, led by new drama teacher Karin Babbit, on Sept. 8.

week of Aug. 29 and it will be performed on Oct. 20, 22 and 24. "Tartuffe" is a French play that was originally written in 1664 about a man named Tartuffe who is a beggar whom people believe is a con artist.

"I assume it will be coming along well," Burgess said.

"We'll be rehearsing for it for about two months."

Last year was very successful and the drama club hopes this year will be even better. "The department is truly my family, and I want nothing but the best for them," Burgess said. ♦

MATH CLUB

## Subtracting 3 stars adds up to a challenging year

by Jackie Gu & Brandon Judoprasertijo

It was a sad day for the math club last June when its three leading seniors, often called the "Three Musketeers," graduated together in one swoop. Besides just helping the club to improve mathematically, alumni Albert Gu, David Zeng and Amol Aggarwal added irreplaceable character to the group with their one-of-a-kind camaraderie.

"This is our first year without the Three Musketeers, and now that they aren't here, it's almost too quiet," club adviser PJ Yim said. "The noise level has gone down from a rock concert to monastery. Before, it had kind of a loud energy, but now it's more meditative."

The new leaders of the club, however, seniors Brian Wai and Alissa Zhang, have filled the shoes of last year's legends to an impressive degree. They hope to shape this year's practices into a format more welcoming for newcomers unfamiliar with competitive math.

"We're trying to make the club more accessible to people and let members tackle problems at their own level," Zhang said. "There's a stigma that if you join math club, you have to be really good at math, but you might be better than you think."

In the past, all members were given the same problem sets regardless of their skill. While some members were able to simply glance at the problems and figure out the solutions, others found getting past the first

problem to be an ordeal in itself. Now, material will be provided for students according to their level.

"I think the way we approach it has to be a little different. We didn't challenge everybody appropriately," Yim said. "The idea of math club is so that the members can be self-reliant."

By turning the club sessions into a format more easily accessible to new members, the club hopes to draw more interest in math from the school.

"We're aware that math can be very discouraging," Yim said. "The nature of the topic is so esoteric that it's a mystery to most people, and I think that's part of the reason that math club has always been small."

With this strategy, Yim hopes that results will prove to be on par with all of last year's success. Saratoga ranked first in California compared to other public high schools in the state for the prestigious American Math Competition.

This result is especially impressive given how "scary good" neighboring schools such as Lynbrook, Mission San Jose and Gunn consistently perform, according to Yim.

Yim hopes this talent will carry onto the next generation of "mathletes," as there are currently several middle-school students who show serious potential. Their dedication to math, Yim thinks, is caused in part by the high school students who go to Redwood every Tuesday to teach them.

High school involvement in the middle

school program had started about two years ago — when Gu, Zeng, and Aggarwal stepped up as leaders of the club — and dramatically changed many aspects of Redwood's math club, including its class size, teaching methods, and lecture format.

So far, the middle school program seems to have proven successful in developing interest in math. Not only are the high school students willing to dedicate themselves to teaching the budding mathletes, but the middle schoolers themselves are motivated.

"I feel like there are three parts of success at Redwood: the high school mentors, the willing students, and the parents," Yim said. "It's as they say, you can take a horse to water, but you can't make it drink."

Yim has such hopes for the potential of growth in the middle-school program that he thinks perhaps, the math club could even begin helping at the elementary schools within the Saratoga district.

"We can't talk about the high school math club without talking about [Redwood Middle School]," Yim said. "Maybe if we have people who are brave enough, in a few years, we could find people who are willing to

help out at the elementary level. If we can start doing that, maybe we can truly see a dynasty." ♦

## 2011-2012 >> Falcon issues\*

- SEPT. 16
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- DEC. 16
- JAN. 27
- FEB. 17
- MAR. 16
- APRIL 6
- MAY 31

(with senior magazine)



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# SHS undergoes increase in enrollment

## ORCHESTRA CONTINUES TO GROW

BY Cecilia Hollenhorst

The music department never seems to stop growing. This year, roughly 450 students will be participating in one or more of the musical groups on campus.

Just three years ago, there were two orchestra classes totaling 89 students enrolled. This year, there are 138 orchestra members and three classes, leading music department chair Michael Boitz to consider about increasing to four orchestras in the future.

In addition to accommodating large class sizes, the music department must worry about all of the added responsibilities that come with having more students.

"We love to see so much participation in our programs," Boitz said, "but it does get very complicated logistically."

Senior Vivian Tsai, who has observed the group's growth first-hand as a member of the orchestra, also admits that the changes create both advantages and disadvantages.

"It's great that our program has grown, but I miss being able to play with everybody," Tsai said. "It's definitely harder to manage the orchestra."

Having space to store instruments, organizing registration forms and keeping track of each student continue to increase in complexity with each new member, but all areas of the music department continue to welcome newcomers of any skill level.

Boitz believes that growth in number of students participating in the music program only makes the program stron-

## >> falconfigures

**89** Number of students enrolled in orchestra three years ago

**138** Number of students enrolled in orchestra this year

ger. For that reason, he is excited to see the record number of orchestra members this year. He attributes the freshman class's enthusiasm for music to the positive influence of Redwood Middle School's band and orchestra staff.

"Many students are drawn to the music community in middle school and find an activity that they love," Boitz said. "Continuing music in high school is the natural next step."

While orchestra enrollment continues to increase, those of the marching band and Color Guard has remained in the range of 210 to 220 students for the past four years. The most significant change has been in Color Guard participation, which has increased from 32 students last year to a record 40 this season.

Not only is the freshman class represented in high numbers throughout the music department, but Boitz predicts that the class will flourish.

"The new students are awesome," Boitz said. "They're really fun and willing to try new things so far, I can't wait to see how the year progresses." ♦

## INCREASING FLOW OF FRESHMEN

BY Amy Jan & Vivien Lu

Freshman Nikhil Chakravarthy expected to encounter a new set of rules and an expanded workload in high school. He did not, however, foresee the packed classes and cramped halls.

"One time I was walking to class, and it was like Disneyland on Christmas Day," he said.

As the school year starts to unfold, returning students are noticing that hallways are more crowded and lunch lines are much longer. Indeed,

the school population has increased. Over the past seven years, class sizes have averaged about 330 students; the current freshman class of 371 far exceeds this number.

Before school even began, Link Crew experienced the impact of the increase in students.

"I definitely felt it with Link," guidance counselor and Link Crew co-director Eileen Allen said. "We had so many people that wanted to be Link Crew leaders, so it worked out as there were enough leaders to have a decent amount of freshmen in their groups."

In addition to the large graduating class from Redwood Middle School, which the administration had anticipated, the school bore an influx of freshmen new to the district, according

to Allen.

Many factors could explain the large freshman population. For one, the economic downturn may make public schools seem more financially attractive than their private school counterparts.

However, according to Allen, the population boom may be short-lived, as Saratoga's elementary school enrollment rates continue to plummet.

According to registrar Jeanne Jamieson, one more freshman English courses was added in accordance to the new student population.

"The only difficult thing I have seen in terms of scheduling is that some classes are super popular, especially electives like Journalism 1 or Ceramics 1," Allen said. "Managing with getting

students the classes they want has been tough because it's hard to explain to new students that we can only accommodate to a certain extent."

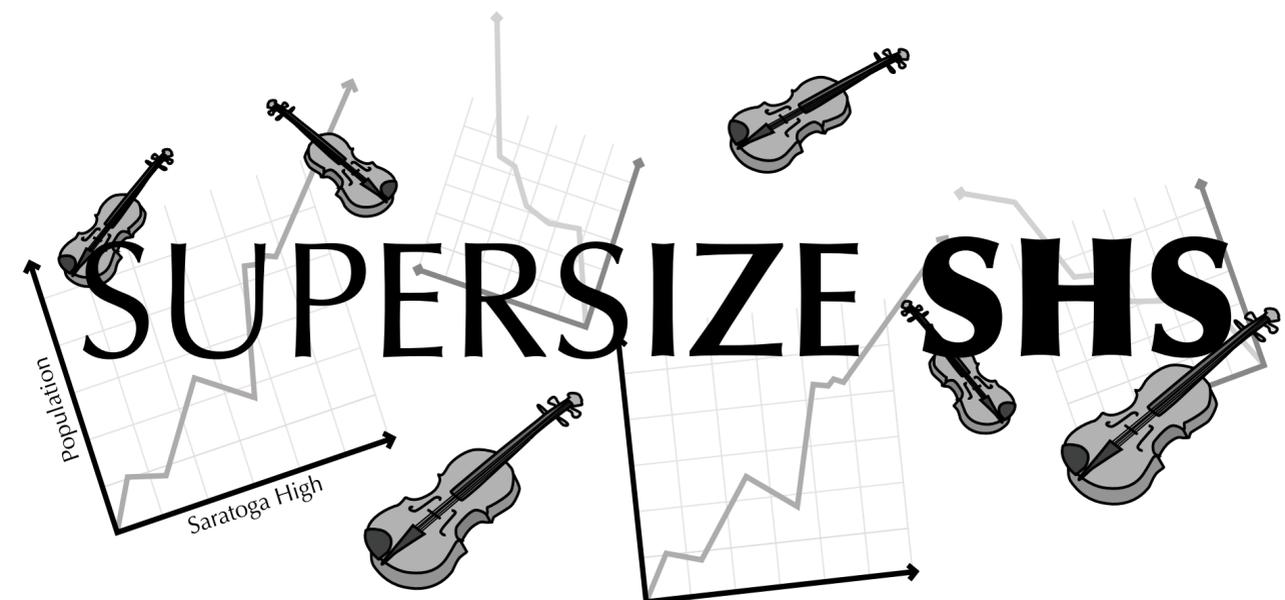
It is not only classes sizes that are feeling the effects of the increased student population, but also throughout the other students, who are noticing the difference.

"The only difference is that there were more students around me, especially really small ones," senior Sarah Lum said. "I didn't really notice how many freshmen there were until I was crowded in the hallways by them." ♦

"I didn't really notice how many freshmen there were until I was crowded in the hallways by them."



senior Sarah Lum



## POPULATION >> Challenges arise from new student influx

continued from pg. 1

new-to-district students in addition to the expected large graduating class from Redwood Middle School.

Due to this increase, many underclassmen have had difficulty switching between science and math honors classes since there are fewer seats in honors. Also, students in regular classes have an even harder time trying to move up.

AP and honors classes have

a similar problem, as these classes are completely filled to the brink. Students must swap with each other specifically in order to transfer.

However, despite all the difficulties faced, most students are willing to find solutions themselves, such as Ishikawa, or make compromises in order to get the classes they need.

Nevertheless, the guidance department considers this school year a success regarding placing everyone into the

regular classes.

"Folks have been able to have classes they want," assistant principal Brian Safine said. "Some students want not only the classes they need to graduate, but they want the periods to fit perfectly and we can never promise that."

Likewise, Allen said, "Get-



ting students the classes they want has been tough because it's hard to explain to new students that we can only accommodate to an extent."

One of these students, junior Sanjna Verma, had tried numerous times to enroll in ceramics to fulfill her visual arts requirement for the past few weeks without success. She has been unable to enter the class because it was already completely full, with a waiting list of more than 50 students.

Although Verma's schedule did not accommodate her interest in ceramics, she worked with guidance to switch into Art 1 instead.

She had to make a compromise, but in the end, she will be able to fulfill her visual arts requirement as planned. ♦

# MATSUOKA >> Superintendent leaves district for new post

continued from pg. 1

dent.

Tom Woodruff, the associate superintendent of the Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District, said that Matsuoka, in addition to being a close colleague, was a caring personal friend.

"I'll miss not seeing him every day," Woodruff said. "My father died a week before I started working [in the school district. Matsuoka] completely supported me."

Senior Anshu Siripurapu, the board representative for Saratoga High last year, also appreciated Matsuoka's approachable personality.

"I think he was a good listener above

all things," Siripurapu said. "He cared about what I had to say, about what students had to say in general."

Matsuoka's efforts culminated last year with the passing of the district's first parcel tax, which has addressed the "need for funding under local control," according to the Jane Marashian, who worked as administrative assistant.

However, Matsuoka believes that his greatest contribution lies in the administrative team that he left behind.

"I think the biggest thing was kind of behind the scenes," Matsuoka said. "We have 13 administrators in the district, and I left a top-notch administrative team."

Matsuoka also left behind the daunt-

ing task of selecting a new superintendent. The district hired Leadership Associates, a search firm specializing in the selection of executive leaders in academia as well as industry.

"The board is committed to finding and hiring the best possible leader for our district," Marashian said. "To that end, a professional search firm provides us with the expertise to coordinate the complex process of advertising, recruiting, collecting community input, and interviewing."

Marashian expects the board to announce the final decision soon after the Sept. 17 finalist interview date. The new superintendent will most likely begin to work in October. ♦

## >> falconfigures

**2** Number of schools in LGSUHS

**13** Number of schools in the Milpitas Union School District

**13** Number of administrators in the Saratoga district

# To perform, to inform >> BY David Eng

### THE MARCHING BAND EXHIBITS THE PROGRESS THEY MADE OVER THE ONE-WEEK BAND CAMP AND TEACHES FAMILY AND FRIENDS MARCHING BASICS ON AUG. 20.



Left: Pit percussionist freshman Jordan Grenier tells his father to watch the drum major to know when to start playing.

Right: Color guard captain junior Mckenna Galvin strikes the ending pose of the first movement. "I think we're at a much better place as far as progress goes than last year. It was fun being able to show family and friends what we accomplished in such a short time."

Bottom: Junior Doug Jones instructs his mother on how to hold the trumpet and march to her next drill set or "dot."

Above: Saxophones and clarinets break off from a large section and merge into a block for the first movement.

Right: Drum major senior Isabel McPherson teaches her dad how to conduct. "Teaching my dad was interesting ... Turns out I have a better 'man voice' than him ... It made me realize that there are a lot of things we take for granted or think are easy in band, but to outsiders they're entirely foreign and confusing."

# GUZMAN >> Night custodian named classified employee

continued from pg. 1

received it at the annual gathering of district employees before school started.

"I chickened out," Guzman joked. "I couldn't do any speech. I was telling my boss, I should take Mr. Rector's class on speech and debate."

Guzman did not expect for a moment he would win the award.

"I got a little plaque," Guzman said. "Very simple. Simple, yet beautiful."

Guzman works from 2:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. five days per week.

"Every bathroom, every day," Guzman said. "Every trash can, every day. We have to check all the doors, make sure everything is secure, make sure all the alarms are working, make sure nothing's going wrong. So it's not only cleaning."

There are five members of the evening custodial staff, which Guzman affectionately labels the "Night Crew."

"Let me give you an example of one person's job [for one night]," Guzman said. "The entire science building, the MAP building, the music wing, woodshop, the weight room, the main office, and the H1 room. It takes about 15 to 17

minutes per room." Guzman said that one of the toughest areas to clean are the locker rooms.

"When we have football games," Guzman said, "when either [team] loses, they trash the place. But we understand," Guzman said with a smile.

"It's frustrating for the kids, because they want to win, you know. But you have to learn to how to lose too."

Guzman, 57, grew up in El Salvador, but the civil war there forced Guzman and his family to flee to the U.S. Guzman, then 24, caught a plane that took him to the U.S.

He first got his G.E.D. from Independence High School in East San Jose. Guzman then worked different jobs, including custodial, maintenance, electrical and plumbing positions. He came to Saratoga in 1991.

"I heard about [the head custodian position] in the paper," Guzman said. "They picked me from a lot of applicants. I was very lucky."

Guzman does not start work until 2:30 p.m., and therefore he has a lot of time to himself in the morning and early afternoon.

"I like to watch soccer," Guzman said. "When I was a kid I used to play a lot. I never miss a game with Manchester United or Barcelona."

Guzman also enjoys fishing.

"I go fishing in Santa Cruz," Guzman said. "I'm not good, but I love it." Guzman said that he always looks forward to coming in to work everyday. "When you guys come, you find it nice and clean, and when you leave, you know it's not the same. The next day, it'll be nice and clean," Guzman said. "And, you know, that's the way it should be. We work hard to deliver good classrooms

## >> thebigidea

**Night Custodian**

**Recognition:** Ever Guzman, the head night custodian, was awarded "SHS Employee of the Year" on Aug. 20. He has been an employee for the school for 20 years.

**His job:** Works 2:30 to 11:30 p.m. five days a week, leads the "Night Crew" to tidy bathrooms, trash cans, locker rooms and classrooms.

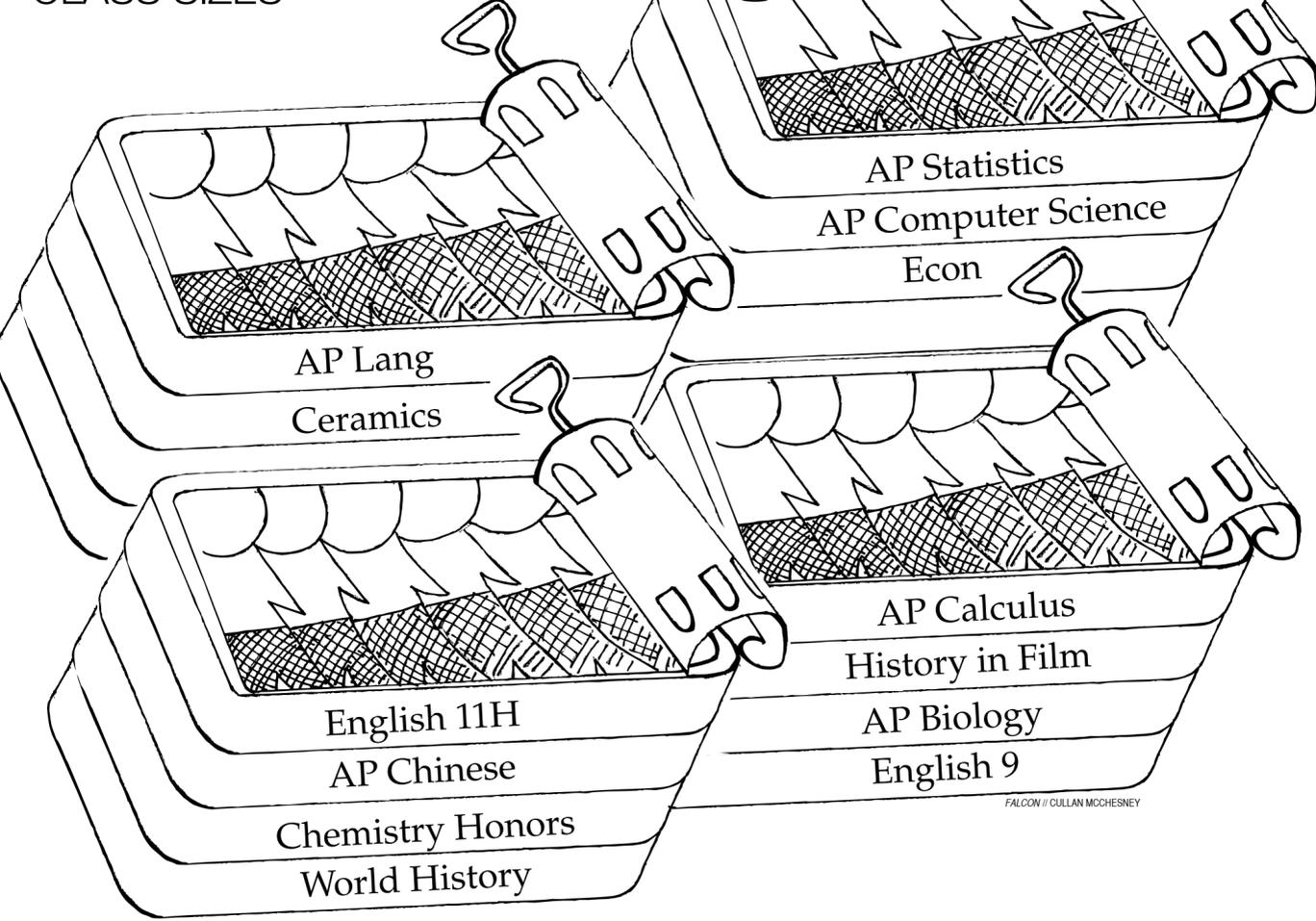
**Quick facts:** Enjoys soccer and fishing, bikes frequently, grew up in El Salvador

for you guys, because without the students, none of us would have a job. You guys make us work, and we're thankful. That's the way I think about it."

Principal Jeff Anderson said Guzman was the obvious choice for the award. "When I went around, I asked about 15 teachers who should win the award," Anderson said. "And I'm not exaggerating; every single one of them said Ever Guzman. It's definitely his hard work [that won him the award]. But what's really above the cut is his attitude." ♦

# Crammed into classes

TEACHERS FORCED TO BEAR THE BURDEN OF INCREASED CLASS SIZES



FALCON // CULLAN MCCHESENEY

by Sabrina Cismas

As students walked into their classes for the first time on Aug. 22, most were greeted by the regular arrangements of inspirational posters, floods of green course sheets and ice-breakers. Few, however, expected that their classes would be stuffed with more than three dozen students.

In order to help compensate for extra student enrollment and limited resources, many classes have exceeded last year's average number of students. According to assistant principal Brian Safine, last year's student body total of 1,354 increased to 1,393 this year, and seniors are outnumbered by 43 freshmen.

Science classes, which are located in some of the largest and newest buildings on campus, are not permitted to exceed 30 students due to safety concerns, but a limit does not exist for any other classes.

**Safety struggles**

Walls should not dictate class sizes.

In order to provide a successful and safe learning environment, class size restrictions should be extended to all subject areas.

Michele Drouin's 4th period AP Calculus AB class is an example of an overflowing one. The desks line the walls in closely packed rows with sufficient walking space available only in the front of the classroom, opposite the exit at the back of the class.

After the end bell rings, a line forms at the door, and it takes a couple of minutes for everyone to exit the classroom. In the case of an emergency when fast escapes are crucial, 39 agitated people will not be able to escape in a timely fashion.

Apart from emergency issues, large class sizes also pose a health hazard to students. Once flu season starts and germs circulate around the school like wildfire, packing students in close quarters will insure quick spreading. It is very uncomfortable for a student to turn away from the person coughing on their right, only to be sneezed on by the person on their left.

**Academic adversities**

The academic atmosphere in a classroom struggles when too many students are present. One-on-one help and question time becomes unfairly limited when teachers are confronted with many students. Teachers have difficulty fitting all of their lectures and activities into the allotted time, especially in AP and honors classes, leaving the small amount remaining to be divided among all the students. Students who do not understand the material and are ignored in class cannot always resort to a packed tutorial for clarification, especially if it falls after a test or a hard night of homework.

Although the school is known for stressing a stringent integrity policy, it allows too many students in classes, which inclines them to cheat. Many teachers are stringent about practices to prevent cheating, but no matter how many calculator lids or water bottles are removed during a test, a person who is two feet away from another has many opportunities to let their eyeballs roam. This is especially unfair to honest students be-

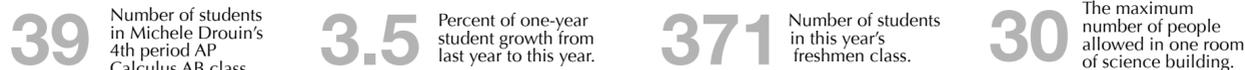
cause they too will fall in the same pot as the cheater if a teacher believes that they let the other person look at their papers.

It is understandable that the school would have a hard time implementing class size caps when it was hit by both monetary constraints and an unexpectedly high enrollment. However, the success of a school begins in the classroom. Extra additions or improvements to the school should be a lower priority when the core is falling apart.

**Simple solutions for the future**

A simple redistribution of students could be a solution, as some classes fall below the 20 student mark. Hiring an extra teacher or two could make the difference between students having a firm grasp on a subject and lagging in class. Electives could implement limits immediately; this doesn't mean that students are barred from taking certain classes, they'll just need to wait another year to do so. It is not necessary to resort to private school class limits, but the school should at least keep rosters in the 20s. ♦

>> falconfigures



THIRDPERIOD

STAFFPOLICY

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

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

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

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# Facebook study groups help out-of-class learning

Thursday night has arrived again, and senior Evan Ye is quickly running to his computer. Nothing needs to be typed or printed. Instead, he logs into his Facebook account, seeing dozens of notifications from the school AP Biology group: students asking for the date of the next exam, for the definition of an allosteric enzyme and if they need to print out the Chapter 6 lecture notes before next class.

Ye is one of the administrators of a user-made AP Bio group on Facebook, which was created during the summer.

In a world in which people sometimes seem to communicate more through technology than in person, the intersection of Facebook and school has been a long time coming.

Facebook can and should be used as an additional study tool to help students learn and understand material. Additionally, teachers can use Facebook as a teaching tool and a means of communication with students.

For the 2011-2012 school year, Facebook groups exist for all of the AP sciences, save AP Environmental Science, plus groups for AP Calculus AB and BC.

All of the aforementioned groups are created and maintained by students, each with one to three administrators who function as "moderators" for the discussions that take place.

Online study groups allow students to pose questions to many of their classmates simultaneously, often yielding immediate response and discussion.

For the benefit of teachers, Facebook can be used as a place for teachers to post links to lectures, diagrams and any websites that could help students further learn material that was taught in class. Follow-up comments and clarifications for test dates also make students more aware of the happenings of the class.

emails to students because students usually check Facebook much more often than they do email.

By linking students to sources, teachers eliminate persistent problems—such as students neglecting to print notes—and offer another source for students to immerse themselves in the given subject.

For this reason, certain teachers like Trig/Precalculus Honors and Algebra 2 teacher P.J. Yim have created Facebook groups for their classes themselves. Not only does group ownership allow an instructor to regulate what types of conversations go on in the group, but it also allows the teachers to make announcements, follow up on lectures and offer help to any students who may need or request it.

Some believe that members of an online Facebook group also must be Facebook friends; however, this is not the case. Yim, for example, is not a Facebook friend of any of his students.

Additionally, the problem of "trolling," or posting inflammatory comments, is an issue that can be easily handled if the administrators do their jobs properly, regardless of whether students or teachers run the group.

Because Facebook makes it easier for students to learn and understand material, schools should embrace it as a 21st century learning tool and utilize it to its fullest potential. ♦

>> Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

**Editor-in-chief** David Eng    **Opinion Editor** Jason Wu    **Web Editor** Aasim Naqvi

The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 35-4 in favor of Facebook study groups.

# Parents: stay out of our parking lot

ADULT DROP-OFF HABITS BOTHERSOME FOR UPPERCLASSMEN DRIVERS

by Roy Bisht

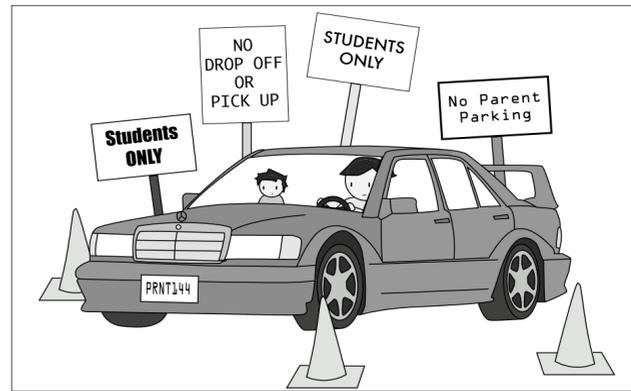
>> candidcaricatures

Waking up on a recent Thursday morning, senior Krishnan Raman opened his eyes to see a red 7:32 glaring at him. Realizing that he had slept an hour too long, he showered in a rush and raced to school. Arriving at school at 7:47, Raman estimated that if he could park quickly and run to class he would make it on time for the 7:50 first period bell. However, a parent pulled into the only open junior lot spot to drop-off their child, which forced Raman to spend a few more minutes looking for a spot and arrive late to class.

Parents parking in the student lots for drop-off is a frustrating issue for upperclassmen crunched for time each morning. Students like Raman are angered every time they are pushed one step closer to a Saturday School by a parent's selfish motives caused by an unwillingness to follow rules. With school starting at 7:50 a.m. for most students, there is not much time to spare for students who cannot find a parking spot.

The name parking lot makes it clear that there is only one purpose for which the area should be used—parking. There is an entirely separate area for drop-off and pickup that spans across the whole front side of the school, providing parents with enough space to drop-off their children in the drop-off lane. With this lane available, there is no reason for parents to be in the student parking lot.

Students buy parking permits so they will be allowed to park in each of the lots located on the front side of the cam-



ALEX JU

pus. It is very unfair for parents to take spots from students in the parking lots designed for them.

The reason students buy the permits is to allow them to get to school faster.

In previous years, there had been a group of eight students acting as traffic patrol to guide parents where to drop-off and guide students where to park. However, this proved to be inefficient as many parents ignored the traffic patrol, and all eight students on duty were consistently tardy.

A possible solution would just be for students to bike and walk to school rather than drive to school. Many students who are driven to school live within a walking or biking

distance of the school. Taking advantage of these options would relieve much of the congestion in the parking lot and drop-off areas before and after school every day. Even though the school would love to solve this traffic issue, much of the problem is in the parents' hands. The school cannot control where or how long it takes parents to drop-off their children. The longer that the parents take to drop-off their children, the more congested the traffic in the parking lot and Herriman Avenue gets. If the drop-off process was more efficient, parents would not need to park in the student lots to drop-off their children and many of the issues would be solved.

Students should have the rights to the spots in their parking lots and allowing parents to drop-off children in those lots violates them. There is a drop-off lane for a reason; there is no excuse for parents to continue to drop their kids in the student parking lots. ♦

>> thebigidea

**Parents in student lot**

**Problem:** Parents in the student parking lot congest traffic and contribute to late students. Previous attempts to fix this with student traffic guides proved unsuccessful.

**Solution:** Encourage more students to walk and bike to school.

# More students, more problems

By Jonathan Young

The quad is packed, the lunch line is endless and students are walking sideways through the halls trying not to bump into each other. Since when did so many students walk the halls of this school?

This year, the school is more crowded than any time in recent years. With only 327 students in the graduating class last year and 370 freshmen this year, the school has experienced a substantial 3.5 percent one-year growth.

## Scarce Resources

This increase has strained resources and has made some on-campus tasks that were easier in the past more difficult.

Another disadvantage of the bigger population is the longer lunch lines, which makes for impatient and restless students. The lines are so long that some students end up getting their meals almost halfway through lunch. In addition, if many students want the same item to eat (e.g., a B.L.T. from the Grab & Go line), the item runs out extremely fast, sometimes even within the first 10 minutes of lunch.

Along with limited food, the school has many other limited resources. This includes fewer textbooks in the library, and classrooms to lend out to students. Also, there aren't enough computers in the library for everyone who wants to use them.

There are many instances when there aren't any seats available in the library and students have to wait in line. With more students, the line could become even worse.

This surge has also negatively impacted extracurricular programs, such as sports and music. The surge in students increases the competition to join sports teams; thus, more students are cut and excluded from these activities.

As for orchestra, most students usually pay for their own uniforms and instruments if they play a viola or violin. However, for bigger instruments like the cello and stringed bass, students are allowed to borrow from the school. If more students are interested in those bigger instruments, the school has to buy more instruments, which is expensive.

If the trend in increased musical interest continues, this could be costly for the school and this could possibly lead to the introduction of tryouts and cuts into these programs.

The problem isn't major at the moment, but if the student population continues to increase, there could be a problem. The school is struggling as it is to accommodate 1,393 students. As the size increases, so do the problems. The school must compensate and after a certain point, they will be incapable of doing so effectively.

## Possible Solutions

For now, the school can do a few things to help with these problems. They can try to separate the hot lunch line, which is always the longest, in two and they can also provide more textbooks and computers for the library. However, these changes are only temporary and cost quite a bit of money.

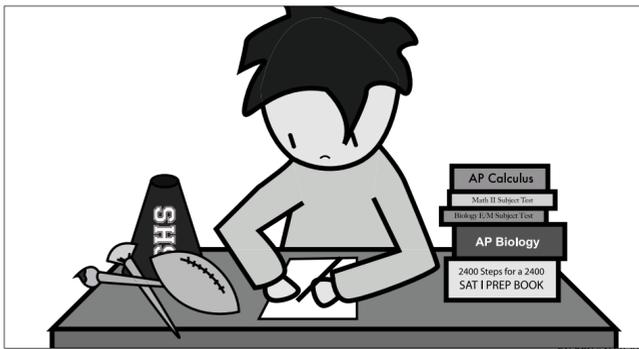
For the future, if the school size keeps growing, bigger changes need to be made. The school could expand and build more classrooms, hiring more teachers in the process. They could also expand the parking lot, to accommodate for the increased number of student drivers. They could even expand the library, making it easier for students to get textbooks they need.

These expansions are very costly and maybe impossible, given the space needed and today's economy. But if the school keeps getting more and more students in the future, the school has to do something. ♦

# Homecoming wrongly scheduled

By Matt Foley & Cecilia Hollenhorst

>> candidcaricatures



Homecoming. The word carries images of fun and celebration for students. It is supposedly a week to forget stress while showing spirit through dancing in quad days and cheering on the football team. But again this year, the dark cloud of SATs and major tests will cast their shadows on the days of festivity.

For the second consecutive year, Homecoming is in the same week as the October SAT and the end of the first six-week grading period. Students already overwhelmed by projects and homework in preparation for the end of the grading period will need to decide between academics and lasting high school memories.

Although students invest months of preparation into the SAT, the few weeks prior to these tests are a crucial time for them to get in any last-minute studying they may need, as well as catching up on sleep to be focused on the day of the test. However, students under pressure to memorize quad day routines, create large-scale decorations, write essays and study for tests may not find the time to get more than a few hours of sleep the nights of Homecoming week.

While teachers often attempt to lighten the homework load during the week of Homecoming, most find it necessary to hold unit tests or assign large projects during the sixth week of school in order to fit in enough major assignments for the six-week grading period. When the two weeks overlap, it not only forces

students to struggle to choose between spirit and studying, but also puts teachers in a difficult situation.

It is understandable for Homecoming to be scheduled around a game the football team is likely to win, but holding it the same week as two very important academic deadlines will yield more problems than benefits. Exhausted students will not be able to enjoy a football victory that falls the night before the SAT.

If holding Homecoming during the sixth week is the only option, an imbalanced grading period ending a week later could be explored in order to allow students to truly enjoy Homecoming and understand the importance of grading period checkpoints. Just as the calendar includes imbalanced semesters this year to accommodate Decem-

ber break, imbalanced grading periods would allow an extra week to fit in tests and projects while also leaving time for Homecoming.

Students should be encouraged to spend the end of the grading period studying and asking teachers questions, not provided the ultimate distraction of an all-week, school-wide party.

Though many see Homecoming as a kick-off to the year, it may be more enjoyable as a mid-semester celebration.

If scheduled two weeks after the six-week grading period, from Oct. 24-29, Homecoming would serve as a reward for students after studying hard for the SATs and sorting out grades before the six-week grading period ends. While a less-likely win in a game facing Milpitas is not ideal, neither is a stress-filled week of important tests and events. ♦

# Retweet this: Oxford's new words

By Kelly Liu

In a world where the Internet is a vital part of our lives, many readily recognize online slang such as "woot," "sexting," "retweet," "mankini" and "cyberbullying." These words have become so standard that according to The Telegraph, the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) added them into its recently released 12th edition.

The OED has been acknowledged as the definitive authority on the English language. However, the OED has breached the fine line between colloquial slang and standard words that should be included in the English dictionary.

Despite the fact that languages are bound to change based on the cultural influence of the media and trends, it is shameful to have Internet slang such as "sexting" and "retweet" be a part of a prestigious dictionary. The job of a dictionary is to document a language that is relevant to a specific group of people are using.

If scientific words are separated from the general English dictionary, then slang should be excluded as well. This is because Internet slang is used by the young generation, not the entire population including the elderly. Since the OED is a general English dictionary, it should contain standard English that

is applicable to all ages and groups.

Angus Stevenson, the dictionary's editor, argued otherwise, saying the dictionary should document all permanent and popular words. He contended in an interview with the Telegraph, "It's how the dictionary has always worked—we get as much evidence as we can so we know it's not just a small number of people using the word and it's not going to disappear."

If that was the case, then how permanent is the new word "retweet," which is a term from the social networking company Twitter? Twitter is popular, but it is not as widespread as Facebook. Instead, "retweet" should be defined in informal English dictionaries such as the website Urban Dictionary. Urban Dictionary's word entries are strictly related to vernacular slang or slurs from a wide variety of subcultures which can be submitted by anyone. These words covered by Urban Dictionary are not part of the official

English language because they may be relevant only for a small group of people or a short time span.

The addition of technology-originated words to the OED has been done before. In the past, the OED has also added and defined "OMG" and "<3." It seems ridiculous that the "<3" symbol has to be defined as an actual word.

Standard and colloquial dictionaries need to separate proper English and short-handed English apart to preserve the eloquent standard of the official language. Slang should only be added into the formal dictionaries if those words are shown in newspapers, essays or any writings that display proper English. Otherwise, there are strictly vernacular dictionaries that are at the public's disposal.

So if you do not understand "wage withholding," look it up in a law dictionary. If you do not understand "Brownian motion," look it up in a scientific dictionary. If you do not understand "mankini," the OED can help you with that, but the OED should have left the conversational words to a vernacular dictionary. ♦

## >> thebigidea

### Words added to Oxford

1. woot
2. sexting
3. retweet
4. mankini
5. cyberbullying
6. OMG
7. <3

## >> togatalks

What do you think of Oxford adding slang to its pages?

"I think it's bad. It really shows how much our generation is influenced by technology."



junior Geena Zhou

"I think that's really cool! It feels like our generation is really making our impact on the world."



senior Angie Chang

# Saratoga Runway

STUDENTS UNLEASH THEIR INNER DESIGNER BY SELLING THEIR OWN BRANDS

## Custom Jewelry Designing

Stephanie Poo

Designing jewelry comes naturally to senior Stephanie Poo, who has sold original jewelry designs and custom-made pieces for three years. She answered a few questions for the Falcon:

**How did you get started making jewelry?**

I started when my sister received a beading kit for her birthday but never used it, so she gave it to me. I learned the basics from books and a brief lesson from my eighth grade art teacher.

**What types of designs do you have?**  
I use mainly Swarovski crystal beads, pearls, and a great variety of chain. Recently I have been adding bows to my designs.

**When did you start selling your pieces?**

I started selling my jewelry after my mother wore a necklace I gave to her for her birthday at a meeting. Af-

ter that, I started a blog (peachsmoothies.tumblr.com) and since then sales transactions have become much easier. I don't have enough time to make as many things as I wish I could but if anyone has any requests, I am more than happy to comply.

**How much do you usually charge?**

The prices vary between \$7-15. Earrings tend to cost less than necklaces, but it really depends on the materials used in that particular piece.

**Do you plan on continuing making jewelry after high school?**

As long as I am able to afford the materials, I think I will continue.

**What is your favorite thing about making jewelry?**

When I see someone else wearing something I made, making jewelry feels especially rewarding.

—Cecilia Hollenhorst



FALCON/ILLIAN CHEN



Courtesy of Stephanie Poo



FALCON/ILLIAN CHEN

"Hey guys! Do you like my new clothes?" Although many students would automatically assume this question refers to new fashion at the mall, the latest shirts around campus are made by senior Claire Couch. Couch has started making her own T-shirt designs for her new clothing line, Clouch.

Clouch all began with a school project last school year. "In MAP (Media Arts Program) class, we had to do a project where I had to make a superhero costume, so I put a person's face on a T-shirt, and everyone said 'Oh! That's so cool!' and suggested I start making shirts, so I started," Couch said. "Then people began getting more and more interested, so I started selling them."

Couch sells her homemade T-shirts for \$10 to \$12 and has sold more than 15 thus far.

"Clouch shirts are very personal," said senior Michael Zucarrino. "They aren't just screened. They're painted, and they have a lot of personality."

"Being that this is a start-up business focused more on my love to design rather than produce massive profit, I charge the bare minimum to stay afloat," said Couch. "There's no better feeling than walking the halls and seeing someone wearing their Clouch original tee."

In addition, Clouch's Facebook promotion page is updated with information and photographs. In order to buy or have a special shirt made, anyone can message Couch through her Facebook page 'Clouch.'

Couch's first T-shirt design was an image of her younger brother with a drawn-on mustache and beret.

## CLOUCH

"He had to dress up as a French explorer for a 4th grade explorer report, and one day he says, 'Claire! Check your email!' so I open up my email and see this image where his beret actually looks like an afro," Couch said. "So I emailed it to my sister thinking it looked hilarious and she said to put it on a shirt, so I did!"

Not only does Couch produce shirts, but she also sells hand bags as well as other items.

"I use a stencil, so anything that can be painted on can be made," said Couch, who resourcefully makes her own stencils.

Couch uses sheet protectors, cuts them open, then puts them on an image and uses an exacto-knife to cut out the stencil.

"Making a stencil usually takes around two hours," Couch said. "Then painting the shirt usually takes around 1 hour and 45 minutes."

After the stencil is finished, Couch paints on the design with fabric paint. With 12 stock designs and more possible designs due to custom orders, Clouch has quickly grown.

Currently, Couch's main hope for Clouch is to keep producing unique T-shirts that many people will enjoy wearing.

"I'm just having a lovely time designing and producing orders as they come in," Couch said. "My goal is not for Clouch to rule the world, but to have fun and see where it leads me."

—Lillian Chen

Claire Couch

## Productive Boredom

Kevin Pan

Although many purchase the shirts of other designers, senior Kevin Pan designs his own apparel. Falcon reporters caught up with him to find out more about his business.

**Who have you sold your shirts to and what are the designs like?**

I've sold about 10 shirts so far, mainly to friends, but also one person from UCSD. Each one is a different design.

**Where can I see your designs?**  
You can view my designs at potsandpans.spreadshirt.com

**How much does each shirt cost?**  
I would rather sell each shirt for \$10-15

but in order to make any kind of profit, I have to sell them at \$20.

**What gave you the idea to put your shirts online?**

I thought it would be nice. Using the website is risk free so why not?

## POTS AND PANS

**How long do you plan on creating shirts for?**

Whenever I'm bored I'll just start drawing something and if I think it's nice I'll upload the design, so forever.

**What is your favorite thing about designing shirts?**

I like the fact that I get money, see people wearing my designs and have fun doing it.

—Lillian Chen



FALCON/ILLIAN CHEN



Courtesy of Kevin Pan

September 16, 2011

# Now that I'm a...

## Everyone's looking forward to something this year

All graphics by Alex Ju



### Freshman: Frosh are friends, not food

#### Staff Report

Freshmen students' first days of high school are often fraught with anxiety and apprehension as they do not know what to expect of their classes, teachers or fellow students. Freshman Rachel Hull, however, has an edge over her peers: her older sister, senior Sarah Hull, has already told her everything she needs to know about high school.

"Because of my sister, I knew exactly what to expect on the first day," Hull said. "I already had painted a picture of high school in my mind, so it wasn't as much of a shock for me as it was for some of the other students."

Having an older sibling who has already experienced what high school has to offer can greatly benefit the younger sibling and make the transition from middle school to high school much smoother.

"[The transition] was definitely easier because I had already seen her go through high school for three years before it was

my turn," Hull said.

An older sibling can also offer useful tips and general knowledge about classes, teachers, the layout of the school and anything else that may cause concern.

"My sister has given so much helpful advice. She's told me where good places in the quad to eat lunch are, when to use my locker, what school supplies to buy and her everything she needs to know about high school."



R. Hull

"I think we all share in the blame for that added stress," AP US History teacher Matt Torrens said. "The colleges create an application process that puts high value on SATs, parents push [students] to take prep classes, teachers think their AP course is the most important and so pile on the projects, students walk around bragging about how many AP's they take ... it's a climate of stress that has created a monster that we all

presents problems since it can be difficult to escape the shadow of an older sibling.

"I feel like I'm constantly being compared to her," Hull said. "Sometimes I feel as though my teachers like me simply because they liked her, and not because they like me for me."

This phenomenon makes it essential for younger siblings to distinguish themselves and create their own niche within the school.

"I want to set myself apart somehow from my sister so that I can't be compared to her in every aspect," Hull said. "Unlike my sister, who is a cheerleader, I've joined the field hockey team this year."

Despite these obstacles, Hull ultimately believes that it is incredibly beneficial to have an older sibling on campus.

"Having a sibling at the same school as me is like having a net below me while I walk a tight rope," Hull said. "If anything goes wrong, I always know she'll be there to back me up. That's really what being a sibling is all about, and I'm so glad that this year we finally get to be in the same school." ♦

Taking similar classes occasionally

### Sophomore: In the middle of nowhere

#### topten

##### THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD TO THIS YEAR

- 10 You can finally start driving. You still can't go off campus, though, so one more year of cookies and pizza from the cafeteria...
- 9 You don't have to pull out a map in the middle of the hallway, blocking everyone's path. Actually, where was Mr. Scott's room again?
- 8 You don't have to endure the chants of "Go home freshmen!" Just kidding, most upperclassmen can't tell the underclassmen apart.
- 7 You can step on the falcon mural without worrying that you'll completely ruin it for the football team.
- 6 You can turn around the term "freshie." "You're just a freshie, stop complaining about your homework load!"
- 5 You're used to 90-minute periods, so focusing during class will be a breeze. Technically.
- 4 You're more familiar with the teachers at school. Mr. Yim has a passion for biking; go bond with him over that!
- 3 There's no need to go through your closet Friday morning, trying to find something green to wear to rallies...Oh wait, no one does that anyway.
- 2 Now it's your turn to silently laugh at the freshmen when they struggle to carry the water coolers before and after sports practice.
- 1 Let's face it, we're sophomores; there isn't much to look forward to .... but at least we're not freshmen or juniors!

>> Karen Sung

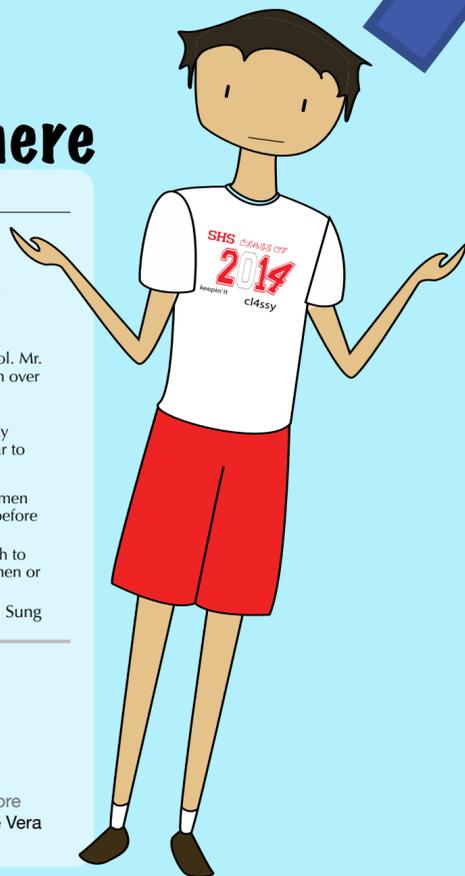
#### >> togatalks

##### How do you think this year will differ from freshman year?

"As a freshman, you are automatically looked down upon by all the other classes. You are given a lot more attention because everyone wants to make fun of the freshman class. It's harder as a freshman because you already have so many other worries about the transition, harder classes, and social situations. As a sophomore, all that pressure is relieved because we already know how high school is, we're used to it, and the spotlight is no longer on us. We also have a lot more upperclassmen friends."



sophomore Raiza De Vera



### Junior: Year of the sleep-deprived?

By Allison Toh

Junior year. Who knew that just two simple words could hold such a terrible reputation, make a person's heart drop and convince students that they were on the brink of utter torture?

Complaints about this notorious high school year are endless and typically well founded. However, students only must endure this year once, while teachers watch a new group of juniors tackle the same obstacles year after year.

"Junior year is very demanding, especially compared to most sophomore schedules," English 11 Honors teacher Natasha Ritchie said. "There is clearly a high demand on time, energy, and expectations for students junior year. In addition, SATs are looming and people start talking about college applications." For many, it may be difficult to fathom how this year came to be, well, a stressful nightmare.

"I think we all share in the blame for that added stress," AP US History teacher Matt Torrens said. "The colleges create an application process that puts high value on SATs, parents push [students] to take prep classes, teachers think their AP course is the most important and so pile on the projects, students walk around bragging about how many AP's they take ... it's a climate of stress that has created a monster that we all

have to own."

Most juniors are introduced to AP courses when registering for their junior classes as sophomores. Because most students have not experienced the actual workload of an AP course prior to enrolling, they are usually faced with a greater amount of work than they ever expected.

"I also think that the conceptions we often have in this community that a student will only achieve success in their future and/or get 'into a good college' if they overload themselves with every class and every extracurricular is, for the most part, not true," Ritchie said. "If you are a driven person, you will be successful no matter what classes you take or what college you go to."

Torrens agreed with Ritchie's stance on AP/Honors courses. He refers to the rising emphasis on college as "a tremendous pressure that rides through this school like a wave. We all know the kids who ride the wave almost seamlessly but so many kids get knocked over."

However, even under intense pressure, junior year never fails to shower its victims with the opportunity to grow and find out more about themselves as they overcome obstacle after obstacle.

"Most 11th graders are mature enough to really dig deep into material and I really enjoy teaching the age group," Ritchie said. "I understand that it is a stressful year, but I

hope students also see the value in pursuing things they are passionate about including things outside of school."

Torrens wishes for the junior class to really enjoy being juniors. While the year is one of the most challenging, it does come with an extensive list of perks: being identified as an upperclassmen, being able to go off campus for lunch, Junior Prom and so much more. Although balancing challenging academics, test prep, sleep and a social life can be difficult, it is still important for juniors to occasionally find time for themselves to relax even for a second and enjoy their time with their friends.

"In all reality, the rigors of the junior year will not go away soon for the reasons I mentioned," Torrens said. "So Juniors need to do things that make [them] happy and smile."

Torrens also encourages juniors to be more daring, and most importantly, look out for each other. "Smile at someone in your APUS class who you have never talked to before. Ask that girl to the dance you never thought noticed you... Since you can't see stress until it's often too late, you may never know when a word of encouragement or a smile may make someone's day," Torrens said. ♦



### Senior: Finally (almost) done



>> Sabrina Cismas

It's Cismas Business

"I AM a senior. I had some trouble rolling my tongue around these words on the first day of school, as I could hardly believe they told the truth. Most students wait three years of high school to reach this point in their lives, but I've looked forward to this moment since I was 4 years old."

My sister and I are 11 years apart, making me a preschooler when she started Saratoga High. I remember getting picked up from school, driving over to the front parking lot and waiting for my

sister to come out. My mom always pulled the car in front of the gym, and I used to stare admiringly at the falcon logo and little pieces of the mural coming together, which had been under construction for several months. My sister frequently came out through the main entrance, surrounded by a laughing group of friends, and I would always see her smiling at me through the car window.

From making "Don't Miss This, Vote For Cismas" T-shirts for her senior class presidential campaign, to watching her finish up an AP Computer Science final project the night before it was due with a certain student-turned-current English teacher at the high school, my sister's senior year especially stood out in my mind as an energetic and happy time.

In my eyes, her senior year was the defining moment of her teen years, and for me to finally have reached this same time period is truly surreal.

Many people eagerly anticipate senior year because they think they will gain a new type of status among other students. Now that they're seniors, they can have an awesome Quad Day, drive their own cars, and go to that highly anticipated Senior Prom. I, however, am looking forward to this year not just for these materialistic advantages, but to the realization that I have finally crossed over into territory that I have been looking forward to since I was a kid.

Now I will know what it felt like for my sister during her time here, and be part of the picture that had such an impact on my childhood.

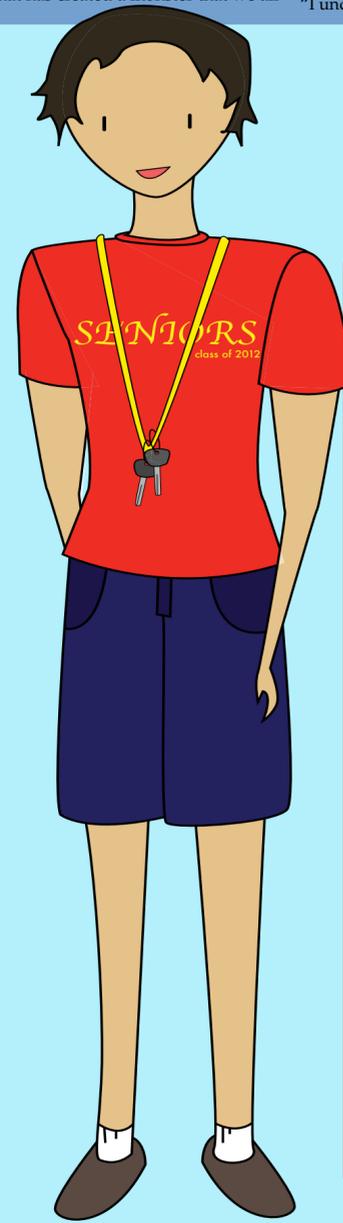
I don't know if I'll ever be able to organize a Thriller dance for Quad Day or breeze through Calculus, but for now I'm just happy that my senior portrait has finally found a spot hanging next to hers in the living room. ♦

#### topten

##### BENEFITS OF SENIOR YEAR

- 10 We finally get the clappers at the rallies because everyone knows we'll win.
- 9 We can now double-up on science. Wait, last year we could as juniors.
- 8 We get to apply to college. Yay, more essays!
- 7 We get top parking spots in front of the school. Then we have to run to AP Physics first period.
- 6 Once we turn 18, we can register as adults in the office. Colds are now limited to five days per semester.
- 5 Our ID pictures no longer go in the yearbook. Right when they started looking decent.
- 4 No school on STAR test week. We would have cut by spring anyway.
- 3 Senior Prom. Because everyone's looking forward to that.
- 2 Senior Quad Day. We will blow your minds before the Apocalypse does.
- 1 Getting a bad case of Senioritis. You'll cure up right away after you find you've been rescinded.

>> Sabrina Cismas



# SUMMER

THIS SUMMER THE MOVIE INDUSTRY RELEASED A FLOOD

## Last 'Potter' movie unforgettable



>> Jackie Gu  
Snapes on a Plane

This is going to be free of spoilers, so if you haven't read the series and have somehow managed the impossible task of steering clear of Potter spoilers for 14 years, feel free to continue reading. (But um, what are you doing with your life? Drop the APUSH! Burn the Bio! Potter is more important!)

For months, I had planned to attend the final premiere on July 15 with a few friends. We began stalking Ticketmaster and Yahoo! Movies months in advance, pouncing on the tickets the day they were available for purchase.

But as we bought tickets to a Harry Potter premiere for the last time, reality began to sink in. This was it. This was the final one. There would be no more thrill of anticipation, no more tears as the last credits rolled.

It symbolized the end of an era, the end of an entire generation's childhood, and in all honesty I dreaded July 15 much more than I willed it closer. (It certainly didn't help that all my favorite Internet haunts suddenly began emitting mass amounts of Potter nostalgia. I'm tearing your childhood apart, piece by agonizing piece, the looming calendar seemed to mock. Cry, because you have an embarrass-

ing amount of feelings for a fictional universe! Cry, because this is the emotional equivalent of helplessly watching your own puppy drown! Cry!)

When the date finally came, I was A.) ridiculously sleep-deprived because I'd spent the past 20 hours marathon-ing the first seven movies, B.) ridiculously sad because of all the aforementioned reasons (and also because I couldn't figure out how to make my Dobby ears attach), and C.) ridiculously hungry, just because.

And although we got to the theater nine hours in advance, we were somehow still shunted behind several hundred people who had probably slept there overnight. (Sorry, do I still sound bitter? Guess what? I AM.)

Frankly, though, the hours leading up to the movie were probably the highlight of my entire summer. Watching the mall fill up with legions of overenthusiastic fans in die-hard costumes filled me with a sense of unmistakable camaraderie, despite the fact that I had never spoken to any of them. There were Dobbies. There were Weasleys. There were Umbridges, Dumbledores, and Snitches galore. There were groups of Death Eaters, one of which I thought had legitimately terrifying costumes until mall security made them take their masks off and grumpy-

looking teenagers slurping Starbucks emerged. There were Bellatrixes, Malfoys, and a couple of people who tried in vain to conceal their noses and pass as Voldemort. There may even have been a Hagrid, although I'm still not sure if he was a guy in costume or just an abnormally large and hairy man.

And, because it was our very last time, my friends and I completely threw dignity to the winds and ran down the halls hollering after costumed strangers we wanted pictures with. Yeah, we received plenty of funny looks ("Kids these days," clucked an old lady judgmentally as we bypassed her on our sprint to a particularly well-made Dumbledore, and it made my entire night)—but the payoff was so worth all the stares that came our way. I now have dozens of photos of us smiling with strangers we'll never know beyond what wonderful

cos-

tume they wore to the final Harry Potter premiere, and I regret absolutely nothing.

As for the movie itself? Well, I'll let you form your own opinions on it. My own reaction, however, was nicely summed up by my friend's Facebook comment: "Honestly, Jackie flooded the theater with her tears and all I could hear was her blubbering. It was great."

It was the aftermath of the movie that really got to me, though. For a few days I refused to leave the house, rereading the books and wallowing in despair. Eventually, I resumed my lurking of the Internet and was forced to return to

day-to-day only when I picked up on fanfiction (don't lie, I know you read it too) that I sincerely realized—Harry Potter will never be over. Our generation of youths, transformed by the truly magical power of fiction, will never stop dreaming and scheming about the world that really isn't fictional for us.

So while we've been given a temporary sense of closure, it isn't really ending. When I am eighty years old, sitting in an armchair and rereading my tattered copy of *Deathly Hallows* for the umpteenth time, my grandchildren will ask me, *After all this time?* And I will reply, *Always.* ♦



## 'Kung Fu Panda 2' packs a punch

BY Vivian LeTran

Unlike failed sequels of other movies that were hastily made with little thought, Dreamworks' *Kung Fu Panda 2* definitely matches, if not surpasses, the action-packed fun of the first movie released in 2008.

The second installment expands on an aspect untouched in the first movie: the fact that Po's father is a goose. While the silly, bumbling little goose who seems more concerned about his noodle shop than anything else was a source of humor in the first movie, the relationship between Po and his father becomes a major concern to Po at probably the worst time ever.

Though Po must face the mystery of his adoption while fighting Lord Shen, an evil peacock intent on ruling the world, the movie still maintains a sentimentality and irresistible humor. While appealing to younger kids, the film retains a witty sense of humor that still pertains to that of adults, or in our case, teenagers.

Po's "Dragon Warrior" Kung Fu is unmatched and provides thrilling action that keeps viewers on the edge of their seat. The fights, chases and explosions throughout the movie are only enhanced by the astounding visual effects, such as the usage of 3D technology and beautiful, vibrant colors.

Indeed, "Kung Fu Panda 2" is an amazing movie; however, the forthcoming "Panda" sequels may be a source of worry. "Shrek," a series also produced by Dreamworks, is no doubt similar to the "Kung Fu Panda" movies in many ways: They are both hilarious movies with animated animals in which the main character ends up in a position he had never expected to find himself in.

The "Shrek" movies be-

gan with positive reception, with "Shrek" 1 and 2 both receiving 89 percent on Rotten Tomatoes, a website that compiles movie reviews and gives the movie a percentage score based on how many fresh "tomatoes" it receives versus rotten tomatoes. Nevertheless, the third and fourth movie seemed to run out of steam according to their mediocre ratings of 41 percent and 57 percent, respectively.

According to a statement by Dreamworks chief executive Jeffrey Katzenberg in *Empire Magazine*, there will be a total of six movies in the "Kung Fu Panda" franchise. The first two movies show careful planning, thought and effort, but we can only hope that this will hold true for future movies and the quality will not decrease the way that "Shrek" did.

While the future of Kung Fu Panda may seem bleak, there is little contention that the second movie is superb and a must-see for those who have yet to witness Po's "Dragon Warrior" Kung Fu. ♦



# OF SEQUELS

OF MOVIE SEQUELS—SOME GREAT, OTHERS NOT

## 'On Stranger Tides' ratings drop anchor

BY Ingrid Hong

As a loyal fan of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies, I had high hopes for the fourth installment, eager to witness Jack Sparrow outwit his next opponent.

"*Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides*" is based on one of those mythological movie quests—in this case, the search for the Fountain of Youth. It would seem a fitting backdrop for a blockbuster franchise treading on thin ice by putting out its fourth chapter. After all, isn't it the dream of every big-budget sequel to seem as fresh and new as the one before it, and to ensure that the franchise itself stays forever youthful? A sequel like "*On Stranger Tides*," however, feels forced on the audience.

The entire film consists of Sparrow traveling aboard the run-down death ship of the sinister pirate Black-

beard to reach the island that houses the legendary fountain. Meanwhile, the peg-legged Barbossa, working for King George, heads for the same destination and gives Sparrow one more thing to worry about.

Early on, a group of British redcoats plucks Jack Sparrow from a coach and puts him in an ornate sitting room. While waiting to be interrogated, Captain Jack jumps forward, a few inches at a time, and tries to grab the cream puff sitting on the table. That's a classic Jack Sparrow moment: His life hangs in the balance, and all he cares about is the sweet pastry in front of him.

That's about where the fun ends, though. The movie runs into the same problems that plagued its second and third outings—miserably verbose dialogue, an uninteresting subplot and pointless supporting characters. And everyone knows that people only see these movies because of Orlando

Bloom and Keira Knightley; it's just not the same without them.

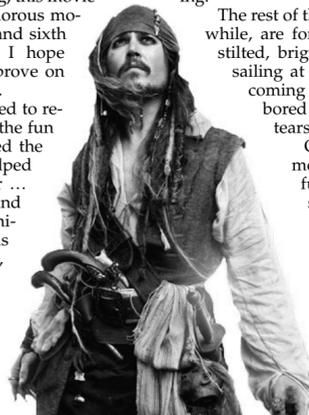
Don't get me wrong, this movie does have a few humorous moments. While a fifth and sixth movie are planned, I hope the screenwriters improve on what they've got here.

What no one seemed to remember to pack was the fun and wit that enlivened the former films and helped put the wind in their ... sales. Depp reels and staggers expertly; a minor plot point finds his old ship in a bottle, which is appropriate given the state of its captain. But he is given no chance to strike sparks with Cruz's character, and little oppor-

tunity by returning writers Ted Elliott and Terry Rossio for any verbal capering.

The rest of the pirates, meanwhile, are forced to speak in stilted, brigand-ese. "We be sailing at dawn." "You be coming with us." "I be bored to mermaids' tears."

Overall, the movie lacks eventful twists and surprises. "*On Stranger Tides*" is so straightforward yet plodding that it puts the "old" back in old-fashioned entertainment. ♦



## Revisiting childhood in 'Winnie the Pooh'

BY Vivien Lu & Allison Toh

On July 15, Disney brought back another favorite cartoon from our childhoods this past summer. We return to the Hundred Acre Woods with "Winnie the Pooh." The charming adventures of the silly old bear and his animal friends reintegrates the whimsical simplicity that many newer movies and cartoons more frequently lack.

Unlike many digitally altered animated films of today, "Winnie the Pooh" maintains a cozy

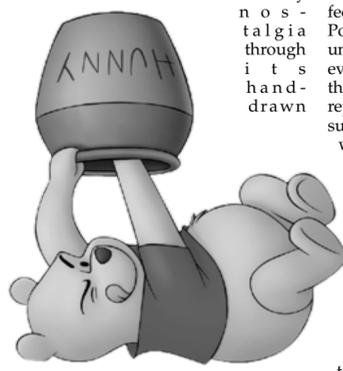
nostalgia through its hand-drawn

scenes and "silly old bear" feeling. Even though the plot travels no further than Pooh's search for honey, peppered with minor obstacles along the way, this elementary story line definitely offers a break from the flashy movies.

The downside falls from the ignorance of all of the characters. At one point, a misspelling of the phrase "back soon" causes pandemonium in the Hundred Acre Woods, as the animals design traps to capture a monster supposedly named "Back-

son." Another aggravating feature was the lack of realistic sound effects, especially the one emitted by Pooh's growling belly. It belched so unnaturally, it caught our attention every single time. The songs sung in the movie also failed to uphold the reputation Disney has for its past successful soundtracks. The tunes were neither touching nor witty; instead they sounded more like monotonous banter set to an even duller melody.

This is not a movie for those looking for a flick to delve deep into. In "Winnie the Pooh," what you see is what you get. However, for those nostalgics who wish to revisit their childhoods, this movie will not fall short of your expectations. ♦



## 'Transformers 3' crashes and burns

BY Amy Jan

I still remember when the first "Transformers" movie came out in 2007. The idea of a regular teenage boy finding a secret map and then cooperating with alien robots to save Earth was very exciting.

This summer, the third installment of the Transformers series, "Dark of the Moon," was released. Unfortunately, there were not many differences in the plot between this movie and the first one. Aside from Sam Witwicky, played by Shia LeBouf, reaching adulthood, nothing else had changed. The storyline felt repetitive.

My aunt, who took me to watch this movie, couldn't stop deriding Sam's new girlfriend, Carly Spencer (played by Rosie Huntington-Whitely), whose sole purpose was to scamper about in ridiculously high heels. (Realistically, anyone running for her life would ditch such cumbersome footwear.) An actress is supposed to act, not just simply run around screaming (which even I can accomplish).

Spencer is just a prop in the movie and fails to enhance the plot.

Another facet of the movie that I found to be extremely unrealistic was when Carly talked a Decepticon, enemy of the Autobots, into a state of jealousy. I don't understand how a high tech robot could be so easily deceived.

The first "Transformers" movie about a normal teenager who discovered alien robots called Autobots and fought along with them to save the planet seemed surreal the first time around. But with the second movie, what more could be added to the story line? In the second movie, "Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen," the plot lacked the novelty of the first movie and seemed to be just a bunch of crashing metal sounds. Adding a third movie with an equally repetitive plot was a major mistake by the producers.

The action of the movie is enthralling and the graphics are satisfactory, but the plot is substandard. This movie succeeds purely as an action film replete with effects, but will disappoint those seeking a captivating plot. ♦



# TOGA'S GOT

## Junior Olympian runs big lengths: Steven Sum

BY Samuel Liu

5-5 and stick-skinny, freshman Steven "Stevie" Sum does not appear to be an athlete, never mind an incredible one.

Yet beneath the seemingly frail exterior is the fastest runner on the school's cross country team, and this year, he may become the fastest freshman in the entire country.

"I definitely would say he's one of the best in the U.S. [for his age group]," said Brad Armstrong, Sum's personal coach. "He could be anywhere from number one to 10 [in ranking]."

Armstrong, math teacher Audrey Warmuth's husband, coaches elite middle/high school runners, some of whom are Junior Olympic champions.

Doing Armstrong's special workouts since sixth grade, Sum's mile time improved dramatically from 4:59 in seventh grade to 4:42.5 in eighth grade.

In seventh grade, Sum placed third in the Junior Olympics 3-kilometer

cross country championships. Freshman Samuel Blake from Westmont High School, Armstrong's trainee and Sum's good friend, took first place.

"Although Samuel has been a two-time national champion in cross country," Armstrong said, "this year in track, Steven has won every time they've raced.

As a result, Steven has proven himself to be one of the top milers in the nation."

Although Sum is new to the cross country team, he is well known for his remarkable ability.

"Stevie is one of the best runners to come into Saratoga [High] in a while," cross country coach Dan Ambrico said. "I definitely expect him to become a leader."

However, Sum is not as outwardly confident in himself as others are in him.

"I feel very flattered," he said, "but I am also a little nervous about living up to such high expectations."

Although some may take his meekness as a sign of low confidence, Armstrong says otherwise.

"The two extra races he ran for the Junior Olympics were just to show that he could compete with anyone, anywhere, any time he wanted, and neither of these races were even close. It was a long track season for Steven, and he really didn't have to prove anything anymore to anyone, including himself. He ran with confidence in every race and deep down



Freshman Stevie Sum does a couple of sprints as a warm-up before starting practice.

he knew he would win, which is why he did. This was Steven's unique trait—he had that quiet confidence that caught his competition by surprise."

Sum's impenetrable inner confidence stems from hard work. On average, he runs about five miles a day at a six minute mile pace. The longest he has run is about 10 miles.

Although Sum's youth, work ethic and innate talent provide him with the tools to excel at any level, some say that a growth spurt may ruin his running career.

It can cause your body's muscles to "physically stretch out to fit your bones," said junior cross country runner David Zarrin, whose running career faltered due to a growth spurt. This causes mus-

cles to get pulled more easily, leading to higher stress. However, Zarrin adds, everyone's "blueprint" is different.

In the future, Sum said, he will continue running merely as a physical exercise, and he is not sure whether or not he will run competitively in college.

"I like running because it's fun, good exercise, social and satisfying," he said. "But it's not my top priority. [My parents and I] value academics more than running [because] they have a greater impact for college [applications]."

Sum has a few goals for high school, and none of them have anything to do with running.

"I'm looking forward to freedom and driving," he said, smiling. "Driving's more efficient, and I'm lazy." ♦

## Artist plans to pursue her passion: Kylie Tseng

BY Lillian Chen

Although many adolescents devote more than a decade to selecting a career, senior Kylie Tseng has wanted to be an artist since she was 6 years old.

From early childhood, Tseng was influenced by her family, who are all artists of some sort. Tseng's father and older sister took up art as a hobby while her mother pursued it as a career. Tseng's mother is a graphic designer.

"Ever since I was in the first grade I have wanted to become an artist, and I have never changed my mind," Tseng said.

When Tseng first began with art at the age of 4, she was interested in acrylic painting.

"I liked it because it made me feel like a professional artist even though I was very young," she said. As Tseng grew older, she became a member of other types of art such as drawing on paper, canvas and tab-

let.

"I still prefer the simple graphite pencil because with a pencil, you can do so much and you have so much control," Tseng said. With a graphite pencil, Tseng relishes drawing abstract as well as still life.

Dedicating a vast amount of time to art, Tseng attends a two-hour art class every day except on Sundays and Mondays. Tseng even takes two classes on Saturdays.

This past summer, she took classes at the Academy of Art University located in San Francisco, where she studied live drawing. Tseng is also interested in photography, serving as the *Talisman* yearbook staff's head photographer.

Stephen McCue, the art teacher on campus, finds Tseng's work "unique, creative, colorful and fabulous."

Sharing her art and designs with the school, Tseng's T-shirt design was voted as the senior class's T-shirt and one of her drawings is even on the cover of this year's student planner.

Tseng wants to major in either graphic design or animation, depending on the college she attends because she "really love colors and putting them together to make something really amazing."

"I also feel like graphic design is



Senior Kylie Tseng's first portfolio piece "Untitled" is a graphite pencil drawing of ribbons and thorns weaving throughout circular figures, representing good and evil.

very useful in the real world," said Tseng.

Currently, Tseng has seven drawings and one work in progress that she will be exhibiting in her art portfolio for colleges to view, hoping to attend an art school.

"I feel like art is the only thing I've really been able to concentrate on for hours," Tseng said. "I'm pretty restless, but some days I can spend hours drawing because I feel like I'm in my own

world." Without art in her life, Tseng has no idea where she would be. "It's the way I think," Tseng said. "I see things, and I think 'Wow. I would love to draw that.'" The smallest things like an expression on a person's face mean a lot, and Tseng wishes she could stop time and capture the image.

Tseng's favorite quality about art is the freedom. "In art, anything is possible!" Tseng said. ♦



# TALENT

## Singer aims for Broadway: Nina Jayashankar

BY Anushree Dugar

"Your future looks bright," sophomore Nina Jayashankar said when she read aloud her fortune cookie last year. The first thought that flew through her mind was the one and only Broadway.

In fact, this notion touched her heart so much, she decided to keep the slip of paper.

Ever since she was 3, Jayashankar has loved singing. Her mother supported her by introducing her to a singing teacher when she was only 6. Since then, she has shown her passion for singing by participating in musical theater and many competitions, consistently impressing her audiences.

After hearing a girl in her piano class sing, Jayashankar was inspired to sing as well. Since then, singing has "defined me," Jayashankar said.

When Jayashankar went to Argonaut Elementary, she performed in the variety show and sang "A Whole New World" and "Reflections." Jayashankar continued to improve her

singing skills while participating in the California Music Educators Association singing competition from grades 6-8, where she received multiple awards through the years. Last year Jayashankar was one of 300 students nationwide invited to perform in the prestigious National Honor Choir in March in Chicago.

Jayashankar had the opportunity to work with some of the best young singers in the country as well as "fantastic directors who helped [her] dig deeper into the meaning of music."

"National Honor Choir was an unforgettable experience," Jayashankar said. "I've never seen music to that extent before this experience."

Jayashankar also uses her singing skills to participate in the Children's Musical Theater (CMT). At CMT she has starred in many musicals, including "13" and "Cinderella."

Sophomore Kristen Lo has watched a few of Jayashankar's performances. "Nina excels in being an amazing actress in CMT," Lo said.

Musical theater has prevented her from participating in many school activities she wishes she has time for. With rehearsals after school lasting four to six hours, Jayashankar admitted that "musical theater is very time-



Sophomore Nina Jayashankar sings "Halo" by Beyonce, one of her favorite songs.

consuming."

Despite this difficulty, however, Jayashankar's passion for singing has shaped her personality and view of life. Unlike many of her friends, Jayashankar said, she is "not afraid about how people will look at [her]." She has come to express her feelings through singing at lunch despite knowing "some people will kind of look at [her] funny."

Jayashankar's outgoing attitude makes her feel anxious instead of frightened before large performances.

She loves the excitement of singing in front of an audience.

Jayashankar has been well supported by her friends and family throughout her singing career, and with continuous support she hopes to participate in musical theater as an adult.

The message in Jayashankar's fortune cookie has encouraged her to try to accomplish her biggest dream of all: to perform on Broadway. She imagines telling newscasters that her future was determined because of a cookie. ♦

## Virtuoso makes it to Carnegie Hall: Desmond Chan

BY Brandon Judoprasertijo & Jonathan Young

Carnegie Hall. If there were ever a single building in the entire world that symbolized the epitome of greatness and success in any musician's career, Carnegie Hall would be it. While some people spend their whole life working toward their moment in Carnegie,

senior marimba talent Desmond Chan managed to earn his chance in the short time of three years.

"If you really like something a lot, then you shouldn't need someone to go tell you to go practice," Chan said. "I know it's cliché, but practice is really all there is to it."

Chan began playing the marimba during his freshman year. Practicing was difficult at first, mainly because Chan was not used to holding four mallets his hands. According to Chan, learning to control all the mallets felt awkward

and often painful. Chan was blessed with the wise teachings of his marimba teacher Tammy Chen. By his sophomore year, Chan managed to become the pit percussion section leader in the marching band.

"[Chen] was the one that showed me what was capable on the instrument, like the difficulty of pieces that could be played on the marimba," Chan said.

Part of Chan's success includes his masterful performances at competitions. Chan was selected as one of 30 grand winners after sending in an audition video at the National Young Virtuosi Recital Competition.

Chan was selected as one of 30 grand winners after sending in an audition video at the National Young Virtuosi Recital Competition, which gave him the opportunity to perform in Carnegie Hall. Other impressive achievements include an invitation to play as the opening act at the prestigious Junior Bach Festival after auditioning in front of multiple judges.

"It is evident to me that he is a miraculous talent, but he also understands the concept of deep practice," music department chairman Michael Boitz said. "Miraculous performers like Yo-Yo Ma, Michael Jordan or anyone who's at that level of genius as they say, have learned how to practice and dedicate themselves with the combination of talent, which gives some incredible results."

In addition, Chan was invited



Senior Desmond Chan performs in Carnegie Hall, New York, on April 30 as one of the 30 grand winners of the National Young Musicians Showcase Competition.

to play a solo recital at "Ding Ding TV," a station that broadcasts online to viewers around the United States. The performance consisted of five pieces and allotted time for Chan to talk about the marimba between each piece.

"It was arguably one of the most remarkable performances I have seen out of a high school student in 14 years," Boitz said. "Desmond performed works of undergraduate and graduate level with a clear understanding of the composer's intentions."

However, these achievements come as no surprise given Chan's unique ear for hearing music and virtuosic practicing style.

Chan says he tries to practice a few hours daily, starting with scales and warm-ups until his hands feel comfortable and then turning his attention to his pieces.

"Whenever I work on pieces, I take a look at the trouble spots and then piece

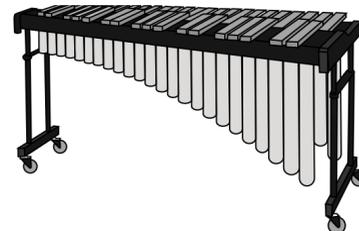
it back together," Chan said. "I try to match a story with the music, which could be from my experiences or just a story I made up."

Chan is unsure whether or not he wishes to pursue a career in music. However, Chan is determined to promote the popularity of the marimba and inspire others to play this underplayed instrument.

"Once you get past the awkwardness of holding four mallets in your hand, it's all good," Chan said. "Try playing [the marimba]. It's very fun, and not enough people play it."

After accomplishing so much at a young age, Chan's talents have earned him the accolades of his judges and peers.

"He's good and he's always practicing every day for hours no matter what time it is," Wong said. "It is an honor to have someone as good as Desmond playing with us." ♦



# Teachers recount 9/11 stories

ABE RELATES POLITICAL VIEWPOINTS TO THE EVENT

by DylanJew & MinuPalaniappan

"It's one of those moments you never forget," World History and U.S. Government teacher Kirk Abe said. "I don't know what I was doing the day before or the day after, but I will always remember exactly where I was and what I was doing that day." Abe was getting ready to leave to teach his class, on Sept. 11, 2001, when he turned on the television. "The first thing I saw was the first twin tower being hit," Abe said. "Every

channel was filled with scenes of the incident."

9/11 had a huge impact on how life is today. It started the longest war in America's history, defined current foreign policies and created numerous other international issues.



teacher Kirk Abe

Citizens all over the country were affected by the lives lost. "It was very devastating to the families that lost relatives in the 9/11 attack," Abe said. "It was a terribly sad day." Soldiers were sent to parts of Afghanistan to hunt down Osama Bin Laden as a response to 9/11. Additionally, suppressing terrorism stretched national resources thin. "Some federal

issues, such as the government deficit, can be traced back to 9/11," Abe said. "It forced the U.S. to spend more on national defense and to send troops to Afghanistan."

Even with all the trauma and pain caused by 9/11, Abe believes there were a few positive aspects of it. Cars rolled by streets with American flags proudly displayed on the sides. "Our country was more united than ever," Abe said. "There was a strong sense of patriotism everywhere."

Now that 10 years have passed since 9/11, the world is beginning to move on. Abe, however, feels that the United States should never forget about the tragic incident.

"Even during the event, I knew I was living through something pivotal. Something that would change the fabric of the nation," Abe said. ♦

>> togatalks

What do you recall about 9/11?

"I was too ignorant to understand what was going on. Now that I'm older, I can see how terrible this war really is."



junior Kevin Chen, grade 1 on 9/11

"I didn't understand what was going on on the news until I went to school and everyone was talking about it."



senior Anna Zhang, grade 2 on 9/11

"It was a horrible blow to our country, yet it raised our sense of community."



soph Aditya Choudry, grade K on 9/11

# TEN YEARS LATER...

AS THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11 ELAPSES, STUDENTS AND TEACHERS RECOUNT THEIR MEMORIES OF THE TRAGIC DAY

PRINCIPAL RELATES EXPERIENCE IN NY

by DylanJew & MinuPalaniappan

"For most people, 9/11 was just a televised event. But for me, and the rest of the people in Manhattan at the time, it was a big part of my life."

Principal Jeff Anderson was an assistant principal at Hunter High School in Manhattan during 9/11. He was faced with the problem of ensuring that the 1,500 kids in his school got home, a daunting task given that all modes of transportation were completely backed up. "Our main goal was to keep the kids safe and somehow get them home," Anderson said.



Anderson

Hunter is a school for the gifted and talented, meaning that many of Anderson's students lived far from the school. It is located about

5 miles from the World Trade Center, two blocks from Central Park in northern Manhattan.

Anderson ended up sending kids home with each other, making sure each student had a place to stay for the night. "We ended up holding [a lot] of the students in our big theatre," Anderson said. "There was a big TV set up inside so everyone could watch the events as they were happening."

The phones were ringing endlessly, due to concerned parents asking if their children are safe. "It was pretty chaotic," Anderson said, "but we kept the situation under control pretty well."

Everyone was unsure whether the first plane crash was intentional or not. However, after the second tower was hit, it became certain that the event was no accident.

Thousands of people in

Manhattan during the incident were going north, away from the dangerous Ground Zero. "If you looked out the window," Anderson said, "you would see an enormous mob of people covering the streets."

The city became polluted with the debris and smoke produced during the crash.

Remarkably, neither Anderson nor any of his students were personally connected to anyone involved in the incident. "I was surprised that we were all so fortunate," Anderson said.

By sheer fortune, Anderson had recently moved. Before, he had been living much closer to Ground Zero. "My daughter would have been going to school only two blocks away from the World Trade Center," Anderson said.

"I felt really lucky," Anderson said. "Not only was my family safe, but the students and faculty at my high school had survived as well." ♦

# 9/11 memories: From across the Hudson



>> Sanj Nalwa  
Like father, like Sanj

It was little before 9 on a Tuesday morning. The sky was a clear, opalescent blue, cloudless and beautiful. I was in my kindergarten class in Village School Elementary, Homdel, New Jersey. My mom was in Newark, N.J., just across the Hudson River, opposite from

Manhattan. She was in her first year of residency, training in order to become an OB-GYN physician.

When my mom walked out of the OR that morning, she saw several nurses crowding around a hospital window. That's when she saw smoke streaming out of the tops of several buildings. It was around 9 in the morning. At the time, my mom just assumed that some regular accident had taken place.

By 10 a.m., just an hour later, she knew better.

My dad was at home at that point. He recalls hearing on his car radio that a plane had crashed into one of the Twin Towers.

He rushed home and turned on the TV, only to watch live as the second plane hit the second tower.

My dad remembers that he could see people jumping off the Towers. They had to decide between jumping or burning to death.

Shortly afterwards, with hundreds of people still inside, both towers collapsed.

I'm not going to pretend that I remember a lot about September 11. I was only 5. But I do remember a

couple of things: The day of the attack, there was a lot of chaos at my school. Kids were unable to come home from school at the usual time, their parents busy trying to determine whether friends and family who worked in New York were safe.

And for about two weeks after the attack, I had to stay mostly indoors; there was too much smoke outside my house.

I remember that my dad and I attended a candlelight vigil organized by my school district to honor those lost. A couple of people kept staring at my dad. His

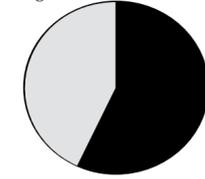
skin is brown. And he has a beard. Tens of thousands of people who live in New Jersey work in Manhattan. There were hundreds of people from where we lived who lost their lives on 9/11.

There were parents of the kids in my kindergarten class that didn't come back.

We'd hear about how cars were unmoved in parking lots days after the attacks, their owners having never come back. Eventually, relatives stepped forward

>> falconpoll

Do you think airport security is too tight?



57% Yes, it's a nuisance  
43% No, it's necessary  
The Falcon polled 60 students.

before the 2004 Olympics," Cochrum said. "We didn't have our IDs or passports checked when we went to Africa. They just loaded us on a plane."

Cochrum said at times she had to ask around just to find out where the plane was headed because of the chaos in the airport.

She also recalled how before 9/11, if her flight was delayed, airport staff would rush her through security to ensure she boarded her next flight.

"Now, there's a one-hour window in which you have to have your boarding pass in hand before they even let you go through the gate," Cochrum said.

The staff and students hold mixed views on the post-9/11 security.

"I think [airport security] is rather

excessive right now," junior Johnny Chang said. "There's been a heightened sense of paranoia because of terrorist attacks."

Junior Shreyas Nagaraj, on the other hand, believes that the stricter security does help; however, he disapproves of the way it racially profiles people.

"I remember once I was going to India, and [security] checked our baggage here, and then again at Hong Kong," Nagaraj said. "And later as we were about to board the plane, [my mom] was checked again just because of her skin color."

Cochrum holds a different view on the racial profiling.

"I have a passport profile," Cochrum

said. "I've been to a lot of Muslim countries, and they see this and check me."

By passport profile she means that security profiles people who have been in countries where known terrorists have come from. Cochrum feels that with non-Muslims behind the bombings in Norway and others around the world, racial profiling ceases to exist.

Based on her experiences travelling thousands of miles before and after 9/11, Cochrum said that flying itself has radically changed in the last ten years.

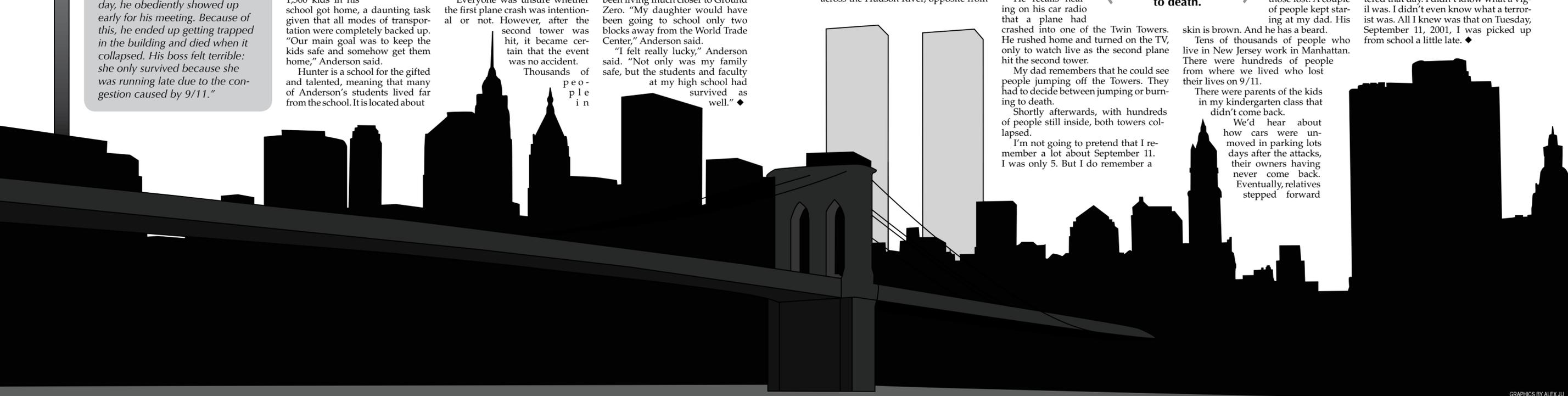
"Things that I used to fly with, I can't fly with now," Cochrum said. "I brought home a 4-foot-high fake giraffe one year from Africa, and I can't bring home drums from Africa now. I can't bring home carvings I've gotten from Thailand. A lot of the things I have at my home now, people can't get anymore."

She, however, feels that all these security hassles are worth it.

"I really support the increase in security," Cochrum said, "because if it was my family member or my friend on that flight on 9/11, I would do anything to save those lives. So even if you're saving just one plane, one time every 20 years, it's totally worth the hassle." ♦

## >> 9/11 remembered

Anderson shared a tragic story about one of his wife's coworkers who did not survive the building's collapse. "The day before 9/11, he showed up to a meeting in the World Trade Center late and was subsequently chewed out by his boss," Anderson said. "The next day, he obediently showed up early for his meeting. Because of this, he ended up getting trapped in the building and died when it collapsed. His boss felt terrible: she only survived because she was running late due to the congestion caused by 9/11."



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FOOTBALL



(Clockwise from left) Sophomore running back Davis Berryhill runs the ball upfield Sept. 2 against Burlingame. Senior linebacker Brandon Oliveri O'Connor and injured senior running back Troy Doles look on during the post-game meeting after the loss. Senior running back Jerrick Lee charges through a mob of Burlingame defenders.

## Team struggles with injuries

By Roy Bisht & Nikil Ramanathan

The Falcon football team opened its season under the lights at Benny Pierce Field on Sept. 2 with a 10-0 loss to Burlingame. As painful as the loss was, even more damaging were the injuries sustained during the game.

Senior running back Troy Doles sprained his shoulder on the first offensive drive of the game, junior linebacker Henry Wei sprained his MCL, a major ligament in his knee, and senior offensive guard Sean Walsh sprained his neck.

Doles was able to return for the team's game against Gilroy. However, the same cannot be said for Wei and Walsh, who both expect to miss at least two to three weeks.

"We had injuries to three key play-

ers without a doubt. It hurts us on both sides of the ball. However, [it] in no way shape or form puts us out of the game against Gilroy. We will beat Gilroy [even] if we play our game without them," sophomore center Clark Rothenberg said.

Beyond the injuries, the rest of the game did not go well for the Falcons besides their hopes. After a scoreless first quarter, Burlingame took a three-point lead with a second quarter field goal and did not look back, shutting out the Falcons for the entire game.

Burlingame added another seven points in the third quarter on an 18-yard touchdown run and extra point. In such a low scoring game, senior linebacker Brandon Oliveri O'Connor believes that his team was simply outplayed by Burlingame.

"We were out-hustled on both sides

of the ball," O'Connor said. "They wanted [to win] more than us and they made sure they got it."

Even though the Falcons held a respectable Burlingame offense to just 10 points, the Falcon offense struggled, totaling 152 yards for the game and just 67 yards in the second half. Senior quarterback Mitchell Casas passed for 90 yards and junior Bryson Yates led the rushing attack with 31 rushing yards in nine rushing attempts.

Though the first game did not go as well as they would have hoped, the Falcons think of it as a learning experience.

"We learned that we really need to work harder during games and practice," O'Connor said.

To see the results of the football game against Gilroy, go to [www.saratogafalcon.org](http://www.saratogafalcon.org). ♦

### 2011 SEASON PREVIEW

Coach: Tim Lugo, entering his fourth season as head coach

2010 Record: 5-5 (2-4 in league)

2010 Recap: Despite defeating cross-town rival Los Gatos to snap a 27-year losing streak and playing well against state champion Palo Alto, the Falcons struggled in league, costing them a chance to reach CCS.

Star Offensive player: Senior running back Troy Doles (682 rushing yards, 8.74 yards per carry, eight rushing touchdowns, 407 receiving yards, four receiving touchdowns in 2010)

Star Defensive player: Senior linebacker Brandon Oliveri O'Connor (77 tackles, 1 interception in 2010)

Key Departures: Quarterback Kevin Smith, center Joe Walters, wide receiver Chris Guengerich and running back Gregory Johnson

Key Additions: Juniors quarterback Kyle Dozier, offensive lineman/linebacker Henry Wei, running back Daniel Castronovo and sophomore running back Davis Berryhill.

Keys to victory: Have the running game open up holes for the passing game and vice versa. The Falcons have to be the best conditioned team on the field due to lack of size, which causes the Falcons to have less subs. With a strong league consisting of "The Big Four" Palo Alto, Los Gatos, Milpitas, as well as Mountain View, Los Altos, and Homestead, the Falcons need to be at their best every game.

On reaching CCS: "We have to take it one game at a time. Our strength this year is our defense, so we plan to establish a strong defensive game to get there," senior offensive lineman Sean Walsh said. "Also, we have to play the big teams like we are just playing another league game."

Key number: 155.2. The team's average number of passing yards per game last season, which was good enough for second best in the DeAnza Division, behind state champion Palo Alto.

—Roy Bisht & Nikil Ramanathan

## Bolt's DQ is excessive



>> Paul Jung

Slower than you

On Sunday, Aug. 28, "the world's fastest man", Usain Bolt, made the grave mistake of leaving his starting blocks early in the 100-meter sprint at the track-and-field world championships in Daegu, South Korea. This false start resulted in the disqualification of Bolt from the race, in accordance with the IAAF (International Association of Athletics Federation) rules.

The rule, which states that a runner who makes a single false start will be immediately eliminated from the race, was not always so harsh. Runners were previously allowed one false start before disqualification, but in 2010 the IAAF changed the rule, believing that competitors were intentionally leaving the blocks early to tense up their opponents.

This new rule was responsible for the absence of the 100-meter world record holder in the 100-meter race. The rule was approved to satisfy television

broadcasters who complained that false starts created delays that threw off their schedules.

However, the IAAF failed to realize that the world championships are not about the television broadcasters; they are about the runners, and in this case, the world record holder.

Had the pre-2010 rule still been in effect, Bolt would have been a clear contender for first place, given the large 0.24 second margin between his record and that of Yohan Blake, who received first in the 100 meter without the presence of Bolt. Leaving early is an understandable reaction for runners who are anxious.

The fastest man in the world, defending his world record, could not compete because of a new rule that did not allow room for human mistakes. The IAAF should make an effort to rectify the severity of this rule or return to the previous rule.

With the 2012 London Olympics approaching next year, such rules as this should be reevaluated for fairness towards runners and fans.

Though Bolt was disappointed with his disqualification, he continued later in the week to win first place in both the 200 meter and the 4x100 relay on Sept. 2 and Sept. 4, respectively, for Jamaica. His spirit is admirable, and hopefully he will not repeat his error as long as the zero-tolerance rule stands. ♦

### ATHLETE OF THE ISSUE

## Seattle U recruits senior

By Roy Bisht

When senior Will Dennis stepped onto the baseball field at Seattle University for a showcase in late August, he had no clue what to expect. A few days and hundreds of pitches later, Dennis knew where his baseball career was headed next.

In what he considered "a dream come true," Dennis was recruited as a two-way player for the NCAA Division I school after an impressive effort at the showcase.

"I've always wanted to play Division I baseball, so this is obviously one of the greatest moments of my life," Dennis said. "I'm so thankful for the opportunity that Seattle University has given me, and this experience has shown me that dreams really can come true."

Dennis was also being scouted by Fresno State and Long Beach State but ultimately decided that Seattle University gave him the best chance to play.

Dennis, a first baseman and pitcher, starred last season as the team captain on the Saratoga diamond, hitting .383 with four home runs and establishing himself as one of the team's top pitchers. Because of his strong efforts last season, Dennis was awarded All-League Second Team recognition in the competitive De Anza League for his work.

Dennis put up these exceptional numbers despite missing the first 10 games of the season due to CCS restrictions on transferring athletes. Dennis attended Woodside Priory in Portola Valley before the beginning of his junior year.

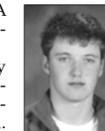
"As much as I hated sitting out the first 10 games, it was worth it since coming to Saratoga gave me a much better chance to win and to be noticed by scouts," Dennis said. "Saratoga is also great academically."

Baseball has always been a priority for Dennis, who practices every day and has spent much of his life playing for year-around travel teams.

"I would not be where I am now without all the time that I have spent on baseball. I always knew how much practice it would take to reach my goal and fortunately I was able to keep playing whenever I had free time," Dennis said.

Many of Dennis' teammates agree that his work habits affect not just him, but also the rest of the team.

"Will totally deserves this opportunity and now I feel like the whole team wants to work harder since we have an example to look at," senior pitcher Thomas Ishikawa said. "We've never really had a player like him these past few years, so it's great to have someone to look up to that's not a coach." ♦



Dennis

# SPORTS SPECIAL

## Fall Preview 2011

### FIELD HOCKEY

**Coach:** Lifon Huynh, entering her first season as head coach.

**2010 record:** 1-10-2 (league: 0-3-1)

**2010 recap:** Because of the injuries of key players, the Falcons were unable to fulfill their goals of a CCS title. Graduated seniors Colleen Garland and Vanessa Block both suffered severe hand injuries.

**Star player:** Senior midfielder Anna Ashe (pictured right)

**Key departures:** Block, forward; Ren Norris, midfielder

**Key additions:** Sophomore midfielders, Jennie Werner, Ingrid Hong and Sarah Finley

**Keys to victory:** Executing more offensive defense plays and becoming a more offensive team overall. The team must maintain a positive mindset to succeed this season. In lieu of a poor season last year, the team knows that they have to keep their minds focused on winning, no matter how many injuries they face.

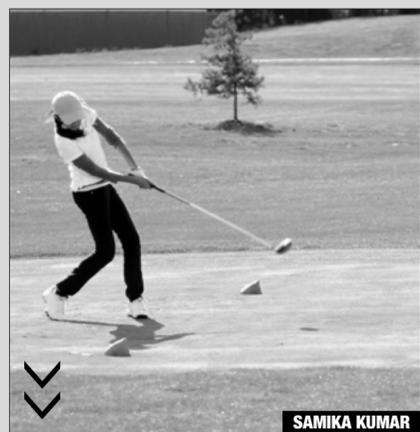
**On staying positive:** "We probably would have loved to freak out and complain about our losses, but we didn't really have a choice because the season being so rough, keeping a positive attitude was key," said junior Megan Doles.

**Magic number:** 17. The percentage of members of the team new to varsity.

—Ingrid Hong



ANNA ASHE  
FALCON // INGRID HONG



SAMIKA KUMAR  
FALCON // JORDAN WAITE

### GIRLS' GOLF

**Coach:** Dave Gagnola, entering first season as head coach

**2010 record:** 0-14

**2010 recap:** In a season full of close matches, the Falcons did not find much success. Out of 14 matches, the team won zero but fought well against teams such as rival Los Gatos and league champions Evergreen Valley. Even though the team was not successful overall, it sent one player to CCS.

**Star player:** Junior Samika Kumar, who almost qualified for CCS last year, pictured above.

**Key departures:** Uttara Sivaram, who qualified for CCS last year

**Key addition:** Freshman Vivian Roan

**Keys to success:** With a smaller team, the coaches have a chance to work with each player individually. The team will focus on reducing the amount of shots it takes to improve its scores. By addressing one type of shot each practice, the team is perfecting its shots and developing knowledge of the sport. With Saratoga Country Club as their home course, the Falcons have the advantage this year of becoming familiar with the course, something they can use to their benefit in their home matches. The team had cuts this year, so the general skill level of the average player on the team has increased from last year, where everyone made the team, slightly bringing down the average skill level of each player.

**On the importance of focus:** "Most people believe that golf is an old-person sport. But in reality, the sport requires a lot of diligence, hard work and skill. Matches tend to be at least three hours long, requiring a lot of focus. One momentary lapse of concentration can cost a player the match," sophomore Nikki Thareja said. "Although our practices are spent working hard in the hot sun, we have really become a family, and every practice has a little bit of laughter, putting challenges, and deer. In the end, golf is a really difficult sport to master, but it is worth every single stroke."

**Magic number:** 34. The par for the Saratoga home course. The Falcons are continuing to improve their scores on their home course.

—Derek Sun



ERIC WANG  
TALISMAN // JAYA NARASIMHAN

### BOYS' WATER POLO

**Coach:** Courtney Crase, entering first season as head coach for the boys' team but has previously coached the girls' team.

**2010 record:** 11-4 (Overall record), 9-3 (League Record)

**2010 recap:** After battling their way up to the league matches, the Falcons were unable to beat Wilcox in a key match that ended up spoiling their chances at leagues. The team finished third in their league last year.

**Star players:** Sophomore Steven Cho, utility; senior Eric Wang, wing, pictured above

**Key departures:** Goalie Gavin Peake and driver Tim Rollinson

**Key additions:** Junior driver Jim Speedy and sophomore driver Cameron Borch

**Keys to victory:** Performing quick passes to create more offensive opportunities will key Falcon victories this season.

**On losing Peake and Rollinson:** "Gavin was a great goalie so it will be hard to fill his place in the cage. and Tim was a quick swimmer with lots of experience," junior driver Tyler Tanaka said.

**Magic number:** 21. The number of varsity players on a team typically made up of 16 players, a testament to water polo's increasing popularity among students.

—Brandon Judoprasertijo and Jackie Gu



ELYSE BERLINBERG  
FALCON // JORDAN WAITE

### GIRLS' WATER POLO

**Coach:** Heather Bridges, entering her first season as head coach.

**2010 record:** 1-9-0

**2010 recap:** Due to a small team size and tough competition in the El Camino league, the Falcons had a tough 2010 season.

**Star players:** Senior goalie Alison Knysch, junior utility players Seralyn Fields and Elyse Berlinberg (pictured above), and sophomore hole defender Nikki de Roos

**Key departures:** Hole defender Alison Buchanan, hole set Joyee Woodrow, hole defender Mackenzie Crase

**Key addition:** Junior hole set Claire Schwartz

**Key to success:** In order to perform better than last year, the Falcons are working improving their offense, which was somewhat lacking last year. The larger team size this year also means more opportunities to switch out tired players. Being able to switch out more players will help the team play complete games.

**On the upcoming season:** "We moved down a league, so we're expecting a lot more wins [than last year]," junior Seralyn Fields said.

**Magic number:** 7. The number of new teams the Falcons will play this season.

—Paul Jung



SARAH LUM  
FALCON // LILLIAN CHEN

### GIRLS' TENNIS

**Coach:** Tom Uyehara, entering sixth season as head coach.

**2010 record:** 24-0; 12-0 in league

**2010 recap:** The girls' varsity team experienced a tremendously successful season last year, going undefeated, winning at CCS and moving onto NorCal championships, where they placed first. This was the best season in the team's history and the girls were regarded as one of the best teams in California, if not in the nation.

**Star player:** No. 1 Singles player Crystal Yen (record: 31-1 for entire season last year) and doubles player senior Sarah Lum (pictured above)

**Key departures:** No. 2 singles player Srinidhi Raghavan; No. 3 singles player Catherine Nguyen

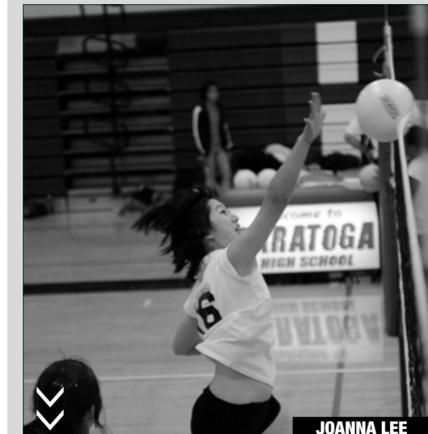
**Key additions:** Freshmen Smita Sabada and Arathi Sabada

**Keys to success:** The team's focus this year will be succeeding consistently at doubles. Because they lost important singles players last year, the players will need consistent doubles wins to make up for singles, particularly against tougher schools. With dedicated players on the team for both singles and doubles, expectations are high after an undefeated season from the previous year.

**On the team:** "We have great players that are united together. We had a strong team overall last year, so hopefully we can have those results again with a solid season this year," coach Tom Uyehara said.

**Magic number:** 18. Out of around 20 matches, the coach expects 18 wins.

—Karen Sung



JOANNA LEE  
TALISMAN // MARY EDMAN

### GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

**Coach:** Brad Frederickson, entering third season as head coach.

**2010 record:** 11-22, 2-10 in the league

**2010 recap:** Due to the loss of key seniors from the year before, the team's performance last year failed to obtain satisfactory results.

**Star player:** Outside hitter senior Talia Sisco, outside hitter junior Joanna Lee (pictured above)

**Key departures:** Libero/defense specialist Raven Sisco, setter/opposite hitter Hanna Nielson, middle hitter Megan Brading, outside hitter Sarah Blegan

**Key additions:** Juniors middle/back row Corinne Moran, opposite hitter/back row Sierra Smith and outside hitter/back row Adriana Ivanko; opposite hitter/back row sophomore Julia Lee

**Keys to victory:** "I would say the we have a very young team," Frederickson said. According to Frederickson, volleyball is an extremely technical sport, and mastering the technique takes time. The team is also on the shorter side in terms of height; in order to make up for this, they will need better skill than the other teams.

**Putting it all together:** "I think right now we need to focus on working together as a team. Everyone has different skills, and if we can put them together, I think we'll be set," junior Corinne Moran said.

**Magic number:** 10. With so many new additions, it's important for all 10 members to work as a team.

—Edward Dong and Matt Foley



LOUISE GUY  
TALISMAN // MARY EDMAN

### GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

**Coach:** Danny Moon, entering his fourth season as coach.

**2010 record:** Runners senior Emily Williams and junior Maya Nag (each qualified for the state race last year)

**2010 recap:** Although only Williams and Nag qualified for CCS last year, another key runner, junior Courtney Schlossarek, was injured. With this returning talent, the team hopes to reach state this year as team.

**Star player:** Schlossarek, Williams, Nag and seniors Kristine Johnson and Louise Guy (pictured to the left)

**Key departures:** Jennifer Varnier

**Key additions:** Schlossarek, who has fully recovered from the knee surgery that sidelined her for the end of last year's cross country season and the entire

track season  
**Keys to victory:** The girls' cross country team has had some discipline problems in previous years regarding runners shirking full workouts. While team management has invoked a more rigorous training schedule, cross country has not lost its fun in the midst of all this hard work.

**On state:** "We really have good chance of going to the state championships this year as a team. With the runners we have and the amount of training and dedication that we have been putting in to training, there is no reason why we shouldn't be able to make it," Schlossarek said.

**Magic number:** 2. The number of varsity spots still open to be filled.

—Aanchal Mohan



WILL GUY  
TALISMAN // MARY EDMAN

### BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY

**Coach:** Dan Ambrico, entering second season as head coach

**2010 record:** Placed 5th at CCS, captain Kyle Fukui qualified for state

**2010 recap:** "Last year we did not have many wins, to be honest, but we did send Kyle Fukui to state which was cool. Our varsity was weakened because Sam Guy broke his ankle and I strained my Achilles so we were kind of crippled last year," junior David Zarrin said.

**Star players:** Freshman Steven Sum, sophomores Sam and Will Guy (pictured to the left), juniors David Zarrin and Kabir Chandrasekher and seniors Eren Veziroglu and Peter An

**Key departures:** Kyle Fukui, Garrick Chan

**Key additions:** Freshman Steven Sum, who is the fastest member on the team

**Keys to success:** The key, junior David Zarrin said, is consistently training but avoiding injury, which would give everyone the best season possible. They also have a freshman superstar, Steven Sum, who may become the fastest freshman miler in the country this year, and is currently the fastest runner on the team.

**On cuts:** "We decided to transition to a cut sport to ensure the runners who are committed to cross country have quality practices and to keep the size of the team manageable," coach Dan Ambrico said.

**Magic number:** 60. The team went over the limit of 60 runners this year, and Ambrico was forced to make cuts to bring the number back down to 60. Last year, the final roster was 53 runners.

—Samuel Liu



polaroids

**Freshman Alana Hess tries to unravel a human knot with junior Link Leader Henry Shen during the Freshman Orientation on Friday, August 19.**

**Seniors Mishi Maniar and David Adler play the trumpet with intense concentration during sectionals at band camp over the summer.**

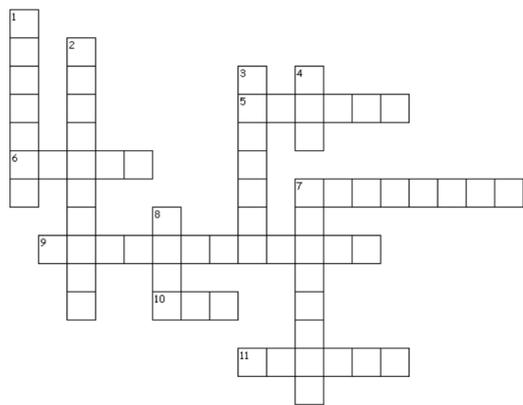
**Models from the Benefit Fashion Show Preview parade down the quad steps strutting their stuff during lunch on Friday, September 2.**

**Biology teacher Lisa Cochrum gives her freshmen instructions for her hands-on activity to make topography maps.**

>> crossword puzzle: search the newspaper for answers for prize!



Fill out this crossword and be the first to turn it in to editor-in-chief David Eng for a \$5 prize.



- Across
- Claire Couch's clothing line
  - An artist who also serves at the head photographer of Talisman (yearbook)
  - Who is the Little Theater named after?
  - Desmond Chan performed here as one of the 30 grand winners of the National Young Musicians Showcase Competition
  - The fastest cross-country runner
  - Recruited to Seattle University for Division I baseball
- Down
- New drama teacher
  - Brad Frederickson is the coach of what girl's sports team?
  - Recently became a teacher after being a maintenance worker for a decade
  - Designs her own jewelry
  - Art Fisher moved to here from
  - New English teacher that taught in Indonesia

Clearly seen but often unheard



>> Mac Hyde  
The Superior Macintosh

I am not used to going unheard. In fact, many people (my mother included) find it impossible to tune me out at times. I'll confess—I've probably been the loudest, most obnoxious person to ever inhabit this campus (save for James Knight, perhaps). However, for some strange reason, every Tuesday and Thursday, I feel completely silent.

You see, on these days, I'm slated to belt the morning announcements, supposedly bringing enlightenment and joy to all who hear me.

But instead, you "Hyde" in pure terror at the mere sound of my voice. I needn't have you barge into my peaceful second period, you surely feel. My one blissful moment where I am guaranteed, by the government no less, 95 minutes of Mac free, bona fide, purely educational time, you may contend.

While I am good for all the therapeutic bills sent my way, I have one

argument in my defense: No one listens to the announcements. Ever.

I hear your protests. ("My class is too loud! My teacher begins the lesson as soon as the bell rings! They aren't relevant enough to me!")

Let's face it: Your arguments are invalid, not only because this school is run like Soviet Russia, but also because my average volume is plenty loud to be heard over your teachers, fellow students and, possibly, even an invading army.

I really don't care, despite the hours that the ASB and countless others put into making the morning announcements as painless, entertaining and concise as possible. That's like saying that you drive an SUV powered by orphan tears and puppies ... it hurts deep.

Why do you insist on ignoring me when I show you nothing but love? This concept is completely foreign to me.

While I understand being ignored in person, perhaps even completely disregarded, to be ignored in an official capacity? That does not compute.

I can understand students who tune out to study for an upcoming test, to contemplate how to best Saran-wrap a friend's car or to strategize how to best ask that certain someone (nudge, nudge) out, but otherwise your attention should be completely devoted to the most informational and important

part of your school day: the announcements.

They not only deliver important news pertaining to the school, but they also provide something that is fast disappearing in modern life, the shared experience. Few are the instances one can share time with 1,400 other people.

Beyond that, the announcements bind the school together by providing individuals and organizations with recognition and giving the school a common agenda. Student leaders complain about their lackluster attendance at one event or another one. ASB invests countless hours into boosting publicity for school events, but the burden of responsibility ultimately rests with you, the listener.

In the end, the entire school loses out by ignoring the announcements. My plight with the announcements in many ways mirrors my plight with writing opinionated newspaper columns. While I might lift my spirits in the hopes that students will read my meaningful words with the utmost perspicacity, I feel somewhat hurt when I find otherwise. When you skip over my article or tune out of ASB announcements, I feel that my efforts have been effectively squandered.

So please, listen to the announcements every morning. They just might make your day. ♦

topten

THINGS TO LOOK FORWARD IN HOMECOMING

- An alcohol-free dance. Let's not get sadies taken away.
- The teachers' dance. Hopefully we won't get schooled.
- The homecoming game. We'll actually win this one!
- The homecoming rally. Oh wait... there isn't one.
- Freshmen girls' outfits. They're not scandalous at all.
- Rumpelstiltskin. Is that some type of skin disease?
- Junior class decorations. Third time's the charm.
- 2014 finally finding out who gave them that horrible theme last year...
- Sophomore class decorations... parents where you at?
- Senior quad day, we've been waiting four years for a good one.

>> Dylan Jew  
Brandon Judoprasetyo

>> THE specialty section

THE NEW SHS

THE SCHOOL TRANSFORMS ITSELF FOR THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR WITH NEW TEACHERS, NEW STUDENTS AND A NEW LOOK



Natural colors give school fresh look

BY Vivian LeTran

A new school year is always accompanied by a variety of changes. For senior Kellie Chiou, this year was no different. Yet, as Chiou rushed to her classes on the first day, there was something outside the usual change of classes and teachers that she couldn't put her finger on. It wasn't until later that she noticed that the campus had received a makeover.

As part of a beautification process, which started the day after graduation, the school was repainted a light brown and gray.

Potential color schemes were selected last June when the school painted the walls outside the 200 wing to test different combinations. These colors make the school warmer, softer and friendlier, according to art teacher Stephen McCue.

"It evens out the transition between

the bricks and the trees and the shrubbery," McCue said. "I think it would look even better to have some walls painted a darker version of the current brown to give more interest and dimension to the school, but it is probably too expensive."

The administration, along with several parent volunteers, decided on the earth color scheme to give the school a more natural complexion and a more modern look as compared to the previous scheme, which was based on school colors.

"The agreement among folks was that the old paint job was a bit tired and outdated," assistant principal Kevin Mount said. "[The school] needed painting and not many people were too

crazy about the old color scheme." However, many students have noticed that some of the hallways remained white and unpainted. Funds for this project came from the Saratoga Foundation, an organization that collects donations from parents, as well as the school's saved maintenance money, totaling about \$50,000. Unfortunately, this amount of money was only enough to repaint half of the school, Mount said.

"We were hoping that we could finish sometime this year, but we don't have any exact dates."

According to several students interviewed, the new paint job has been received relatively well. The neutral color scheme makes the school look more

earth friendly looking and easy on the eyes, said Chiou.

"I feel like the half-painted school is kind of weird, but the paint job is still a good idea. Before, the walls were white and covered with dirt and dust," Chiou said. "These colors make [the school] look more natural, and it complements the green trees. Unlike the white and blue, which made our school look like a prison."

The cursive word "Falcons" is also missing from the front of the school near the gym. The words were erased because the school ordered new lettering, which was originally scheduled to be installed before the start of the school year. The 24 inch, black, aluminum "Saratoga High School" sign should arrive by the end of September to finish this year's makeover.

"I'm excited to see the school when it's completely finished," Chiou said. "I'm sure it'll look amazing." ♦

These colors make [the school] look more natural. It's more earth friendly looking and easy on the eyes.

>> Senior Kellie Chiou

Traveled teachers descend upon SHS

BY Edward Dong & Grace Ma

Amy Keys stands enveloped by the humid heat of Indonesia, where street markets line the roads and common folk wash their clothes in rivers. It is 1990, and when classes resume later in the afternoon, she will teach English to Javanese students intent on learning the language in order to qualify for higher-level education.

Ten years later, on the Asian mainland, Sariah Tolley gazes over a farming village. A woman carrying her child on her back plows a field in a rural landscape dotted with clay huts. Tolley, a college student teaching English in Kunming, capital of China's Yunnan province, has just finished a long day at work.

Time and chance would bring these two traveled teachers together on Aug. 22, their first day of teaching at Saratoga High. After years spent teaching students from across the globe, Keys and Tolley both felt eager to apply the knowledge gained from their experiences to the challenges that lay ahead.

"I'm struck by how friendly and welcoming both students and staff are, how cooperative and helpful to each other and to new teachers!" Keys said. "The students are thoughtful and creative and mature."

Tolley agrees that the nurturing envi-



Keys



Tolley

ronment at the school helps foster student learning.

"This is a school that truly invests in and shows great concern for its students. I am here because I want to continue the tradition of excellence that embodies the school," Tolley said.

In 2000, Tolley journeyed to China where she taught English at a boarding school for six months. Some of her students were already in their senior year; others were in kindergarten.

"One of my big objectives while I was there was to involve the kids in activities and games," Tolley said. "I remember one of their favorite ones was to dart up to the board, and they would have to write or identify a word. They loved it."

Starting in 2008, Tolley also taught for three years at the Downtown College Prep, a high school for impoverished, mostly Latino students trying to get into college. There, she learned about dealing with students who struggled "emotionally, academically or socially," she said.

Like Tolley, Keys began her career as a teacher outside of the United States. She first picked up teaching in Indonesia in 1990, where she stayed for two years. At the time, she did not suspect how much she would

New finals schedule creates mixed feelings

BY Anushree Dugar & Derek Sun

The administration has implemented a new finals schedule this year in which finals week will start on Dec. 19, before winter break, instead of in January. Winter break will now start on Dec. 23, so students will not be burdened by having to study for finals over the holidays.

This shift in the schedule resulted in a shorter summer because school started eight days earlier this year. To compensate, however, school will end on June 7, nine days earlier than last year.

The administration's reasoning, the same for many other schools, was that it reduces the stress of studying for finals over break.

"It would be really nice for students and teachers to be done in December with a real break," principal Jeff Anderson said. "Both students and teachers could start fresh after the December break. This is something we can control that can help with students' stress."

Assistant principal Brian Safine agrees with Anderson. He believes that students should not have to work over break. "Personally, [I think] students could decompress and re-energize over the break," Safine said.

Many teachers do not yet have an opinion regarding this shift in schedule, but they are pleased to know that students will not have any concerns over winter break.

Other teachers are dissatisfied about having grades due soon after winter

December 2011						
SUN	M	T	W	TH	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
		Finals Week		Semester Ends	Start of Holiday	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
		Holiday Break Until Jan. 8				

break. Although the deadline for turning in grades has been extended, teachers who like to finish them as soon as possible will have to work harder during the holiday.

Semester classes are also troublesome for teachers since first semester is shorter than second semester and they have to teach the same material.

This shift in schedule was not made in isolation, however. Many schools have made this switch in part because teachers find it more useful to have an extra week of instruction before STAR and AP testing.

Despite the reasons for having finals before winter break, many students are still not persuaded. Some still anticipate a more stressful and difficult end of first semester this year.

"[Having finals before break] simply increases the stress during the period prior to finals because of the [lack] of time to study," junior Johnny Chang said.

Senior Hansen Qian concurs with Chang's concern over added stress

>> SCHEDULE on pg. S3

>> ENGLISH on pg. S4

September 16, 2011

# FROSH MOSH

THE FALCON INTERVIEWS THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF THE STUDENT BODY AND INVESTIGATES WHAT MAKES THIS FRESHMAN CLASS UNIQUE

## New students arrive from around the world

by IngridHong

Senior Melodie Zhang is accustomed to the crowded, busy city life of her hometown of Hong Kong, a far cry from her new home in quaint, cozy Saratoga.

"At first, moving from Hong Kong to the U.S. was scary because I didn't know what to expect," Zhang said. "It's a different culture altogether and I was nervous [about coming to the U.S.]."

Zhang is one of many international transfer students who now face the challenge of adjusting to life in a new country as well as acclimating to a new school. This year, the school has added students from Peru, Mexico, Japan, China, South Korea, New Zealand and several other nations.

While stepping onto a new campus is always daunting, common hardships such as navigating the flow of traffic in the hallways and finding an unoccupied place to sit at lunch are made even more difficult for foreign students, whose first language is often not English.

"I didn't know how to dress for the weather and making friends was difficult at first. The curriculum was also different; it's a lot easier than in Finland," freshman Olli Lilja said.

Freshman Boyu Pang, who moved to Saratoga from Canada about a month ago, was also anxious about attending school in the U.S.

"The transition was a major one," Pang said. "I didn't know anything about the [U.S.] education system, or any of the schools really, but I also had to deal with finding new friends."

The school has attempted to ease the transition for new students by hosting the annual new student barbecue, held on Aug. 19, which gave students new to the district an opportunity to interact with both old and new students.

"I also found the new student barbecue and the orientation day very helpful, as I met new people and had many of my questions answered," Pang said.

Pang also added that being a member of the marching band helped him adjust because he got to know some of the staff and students before school even began.

>> Foreign Students

Q: How is living in the U.S. different from Mexico?

Castillo: It is very comfortable and calm here. Back in Mexico my classroom had 30 people and I knew them all. Also we had uniforms in Mexico and many rules that you don't have here.

CarlosdelCastillo >>



Q: How is living in the U.S. different from Thailand?

Fisher: I used to live in California before I moved to Thailand, but I do not see much difference between California and Thailand. It was a pretty easy adjustment. The only major difference between the two countries is the weather.

<< ArtFisher

Since then, he said he has easily settled into the rhythm of high school life.

"I think that the transition went very smoothly, especially considering the added details of moving and adjusting to a new environment," Pang said.

Despite being unsure at first, Zhang has also managed to become accustomed to the lifestyle in the U.S. and is excited to experience all that California

has to offer.

"I saw a lot of forests and little shops downtown," Zhang said. "It was great, because you can't see that in the city."

But the thing she's looking forward to the most is the different environment.

"I love how the sky is so blue and that it's not noisy or polluted," Zhang said. "I'm really looking forward to living and going to school here." ◆

## Runner meets high school pace

by EdwardDong

Like many other incoming students, freshman Yvonne Ye hit the ground running.

"Cross country is fun in a kind of unexpected way," Ye said. "Long runs don't actually drive you over the edge into exhaustion. The trick is to find that good spot on your speedometer, where you feel like you can run like

Forrest Gump." Ye admits that cross country can sometimes be long and grueling, but she also believes that running is invigorating.

"While running, your feet hurt and you can't breathe nearly as much as you would like to. But afterwards, you get that wonderful feeling of satisfaction that makes you want to do it again." ◆

## >> freshmanfocus

Q: What are your impressions of high school so far?

A: It's big, fun and all around a million times better than middle school.

>> NatalieMiller

A: It is a really big school, yet it has a very nice community feeling. I didn't expect so many students to be so welcoming and I didn't expect there to be so many clubs and activities to be able to participate in.

>> SupriyaKhandekar

A: I thought there would be more class-segregation—the stereotypical seniors picking on freshmen and the like. But that doesn't really happen here; Saratoga tends to throw stereotypes out the window.

>> YvonneYe

## Soccer star shoots for national team

by JayMulye

Freshman Samuel Junqua has been playing competitive soccer since he was 10. His outstanding talent led him directly onto the U-14 San Jose Earthquakes Pre-Academy team last spring. Junqua attends three vigorous two-hour training sessions per week to

improve his technique and fitness. He hopes to be on the U.S. national team one day.

"For now I want to concentrate on the Earthquakes and improve with the U-16 academy," Junqua said. "In order to make it to the national team, I will need to work to my full potential for every training." ◆

## Malik seeks success in drama

by AasimNaqvi

Freshman Neesha Malik hopes to attain a reputation similar to that of 2011 Saratoga High graduate Jay Lee, who was renowned for his unforgettable performances.

"I like drama because I can do

something stupid or dumb, but it won't matter because it can be molded into something that other people will appreciate," Malik said.

Despite not having much experience, Malik added that she loves drama because she feels that her peers are always there for her. ◆

## Swimmer dives right into school

by MichaelLee

Monday through Friday, freshman Nikhil Chakravarthy gets up, goes to his classes and then heads over to the school's pool at 4:30 p.m. Two hours and 6,000 yards later, he gets out of the water and goes home, ready to do it all again the next day.

Chakravarthy learned to swim when he was two. He joined a club

when he was seven, and has swam competitively ever since. He dreams of trying out for the Junior Olympic National team.

He appreciates Saratoga High for the wide selection of activities and increased freedom compared to middle school. In addition to joining the school's swim team, he will consider doing speech and debate and water polo. ◆

## >> freshmanfunfacts

Q: Do you have any unique hobbies?

A: I have so much music that I ran out of space to put it on my iPod, so I started burning cassette tapes. I like listening to almost every type of music besides mainstream.

>> RachelMenard

Q: If you had a million dollars, what would you do with it?

A: I would travel all over the world. When I was little, my mom brought me to all these places, but now I can't remember any of it, so I want to revisit them.

>> AudriePott

Q: If you could travel anywhere, where would you go?

A: I would go to Neverland because I could stay young forever there.

>> NatalieMiller

## Indian culture inspires art

by AnushreeDugar

There are some things in life that are easy to learn in a day and remember for life. Drawing is not one of these things. Freshman Preethi Ravi has been taking sketching classes over the summer in India since she was 5, and has slowly been able to perfect the art.

Ravi's drawings were voted to be displayed on the "wall of fame" in her Indian art class, and she has won many awards from the Reflections program.

To Ravi, art is more than a fun pastime. "I really became interested in art because it was a way I could express myself without being graded," Ravi said. ◆

## Menard twirls into high school

by VivianLeTran

A couple of weeks before most freshmen even set foot on campus, freshman Rachel Menard was twirling, tossing and meticulously learning drills during band camp for Saratoga High's Color Guard.

"I joined guard at Saratoga since I did it for three years at Redwood," Menard said, reflecting on her experience in Color Guard at Redwood. "My older

sister, [Sarah], is in guard and it seems like she always has a great time. Also, I thought it would be a better way to get P.E. credit, since I didn't want to run miles."

Although the taller flags, rifles tossing and drill exercises are all new to her, Menard is relieved that Color Guard is not as intense as band camp during the actual school year. She hopes to continue Color Guard all four years of high school. ◆

## Khandekar finds passion in singing

by AnushreeDugar

Freshman Supriya Khandekar has found her passion: singing. While she attended middle school in Europe for two years, Khandekar participated in the AMIS International Honor Chorus.

"It was an amazing experience since I was singing with people from all over the world," she said. "It was

great to see how our unique voices could be made into a soulful choir."

At Redwood Middle School, she was involved with the Honor Chorus, and she continues to take choir here at Saratoga High.

Khandekar is also interested in singing in school musicals and plans to participate in the drama productions throughout her high school years. ◆

## Dedicated maintenance worker starts teaching job

by JayMulye & ParulSingh

From a bar tender in high volume rock n' roll club to a maintenance worker, new teacher Mike McQuade has worked in many different professions in many different places but now he has finally settled as a teacher at Saratoga High School.

During more than a decade as an employee of the Los Gatos Saratoga Union High School district, McQuade has worked in the maintenance department, been a student teacher with Kelly Nicholson and has now finally become a biology as well as an anatomy and physiology teacher.

"When I decided to become a teacher, I was hoping to get a job in a good school district, and now I've found the greatest school," McQuade said.

He envisioned himself as a biology teacher and, with determination, he made that dream a reality.

"I love biology, anatomy and physiology although biology was my major in college," McQuade said. "My goal for now is to have a 10- to 15-year career as a teacher."

McQuade has no shortage of quali-

cations. Prior to receiving his credential from National University in February of 2009, he had held an array of substitute teaching positions. However, due to the current fiscal crisis he was unable to find a permanent teaching job anywhere. But when former physics teacher Bill Drennan retired, a position opened up and McQuade jumped at the opportunity.

"[McQuade] applied and did a great job, he was clearly the best out of the applicants," Nicholson said.

Nicholson mentored McQuade and encouraged him to pursue his teaching credential back in 2008.

"[McQuade] had graduated with his degree, but he never pursued his teaching credential.

He reached a point in his life where he decided he wanted to teach so I offered to be his master teacher," Nicholson said.

Nicholson speaks glowingly of McQuade's drive and passion for teaching. She fondly remembers her days mentoring McQuade.

"He is really great to work with and he really absorbs information, he is also really open to learning from both the students and other teachers," said Nicholson. ◆

## Spanish teacher transitions from middle to high school

by NikilRamanathan

The transition from middle school to high school is regularly made by incoming freshmen, but this year, Spanish teacher Andrew Narva has made the switch as well.

Narva taught at Redwood last year and the year before that he taught at South Valley Middle School. This is Narva's third year of full-time teaching.

Through just his first week of teaching at the high school level this year, Narva had already noticed some differences between the high school and middle school students.

"So far [the high school kids] are much bigger, and they're mature in the sense that I don't have to explain what I expect," Narva said.

Narva started his career as an English as a second language teacher, but when he was offered the opportunity to instruct Spanish elective classes he "jumped at the offer."

According to language department head Amaldo Rodriguex, the school needed another Spanish teacher because the Spanish program was expected to grow by about 50 students this year. Of the five applicants, Narva was chosen in part because he taught a Spanish class at Redwood last year and therefore has

a connection with some of the students here, said Rodriguex.

Narva will be teaching two Spanish 2 classes and two Spanish 1 classes this year. He hopes to emphasize culture and loves to teach students about holidays. Narva also said that the activities he does in the class may seem somewhat elementary but are necessary to help students learn first and second level high school Spanish.

Narva believes that confidence and motivation are essential to the students' learning.

"Many people are intimidated by learning a new language," Narva said. "If a student is motivated to learn a new language, they will. If a student feels confident enough to practice speak-

ing this new language in class, they will quickly feel confident speaking this language out of class."

Narva says that it has been nice seeing familiar faces from Redwood and that he feels excited to be a part of the language department.

Narva attended Archbishop Mitty High School and received his teaching credential from UC Santa Cruz.

For hobbies Narva said that he really likes to do outdoor activities like skateboarding and surfing. However, he joked that he's "grown too old" for the both of them. ◆



Narva

## SCHEDULE >> Finals moved to maximize stress-free break

Continued from pg. S1

because college applications are due at around the same time as finals, which could negatively impact the quality of the seniors' applications. For this reason, the Palo Alto Unified School District decided to keep finals after winter break.

Other students, however, are now comparing first semester finals to those

taken in the spring.

"It won't be hard to get used to the new schedule because we have to cram for spring finals as well," said sophomore Usha Raman.

Both students and parents admit, however, that winter break should not be consumed by studying for finals, but instead be treated as a holiday.

"Having finals before break really

makes December break fun because there is no stress," sophomore Adrian Fong said.

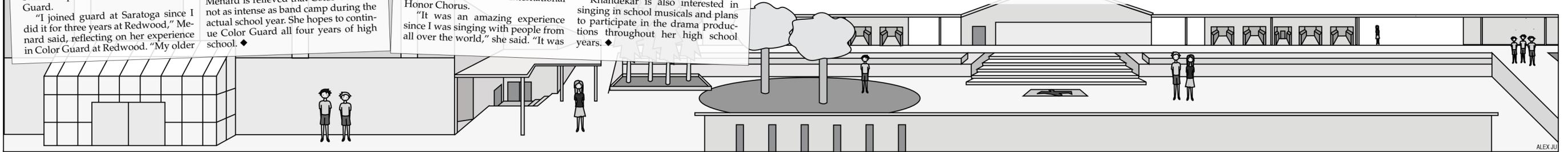
Junior Shayda Roohparvar also appreciates the change because she is not worried about forgetting any material over break.

The abrupt start of second semester after a long sedentary set of two weeks is also unappealing to some students as

Chang pointed out. Chang was fond of starting second semester a few weeks after the end of winter break.

Although currently there are mixed opinions about the new finals schedule, students said they will eventually become accustomed to it.

"If you're not there when the change occurs, you don't have any incentive to protest," Qian said. ◆



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Drama and English teacher Karin Babbitt talks to students in the Little Theater on Sept. 8.

## Babbitt brightens up drama department

BY Michael Lee

She has performed on VH-1, MTV and Comedy Central. She worked as a stand-up comedian for 15 years and continues to entertain at fundraisers and to fight substance abuse. She has taught drama since the 1980s. She has held her English credential for years and used to write for a living. To cap it off, she produced and performed in a documentary entitled "The Last Laugh" to bring awareness to AIDS in 1991.

Needless to say, new drama and English teacher Karin Babbitt has quite a resume.

Throughout her childhood, Babbitt dreamed of doing stand-up comedy and eventually made that dream a reality.

"People always say, 'Isn't [comedy] the hardest thing in the world?' Well, I think it is ridiculously easy," Babbitt said. "You get up and act silly for 45 minutes and they pay you, and you don't have to go to a real job for eight hours."

Babbitt later found work as a comic in her hometown of Los Angeles. In 1988, she moved to the Santa Cruz area, where she started acting locally, teaching and performing in drug recovery venues. In California, she taught at San Lorenzo Valley High and San Jose State before she taught drama at Scotts Valley High for 10 years.

Starting this year, Babbitt will lead the drama department in addition to teaching one English 9 class. She expects her first year to be a good one.

"My first impression [of the school] was that I had landed in paradise," Babbitt said. "[The staff] continually prove to be brilliant and generous, and the community support is exemplary."

Babbitt said she was inspired to teach because of her desire to help kids through high school—often a rocky time

in their lives. She will use her extensive experience in comedy to complement her teaching.

"I wanted to be that person to teenagers who didn't discourage them," Babbitt said. "From the time I was a little kid I dreamed of having a drama class where kids—no matter who they are and whatever people felt about them—could get up and try on all these different roles and blow people's minds."

Babbitt has high aspirations for the drama program. She plans to give the Drama 1 students "a little taste of everything," including pantomime, storytelling, play writing, theater tech and costume design. In the higher levels of the course, however, Babbitt aims to focus on more advanced topics such as drama theory. In addition, she will give Drama 4 Honors students the opportunity to study various production jobs, such as direction and design.

English teacher Kerry Mohnike, who taught the drama classes last year, recognized the need for a teacher with formal training in drama. Additionally, Mohnike noted that she did not have the time to direct the school productions due to teaching and family commitments. Last year, the school had to hire outside directors for "Our Town" and "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." Babbitt, on the other hand, will direct this year's productions.

"We liked the experience that she had. She [also] had really good references," Mohnike said. "The students that she worked with at her former school praised her highly."

After more than 30 years of working at various schools and organizations, Babbitt feels excited to start anew at Saratoga High.

"I feel privileged to be working here," she said. "I am very, very grateful and I hope I please [everyone]." ♦

## Slone psyched for SHS

BY Vivien Lu

New school psychologist Michael Slone joined the SHS team at the start of this school year after former school psychologist Mark Atkinson accepted a position as the director of special education at the district office.

Slone was encouraged by Atkinson to apply for the position and is excited to come to Saratoga High.

"All of the positive information he gave me about the students, the staff and the administration was one of the reasons that convinced me to come here."

So far, Atkinson's statements have held true, and Slone has been greatly impressed by the student body. He also admires how much students at Saratoga value their education compared to those he has worked with in other school districts, he said.

"Saratoga students are really lucky to have all these facilities," Slone said. "The best part is that they seem to appreciate everything offered."

Previously, he worked as a school psychologist at both the Irvine Unified School District and Lodi Unified

School District. He then transferred to the Cambrian School District where he held administrative jobs and duties, including the director of student services and special education, before becoming the principal of Cambrian Community School.

Slone first became interested in psychology during his time at Lewis and Clark College in Portland.

"I can think back to students with special needs, friends and classmates who didn't get the help they needed," Slone said. "Remembering these experiences has helped shape and influence what I wanted to do."

Slone enjoys working in a school environment because of the emphasis on teamwork.

"I didn't like the idea of working by myself in an office or private clinic," he said. "The best part about being a school psychologist is the great team atmosphere."

Slone is looking forward to being able to work with the special education students as well as the rest of the staff.

"It's an amazing student body and a wonderful staff," Slone said. "I couldn't be happier to be here." ♦



>> psychologist  
Michael Slone

Replaced Mark Atkinson; studied at Lewis and Clark College in Portland.

## New counselor fitting in

BY Jay Mulye

"I felt as if I had died and gone to heaven," guidance counselor Lisa Kellert said of her first day at Saratoga High.

Kellert replaced previous guidance counselor Christy Cali, who retired last year. She is excited about joining the guidance department and looks forward to creating lasting relationships with all of her students.

"It is a privilege to work with teenagers, especially the unique and amazing individuals on this campus," Kellert said.

Kellert is already familiar with the South Bay community, which eases her transition to Saratoga High. She served as a counselor at Wilcox High School last year and was an English teacher at Prospect High School for four years prior to that.

"It is a community here and you can really feel it," she said. "That's what

makes me excited to come to work every day and meet the students."

As the Link Crew co-director, Kellert has already started contributing to the school, demonstrating her versatility.

"It was great getting to know some students before school started," Kellert said.

According to assistant principal Brian Safine, Kellert was an ideal candidate to fill Cali's shoes.

"She has experience working with the high achieving students as well as struggling students," Safine said.

Kellert welcomes anybody to her office and hopes that students will approach her if they ever have any problems.

"It is fascinating to make a connection and a difference in the life of a student, even if it is only one," Kellert said. "It is rewarding and fulfilling to know I have helped a student during his or her high school experience, whether it be academic or personal." ♦



Kellert

## ENGLISH >> Teachers take advantage of diverse experiences

Continued from pg. S1

love the experience nor the impact it would have on the rest of her career.

"The first class I ever taught, I walked in and I had no idea what I was supposed to do. I really underestimated how much it takes [to teach a class]," she said.

She taught English to children and

adults from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., with a midday break that spanned the day's warmest hours.

After moving back to Wisconsin, where she came from, Keys continued to teach from 1995 to 2007, this time at a diverse high school with students from countries such as Laos, Ethiopia, Vietnam and Mexico.

These experiences contrasted with her recent involvement as a mentor with the Santa Cruz New Teacher Project.

"I got to have more sense of what school is like for students, since instead of being up in front of the class, I was sitting at the back," Keys said. She gained a sense of how students respond "when the teacher is disorganized, or stressed,

or doesn't use any visuals, or uses the same teaching method all the time."

Like Keys, Tolley feels like she has benefited from her adventurous past.

"I feel like it's unique in that I've taught students from so many different backgrounds," Tolley said. "Something I really try to do is meet the needs of my students where they're at right now." ♦

