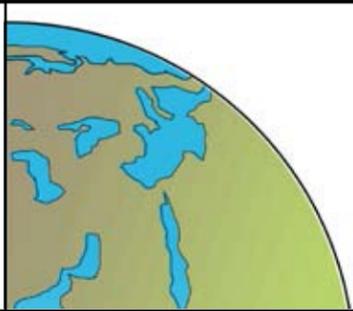




ONLINE:

Students volunteer at the Olympics
Seniors work on Eagle Scout projects



OPINION: Sarah Palin
IN-DEPTH: Divorce
ENTERTAINMENT: Underground vs mainstream
LIFE: Saratoga splurges
SPORTS: Boys' lacrosse
BACKPAGE: Photo essay

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CAUGHT ON TAPE



Cameras installed to prevent vandalism

by Vijay Menon and Saniha Shankar

When students walk into the school's parking lot, they see a familiar scene of cars and students with backpacks. What they may not realize is that they are being watched over by something unprecedented—video cameras.

For the first time at Saratoga High, video cameras are recording what goes on in the front and back parking lot, football field and swimming pool. Administrators said they took this step

based on recommendations from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation last year.

"One of the WASC outcomes was that the campus did have a lot of ins and outs and that felt a little unsafe to the reviewing committee," said assistant principal Joe Bosco.

According to Bosco, the administration is trying to further improve the security on campus, which he called the school's top priority. A sign has already gone up in the front parking lot notifying students that they are under surveillance. The cameras will assist

by "curtailing any activities that could be deemed unsafe, whether it's on the weekend or during the school day."

"This provides a lens by which we can make sure that if there is an incident we can go back and look and see what occurred," said Bosco. "That was the reason behind that and there was funding available and we had an anonymous donor who helped also."

The cameras record straight to DVD, allowing administrators to go back and review the tape if there is an incident. In

see WASC, p. 5

photos by Amanda Yi

Poets' works published

by Lauren Kuan and Pia Mishra

Last spring, students from Judith Sutton's Creative Writing: Poetry classes put on a presentation at the Saratoga Library portraying the Mutanabbi Street bombing in Iraq. The bombing took place in March 2007 and devastated the entire street, which had served for hundreds of years as a lively market where ideas, books and thoughts were exchanged freely. Not only were all books destroyed, but some 75 people were seriously injured and 30 people died.

The poetry students wanted to spread knowledge of the attack's impact. The reading left the audience with a call to action: How could they help? Their answer was a press publisher by the name

see POETRY, p. 5

32 earn National Merit honor

by Synthia Ling

This year, 32 seniors qualified as semifinalists for the National Merit Scholarship Program, an academic competition that recognizes students who scored among the top 1% statewide on the PSAT taken during their junior year.

This is one of the most semifinalists the school has had. Last year, 28 qualified.

"If you look at the fact that Saratoga High has 32 semifinalists, it's close to 10 percent of the graduating class," said assistant principal Brian Safine.

Out of the 1.5 million students who entered in the nation, 50,000 qualified for recommendation. Two-thirds got Letters of Commendation and the remaining third were named semifinalists. Forty-three seniors were commended by scoring in the top 5 percent in the nation.

Semifinalists must submit their SAT scores, be recommended by the principal and have an outstanding academic record. They are also required to submit an application and an essay.

Approximately 94 percent of the semifinalists will move on to become finalists. The students who will receive scholarships are then chosen out of the finalists. The National Merit Semifinalists were: Adela Chang, Lisa Chang, Emily Chen, Michael Chen, Elizabeth Cheng, Andrew Francis, Aaron Garg, Jessica Gipe, Jason Huang, Kimberly Hui, Candace Kao, Stacy Ku, Devan Lai, Deborah Lin, Alan Menezes, Aadrita Mukerji, Mridula Nadamuni, Megha Raghavan, Dorey Schranz, Connie Shang, Joseph Smead, Felicia Tang, Rahul Thakker, Timothy Tsai, Andrew Tsao, Tifany Tseng, Thomas Wang, Joyce Wu, Alina Yang, Jocelyn Ye, Jeffrey Young and Yvette Young. ♦

API score up 25 points from last year

by Saniha Shankar and Andy Tsao

Saratoga High has historically been one of the highest ranked public high schools in California in terms of Academic Performance Index or API scores. This year, the school had a record 25-point increase in its API score, going from 903 in 2007 to 928 in 2008, outperforming rival schools like Lynbrook and Monta Vista to become one of the top three schools in the Bay Area and the top performer in the Santa Clara County.

The school's API scores have been dropping in the past couple of years, which makes this increase much more remarkable.

"I think that a 25-point increase is pretty astonishing," said principal Jeff Anderson. "I don't think there were any

schools above 900 that went up 25 points. To increase that score once it's over 900 is really hard."

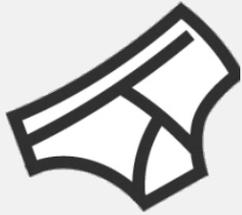
Anderson thinks the primary cause of the big increase is that students began to try harder this year. In the years before, some students didn't take the test seriously, and some would either try to get excused from taking the test or mark random answers. Anderson also gave credit to the English Department's writing assessment, which he said has greatly improved students' writing abilities. The writing assessment measures students' writing level at the beginning and end of the school year.

"[The writing assessment] has really improved the quality of writing in our campus," said Anderson. "Ninety

see API, p. 6

API Score Growth at SHS from years 2000-2008

Year	API Score
2001	875
2002	889
2003	911
2004	909
2005	914
2006	906
2007	903
2008	928

NEWS
BRIEFS

Program on Media Arts building moves forward

Although talk about building a Media Arts center began nearly a year ago, the blueprints have now been completed, and the school will soon be moving to the next step of the approval process.

The Media Arts Program (MAP), as well as other media arts classes at the school, will take place in this center.

The architectural plans have been completely revised, going from a more preliminary design to a complete blueprint. Last year, the building was estimated to cost \$1.5 million.

These plans are to be sent to the Division State Architect (DSA) in October for approval. Construction should start by late February.

Although the changes to the design took up a lot of time, media arts teacher Tony Palma said he was pleased with the revisions.

"We want to make sure that we're teaching students what it's like to work in these collaborative environments and the right way to do it," said Palma. "If all of our students can leave here and be team leaders, then we will have succeeded."

In the Media Arts 1 class, students sample different types of media arts professions such as digital photography, web design and video production while also applying the different skills they have learned in English and history to their projects.

New elections method runs smoothly for freshmen

By now, most upperclassmen are used to having class interrupted once or twice a year to vote for elections. However, this system may change soon if the election commission's new idea works.

In the past, the commission would hand out slips of paper in manila envelopes, distribute them to every teacher and collect them all 10 minutes later, a process that was time-consuming and disrupted the classroom environment.

Because of the complaints, the elections commission came up with a new system. They began to plan over the summer, and by August were ready to attempt a new method.

For the freshman class elections in early September, the commission set up a table in the quad during lunch, open to any freshmen who wanted to vote.

The freshmen elections took place on Sept. 4 and 5. Out of a freshman class of about 300, 70 voted in the preliminaries and over 150 participated in the final election.

Although fewer people voted using the new system, the results were more accurate because only people who actually wanted a say played a part, commissioners said.

"Before, people would just vote randomly, like, 'I've heard of this guy, I'll vote for him' or 'this guy has a cool name, why don't I vote for him'," said senior Heraa Hyder. "Now the elections have become more personal."

School finishes facelift to facilities

Along with welcoming new students this year, students can also welcome many new changes made to the campus.

One change is the gym lobby that was completed around the end of the school year. Besides the new, bigger glass front, the administration has added a trophy cabinet, improved the concession stand and redone all the bathrooms inside.

According to assistant principal Joe Bosco, the administration also plans on putting tables in the lobby so that people can enjoy their food there since they are not allowed to eat in inside the gym.

Inside the gym, new pads have been placed on the walls. On the outside, Bosco said there are plans to plant trees in planter boxes going out towards the parking lots to make the front of the school look less bare.

Along with these changes to the gym, the administration has changed the turf on the football field.

The new falcon logo has been painted over the old one and the workers have painted in field hockey lines so the girls can play on the turf.

"There was a CCS requirement to put a dotted white line all the way around the field to keep people off the field during the games," said Bosco.

The bathroom near the track has also finally been cleaned up and redone with newly installed fixtures because it was previously in an unusable condition.

According to Bosco, there are plans to put a sport court in the dirt area near the track behind the scoreboard for students to play basketball. However, the administration is still looking to receive donations to fund that project.

They are also looking to make a full snack shack area near the field but are not expecting to do so for another few years for the lack of funding reasons.

"We are living here right now," said Bosco. "We need to do what we can to make the campus look nice for us and for the future." ♦

-by Ben Clement, Albert Gu, Kavya Nagarajan, Mika Padmanabhan



Melody Zhang

Seniors Sandra Sotiriadis, Kaylee Pettengill and Matt Brading listen as speaker Brad Baertsch from Arizona State University (second from left) answers questions about the school. College visits will continue until Nov. 7.

College and Career Center hopes to raise attendance

by Jenny Zhang

The College and Career Center opened on Sept. 2 with a goal of getting more students to come. New staff member Bonnie Sheikh and numerous parent volunteers are helping to raise awareness and get more students to attend the college speaker sessions.

"We redecorated the College and Career Center and put some more IKEA furniture to make it more kid-friendly," said Sheikh.

Besides giving the center a more inviting environment, Sheikh is doing much more to encourage students to use this valuable resource. In order to

raise awareness for the college speakers, students are being notified over the daily announcements; Falcon Futures, the center's newsletter, is being sent out with the Principal's Newsletter every other month; and e-mails are being sent out through the PTO so parents can get involved as well.

Students can access information about college speakers and the center through Naviance, a web-based tool designed to help students get organized with their list of colleges, or under the "Academics" section on the school website.

Students can sign up for a 30-40 minute session at the center or

through Naviance.

"What's great is that the college speaker is usually the admissions officer for the school," said parent volunteer Shaila Iyer, who signs students up for sessions. "You can meet the person who will most likely be looking at your application."

Students of all grades can attend the speaker sessions, and parents are welcome as well. However, because of varying interest levels, only a handful of students attend many of the sessions. The most popular ones, including UC schools and well-known universities such as Princeton, usually have an audience of 60 to 80 students. ♦

COLLEGESPEAKERS

College speakers visiting the College and Career Center from Sept. 30 to Oct. 29

9/30 Lafayette College
10/1 Carnegie Mellon
10/2 Harvey Mudd
10/7 Vanderbilt University
10/8 R.I. School of Design
10/9 Hofstra University
10/10 Yale University

10/14 George Washington Univ.
10/14 University of Oregon
10/14 University of the Pacific
10/15 Rensselaer PolyTechnic Inst.
10/16 St. Mary's College of CA
10/22 Univ. of Southern CA
10/23 Whittier College

10/23 Mount Holyoke College
10/23 New York University
10/24 Washington Univ. in St. Louis
10/27 Univ. of CA-Santa Barbara
10/27 Swarthmore University
10/28 Drew University
10/29 Chapman University

PTSA changes name to PTSO

by Karthik Annaamalai
and Emily Chen

What's in a name? The leaders of the formerly named PTSA have changed their title to the PTSO (Parent Teacher Student Organization) in order to get more control on where they spend the funds and generate more money for the school. It is an organization that links together parents, teachers and students. The SHS PTSA recently modified its name to Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO), making it independent from the national PTA (Parent Teacher Association).

"PTSA membership meant taking a portion of our membership dues and sending them to National PTSA. National PTA has some great programs, but few

were directly applicable to Saratoga High," said Carolyn Doles, co-president of the PTSO.

Although more money will be kept for the school, the PTSO still needs more funds due to rising program costs.

In light of this, the PTSO has

"With the tight budgets we were working with, those membership fees, we felt, could be used better on campus."

—PTSO co-president Carolyn Doles

introduced a program called *Just Do It!* This initiative helps the entire SHS community by ensuring that all parents pay their fair share to help support the school programs.

"*Just Do It!* is imperative, as costs for all programs have increased and we simply cannot

cover the costs with membership alone," said Doles. "At \$150 per family (\$50 for PTSO membership and \$100 for *Just Do It!*), we can help all our students in all the many areas our high school requires."

The PTSO funds cover a wide array of student activities, as well as giving teacher grants when teachers request equipment and more supplies for their classroom.

"A large portion of our funds cover the publication of *The Falcon*, Link Crew and the Tutorial Center," said Doles. "Then there are special programs like 'Every 15 Minutes' and Career Day."

"PTSO Membership and *Just Do It!* are everyone's responsibility at our school," said Doles. "We hope all our families pitch in by doing their fair share to support our students." ♦

New Spirit Squad works on building teamwork

by Mira Chaykin

For years, Cheer and Song operated as two separate units, sometimes leading to a lack of teamwork and a consequential lack of spirit.

Now that the squads have recently been combined as the Spirit Squad, the girls and their coaches rave about the immediate increase in unity, and their hopes for the future.

According to team adviser Laressa Ridge, a main reason the teams were merged is that as they practiced separately, they developed different ideas of what they should be doing on the sidelines.

Both team captains senior Harriet Russell and junior Ally Doles echoed this sentiment, although they focused more on the emotional separation of the team rather than aesthetic disunity.

"The only time [the cheerleaders] actually really saw the Song team was at the football games when we would cheer together, but even then we didn't communicate very much," said Doles. "We never practiced together, and we never did any team bonding together. We barely ever even saw them."

Russell said "the squad was cliquey." She said that people separated into groups and would not talk to one another.

"My ultimate goal as a captain is to get everyone to work together and be united," said Russell.

A second reason for the merging the squads, said Ridge, was that "girls were interested in both cheer and dance and had to decide which team they wanted to join. Instead of making them choose, we're now giving them the opportunity to enjoy both activities in one."

The merge is currently drawing a mostly positive reaction from the captains and the coaches, as well as from the new members of the team.

"The benefits of this new union are a stronger, more unified team as well as a chance for the girls to learn new skills and showcase their unique talents together as one exciting squad," said coach Tiffany Borgia.

Doles complimented the team's new-found unity as well, by saying that the team is doing much more bonding and "bonding makes [us] more spirited, which makes [us] a better team."

Clearly this bonding is having an effect on the experiences of the squad's new members. Squad members junior Simin Ghahghahi and sophomore Katie Gifford both spoke of their excitement in joining

"Trust is really key in cheer because trust brings the team together as a whole."

—junior Simin Ghahghahi

the team.

Ghahghahi spoke highly of team bonding, saying it was a great way to meet new people, and to allow the team to more readily trust one another.

"Trust is really key in cheer because trust brings the team together as a whole," said Ghahghahi.

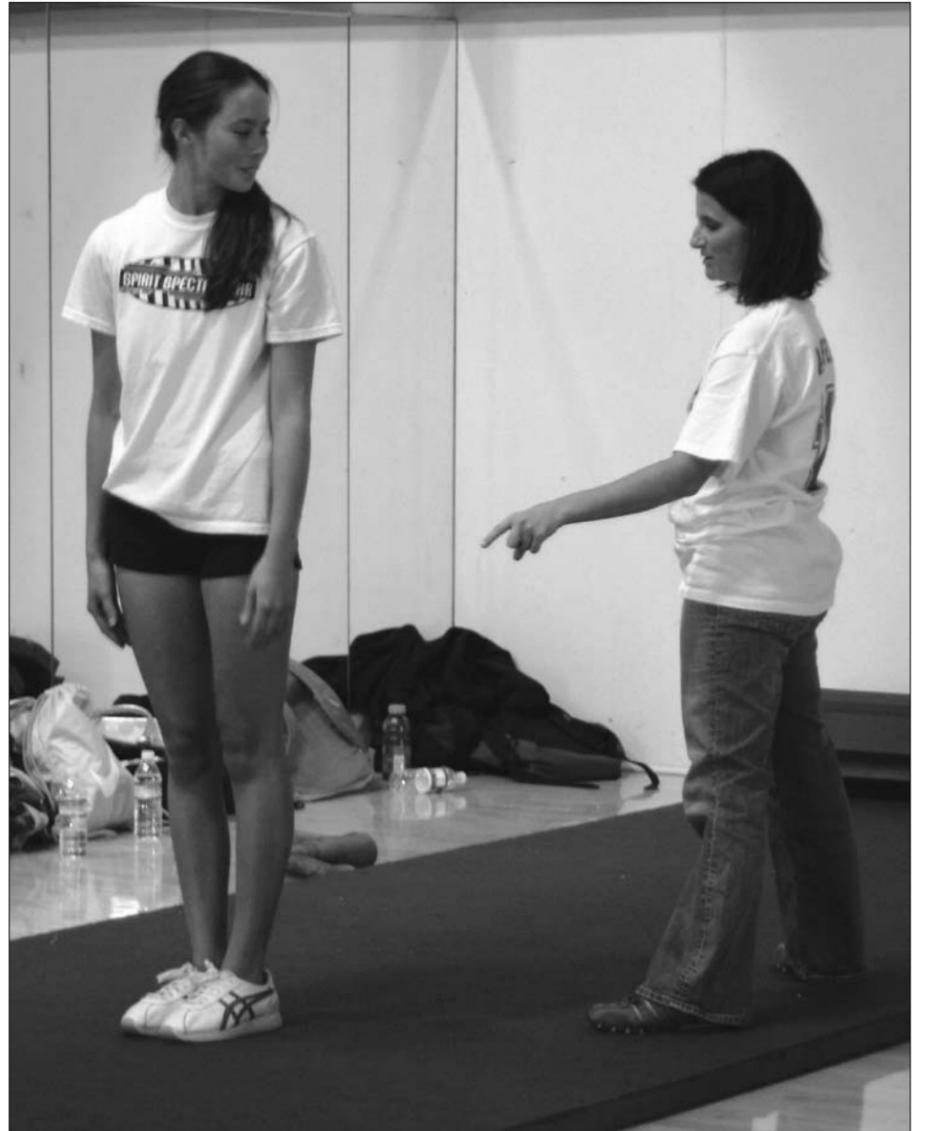
Gifford said that it's "a really great experience and so much fun because everyone works together."

Expectations are high this year due to the merging of the two teams.

"There will be a completely different atmosphere at games and rallies. The teams will no longer be working against each other," said Ridge. "Rather, they will be working as a cohesive unit to pump up the crowd, show off their unique talents and funnel all of their energy into promoting school spirit."

Doles explained that the expectations for excellence this year are high because the squad is bonding more than last year, but cheer is still not without its challenges.

"There are so many new people from different grades that need to learn techniques like stunting and jumping," said Doles. "We need to catch up the new



Melody Zhang

Spirit Squad coach Laressa Ridge instructs freshman Sarah Hull during cheer practice on Sept. 18.

members to speed."

However, this task should be made much easier this year as "both the varsity and JV Cheer teams are brimming with talented and energetic young ladies," ac-

cording to Borgia.

Cheer has an entire year to live up to its grand expectations and continue bonding as a team. After all, there is no "I" in cheer. ♦



Melody Zhang

Senior Elizabeth Shin and drama instructor Chris Mahle sit patiently while reviewing auditions for the upcoming fall play, *Romeo and Juliet*, on Sept. 17.

Drama prepares for fall plays

by Pia Mishra
and Holden Sparacino

With the school year started, the drama department has sprung into gear, preparing for several productions. Soon, the drama department will begin auditions for the fall play, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Although this classic may already seem appealing to many, the drama department has decided to mix it up a little. *Romeo and Juliet* is known for its 16th century setting and sets. This year, however, the play has been modified to represent several different time periods ranging from its original Elizabethan theme all the way to the 21st century.

"The sets are going to be created to have many levels, very non specific," said drama instructor Chris Mahle. "We're going to try to produce a set design

that doesn't refer to any certain time period."

Along with the normal rehearsals, all the actors will be given lessons in stage combat to help them develop their fighting techniques and to ensure both safety and professionalism in the production. The help of a special guest artist has been enlisted for the lessons.

The drama recently held auditions on Sept. 17. About 30 people auditioned, the actors were judged by Drama teacher Chris Mahle as well as a parent volunteer, Kathy Thermond.

Sophomore Jay Lee was one of those to audition. He said the auditions did not have anything out of the ordinary.

Apart from the fall play, the drama department is collaborating with the music department to put on the musical, *Grease* in February. The departments are planning to begin auditions in December. ♦

English teacher steps up as new SHS debate coach

Rector wants to bring program to higher level

by Saniha Shankar
and Abhi Venkataramana

This year, English teacher Erick Rector has stepped up to coach the speech and debate team in hopes of bringing much needed stability to the program.

"I think that we're going to be able to put forth a very strong team this year, somewhat like a phoenix rising," said Rector. "I think we can attack this year with a very up-and-coming team."

Rector, who participated in speech and debate when he was a student at Saratoga, has been a part of the team since last year. He has assisted in organizing team meetings during lunch, helping out during tournaments and providing his room to the students for practices.

Many students, such as Student Congress captain junior Varun Parmar, feel that Rector is the only one who can bring the team back together after a rough season.

"Last year we never really had team unity and many people disliked our coach," said Parmar. "However, this year Mr. Rector is trying to build unity and friendships within our team and is making new rules and changes to ensure that we work together and have a successful season."



Rector

Rector's first step for the new season was hiring two alumni and former debate captains. Andrew Suci, a student at Stanford University, will coach Parliamentary debate and Aditya Ullal, who attends UC Berkeley, will coach Extemporaneous Speaking and Student Congress. Both were successful debaters during their years at Saratoga and went to State and National Championships in their respective events.

"I think that [Ullal] and [Suci] will not only provide the experience necessary," said Speech captain senior Rishi Taggarsi, who was coached by Suci and Ullal during his freshman year, "but since they are former Saratoga High students, they will also connect easily with the speech and debaters on a more personal level than any previous coaches [would]. Their commitment and drive is what the teams needs and having them as coaches will undeniably help carry the team to a successful season."

Rector hopes to maintain, if not surpass, the success that the entire speech and debate team has achieved in previous years, starting with their first tournament at Menlo Atherton on September 28.

"I expect that the year will be difficult, long and arduous," said Rector, "but at the same time, fun, exciting and rewarding, as it always is." ♦

Students launch mag for South Bay teens

by Shannon Galvin
and Tim Tsai

Few students outside of the journalism world understand the effort and creativity that that is needed to publish a piece of work, much less a 32-page, full-color magazine. The process is made more difficult if one is not trained in journalistic skills. However, senior T.T. Tu did not let this stand in his way as he embarked on creating a self-published "Bay Magazine," over the summer.

"I was relatively new to the journalism world, so I had to learn to use [Adobe] InDesign and get used to all that journalism jargon," said Tu. "I kind of learned the process as I went along."

Tu and his team of ten Saratoga seniors were able to complete the magazine over the summer and have distributed it freely to businesses across the Bay Area, as well as on the Saratoga High campus.

The first issue for fall 2008 features an article on the presidential candidates' stances on environmental issues, restaurant reviews, a chocolate chip cookie recipe and a fashion spread. Colorful glossy pages showcase the effort Tu spent this summer organizing his own magazine.

First, Tu assembled a team of people whom he knew he could trust, most of them already involved in Journalism. Then, he, along with seniors Christina Lim, Kathy Koo, Sonali Dujari, Michael Huang, Neyha Bhat, Lyka Sethi, Kelsey

Dang, Tiffany Wang, Jonathan Vu, and Mabel Hsu, began to think of themes and collaborate about possible story ideas.

For the first issue, they decided to "go green," with articles on solar energy, electric cars, the pros and cons of paper bags and tips for eco-friendly living.

"I thought that going green was an important issue in the Bay Area," said Tu, "and I thought that teens should be aware of these environmental problems."

After deciding on a theme, Tu took steps to start the magazine, including applying for a business license and creating a post office box.

They also had to apply for grants and funding from organizations such as the City of Monte Sereno and the Rotary Club. The magazine also managed to get one ad from Willow Street.

"We weren't intimidated at all for putting this magazine together because T.T. was a great leader," said Mabel Hsu, the Think Editor for the magazine. "He was on top of everything and made the process very easy on all of us."

The magazine was assembled with Tu's personal equipment at home, using Adobe Photoshop and InDesign, as well as Illustrator. For inspiration, they looked to magazines they found interesting, like "San Francisco" and "Nylon."

"We liked the modern-ness of them, and how they were simple yet sleek," and Tu, "but I think we have a signature look not like any of those magazines."

"I thought going green was an important issue and teens should be aware of these environmental problems."

—senior T.T. Tu



Melody Zhang

SENIORS NEYHA BHAT, T.T. TU, LYKA SETHI, MICHAEL HUANG AND YEUN BYUN PASS OUT COPIES OF BAY MAGAZINE DURING LUNCH IN THE QUAD ON SEPT. 10.

Over the course of two and a half months, the team assembled a magazine from scratch, with the actual creation of the magazine taking three to four weeks.

"One of the hardest parts was getting everyone together, because it was summer and everyone was traveling," said Tu.

Funding was another hard part.

"People are skeptical about teen projects," said Tu, "so it took time to convince them that this was a good project."

Now, they plan to look for more mem-

bers to continue the magazine as the majority of the staff is graduating this year. Tu wants "it to go as long as possible," but realizes it would be hard to continue to mediate next year in college.

Tu's publication of the magazine has led him to realize his passion for journalism, something he could not address as his schedule did not accommodate it.

"I don't really know how 'real' journalism is," said Tu. "But I would definitely like to work for a college newspaper." ♦

Invisible Children raises awareness of Uganda

by Rebecca Nguyen
and Apeksha Sharma

Imagine walking down a dirt road barefoot among shards of broken beer bottles. Imagine losing a friend to enemy fire every day. Imagine not being able to see your family again. Imagine all this when you're only being nine years old.

In Uganda, 1.8 million children are being forced from their homes to fight against the Ugandan army. For them, it's either kill or be killed. A rebel group named the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) led by Joseph Kony has taken these kids from their homes at the ages of 5 to 14.

Not only has Kony destroyed lives, he has destroyed schools. Most of the kids in Uganda don't have a plan for the future. Lucky for them, hope is on the way.

Here at SHS, the Invisible Children Alliance club is raising awareness of this dire situation. Last year a total of \$3 million was raised from high school and colleges all around the United States, with Saratoga High raising money at a movie screening last spring.

This year's event was a screening of *GO* held Tuesday September 16. Held in the McAfee, it brought in almost a full house and made profit of \$100 from donations.



Melody Zhang

SENIOR ALISON TSZTOO BUYS BOOKS AND T-SHIRTS FROM INVISIBLE CHILDREN CO-

Half the money came from bracelets made by Ugandan kids. Two representatives from the Invisible Children organization answered questions from the audience had and were able to get people thinking about how fortunate they are.

"[The kids are] basically orphans, they don't have parents or supervision and they're being infiltrated by people trying to make them into child soldiers," said Katta, "I think they obviously don't want to [fight] and there is violence all around them and their friends are being killed everyday."

Others find this group a good way to give back to the people who've lost so much.

"I don't think it's fair that they have to go at an early age and fight," said sophomore Lexie Mullaney. "I think we should all learn more about what's going on and about the children." ♦

FALCONFOCUS

Student's new business arranges local concerts

by Elizabeth Lee

It is senior Elizabeth Shin's ultimate dream to run her own venue complete with a bar and food service and open space—for concerts.

It was last year when Shin began to realize that dream, when she sat mesmerized by the story about alumnus Vivian Wang in the Falcon newspaper. Wang, who was an intern at Pinup Productions, had wanted to hold a music concert herself in Saratoga, but couldn't handle the burden that came with managing it. Wang's efforts piqued Shin's interest, and Shin decided to start a music management business like Wang's Pinup Productions in Saratoga.

"I was like, 'Hey, this sounds cool, maybe I'll just invite my favorite local bands [to concerts],'" said Shin.

From then on, Shin began extensive planning with the original music production organization, Paper Star Productions, with senior Nicole Ng.

Paper Star Productions has encountered many problems along the way. With no adult advisor to guide Shin and Ng along, the pair is forced to figure out everything by themselves.

Shin, who had been searching for a long time for a suitable venue, has ventured to many places, but was turned down each time. Recently, the committee of West Hope Presbyterian Church in Saratoga, which responded that the music she was going to showcase was "too rowdy," also rejected Shin.

Though distressed, Shin was driven by hope and ambition, and continued to go through the difficult process of finding a place—any open place.



SHIN

Senior student entrepreneur finds passion in music business and management.

Like a miracle, the single word "yes" came when Shin finally received her confirmation of approval from the committee of the Immanuel Lutheran Church in Saratoga.

Cost is another issue that Shin and Ng are facing. The costs usually range from \$500 to \$1,000 and Shin and Ng are still trying to find opportunities for outside financial support. Ng is currently searching for possible fundraising methods to relieve their costs. As a last resort, Shin will pay out of her own pocket, but she hopes that members from the community will make contributions.

In order to find more support, Shin created the open group Paper Star Productions on Facebook, where anyone can join and help the organization. Senior Yvette Young, who is currently communicating with a band called Westwood and Willow.

Paper Star Productions will be hosting its first concert tonight at 7 at the Immanuel Lutheran Church. The show will feature the musicians Kulle Reece, Vincent Do, and Westwood and Willow. Shin and Ng estimate tickets will be \$8. By managing her business, Shin has learned valuable lessons about planning, human relations, and flexibility. Shin and Ng as a group also have a more localized goal. ♦

THE BIG IDEA | Saving Uganda

PROBLEM: Ugandan children are getting taken from homes for war.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS: Raising money through donations and sale of bracelets.

WHAT'S NEXT: Raising awareness to find more people who can help in Uganda.



Melody Zhang

Senior Link Leader Satomi Ishikawa guides freshmen in a bonding game on Sept. 8. Freshmen and Link Leaders attended Monday tutorials for the first three weeks of school. Link Leaders helped freshmen make a smoother transition to high school.

Link Crew leaders help freshmen to assimilate

by Rebecca Nguyen
and Melody Zhang

The class of 2012 timidly filed into the large gym on Aug. 22 for the first time as high school students. Unsure of what was planned, they were placed in the care of 104 Link Leaders for the day, who led them through a series of activities and a tour of the school.

Guidance counselors Alinna Satake and Frances Saiki, the newly appointed co-director, revamped the Link Crew program to be more effective this year. To help Link Crew run more smoothly, three commissioner positions were created and filled by juniors Rebecca Amato, Nathan Kim and senior Stacy Ku. Sophomores Harshil Sahai, Jenny Zhang, Mikaela Burton and Shannon Galvin formed a new administrative team.

Each commissioner was assigned a group of Link Leaders to assist, which prevented the Link directors from being overburdened. The administrative team, also known as the A-Team, helped with organization, training and the freshman orientation by setting up the groundwork for the program. Their responsibilities included making the Link Crew binders and checking up on the different groups throughout the orientation.

Last year, freshmen were placed randomly into their groups, but this year, they were sorted according to their extracurriculars and interests to help them feel more familiar in their new settings.

"I think the freshmen should really be able to relate to their Link Leaders," said

junior Link Leader Cindy Chang. "Sorting them into groups based on their interests and extracurriculars is a good idea, as it helps us Link Leaders get to know our kids better."

The Link Leaders will be dedicating their school year to "[helping] students to get connected" and to "[leading] by example." Aside from helping out at freshman orientation, they also helped at Back to School Night and are expected to keep in contact with their "links" throughout the school year. A freshman-to-sophomore transition activity is also in the making, according to Satake.

The Links tried their best to loosen up the freshmen by handing out themed costumes and accessories for their groups.

"[My Link Leaders] brought in scooters for us to ride around school," said freshman Connor Mullaney. "They were really nice to us. They were helping us a lot, telling us what's going on with this school. I feel more comfortable."

Overall, the freshman orientation was a well-received success.

"Everyone had a lot of fun just hanging out with freshmen," said senior Link Leader Sarah Tang. "Afterwards we got to chill around at school."

A year-long effort, the Link Crew program hopes to eventually successfully integrate the new students into the high school community.

"I do think that, over time, we will grow closer and the freshmen will genuinely appreciate and enjoy their Link Crew sessions," said junior Link Leader Ashwin Siripurapu. ♦

WASC | Cameras installed

continued from p. 1

Although the school is located in a fairly secure environment, he said the administration felt that one "can never be too safe." On the other side of school, the sports boosters paid to install video cameras to ensure the safety of the football field.

Students have had mixed reactions to the implementation of the cameras, but most understand the school's decision.

"The cameras seem to be an invasion of privacy, but on the other hand, we are on school property, so the school has the

right," said sophomore Harshil Sahai.

Along with the new security measures are other changes from WASC. Among the topics under discussion is a new seventh-period P.E. that will offer dance, yoga, and strength and conditioning. Faculty will also be able to take the class along with students. This will make student-teacher connections stronger and provide another environment in which they can interact, according to Bosco.

"I think that's a really good idea," said sophomore Walker Hadden. "Having teachers that are closer to the students would make school a lot more fun." ♦

POETRY | Mutanabbi recalled

continued from p. 1

of Studio 1801.

Mike Day, a publisher and artist, who teaches a letter press printing class at Foothill College, was extremely impressed by the students' work. He passed out the 27 poems to his publishing class and asked them if they would like to work with the poems. It was a unanimous decision; these were pieces that deserved to be published.

The publishing company, in association with Foothill College, agreed to help the cause by publishing all the poems presented by the students on the subject of the Mutanabbi Street bombing into a limited edition book, to be printed through letterpress printing, which engraves the poems into a hard surface. It's a difficult process that is often used for professional prose and is a huge honor for the students.

The students and printer have yet to finalize the name of the book but have been exchanging ideas. The publishing date is currently scheduled for late November.

The books will be sold to SHS community in order to raise funds for a man who was injured during the bombings.

In addition to this upcoming book, two of the 27 poems have been also selected to be put in a national anthology of poetry. The book *Mutanabbi Street Starts Here* features many famous American poets including Adrienne Rich. The two SHS



CIRIT

Graduate will have poem "Remnants" published in late November.



McGINLEY

Her poem "Ashes" to be printed in an anthology of poems.

poets featured in the anthology are Dilara Cirit and Niamh McGinley, both 2008 graduates.

Both Cirit and McGinley have won multiple awards and have had their poems published all over the nation. Sutton believes the books will have a stronger impact than the presentation did since they will reach so many people.

"*Mutanabbi Street Starts Here* is more than a title," said Sutton. "Mutanabbi Street started in Iraq centuries ago, named after a 10th century Iraqi poet. When the street was attacked in Baghdad, it impacted more than the Iraqis. It impacted people all over the world who value culture as books form the center of civilization." ♦

The tables are turned: teachers take classes

Under new law, many instructors must pass test or take classes about teaching English language learners

by Mabel Hsu
and Apeksha Sharma

Students at Saratoga High: there are more of you than you think. This year, many teachers at SHS are students once again.

As of January 2008, the state of California required teachers to hold the California Teachers of English Learners (CTEL) certification. Teachers have the option of passing either three tests or completing four graduate level courses—either online or in a weekly class that last until mid April.

English teacher Cathy Head became aware of the certification three years ago but did not know that it would be required of all teachers at the time.

Head was surprised to learn this later because the district administration had said the school did not have enough English Language Learners (ELLs) to justify helping teachers attain the certification—but did not mention the fact that teachers would have to be certified by 2008.

History teacher Matt Torrens said that he waited to fulfill the requirement.

"I had looked into taking the classes the year before but was told to hold on because the requirements were going to change," he said.

Many teachers have expressed anger at the situation.

Science teacher Jill McIntyre was unhappy with the disorganization of the district.

Instead of taking the classes, she opted for taking the tests.

"I took the test and passed last June," said McIntyre. "I spent 10 to 12 hours studying for it. I am very happy not to have my teaching schedule disrupted by classes."

The demand for more time is more apparent now as the workload for teachers has increased.

"My supply [teaching] is the same, [but my] teaching, wife, kids, my fence that needs to be repaired, ESPN Sportscenter...

...they all suffer," said Torrens.

Head feels the same about the sudden workload.

"[I] work on CTET whenever I have finished with prep for my classes—school obligations still come first," said Head. "Once I start grading essays and writing letters of recommendation, I don't know what I'll do; I'm hoping the workload will lighten somewhat in later classes."

Most teachers feel that being a student again was not a big adjustment. Head said she has always been a student, whether she is in a formal class or not. Her last class was roughly around two years ago, so she feels familiar with roles of being a student and teacher.

"The difference is that the series of classes were more flexible in terms of scheduling," said Head. "I could set them up to be completed around a break and then get a lot of work done when I wasn't also trying to teach. Our being under a strict deadline for completion of these four courses makes it more difficult, not impossible, though."

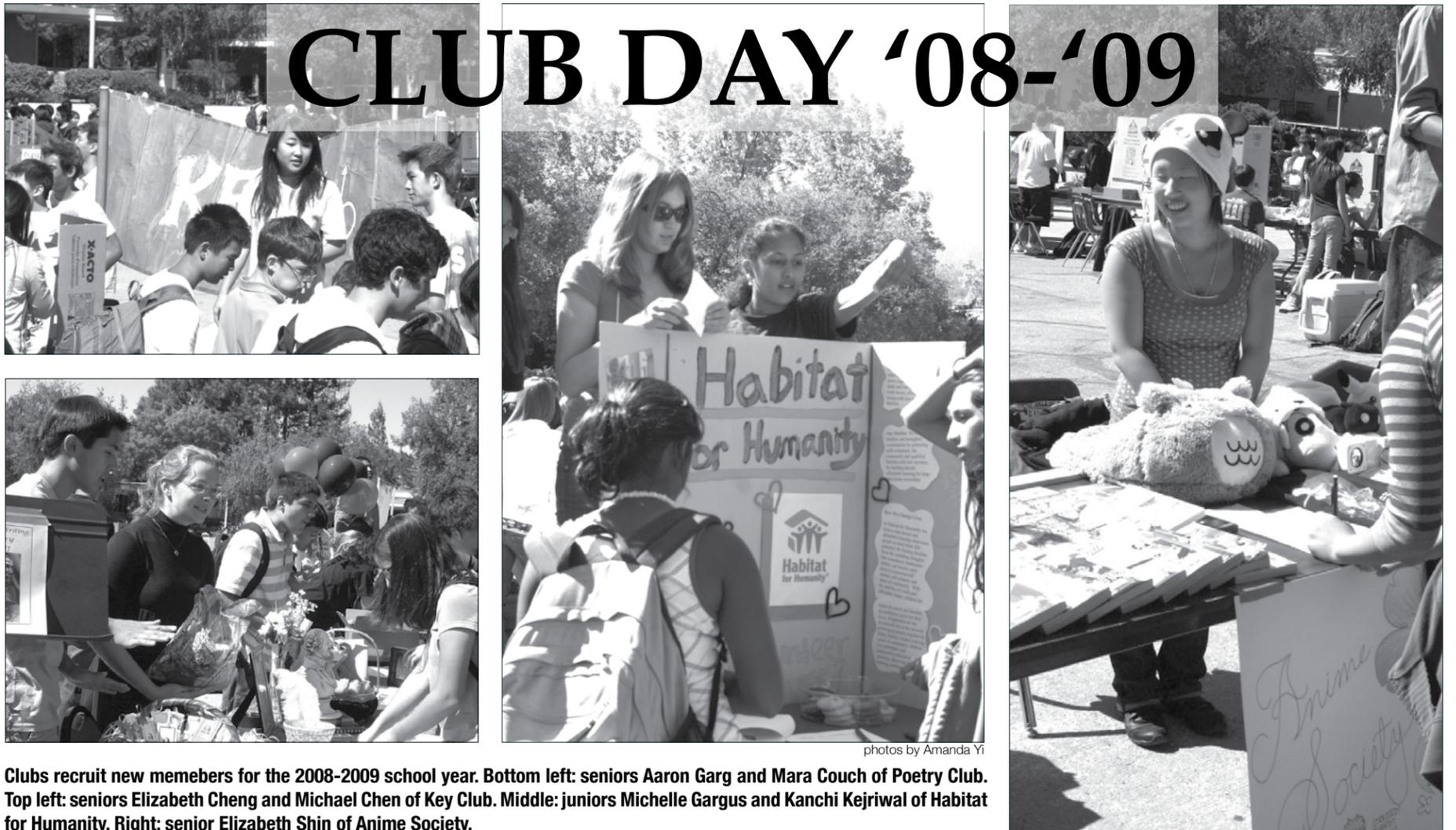
Though it's still too early to determine whether or not the CTET classes will make a big difference to most teachers, McIntyre believes that she is more aware of how her teaching style affects students.

"My teaching style is approximately what is recommended for ELL students, but my new awareness will help me focus on whether an ELL student is getting what they need when they are in my classroom," McIntyre said.

Saratoga High has about 35 ELL students.

Despite the heavy workload and time constraints, most teachers are bravely taking on the student role once more.

"I really believe that teachers here care about not only the kids but their profession, as well," said Head. "We want to do the best job we can, and if these courses have gems to offer us, we'll find them gladly." ♦



Clubs recruit new members for the 2008-2009 school year. Bottom left: seniors Aaron Garg and Mara Couch of Poetry Club. Top left: seniors Elizabeth Cheng and Michael Chen of Key Club. Middle: juniors Michelle Gargus and Kanchi Kejrival of Habitat for Humanity. Right: senior Elizabeth Shin of Anime Society.

ASB TO CUT CLUBS

by Anna Shen

Saratoga High currently offers 76 clubs, half of which may be cut this year if everything goes according to plan. Due to the numerous inactive clubs, the ASB reached a conclusion to reduce the number of clubs after Club Day.

The goal is to consolidate and minimize clubs, especially those that have disintegrated or become inactive since their formation, according to ASB president Ketaki Shriram. The ASB refused to comment on specific clubs they plan to cut.

A majority of clubs on campus is similar in nature, said ASB club commissioner Cindy Chang. Consolidation will take place with clubs grouped under big banners according to their common goals.

"It's for the better," said ASB vice

president Felix Tuan, "because [redundant clubs] are just a waste of our time."

The ASB sees the creation of many clubs simply as another activity for students to pad their college applications.

"We've had colleges come to us saying we have way too many clubs, and it's not going to get [students] in," said Tuan.

Propositions for reducing the number of clubs at SHS are not new. In fact, the

idea has been brought up during the past few years, but this year the ASB is determined to carry through.

The ASB has not yet decided on ways to appeal for clubs that believe they are unfairly cut.

"Some students will be upset, because their clubs will not be existing anymore," said Shriram. "Our intentions are not to hurt anyone's feelings or to harm what people are trying to do. We're just trying to make the school a better place." ♦

"It's for the better because [redundant clubs] are just a waste of our time."

—ASB vice president Felix Tuan

Event draws hundreds

by Tiffany Tseng
and Theresa Yeh

The lunch bell rang on Sept. 18, finally releasing hundreds of restless students from their classes. As usual, they scurried to the quad steps with the intent of reaching the cafeteria first and avoiding the long lunch lines. However, they were met by an enormous mob of classmates surrounding the center of the quad, surveying colorful posters bearing the names of dozens of clubs.

Saratoga High hosted its annual Club Day on Sept. 18. Although upperclassmen had already been introduced to a variety of clubs during their high school experience, freshmen who had never experienced this before were overwhelmed by the many clubs that their new school had to offer.

"Our school has a lot of clubs, and a lot of them are not very well known," said assistant principal Karen Hyde. "Some of the smaller clubs are able to come out and introduce their ideas to the student body on Club Day."

Club Day is organized every year by

the Club Commission, whose head commissioner is junior Cindy Chang. Chang began working with Hyde two weeks before Club Day to organize details, such as table arrangements and club sign-ups.

"We want to encourage awareness of the many clubs we have and be able to share their interests," said Chang.

In previous years, clubs chose tables in the quad based on a first-come, first-serve system. However, because the ASB is trying to cut down on inactive clubs, this year the tables were assigned in an effort to avoid unofficial clubs from promoting themselves.

More than 40 clubs participated in Club Day, and many of them brought food and other attractions to capture students' attention. With the loud clashes of music, decorated shirts and some bright green hair sticking out of the crowd, this event was a hard one to miss.

"The students were good about respecting other clubs and cleaning up the tables and chairs afterwards," said Chang. "Overall, Club Day was a success and raised awareness of the variety of clubs that our school offers." ♦

Hyde teaches new leadership class

by Nathan Kim
and Brian Tsai

In response to the apathetic attitudes at Saratoga High, assistant principal Karen Hyde is teaching a new leadership class this year. Senior Paul Stavropoulos introduced the idea last year after hearing some opinions on the school.

"There's a lot of gossip about how the students don't really like Saratoga [High]," said Stavropoulos. "Our goal would be to make [school] a place where students could feel comfortable in and have spirit."

The class holds around 20 students approved by Hyde, mostly upperclassmen. Meetings are held during Monday tutorial and Thursday lunch in the faculty lunchroom and receive 2.5 applied arts credit per semester.

The first part of the course focuses on theory, teaching students leadership-related skills. The second part of the class delves deeper into the techniques of brainstorming, collaboration and running meetings. During

"Let's make a difference on campus that is sustainable."

—assistant principal Karen Hyde

the third and final part, students will put their skills into effect.

Stavropoulos was inspired to start the leadership class due to receiving help from the community himself.

"When I've been in tough situations, I've always had people there to help me," said Stavropoulos. "As a senior, it's my turn to be in that position where I can

help the younger students, and leave some sort of legacy."

Because leadership classes have failed in the past, one of Hyde's goals is to keep the class running for as long as possible.

"Let's make a difference on campus that is sustainable," said Hyde. "I need it to be ongoing and sustainable by others who are coming through. I'm willing to give up my time if we can make this a better place."

With her leadership experience, Hyde hopes to instill her knowledge within students.

"I don't think you can throw [leadership] out and watch kids grow without some thought process that really is leadership," said Hyde. "Leadership is not standing at the front of the boat and yelling, 'Follow me.' Leadership is empowering others to lead. And that's what I believe in." ♦

API | Score increases

continued from p. 1

percent of students are now writing at proficient or advanced levels."

The math section of the test, too, saw great improvement, according to Anderson. Algebra and geometry teachers began to give even more targeted attention to students who had not done well in the past.

As a result, every group on campus—all ethnicities and boys and girls—saw massive improvement on last year's California Standardized Test (CST).

"Across the board and in all different content areas there was improvement," said Anderson.

Another motivational force for students to do well was the inclusion of CST score

reports when students ask for letters of recommendation from teachers.

Some students who, in previous years, did not see any value in taking the CST seriously, are now aware of the direct influence of CST scores on their college applications. In addition, many teachers made pitches to students to do their best.

"The score awareness on the students' part helped," said Anderson.

Now that students are taking the standardized test seriously, he said, Saratoga High can now effectively analyze strengths and weaknesses of the various departments.

"What we need to look at is what it actually shows about our programs," said Anderson. ♦



Bonnie Shiekh

Position: Guidance office secretary and College and Career Center aide

Background: Contributed to the Saratoga High's Media Arts Program last year.

A BRAND NEW HOME

THE ARRIVAL OF A NEW SCHOOL YEAR IMPLIES MORE THAN JUST THE DEPARTURE OF OLD FRIENDS. THIS YEAR, SARATOGA HIGH WELCOMES EVERYONE, INCLUDING NEW STAFF AND STUDENTS FROM ABROAD.



Dona Feizzadeh

Position: Guidance Counselor

Background: Interned at several schools on the East Coast as a counselor; worked mainly with teachers.



Jennifer Mantle

Subjects: Geometry and Algebra 2

Background: Taught all math courses from Algebra 1 to Calculus and AP Statistics at Lincoln High for nine years.



Kevin Heyman

Position: Librarian

Background: Taught history for ten years at Mount Pleasant High. Worked as librarian at Independence High for eight years.



Ken Nguyen

Subjects: English 10 and AP English Language

Background: Taught AP English Literature and sophomore English for six years at Leland High.



Margarita Lozano

Subjects: World History, U.S. History and U.S. Government

Background: Taught at Beverly Hills High and Culver City High before moving to N. California.



PJ Yim

Subjects: Geometry and Algebra 2 Honors

Background: Taught in Boston prior to teaching at Leland High for seven years.



Bon Koo

Grade: Freshman

Hometown: Seoul, South Korea

"It's cool because I like the nice kids. They are more friendly than in Korea."



Charles Main

Grade: Sophomore

Hometown: Shanghai, China

"I knew [Saratoga] was gonna be bigger because my last high school had about 200 kids. I'm looking forward to being here."



Omid Roostaeyan

Grade: Junior

Hometown: Shiraz, Iran

"[Saratoga] is different from where I came from. Back in Iran, girls and boys were separated, but here they go together."



Soobin Yoo

Grade: Freshman

Hometown: South Korea

"Saratoga is very different. I like this school better because in Korea we don't get to choose our classes."



Kaisa Yli-nokri

Grade: Senior

Hometown: Tampere, Finland

"The people are so, so, so amazing and so friendly. It's been exactly as I imagined it would be; I love it!"

For more detailed information on new staff and students, please visit www.saratogafalcon.org.

Jordan makes leap from coach to athletic director

by Jordan Waite

When previous athletic director Ian Mackenzie left the school last spring, assistant principal Joe Bosco didn't have to look far for a replacement. State Requirements teacher Peter Jordan was reluctant at first when asked to take the position of athletic director but decided to go for it.

"It was a challenge and an opportunity to try something new and I almost never turn that down," said Jordan.

Jordan is gaining experience with management but is also getting the

chance to watch and learn sports he never played as an athlete, such as water polo, tennis and volleyball.

When Jordan was a running coach, he only needed to focus on his job as the coach. Now, Jordan is in charge of making sure all the sports teams run smoothly, which includes everything from hiring coaches and buying gear to organizing field use.

"As the athletic director you need to be able to roll with the punches because it seems like there's always something breaking down or going on or there's something you need to attend to," said

Jordan.

One of Jordan's main goals is to "open up channels of communication with the parents." Teenagers tend not to be the most reliable communicators and it's important for parents to know what's going on in the sports. Jordan hopes to help the parents understand what they can do to get involved in athletics.

A big change for Jordan is that he deals more with adults, coaches and parents rather than directly with the athletes.

"I'm hoping I'll get a handle on things to a point where I can spend a little more time enjoying the games and getting to

know the athletes," said Jordan.

He also plans to fill the coaching positions with people who will keep the position for more than a season. Having long-term coaches builds valuable coach-to-athlete bonds that help teams become successful. So far Jordan has hired all the coaches for fall and winter sports and is working on spring sports.

He also intends to make some changes to the seventh period sports physical education class and expand it to include weight training, aerobic training, yoga, flexibility and agility training to better prepare the athletes for their sports. ♦

SARAH PALIN:

MEDIA DISTRACTION OR REFRESHING ALTERNATIVE?

PALIN PRESENTS AMATUERISH IMPRESSION DURING SPEECHES THROUGH OUTLANDISH COMMENTS, SHOWS LITTLE EXPERIENCE

by Mira Chaykin
and Brian Kim

In a desperate attempt to draw attention away from the Democratic Party, Republican presidential candidate John McCain appointed Alaskan Gov. Sarah Palin as his running mate. It is already evident, however, that she is merely a tool of McCain's campaign—one that's directed solely at short-term victory rather than long-term solutions for the country.

Throughout the campaign, McCain has referred to Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama as "dangerously unprepared for the presidency" in speeches and called Obama "the most inexperienced candidate of our time" in interviews and Republican National Committee ads.

McCain has repeatedly asserted his intention to recruit a well-qualified individual as his running mate. Yet in a highly hypocritical move, he appointed Palin, who is certainly far less prepared than Obama.

Palin has served two terms on the Wasilla, Alaska, city council, served as the city's mayor and then had less than two years of experience in office as the governor of Alaska, population 670,000. In contrast, Obama, who has been called dangerously inexperienced, has served nearly eight years in the Illinois State Senate, followed by an additional four years in the U.S. Senate.

Some people assert that McCain's experience will balance out Palin's lack thereof, however, if something should happen to McCain, a 72-year-old man with skin cancer, and Palin is forced to take the presidency, his experience will be of no help to her. She claims she will learn in office, but she may not have time to take notes before being thrust into the presidency.

Her lack of experience may yield dire consequences for America should the Republican Party be elected on Nov. 5. She has no views to speak of on foreign policy and absolutely no experience with national security. Calling in the National Guard once doesn't count. Palin will not be prepared to handle a world crisis, and as vice president, she would be an arm's length from the presidency.

Palin, knowing her lack of experience makes her inadequate, makes pathetic

attempts at compensating for this weakness with her gender. Palin was quoted for saying, "Hillary left 18 million cracks in the highest, hardest glass ceiling in America, but it turns out the women of America aren't finished yet, and we can shatter that glass ceiling once and for all." Newsflash to Sarah Palin and the rest of the Republican Party: Being a woman is the only similarity between Palin and Clinton, as they disagree on just about every policy.

Women should not be denied the presidency because of their gender, nor elected because of it. The next president should be elected based upon qualifications and prior success, not because America wants to shatter a metaphorical glass ceiling.

The majority of Palin's speeches have focused on Obama's flaws rather than her own strengths, because she has no strengths to speak of. Looking beyond the fog of her fancy speeches and dramatics, Palin's words consist of no more than sarcasm and arrogant remarks, in contrast to Obama, whose rhetoric consists of a legitimate movement for change rather than slander.

In addition to being a gamble due to her lack of experience, Palin is also a gamble in her personality and past. She is currently under investigation by the Alaskan state Legislature for suspicion that she and her staff illegally pressured the public safety department to fire a state trooper who was in a custody battle with her sister.

Gambling can be fun sometimes, like in Vegas, but gambling with the merit of America's next president is beyond foolish. The Independent Party's Ross Perot's '92 running mate, Navy Admiral James Stockdale once stood up at a debate and asked "Who am I? Why am I here?" It's time for America to stand up and ask: Who is Sarah Palin and why is she here? If we cannot find the answer as to why this inexperienced Alaskan governor should be the vice president of the United States, then she is not a gamble worth taking. ♦

REPUBLICAN RUNNING MATE BRINGS FRESH OUTLOOK TO PLATFORM WITH UNYEILDING STANCES ON POLICIES

by Annie Lee
and Andy Tsao

After the recent republican nomination of Sarah Palin as John McCain's vice presidential candidate, many Americans have questioned McCain's choice. Palin's views on abortion, education and gun rights, coupled with her inexperienced background, has led people to doubt her ability to lead the nation.

Palin, however, has showed promise with her pro-life and equal opportunity beliefs. Her adamant adherence to these beliefs has proven her to be a better candidate than even Hillary Clinton.

First among many criticisms of Palin was her family history. She is a mother of five children, one of whom is an infant with Down Syndrome and another a pregnant teenager.

Although many people criticized her decisions, Palin, stead-

fast to her pro-life beliefs, chose to raise a baby with disabilities rather than to abort. Along with that, both she and her daughter were unwilling to abort Palin's future grandchild.

Palin's experience as a mother has also helped her. Because she was a "hockey-mom" for her children, she can relate closely to the millions of other mothers throughout America.

Palin can also effectively connect to the working class of America due to her 20-year marriage to a blue-collar worker. Instead of basing her decisions on the environment of the White House and wealthy aristocrats, her unique background allows her to develop a more worker-friendly perspective when dealing with economic issues.

Palin is also an advocate of equality between men and women, more specifically, equal opportunities in the work place. She believes women are equally capable of working in today's technologically advanced society as men. For 80 years, feminists have been advocating the idea of complete equality for women, and Palin has finally brought the issue to the presidential level.

Palin's nomination as the new Republican vice presidential candidate neatly complements McCain, as she is a dynamic newcomer into the arena of national politics, a trait most Americans believe is necessary.

In addition, as a committed conservative, Palin balances out McCain's more liberal beliefs.

Palin provides the fresh air McCain so desperately needs. Her viewpoints on issues such as abortion and women's rights and her ability to stay true to her word make her a popular candidate—and a good choice. ♦

CON PRO



Republican National Convention falls short of expectations



Amalie MacGowan
Sam-I-Amalie

When I found out my family would be in Minnesota during the Republican National Convention, I had my expectations high for an exciting weekend.

I thought I'd see citizens strolling through St. Paul, a city covered in bright red

streamers, flyers, and banners. I figured there would be red as far as the eye could see and brightly splayed signs of welcome to the Republican National Convention, and all around people would be wearing their politics on their sleeves – dressed in red, white, and blue. At the very least, I figured I'd see some politicians walking the streets, discussing the election with one another and signing the occasional autograph, while dodging the occasional question. I was even looking forward to some baby-kissing.

Unfortunately, what I got was far less interesting. Sure, there were some red post-

ers that could be seen from a distance and some messages of welcome, but the event seemed more geared toward keeping people away than inviting them to experience the process.

There was a barrier of security guards lining the quarter mile radius of the Excel Center where the convention was taking place. No one could even think of walking within the premises, and the city's people were obviously pressured to show their support.

The city had plastered a few red signs on lampposts, prints of elephants adorning buildings, and even pachyderm shaped topiaries. I did not even witness one politician kissing a

baby. I was disappointed.

When my family and I first came to St. Paul, I was hyperactive. I had my camera at hand, ready to snap a photo of any unwilling politician I could find. As we began to descend the hill to St. Paul Cathedral, I spotted an absolutely perfect view, so I raised my camera to try and take a picture. Before I knew it a security guard was shooing me off the site, claiming that we had no right to be where we were. What kind of threat was an energetic 14 year-old with a bright pink camera?

It was frustrating to not be able to get closer to the action as it was occurring. I missed the atmosphere associated with

political conventions; in fact, it seemed like it wasn't even there. My dad tried to turn a corner, when all of a sudden we would find a chain link fence and a sour-faced line of guards. I was surprised they didn't set the dogs on us.

My weekend spent in Minnesota was far from uninteresting. My family said our teary goodbyes to my brother as he headed off to college, and we were able to visit the fabulously grandiose Mall of America. The Republican Convention may not have been what I expected, but even seeing it from practically miles away with a security guard in my face was memorable all the same. ♦

Is New Orleans worth it?



With constant threats of natural disaster, Crescent City needs fool-proof plan for recovery

by Brian Kim

Despite the relatively minor impact of Hurricane Gustav on New Orleans in late August, many question whether protecting the city is worth the time and money.

Although New Orleans dodged Gustav at its strongest, it might not survive another hurricane with strength similar to that of Katrina. Billions have already been spent toward relief efforts, leaving the nation no choice but to continue the recovery. However, instead of pursuing its current prevention plan, which repaired broken levees in 2007, the nation should start spending more intelligently.

In order for protection to be effective, officials must focus on the two main kinds of damage hurricanes cause: property destruction and death. Unfortunately, since

New Orleans is naturally subsiding, the center retains the most flooding

since it is deepest while the shores remain relatively dry.

Officials have unwisely planned the reconstruction of destroyed buildings and homes at the site at which they had originally been demolished.

Louisiana should build efficiently by installing apartment complexes toward the floodwalls and investing in stronger building material with the mindset of quality over quantity. Funds have already been redirected from offshore drilling toward levee and floodwall installation, supporting the Army Corps of Engineers and their experimentation with new levee technology including the use of clay and grass roots to stop coastal erosion.

Despite what many believe, forgetting New Orleans isn't an ideal solution to the matter. Abandoning the city would not only be detrimental as a loss of a cultural landmark, but also to the nation's economy. Refineries, located all along the Gulf Coast, process a large percentage of the nation's oil and gas.

Prior to Gustav's arrival, many citizens of New Orleans responded to storm forecasts and evacuated. Trans-

portation, however, wasn't accessible to everyone.

Building should commence in areas where easy evacuation is available, and the construction of homes should resume in areas where the city can handle the most damage. Finances applied to the recovery of New Orleans should be directed toward reliable material that can decrease the number of destroyed homes. Although New Orleans may never be safe from hurricanes, the city must initiate smart spending.

New Orleans' citizens must remain fearful and cautious.

It's only a matter of time before another Katrina hits. All the nation can do now is work harder and hope that by the next disaster, New Orleans can weather the storm. ♦

Lunchtime changes cause negative effects

Price changes, crowding problematic for students

by Grishma Athavale
and Brandon Yang

The lunch bell rings and the serenity of the campus is broken. Underclassmen rush to the cafeteria, hoping to grab a spot at the front of the lunch line to buy cookies before they run out. Most upperclassmen, who have the privilege to go off campus at lunch, drive themselves to local restaurants for their meals.

Or at least this is the way it used to be. A rise in gas prices seems to have encouraged more juniors and seniors to stay on campus, which causes frustratingly long lines and fewer eating areas. These crowded conditions have made lunchtime less enjoyable for many students.

As more upperclassmen remain on campus, many areas have become uncomfortably crowded. The lines leading to the cafeteria now extend farther into the quad, causing many students to waste their lunchtime waiting to buy food. These long lines tempt students to cut with their friends, thus making conditions even worse.

Staying on campus may solve the problem of using up precious gas, but getting a quality, reasonably priced lunch on campus has become

increasingly difficult. To make matters worse, the cafeteria has raised the prices of many items, including pizza and cookies, which have gone up 50 cents and 25 cents, respectively. In addition, most students regularly purchase oily, fat-filled food like fries, pizza and fried chicken at school compared to the more nutritious dishes sold off campus. Health concerns and price increases have persuaded many students to bring lunch instead, which is less convenient and reduces lunchtime revenues for the school.

As more students stay on campus for lunch, the school must work harder to meet the needs of the increasing number of students by providing more tables and benches. In addition, the school lunch menu should be altered to appeal to a greater number of students, such as by providing more choices for vegetarians on campus, which numerous other schools have already done. Not only would the food be healthier and more nutritious, but more students would be attracted to buy food by the increase in dishes. As lines increase and costs go up, the administration should improve campus conditions and food quality to make lunchtime more enjoyable. ♦

Health concerns and price increases have persuaded many students to bring lunch instead.

America shares blame for Pakistani troubles

by Uttara Sivaram

It is hard to resist a man in uniform... Following 9/11, the United States found itself in dire need of an ally in the Middle East who would help clean up Afghanistan. Fortunately, Pervez Musharraf stood as the president of Pakistan, a well-bred man who spoke fluent English, wore a no-nonsense moustache just as crisp as his suit and appeared on "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart". To many, this man could do no wrong.

It's been seven years since America was taken in by Musharraf's seemingly agreeable ways, turning a blind eye to his many misdeeds. Musharraf had come into power through a coup d'état of a democratically elected government under Nawaz Sharif. During his eight years in power, he had appointed himself both president and the head of the army, suspended the constitution and dismissed the chief justice.

Evidently, America's sight was selective. Instead of keeping Musharraf at arm's length, the U.S. contributed to his military arsenal and supported him politically. America tripped over itself to help him and was rewarded when Musharraf assisted in the United States' overthrow of the Taliban in Afghanistan. However, the United States' aid has come to nothing. Musharraf relinquished his title as president of Pakistan after Parliament threatened to impeach him should he fail to resign, and he has left the country in a relatively bad state of affairs: Benazir Bhutto's corruption-charged husband Asif Zardari has taken office while the economy continues to flatline.

The U.S. must take some of the blame regarding the current state of affairs in

THE BIG IDEA | Pakistan

NOW: Musharraf has finally stepped down, leaving behind a frustrated and unstable Pakistan.

THEN: A paralyzed Pakistani government under Musharraf's U.S.-supported reign.

WHY IT MATTERS: The U.S. has lost another Middle Eastern ally, leaving them in a worse state of affairs...again.

Pakistan. Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State, pressured Musharraf to improve his reputation as the leader of Pakistan by holding elections, worsening the situation.

Against his better judgment, Musharraf grudgingly allowed former political leaders Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif to fly back into the country for the elections. Bhutto was subsequently killed while under the protection of the Pakistani government, cementing Musharraf's image as a dictator who eliminates all competition.

For the U.S., it is déjà vu all over again. Pinochet's coup in Chile? Troop intervention in Nicaragua? We've seen those movies before. Musharraf is just another example of the United States propping up a leader, tying his hands and then watching in confusion as the country slowly crumbles under his rule. Would the situation be better if instead of getting involved, the United States had pulled back its meddling hands and just twiddled its thumbs? Because now that is about all there is to do as the world helplessly watches the situation in Pakistan go from bad to worse. ♦

Seniors speak out for their rightful parking spots

by Kelly Lamble

By the time students get to their senior year at Saratoga High School, they are worn out from the multitude of homework, SATs, and AP tests. These hardworking students are, as seniors, expecting some relaxation that comes with the perks of entering the final year of their high school career. One of the most fundamental things they expect out of their senior year is a prime parking

spot—one of the coveted ones in the front of the school.

This year's juniors, however, seem to have missed the memo and insist on taking spots designated for the weary senior class. This disregard for rules is forcing seniors to get to school earlier than ever before, not because they have last-minute theses to write or questions to ask, but because that is the only way to ensure getting their rightful parking space.

The rules for parking are not complicated. All of the more desirable parking spots, including ones in front of the gym and the McAfee, are designated exclu-

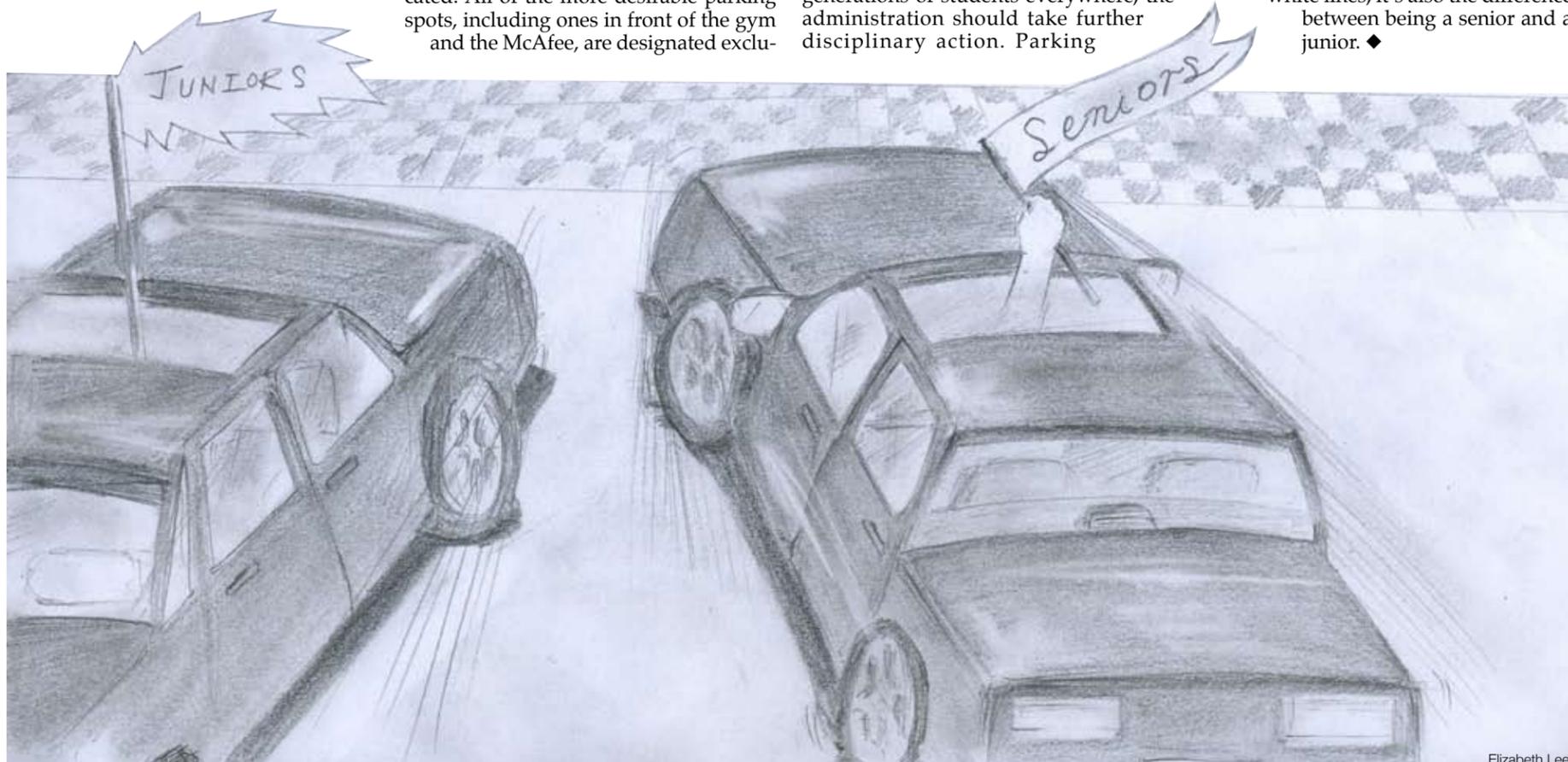
sively for seniors. Juniors can park in the last two rows of the parking lot in front of the gym or out by the tennis courts.

The administration has attempted to correct the problem by issuing an announcement over the loudspeaker each morning detailing the parking policy. The attempts to point the juniors in the right direction have, however, so far gone unheeded.

If juniors continue to disregard the traditional hierarchy set in place by generations of students everywhere, the administration should take further disciplinary action. Parking

in the wrong place should receive the same punishment as parking without a permit—ugly violation stickers that refuse to come off the windshield as a warning and a fine if the perpetrator continues to disobey the policy.

The senior class is not asking for much. They only want the same courtesy and respect that has been given to senior classes before them. A parking spot is five feet wide by ten feet tall, and although it's only a piece of pavement with two painted white lines, it's also the difference between being a senior and a junior. ♦



The Saratoga Falcon

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Students need eco-friendly habits to maintain cleaner, greener campus

by Lyka Sethi

A student rushes to class after lunch and looks up at the sky to see a flock of seagulls circling the quad, waiting for a chance to fly down and devour the leftovers that are strewn across the concrete. Lowering his glance to ground level, the student slows his pace and looks around at the multiple lunch tables. There are recycling bins and trash cans beside every few tables, yet none of them are teeming with garbage. Instead, the garbage lies on the ground and on the tables, creating a tedious job for the custodians.

This daily occurrence is not inevitable or acceptable; the custodians, who already do enough service for the school, should not have to sort out garbage from the trash cans and the surrounding areas into recycling bins due to the carelessness of a student.

Saratoga High should be kept in pristine condition to make for a healthier environment not just on campus, but also in the entire community.

"Although the custodians do some separating [of trash from recyclable items], it's not possible for them to sort through

every bin," said Maintenance Head Brian Moran. "If students placed their garbage in the right cans to begin with, more items would be recycled."

According to Moran, every two to three weeks the school sends approximately 20 cubic yards of compressed garbage to the dumpster. On a weekly basis, the grey recycling bins are emptied, amounting to only about 50 gallons of recyclable waste.

It is by no means believable that students cannot differentiate between the paper recycling bin and the one for bottles and cans.

Any problems on this front result from laziness, not ineptitude. There are about 30 mixed paper and beverage container bins on campus, and they are not at all inconspicuous.

Students should be encouraged to use not only recyclable items, but also to reuse items ranging from lunch bags to hard plastic bottles.

Also, each classroom should have a strict recycling policy, and every student should follow it.

Last year, the Environmental Management System (EMS) attempted to engage students in several eco-friendly activities,

including Bike to School Day and a school-wide recycling competition.

Few of the club's efforts received sufficient attention from the student body. The fact that only a small fraction of the students took EMS' message seriously does not bode well for the future of the environment.

The administration should give awards and punishments for "green" behavior to provide incentive for students to be more eco-friendly.

If a student is caught recycling or picking up trash after lunch, he or she should be rewarded, whether it is by a Jamba Juice card or small cash prize.

Also, an after-lunch clean up group should be established to ease the unnecessary work that's placed on the custodians.

Although there is not much that a single student can do to repair the state of the environment, there is still a small duty each person owes to the world around him.

Recycling on campus, encouraging teachers and administration to use energy effectively and joining EMS are a few of many ways one can take part in the global movement to better the environment.

Whether students start on campus or at home, every act of eco-friendliness is worthwhile. So get started—reduce, reuse and recycle! ♦

Every two weeks the school sends approximately 20 cubic yards of compressed garbage to the dumpster.

SHS must keep pace with technology

by Gautham Ganesan

It would seem that an esteemed public high school located in an affluent neighborhood in the heart of Silicon Valley would be at the forefront of technological advancement. Saratoga High should logically boast a vast array of high-tech educational options for its students, ranging from the availability of high-speed wireless internet to a greater emphasis on technology-based learning.

Though the school is moving ahead in this area, it is by no means a leader.

Not only does the school lack basic high-tech features, such as the aforementioned wireless service, but the influence of technology as a whole on the campus, outside of select areas, is startlingly low.

While SHS is somewhat on par with its Bay Area counterparts technologically, schools such as Lincoln High School in San Jose and Monta Vista High in Cupertino have wireless infrastructures that encourage the use of laptops among students, two phenomena decidedly absent on campus.

Additionally, with many universities espousing the use of purely digital textbooks, several high schools have followed suit, encouraging students to shed their

often inordinately bulky, book-stuffed backpacks in favor of a personal laptop.

Even fundamental practices, such as the blocking of popular web sites like

to active, helping them to make choices regarding the acquisition, manipulation or display of information.

While it would be absurd to suggest

that Saratoga

High students

are wholly

deprived of

such benefits,

as technology

does play an

integral part

in a handful

of courses like

journalism and

video, there is

little doubt

students

would benefit

from using more

technology in

their school day.

Luckily,

the administration

has realized

this, evident

in the

institution

of the Media

Arts Program for

the 2008-09 school year,

an alternate learning experience

founded heavily in

technology and the use

of technology in scholastic

endeavors.

Still, despite incremental

improvement in the

utilization of

technology at SHS, such as the steadily

growing population of SMART Boards

found in classrooms, the school remains

behind other institutions and lacks the

cutting edge, which can only be achieved

through assertive action.

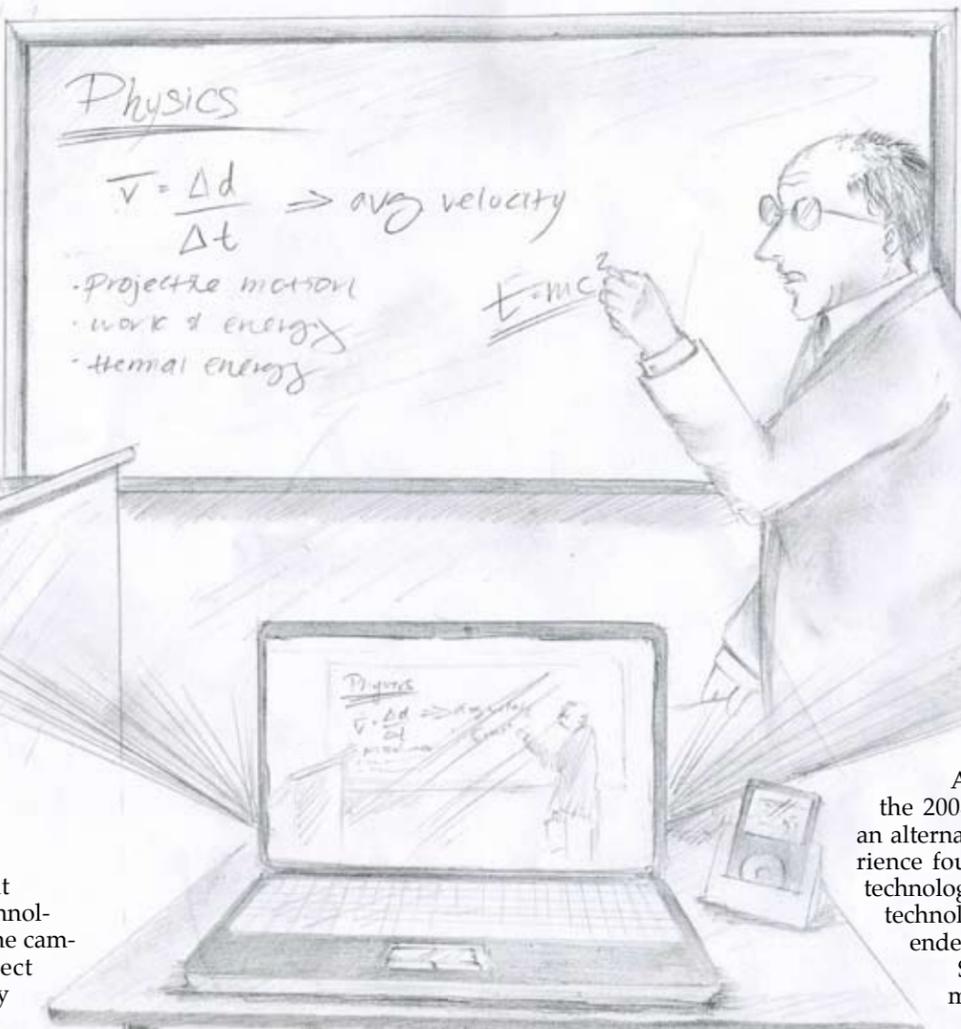
Given the context—a school supported

by tax dollars stemming from some of the

most technologically innovative minds in

the country—SHS has no excuse for not

being a leader. ♦



Elizabeth Lee

TAKING DOWN LOS GATOS: WHY WE NEVER CAN



Guy Quanrud

It's a Guy thing

Okay Saratoga, playing Los Gatos in football has not been our greatest strength. We're not terrible... we've just run into some bad luck for a while—like 25 years or so.

If you'll suffer my opinion, let me explain in a few words why Saratoga seems to fall off the cliff when battling our local town rival.

They're huge.

Being bigger makes the football field smaller for Los Gatos. It allows them to break down their opposition one by one, matching every guy with someone twice as big. It gives them overwhelming strength and allows them to pretty much dominate every aspect of the game.

I do believe in David versus Goliath stories. I do believe that every person has a weakness and that underdogs can rise to the top. But really, why can't we live those legends in our town?

It's funny because we beat Los Gatos in everything else. SAT scores, academics, swimming, field hockey: We pounce and take down the Wildcats. In football, though, it seems to take a whole different story.

We have great athletes and great coaches. Thus, how can Los Gatos be so darn good at football? Cheating, possibly, but I have a better and more logical theory as to why we can't end our losing curse.

We're too stressed out

No, I don't mean the football team is stressed out, I mean everybody in Saratoga is stressed out. Stressed out from 75% academics, 24% SAT prep/college applications and 1% social life. What does this have to do with football? Simple: the after effects.

Saratoga is so academically challenging that in the case of football, not every athlete wants to be crushed by its towering educational standard. Sure, some choose to go to Mitty or Bellarmine, but many

end up attending Los Gatos.

Now, Los Gatos isn't the easiest school in the world. But at least in Los Gatos, football is appreciated.

Our system of education makes it tough to love football here; the school creates a troubled, unappealing atmosphere for athletes. In our rival school,

it's the exact opposite.

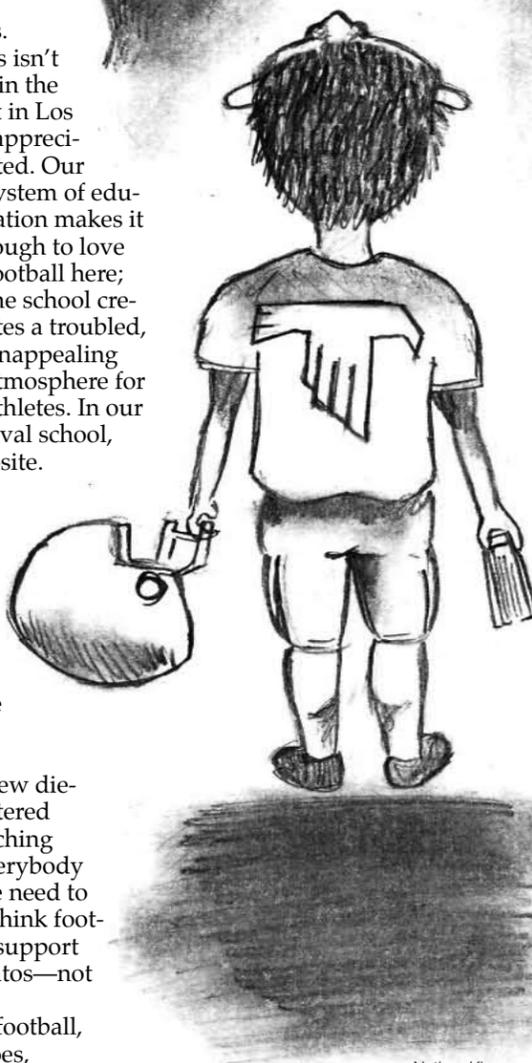
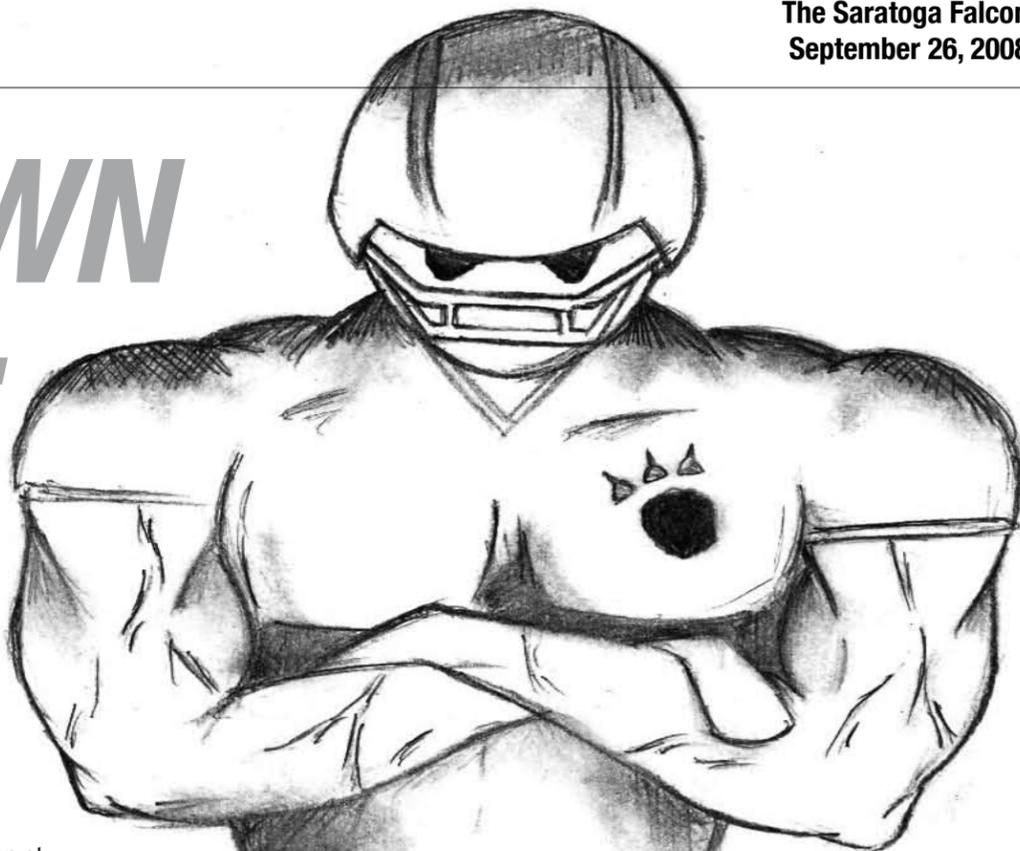
Passion needed

We need fan support. Real intense fans screaming and rooting for players on the field. Our athletes crave the attention from their community.

Instead of the few die-hard parents, scattered students and marching band, we need everybody to be cheering. We need to live, breathe and think football. That type of support is found at Los Gatos—not here.

In high school football, when anything goes,

We need fan support. Real intense fans screaming and rooting for players on the field. Our athletes crave the attention from their community.



noisy appreciation from fans gives the football team the extra umph, the extra push of confidence to help our boys motivate themselves to topple our rival.

A more football-orientated school

Once again, the crazy and uptight environment of Saratoga High has to change. One thing I've noticed in Saratoga vs. Los Gatos football games is the difference in team numbers on the football field. Los Gatos comes on the field with a hundred strapped and padded players compared to our mere 30 to 40 kids, and they occupy half of the field during pre-game stretching.

Saratoga football needs more players. Thus, going against everything that Saratoga High has stood for in its educational dominance, we have to make it easier for the football guys. Give them some sort of benefit and make more teenagers think Saratoga football rather than AP classes when deciding between the two schools.

Thirty years of losing history proves we need a dramatic change. I think I've made my point. ♦

Nathan Kim

Apple's brand new 3G iPhone fails to impress

COMPANY'S DEPENDENCE UPON CONSUMER LOYALTY LEADS TO LACK OF QUALITY IN PRODUCT

by Kavya Nagarajan
and Melody Zhang

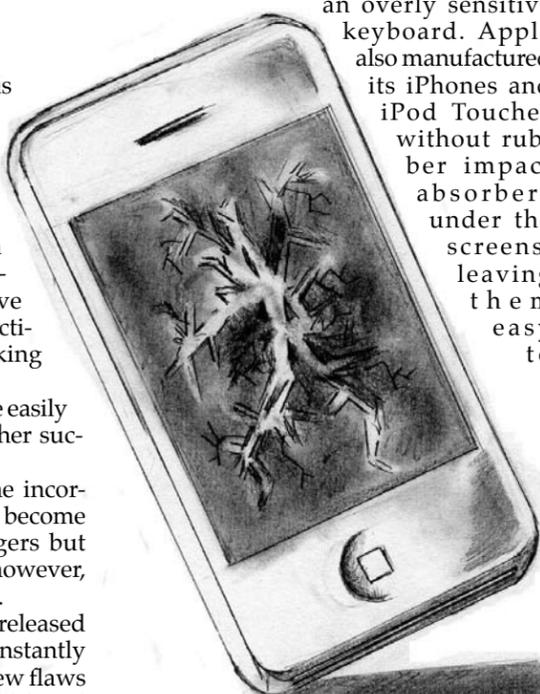
It's amazing how far Apple has brought its product line the past few years. The iPod has evolved from a chunky block of metal to a slim and sleek piece of advanced technology.

Just this September, the fourth generation iPod Nano was released, revealing another creative feature that allows the user to activate a shuffled playlist by shaking the iPod.

Apple's innovative iPhones are easily set apart from the company's other successful products.

Never before has a cell phone incorporated so many features. It has become popular among not only teenagers but adults. Apple's newfound fame, however, may not be completely deserved.

The first iPhone, which was released in the summer of 2007, became instantly popular. Of course, there were a few flaws here and there such as poor battery life and



Nathan Kim

an overly sensitive keyboard. Apple also manufactured its iPhones and iPod Touches without rubber impact absorbers under the screens, leaving them easy to

scratch and break. The lack of work and life features on the iPhone, such as the ability to download attachments or copy and paste also irked users. Despite the quality problems, most just brushed these aside and learned to deal.

But after the iPhone 3G was released this summer, people began noticing a multitude of glitches. The main issue with the new line was connecting and staying connected to 3G networks. Calls were frequently dropped and areas with decent signal were scarce.

What was originally meant to become a life organizer became a chaotic hindrance. As a result, many people stuck with their Blackberries for their reliable features and converted the lacking iPhone to a gadget of entertainment.

Thus the iPhone fell short of its original purpose, barely differing in its abilities from an iPod Touch, except

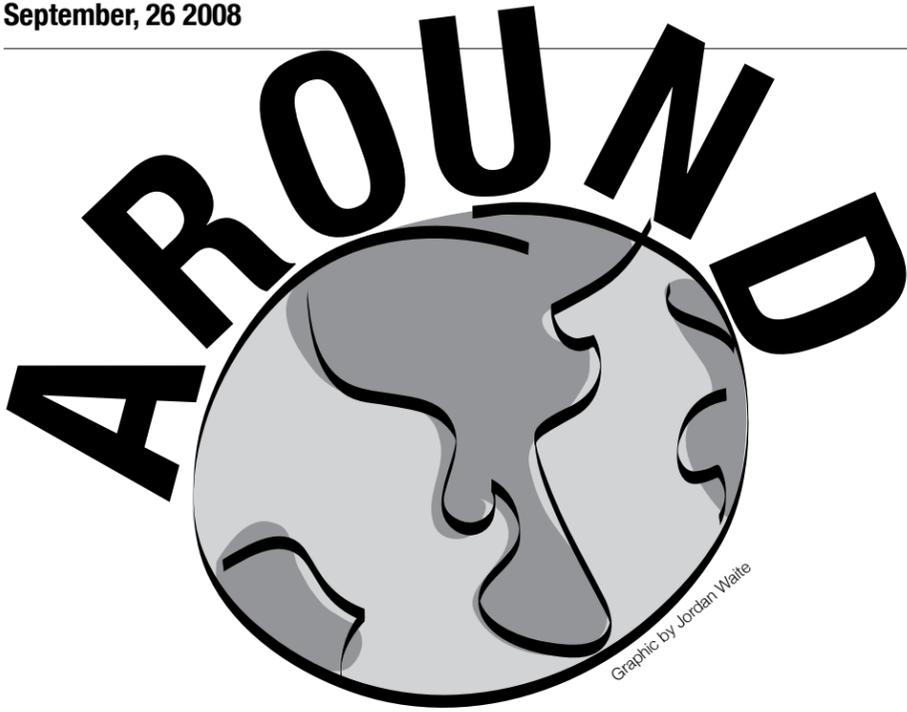
now in two enticing colors.

If creating a phone that refuses to function as one wasn't enough, Apple's reaction to complaints was even worse. The company responded to customers with a software update only after having several suits filed against them.

Even now, Apple is lacking the useful context menus for copy and paste functions. It's pure irony that such a monolithic company only took action after legal action. And strangely, the new upgrades brought in reports of even worse connections than before.

It seems as if Apple is putting out products as fast as it can to lure in loyal fans rather than focusing on quality. It is an extremely foolish business strategy to completely depend on dedicated customers buying updated versions of any product the moment of release. Maybe Apple should go back to the drawing board and focus on its claim to fame: quality. ♦

As a result, many people stuck with their Blackberries for their reliable features and converted the lacking iPhone to a gadget of entertainment.



THE WORLD

Homecoming 2008: This year, Saratoga High will be visiting such sites as **Atlanta**, home of the Atlanta Falcons, and then off to **Rome**, as all roads lead do. Next we will swing by downtown **Tokyo**, surely getting a dose of cultural anime. Saratoga's final destination is **Cairo**, near where the ancient pyramids, as well as the sphinx, reside. It promises to be an exciting week, full of fun and adventure.

Monday	Teacher quad dance at 11:54 a.m.
Tuesday	Freshman quad day at 11:15 a.m.
Wednesday	Sophomore quad day at 12:15 p.m.
Thursday	Junior quad day at 11:15 a.m.
Friday	Senior quad day at noon Football game vs. Los Altos at 7 p.m.
Saturday	Dance from 8-11 p.m.

*date of night rally to be announced

Civilizations battle it out

by Holden Sparacino

Homecoming is almost up and running, and classes are scurrying, painters painting, dancers trying to coordinate the final steps of their class' quad day. Each class is looking forward to the upcoming competitions—no one wanting to be left behind.

Next week will mark the start of the massive event, after the decorations are finally up for all the classes. The festivities will most likely begin Monday at lunch, the time when teachers are notorious for displaying their dancing talent, or lack thereof for Homecoming.

Each class will perform on their respected day during lunch, starting with the freshman

Will the sophomores invade Tokyo, or will the juniors provide a simple history lesson with the fall of

class on Tuesday. The school will also nominate Homecoming princes and princesses, and a Homecoming King and Queen. Classes will also compete at the night rally held

during the week.

The week will come to a close only after the Homecoming football game against Los Altos, and of course, the dance.

The senior class was, of course, the first to pick, choosing Cairo as the sub-theme of the class of '09. Although originally divided between Cairo and Tokyo, the class seems now to be fully behind their decision, and will be putting it all together this weekend in the quad.

On the other side of the school, the freshmen have mixed feelings on their theme, Atlanta. While Atlanta is hardly as worldly or as infamous as Cairo, Tokyo or Rome, many argue that it has much potential. This potential sprouts from the thriving businesses that reside there, as well as active music and sports franchises. But others say it seems to stick out from the others as a clear "freshman theme."

But it seems this year the real competition is in the middle. The current sophomore class beat the current junior class in homecoming last year, so the question must be asked, will the sophomores invade Tokyo, or will juniors provide a simple history lesson with the fall of Rome?

Sophomore class president Aditya Dev exudes confidence.

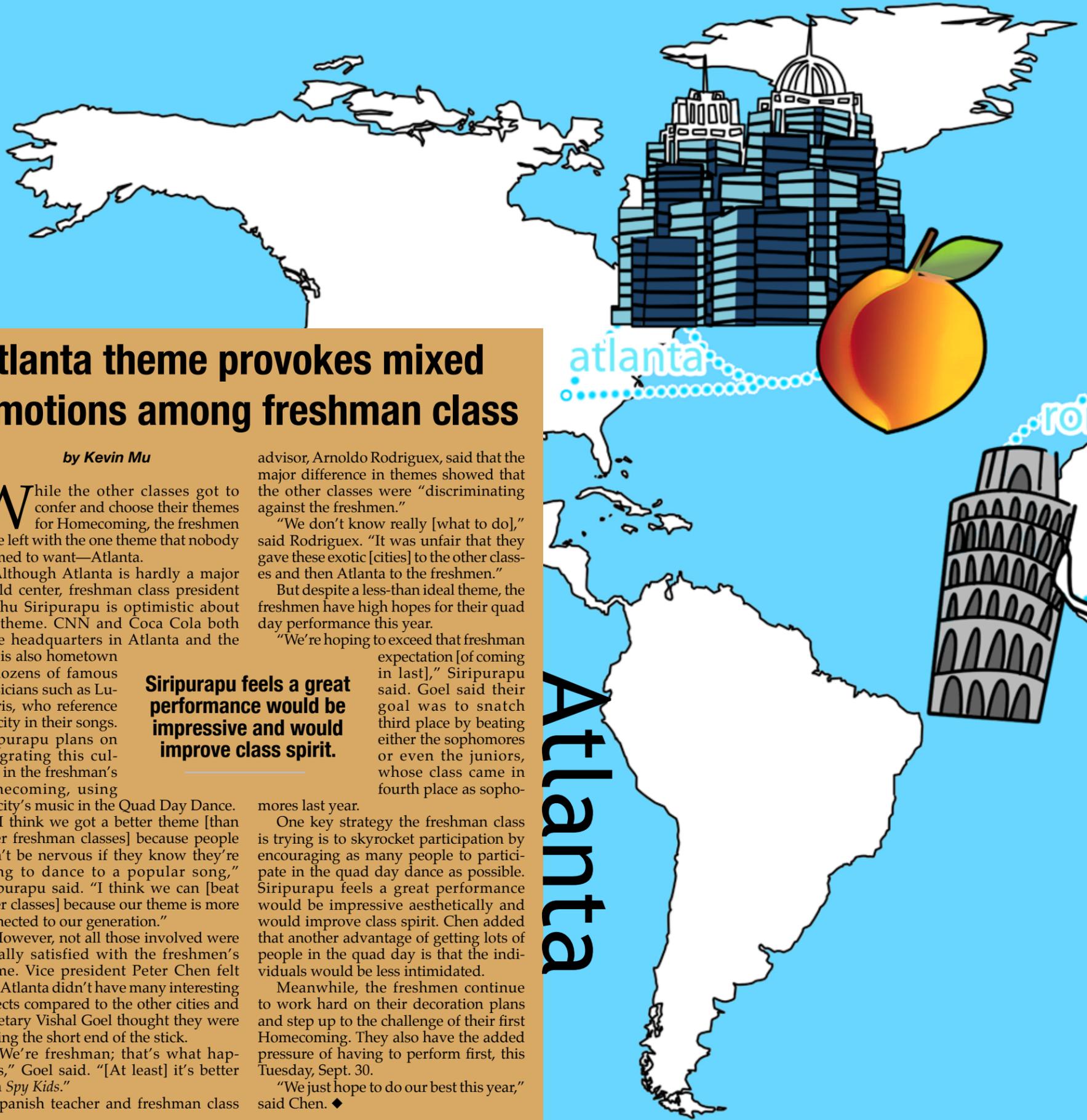
"We passed them up last year so I think we can do that [again] easily, no competition," said Dev. "We have a chance at second, easy."

Sophomores are quick to point out their victory over their superiors last year, but the juniors will have nothing of it.

"They had parent help last year," said junior class president Tiffany Mo. "I hope



Students watch the junior quad day dance during Homecoming last year.



Atlanta theme provokes mixed emotions among freshman class

by Kevin Mu

While the other classes got to confer and choose their themes for Homecoming, the freshmen were left with the one theme that nobody seemed to want—Atlanta.

Although Atlanta is hardly a major world center, freshman class president Anshu Siripurapu is optimistic about the theme. CNN and Coca Cola both have headquarters in Atlanta and the city is also hometown to dozens of famous musicians such as Ludacris, who reference the city in their songs. Siripurapu plans on integrating this culture in the freshman's homecoming, using the city's music in the Quad Day Dance.

"I think we got a better theme [than other freshman classes] because people won't be nervous if they know they're going to dance to a popular song," Siripurapu said. "I think we can [beat other classes] because our theme is more connected to our generation."

However, not all those involved were equally satisfied with the freshmen's theme. Vice president Peter Chen felt that Atlanta didn't have many interesting aspects compared to the other cities and secretary Vishal Goel thought they were getting the short end of the stick.

"We're freshman; that's what happens," Goel said. "[At least] it's better than *Spy Kids*."

Spanish teacher and freshman class

advisor, Arnaldo Rodriguez, said that the major difference in themes showed that the other classes were "discriminating against the freshmen."

"We don't know really [what to do]," said Rodriguez. "It was unfair that they gave these exotic [cities] to the other classes and then Atlanta to the freshmen."

But despite a less-than-ideal theme, the freshmen have high hopes for their quad day performance this year.

"We're hoping to exceed that freshman expectation [of coming in last]," Siripurapu said. Goel said their goal was to snatch third place by beating either the sophomores or even the juniors, whose class came in fourth place as sophomores last year.

One key strategy the freshman class is trying is to skyrocket participation by encouraging as many people to participate in the quad day dance as possible. Siripurapu feels a great performance would be impressive aesthetically and would improve class spirit. Chen added that another advantage of getting lots of people in the quad day is that the individuals would be less intimidated.

Meanwhile, the freshmen continue to work hard on their decoration plans and step up to the challenge of their first Homecoming. They also have the added pressure of having to perform first, this Tuesday, Sept. 30.

"We just hope to do our best this year," said Chen. ♦

Siripurapu feels a great performance would be impressive and would improve class spirit.

Atlanta

Sophomores build Rome in 25 days

by Synthia Ling

Last year, the sophomores lost to the freshmen in Homecoming, putting the class of 2010 in last place. The current sophomores, however, believe the same thing won't happen to them, especially with the city of Rome as their theme.

"I think [Rome] is amazing. There's definitely a lot we can do with it," said class treasurer Nina Mohanty.

After experiencing freshman Homecoming last year with the theme *Spy Kids*, the sophomores believe they'll improve a lot.

"This year is going to be a lot better [than freshman year] because we know what we're doing," said sophomore vice

president David Mandell. "We have the money and resources, and actually know how [Homecoming] works, so we can do a better job."

The sophomores see Rome as a terrific city for the quad decorations.

"I think compared to Tokyo, Cairo and, obviously, Atlanta, we have the best theme to decorate," said Mohanty.

The sophomores plan on building pillars and Roman monuments such as the Coliseum, said class president Aditya Dev. They cannot reveal all their decoration plans, though. According to Mohanty, they're "keeping it a surprise."

Not only will their decorations be more elaborate this year, the sophomores' quad day will be better choreographed.

"[Quad day] will be longer than the

lame seven-minute show we gave last year," said dance organizer Grace Kim. "There are more people participating and the dances will be fun. Hopefully, it will be entertaining."

It was an easy choice for the sophomores to choose Rome over Atlanta as their theme.

With the help of a better theme and more experience, they do not think beating the class of 2012 will be a challenge.

"I've been talking to some of [the freshmen], and I don't think they have a clue what they're doing," said Mandell. "It sounds like we're pretty good. We've got an idea of what we want to do and I think we can beat them. I don't think it will be too hard." ♦

Rome

Cairo

Juniors hope for better Homecoming end results

by Sophia Cooper

Godzilla will pay Saratoga High a visit this week as the class of 2010 decorates with their Homecoming theme of Tokyo. Sushi restaurants will be constructed in front of the office as Sanrio and Pokemon characters grace the hallway.

The junior quad day on Thursday, Oct. 2, will also follow the theme.

Despite previous Homecoming performances, the junior class is optimistic that their participation will be better now that they are upperclassmen.

"I think people have a lot more spirit this year," said junior class president Tiffany Mo. "Mostly, they saw that [our Homecoming performances] sucked the last two years and they

want to make it better."

The juniors have been working since Sept. 13 on preparations. They met at junior Varun Parmar's house every day for construction and choreography.

Although most of the Homecoming activities won't be disclosed until Thursday during quad day, they are trying to involve more students in the preparation and performance.

"Our class officers are from different groups, so we got people from all different [areas of school to work on Homecoming]," said Mo, "except band because they're busy."

The quad day skit will be based around a class trip to Tokyo and the adventures they encounter while in Japan. The rest of the performance, however, will remain as secret as a surprise ninja attack. ♦

The junior class is optimistic that their participation will greatly improve

TOKYO

قهره هليق ان!

東京



Graphics by Tiffany Tung

Senior class plans for its final Homecoming

by Alex Sclavos

With a disappointing performance their freshman year and improvements sophomore and junior year, the Class of 2009 is not just hoping to win Homecoming this year.

They are hoping to end their high school legacy with over-the-top decorations and an amazing quad day that leaves everyone speechless.

"We have had a lot of people help with the decorations," said senior class president Lewis Chen. "Everyone has contributed great ideas and I can't wait to see them all come together."

After much debate, the seniors chose Cairo to be their Homecoming theme.

"A lot of people wanted Tokyo and some wanted Rome, but in the end we agreed on Cairo," said Chen. "Now, everyone is excited about it, and cannot wait to show off all of the great decorations that have been created."

The Class of 2009 plans on keeping the tradition of seniors always dominating quad day alive and leaving a legacy for years to come.

"This year is going to be a lot bigger and better," said senior Casey Farmer, who is in charge of the senior quad day. "We have a lot more participation than in previous years and are hoping to end Homecoming with a bang."

The seniors have been working extremely hard on their decorations at Senior Farid Jiandani's house and this weekend they will bring all the decorations to school and work from dawn until assistant principal Karen Hyde kicks them off campus.

Not only are the decorations going to shock the school, the quad day will be creative and is going to have a lot of surprises.

"There are going to be no disappointments this year," said Farmer. "It is time to prove the seniors are the best class and always will be. ♦"



Melody Zhang

Senior Satomi Ishikawa works on a Cleopatra cut-out during Homecoming preparations.

CAIRO

RIPPED

THE

Students confront the reality of divorce

by Lyka Sethi and
Rebecca Nguyen

It was on a typical day three years ago that sophomore McKenzi Toh experienced one of the biggest surprises of her lifetime: the announcement of her parents' divorce. Although she had heard her parents fighting for a while, she never thought that they would give up on their relationship.

"I was really surprised because I didn't know at all that it was going to happen," said Toh. "Everyone was told about the divorce six months before except for me."

Though divorce is a common occurrence in today's society (the divorce rate in recent years has been about 50%), it can still change a child's life immensely. It has been linked to other problems including teenage suicide and drug use, both of which have fluctuated alongside divorce rates in past years.

Despite these findings, Toh, one of the hundreds of students at Saratoga High living with divorce, believes that it's important to not let divorce ruin her adolescence. The process was difficult to recover from, but Toh finally accepted reality and faced the situation with courage.

"It sometimes gets really emotional because I can hear fights on the phone. We've changed everything," said Toh. "There's a lot of stress."

Dealing with the fights and chaos of legal proceedings has taken a toll on Toh's

academic performance as well.

"Last year, I did very badly in school because I was so stressed out from all of the [arguments]," said Toh.

On top of being stuck in the middle of her parents' divorce, Toh has had to move five times in the past three years. She has lived all over the Bay Area, in places from Los Gatos to San Jose.

"It was different because after the divorce we had to move out of the house we'd had for seven years," said Toh. "All of the school changes were really complicated."

With the support of her friends and the knowledge that within the next months the divorce papers will be signed, Toh hopes to make it through the rest of this chapter of her life unscathed.

Junior Al Thorburn was forced to deal with a similar situation in 2002. Due to constant disagreements that plagued their relationship, his parents decided to formally separate. After a year of working out financial details and custody of Thorburn and his two siblings, the divorce papers were finally signed.

Thorburn clearly remembers the immediate effects the divorce had on his family life despite his foggy memory of the events that occurred.

"Even though I was so young, my whole life changed. I was really sad and angry for a long time and refused to see my father for about a year and a half after the divorce,"

said Thorburn.

He quickly began to miss the little things that were present in his life before the divorce: namely, the togetherness and unity of his family.

"I no longer had a normal family life," said Thorburn. "We couldn't have dinner or spend holidays together anymore. I have to spend Christmas with my mom one year and with my dad the next."

Long-term effects included having two homes, one in Saratoga and one in Los Gatos, and switching where he stayed on a weekly basis. Thorburn spends most of his time at his mother's home, but once a week and on occasional weekends he stays with his father.

"Alternating homes gets difficult," said Thorburn. "It affects my relationships with [my parents] a lot."

However, one thing that has remained a constant throughout the years is his relationship with his siblings.

"My siblings and I haven't let the divorce affect our relationships," said Thorburn. "We don't spend as much time together anymore, but we still get along well."

Through all of the years, Thorburn has stayed strong and found ways to deal with the hardship.

"I realized that I needed to move on from [the divorce] and deal with other things," said Thorburn. "It changed my life in many ways, but I didn't let it take over." ♦

Guidance counselors assist students in healing process

by Gautham Ganesan
and Vijay Menon

Although divorce has been a prominent societal issue since King Henry VIII formed the Church of England in 1534, recent studies have shown an unmistakable spike in divorce rates to the extent that nearly half of all United States marriages now end in disunity. Naturally, the victims of this phenomenon are not the sparring adults but their children, who are unwittingly thrust into a world of court appearances, custody battles and bitter arguments that often lead to grave long-term consequences.

Divorce is an especially pivotal issue on campus, where many students are affected by their parents' separation. Striving to provide relief to such



Safine



Atkinson

students, whose schoolwork and social interactions often bear the brunt of the pressure stemming from divorce, the administration often alerts teachers of the matter.

"We as a guidance staff inform the teachers just so [they] will have the issue on their radar screen," said assistant principal Brian Safine. "Not that they would get in the student's face or run up, hug them and give them a box of Kleenex every day, but so the teachers would at least know what is going on in their lives."

From there, students usually engage in weekly one-on-one sessions with teen counselor Judy Jackson.

"With [Jackson], they see her for an hour a week," said Safine. "Typically, the students who need the counseling come for an hour and then come back as needed each week for an hour to talk. It becomes part of their regular routine."

Although counselor Mark Atkinson was not at liberty to divulge the specifics of these sessions, he did elaborate upon the therapy afforded to students.

"It's counseling, it's therapy," said Atkinson,

"[They] talk out, in a confidential arena, the difficulties and things they're working through personally and within a family as a whole. It's helpful to put those problems on the table and look for solutions."

Both Safine and Atkinson stressed the confidentiality of the sessions.

"The sessions are absolutely confidential unless the student senses he or she is in danger or someone they know personally is in danger," said Safine.

With studies producing horrifying statistics to the tune of 70% of prison inmates having come from fatherless homes and 75% of teenage suicides stemming from one-parent households, providing consistent and efficient means of counseling to students affected by divorce is unquestionably crucial. Atkinson implores any student in such a situation to seek out forms of therapy.

"If you're stressed," said Atkinson, "access that help at whatever level you need that to be. Whether it's with friends, family or a professional, those people who access that community feel of help are the ones who are successful at [helping you get] through." ♦

AT STAMS

With nearly half of America's marriages ending in divorce, *The Falcon* takes a look at its effect on SHS students.

Columnist hesitates to bond with estranged father



One voice among many

A Senior

I arrived at Reading in the Redwoods one night, ready to brave the cold wind in eager anticipation the poetry class's performance. Minutes after I sat down, a middle-aged father led his little girl to the seats in front of mine. Though I tried to keep my eyes on the performance, I couldn't help but watch the interactions between the father and daughter. It was clear to me he had a protective air about him—when she shivered, he took off his sweatshirt and gave it to her. After a couple of minutes of watching them, I felt too much like a creepy stalker, and forced myself to watch the performance.

I have learned that no matter where I go, I will see fathers and their children. I see them taking walks by my house every day at

7:45 p.m. and on family bicycle rides. I see them at the supermarket, in parks and at the movie theaters; clearly the world is just reproducing too fast for me. It makes me ache to see such a loving relationship, but at the same time, that envy is what draws me to these people.

The family history

My father left my family when I was in the fifth grade. He had cheated on my mother for a number of years, but at that time, I wasn't angry with him. I thought that the reason he cheated on my mother was because he didn't want to leave us children, so by cheating on her, he could get the best of both worlds. The hurt that I didn't feel as an 11-year-old has finally caught up with me. Two years ago, I got into a big argument with him. He had ignored my brothers and me for almost the entire summer to spend time with his newest girlfriend. He had told me he was going on a business trip for a week, but after some sleuthing, I found out he had been to an exotic getaway with his girlfriend—and she was pregnant. When I confronted him, he put the blame on me for

lacking respect. How am I supposed to give my respect to someone who has done nothing to earn it? Now they're married, but after our fight, communication between us has been very limited.

After months of refusing to reply to my father, I finally accepted a lunch date with him. I told him to meet me at school, but told my mother I was going to go help out with Homecoming decorations. I made it very clear the day before that I only had one hour to spend with him. He came half an hour late and after he picked me up, we had to pick up the rest of his family members—by the time I got to the restaurant, I had 10 minutes to order and eat. I was so angry with him that I as soon as we got there, I told him we would need to leave immediately.

The present and future

Now I am entering my senior year and am afraid of never finding or fixing whatever "relationship" lies between me and my father. Yet at the same time, I have loyalties to my mother, who has done more for me in one hour than my dad has

done in his life. So here I am, in the eye of whatever storm is sure to come. Sooner or later, I will have to face the problems I have.

For now, I am taking the easiest way out, which is to hurt my father the way he hurt me. It's horrible, I know, to want to hurt someone, but I no longer feel guilty about it. Strange, right? Here I am, a 17-year-old, about to go to college, and I am pushing away every feeble attempt my father makes to rekindle our relationship. Am I not the girl who wants a boyfriend-hating, math-teaching and overprotective father? I justify my cruelty with the pain he has inflicted upon me, but even I know that my moral compass isn't pointing north anymore.

I don't know what I want from my father. I want him to keep trying to reach out to me so that I know he cares, but I also want him to stop so that I can feel less guilty. The only thing I know for sure is that I want to impart to every child that they should cherish the moments they have with their fathers (or mothers), because no matter how secure a family may seem at one point, it may not stay that way forever. ♦

FALCON FIGURES

49% of all marriages in America end in divorce.

1.5 million Number of students who deal with divorce every year.

75% of teenage suicides happen in a household where a parent is absent.

23.5% of mental diseases develop in teens dealing with divorce who do not receive active intervention.

—from www.divorcereform.org/stats.html

POTTER FAN
DISTRESSED

Nandini Ruparel

A Little Off-Balance

I was shocked. Hurt beyond belief.

Paralyzed, in front of the news article that said that it was delayed. I had just found out that the premier of the sixth Harry Potter movie (*Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince*) had been pushed back eight months. I wanted to yell at people, so I tried to use meditation to calm down. After that completely failed, I went downstairs and ate a bowl of chocolate ice cream to relax myself.

Thinking rationally

When I had calmed down enough to think rationally about what happened, I tuned into *MuggleCast*, the podcast for Harry Potter freaks like me, to hear what other fans were doing. Frankly, it didn't help. They couldn't fix the problem either. There seemed to be many plans of action, but nothing that seemed even vaguely plausible. Even on Facebook, groups appeared telling me to boycott the movie in protest of its delayed premier, an idea that seemed rather ironic and more intellectually worthy of *Twilight* fans.

I thought maybe I'd send a forceful letter to Warner Brothers, the studio in charge of production. This decision was not brought about by the fact that I thought it would make a difference—it was a request from my family to "do something!" instead of ranting about how much it sucked to not have a Harry Potter movie to watch in November.

Getting over it all

In the end, of course, I did not end up writing my letter, due to my lack of arguments against the delay. Although it was really irritating that they had released the teaser trailer right before telling us it was delayed (eight months, no less!), my annoyance was not a very compelling reason for the bigwigs at Warner Brothers to change their minds. As my brother in speech and debate might tell me, "Do you have any evidence to support that?" And quite frankly, what kind of evidence would I have that I was irritated? Except for the fistful of hair I had yanked, none at all.

Also, there was no way to argue the fact that this was a fiscally motivated decision, and a delayed Harry Potter movie is better than none. Even though I fumed about how greedy these large corporate companies are, I knew that I was actually just really glad they were there to make fans like me happy. And even though I knew that it was sad that the movie was delayed, like Alan Horn, the president of Warner Brothers, pointed out, it meant that there wouldn't be such a long gap between the sixth and seventh movies.

So, I've gotten over my heart-break. But Warner Brothers beware: If you decide to delay the seventh movie, I will send that letter. ♦

America not ready for Russell Brand

by Brian Kim

British comedian Russell Brand set the tone for MTV's Video Music Awards with a comedy act that kept many viewers entertained, and others aghast, on the evening of Sept. 7. Brand made his remarks about America during his live television debut, offending the audience by targeting the Republican Party and the Jonas Brothers.

Stepping outside the trend of past hosts, such as Chris Rock, Sean "P. Diddy" Combs and Jack Black, Brand walked the stage as a stranger to many Americans, except for those who could recall his minor role in *Forgetting Sarah Marshall*. Brand and his provocative performance were mistakenly besieged by the American people, mainly due to the misconceptions and mixed feelings viewers held for a non-American host and his explicit vocabulary.

From the start of his solo act, Brand injected a political bias on national television, asking viewers to vote for Barack Obama in the upcoming presidential election. In the process, Brand slid across a few critical remarks about President Bush, identifying him as "a retarded cowboy fellow" who "couldn't be trusted with a pair scissors."

It seemed as though the majority of the live audience was in support of Brand's comments, with a quick flash to pop-star Chris Brown cheering from the edge of his seat.

Viewers, however, expressed complaints



that Russell Brand was not qualified to voice his opinion, mainly because he is not American.

Unfamiliar to the "brand" of comedy that had been broadcast, some Americans were utterly appalled by the blatant insults unleashed into the political realm. However,

Brand's philosophy suggests that his actions at the VMAs were no accident.

"I think it's cheap and easy to be dismissive and condescending about American culture, and the tragedies that have befallen America in recent years," said Brand in an interview released by MTV days before the live event. "That's not what I'm about."

Further into his act, Brand breached another barrier that flustered Jonas Brothers fans, as well as parents, across the nation. After mocking the boy band and their religious decision for chastity and the wearing of purity rings, Brand was later criticized by other celebrity attendees, such as American Idol Jordin Sparks and blogger Perez Hilton, for his choice to turn what some consider an admirable decision into a joke.

"I thought he was funny, but I was upset," said Hilton shortly after the VMAs. "I think those Jonas Brothers are good kids. We shouldn't be making fun of them for promoting good values."

Brand hasn't set the best track record with the American audience, and a triumphant return to host the VMAs in following years is highly unlikely. MTV chose to remain quiet over the confrontational situation concerning Brand in this year's VMAs.

Although he wasn't as well accepted as MTV could've hoped, Brand has opened a trend that might reveal a side of comedy many Americans are still blind to.

"Brand surely won at least as many enemies as fans on Sunday night," said AP Entertainment Editor Jake Coyle. "But in contrast to some of the personality-less pop stars this 'American Idol'-crazy country has been producing lately, an import was a welcome change." ♦

Which Fall TV Show is for you?

Take this quiz and discover your new fall obsession!

1. What is your favorite class at school?

- A. Skip school, go to a club.
- B. AP Bio
- C. AP Chem
- D. Newspaper.

2. Your worst quality?

- A. Nothing, you know you love me! (XOXO)
- B. My knee is kind of messed up, and I'm addicted to pain killers and everyone hates me.
- C. I can kill people with my eyes.
- D. I shrug and smile at cameras a lot.

3. What do you go to the mall for?

- A. Shoes, boys, clothes and glamour.
- B. Vicodin "prescriptions."
- C. A Nissan versa, like in the comic!
- D. Coworker Bobble-heads.

4. Your friends think that you...

- A. Suck at keeping secrets.
- B. Know it's not Lupus!
- C. Died, like five times.
- D. Put their stuff in gelatinous desserts when they aren't looking.

5. An ideal extra-curricular?

- A. Working part time at your favorite boutique for the discounts.
- B. Yelling at your team for thinking it was lupus.
- C. Stopping time, regeneration, the regular stuff.
- D. Bear Hunting.

6. Your goal in life is to...

- A. Be the Queen B, B----!
- B. Make your boss fire you while hooking up with her. Not Lupus.
- C. Stop the crazy clock dude from eating everyone's powers.
- D. Make a success out of your beet farm and motel.

7. What's your most prized possession?

- A. Cellphone, of course!
- B. Mints that happen to be inside of a prescriptions medication bottle.
- C. Horn-rimmed glasses.
- D. Dundie award for "Whitest Sneakers."

8. What is your motto?

- A. You're nothing until you're talked about.
- B. Everybody lies.
- C. Save the cheerleader—save the world.
- D. That's what she said.

If you answered mostly A's: *Gossip Girl*

A risqué show about privileged teens on the Upper East Side, *Gossip Girl* most fits your personality. (Gee, that's interesting.) You'll be watching for the blend of unpredictable plot twists, sabotages and fashion ideas, ogling the abundant eye candy, or just desperately waiting for Chuck and Blair to get together. GG will leave you wanting more at the end of each episode, which air Mondays at 8 p.m.

If you answered mostly B's: *House M.D.*

You'll be charmed by the cunning mind and side-splitting sarcasm of Gregory House—a genius diagnostician, who also happens to be a Vicodin addict and uses his cane on the wrong side. Every episode is a detective story sprinkled with sarcastic humor as House solves case after case (the answer isn't Lupus!), despite that he may often put his patients' lives in danger to save them every Tuesday at 8 p.m.

If you answered mostly C's: *Heroes*

An action-packed show full of twisting plotlines and mind-bending perceptions, the self-healing and time-bending characters will keep you on your toes during every second of a chase to save the world. Join the group in their new season that explores the concept and psychology of villains on Mondays at 9 p.m. as they battle the villain Syler before he absorbs everyone's powers.

If you answered mostly D's: *The Office*

You're enthralled by all the wit contained in a single episode. Whether it's Michael's random comments, Stanley's sass and big butt or even Dwight's tips on growing beets, the cast of *The Office* has got you listening in for the hidden innuendos. Jim and Pam are so last season, watch out for Dwight and Angela on Thursdays at 9 p.m.

—by Mary Mykhaylova and Alex Song

Video directors gain fame through YouTube

by Mika Padmanabhan

Movie stars, famous musicians and even athletes have made great names for themselves through traditional media. However, many smaller celebrities achieve fame the other way around, by becoming popular through means of the Internet and YouTube and have then continued to be recognized by other forms of the media.

In the same way that some 12-year-old fans obsess over Miley Cyrus and the Jonas Brothers, many high school and college students obsess over the directors (members who post videos) of certain YouTube videos.

One music group, OK Go, received attention by posting a music video in which they performed dance moves in synchronization on treadmills.

The video skyrocketed their popularity, and they now have their songs played in stores and on the radio and are on almost every teen's iPod.

One of the most famous YouTube videos ever uploaded is the well-known "LEAVE BRITNEY ALONE" by Chris Crocker. He broadcast a video in which he sobbed and begged the media and fans to "leave Britney Spears alone," after her performance at the VMAs, which was widely considered disastrous. Most viewers just found the video greatly amusing, but its immense popularity left it with 22 million hits and 330 thousand comments.

The video also received so much media attention that parody videos even appeared on a few late night shows.

Currently, the outspoken Crocker runs his own blog in which he posts self-made videos and writes about his personal life.

However, he decided to leave YouTube since it appeared to him that he wasn't receiving enough appreciation from his skeptical viewers.

Another YouTube director, "HodgeStansson," is best known for his series "Unforgivable." In this series, the deranged main character known as Merch becomes absolutely infuriated as he tells stories of terrible deeds, such as smoking weed or beating up an innocent grandma while swearing profusely. Thousands of fans, for some reason, find this extremely appealing and amusing.

Like Crocker, "HodgeStansson" has created a webpage on which he blogs about his ideas for upcoming videos and posts pictures. He has even made clothing designs with slogans from his earlier creations.

For many aspiring musicians, directors and bloggers, an easy way to gain publicity seems to be posting videos on YouTube. For now, none have surpassed the status of mass media celebrities, but they certainly have teenagers buzzing. ♦

Indie takes on mainstream

by Mary Mykhaylova
and Tim Rollinson

Have you ever heard of "There For Tomorrow"? Probably not. Well, how about Kanye West? If you turn on the radio today, you will probably find one of his songs, along with all the other top hip-hop, rock and pop anthems.

Mainstream tracks play just about everywhere we go. Living in this world of mainstream we may forget about the hundreds of small-time musicians and labels that struggle to break into the music scene, overshadowed by the name-brand artists who continue to dominate the charts.

The music's message can range anywhere from a protest against treatment of immigrants to a broken heart, but today's mainstream music tends to focus a lot more on material and violence. Moreover, mainstream music tends to be overplayed to the point where it often becomes overwhelmingly annoying. Though it may have seemed appealing at first due to substantial lyrics, after *Hey There, Delilah* droned for the 253rd time, the chances of you wanting to smash your radio probably rose by 300%.

Tunnel vision is created within the audiences of mainstream music as well. Style, clothing, even subgenres of music are locked into the listener's mind, creating a mindset unwilling to accept new forms of music and culture. Music, however, is by no means a static market. With new ventures into music distribution through iTunes, it is now easy to see not only the biggest

songs of the day but songs from complete unknowns with ease.

Artists are slowly now receiving attention due to their MySpace music pages. "Indie" or independent music has transcended from subgenres to full-blown culture. Through advances in technology, communications and general distaste of mainstream tendencies, it is now made up of the thousands of artists who have yet to have their big break but continue to put out music that fans adore.

The profit margins of such artists tend to be miniscule compared to the record contracts of mainstream artists and airplay is limited to local and pirate radio stations, but a new sentiment has spawned from the ranks of Indie fans and artists—the drive to remove themselves from mainstream ideas and tendencies has become a source of pride for Indie cultures.

Fans enjoy being one of the few who listen to an artist. Notable movements like the drug and violence free "Straight Edge" punk culture has permeated through local listeners and bands creating disparities between mainstream and indie sympathizers.

The differences between the two ends of the spectrum have little to do with talent and love of music, but rely more on culture, motivations and messages. Mainstream and Indie music should be coming closer due to modern day technology, but a strong cultural divide stands in the way. ♦

INDIE AND MAINSTREAM HAVE GROWN CLOSER TO A NEARLY INDISTINGUISHABLE BLEND, WHILE SYMPATHIZERS OF EACH TRY TO STAY SEPARATE FROM THE OTHER.

Alternative books give a reason not to judge a piece by its cover

by Tim Tsai

When one thinks of the "popular books" of today's society, he or she usually recalls the long nights reading the *Twilight* or *Harry Potter* series. However, there are numerous books that may not be as appealing to a high school student fan base, but are still massively popular. The thrillers of John Grisham and James Patterson, as well as numerous non-fiction books along the lines of *Freakonomics* and *The World is Flat* are all best-sellers, and each offer contents that give the reader an engrossing read.

Harry Potter and *Twilight* are the two prime examples of contemporary literature.

The seven *Harry Potter* books have sold over 400 million copies worldwide, have spawned a tremendously popular movie series, and elevated author J.K. Rowling to royal status.

The *Twilight* series is currently extremely popular among teenagers, especially girls. Its books have sold over 50 million copies worldwide, and have led to the release of a movie due to release this year.

The commonalities between *Harry Potter* and *Twilight* lie in their similar story structure. Both series revolve around average common main characters. As these two characters forge ahead in their fantasy worlds, readers find it easy to picture themselves in these situations, whether as a wizard or a vampire.

J.K. Rowling and Stephanie Meyer both employ a literary strategy that greatly appeals to readers. Their characters are easy to relate to because they are everyday people who suddenly are endowed with extraordinary powers and adventures. Furthermore, both authors set their fantasy stories in a modern times, allowing this effect to be increased. Meanwhile, there lies an almost infi-

nite amount of literature outside the sphere of the popular series novels. One example is the contemporary nonfiction books chronicling the state of the current world.

For junior Varun Parmar, these books provide the bulk of his reading entertainment.

"I like reading *Harry Potter* and those kinds of books too, but nonfiction books to me are more interesting because they are a form of learning topics outside of school that interest me," said Parmar.

While these books may not seem to be as popular as a *Harry Potter*, they are also renowned. And while *Freakonomics'* claim to three million readers may pale in comparison to *Twilight's* 50 million or *Harry Potter's* 400 plus million, the accolades won by *Freakonomics* and the praise it has received from renowned contemporary figures in the literary world attest to its greatness.

While many teenagers may be

much more drawn to the tales of a wizard than an economist, it is necessary to point out that the popularity of these non-fiction books is not based on the dry facts it spits out, but the incredibly interesting ways they are written. For example Steven D. Levitt, the author of *Freakonomics*, uses economic reasoning to answer questions such as "what do schoolteachers and sumo wrestlers have in common?" and "How is the Ku Klux Klan like a group of real-estate agents?"

These books wouldn't be successful unless they found a creative way to tackle contemporary issues, and that is precisely what makes these books popular among adults. While students will probably always rather read a fantasy book along the lines of wizards and vampires than a book on globalization, it is worthy to note that even though these two styles differ in their subjects, they both weave creative and enticing tales into their pages. ♦

the URGE to \$PLURGE



Take a look at the way students and teachers roll with their dough.

Economics teacher finds joy in collectible items

by Umadevi Sambasivam

Even from the exterior, students can tell from the neon lights that Room 605 is a unique classroom. Their suspicions are only confirmed when they enter the classroom and are met with toys, soda, statues, stuffed animals and college posters.

"All the collections started when I first came here," said Economics teacher Todd Dwyer. "Basically [the action figures] show different types of generations."

Above the whiteboard at the front of his classroom stand many cartoon action figures, ranging from G.I. Joes to Sponge-Bob Squarepants.

Many of the action figures are from the 1950s, with figures like Alfred E. Neuman, the MAD magazine character, Robby the Robot from *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, the Robot from *Lost in Space* and a few characters from *Where the Wild Things Are*.

"I even have some characters that go back from before that [Baby Boomer Classic Generation]," said Dwyer.

Dwyer also collects figures from the "next generation," such as Homer Simpson and Krusty the Clown. All of the action figures are from "the three big generations: Baby Boomers, Generation X (Gen X), and Millennials."

The Baby Boomers are from around 1946 to 1963, Gen X is from 1964 to 1981 and the Millennials are roughly from 1982 to 1994.

Dwyer has gotten some of his toys from Tower Records, Toys "R" Us and various garage sales. At Toys "R" Us, the action figures cost around \$5 to \$6. Sometimes,

students will give him action figures as presents.

There are also trains and airplanes, which Dwyer uses to illustrate points in his lessons.

In the back of Dwyer's room, Dwyer has WWII model airplanes. He estimated that he had invested about \$1000 in them.

"The trains are the most expensive things I have in here. There are \$1,500 worth of trains here," said Dwyer.

Not only does Dwyer collect action figures, but he also collects Coke bottles from many parts of the world, such as Central America, Asia, Saudi Arabia.

"Many of his toys and coke bottles, have interesting stories behind them," said Senior Frank Mao.

For example, Mr. Dwyer showed students bottles of coke that he had brought back from Korea and Nicaragua, and one his brother back from Saudi Arabia.

However, all this "clutter" just adds to the unique atmosphere of the room.

"I haven't done a lot in the room for two years, because it's kind of full. Kids come here with a sticker of [their schools] and I have a hard time finding a place for it," said Dwyer.

Students like the amount of time, effort and money Dwyer had put in the fabulous room.

"I really like his room," said Senior Corey Rateau. "It feels very lived-in. When you go into his room, you always have something new to look at."

All the toys, Coke bottles and trains may seem frivolous to some students in his class. However, these objects provide a fascinating link to the past. ♦



photos by Melody Zhang

Top: Dwyer has spent \$1,500 on his train collection, which is displayed in his room. Above: Dwyer stands beside the various figurines placed on top of his whiteboard.

Senior creates works of art with sheets of pricey paper

by Tiffany Tung

When most people think of paper, they tend to think of the plain white or loose-leaf lined kind. Senior Grace Wu is not like most people. To support her hobby of journaling and crafting, Wu splurges on all things related to paper: magazines, books, notebooks, journals, scrap booking papers, posters, prints, postcards, stationery and more.

Wu's obsession with buying all things paper began in middle school when she picked up the hobby of journaling. She now uses the paper to create artwork as gifts for her friends.

"So the first paper-related items that I bought were journals and diaries. I'm picky with what I write in because you write in journals for a long time," Wu said. "I have standards and I do end up buying expensive journals because them. In high school, I started experimenting making collages with paper and making things for my friends. That's when I started buying specialized papers."

Wu buys most of her paper at the store Paper Source, which, of course, sells all things paper. Because specialized papers can run a high price, Wu has two criteria for paper: She needs to really like the paper, and it can-



Amanda Yi

Senior Grace Wu uses a variety of paper, embellishments, and a unique artistic method to create a personalized journal for a friend.

not be too expensive.

"I use a lot of paper in my artwork and I'm satisfied and happy when my gifts to my friends bring a smile to their faces," said Wu. "Because of this, I don't care how much money I spend on paper. Whether the paper I buy is cheap or expensive, if it brings joy to someone else, then I think it's worth it."

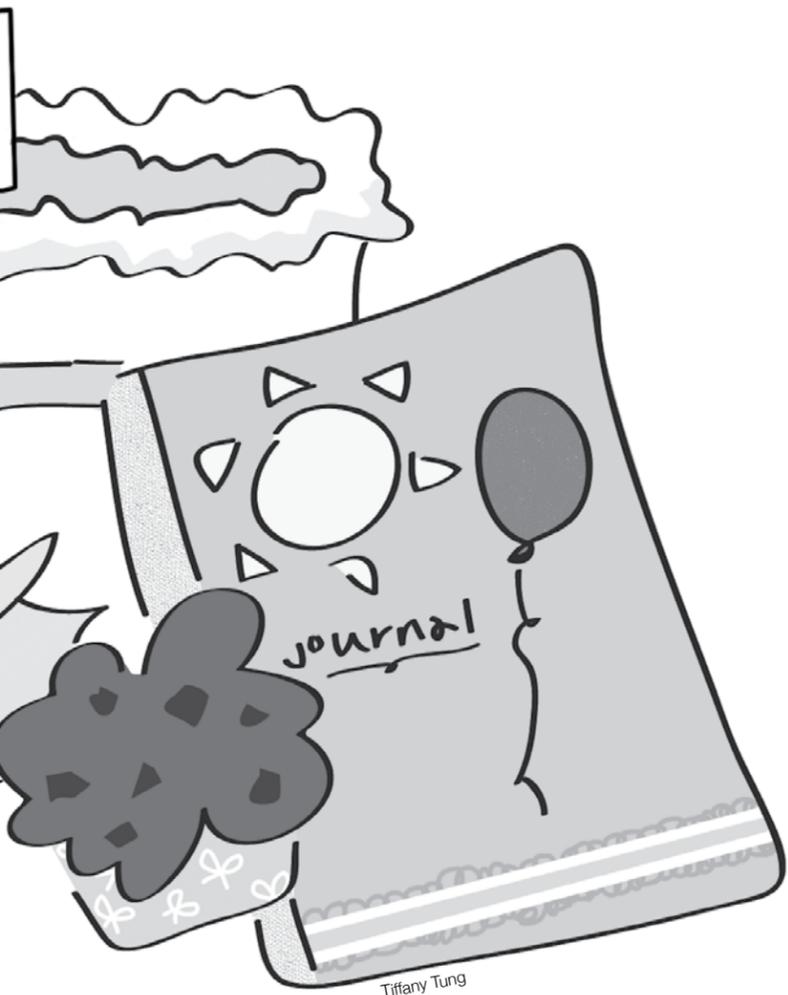
Wu is fascinated with the artistic field, and her purchases reflect her interests. Though most people buy magazines, read it once, and then throw them away,

Wu keeps them as references.

"I'm very interested in photography and fashion. I do go back and look at my magazines; they don't just lie on my floor forever," said Wu.

She feels that the money spent on paper and other paper related goods is not splurging. Rather, she views it as money well-spent.

"My journals contain my secrets. Everything I buy has a use. To other people it may seem like a splurge, but to me, it's not," she said. ♦



Tiffany Tung

TOGATALKS

What do you like to splurge your money on?

If there's a shirt that I really want to buy, I would buy it even if it is really expensive.



senior Christina Lauro



junior Preethi Rajendran

I'm obsessed with shoes, so I'm continuously spending loads of money on them, especially heels.

I spend about \$60 per month from my allowance on video games for my Xbox and PC.



sophomore Dylan Reader

Senior baker enjoys splurging for friends

STUDENT FINDS PASSION IN BAKING COSTLY CAKES, ASPIRES TO BECOME PROFESSIONAL CHEF



photo courtesy of Sara Gambord

Senior Sara Gambord presents her final English 11 Honors project, the would-be wedding cake of two characters from F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, *The Great Gatsby*.

by Alicia Lee
and Kirstie Lee

When senior Sara Gambord hands her friends a birthday cake, it is not merely a rainbow sprinkle easy bake cake covered in a thick layer of store-bought frosting, but an artistic creation filled with time, effort and flawless design. Not only that, but the high-quality ingredients in her cakes can add up to be worth more than \$70.

Beginning her interest at a young age by baking with her mother, Gambord has taken her cakes to a higher level in the past year and a half by making more ambitious cakes and using quality ingredients. Much of her expenses go to purchases of fancy chocolate, mostly Godiva, and fondant, a pasty cream dough of complex sugar and water.

"[Fondant] gets pretty expensive, but you buy it in pounds. You can get it at Michael's, but I like to go to a bakery instead because it has better quality," said Gambord.

Gambord's first expensive creation was made her junior year after the first semester finals.

"I made it randomly during the four-day weekend," said Gambord. "It turned out to have three tiers and I

ended up giving it to my friend."

Since then, Gambord has made many intricate goods, ranging from cakes for her classes to chocolate cookies for friends. A big hit was the cake she made for Shakespeare's birthday celebration in poetry class.

"I like making cake the most because you can put a lot of time and effort into it, whereas if you make a chocolate chip cookie, there's nothing much you can do with it," said Gambord.

Her pricey hobby has led her to find a job at Saratoga Chocolates in downtown Saratoga, where she has been working since May. Her job has gotten her into free classes that teach the art of chocolate-making and has, in turn, given her even more passion for fancy foods.

"I'll definitely still [bake] for fun in the future," said Gambord. "I want to take some classes in college, because I haven't had any formal training yet."

Gambord splurges on baked goods not for herself, but for other people during special events.

"I just like the overall product to be something really nice," said Gambord. "I like making cakes and sharing them with people and making [those people] happy." ♦

Student learns lessons from teaching abroad



Aditi Jayaraman

Head in the Clouds

I have teachers with college degrees, and years of classroom experience. They don't. I have a limitless amount of supplies at my fingertips. They don't. I have a comfortable classroom setting, with air conditioning and proper desks. They don't.

I spent part of this past summer teaching at a K-10 school named Suddhanandha Vidyalaya, located on the southern coast of India in a small town called Uthandi. The school was built in an effort to educate less fortunate children.

The school consists of nearly 560 students from nearby villages, the majority of whom belong to fisherman families. The children are the first members to receive an education.

Upon arrival at the school on my first

day to meet with the head coordinator, I had barely taken one step onto the campus before hoards of children were running toward me. "What is your name, miss?" "Where do you come from, miss?" "You are very tall, miss." The younger students asked me almost every question possible, nearly ripped my hand off in their attempts to grasp if I was a real "foreigner" on their turf or just an illusion, and of course, hurled any little fragments or phrases of English they knew at me.

The next morning began at 8 a.m. with a bus ride that I shared with other students and faculty members to school. While on the bus, I observed the conditions in which they were living. One first grader, Manju, left her family's thatched hut and climbed into a nearby seat.

Once we arrived on the campus, I assumed there would be far less commotion compared to the day before. How wrong I was. Students, once again, came running towards me, smothering me with their attention, love and questions. What surprised me most was that despite the fact that I was a mere high school student, I was being given such clout by not only the students, but the staff members as well. I

was always welcome to speak at the daily announcements, and teachers often came to me for help with English or suggestions for lessons plans.

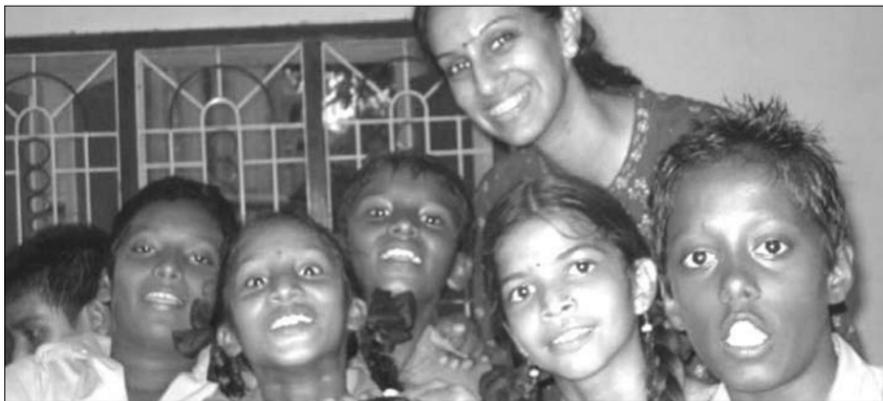
I began by teaching the kindergarten classes basic shapes for drawing, a fairly challenging task, as they did not understand any English beyond the basic terms like "cat," "dog," and "no." I then moved on to working with students in first, third, fourth and fifth grades on more tough, intricate projects varying from tissue paper flowers to decorative photo frames. I also spent time teaching fourth graders Indian vocal music in the form of short songs. Two weeks later, I had worked with the 6th to 8th graders on art projects as well.

What stood out throughout my teaching experience was the attentiveness of students and their innocence. I learned that what the students valued most was the praise of the teacher. Students would continuously come up to me for my approval of their work. If I expressed any doubt, anything less than "very good," the student stood motionless, unaware as to what they should do, discouraged and waiting for a more positive reply. If I

told one student, "Wow! Amazing!" and then told the following student, "Very good!", the second child would consider my words void.

Considering that many of these children lacked material items, I assumed that they would want to take their projects home with them. Yet I was proven wrong by a number of children who offered me their projects as gifts. In addition, students showered me with other mementos like earrings, a miniature vase, chocolates and the students of one class even gifted me with all their pens, when a dearth of writing utensils exists for most of them. Such generosity shocked me and made me wonder how children with so little, had so much.

Since my experience at Suddhanandha Vidyalaya, I've gained a new appreciation for the life that I live in Saratoga. I can no longer write one word on a piece of paper, crumple it up and throw it away, or curse at my computer (which I now realize is a gift) when it freezes on me. Perhaps, the greatest thing I've gained is a better understanding of affection and generosity and the power they have on those around you. ♦



FAR LEFT: SENIOR ADITI JAYARAMAN POSES WITH A GROUP OF THE CHILDREN SHE WORKED WITH OVER THE SUMMER IN A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM.

LEFT: STUDENTS AT SUDDHANANDHA VIDYALAYA SCHOOL IN INDIA PROUDLY DISPLAY THE FANS THEY MADE

photos courtesy of Aditi Jayaraman

Los Gatos gelato store offers up delicious treats

by Emily Chen
and Elizabeth Cheng

Although Saratoga's rivalry with Los Gatos leaves much to be desired, there is one thing we will admit: In contrast to The Village, downtown Los Gatos is filled with a bevy of delicious restaurants that will please even the pickiest of eaters. To fill an ice cream craving on a hot day, two *Falcon* reporters visited Dolce Spazio, an award-winning gelato store, and left extremely satisfied.

Gelato, the Italian version of ice cream, is by definition denser than ice cream, resulting in a more flavorful and creamier product. It is also healthier because it contains less butterfat than traditional American ice cream. Dolce Spazio makes 28 flavors, but only 16 are available in the store on any given day. They also offer a varied selection of cold and hot drinks, and a large display of mouth-watering pastries, which were tempting, but quite pricy.

Emily's take:

We tried Dolce Spazio, "sweet space" in Italian, because it was a swelteringly hot day and downtown Los Gatos is just a short

10-minute drive from school. The place offers many flavors, from the standard, such as Vanilla Bean and Cookies and Cream (dubbed "Oreogasmic"), to the unique, such as Bananas Foster.

The interior of the store was pleasantly quaint, with friendly workers who were glad to give us samples. Though the seating inside looks rather limited, there is a refreshing and spacious patio area behind the store. I chose a single serving of Hazelnut, and although it was on the expensive side at \$3.35,

it was worth every penny.

Since gelato is denser than ice cream, it fills you up more quickly. Though the serving seemed small, the gelato was so thick that it took longer to eat. The gelato had a noticeably high quality, with an extremely authentic hazelnut taste and hazelnut bits scattered throughout. Gelato is traditionally served with a wafer, and Dolce Spazio's was the perfect complement to their gelato.

All of Dolce Spazio's flavors looked delectable, and since their use of high quality ingredients is evident, I will definitely be back to try more (or all...) of the flavors. Dolce Spazio is open until 11:30 on Friday and Saturday, making it the perfect late-night snack spot



Emily Chen

DOLCE SPAZIO'S BRICK EXTERIOR BELIES THE WIDE ARRAY OF FOOD THAT IT OFFERS INSIDE, SUCH AS PASTRIES, CAPPUCINOS, IN ADDITION TO GELATO—BRING YOUR WALLET BECAUSE PRICES RUN HIGH.

Liz's Take:

From the outside, Dolce Spazio looks like a homey little cottage built of red bricks. The interior is just as sweet, with a local photographer's work on the walls and varied seating choices from high stools next to a counter to small circular tables surrounded by metal chairs. My only complaint would be the slightly cramped feeling the place gives.

Faced with 16 flavors and no idea what to choose, I made an

impulse decision and ordered a cup of Cappuccino Chip, coffee gelato and semi-sweet chocolate chips, in the smallest size. I felt a little perturbed by the price, \$3.35, considering how small the cup was. I thought I'd finish within a few scoops. I was very, very wrong.

The gelato was incredibly filling. In fact, not only was it filling, but it was absolutely delicious. The coffee gelato was balanced, not too sweet or too bitter, and extremely creamy. There were

plenty of mini chocolate chips in the gelato, that added a nice texture. The light, crisp wafer served alongside the dessert was delicious in its own right and downright heavenly way

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that I will be paying Dolce Spazio more visits. Pricy? Yes. Delicious? Definitely. Worth every penny? Without a doubt. Less than a ten-minute drive from the school, it is the perfect place for spontaneous sweet indulgences. ♦

FOOTBALL



courtesy of Dennis Farmer

Senior tight end Alex Wokas leaps for a catch during the game against Menlo-Atherton on Sept. 6. The game ended in a 30-0 Saratoga loss.

New head coach hopes to repeat CCS success

by Karthik Anaamalai and Abhi Venkataramana

After a winning football season last year that ended with a heart-breaking loss to Live Oak in the CCS semifinals, the Falcons are looking to repeat last year's success. However, this year the Falcons are almost a completely different team with a new head coach, new offensive formation, new uniforms, new starters and a new league.

"My goal for this year is to practice on Thanksgiving Day," said head coach Tim Lugo, "because, if we practice on that day, that means we are in the second round of the CCS playoffs."

Lugo was recently hired to replace Kurt Heinrich, who coached at Saratoga for 11 years before leaving, because the school wanted an on-campus football coach. Lugo has over 11 years of coaching experience, spending time at Valley Christian, Leland and Pioneer. He decided to coach here because he thought "it would be a great opportunity career wise."

"I always told myself that I wanted to be a head coach, but it had to be a special situation for me to take it," said Lugo.

Lugo will have a challenge ahead this season coaching in the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League's toughest division. Since the Falcons won the El Camino Division last year with a record of 8-4, they have moved up to the De Anza Division, which includes larger and stronger teams such as Palo Alto and Los Gatos, who were 11-2 and 10-1, respectively, last season.

"[This season] won't be as easy as it was last year, not that last year was easy but because we are in the De Anza Division, a much tougher league," said

Lugo. "[Also] our schedule is a lot tougher than it was last year."

In hopes of adapting to the stronger teams of the De Anza Division, Lugo has brought back one of Saratoga's most successful offenses, the Wing T, used in the glory days of coach Benny Pierce. Lugo chose this offense because it takes advantage of misdirection and counters in order to confuse the defense.

"We don't have the biggest guys in the world here," said Lugo, "but this offense puts us in the position to beat guys that are a lot bigger than us. I think it is an offense that will help our kids win."

The Falcons had a chance to practice the Wing T during the off-season at Cal Camp, and many players, including senior quarterback Michael Guercio, were pleased with the offense.

"We did a great job up at Cal," said Guercio. "It was the first time we ran the offense and we moved the ball really well."

The Falcons' new offense did not work well in their first two games. Against the Alisal Trojans on Sept. 19, they lost 27-14 despite strong defense. The offense started out slow but picked up their game in the second half, scoring twice.

After working hard in the off-season the Falcons had high expectations for their non-league season opener against the Menlo Atherton Bears on Sept. 6, but six turnovers ultimately led to a 30-0 defeat.

"The turnovers killed us," said Guercio. "The team was really disappointed because we took ourselves out of the game. We are going to build on every aspect of it to get better."

The Falcons will be playing Westmont in their home opener at 7:30 p.m. tonight. ♦

GIRLS' GOLF

New team opens season showing great potential

by Tim Rollinson and Uttara Sivaram

For the first time in school history, a girls' golf team is teeing off. A growing number of requests to the school last year resulted in the team being formed.

Eight students said they'd play, two more than the minimum player requirement for high school golf, and the team became official.

"I think we have a lot of players with a really positive attitude," said No. 2 golfer sophomore Annaliese Parker. "The team has a lot of potential for the future."

Casey Hall, golf coach and member of the Saratoga Country Club, was picked to coach the team. Most recently, Saratoga got ready for its fourth match, matching up against Burlingame, San Mateo, and Woodside on Sept. 15 at the Saratoga Country Club. No. 6 golfer junior Natasha Aleksic put up the best score for the Falcons with a 54 followed by a solid 56 by Weiss. The team ended up third out of the four teams, recording a team score of 231. Though they beat Woodside's 247, San Mateo sought redemption and beat the Falcons, post-

ing a 220 while Burlingame took first place, posting a low 194.

On Sept. 10, the girls teed up against Aragon and San Mateo at Poplar Creek, San Mateo's home course. Sophomore Uttara Sivaram, the No. 1 golfer, led the way, posting a 47, followed by Parker, who played a 50 stroke game.

The team finished with a

score of 210 strokes, edging out San Mateo's 216, but losing to Aragon's 193.

"I think we have a lot of players with a really positive attitude. The team has a lot of potential for the future."

—sophomore Annaliese Parker

The Falcon's previous game was on Sept. 8 against Menlo Atherton; the teams played on the narrow fairways of the Saratoga Country Club.

"The grass was soaked, so it was hard to hit good shots," said No. 5 golfer junior Kayla Epsman. "The opposing team had a tough time too, but they were nice about it and played pretty well."

Due to the marshy fairways and the usual chal-

lenges that Saratoga's difficult home course provides, both teams found themselves playing far above par. Sivaram and Parker had difficulty reaching the greens on the second hole, where their shots landed in roughs with long and muddy grass, leading to uncharacteristically high scores of 49 and 54, respectively. The cumulative scores were 348-377, a Saratoga loss.

In their first match on Sept. 4, the Falcons faced off against San Mateo. Due to complications with the availability of five members, only three players went to the match.

"I thought the game went pretty well," said Parker. "Our team only sent three people, but overall, we played well."

Because of the four-player minimum however, the game was forfeited at the end.

This did not dampen the girls' spirit, and they say that they are proud to be winning and scoring in such close margins with the other schools.

"This is, after all, our first year as a team," said Epsman, "but I can definitely see room for improvement." ♦

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GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

Early tournaments spur team's confidence

by Neyha Bhat
and Nathan Kim

This year the girls' volleyball team is looking forward to a strong season with a new coach guiding their young, talented roster. Brad Frederickson, who has been coaching the boys' varsity volleyball team since 2005, will replace Lori Gragnola as coach.

Gragnola coached the girls' JV team for 11 years and was an assistant coach for the varsity team for nine years before being promoted to head coach in 2006. She left Saratoga High after the 2007 season and will continue coaching the Monta Vista boys' varsity team in the spring.

Frederickson has an impressive amount of coaching experience under his belt. He started coaching the Campbell High team in 1978, while playing his first year of college volleyball. In 2005, he was offered a chance to lead the boys' volleyball team, and two years later, he led them to the CCS semifinals. Consequently, he has high expectations for the girls.

"I'm excited about the [consistent] level of talent on the team," said Frederickson. "It's different from other schools that only have one or two key players."

Frederickson believes he has a lot of material to work with, since many of the players on the team have extensive backgrounds in club volleyball.

Three captains, senior Kiersten Dolbec and juniors Chelsea Sabella and Nicole Gragnola lead the team. Frederickson noted that Dolbec is probably one of the best players in the league and her aggressive play at the net will make her "a force to be reckoned with." He also pointed out that sophomore setter and hitter Hanna Nielson is a phenomenal athlete and can only improve as she has an amazing amount of potential.

Frederickson hopes to break any bad habits

with technique that the players have developed and to bring their game to a new level.

"Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard," said Frederickson.

On Sept. 18, Monta Vista played an impressive defensive game but was no match for Saratoga's superior offense. Saratoga won in three quick sets: 25-16, 25-18 and 25-11. Saratoga was able to come back from early net and serving troubles to rout the Matadors.

On Sept. 11, Sobrato turned out to be an easy match-up. Saratoga won in four sets: 25-13, 25-7, 20-25 and 25-14. The front row played an exciting game, with a combined 42 kills from Nielson, Gragnola and Dolbec. Sophomore Erika Ho came in to finish off the last game with a stunning seven consecutive aces.

Two days earlier, Saratoga played its first league game against Westmont. Saratoga dispatched its opponent again in four sets: 25-20, 19-25, 25-14 and 25-16.

"We came together as a team really well, especially after the weekend tournament," said Nielson. "Emily Baba did a really good job passing, but we need other people to step up for us too."

Saratoga started its tournament record strong by winning the red division at the Milpitas Spikefest on Sept. 6. After meeting at Saratoga Bagels at 6:30 a.m., the team headed to Independence High School for their first tournament of the season. They lost their first game, missing the chance to qualify for the gold, silver or bronze ranks but rebounded well with four consecutive wins.

On Sept. 20, Saratoga attended the Westmont Invitational Tournament. This week, they had a loaded schedule with games on Tuesday at Gunn, Wednesday against Valley Christian and Thursday against Homestead. Scores could not be published due to publication deadlines. ♦



Amanda Yi

Senior captain Kiersten Dolbec hits a spike on Sept. 18 against the Matadors.

BOYS' WATER POLO

Toga sinks Santa Clara in first league contest

by Kevin Mu
and Guy Quanrud

Boys' water polo has had a new coach every year for the past four years, and this year is no exception. Swim coach Christian Bonner is filling the position this year, so the team will have to adjust, once again, to new strategies.

"It's pretty hard [having a new coach] because of the different drills they do during practice," said senior Nick Mortazavi.

Bonner is focusing on getting the team to get back into shape.

"A lot of the boys have not played polo in recent months," he said, "so my goal for the season is getting the boys into shape as best I can."

The team is moving down to the lower-level El Camino division of the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League this year, but team captains Mortazavi and senior Arian Mahini, and key players juniors Johnathan Chen, Kevin Rollinson, and senior Michael Huang are planning to help lead the team to multiple victories.

"It's a good thing and a bad thing at the same time," Mahini said. "It sucks moving down a league, but at the same time we're going to [do really well]."

Bonner hopes to get the team back to the higher De Anza division. He encourages the team to give their best effort in all the matches they play.

"Every game's important," Bonner said. "Whether it be a scrimmage in practice or a tournament or a regular season game, every game is a learning

experience."

This is especially true for the current season, when the team needs to win almost all of its games to move back up to their original league.

The team got off to a rough start at the season-opening Schmidt Tournament, losing all five matches against tough teams from Southern California. Counters by the other team and costly turnovers resulted in too many goals, preventing the Falcons from keeping up with their opponents. Mortazavi, along with Huang, were the stars of the tournament, with Huang scoring four goals and Mortazavi knocking in five.

The tournament was a good learning experience for the team and because they faced extremely difficult opponents in the tournament, their results there are not indicative of how they will play in the season.

"It was good start," Bonner said. "I definitely thought that the tournament was a success. It's hard when there are been so many different coaches for the kids."

They played their first league game of the season against Santa Clara High school on Sept. 18 and won with a blowout score of 13-6. Four players, Chen, Huang, Mahini, and Mortazavi each got hat tricks, with three goals apiece. Rollinson added another goal to bring the team total to 13.

"I think the team definitely played well in our first league game," Mortazavi said. "Hopefully the momentum can carry throughout the rest of the season." ♦

FIELD HOCKEY

Injuries hobble girls

by Shannon Galvin
and Ren Norris

After making the semi-finals in CCS last year, field hockey is ready to hit off a successful season this year under Coach Amber Wilson. The team traveled to several tournaments in the spring and continued practice throughout the summer.

Unfortunately, only weeks into the school year, several players have already been sidelined with injuries. Seniors Ashley Charette and Laura Ruddy and juniors

Jessica Liscom and Diana Douglass are among those injured, and others have been out for periods of time.

Charette fractured her hand during practice the second week of school. She sat out for two weeks and then decided to come back even though her doctor recommended four weeks of rest.

"It's been hard to come back because it's still hard for me grip and hit with a stick," said Charette.

Ruddy was out for a week and a half with a pulled muscle on her shoulder blade and Liscom was out for a week after pulling her rectus femoris, the muscle from her knee to her hip.

"Not being able to practice made me not as prepared for the season," said Liscom.

Douglass has two stress fractures in her ankle, one an old injury from track last year, and one fractured at field hockey tryouts. Although she is cur-

rently wearing a brace, she hopes to be able to get back in a month.

"Hopefully, I'll be able to get back before the season ends," Douglass said, "but it'll be hard because I will be out of shape."

Despite multiple injuries, the team has been playing fairly well. They won their first two pre-season games against Prospect (5-0) and North Salinas High School (4-1). The team lost to Gilroy in a pre-season game and also in the semifinals of the Leigh Tournament.

"Obviously it's bad that the injured players are out," said Wilson, "but with injured players,

sitting on the bench, younger players get to play more and it's only pre-season, so it's not a big deal yet."

Field hockey competes in the A division in the California Interscholastic Federation of the Central Coast Section. Last year, the team made it to the semifinals at CCS, losing to 0-3 to Los Gatos. This year they look forward to developing the team to defeat power schools including Los Gatos, Mitty and St. Francis.

The official field hockey league season began Sept. 24. at home against Leland. The Falcons play again Sept. 26 after school at Mitty. Field hockey also plays under the lights Oct. 1 at 6:15 p.m. against Los Altos High School.

"I don't think we're ready for the season yet," said Wilson. "But playing more competitive pre-season games will help us know where we're at and what we need to work on for the season." ♦

"I don't think we're ready for the season yet, but playing pre-season games will help us know where we're at."

—coach Amber Wilson

GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

Girls excel under leadership of 'Rocketman'

by Grishma Athavale
and Ashley Chou

He owns 13 different colored tuxedos, 12 pairs of running shoes and is nicknamed the "Rocketman." He was running sub-5 minute miles a decade before any of us were born. And he just happens to be the new girls' cross country coach.

Besides the fact that Danny Moon could probably—scratch that—*can* run faster than 75 percent of the school's athletes, his quirky personality and lovable spirit have helped the girls' team immensely this season. Previous coach Peter Jordan moved on to take the position of athletic director.

"I am a firm believer that one must enjoy, laugh and have fun while training for running, regardless of the type of competition," said Moon. "This philosophy will prepare athletes to apply it to the rest of their life's journey in whatever they pursue."

His philosophy has pushed him to excel past boundaries most people only dream of. He ran 128 straight sub-5 minute officially timed miles over the course of 26 years, with his personal best at 4:35. But here's the catch: Moon just turned 61.

"Coaching is so very gratifying for me," said Moon. "I'm able to pass on my many experiences and knowledge to each

athlete while actually having fun with running."

Moon's years of practice has also given him the skill of intuition—that is, knowing exactly what to say to soothe the flurry of nerves before a race. His motto every race has always been "smile big for the camera," along with a small, reassuring reminder for the girls to run their own race and no one else's.

This tactic worked its magic at the Saratoga Scrimmage on Sept. 18th. The varsity girls placed second behind Lynbrook, with a total of 66 points.

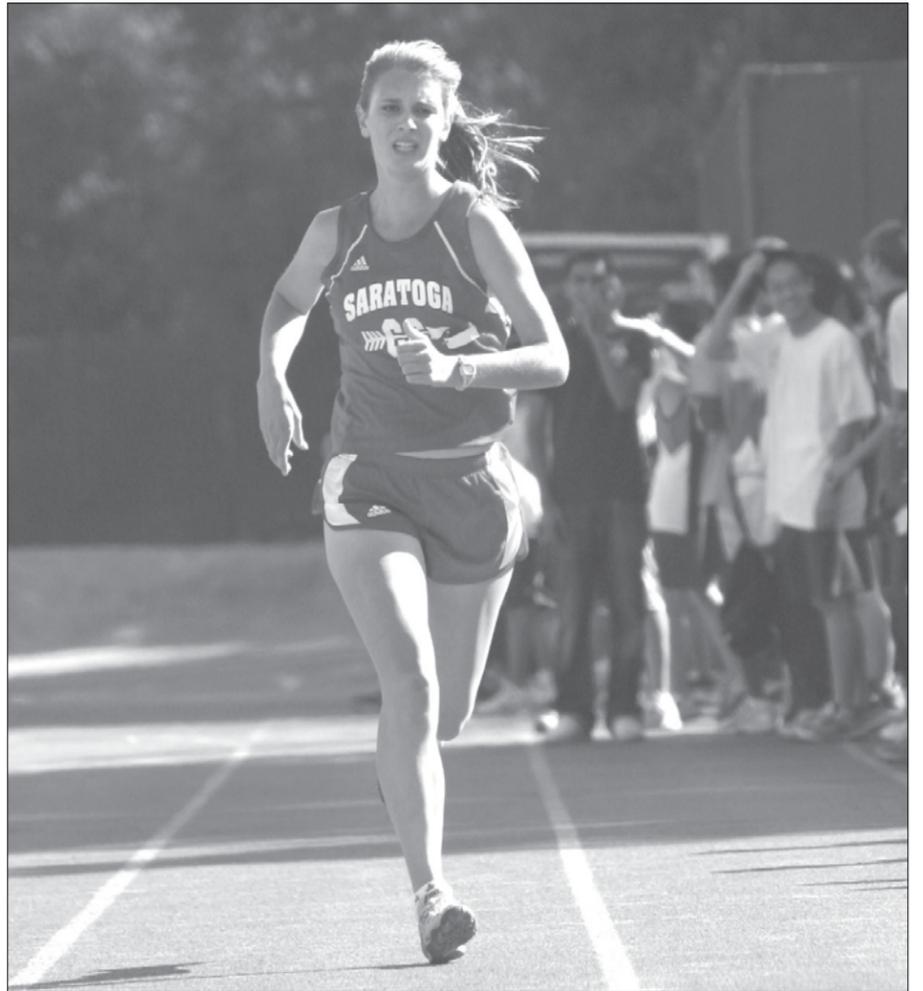
—coach Danny Moon

"It really gave me an extra boost when running, and it was nice to have Coach Moon cheering us on during the race," said sophomore Raisa Rahim.

Luckily for the team, no major wrong turns were made on the course like last year. Senior Katie Nast and junior Karen Wai placed second and fourth, respectively, behind Lynbrook 800 meter star Cindy Huang.

Moon hopes that by the end of the season, every athlete will have come to love the sport and come back ready for more the next season.

"I really enjoy seeing all the athletes bond and becoming successful with in themselves which always brings a smile to their faces and mine too," said Moon. ♦



Brittany Judoprasertijo

Senior Katie Nast kicks to a strong second place at the Saratoga Scrimmage on Sept. 18.

LACROSSE

School adds new spring team

by Ben Clement

Saratoga High has finally added lacrosse to its spring sports roster, five years after the creation of the highly successful West Valley Redhawks Lacrosse club.

The process started around this time last year when several members of the Redhawks management, as well as Wes Koenig, a lacrosse supporter responsible for the lacrosse programs in Scotts Valley and Santa Cruz, approached former athletic director Ian McKenzie and assistant principal Joe Bosco.

"[McKenzie] was very familiar with lacrosse having grown up in Canada," said Kathy Waite, a Redhawk parent and big supporter of Saratoga's lacrosse program. "He thought having a lacrosse team at Saratoga was an excellent idea."

Waite came into the picture after McKenzie announced that he would be leaving last year.

"When Mr. McKenzie left, myself, as well as some other lacrosse parents wanted to make sure that his efforts did not go to waste," said Waite.

The parents arranged to meet with principal Jeff Anderson and Bosco to press their concerns.

"Right now, the Santa Clara Valley Athletics League (SCVAL) is the only league without multiple lacrosse teams. In fact, Saratoga will be only the second school in the league to field a lacrosse team," said Waite.

After meeting with the administration, Waite said that Bosco and Anderson had four primary concerns, including field space, funding, competition and participation.

The field issue was solved quickly, said Waite, and the Sports Boosters will help fund the team.

The issue of which schools the Saratoga team will play against has been finalized

as well, according to new athletic director Peter Jordan, who has arranged for Saratoga to compete in the Peninsula Athletic League (PAL). According to the PAL website, the league contains the 17 public schools in San Mateo county as well as 14 other "supplemental" public and private schools, including Los Gatos High and Bellarmine College Prep.

The last issue that remains is that of players.

"After reviewing last years roster for the Redhawks JV and varsity teams, I have estimated that we will be able to field about half a team with Redhawks players," said Waite. "For the other half, the team will rely on kids who have either tried the sport or have interest in doing so."

Numerous Saratoga High students have expressed interest in the team so far.

"I'm happy Saratoga finally got a school team," said Redhawks star midfielder Andrew Lee. "I'm definitely signing up."

Waite also mentioned that the administration is considering promoting lacrosse as a spring sport option for football players, seeing as it utilizes many of the same skills.

The school is also encouraging girls to attend the tryouts, even though the team will be competing in a men's lacrosse league.

"I don't know what kind of interest we will have among the girls, but we're encouraging them to come to tryouts," said Jordan. "If there is enough interest, there's a chance that we'll be able to start a girls team as well." ♦

For anyone wanting to get practice playing lacrosse, there are fall camps and leagues to help athletes prepare for the season, please email Kathy Waite kathy.waite@comcast.net for more information.

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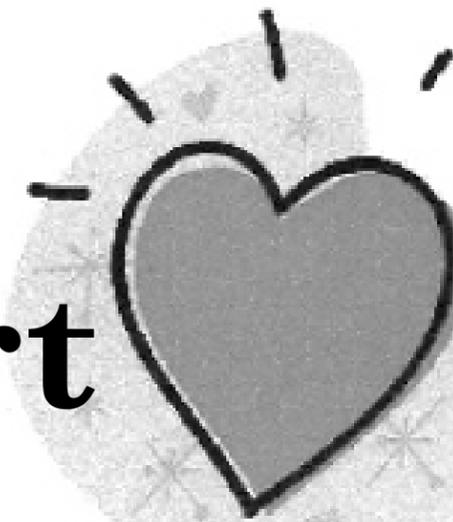
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Two races down, runners hopeful for state qualification



Brittany Judoprasettijo

Senior Alan Menezes breaks the Saratoga Scrimmage course record on Sept. 18 at SHS.

by *Sophia Cooper
and Kelly Lamble*

Four boys' varsity Division III teams make the big meet, the one that really counts, The CIF state championships.

Saratoga is currently ranked fifth. Move up one spot and they'll be in.

Gaining that one spot, however, will be a challenge.

The team has already been set back with one injury to No. 3 runner junior Nick Olsen, who tore his IT band (part of the upper leg) due to overtraining.

"I hope to begin training again in three to four weeks," said Olsen. "We are still going to state [despite my injury]."

Sophomore Garrick Chan replaced Olsen at the Saratoga Scrimmage on Sept. 18, a league meet in which Fremont, Homestead, Wilcox, Lynbrook, and Los Gatos raced. Other newcomers to the varsity team are freshmen Harry Curtis and Eren Veziroglu.

Senior Alan Menezes finished first at the Scrimmage with a time of 10:03.9, breaking the course record set last year by fellow senior Kian Banks by three seconds. Banks came in third with a time of 10:25.7. Junior Kyle Borch ran strong, finishing 10th with 10:45.9.

"I felt good," said Borch. "I felt I could have even gone a little harder."

Curtis finished with 11:35.9 in 31st place. Rounding out Saratoga's top five was Chan with 11:41.3 in 37th place. The team placed second overall, losing only

to Lynbrook who may be their strongest competitors for the El Camino League Championship.

Some of the top seven runners, including Menezes, Banks, Borch and sophomore Kyle Fukui have not been racing at the league-sanctioned school meets, such as the Lynbrook Center meet on Sept. 4 and the Firebird Invitational at Fremont High on Sept. 11. Their coach, Jerry Banks, believes racing once a week is too much stress for their bodies, and by the end of the season they will not have enough left for the important races.

Also, this gives other boys a chance to run varsity. Representing Saratoga at the Firebird Invitational was Chan, seniors James Arroyo, Derek Bond, and Duke Letran as well as junior Joe Stevens. Chan placed 44th with 12:00 and Arroyo placed 55th with 12:22.

The team's first competitive meet was the Earlybird Invitational on Sept. 6. The race was held on the 3.0 mile course at Toro Park, the site of this year's CCS Championships.

Menezes finished 10th in the senior boys' race with a time of 16:33, followed by Banks in 21st with 17:33. Fukui came in 22nd out of the sophomore boys in 18:02. Curtis finished 29th in the freshman boys' race with 19:22.

The top seven boys will race tomorrow at the prestigious 5K Stanford Invitational. This race could be a tell-tale indicator of the reality of the team making state. ♦

Saratoga is currently ranked fifth. Move up one spot and they'll qualify for state championships.



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GIRLS' TENNIS

Girls place third at Peachtree Tournament

Team has good chance of defeating long-time rival Monta Vista for first time in three years

by Kelly Lamble
and Annie Lee

If the Wawona Peachtree Classic in Fresno is any indication, the girls' varsity tennis team may just beat their long-time rivals the Monta Vista Matadors this year. Despite several close matches, the Falcons have been unable to defeat the Matadors since ending their 72-match winning streak three years ago.

"I think this year we match up very well with Monta Vista and we have the opportunity to take the upper hand in this rivalry," said coach Tom Uyehara. "If everybody steps up to the plate and plays up to their best abilities, I think we will

have no problem."

The girls finished third place at the Peachtree Tournament held Sept. 12-13. Coming back from a disappointing seventh-place finish last year, the girls positioned themselves for a promising season.

"I was very impressed with the way we came together at the tournament," said Uyehara. "I think it gives us good things to expect."

Saratoga did not play Monta Vista at Peachtree, but they defeated St. Francis 6-1, a team that beat Monta Vista. The girls' only loss in the tournament came to Mitty 2-5. Senior co-captain No.3 singles player Kara Wang and No. 1 doubles team

junior Annie Lee and freshman Sarah Lum brought home wins.

Although sophomore Shrinidhi Raghavan and junior Malavika Padmanabhan decided not to return to the team this year, Saratoga should have a good chance against the Matadors. Several strong freshmen, including No. 4 singles player Crystal Yen, Lum and No. 2 doubles player Lisa Asai, have filled out the team.

"[The freshmen] definitely add a lot of depth to the lineup, and I'm very impressed with the way they integrated with the team," said Uyehara.

Thanks to this depth, the team is hoping to improve on its semifinal finish at CCS last year.

"This team is more than capable of competing with the top teams in CCS," said Uyehara. "Everyone has a common goal of winning and that helps bring the team together."

In their first match of the year, the girls put this attitude to the test, smothering Gunn 7-0 on Sept. 16 and crushing Homestead 6-1 two days later.

The team takes on Lynbrook on Sept. 30 home at 3:30 p.m. They also play away against Palo Alto on Thursday, Oct. 2.

The big matchup against the Matadors is away at Monta Vista on Oct. 7 at 3:30 p.m. The team will be looking to smash their rivals and see how they stack up to the competition. ♦

GIRLS' WATER POLO

Injuries to captains dampen first games

by Amalie MacGowan
and Pia Mishra

The swim caps have been donned and the nets have been placed as the girls' water polo team starts its season this month. The players are prepared for a challenging and rewarding season, but they have a problem.

Senior Alison Norris, co-captain along with senior Kaylee Pettengill, is one of the team's key players and will play through the season with an arm injury.

"Every season I start out with an injury," said Norris. "Freshman year I started with a broken tailbone, sophomore year I tore my tricep, junior year I broke my nose and had to wear a face mask to every game, and this year I'm topping it off with bicep tendonitis in my right arm."

Bicep tendonitis is an overexertion of the muscle, a result of Norris' constant powerful shots.

Without Norris, who has been playing water polo for three years and has been in the Junior Olympics, winning will be tough.

Norris took a break from water polo for two weeks, but she was

able to be back in time for the tournament and the beginning of the SCVAL League on Sept. 18. She plans to play through the injury even though it will be hurting on and off throughout the season.

Norris is not the only injured player. Pettengill recently suffered a concussion in a scrimmage between the girls' and boys' teams. She expects to participate in the upcoming tournament.

Even without two of the teams' best players, the girls feel confident and are prepared to challenge their opponents, including Palo Alto, Gunn, Los Altos, Mountain View and Los Gatos.

"I think that the girls will be able to step up to the challenge. It's a wonderful group, and the team has great chemistry together," said coach Courtney Crase.

All the girls know that even if they do not win all their games, each match is still a chance to learn from their mistakes and improve.

"In the end, our success is not valued on how many games we've won or lost," said Crase. "It's based on how much we've improved as a team through the season." ♦

"I think the girls will be able to step up to the challenge. It's a wonderful group and the team has great chemistry."

—coach Courtney Crase



Theresa Yeh

Junior Sammi Lotti looks to pass the ball during the Sept. 18 game against Los Gatos. The Falcons lost 16-9. Lotti is among the players who have stepped up to take the place of their injured teammates.

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buzzworthy

Rector becomes voice of the Falcons

Fans attending the first home football game tonight will be surprised to hear a new voice sounding over the speakers.

English teacher Eric Rector is the new announcer for JV and varsity football and basketball games, taking the place of math teacher Mike Navrides.

"This year I was given the opportunity to announce and I decided to give it a shot," said Rector.

Navrides, who left to teach at Los Gatos High, and Rector had worked together on the scoreboards at all the games last year. Rector was even able to announce at one of the games by himself last year.

Not only does Rector enjoy watching at the games, but he also has fun helping out Saratoga teams.

"I am super excited; I just hope I don't make any mistakes," said Rector.

Free Hugs Day

Walking through the quad, you could see people hugging away and holding up signs that proclaimed "Free Hugs." You didn't even need to know the person in the funky shirt you were hugging, because it was Free Hugs Day.

The Spirit and Publicity commissions hosted this year's first spirit event, Free Hugs Day, on Sept. 10.

Free Hugs Day originated from a YouTube video that featured Juan Mann, a native of Australia who began his free hugs campaign in 2004.

The commissions advertised the event with posters and announcements to bring this international event to school. In addition to the in-school promotion, students created and joined a Facebook group to get the word out.

"I thought it turned out pretty well," said senior Catherine Wang.

The more spirited individuals were rewarded with treats in the office at lunch.

"My friend and I got together to make shirts the day before," said senior Lisa Chang. "It turned out to be really fun giving hugs to [strangers]."

Senior Girl sings Chinese opera

Senior Neyha Bhat sang a solo at a Chinese opera performance at Le Petit Trianon Theatre in downtown San Jose on Sept. 13, quite a surprise considering Bhat is of Indian descent and does not speak the language.

Bhat has been taking singing lessons from a man who goes by Instructor Dung, a well-known Chinese singer, at the Calder Music Academy, and was chosen to be one of the students performing at the Chinese festival.

"I knew the song was about moons and rivers, but I couldn't really understand it," said Bhat.

Dung had previously seen an Indian girl singing a Chinese song at another show and wanted to give it a try. In order to memorize the piece, Bhat had to spell out the Chinese words the way that her teacher pronounced them.

Although she was the only student who was not Chinese, all of Bhat's peers were very supportive and encouraging.

"It was a good experience since I got to try something that I never thought I would have done," said Bhat.

-by Nathan Kim, Tiffany Tseng, and Theresa Yeh

PHOTO ESSAY:

CAUGHT IN THE ACT



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: **R2D2** JUNIOR ERIKA YE AND SENIOR SUNIL SRIVATSA DEMONSTRATE THEIR ROBOT ON CLUB DAY. **ROCK-A-BYE BABY** JUNIOR POOJA DESAI TAKES CARE OF HER ELECTRONIC BABY FOR A PROJECT IN CHILD PSYCHOLOGY. **WHERE IS THE LOVE** FRESHMAN JESSIE LIN HOLDS UP A SIGN FOR FREE HUGS DAY. **LET'S ROLL** JUNIOR BEN CLEMENT AND FRESHMAN DOMINIC GUERCIO RACE DURING THE FIRST RALLY OF THE YEAR ON SEPT. 4. **PUMP IT** SENIORS ALANNA LEADBETTER AND HARRIET RUSSELL GET THE CROWD PUMPED AT THEIR FIRST RALLY PERFORMANCE.

TOPTEN

WAYS TO STAY AWAKE IN CLASS

- 10 Make weird animal sounds in the back of the classroom: You'll keep the others awake too!
- 9 Give the person sitting in front of you a haircut: Nothing is more entertaining than making someone look ugly.
- 8 Go to bed early. But then again you may fail Kucer's Bio test the next day.
- 7 Hire a neighbor to keep you awake: a good slap in the face should do the trick
- 6 Send texts to yourself; if you're desperate enough this may make you feel popular.
- 5 Eat one of the school's burritos: WARNING you may spend more time in the bathroom than in class.
- 4 Chug a Red Bull: If it can give you wings, it just might be able to keep you awake through math.
- 3 Clip your eyelids open with clothes pins: no pain, no gain.
- 2 Have a poke war with your neighbor: not on Facebook, you Internet dork.
- 1 Put a picture of Michael Phelps or Megan Fox on your binder: Those bodies will catch your eye.

-by Mika Padmanabhan and Tim Rollinson

Decoding blonde 'intelligence'



Dorey Schranz
Hilariously Hungarian

How do you get a one-armed blonde out of a tree?

Wave to her. I have probably heard this joke about 20 times, and I still do not find it at all relevant.

As a blonde myself, I can appreciate little jokes about at our intelligence level because—let's face it—some of them are funny, but I will never understand this particular joke. Why is this poor woman maimed? And how did she climb the tree with one arm? If anything we should have sympathy for

her condition and respect for her dexterity rather than be plotting to have her fall and possibly break her now sole arm. Then what will she do for a living?

I don't like this joke because instead of mocking blondes for being stupid or even sleazy (as some jokes of ill-repute do), at its core, this joke mocks us for being nice. Yes, maybe it's stupid that the blonde will let go of the tree to wave, but what she is really doing is trying not to snub someone who has taken the first step toward friendship.

As a blonde, I hear jokes like this almost constantly. Not only that, but my entire life has somehow turned into some sort of blonde joke.

Like everyone else, I have my moments where I make comments that are more worthy of Jessica Simpson and Paris Hilton (oh, the role models we blondes have!) than I

would like, but I've noticed that these "blonde moments" get thrown back in my face a lot more often than in the case of those who have less appealing, I mean...darker, hair colors.

Even a simple question like "Are they really allowed to push each other over like that in football?" is met with groans and comments likening my IQ with that of a medium-sized rodent.

Not that I don't sometimes use this to my advantage.

When people expect you to be stupid, you can get away with almost anything and you receive praise for the simplest of acts. "Wow, good job double spacing this essay—I know it can be pretty tough sometimes!"

The best part of being blonde? I always have an excuse for anything ditzzy or silly I say or do: blonde moment! ♦