



What's in your car?



Football wins first game against Gilroy Mustangs

THE saratogafalcon



MEDIA ARTS

MAPPED OUT

Years of planning and \$3 million later, high-tech facility completed at last



FALCON // VIVIAN LETRAN & PARUL SINGH

MAP students work in the building's new computer lobby. The MAP Building also has a recording studio and green screen.

BY Karthik **Sreedhara** & Karen **Yang**

When the first-period Media Arts class entered the new multimedia center on the first day of school, students were amazed by the brand new high-tech equipment. They ran to explore each corner of the building, from the green screen to the recording studio, in awe of the building's similarity to a real-life television studio.

After years of anticipation and planning, the Media Arts Program (MAP) Building, located behind the

weight room, is now open to all students for their multimedia needs, whether for drama, music or film. The 2,300-foot building includes a green screen, a multimedia journalism set, a soundproof audio recording studio, a 24-channel mixer and a control room.

The MAP building currently houses Multimedia Journalism (MMJ), Film Making and first-year MAP classes. The building cost an estimated \$3 million to construct, with about a third of it paid by a state grant, according to principal Jeff Anderson.

After visiting the facilities of a num-

ber of universities and companies around Silicon Valley and even out of state, such as Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication, MAP teacher Tony Palma and others involved in the project designed the facility to create a collaborative work environment where students can easily communicate with each other but also have individual space.

"We've seen the facilities they have, which helped us design our

>> **MAP** on pg. 6

HOMECOMING

With themes decided, classes get rolling

>> **THE big idea**

BY Kim **Tsai**

2010 Homecoming

What: The seniors have Candyland, juniors play Monopoly, sophomores get a Clue, and freshmen have Chutes & Ladders

When: Oct. 4-8

Where: Decorations in the quad and themed performances on the quad steps.

Roll the dice, pick your player and gear up for an intense round of Homecoming. The week-long celebration of school spirit starts on Oct. 4. And with "Board Games" as this year's theme, all classes are starting to get competitive, although there will be some new rules this round.

When it came time to select class themes, the seniors satisfied their sweet tooth with "Candyland," the juniors hoped to cash in with "Monopoly," the sophomores finally decided to get a "Clue" and freshmen were left with "Chutes and Ladders."

Freshmen will be starting the performances on Tuesday, Oct. 5, with seniors ending

on Friday, Oct. 8. The Homecoming football game takes place on Friday night against Lynbrook, with the dance on Saturday in the big gym from 8 to 11 p.m.

Each class is already making plans for Quad Day and decorations, but they will have to work around a new safety regulation to be implemented by the school this year.

Because a school employee fell off the roof and was seriously injured last spring, no students will be allowed on the roofs.

"[The accident] set up red flags all over," said assistant principal Karen Hyde. "So insurance companies, compensation companies and everybody have come out and now

>> **THEMES** on pg. 6

SCHOOL THEFT

Burglar busted

In high-tech sting, police arrest San Jose man accused of stealing items

BY Mac **Hyde** & Synthia **Ling**

Disappearances of items, an elusive criminal and a high-tech police scheme—Saratoga High School, located in a sleepy suburb known for its low crime rate, hardly seems like the place for all these things to occur. But while students relaxed over summer break, police and administrators tracked down a thief.

Thomas Igou, 48, a resident of San Jose, was apprehended in August for burglarizing the school, which had been experiencing thefts for more than six months, said Sheriff's deputy Gabriel Gonzalez. In this time period, the school documented about \$30,000 worth of missing items, said principal Jeff Anderson. The suspect admitted to seven burglaries and several additional burglaries or thefts that were not reported to the Sheriff's Department. Igou is awaiting trial.

According to Anderson, the first instance of theft occurred during the last holiday break in December 2009, when instruments and equipment were taken from the music building. But the mysterious disappearances didn't stop there. Valuables continued to go missing throughout second semester and the summer.

"The sound system for Color Guard, softball pitching machines, laptops and a video camera were taken," said

>> **THIEF** on pg. 6

>> upcoming events

Oct. 1 "A Woman In Black"
The student-directed play will be performed in the Little Theater.

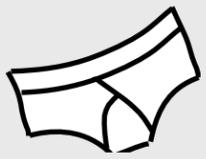
Oct. 4-8 Homecoming Week
Watch the board-game-themed dances at lunch.

Oct. 8 Homecoming Game
Saratoga faces off against the Lynbrook Vikings at 6:30.

Oct. 9 Homecoming Dance
Dance the night away from 8-11.

inside **THE falcon**

News	1-7
Opinion	8-10
Life	11-13
Entertainment	14-15
School Scope	16-17
In-Depth	18-19
Sports	20-23
Backpage	24



news
>> briefs

School going green with filtered water

Last May, the school installed water filtration systems across campus. Students are now drinking from cleaner water fountains, thanks to the Green Tea Party last fall.

The reconstruction began with the Green Tea Party meeting in October last year. Superintendent Cary Matsuoka and 2010 graduate Natalie Tkalecic organized this event to make Saratoga and Los Gatos High more eco-friendly. Faculty members, admins, students and city council members from Saratoga and Los Gatos all met at the meeting. Among the list of possible improvements were the school's outdated water fountains.

"The idea was proposed because the fountains were pre-historic, when the school was built 51 years ago," said senior Kent Paisley, a participant in the Green Tea Party.

The school completed the fountains before summer. Plant operations supervisor Brian Moran said there are two new fountains in the gym lobby, one in the cafeteria and two on either side of the English wing.

The cost of each water filtration system was about \$1,500, and the installation cost up to \$3,000 for each unit, Moran said.

Thanks to the Green Tea Party, the school has taken another step toward a cleaner, greener campus.

Said Paisley, "Students should no longer complain about the quality of water at the school."

New ASB officers work to launch events

Every day students listen to the familiar voices on the intercom, telling jokes and reading morning announcements, but who are these witty students and just what do they do?

The Associated Student Body is the school-wide student government that facilitates all student-run activities on campus, from clubs to commissions.

This year the ASB is comprised of six highly motivated and experienced students: seniors president David Mandell, vice president Nina Mohanty, secretary Pamela Lee, treasurer Anthony Sutardja, head commissioner Uttara Sivaram and junior Board Representative Anshu Siripurapu. Although each job has an important role to play in the organization, everyone collaborates when it comes to projects like Club Day, which require immense time, planning, and team work.

"The job titles are different than what we actually do because we all try to collaborate as a team," said Mandell. "I think this is a really good team and I'm really excited to work with them."

In previous years they have planned the winter formal, and this year the ASB is tentatively planning another event later in the spring.

They hope that this event, the Night Rally, will help bring everyone together in a night filled with music and fun. The goal of this event and of the ASB in general is to break down social barriers and bring the school together.

So when you are dress shopping for winter formal or spending your lunch time at a club meeting, remember the group of students that made it happen.

—Emily Williams

Freshman class officers elected

After two rounds of voting, this year's freshman class officers were announced on Sept. 9. The office consists of president Nikhil Goel, vice president Maggie Sun, treasurer Gloria Liou, secretary Abigail Small and class representatives Robert Eng and Jane Chang.

Many of the officers have previous experience in student government and are ready to face the challenges of a high school office.

"I've been a part of student council since fourth grade, and I knew that high school had even more events like Homecoming, so I decided I wanted to take a bigger part in preparing for these special occasions," Liou said.

Goel, the former president of Redwood Middle School, also has confidence in the freshman class's abilities.

"We have some people in our class who are really spirited and can rally the class and don't care what people think about them, so I think we will do well this year," Goel said.

Sun also hopes to help her class by being part of class office.

"I ran for class office because I really enjoyed my first few days of school at Saratoga High," Sun said. "I wanted to get involved and help make this year great for everyone else."

—Shivani Chadha

>> picture this



FALCON // JORDAN WAITE

Senior Jay Lee, as Cho Chang, holds onto junior Dominic Guercio, as Harry Potter, while entertaining students with a skit at the Harry Potter-themed kick-off rally on Sept. 17 in the large gym during tutorial.

>> falcon figures

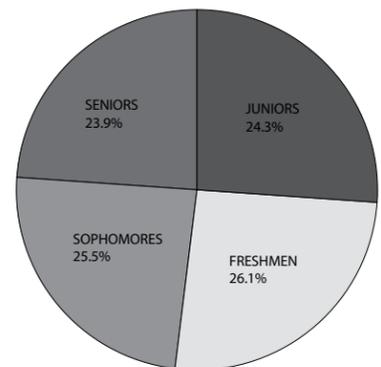
358 The number of freshmen at school

350 The number of sophomores at school

334 The number of juniors at school

329 The number of seniors at school

Number of students in each class



—Izzy Albert

>> falcon focus

School's gardener marches to the beat of his own drum

By Kyumin Shim & Ashley Tang

Every morning at 6:30 a.m., gardener John Berti deactivates the school alarm, opens up the bathrooms and begins watering the plants. After he's done with all his gardening work, he goes through the hallways to help with the trash. However, Berti is more than just part of the maintenance staff.

Berti has cleaned, repaired and beautified the school for 23 years. He has seen the school develop a high quality concert hall, a well-kept football field, and even a state-of-the-art Media Arts building.

"Me and the whole crew did a lot of work. We really enjoyed it. If we didn't, we wouldn't be here," said Berti. He smiles and points out the differences that they made around the school, such as the newly decorated Room 804.

Berti has other interests besides taking care of the school—ever since second grade, Berti has played the drums.

"I came home one night and told my mom that I wanted to play an instrument. She immediately said, 'Play the drums! Then if you have a cold it doesn't matter; you can still play.' My mother was a character," said Berti.

Growing up in New York City, Berti learned jazz and rock and roll as a studio musician. He even played in a few bands, like Bull Angus and Gypsy Rose.

"It was a lot of fun, and I did that for a long time," said Berti. "Growing up, I wanted to be a professional drummer, but it's so hard to get in. We recorded a few albums locally and sold them in our hometown,

and we thought we were going to become all big and great."

Even though Berti didn't quite make it big, he still loves playing the drums.

"Sometimes I go up to the music room and bang 'em out," said Berti. "Over the summer, I was there by myself with my headset on playing the drums. Michael Boitz comes in and

takes a picture of me. I didn't think anybody was around!"

Besides music, Berti also has a hidden passion for golf, which he has played since age 8. On weekends, he plays in the Stanford Medical Hospital Men's League.

Berti's penchant for fun is evident in his friendly demeanor. He can often be seen joking around on campus.

He recently told two Falcon reporters to go to journalism adviser and fervid Giants fan Mike Tyler with the words, "Go Yankees!"

Evidently, Berti has many fond memories at Saratoga High, including the graduations of his daughters from the school in 2000 and 2003. But he sees retirement happening in the next few years.

"I like the freshmen coming in this year because when they graduate, so do I. After 26 years, I'm gonna retire," said Berti. "We [the custodians] just want to leave our little mark before we go. You're only as good as the last day you work. Then you can look back and say, 'Hey, I did that!'" ♦

EDUCATION

Students choose public over private

BY Deborah Soung

His first class was P.E., and the shy freshman stood awkwardly alone off to the side in the weight room. As a Harker student who transferred to Saratoga High last year, Benjamin Yang was not able to not recognize a single face during the entire morning of his first day of freshman year.

"I remember the first few weeks I didn't have any friends except for the ones from Harker that came with me, but I didn't see them that often," said Yang, now a sophomore.

Parents pay \$31,000 annually to send their children to Harker Middle School and more than \$35,000 for its high school. The added cost has the benefits of smaller class sizes and a more competitive environment, Yang said, but it isn't always worth the money.

"The money was only worth it if you had the best teachers," said Yang. "Sometimes you'd get a really bad teacher and

you'd wonder why you even bother."

Yang's parents made him transfer to a public school because Harker's high school tuition was too much, and they were afraid they would not be able to afford to pay for college if they sent him to four more years of private school. Yang, like most transfer students, had no choice in this decision.

Senior Yeon-ho Kim's parents brought up the idea of sending him to public school during the second semester of his junior year, but unlike in Yang's case, Kim's parents let him decide whether or not he wanted to leave Bellarmine to attend his senior year at Saratoga High.

To save money for college, Kim ultimately chose to attend public school, but he said he would still prefer to be going to Bellarmine if money was not an issue.

The all-boys private school costs about \$15,000 a year for tuition, but Kim said the cost is "definitely worth it."

"At first, I ate lunch in the hallways near the construction site by myself for a while."

>> Sophomore Benjamin Yang

"It's a great group of guys [at Bellarmine]," said Kim. "In athletics we always win, and in academics, I felt like I was really being prepared for college."

Kim knew about four other students at Saratoga High before he transferred this fall, but he felt welcomed by the others.

"School is not that bad because I made friends pretty quickly," he said. Kim attributed part of his smooth adjustment to this new environment to assistant principal Karen Hyde.

"Mrs. Hyde made me join the water polo team," Kim said. "I swam with Mac Hyde for a long time before coming here, so our moms were pretty close friends."

Kim made many new friends from wa-

ter polo practices and his other elective, choir. His experience shows the important benefits of getting involved in clubs and other extracurricular activities when transitioning to a new environment.

On the other hand, Yang's social transition did not go as smoothly as Kim's. "I didn't know anyone in public school," said Yang. "At first, I ate lunch in the hallways near the construction site by myself for a while. After the first few weeks I made a few friends in my PE class and from there I met more and more people through orchestra and clubs," he said.

Regardless of all the hectic confusion that tagged along with his school change, Yang accepted his current situation and adapted to it, while still remembering the past.

"I had been with my friends from Harker for many years, so it was hard to leave them behind... [but] I think I've pretty much adjusted here, so I wouldn't mind staying," said Yang. ♦

TRAVEL

Neal Siganporia and his family ride an elephant in India over the summer. "The elephant was swaying and shaking, and we were [traveling] on the wrong side of the road, facing traffic," said Siganporia.



Courtesy of NEAL SIGANPORIA

Foreign Culture 101

STUDENTS TRAVEL THE WORLD

BY Rohan Rajeev

Ask sophomore Neal Siganporia what happened over the summer, and he'll tell you about his experience riding through a traffic jam on an elephant. You might think he's bluffing, but Siganporia was one of several Saratoga High students who took advantage of exciting and educational travel opportunities this summer.

Siganporia, who made a journey to India with his family, returned to Saratoga with a plethora of adventures and stories.

"My dad, sister and I were walking down the road from the beach and we saw an elephant," he said. "His owner was yelling that we could ride his animal for a cheap price. I had no idea what to expect, but it really sounded like fun."

The elephant ride, however, wasn't nearly as glamorous as he had imagined.

"The elephant was swaying and shaking, and we were [traveling] on the wrong side of the road, facing traffic," said Siganporia. "The elephant's smell was horrible, too."

But the adventurous sophomore was not put off by the experience.

"If I ever get the chance to ride another elephant, I definitely will take it," he said, smiling.

While Siganporia was busy getting in touch with the sights, sounds and animals native to India, another student was busy traveling through countries that most have never dreamed of visiting.

For three weeks in July and August, senior Joseph Kim traveled more than 6,000 miles across the world to the far-

away Middle Eastern lands of Jordan, Israel and Palestine with his church mission group in order to experience the lives of citizens, learn their culture and share their own culture with them.

"The idea of the trip was to not only share our religion and culture with them, but also to learn about their culture and help them in their daily lives," Kim said.

This trip was not Kim's first visit to the Middle East.

"I'd been to Syria last year, so I was expecting I could learn more about their culture," he said. "I also wanted to meet people who were completely different from me."

Learning about their culture was interesting for Kim because he got an up-close and personal view of how native families lived.

"I especially liked that we stayed in different native people's houses while we were there," he said.

Kim said he obtained a new sense of cultural awareness from his church trip.

"[The experience] taught me to be aware of other cultures around the world, and aware of how people are living in different parts of the world," he said. "For example, I learned that people in the Middle East invite others over even if they have just met, as if they are already friends."

Both Kim and Siganporia had unforgettable experiences this summer. By traveling to far-off countries and experiencing different cultures first-hand, they were able to broaden their own horizons.

"If I ever got the chance, I'd definitely do something like it again," Kim said. ♦



Siganporia

DRAMA

New play, new teacher, new traditions, new look

BY Christine Bancroft

When it was announced last April that drama teacher Chris Mahle would not be returning to his position, the future of the drama department was uncertain. The students were worried that their beloved "family" would fall apart in the unforeseeable future.

In an attempt to counteract whatever unraveling of the drama community may have occurred during the summer break and into the new school year, the drama students began their class bonding before school began, to ensure that the freshmen would feel as at home in drama as their older peers have in previous years.

Drama lock-in helps students bond and reconnect

On Aug. 27, the Drama Club leadership held a lock-in for the first time in recent years. The activities began at 6 p.m. and ran to midnight, with some students staying even later. The purpose of the lock-in was to create a warm and inviting atmosphere for freshman dramatists to get to know upperclassmen and bond with their peers.

Some of the activities included improvisational and situational acting and various games.

Freshman Annelise Nussbacher was one of those who found the experience to be rewarding.

"Some people were hesitant at first [when performing improv], but once people started to laugh, it got a lot better," she said. "That's the great thing about drama. No one is afraid of acting like a total idiot."

With MAP coordinator and English teacher Kerry Mohnike teaching drama as well as other classes after last year's departure of Mahle, getting the other new members of the department to bond is more crucial than ever, said junior Natalie Berg.

The upperclassmen are attempting to make the transition as easy as possible for their incoming freshmen. Berg, a member of the Drama Club leadership that planned the event, said that the event set a good tone.

"A lot of things have changed since last year, so we needed to bond, to get to know each other and to get the new students to be a part of our community," said Berg. "The freshmen seemed to have a lot of fun, and they were excited and enthusiastic about getting to know a lot of new people. I hope it continues in later years."

Mohnike predicts a "fabulous" year for department looking forward to a terrific theater season. Although much of the curriculum taught in the drama classes remains fairly unchanged, there have already been several differences added to the department.

Some of the most noticeable changes are occurring in the Little Theater, or the "Black Box." It has been repainted and refurbished through the help of various members of the technical crew. Couches were moved down into the room, and the lights were struck down and redesigned through the help of Berg and production designer Ken Ochi.

Drama department reintroduces Saratoga to "Our Town"

The fall play, "Our Town," finished auditioning on Sept. 2, and cast lists were posted on Sept. 4. It was chosen for the school's 50th anniversary, as the play was the first one performed at Saratoga High by its first graduating class.

The play focuses on group of townspeople who decide to put on a play about the world around them.

It will be directed by Steve Dini, produced by Mohnike and stage managed by Berg. The cast will be led by seniors Jae Lee, David Mandell, Mikaela Burton and Chaz Main, and complemented by a group of other drama veterans, including juniors Penny Burgess, Mitchell McGuire, Michael Coe, Ariella Yendler and Joshua Harris.

"It looks to be an amazing cast," said Mohnike. "It promises to be a fabulous, emotional retelling of 'Our Town.'"

In addition to the fall play, a student-directed production, titled "A Woman In Black," will be preformed in the Little Theater on Oct. 1. ♦

>> =yougo

"Our Town"

What: Immerse yourself in a play set in a small New England during the 1800s, where a group of townspeople take time to appreciate the world around them.

When: Oct. 16, 17, 23 and 24

Where: Little Theater

Annual BBQ helps new students adjust

BY Aashna Mukerji

More than 50 fresh faces gathered in the quad on Aug. 27 to participate in the annual New Student Barbecue, which was held to help new students feel comfortable before diving into the school year. The event was organized by the New Student Commission.

Upon arrival, students were greeted by upperclassmen and given name tags. After getting acquainted with fellow new students, members of the ASB and the administration introduced themselves and welcomed everyone to SHS.

"The idea of planning the event was so new students didn't come to school on the first day completely in the dark," said senior Emily Hsia, one of the heads of the New Student Commission. "It was a chance to introduce them to the school, so they could come to school and see a

few familiar faces."

New students who attended the gathering, which lasted from 5-7 p.m., enjoyed a barbecue dinner and played games with returning upperclassmen to help break the ice.

"It was a chance to introduce them to the school, so they could come to school and see a few familiar faces."

>> Senior Emily Hsia

"Everybody was really nice and welcoming," said new student sophomore Mia Hammond. "It's cool because when we're walking in the hallways or in our classes, we can kind of know each other's names." Hammond recently

ly moved here from Santa Cruz.

Students were given a tour of the school, and New Student Commissioners also gave out advice about teachers, lockers and specific parts of campus.

"I think the students benefited from going," said Hsia. "They seemed more comfortable at the end of the night because they made new friends and got a sense of our school's environment." ♦

Junior class makes-a-wish

BY Olivia Chock

This year, the junior class is doing something a little out of the ordinary. Instead of siphoning profits from class fundraisers exclusively toward class activities, they are hosting extra events so they can donate the excess money to a charity. Although they are only donating what they have left over after prom, they are shooting to donate 20 percent of their funds to the Make-A-Wish foundation by the end of the year.

"The officers are all really excited about this year. We hope we can make a lot of money so we can give a substantial amount to the foundation," said junior class representative Stephanie Shimizu. "We want to have as much class participation as possible so we can reach our goal."

Donating 20 percent of their funds is ambitious, but president Anika Jhalani thinks that a group of 400 people can work together and make a significant contribution to the Make-A-Wish foundation.

"I think it's good they're giving globally. Not only are they helping their class, but they're also helping a founda-

tion," said junior class advisor Arnaldo Rodriguex.

With the leadership of Jhalani, the junior class is already being guided toward the right direction for themselves and for people in need of support.

"My goal as president of our class is to raise awareness about stuff going on in the world and get people to realize that they're a lot luckier than other people," said Jhalani. "There is a way for us to make a difference."

The junior class officers want to inform their class and the rest of the school about the harsh realities outside of the sheltered Saratoga they are familiar with.

"Ignorance really isn't bliss, and that's the path we take every day. We all try to ignore these things so we don't have to feel bad about it," said Jhalani. "If we put it out there and say, 'Look, these things are out happening', it could make people question, 'Should we put all of our money into prom? Or should we leave a little room to share?'"

The junior class has already had a yard sale fundraiser at the high school on Labor Day. This is one of many fundraisers they will have this year. ♦



Interact and The Investment Club recruit students during Club Day on Sept. 15.

Club day draws crowd

WITH CANDY, FOOD AND ENTHUSIASM, 50 CLUBS RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS

BY Anika Jhalani

For many students, club day is often an exciting mark as the resumption of the school year, but for freshmen, it is a whirlwind of action inviting them to the realms of high school.

"I'm so glad that we have club day," said freshman Nikhil Goel. "I knew I wanted to join a couple clubs in high school but wasn't sure how to go about it. Club day was the perfect way for me to see what each club offered and to help me pick which ones I might join."

This year's club day on Sept. 15 proved to be as exciting as ever with more than 50 booths set up for clubs advocating all kinds of causes and activities. Clubs such as Benefit and Indian Cultural Awareness Club received more sign-ups than ever.

"Club day is really important because people who don't ordinarily know about a club get a taste of what a club is really all about," said senior Erin Wong, president of Benefit Club. "Instead of hearing about a club over the announcements or Facebook, students get to speak face to face with presidents of clubs."

To attract potential club members, club officers employed a variety of

marketing techniques.

"We usually bring food and music," said senior Parth Dholakia, president of the Indian Culture Awareness Club. "It definitely gets people interested in the club, and when we dance to the music we play, we are giving the school a preview of what our club is all about."

With all the music, food and decorations, students often can't help but approach clubs that offer these temptations.

"I am definitely more willing to go sign up for clubs that are offering some kind of reward," said sophomore Amin Mirzadegan. "I end up walking over just because of the candy or music, and more often than not end up signing up for the club."

Club day is also important because it showcases the variety of activities at the school and welcomes all students to get involved and get to know new people.

"Most people think club day is only helpful for incoming freshmen, but students from all classes learn about clubs and then get involved themselves," said junior Shivani Chadha. "I am really glad we have a club day. It allows each club to get a chance to recruit more members and get a group of students involved in a common cause." ♦

"Club day showcases a variety of activities and welcomes all students to get involved."

>> Señor Rodriguex

Mexico trip changes direction, heads to Yucatan

BY Jordan Waite

Delicious food, cultural immersion and ancient Mayan ruins are experiences that can only be found simultaneously at one SHS event: the annual Mexico trip.

Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguex has been taking SHS students to Cuernavaca, Mexico for more than 30 years, but this year, he is planning something a little different. This February break, the group will head to the city of Merida on the Yucatan Peninsula coast.

"[Merida] is a great place to visit," said Rodriguex. "The highlights of the trip will be the Mayan ruins of Chichen Itza and Uxmal, which are the biggest and most well preserved in the area."

Merida has deep Mayan cultural roots, great food and a strategic location,

being close to both Mayan ruins and the beach. Rodriguex decided to change the location of the trip this year because many students go more than once during their high school career. He intends to give those students the opportunity to experience a different aspect of Mexico.



Rodriguex

"If the students repeat, they will be able to appreciate the two different cultures."

Students will be staying with host families in pairs, fully immersed in both the language and culture of Merida. Rodriguex has planned a variety of cultural events, to ensure that the students are culturally stimulated.

"I hope that the students gain more understanding of the culture of Mexico," said Rodriguex. "In Merida, just about every night in the town square they have a cultural event."

The group will attend events such as dances and shows in the town square—with both the group and the host families.

According to Rodriguex, Americans tend to negatively stereotype Mexicans. With the Mexico trip, he hopes to break those stereotypes.

"[The students] will see that Mexican people are wonderful people," said Rodriguex. "The more we know about another culture, the better we understand them and the less stereotyping we do."

Along with the cultural experience, students who go on this trip will expand their knowledge of the Spanish language. They will communicate in Spanish with

their host family, and will be attending a language institute every weekday. At the school, they will take classes in grammar, conversation and culture in groups no larger than seven students.

The Mexico trip has been a huge success in the past, with over 50 students going on each trip in the past few years. With the change of destination of the trip this year, Rodriguex still expects another big turnout.

"I went on the trip last year and loved it," said junior Kyle Fukui. "I'm looking forward to going to a new place this year."

For more information about the trip, contact Arnaldo Rodriguex in room 601. ♦

Link helps freshmen get a head start

Link Leaders provide incoming freshmen with ice-breaker games, useful advice at orientation

BY Evaline Ju

A cheering gauntlet of upperclassmen dressed in costumes from ninjas to crayons welcomed the 360 members of the class of 2014 as they stepped through the doors of the gym lobby on Aug. 27.

"I liked how they greeted us with smiles," said freshman Kalyani Narayan. "It was very inspiring."

This year's Link Crew, with 106 Link Leaders, is coordinated under new leadership by new guidance counselor Eileen Allen and school psychologist Mark Atkinson, along with four Link Crew commissioners, seniors Lexie Mullaney, Kyumin Shim and Peter Auvil and junior Annie Barco.

Orientation began with introductions of the rally commission and the ASB and a performance by the cheer team. The freshmen were then divided into 49 groups of six to eight, with each group led by two or three Link leaders.

Students played games for two hours to get to know each other. After the ice-breakers, Link Leaders put together creative ideas to entertain the freshmen. One group began to play "Duck, Duck, Goose!" in the quad, while another took turns hitting a pirate piñata.

"My favorite game was one [where we were given] a list of things to act out. I didn't know how to play at first, so I started guessing random things," said freshman Nikhil Ramanathan, laughing at the memory.

Following the games, each Link group went on a campus tour. Along the way, Link Leaders showed the freshmen their classrooms and gave them advice.

"It was nice to pass lessons I've learned or mistakes I've made on to the new kids, so they don't have to go through the same thing," said junior Link Leader Zara Sheikh.

The day ended with closing remarks by English and rhetoric teacher Erick Rector and free Togo's sandwiches for lunch. Link Leaders stayed after to clean up and were treated to Jamba Juice.

Through a week of planning and two days of training with the Link Leaders, orientation proved to be a success for the Link Crew coordinators and commissioners.



TALISMAN // ADITYA DEV

Freshmen Nicole MacKenzie, Olivia Grob-Lipkis and Isabella Zuccarino enjoy their free Togo's sandwich lunch in the quad at the freshmen orientation on Aug. 27.

"We were very happy with Link Crew this year," said Atkinson. "We thought the Link Crew leaders did an outstanding job of welcoming our new freshmen and beginning their next four years on a positive note."

All the Link groups met up for the

first two Monday tutorials this year in order for freshmen to discuss their adjustments to high school life with teachers and their Link Leaders. More Link events, which will include a cookie decorating session, are planned for later this semester. ♦

Cafeteria reorganization increases choices

NEW CHANGES INCLUDE WIDER VARIETY OF FOOD, SEPARATION OF LUNCH LINES

BY Ashley Tang

Every year, the school experiences many changes as the new year opens: new classes, new buildings and new faces. This year, the cafeteria joined the list of changes by reorganizing and adding to its food selections. The main change students notice is that the lunch lines are now separated into five different categories: salads, fast takes, creations, pizza and grill.

The cafeteria staff believes the lunch process is now more efficient and hopes to attract more students to stay on campus.

Although lines were a rather longer than usual during the first few days of school, the cafeteria is now well on its way to serving the new types of food

faster.

"Right now, we have two people trying to serve up pasta [in the creations line] as fast as they can, but it is not going to always be that way," said chef Diane Ray. "Some people don't like the Chinese food or the Mexican food, but the pasta seems to be a hot seller, so we're working on getting it faster."

Although the cafeteria, now newly named as Crossroads Cafe, is streamlining the method of serving food, it is still run by the same food company as last year.

"Yep, it's the same staff," said Ray. "We're just working our butts off."

Despite all of the cafeteria's hard work, many students have differing opinions on the new shape of the cafeteria lines.

"With the lines organized by types of food, I'm forced to decide what I want to buy beforehand, instead of being able to choose while I'm in line," said sophomore Kevin Chen.

Another change to the cafeteria is the addition of new foods, such as paninis, toasted Italian sandwiches that contain rosemary focaccia, turkey, salami, Swiss cheese, spinach, tomato and honey dijon mustard. Paninis, along with grilled cheese sandwiches, are now available in the grill line at the snack window for \$4.50 each.

The cafeteria, however, did not always sell so many types of food.

"We used to serve only hamburgers, pizzas, corn dogs and burritos. That was it," said Ray. "Food has really changed over the years."

This year, one of the main goals of the cafeteria is to encourage students to stay on campus.

"Students don't have that much time to go out and get food, so it's safer if

they stay on campus and eat here. We're also trying to make some more money because we don't want them to close us down," said Ray, who has been working at the cafeteria for almost 17 years. "So far, with the budget, our school is doing okay, but we're still trying to stay afloat." ♦

>> THE bigidea

New Lunch Lines

Grill: Now located at the snack window, sells burgers, paninis and grilled cheese

Salad Bar: Create your own salad

Fast-takes: Sells prepackaged items

Pizza: Located on the far left of the cafeteria

Creations: Freshly made food; varies day-to-day

SHS feels the 'California Love' at kick-off dance

BY Izzy Albert

More than 500 students partied it up at the school's kick-off dance in the quad on Sept. 4, marking an unusually high attendance rate for the first dance of the year.

This year, the "California Love"-themed dance was held on a Saturday rather than the traditional Friday. The large turnout can be attributed to the change of date, according to assistant principal Karen Hyde.

"If we held the dance Friday night, then pretty much the whole football team wouldn't be able to go," said Hyde. "And then we have those who wouldn't go if the football team didn't, so we decided it would be best to change the dance to Saturday night."

Hyde said that, unlike last year, there were no major complaints from parents this year following the dance; however, the dancing etiquette displayed by

some freshmen in particular came to the administration's attention.

Hyde said freshmen will be getting her traditional "Sister Mary Karen" talk soon regarding what makes an appropriate dancing style.

Both the DJ and decorations got positive feedback from students, a huge relief for the dance commission.

"I think it gave all of [the dance commission] a huge sigh of relief to know that it was a success," said head dance commissioner Megan Kao. "We spent a lot of time on designing and buying decorations this year, as well as finding a good DJ."

After the plethora of complaints from parents regarding "freaking" after the first dance last year, the students proved to be more well-behaved this year.

"It was generally just a smoothly-run kick-off dance," said Kao. "The result of the dance will definitely earn SHS a better reputation in the future." ♦

PTSO holds free barbeque STUDENTS, STAFF WELCOMED BACK

BY Vivian LeTran

During lunch on Sept. 3, several long lines full of hungry, boisterous students wound their way through the noisy quad. Each line led to several large, colorful bins filled with water bottles and tables covered in red plastic, where

about 100 PTSO volunteers served free barbeque to eager students and staff.

The second annual school-wide BBQ event gave students and staff a warm back-to-school welcome with a variety of food options. With a budget of \$3,500 for the event, the PTSO was able to serve the students and staff hot dogs, hamburgers, cheeseburgers and veggie burgers at designated stations marked with colored balloons. On the side, the PTSO of-

fered Oreos, cookies, watermelon and a variety of chips.

"It's a new school year, and we want to welcome everyone back. It's a great way to kick off the new school year," said PTSO Event Chair Michele Soung. "We had [prepared] enough food to feed 2000 people and by the end of lunch, all

the food was gone. The students really seemed to enjoy the food and music, so we hope everyone had a lot of fun."

Many students who enjoyed the barbeque felt it

was a nice reminder that the parents are always supporting their kids.

"We really appreciate this lunch," said junior Kellie Chiou. "It's nice to know that the PTSO is willing to spend all that time planning a barbeque for the students." ♦

"It's a new school year, and we want to welcome everyone back."

>> PTSO Event Chair, Michele Soung

THIEF >> Suspect in school burglaries finally nabbed

continued from pg. 1

Anderson. "The music department was hit hard—they lost a laptop, Color Guard equipment and instruments."

Igou is not associated with the school, and it is believed that he came across keys that said "Saratoga" on the lanyard that were lost by former music director Duane Otani, who is now the director of one of the most prestigious bands in the state at Rancho Bernardo High School in San Diego. With these keys, the burglar could easily access school buildings, search classrooms and steal valuables.

"People are good here, but it only takes one person to find a set of keys and do some damage, as we found out this summer," said Anderson.

According to former assistant principal Joe Bosco, the school notified the staff to lock up their belongings and to bring personal items home in an attempt to

prevent further thefts.

They also notified sheriff's deputies, who came up with a clever plan to catch the thief. A laptop had been stolen in the copy room, so the deputies put a laptop with a GPS locator installed in the back into the copy room.

After some time, the suspect allegedly broke into the school again and took the burgled laptop. He was then tracked

down to his house, where he was arrested. Igou will be charged for three felony counts of second degree burglary, felony theft and felony drug possession, said Gonzalez.

"I sent a list of all the things that we know of went missing to the deputy sheriffs to see if we can regain the equipment

that was taken," said Anderson. "Or maybe [they can get] this guy to pay restitution where he would have to pay back the \$30,000 of stuff that was stolen as his sentence."

Because the school's locks had become obsolete with the lost keys, the entire school was re-keyed during the summer, a

process that cost \$10,000 and caused the staff some hassle.

"They have revamped the key system in terms of who gets a key and how that's checked out and checked in," said Bosco. He also thinks the school's video surveillance system can be improved to provide even better security.

The staff has also been told to remove any lanyards that said

"Saratoga" on them so people cannot easily associate the keys with the school.

The robberies came at a tough time for the school, with budget cuts limiting the ability to replace stolen items.

"I feel angry and disappointed because there are a lot of valuable things being taken, and in these budgetary times we can't just snap our fingers and replace a lot of this equipment," said Anderson.

There have often been robberies of iPods, phones and other items in locker rooms, but these smaller thefts are not believed to be connected to the larger string of burglaries, according to Bosco. The school has learned a lesson to be more aware and careful.

"We have been lulled into a sense of security where people say that it 'can't happen here' or 'can't happen in Saratoga [because] it's a good place,'" said Anderson. "But smart villains

will go to places where people are not on guard and take advantage. If we can take away a lesson it's that we need to have our eyes open be a little more respectful of the property and not take it for granted." ♦

items taken include...

- Laptop from the copy room
- Sound system for Color Guard
- Softball pitching machine from the sports department
- Instruments from the music building
- Video Cameras

>> Ashwini and Evaline

The robberies came at a tough time for the school, with budget cuts limiting the ability to replace stolen items.



FALCON // VIVIAN LETRAN

Senior Abner Inzunza edits video clips for multimedia journalism on the new computers in the MAP building, located at the back of the school.

MAP >> New, open to all

continued from pg. 1

facility and what we want it to be—to be flexible and able to grow, to be able to fit the content and product that we plan to record," said Palma.

Currently, the new building is used regularly for all MAP classes, multimedia journalism and film making. The high-tech technology enables students to explore their interests in multimedia in a real life setting.

"It's really nice and resembles a real life studio," said senior Courtney Maa, who is part of the MMJ program. "The new technology gives us the opportunity to learn about the careers out there that require this type of equipment."

In his first year at the building, Palma anticipates for the center to expand SHS TV and the MMJ program. His goal for this year is for the multimedia journalism class to showcase their work to the entire school community.

He wants his students' work to be professional—"not what you see on YouTube where people are hitting themselves with skateboards . . . [it will] make a difference in the community and in the world."

As the manager of the newly completed building, Palma also aims to train students to become

comfortable with the equipment so that they can operate it without his direct supervision.

For students not in the MAP program who want to use the facility, they must first identify their goal and then register for a time to come in so that a student familiar with the equipment can assist them, Palma said.

"Whether it's a student play that we want to broadcast, or an individual who wants to record something for college, or as simple as someone who is recording something in a foreign language, we want to make these opportunities available," said Palma.

Anderson hopes that the building will help create hands-on exposure to a new field and that students might consider a career that they previously did not

know much about.

"I think it's breathtaking what the building can become," Anderson said. "It has a lot of potential."

While most video studios in high schools and some colleges are just regular classrooms that have been retrofitted, Palma said that most of the contractors and other teachers who came to tour the facility had never seen a facility this dynamic or this large in a high school.

"We want it to be an open facility," said Palma. "It's a beautiful facility, it's gorgeous, it's large and it's 21st century and it's here to provide opportunities for all students." ♦

"[The MAP building] is really nice and resembles a real life studio."

>> senior Courtney Maa

THEMES >> Boardgame mania sweeps the school

continued from pg. 1

we are under a microscope. Because of that, kids can't be operating equipment or on the roof for any reason."

Despite the rule, seniors will be allowed to hire custodians for the weekend to help put their decorations up. So far, no other classes are allowed to have decorations on roofs. The administration is still considering whether they will allow students to be on ladders.

"I felt it was a privilege to go somewhere that's forbidden," said senior Grace Kim. "It makes sense that it's dangerous though because there is nothing to prevent you from falling."

But no one seems to be deterred by the new regulations the school has set up. In fact, the excited students are more spirited than ever.

"We're really excited," said senior class president Michelle Wang. "We have an idea of what our centerpiece is going to be, and we know what the dances are going to be like. It's senior year so you want your Quad Day to be awesome and have a lot of spirit."

The senior class has been enthusias-

tic about Homecoming this year, with choreography for dances already underway.

"This year we have so many participants and I'm really happy to see the spirit that our senior class has," said Kim.

Meanwhile, the sophomore class is looking to improve their Quad Day from a disappointing performance last year.

"I hope that people participate this year because there were not many people helping out last year with decorations," said sophomore class vice president Shireen Kaul. "So this year, we're trying to get more people to help."

To promote even more spirit, Homecoming points will

be distributed to each grade in the Class Cup, a year-long competition to determine which grade shows most school spirit. Classes with better Homecoming decorations and Quad Days will receive more points, said Hyde.

Although every class has a chance to nab a Homecoming victory, Wang is confident that the seniors will triumph in the end.

"Our Quad Days have always been really good, so I'm not too worried," said Wang. "I'm pretty sure we'll win." ♦

"We're really excited... It's senior year so you want your Quad Day to be awesome and have a lot of spirit."

>> senior Michelle Wang

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Music department prepares for good year

By Vivien Lu & Kyumin Shim

The theme for this year's field show is "Thought Crime," and it will be under the leadership of senior drum majors Chris Chung, David Mandell and Jason Shiuan. "The theme is very different because it's pretty percussive," music director Michael Boitz said. "The music is more angry and futuristic than lyrically stylistic, how it generally is."

The marching band, consisting of 220 students, is also adjusting to a new director after the departure of previous director Duane Otani, who has moved on to conduct one of the most prestigious bands in the state at Rancho Bernardo High School in San Diego. Students are now under the supervision of director Seth Jones, who went through a rigorous process to be chosen to lead the marching band.

"There were three rounds of interviews, and one interview was a mock rehearsal," said Boitz. "It was pretty intense and intimidating, but Mr. Jones stood out."

During the mock rehearsals, Boitz watched the students' reactions to each of the candidates for director.

"Mr. Jones makes band fun again," said senior Amanda Jeng. "It used to be all work, but he combines work and play at the same time and it makes things interesting."

Orchestra

The annual orchestra retreat was held at Saratoga Springs on Sept. 10 from 3-10 p.m. One hundred and twenty-five string players came together to play music and games, eat and socialize with one another.

"The purpose of the retreat is for the kids to get to know each other because it's a really big group and they're going to play together the whole year," said Boitz. "The philosophy here is that the better associated the kids are with each other, the better music they can make together. I want them to work hard and play hard."

Many students agreed, namely, junior Ivan Lee, who plays the violin.

"The retreat is a good time to meet all the people in orchestra because we're split between two periods so we barely even see the people in the other period other than weekly rehearsals. So it's a good way to have fun while getting to know the incoming freshmen and others that we're working with."

Saratoga Springs offered a great area for providing opportunities for new friendships to be formed by allowing kids to play icebreaker games and swim in the pool as well.

Choir

The choirs are in for a busy year with upcoming concerts.

First, they had a choir retreat overnight at Walden West on Sept. 10. "The retreat is usually just bonding," said junior Sarika Srivastava. "So we played some games and ate; it was really fun."

An upcoming performance on Nov. 3 at 7:30 p.m. in the McAfee Center will showcase a variety of choirs, ranging from Concert Choir to Chamber Singers.

While a substantial number of seniors graduated last year, music teacher Jim Yowell is excited at the prospect of new members.

"We're starting all over with brand new people, and I'm excited to get started," said Yowell. ♦

New debate coach, leadership for S&D

By Vijay Menon & Abhishek Venkataramana

For the past several years, the speech and debate team has struggled to establish itself with a solid coaching foundation. As the team prepares for another year of competition, English teacher and head coach Erick Rector hopes that permanent new coaching additions can take the squad to the next level. The club will have the added advantage of having several newly hired coaches to assist the team.

"The fact that we are now going to have multiple coaches for each event is something that I think will really help us stand out this year in terms of the competition," said Rector.

The most significant addition to the squad is Steve Clemmons, a professional debate coach who will join the team as assistant coach this year after several years coaching at Harker Middle School. Clemmons will assist in coaching extemporaneous speaking, parliamentary debate and public forum debate.

"Having [Clemmons] is going to be a great advantage for the team," said Rector. "He has years of experience both coaching and debating, and also will be coaching full time, so students will always have someone to help

out."

In a welcome addition to the team, Saratoga High alum and Stanford student Andrew Suci will return to coach Parliamentary Debate after taking a year-long hiatus to pursue educational opportunities in Bhutan.

Several returning students will also have to adapt to their new leadership roles. Seniors Keerti Shukla and Vance Lindholm will lead as team captains. Seniors Abhishek Venkataramana and

Several returning students will also have to adapt to their new leadership roles.

Karthik Annaamalai are Parliamentary Debate captains while Public Forum is run by junior captains Ruchie Bhardwaj, Danielle Savage and Parul Singh.

Seniors David Mandell, Taara Rangan and Vijay Menon will lead the speech team as the Individual Events captains. Congress captain Vishal Goel and Extemporaneous Speaking captains Viraj Parmar and Michael Chen round out the leadership roles.

"This year, I am especially impressed with the amount of leadership we have on this team," said Rector. "We have a great group of captains who have had a great amount of success in their respective events"

The first league tournament will be Oct. 17 at Leland High School. The team hopes to continue last year's record, when they sent four students to the state tournament. ♦

Budget under control for '10-11, but class sizes increase

By Emily Williams

Facing a \$1.6 million deficit last year, the Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District worked tirelessly to come up with a solution to the budget problem that would minimize effects on the students. Their efforts paid off this year, as no major programs were cut, but sizes for many classes have been increased, according to superintendent Cary Matsuoka.

"This year we really minimized the impact for the students and classes," said Matsuoka. "All programs are continuing, so we're able to fund everything. I doubt that kids are going to see much of a change."

The changes that have taken effect this year because of the budget problem may not be easily noticeable, but they are nonetheless present.

In particular, the budget for the 20-to-1 program that kept English 9 class sizes smaller was cut.

After much discussion and heated debate, the district decided to let the size of English 9 classes increase in order to keep other already larger classes from becoming too big.

Now English 9 classes average 24-25 students versus the 20 in past years, but still in contrast to most other classes that average 30 students. According to Matsuoka the average class size went up by just 1/2 a student per classroom across the district.

Of all the departments, English was hit the hardest, with seven sections cut from the curriculum and an increase in class sizes. But despite challenging circumstances, department chair Jason Friend said English teachers are doing their best.

"I know that English teachers are incredibly committed, so I know that they are going to work their hardest to make sure they reach every single student," said Friend. "[The big classes] could potentially hurt students in the future. You just hope that we do our very best to make sure that doesn't happen."

In addition to having slightly bigger classes on average, all teachers received a 'step freeze,' meaning that they will stay at the same spot on the same salary schedule, and all administrators and other school employees (such as janitors and secretaries) took a 3 percent pay cut.

The district's total budget is \$35 million, with teachers' salaries and benefits being the largest expense for the district. Because of this large expense, a few new teachers were pink slipped at the end of last year, but all who were pink slipped

because of the budget were hired back. "[Teachers] weren't happy with [cuts] but they understood the financial reality," said Matsuoka. "They've been understanding and cooperative and we were able to hire

back teachers that we initially laid off because of the budget."

Although the budget is balanced for this year, the projected deficit for next year is \$1.3 million.

"We have some major challenges for next school year," said Matsuoka. "That's a big hole that we need to solve."

So far no major decisions have been made to solve this problem, but the school board and the community are strongly considering trying to pass a parcel tax that would provide the high schools with much needed funds.

"With the efforts of the community and the campaign, [the parcel tax] has a really strong possibility of passing, in the spring" said Matsuoka. ♦

All programs are continuing, so we're able to fund everything.

>> Superintendent Cary Matsuoka

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Whitman fit to lead as governor

BY Anika Jhalani

When it comes to watching high level political races, many people are willing to TiVo their favorite soap and instead tune into a live news broadcast of opposing candidates in heated debate. The drama and gossip of such races have always been crowd pleasers, and the 2010 California gubernatorial race between Republican Meg Whitman and Democrat Jerry Brown is no exception.

In the political frenzy, candidates' real stances on policy are often obscured. Whitman has too often been recognized solely for her expensive campaign, rather than for the many reasons she is capable of being the leader of our state.

Whitman's experience as former CEO of eBay, a multi-billion dollar company, will help her tackle the fiscal challenges our state faces. Although often criticized for her political inexperience and predicted inability to handle the problems facing California, Whitman is the only candidate with the crucial business experience our state needs to rebuild the economy.

Whitman's experience as former CEO of eBay, a multi-billion dollar company, will help her tackle the fiscal challenges our state faces. Although often criticized for her political inexperience and predicted inability to handle the problems facing California, Whitman is the only candidate with the crucial business experience our state needs to rebuild the economy.

Concrete plan for job creation

With California's record high unemployment rate, job creation is a crucial issue that needs to be addressed. Whitman's work at eBay proves her skill in this area; she expanded eBay from just 30 employees to 15,000

and increased the company's revenues from \$4.7 million to \$8 billion. Whitman says small businesses are the key to leading California out of its recession; her detailed plan creates 2 million private sector jobs. She will encourage small businesses growth by a system of targeted tax cuts including the elimination of the factory tax, the elimination of the \$800 start-up tax, and better, streamlined regulation to help entrepreneurs start

business as soon as possible. Brown, on the other hand, supports taxes that are driving away the small businesses that could be creating millions of jobs for our state.

Letter-grade system for schools

Job creation isn't Whitman's only advantage. She plans to award money to schools and teachers with the best academic outcomes and will grade public schools on an A-F system, thereby serving as an incentive for schools to become more academically competitive.

Another planned fix in Whitman's agenda is to improve how school districts are allowed to spend funds. Currently the state allows each district to spend a set amount of money in each academic category. With this system, the state assumes that all schools need funding in the same areas, which means that

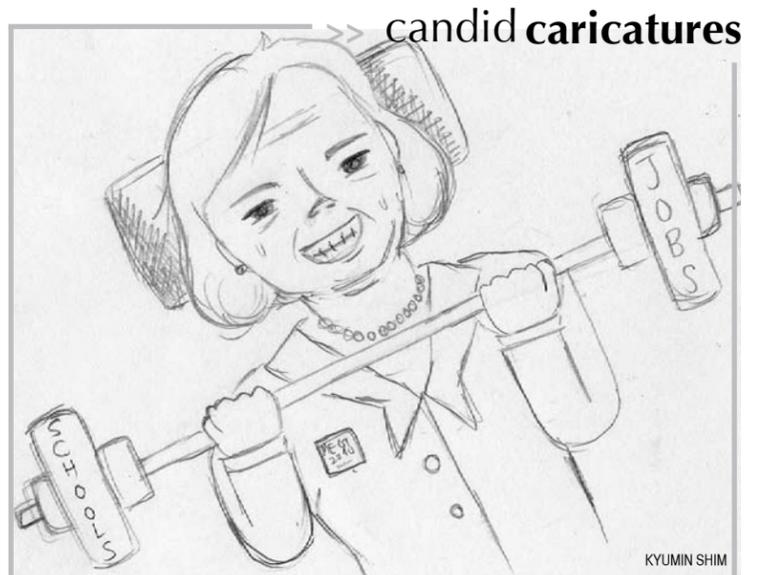
the money isn't being spent on specific needs of each school. Whitman plans to fix this by giving individual school districts greater control over their spending.

Brown's comments regarding his plan for education have been elusive at best. He advocates transfer courses between CSU and UC systems to eliminate redundancy, and plans to explore online education. He hasn't shown how he will bring money to the classroom and does not support grants to high performing schools, thereby eliminating incentive for academic competence.

Tough on illegal immigration

Perhaps the most controversial of her policies, Whitman's take on illegal immigration has created a stir among voters. Her plan to secure the border has resulted either in condemnation or commendation from a split population. Being absolutely against amnesty, Whitman plans to work with the federal government to eliminate illegal immigration in our state. She envisions an economic fence with which employers are held accountable for hiring undocumented workers, and plans to "crack down" on sanctuary cities that are housing undocumented workers.

Amnesty is wrong because it helps illegal aliens gain support off the backs of legal Californians. She believes that U.S. citizens should be the first to enjoy a state's privileges and



candid caricatures

does not believe in supporting an illegal immigrant on local tax money. Brown, on the other hand, believes that immigrants "do work that Californians do not want to do." He should not justify illegal immigration with an assumption, especially at the cost to the 12 percent of Californians who are unemployed. In fact, the Federation for American Immigration Reform reports that illegal immigration is costing California \$10.5 billion annually. We must fix the influx of immigration into our state and cannot rely solely on the federal government to do so.

Self-funded campaign

Although Whitman presents a solid stance, she has often been criticized just for her expensive campaign, which she funded with \$100 million of her own money. A

less publicized detail of Brown's campaign is that it is mainly funded by labor unions, which means he may have obligations to fulfill if he ever does become governor. Whitman, on the other hand, has personally funded her entire campaign, so if she becomes governor she won't "owe anyone anything."

Whitman brings a unique mindset and skill set to politics. She was able to turn a fragile startup into a booming corporation and has presented a clear plan as to how she plans to recreate and revitalize California. A new perspective is a key ingredient to solving our state's problems; We can't afford to recycle the same politicians from Sacramento. Jerry Brown's fluctuating and generalized plans cannot compete against Whitman's detailed strategies. Meg Whitman is the best leader for our state to build a new California. ♦

School elections in need of reform

Last spring, each officer for ASB ran unopposed. With no opponents, candidates had virtually a free pass to their office, making the process more of a coronation than a competitive race where different ideas are debated.

To begin with, part of the problem lies in the student body itself. Why do so many students pass on the opportunity to exercise their democratic right? Apathy toward elections and student government hinders the ASB's ability to accurately represent the wants and needs of its constituents. The problem behind this apathy lies in a lack of communication behind what really goes on in ASB.

In 2008, a commission was formed to revise the Constitution after it had been lost. Ironically, the precedent that required ASB to revise the Constitution only points out how the problems in student government are by no means

new.

The committee set out to increase student voice through initiatives such as academic class representatives from each third period. However, the ASB has not actively promoted this clause. As a result, few students know what goes on at ASB meetings, and even fewer have a voice in student government (and even more so when they don't even have a choice in candidates).

Another fault buried in the Constitution lies in the election system itself. Poorly publicized requirements prohibit the majority of students from running. Even if they do decide to run, many students find out too late of what they must do in order to be eligible as a candidate. Currently, to run as an ASB officer, a student must have attended three ASB meetings and served as a class officer. These requirements severely limit the number of eligible students, perpetuating a cycle of the same people serving the same positions year after year.

Unfair election procedures also de-

ter qualified students from participating. Several years ago, candidates used to have to write a short paragraph explaining their campaign platform and goals. More time was also given to candidates to campaign, allowing them to put up posters and fliers around the school with their office goals.

Recent elections have significantly changed. Due to complaints from teachers about the time elections took away from instruction, the process has been noticeably simplified. Few candidates post any sort of campaign material around campus. Instead of voting on issues, students instead must choose from a list of names—turning the elections into a de facto popularity contest.

Candidates have not been required to give their campaign goals since the fall of 2007 and continue to not do so. Elections were moved to a table in the quad at lunch, drastically cutting student participation in elections. Although the school now has access to a campus-wide broadcast system, elections do not yet take advantage of this technology.

To expand student participation and voice in Saratoga's government, the ASB needs to better convey its policies. Requirements for candidacy should

be re-evaluated, especially when they contribute such an alarming apathy on the part of students. On top of that, any requirements should be clearly and widely publicized—not just right before elections when it is too late, but months in advance.

To address student apathy, ASB also needs to promote the selection of representatives from each third-period class.

By expanding participation, student government will be significantly legitimized. If more students are involved, they are more likely to care what is going on.

Lastly, the election process needs to be improved to make it more on the issues and less on the name recognition. Although it may cost class time, teachers should be willing to sacrifice several minutes if it means increasing students' voice across campus.

When all officers are running unopposed, the time is ripe to start making reforms. ♦



STAFFEDITORIAL

Poorly publicized requirements prohibit the majority of students from running.

>> THE big idea

Election Reform

Problem: Student apathy, lack of information, dearth of class time devoted to elections

Proposed fix: Involve more students, requirement of campaign goals, better publicized requirements

>> Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

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Apple jailbreak crackdown unjust

BY Evaline Ju

With a quick stroke of the slider on his iPhone, a student can enter a world of free applications and unrestrained choices of phone carriers. Little does he know, however, that his iPhone could be recording his voice and his heartbeat or taking secret photos of him if Apple gets its way in the next few months.

Jailbreaking is the process that allows iPod Touch, iPhone or iPad users to run software not authorized by Apple on their devices. Since the invention of these products, the legality of this practice has been in question.

On July 26, the issue was resolved. The U.S. Copyright Office and the Library of Congress declared against Apple that jailbreaking did not violate the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, which protects copyrights.

However, Apple would not put the matter to rest. A patent for "systems and methods for identifying unauthorized users of an electronic device" went before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office in late August.

With the system, Apple can basically stalk devices' users. If it senses any "suspicious behavior," such as jailbreaking, hacking, or even moving away from the synced device, it can lock or shut down the iPod Touch, iPhone or iPad.

The very idea of taking undetectable photos or monitoring the heartbeat of a user sounds like a part of a science fiction novel, much like Big Brother in George Orwell's "1984." Not only does it interfere with personal privacy, it is "downright creepy and invasive," as Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), a U.S. civil liberties group says.

Jailbreaking, in a way, has broken Apple's monopoly over items like backgrounds, themes and games. The court's approval of jailbreaking has been a step forward for users of Apple devices.

Users are no longer constrained to the same things

but can use what others have come up with online for little to no cost. Though the company may be motivated to recover its possible financial losses caused by the court's ruling, Apple's new patent idea has simply gone over the top.

The application for the patent has not yet been approved, but it has stirred controversy over Apple's legal authority to try to slip past the court's approval of jailbreaking.

Instead of seeking to improve its products or lower their costs, the company insists on stalking customers who have found cheaper and a wider range of alternatives. Now that Apple is powerless to stop jailbreaking by any moral or legal means at this point, users can freely hack their devices.

In this world of constant technological advancement, Apple does not have to play

the sore loser. If only it didn't choose to. ♦

The very idea of taking undetectable photos or monitoring the heartbeat of a user sounds like a part of a science fiction novel.



KYUMIN SHIM

>> THE bigidea

Apple Jailbreaking

Issue: Apple is trying to get the power to hack into a user's device if they suspect suspicious activities.

Means: Apple plans to use the inbuilt capabilities of the redesigned iPhone 4 to snap photos of users and monitor heartrate.

Problem: Many users feel that this is an invasion of their privacy and that they can do whatever they want with their purchased device.

What's next: The patent is still pending at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Tenure should be fired

BY Parul Singh

In early February of this year, a biology professor at the University of Alabama opened fire during a faculty meeting and killed three professors. The professor, Amy Bishop, was arrested and charged for murder. The twist, however, is that the shooting was provoked by the rejection of Bishop's recent appeal for tenure.

This event involved one very deranged woman, of course, but it also rekindled the debate about whether tenure for professors should be preserved. Tenure, or job security for professors after five to 12 years of work, essentially prevents these professors from getting fired.

Instead of attempting to completely eradicate tenure, many states are passing bills to lengthen the amount of time it takes to achieve tenure or make it more difficult. Maryland, for example, is implementing a system in which increases in student test scores must be apparent before tenure is granted.

California is no exception. Because of the current budget deficit in California, tenure is becoming a less and less viable option for many universities. Although advantages of tenure include job security, academic freedom and incentive for professors to remain in the work force, granting tenure to a professor can prove to be very costly for a university. For every professor with tenure, the university is forced to pay his or her salary for anywhere from 30 to 50 years. This is not only hugely expensive, but the return for students after paying this much money is surprisingly little.

This occurs because, after 20 years on the job, the professor's ideas, although not irrelevant, may not be as fresh as those of a younger teacher trying to get a

job. Tenure prevents new teachers from getting hired simply because professors refuse to quit their jobs until they reach extremely old age.

Even if the professor's ideas remain current, many tenured teachers' main priority is not even teaching. The luxury of tenure allows professors to research and publish papers. While this may seem like a good thing, the truth is that many professors prioritize publishing a paper over teaching their students.

The university is not paying these professors to do their research; the university is paying them to teach their students, but due to tenure the teachers who do not perform their duty cannot be fired. Although research is important for making new discoveries, educating the future generation should take precedence.

When considering the timeline for achieving tenure, it also becomes clear that tenure discourages women from becoming professors. Since it often takes four years to get a college degree, six years to get a doctorate degree and then 10 years to achieve tenure, people would be around 40 years old by the time they are granted tenure. With this track, it becomes harder for women planning to have children to ever achieve tenure, thus discouraging gender diversity in teaching.

It is true that without tenure fewer people will become professors due to job security fears. However, if tenure is eliminated or significantly reformed, only the people who really love teaching will become teachers. As a result, this new committed workforce of professors will increase the quality of education because they won't be motivated by thoughts of tenure.

Eliminating teacher tenure will allow for the rejuvenation of California's education system. ♦

So...where's the (freshman) love?

BY Michael Lee

Just to clarify, this is not about the song by the Black Eyed Peas.

This is about something more significant than pop music, something that affects high school students everywhere. This is about the much needed respect most freshmen have been deprived of. Despite the Link Crew and teachers' attempts to help ninth graders, some sophomores, juniors and seniors still enjoy picking on their younger schoolmates.

This maltreatment naturally stems from the older students' past high school experiences. After all, every upperclassman was once a freshman. And many would argue that the sophomores', juniors' and seniors' built-up anger and resentment left over from their freshman years fuels the troubles of the next group of ninth graders.

It is, however, the responsibility of these older students to help terminate this apparently endless cycle. Freshmen hazing can be minimized—if not completely eradicated—if the other students decide to take the initiative and treat them as peers.

Someone once said, "Life is like a mirror. Treat others how you would want to be treated." Unfortunately, in the mirror of life, bad actions reflect on and affect all.

The truth is that there is no justification to discriminate against people who are different. This applies to people of

another religion, ethnicity, social class or, in this case, educational class.

Mistreatment and bullying have the potential to affect a person's personality and self-esteem.

Many upperclassmen are probably thinking, "We all went through it. So shouldn't they?"

In reality, it is wrong to wish misfortune on others, even if one has found adversity in the past.

Think about how *you* felt as a freshman—intimidated, confused and scared. Do you really want other people to go through that?

This hypocrisy, combined with the irony of Link Leaders welcoming freshmen, then sometimes losing interest in them later on, highlights the injustice of this situation.

Some freshmen claim that they have not been affected by this "grade-ism," but others admit to being victim to some form of bullying, whether it be teasing, harassment or even the quiet utterance about "those freshmen."

Kindness and sympathy are integral to creating a better high school environment. Students—Link Leaders especially—should make incoming freshmen feel welcome in class, during Homecoming and around campus.

If anything, students need to think before acting. The insignificant, spontaneous word of one person can have effects on others that are much greater than anticipated. ♦

Think about how you felt as a freshman—intimidated, confused, and scared. Do you really want other people to go through that?

Islamophobia

DISCRIMINATION DIVIDES NATION

BY Aasim Naqvi & Ashwini Velchamy

September 11, 2001. Without a doubt, this date marks one of the most terrifying and saddening moments in our country's history as terrorists destroyed the Twin Towers of New York City, killing almost 3,000 people. From this devastating event emerged another upsetting outcome, one that has slowly yet surely begun to undermine our country.

The terrorists who attacked New York in 2001 were Muslim extremists. This fact began the transformation of many Americans into "Islamophobes."

Since the events of Sept. 11, prejudice against Islam has risen to the point that a word was created to define this hatred. American views of the 1,400-year-old religion have continued to become more and more negative.

Islamophobia remains the disease that has started to wear down the image of the United States. While it might seem drastic to call it such a loaded term, this remains a pressing issue given all the hate crimes and discrimination against American Muslims.

When a passenger gets into a New York taxi and stabs the driver because of his faith, as happened recently, the United States' level of fear has reached ridiculous heights.

The United States of America, "the melting pot of the world," has long been known for its tolerance, but this reputation is in danger.

From issues such as whether a mosque should be built near Ground Zero to whether the state of Florida

should allow a Gainesville church to burn copies of the Quran, Islamophobia has reached the point where Americans have no problem ignoring the values of acceptance upon which the nation was built.

If this Islamophobia continues, our nation's ideals are in jeopardy.

People should not focus on the minuscule extremist groups but take into perspective the millions of Muslims who possess the same values as everyone else in the United States. These individuals have to deal with such stereotypes, even though more Muslims have been killed by Islamic extremists than members of any other religion. Many Muslims were killed in the 9/11 attacks as well. In fact, the World Trade Center itself included a Muslim prayer center!

Today, the Islamophobes of America hate Islam out of ignorance. This irrational fear and hatred can only create discord.

Is that the image wanted for America? A country being torn apart from within?

That is exactly what is happening with Islamophobia. ♦

>> THE bigidea

Islamophobia

Misconceptions: Ignorance is the main problem behind the issue

Generalization: Linking the world's largest religion with this relatively miniscule group makes no sense

Day of Beck-oning dampens MLK day

BY Nandini Ruparel

For most educated Americans, the mere mention of the Lincoln Memorial and the date Aug. 28 brings back memories of Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963, one in which he rallied for the civil rights movement and brought hope to many disheartened African-Americans. The significance of the two together is rarely lost on anyone.

Except for Glenn Beck, apparently. Instead, Beck, a very conservative

commentator on Fox News, saw himself standing at the Lincoln Memorial on Aug. 28 giving a speech regarding the Tea Party movement and called the rally he was holding "Restoring Honor."

Beck is known for his intense remarks and radical statements, but many people think that he has gone too far this time.

While Beck is perfectly entitled to have his own views and beliefs, holding a rally on the same day and, adding insult to injury, at the same location as MLK's speech was disrespectful to not only the civil rights activist, but also to all the men and women to which this day is significant.

Even after being politely informed about the "coincidence" by many people, keeping the date and saying that he wanted to "reclaim the civil rights movement" was the wrong decision

for Beck to make.

Beck claims that the anniversary was not the reason he chose the date, insisting that it was simply easier to choose for everyone involved.

Clearly, "easy" is a relative term. Beck has received much criticism regarding his apparently utilitarian choice, especially from prominent activists and pundits.

Call it "divine providence," as Beck does, or unfortunate coincidence, but if Beck did not know of the significance of the date, then the most respectful action to take would have been to change it.

Beck has once again proved himself to be a rallying force for controversy and troublemakers. Unfortunately, his rally, which, according to CBS, anywhere from 78,000 to 96,000 people attended, ended up being one of the least incendiary events of the summer (which may say more about the past months than it does about the rally). The rally is more of an indication of how Beck is willing to do anything to keep the fame he's established on his extreme TV show.

If Beck continues to hold his "tea parties" on similarly significant dates without examining the consequences, his reputation will either fade to a washed out nay-sayer or a controversy hound with little knowledge of historical events. ♦

Beck has once again proved himself to be a rallying force for controversy and troublemakers.

Ground Zero mosque controversy highlights American ignorance

MOSQUE A PLACE OF WORSHIP, NOT A SHRINE OF TERRORISTS

BY Will Edman & Jason Wu

In mid 2009, a group of Christians, Jews and Muslims created the Cordoba Initiative, an association that planned to build an Islamic community center near Ground Zero in New York called Park 51 that would house a mosque.

As the project neared completion, it sparked a fierce national controversy, largely thanks to misinformation about the proposed building. What the media excitedly brands as the "Ground Zero mosque" is actually neither located at Ground Zero nor, by definition, truly a mosque. The community center would actually be located two blocks away and out of sight from Ground Zero, and the mosque would take up only two floors out of the building's 13.

In a recent act of defiance against Park 51, Florida pastor Terry Jones announced that his church would burn the Quran if Park 51 does not cease development (he later backed down). The same constitutional rights that protect Jones' freedom of speech in threatening this hateful act must also protect freedom of religion for Muslims.

The community center proposal has nevertheless faced opposition from those who believe that the building

>> candid caricatures



would insult 9/11 victims' memories. However, Park 51 would feature a memorial to the victims of 9/11, an attempt at good will toward victims and their families that has largely gone unnoticed.

Many Americans believe that Park 51 instead honors Islam's role in the 9/11 attacks, but this misconception only highlights the ignorance that surrounds the issue. Compared to an estimated thousand members of the extremist

group Al-Qaeda responsible for 9/11, there are over 1.5 billion Muslims in the world. The 9/11 attacks were not an Islamic crime but a crime committed in the name of Islam by extremists whom most Muslims reject. Linking the world's second largest religion with this relatively minuscule group is a gross generalization, effectively associating the erection of a community center that happens to contain a mosque with the glorification of a terrorist attack. ♦

THE saratoga falcon >>

THIRDPERIOD

STAFFPOLICY

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

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Unicorns and Monkeys and Guitars, oh my!

SILLY BANDZ SWEEP THE NATION AS STUDENTS CAN BE SEEN WITH THESE COLORFUL WRIST BANDS

BY JustineHuang

If you ever thought that wearing rubber bands around your wrist was a dumb idea, take a look around.

Alligators, squirrels, dinosaurs, strawberries and stars are only a few of the many shapes of Silly Bandz, colorful silicone wristbands that form shapes or words. These playful accessories have become a cultural phenomenon among people of all ages, including students across the school.

"My friend had a bunch [of Silly Bandz] and then she gave me one and it exploded from there," said junior Isabel McPherson. "Plus they're different and I'm easily amused."

Silly Bandz were originally invented in Japan in 2002. Cosmetic changes were made to the bands to make them more kid-friendly, then were man-

ufactured and sold by Brainchild Products.

These modern day Silly Bandz come in packs of 24 bands each, and are sold on numerous online shopping sites. The prices range from \$5-\$6 for a 24-pack of bands.

The bands range from musical instruments to mermaids and unicorns. A recent pack of Silly Bandz even included bands related to singer Justin Bieber.

They can be seen on the arms of students not only in Saratoga High, but all over the country. People of all ages wear multiple bands on their arms, usually creating a rainbow effect. Besides serving as decorative armlets, Silly Bandz provide cures for boredom during class.

"Sometimes in class I'll take off my Silly Bandz and look at the shapes," said sophomore Allison Kim. "But they don't distract me from learning."

However, in some schools around the nation, Silly Bandz have been banned from the classroom because of teacher complaints about the bands causing disruptions. Teachers who gave out Silly Bandz as prizes or incentives found that students constantly played with the bands in class, and created disturbances that resulted when students traded Silly

Bandz.

"I think

[the ban]

ma k e s

sense for

younger

kids be-

cause they could

be easily distract-

ed," said McPher-

son. "But in high

school, I don't think they're really an issue because

we're mature enough to know when the appropriate

time to show them off is."

The popularity of these toys has resulted in the

company branching out and launching several Silly

Bandz-related products. Silly Ringz, Silly Necklaces,

and SillyButtons are advertised on the Silly Bandz

webpage, offering a wide range of selections.

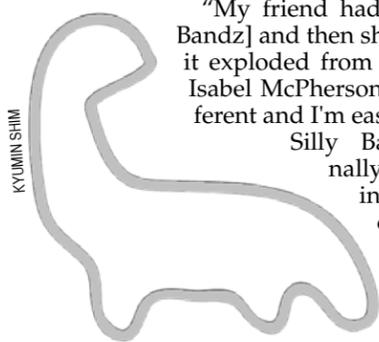
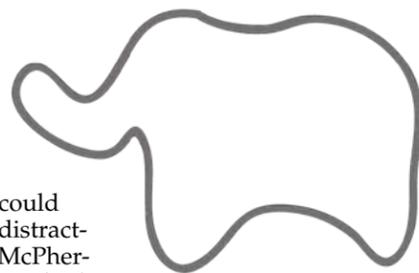
While most critics dismiss Silly Bandz as a pass-

ing fad, if the ever growing number of bands show-

ing up on high school students' wrists are an indica-

tion of the product's progress, these bands will be

around for at least a little longer. ♦



KYUMIN SHIM



KYUMIN SHIM

Got Questions? Seniors have answers

BY JackieGu

The transition from middle school to high school is not always a smooth one. Incoming freshmen can often be overwhelmed by the sudden shift in schedules, teachers, policies and general environment; the class of 2014 is no exception. The Falcon took questions from freshmen and turned them to experienced upperclassmen for answers.

•"What does ASB stand for? What do they do, anyway?" – freshman Michael Zheng

"ASB stands for Associated Student Body. They organize school events like homecoming, prom, and student elections. I think they're awesome because they do so much work but not many people really know what they do." – senior Walter Hsiang

"ASB is like student council for the entire school. They do a lot of work for the school. They do fundraising and overall just help the school run smoothly, keeping the school's flow in check. They also organize special events." – senior Sarah Blegen

•"Do they really yell at freshmen at rallies? Why do they do that?" –freshman Rachel Perera

"It's really just tradition. But you should get in-

involved in rallies! Go to the office and sign up. It's really fun to participate." – senior Walter Hsiang

"It's almost like a rite of passage, I guess. Everyone goes through it and it's just a tradition. When you become a sophomore it's exciting because now you can yell at the freshmen and there's people below you and when you're a senior you feel like you've really earned that right. It's more to celebrate that you've gotten a year older than to actually yell at freshmen. There are no hard feelings." – senior Sarah Blegen

•"What are we supposed to do during tutorials? Is there anything we have to do, exactly?" – freshman Drew Kriens

"Ideally, you should spend the time getting extra help on schoolwork. Connecting with your teachers is always good, too. But really most people just hang out with their friends, because who doesn't want to do that in 40 minutes of free time? If you need help or have tests and other things to make up, though, definitely go see your teachers. That's what the time is for. But no one's going to force you to do anything during tutorial." – senior Walter Hsiang

"You don't have to do anything, actually. A lot of people just hang out with their friends, but you can also go talk to your teachers for help on material or

make up tests that you missed. It's basically a free period." – senior Sarah Blegen

•"Do we have to swim in PE?" – freshman Rachel Perera

"I heard that you do a swimming section in PE, like a unit. I never took PE myself, but I heard the swimming was fun!" – senior Sarah Blegen

"I never took PE because I'm a swimmer, so I don't know. But I have to swim anyway." – senior Walter Hsiang

•"How do you use the locker rooms if you're taking a sport like swimming? Are you allowed to get a locker for yourself?" – freshman Michael Zheng

"I do swimming and yeah, you can get a locker for yourself. Just bring a lock and stick it on any locker, but make sure to register it first so they don't cut off your lock. Typically we get the lockers in the back so that the people actually taking PE get lockers in the front." – senior Walter Hsiang

"I've never really had a locker, but my friend in field hockey had one. If you want one you just have to bring a lock and the office will help you set one up." – senior Sarah Blegen ♦

THE SENIORS:



Sarah Blegen



Walter Hsiang

THE FRESHMEN:



Rachel Perera



Drew Kriens



Michael Zheng

FALCON/JACKIE GU

What's In

THE SARATOGA FALCON TAKES A PEEK INSIDE SENIORS' CARS FOR PILES OF HOMEWORK, EACH ITEM IN THEIR OWN

Leah Capek

Car stores rally keepsakes

BY SynthiaLing
& RebeccaNguyen

Rally commissioner Leah Capek's black 2003 Volkswagen Jetta seems more like a storage closet for costumes, props and equipment used in past rallies rather than a form of transportation.

"My stuff is all pretty much from the rally, give or take a few things," said the senior who has been on the rally commission since the end of last year. "There are flags, my clothes from the rally, skates and in the backseat of my car I have my blanket and binders. I also have some nice robes and a bra."

Capek, embarrassed by the blue leopard print bra, explains how it got in her car.

"I've actually never worn it before," said Capek. "I think it still has the tags on it. We wanted [senior Jay Lee] to wear it during the rally but we're not allowed to do that."

In the trunk is also a fake snake that junior Anna Ashe, playing Lord Voldemort, wore around her neck during the recent Harry Potter-themed rally.

There are also helmets and longboards that was used in a competition among each grade. Students had to lay down on the boards on their stomachs and race around the gym.

Along with the interesting rally items are her everyday things such as white sneakers and a blanket to keep warm during foot-

ball games.

Capek does not mind her disorganized with eccentric belongings but it does create problems when friends try to ride in her car.

"I just throw my stuff in the backseat," said Capek. "But then I realize, 'Oh wait, people have to sit in the backseat,' so I just throw everything back in the trunk."

With all of her crazy stuff, Capek can always entertain herself.

"If anyone ever wants to play flag football I've got some flags," said Capek. "You know, if you want to do that at lunch." ♦

>> car findings

- Flags
- Skates
- Clothes from the rally
- Bra
- Fake snake



Kabir Jiandani

Cleanliness not a big deal for senior

BY RoyBisht

Some students keep their cars completely spotless. Senior Kabir Jiandani is not one of those students.

Ever since Jiandani got his 2008 silver Mercedes Brabus last year from his older brother, he has never made much of an effort to keep his car tidy. He blames this habit on a variety of things, particularly his heavy schoolwork load as an upperclassman.

"When I first got my car, I really wanted to be able to clean it on occasions," said Jiandani. "Junior year made that nearly impossible with all of the work that I had to do, so not cleaning my car has become a habit."

Unlike most students, Jiandani does not have a locker to put his school stuff in. In fact, he has not had a locker since his freshman year, since he forgot to get one every year since then. So where does Jiandani put all of his textbooks binders? The answer: the floor of his car.

"It's fair to say that my car is my locker. I'm comfortable putting a lot of my stuff in my car, so when I stopped using my locker I just put all of my school stuff on the floor and in the trunk of my car," said Jiandani.

Entering Jiandani's car, one will find not just textbooks, but a vast expanse of papers. These can range from old homework assignments, quizzes and even SAT prep papers from his junior year. Most of the papers scattering the floor are useless to him now, since they're so old.

"I never really have had a place for old schoolwork, so most of it goes on my car floor," said Jiandani.

To make matters even more interesting, Jiandani doesn't seem to mind the extreme disorganization in his car. Most students with such a mess in their car would be embarrassed by the situation, but Jiandani believes that it just adds to the uniqueness of his car.

"Honestly, I'm fine with the mess. It kind of makes my car different and more unique than others, and I like being able to say that my car is

very different," said Jiandani.

Jiandani may not have the cleanest car out there, but that's about where the disorganization begins and ends in his life. Outside of his car Jiandani makes sure that almost everything is tidy: his room, his schoolwork, and himself included. His car just seems to be the only thing that happens that does not fall under that category.

"Generally, I'm an organized guy, but I have a lot of old paperwork from school and not much time to do anything with it, so it all ends up in my car. I don't really mind having it that way because I don't live in it," said Jiandani.

Even though Jiandani's car is a jungle of old homework assignments and handouts, it could be worse. Let's just hope that senioritis does not make it any messier. ♦

>> car findings

- Textbooks
- Binders
- SAT prep papers
- Homework



Your Car?

STUDENTS' CARS. WHETHER IT BE A PLASTIC SWORD
CARS REPRESENTS A PART OF WHO THEY ARE.

Anthony
Sutardja

What's that junk in his trunk?

BY Kimberly Tsai

Senior Anthony Sutardja's car at first seems childish. After all, it contains stuffed animals, Winnie the Pooh stickers and kites. However, Sutardja's car is far from a toy store. His car also hoards other eccentric belongings such as extension cords and band-aids.

Sutardja says there is no real meaning to all the things in his car other than for enjoyment.

"It's always fun to keep stuff in the car because sometimes [my friends and I] get bored and don't know what to do," said Sutardja.

He and his friends often go to the dollar store and pick up things they think are interesting. Sutardja's grey 2009 Acura TSX holds a variety of things such as a "Hamtaro" stuffed animal, a cardboard rainbow and various plates of plastic armor. Sutardja even has a biodegradable spoon in his car from whole foods.

"I was going to bury [the biodegradable spoon] and see [if it was biodegradable], but I never got to it," said Sutardja.

Most of the time, Sutardja says his friends think his things are pretty funny. His friends often play around with the various masks and toys in Sutardja's car.

"Usually my friends are like, 'Wow! What's that?' and they'll play with it and think it's super cool," said Sutardja. "It's just a fun way to pass time."

Sutardja's favorite thing out of all the items in his car is the plastic sword in the back of his trunk. He thinks that it is the coolest thing in

his car because it lights up.

Even though Sutardja has no deeper reason for all the things in his car, he feels as his collection of random stuff is another way to express himself.

"I'm not really allowed to paint the walls in my room or really have fun with it," said Sutardja.

He says his parents are more of the strict type and would rather have clean, white walls in his room. Sutardja works around this and tries to find other ways to be himself.

"My parents don't really let me decorate my room the way I want to," said Sutardja cheerfully, "so I guess I just decorate my car." ♦

>> car findings

- Stuffed animals
- Kites
- Winnie-the-Pooh stickers
- Cardboard rainbow
- Plates of armor
- A degradable spoon



Tim
Lycurgus

What's Waldo carrying?

BY Synthia Ling
& Rebecca Nguyen

For senior Tim Lycurgus, his blue 1999 Lexus SUV is more than something that takes him from point A to B. It's also a storage device that he lovingly calls "Waldo" and a place where he hangs out with his best friend senior Kevin Darchuk, who claims to be Waldo's uncle.

Just to get a glimpse of the inside of his trunk, Lycurgus has to fold down the back seat of his car and crawl into the trunk to open it from the inside.

"My trunk broke after my friends and I put a couch in it and it didn't fit all way," said Lycurgus. "We had to tie it down. After we took it down the rope got caught on the trunk latch and when I yanked the rope the latch broke. My mom was mad."

Inside his car is a collection of eclectic items, including a woman's visor, glasses with the name "Soulja Boy" written on it, his mom's sun hat, a compass from an orienteering course and a map of St. Louis.

Most of these items have some story behind them. Once such item is a toy foam sword that was used in the Ethnicity Ball League, a self-created league in which he and his friends play football in teams that are based on different countries.

"This sword is probably the most valuable thing in my car," said Lycurgus. "It's the silver sword because in Ethnicity Ball League we always have the battle for the sword, and the USSR won this from India. Most important thing."

Although Lycurgus does have some unusual items in his car, there are some normal ones as well: umbrellas, a dog chew toy,

softballs, a folding chair, two hair-brushes, clothes, a very old Dr. Pepper bottle, a hair clip, old lunch.

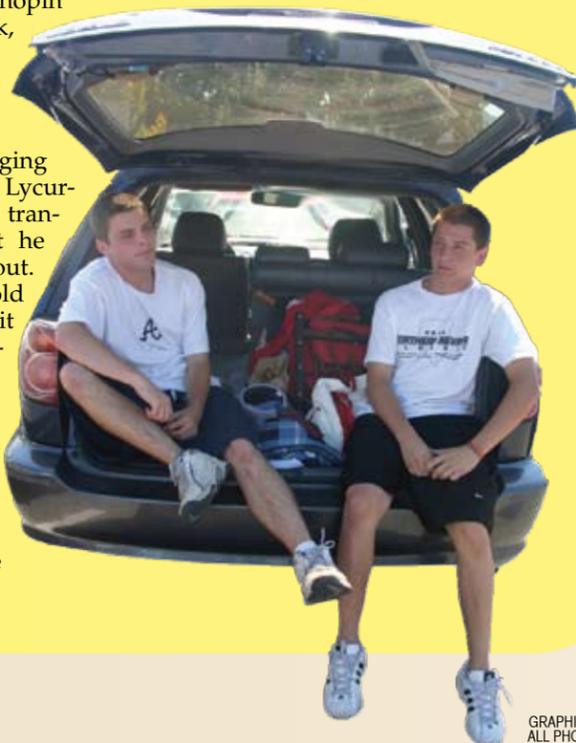
On the floor and in various bags, Waldo also carries a tie-dye bucket hat which was ruined from spilled drinks. There is a bent Chopin piano music book, although Lycurgus no longer plays the instrument.

While rummaging through his car, Lycurgus discovered a transistor radio that he had forgotten about.

"My 85-year-old neighbor gave it to me," Lycurgus said. "I was going to give it away at Goodwill but I forgot I had it. I love Waldo. I am Waldo personified. We are the same person." ♦

>> car findings

- Woman's visor
- "Soulja Boy" glasses
- A compass
- Toy foam sword
- A map of St. Louis
- Very old Dr. Pepper bottle

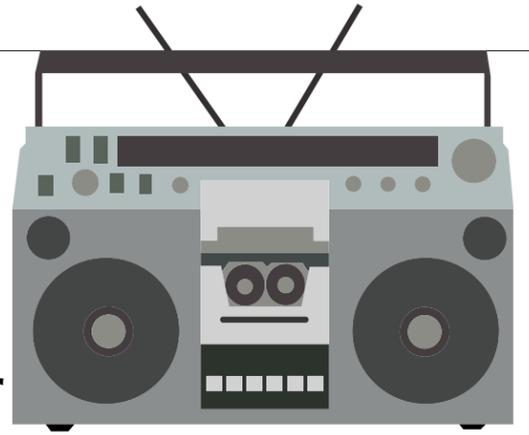


STUDENTZ

Many students find a way to showcase their passion for music outside of school. They've done this a variety of ways, from forming acapella groups and death metal bands to even playing instruments like the Chinese yangqin.

ROCKIN' BANDS

Hardcore metal band Flint Ironstag shows promising start of music career



BY Emily Williams

Death metal. When many people think of this style of music, they think of excessive loud noise and "emo" music. What people don't realize is that there are many types of hard-core metal bands and not all of them fit into the stereotype.

Flint Ironstag is one of those bands that embraces the technically challenging style without a death metal blood and guts flair. According to Flint Ironstag's lead guitarist, junior Marshall Westall, those emo bands give hard-core metal a bad reputation.

"I hate [the blood and guts lyrics], honestly, I'd rather write deep lyrics that are about human feelings than 'I'm going to kill you!' said Westall. "There are songs like that and that's not the stuff we want to write. Maybe that style for guitars but never vocals."

Flint Ironstag formed at the end of last school when six guys with the same interest in music decided to

create a metal/hardcore band with screaming vocal, distorted guitars and double bass drums.

The band consists of Westall; alumnus Ian Guner on screaming vocals and key board; senior Brandon Pierce on clean vocals; Sam Cokes from Los Gatos High School on bass; Allen Locket from Los Gatos on drums; and Westmont High School alumnus Chris Tognetti on rhythm guitar.

The band was originally created by Guner and Pierce. The band practices every Saturday.

The band's first gig is on Nov. 27 at Nickel City,



"This is a group of guys who share the same taste in music to be able to make their own music."

>> Senior Brandon Pierce

an arcade in San Jose. Flint Ironstag is joining forces with another Saratoga band called Revive the Lifeless to release a joint EP or Extended Play which is a recording smaller than an album, but larger than a single. Flint Ironstag hopes to get to the studio to record by the end of the month so that they can get even more gigs through the agency PinUp productions.

Westall created a Myspace page and a Facebook fan page for the group over the summer. He said that most of their fans so far are friends, but he hopes that once they play at a few gigs and record their songs, their fan base will expand.

Flint Ironstag doesn't play covers; instead, they write their own music. The band currently has three songs fully written and a few more are in the works.

"Frankly for a band, covers are a cop out because you don't have to write stuff and writing is what makes you a real band," Westall said.

When they are writing, the songs usually start on the piano or guitar. Westall and Guner bounce ideas off each other and each band member writes his own part. Pierce, Westall and Guner all collaborate on lyrics.

"My friends tell me that the guitar bits I've written sound cool," Westall said. "I'm just hoping that once we get the rest of the instruments and the lyrics finished and recorded, people will still like it."

Their influences include bands like Parkway Drive, Structures and Emmure, but Flint Ironstag

has a style all its own.

"I think we are pretty original, because when I write stuff I like to mix a lot of styles together," he said.

Marshall draws most of his inspiration from different types of bands and then he takes various things that he likes about a band and combining it with other things to create a unique, technical guitar sound.

"The purpose of this band is for a group of guys who share the same taste in music to be able to make their own music and have fun creating it," said Pierce.

"Oh, and possibly get big and eventually make a career out of it."

Although still fairly new, the band would love to eventually get a record deal, but becoming professional is a long shot at best for a high school band.

"I mean [becoming professional] is the hope, but with high school bands, even if you do get anything going on, people can't really do it because of schedule conflicts," said Westall. "If we can get our stuff recorded quickly enough, get a few gigs, maybe something will happen, but it's high school."

Although all of them are passionate about their own style of music, the musicians are aware that not everyone will be a fan of their hard-core metal style.

"I know in this genre, people really love it or hate it and it's just those screaming vocals that people tend to really hate," said Westall. "It's kind of like you get an angry emotion towards it. It either pumps you up or makes you really hate it." ♦

Taggarssi drums in student band

BY Karen Yang

In a flurry of motions, sophomore Rohil Taggarssi deftly executes a drum roll, carefully maintaining a steady rhythm and paying close attention to the beat of the bass. A final hit and he knows his band successfully recorded another original song.

Three years ago, Taggarssi and his friend gathered three other members to perform at a friend's sweet sixteen. Today, the band, Vertical Limit, has created four original singles, each touching upon a different musical genre.

Inspired by the alternative band Linkin Park, Taggarssi and his friend Sagar Kalbag, a guitarist from Leland High, originally created Vertical Limit to play covers by Linkin Park and other alter-

native and nu-metal music. The band quickly grew to five members when the guitarist recruited vocalist Ahon Mukherjee, bass/keyboard Samir Dutta and guitarist Oomung Varma from Leland High. Since growing in size, the members recently expanded its playlist to include other genres and they are currently considering changing the name of the band in order to complement the change.

"As we started getting newer members, our sound started to change as well," said Taggarssi.

Although the band often struggles to book performances, they promote their music through events like Battle of the Bands, a music competition open to local bands, and taking any opportunity to play gigs. Vertical Limit placed in the top five in Battle of

the Bands on several occasions.

In addition, Vertical Limit creates more original singles every year, each with a different sound and genre.

"The best part of being in a student band is that there is more creativity in each member," said Taggarssi.

Through creating music together, Taggarssi has built strong relationships with each of the members that further enrich his band experience.

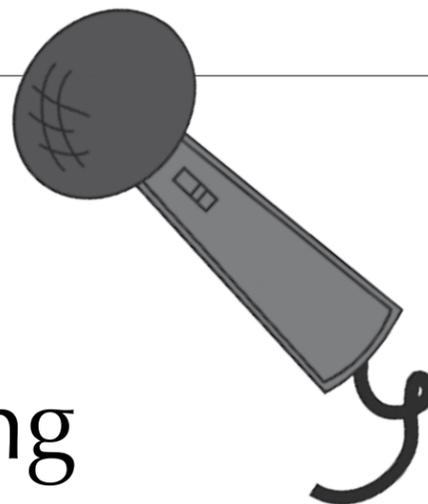
"It makes the band practices so much more memorable," said Taggarssi. ♦



BOP 2010

SMOOTH ACAPELLA

Tensync becomes close-knit family through love of singing



BY Izzy Albert

Olivia Chock and Eric Wang go to Saratoga High School. Josh Ding, Jasper Wu, Sam Hui, Michelle Lee and Jenny So go to Monta Vista High School. Nicole Chen goes to Archbishop Mitty High School. Daniel Chow goes to Cupertino High School. Two things they all have in common? A love for singing and a knack for performing.

Tensync is an acapella group comprised of 10 high schoolers from around the southern Bay Area, including juniors Eric Wang and Olivia Chock, who are also a part of Crystal Children's Choir in San Jose.

Oliver Yeh, an alumnus from Bellarmine and currently a junior at UC Berkeley, came up with the idea of a high school student acapella group after being a part of a similar acapella group. Yeh asked nine people from his choir to start another singing group with him, one of the members being Andrea Wang, a Saratoga High graduate and current senior at UCLA.

"I wasn't really close friends with some of the members in our group until [Yeh] brought us together," said Wang. "I was nervous at first, but we all got along together really well. They're some of my closest friends now, and

I'm really thankful."

Tensync has an annual concert in August at which they perform self-arranged music, meaning the members re-make popular songs into "acapella form." When a song is sung in acapella form, there is no music and the members make the beat of the song themselves.

The group usually holds its performances at Union Church in Cupertino, and this past year members also performed at Heartskate, an annual event to raise awareness and money for the organizations that support victims of Sudden Cardiac Arrest and other heart-related issues.

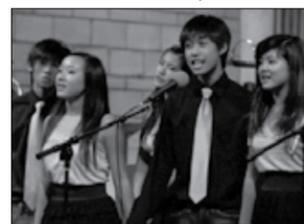
Chock, a member of Tensync for two years, believes a lot of hard work is put into the group, but the feeling of satisfaction is always worth it.

"It definitely takes a lot of commitment because we want to be able to attend as many gigs as possible," said Chock.

When Tensync was first formed, the members found themselves stumped when trying to think of a name for the group. Names such as "kkofmjakt" (the first initials of each member from the first generation) and "Sensasians" were tossed around, but Wang's idea of "Tensync" was chosen, and they've stuck with it



Courtesy of OLIVIA CHOCK



Juniors Wang and Chock sing with their acapella group Tensync.

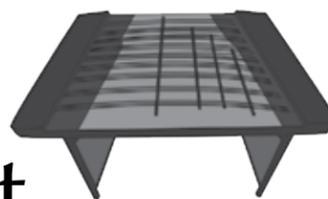
ever since.

Tensync creates everlasting friendships and tight bonds among high school students who share only a talent and love for singing in common.

"[The best thing I got from Tensync] is a sense of community. Even though I've graduated, Tensync has taught me to keep coming back," said Wang. "[At concerts], it's incredible [to get] onstage as someone [who] changed but [keeps] going back to a feeling so familiar." ♦

CULTURAL INSTRUMENTS

Student plays Chinese instrument



Kung practices the yangqin at home a few hours every day.

BY Jennifer Jin

The sound of the yangqin, an instrument known as the Chinese piano, rings through junior Kristal Kung's ears as she lifts the mallet again.

Kung has been playing the yangqin since fourth grade.

The yangqin is a trapezoid-shaped instrument made of wood with around 144 metal strings. It is played using two mallets made of bamboo with rubber on the ends to hit the strings.

"I started because one of my friend's mom introduced us to this Chinese instrument teacher and we all thought it was nice and joined," said Kung.



"I like the sound of the yangqin and how even though it's really easy to learn, there are still a lot of challenges and advanced techniques out there."

>> **Junior Kristal Kung**

easy to learn, there are still a lot of challenges and advanced techniques," said Kung.

"It's really exciting when I play a hard piece."

Her friends have also expressed interest in the yangqin.

"For [my friends] who have seen [me play the yangqin], they have said that it's a really cool and an interesting instrument," said Kung.

As of now, her two favorite pieces are "The Arkansas Traveler" and "The Train is Coming."

Kung has performed individually at her church and the Maryknoll retirement place.

"I like the sound of the yangqin and how even though it's really

The yangqin has also helped Kung with her other musical talents.

"[The yangqin] has helped me learn to read music better and improve my rhythm," said Kung.

Kung is also plays the piano and is a part of the school's choir.

Using her musical adeptness for the yangqin, Kang is a part of a group called the Chymes.

It consists of a yangqin, two erhus (Chinese violin), two yueqins (Chinese moon guitar) and a dizi (Chinese flute).

The Chymes has performed at Saratoga High School, Redwood Middle School, the Saratoga Library, downtown Saratoga during the Lantern Festival and at a retirement home almost every year.

"I like the yangqin because it is a really unique instrument," said Kung. "I hope more people learn how to play it." ♦

Seth Jones, Band Director



Bio: Degree in clarinet performance from Carnegie Mellon

What do you hope to bring to SHS?

I hope to use my knowledge of music to help the student body appreciate music and art even more than they already do.

Jones

How do you like SHS so far?

It's a lot more fun than my old school [in New York]. It's much warmer, and the kids are very nice.

Read More >>>

Jones brings unity to band

BY AnnaShen

Walking into the music room, one observes the familiar sight of music students chatting behind pedestals, the familiar pitchy jumble produced by array of various instruments and an unfamiliar face. Seth Jones, Saratoga High's new band director, can be seen teaching the symphonic band and jazz ensemble.

"I'm very excited to be here and get to know everyone," said Jones. "I want the students to achieve their best and work their hardest and at the end of the year give really great performances that people want to come and hear."

Holding a degree in clarinet performance from Carnegie Mellon and a graduate degree from Northwestern University, Jones taught at a school near New York City for six years before moving to California this summer.

"I knew the [Saratoga High] music department was really big and I knew that that would be a really fun thing for me to do and work with," said Jones.

So far, Jones' experience has been an enjoyable one.

"I like the people, and the music department is great," said Jones.



FALCON // SARAH HULL

Seth Jones takes a peek at his binder during a water break at band practice.

"The students work very hard, and they're overall pretty good, so it's been a good experience."

Although no major changes to the music department are being implemented this year, Jones hopes "to learn everyone's names and to try and get acclimated to being a teacher in California."

Band students feel that Jones is a great addition to the music department.

"Mr. Jones has a good sense of humor to make rehearsals more fun but he also knows how to work us and give us constructive criticism," said senior clarinetist Krista Chow. "Since he plays the clarinet,

he helps our section a lot and gives us advice."

Senior drum major Jason Shuian also gave Jones high marks.

"[Mr. Jones] has an extremely good ear for incredible music," said Shuian. "I can see a lot of passion when he teaches. He is always so excited to start class, and his enthusiasm is very contagious."

Although Jones misses the East Coast, he is excited to be starting a new year at the West Coast and at Saratoga High.

"I'm just very excited to be here and get to know everyone," said Jones. "So please, come and see the bands perform." ♦

Jeff Scott, Social Studies

Bio: Degree in political science and German studies and teaching credential from Santa Clara University



Scott

Have you worked as a teacher before this year?

I've worked at SHS for the past 2 years as a substitute two years ago and as a student worker last year.

What do you hope to bring to SHS?

I'm a young teacher, probably one of the youngest here. I'd like to bring a upbeat vibe to the classroom.

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WHO'S ON

Javier Llera, Junior & Lukas Sako, Junior

Lukas, how hard was the adjustment to SHS?

I adapted to life very quickly indeed. I didn't really have any problems except the time difference.

Javier, what the main difference between life in America and life in your native Spain?

In America there are people of all parts of the world. In Spain there are only Spanish people.

Lukas, how has life in Saratoga gone so far?

Saratoga is a very beautiful city with a lot of nature. The city where I come from, Bratislava, is the capital city so it's... not so beautiful.

Read More >>>

A home away from home

TWO EXCHANGE STUDENTS ACCLIMATE TO LIFE IN AMERICA

BY GuiliaCurcelli

The last month has been packed with memories for junior Lukas Sako. He has been to Great America, Laser Quest and Earthquakes and Gold Pride soccer games, among other places, not to mention he has started attending a new school and is living more than 6,000 miles away from his home in Slovakia.

Sako is spending the next year living in Saratoga with junior Adrian Bedard and his family. Junior Luis Javier Llera of Spain is also staying with them.

Llera has found it slightly difficult to adjust to his new life here. Sako, on the other hand, has taken to life in America fairly easily.

"The classes are more difficult here because I don't speak English very well," said Llera.

Sako finds the subjects and the structure of American school to be slightly different but says both school here and in Slovakia is interesting. He says that students have much less homework at school in Slovakia, but more time is devoted to studying.

Both Sako and Llera are eagerly



FALCON // SARAH HULL

Javier Llera talks with his foreign exchange pal Lukas Sako after math class.

looking forward to the winter when they will play soccer after school.

"I'm playing a] winter sport, soccer," said Sako. "In spring, [I'm doing] swimming. And I play hockey; you know, street hockey. I want to go to [a] match [of the] San Jose Sharks. I saw [the] stadium, HP Pavilion; that was very big."

Sako says his weekday schedule has stayed the same, but he sees differences on the weekends.

"Friday evening [in Slovakia, I] went to the discos with friends and on weekends I had matches of hockey," Sako said.

Sako also sees differences between Saratoga and his hometown of Bratislava.

"The city where I live, Bratislava, is the capital city so it's...not so beautiful but there are a lot of historical monuments," said Sako

Although both Llera and Sako are enjoying their experiences in America, they miss their friends and families.

"In one word, I can say I miss my home," said Sako. "But I've found that California is a beautiful state and helps me forget a little about my home." ♦

Edward Lin, Freshman

What school did you attend before you came to SHS?

I went to Challenger in Almaden.

How do you like SHS so far?

The people are friendly and it's better than my old school.

Fun Fact: Lin's greatest accomplishment occurred when he received third place at Nationals for the Rubik's cube competition for two by twos.



Lin

Ex-NY cop becomes SHS A.P.

BY Rohan Rajeev

Walk into the assistant principal's office, and meet a relaxed man at the desk. He turns around, smiles and tells you to have a seat. But this man is not the familiar Joe Bosco, now principal of Foothill Elementary. His name is Chris Cerbone, and there are many reasons he was hired as Saratoga High's new assistant principal of athletics and discipline. Originally coming from the not-so-friendly Bronx area of New York City, he feels he brings one important thing to this school: experience from the tough real world.

After attending grade school in NYC, Cerbone continued his studies at the University of Wyoming on

a football scholarship. After that, he headed back to the city to start his career as a law enforcement officer—an undercover narcotics officer.

"I've seen some pretty horrific things in that job. I can't even tell those stories to students," he said seriously. "That job shaped me, and it shaped how I see the world."

After fulfilling his duty as a narcotics cop and having loved his time working as a coach, Cerbone moved into teaching and administration. His first job was teaching P.E. in the Bronx. After working there, he became an assistant principal, frequently moving around. During his five years as an administrator, he got the opportunity to learn about himself and grow as a person.

"I think I bring a diversity of experiences in many degrees," he said. "I've been to the real world and back, and I've taken a more realistic point-of-view than before."

Along with his atypical background, Cerbone is unique in the world of school administrators in a few other ways. One of them is that he owns two wolves as pets.

The two wolves are rescued animals. The male wolf's name is Tatanka, which, in the language of Lakota Sioux, means "Buffalo." He picked up Sioux phrases such as this during his time on a South Dakotan Indian reserve. The female wolf is "Lupa," which is Italian for "female wolf."

But his pets are just one important joy in his life.

"My favorite part about this job, in general, is seeing struggling kids graduate," Cerbone said. "I felt like I played a role in the child's success; it's always a proud moment."

Despite his 90-mile commute from his Petaluma home, Cerbone insists that the long drive every morning and night is worth it.

"The reason I took this job was because I thought it was a beautiful school," he said, smiling. "There are great students, great teachers, and it's a very welcoming place." ♦

Chris Cerbone, Asst. Principal

Bio: Sixth-year administrator, ex-NYC narcotics officer, 90-mile commute to SHS from Petaluma home



Cerbone

In one word, how would you describe yourself?

I think that one word that could be used to describe me after all these years is integrity.

Read More

Fun Fact: Cerbone owns two pet wolves named "Lupa," Italian for "female wolf," and "Tatanka," meaning "Buffalo"



Principal Jeff Anderson talks with his new assistant principal Chris Cerbone

Eileen Allen, Guidance



Allen

Bio: 2001 SHS alumnus, Undergraduate degree at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, masters from USF, second-year counselor

What inspired you to become a guidance counselor?

I was involved in business fresh out of college, but I wasn't really happy. I wanted to be working with young people and came to the conclusion that school counseling would be a really good fit.

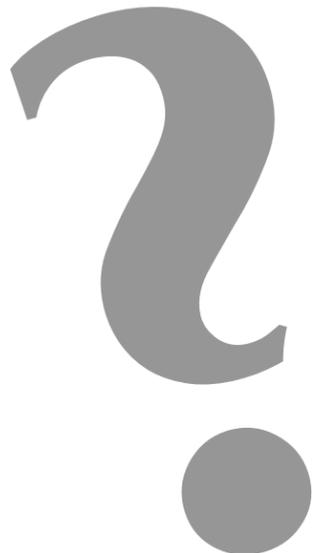
the conclusion that school counseling would be a really good fit.

How has working at SHS gone so far?

I love it. I look forward to coming to work every morning.

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Seventh time's the charm

BY Michael Lee

Most students attend three—at most four—different schools by high school graduation. Then there is sophomore Aashna Mukerji, who is currently on her seventh.

Before her schooling even began, Mukerji was on the move. When she was a year old, her family migrated from Mukerji's birthplace in Calcutta, India, to Beaverton, Ore. This sudden move was the first of four.

"I've never really thought of the U.S. as my home," said Mukerji. "I feel more international now, having lived in three continents."

Her father's repeated job transfers naturally have forced her to adjust to new lifestyles. She has experienced

difficulties with becoming attached to her temporary homes, but feels that her best friends are the ones who strove to keep in touch.

Friends aside, Mukerji insists that her experiences have also positively changed her.

"Moving changed my outlook on a lot of the more trivial things that high schoolers stress over," she said. "There's a lot of bigger stuff out there."

Mukerji has lived in India, Oregon and California, but she said that her most recent residency, a two-year stay in London, was most influential, citing liberal drinking restrictions as a major shocker.

Her school options, however, softened the major cultural shock.

She attended the American School in London (ASL), which acts as a sanctuary for American immigrants.

Mukerji appreciated the opportunities that came with her English education, in spite of the necessary assimilation.

"It was nice to get out of the Saratoga bubble," she said.

Having attended Argonaut Elementary and Redwood Middle, Mukerji has found it hard to return to Saratoga after her long absence.

"It's interesting to see familiar faces, but it's hard to gather up the courage and say, 'Hey, I'm back!'" she said. "But it's nice if people make an effort to get to know me, even if we weren't friends before."

Mukerji has had mixed feelings regarding her return. She said that she agreed to return to the U.S. due to a "complicated social situation" at ASL but is unsure of her choice.

Despite her challenges, she decided that she would go through her moving experience all over again "in a heartbeat," seeing Saratoga High as a new challenge to overcome.

"Am I ready?" said Mukerji. "I guess it doesn't really matter if I'm not. The fact is that I'm here, and I have to get used to it." ♦

Aashna Mukerji, Soph.

How are you adjusting to Saratoga High life?

I'm participating in the school newspaper, upper-level French (thanks to my trips to Paris) and girls' golf.



Mukerji

How have your travels affected you?

It's difficult to become attached to a temporary home. But, in a way, I feel like you make better friends with the ones that make an effort to keep in touch.

Read More

Paul Choi, Freshman

What schools did you attend in the past?

For the past decade, I've been moving to places like Vancouver, Canada; Seoul, Korea; and numerous cities in the U.S..



Choi

How has the transition to SHS life been?

I think students here are more kind and friendly than students from Korea and Boston. Also, the Link Crew helped make my adjustment smoother. Out of all my past schools, Saratoga is the most inviting.



THE bigidea

Mukerji's Travels

1. Calcutta, India
2. Beaverton, Oregon
3. Saratoga, Calif.
4. London, England
5. Saratoga, Calif.

FALCON // KYUMIN SHIM

1.) The SAT makes SHS students _____.

- (A) Stressed
- (B) Angry
- (C) Tired
- (D) all of the above

Opinions and info on the infamous college entrance exams from alumni and those who have yet to take the test

SOPHOMORE LAMENTS SAT CLASSES

Sophomore columnist finds SAT prep classes effective, feels grading system has flaws



>> Debbie Soung

When I was small I always wanted a million of everything. I wanted a million pieces of candy, a million new hair clips, a million stuffed animals. Now I only want 2,400 points on the SAT. The SAT testing dates have become the modern days of judgement: Get a bad score and never make it into that dream university, get a perfect score and earn the affections of college administrations everywhere. Therefore, without a good SAT score, there is no future. Well, that was my first and very incorrect impression of the dreaded test.

At first, the more I learned about the SAT from my weekend classes, the more I disdained the College Board employees. Usually, the most hated employees are the ones who come up with the questions, which are purposely structured to confuse test takers so the bell curve stays a bell curve: with very few students earning scores near 2,400,

and most students getting scores below 2000—scores deemed unacceptable by virtually every parent I have ever met.

But the employees I disliked the most were the essay graders and the people who decided SAT essays should be graded the way they are. Their standards of good writing contradict those taught by most schools.

It is a fact backed by M.I.T.-gathered data: under most circumstances, the longer the essay, the higher the score. Apparently, all the students who follow the “quality before quantity” rule are wrong; the big shots at the College Board know best. This pushes students to believe that good writing is quick, rapid-fire, how-much-can-I-jam-onto-a-paper-under-a-time-limit writing. Further distorting students’ ideas on how essays should be written, the College Board instructs essay graders to disregard inaccurate facts. If only history teachers were taught to grade that way.

Yet beyond the wall of SAT loathing, I must admit that the College Board is probably not run by some kitten-killing cannibals trying to prevent me from getting into

college. Though students and their parents alike commonly experience extreme distress while contemplating the foreboding essay, a student can still score full points on the writing section with an essay score of nine out of 12, assuming the multiple choice score is perfect, and college admissions officers acknowledge that one 25-minute essay written

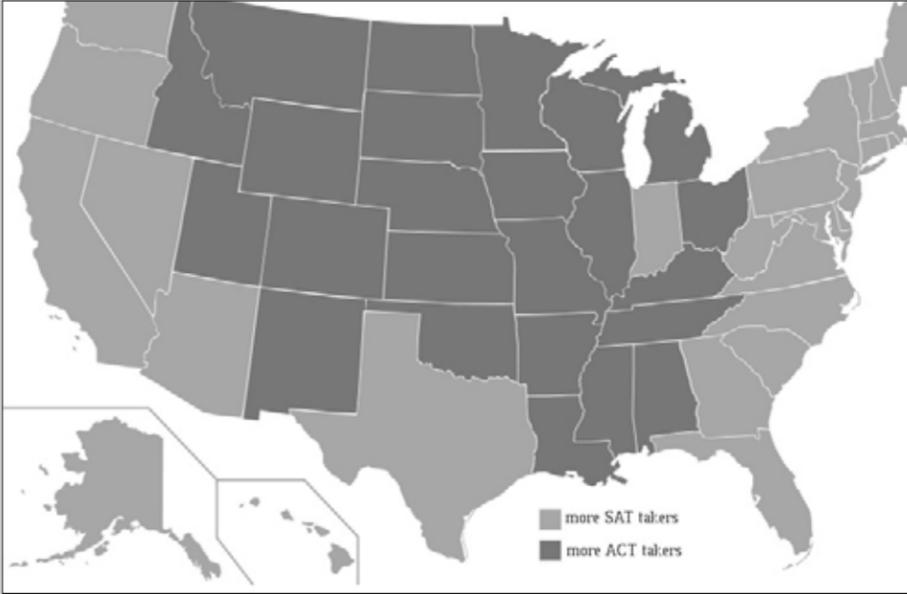
under pressure is probably not the best example of a student’s writing.

Luckily, for those who fail to achieve an above-average score on the SAT, there are other factors ad-

missions officers take heed of, such as extra-curricular activities. In fact, nearly all colleges consider school grades and background more important than SAT scores.

Therefore, memorizing the three-inch-thick College Board-issued blue book or the slightly thinner red book by Barron’s, although helpful, may not be the best way to spend my weekends of sophomore or junior year. It seems like the best advice is to study for the SAT, but do not fear it as if it were the harbinger of all doom, because a test taken in a mere 3 hours and 45 minutes cannot pre-determine the future of anyone. ♦

Yet beyond the wall of SAT loathing, I must admit that the college board is probably not run by some kitten-killing cannibals trying to prevent me from getting into college.



Above is a map detailing the preferences between the ACT and the SAT by region. Dark colored states prefer the ACT, while the lighter, coastal ones prefer the SAT test.

>> falconfigures

Average Combined SAT/ACT Score for Top Universities

	SAT	ACT
Brown University	2295	34
Duke University	2231	35
Dartmouth University	2316	34
Harvard University	2274	—
New York University	2130	32
Princeton University	2355	—
Stanford University	2271	34
UC Berkeley	2206	33
UC Los Angeles	2204	32
USC	2132	31
Yale University	2313	34

Source: Guidance Office

THE SAT AND ACT OVER THE YEARS

BY MacHyde

Just the mere mention of the SAT and its counterpart, the ACT, conjures images of late night studying and massive prep books. These six letters often guide the future for high schoolers who hope to go to competitive colleges. While we all are familiar with the test, few if any, of us have taken the time to step back and ask, how did these two tests become the gateway to college?

According to College Board, the SAT began humbly enough in 1901. It was developed by psychologist Carl Brigham, who intended it to rule out bias based on socio-economic backgrounds. The first test would be unrecognizable to the test takers of today. There were nine sections, five of which were languages: English, French, German, Latin and Greek. There were also separate categories of mathematics, history,

chemistry and physics. There were no multiple choice questions and essays which were judged much like students judge their text books, on a scale of excellent to very poor.

The SAT we would most recognize entered into use in 1930. The SAT has evolved numerous times since being introduced with sections being dropped and then re-added to lengthen the test. This is a direct contrast to its younger rival, the ACT.

The ACT, when compared with its storied sibling, is a relatively new test. It was first administered in 1959 and was created to primarily serve two purposes: one, to guide students with their choices regarding college and courses and two, providing colleges with a baseline with which they can compare students fairly. The ACT also tends to be the least volatile of the two, remaining roughly the same for the past 50 years, with the addition of an optional writing section in 2005.

Saratoga, to no surprise, has historically done well in the SAT with one perfect score for the class of '07, two for '08, three for '09, and one for the class of 2010. Saratoga students also consistently score above the national average in all areas of the SAT and ACT, averaging 622 on the critical reading section, 664 for mathematics, and 636 for writing versus 500, 513, and 498 for the state average on critical reading, mathematics and writing, respectively. Saratoga scores about five points higher on the ACT than the state average with 27.9 versus 21.7 for English, 29.5 versus 22.9 for mathematics, 27.2 versus 22.3 for reading, 26.4 versus 21.5 for science, and 27.9 versus 22.2 for the composite score, according to the official ACT summation.

Though it seems disheartening to compare SAT scores with peers, take pride: Saratoga students' SAT scores is on average 400 points above the national average, which was just 1509 in 2009. ♦

COLLEGE STUDENTS FIND SAT TESTS INEFFECTIVE

BY ShivaniChadha & DylanJew

As senior Kaitna Shankar heads to the parking lot after school on a Friday afternoon, she isn't gearing up for a night at the movies or other entertainment. Instead, she is planning to study for the SAT she will take again in October, a last attempt to get her best score and gain entrance into her dream college.

The SAT is a standardized test that used to be required by all colleges, but now is only required by some and can be replaced by another standardized test, the ACT. Although the tests are recommended for juniors and seniors, some students begin studying as early as freshman year and devote hours to doing better on them. But how does the SAT come into use for students after they take it?

Despite the importance placed on the SAT during high school, many college students feel that it does not accurately define a person's knowledge and ability to succeed in a college environment.

Saratoga alumnus Eric Jung, UCLA '14, believes that the SAT only measures test taking skills and not work ethic or knowledge.

"I don't think it predicts how well one will do in college," Jung said. "I know people who did badly on the SAT but study and do well in college. But then there's people who got a 2,400 that come to college and don't know anything about working hard or time management."

Jung said the SAT is easy to wing and study for in one night, but college tests are different since they require actual studying to do well.

"My advice for anyone worrying about the SAT is not to let that score define you, because no one cares about your SAT score in college," Jung said.

When Saratoga alumni look back, they believe that too much stress is put on achieving the perfect score on the SAT during high school.

"Doing well in school is the main goal," Saratoga alumnus Tiffany Tsao, UCLA '10, said. "The SAT is only one

aspect of this, and you need to focus on everything else as well."

Instead of concentrating solely on the SAT, students should also spend time on extracurricular activities, such as leadership and community service, alumni said.

"SATs help colleges sort through huge numbers of people, but extracurriculars make people really stand out," Tsao said.

The SAT is the tool colleges use to get a general idea of students' academic abilities in an efficient manner, because there is no other standardized tool that can accurately gauge this on over 50,000 prospective students. However, some students have mixed feelings about the test. Shankar said she uses the SAT vocabulary in her everyday conversations but does not feel the same way about the other sections.

"I don't think the critical reading or math sections have really helped at all," Shankar said. "Maybe my stamina has increased on taking 4-hour tests, but otherwise I think it's completely useless."

Students may think the four-hour SAT will prepare them for challenging tests in college, but some college students think otherwise, which are much harder.

Alumnus Amrit Rathi, UC Berkeley '13, said one of the rare uses of the SAT during college is when students apply for college clubs. When students try to join clubs their freshman year, they haven't had any semester grades yet. Because of this, clubs are forced to look at SAT scores for background information. Aside from this process, the SAT does not play a factor in college.

"The SAT is not a test of how smart you are; it's how well you can beat the test using different strategies," Shankar said.

Despite the importance placed on the SAT during high school, alumni believe there is more to a person and their future than a test score, which is why it is not the most important aspect colleges look at during admission.

"A one-time test can't depict what you've done during your whole life," Jung said. ♦

>> togatalks



>> Senior Kent Paisley

"I think that the ACT is easier because it has science, and that's why I took the ACT instead of SAT."

>> Senior Sara Padash



"The SATs are something that can't be mastered in one weekend. It takes months of studying to master the test."



>> Sophomore Brandon Chien

"The SATs seem really intimidating, but once I start taking classes, I think I'll be okay."

>> Junior Kellie Chiou



"I've just spent my whole summer in SAT classes, I really hope it pays off..."

Falcons open up passing game

BY Karthik Annaamalai & Abhishek Venkataramana

As traditionally one of the smaller-sized teams of the California Central Coast Section (CCS), the Falcons have always been able to take advantage of their determination and stellar ground attack to match up against bigger and stronger teams of the De Anza Division. But this year, third year coach Tim Lugo has another secret weapon up his sleeve, which he believes may throw off some of his competitors.

"If you check online right now," Lugo said, "you'll see that Saratoga is the No. 2 passing team in the CCS. I told my guys to take a picture of that, because that's really something."

What Lugo is referring to is the team's thriving passing game, anchored by the super-star duo of senior quarterback Kevin Smith and senior receiver Chris Guengerich, who are both ranked first in the De Anza league for passing yards.

Balancing the Offensive Attack

Though Lugo maintains that the Falcons will be primarily a running team and use the Wing T offense, an offensive formation used by power running teams, he believes that by establishing a passing threat, they will be able to open up more opportunities for the ground attack.

"We're still running Wing T and always will run Wing T, but we're more diverse now," said Lugo. "We're taking

>> scoreboard

Sept. 4
Santa Teresa 46, Saratoga 28
The defense allowed 445 rushing yards

Sept. 10
Saratoga 45, Gilroy 29
Smith connected on 11 passes for 163 yards and a TD score.

Sept. 17
Saratoga 54, Westmont 41
Doles 4 TDs, Johnson 2 TDs and Guengerich 1 TD
The Falcons will play Homestead on 9/30

advantage of [Guengerich] spreading the field by throwing the ball a lot more, which will create seams for the running game."

All-league veterans to lead team

Guengerich, an all-league receiver who racked up an impressive 397 yards last year, already has 209 yards in just two games, to lead the De Anza Division. He is also being recruited by several Division I schools, including Princeton, Columbia, Brown and Cornell. In addition, Smith also has another prime target in junior running back Troy Doles, who is making a big splash in the De Anza Division.

"This year, we are a lot more versatile," said Lugo. "We have multiple formations, which makes it harder for other teams to prepare for us. We run [both run plays and pass plays] from the same sets, which makes it harder for our op-



FALCON // DAVID ENG

Senior WR Chris Guengerich absorbs a hit after catching a pass against Gilroy on Sept. 10.

ponents to predict what we'll do."

Much of this versatility comes from a strong set of veteran backs, including senior backs Greg Johnson, a three-year varsity player, and Marcus Hoffman, who both run with a physical, "truck-stick" style, according to Lugo. To stretch the field with speed, the Falcons rely on the elusive Doles, who serves as a running and receiving threat and is currently ranked second in the division in touchdowns. Smith can look for protection behind an offensive line led by senior center Joe Walters.

Heart and Red Pride

Loaded with talent on the offensive side of the ball, the Falcons need their de-

fense to play a pivotal role in the team's success, said Lugo. It is essential for the Falcons' defense, led by junior middle linebacker Brandon Oliveri-O'Connor, to shut down the running game and force their opponents to pass.

"When we're on defense, we have to ask ourselves, 'Who wants it more, us or them?' For defense, it's all about heart and Red Pride," said Johnson. "We just need to get better every week."

Falling short last year in the CCS semifinals, the Falcons look to not only return to the playoffs, but win their CCS division as well.

"With the talent we have on both sides of the ball, it's definitely a possibility," said Johnson. ♦

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3 keys to victory



>> Kevin Darchuk and Tim Lycurgus

All Things Considered

On Sept. 30, the Saratoga football team will kick off its league schedule at Homestead in a rematch of last year's heated 10-7 Falcons victory, which sent Saratoga to CCS. This year, Homestead, currently ranked 13th in CCS, brings a very similar team to face the Falcons. We expect another low scoring contest due to a stout Homestead defense. Here are some keys for Saratoga to bring home the victory.

1. Force Homestead to put the ball in the air

Homestead, averaging almost 380 rushing yards a game, has a potent rushing attack, led by all-league running back Kyree Rhodes, who leads the league with 320 rushing yards. However, the Mustangs have trouble moving the ball through the air. In the first two weeks of play, Homestead QB Sh'quill Green has only completed seven passes and is clearly much more fond of the ground attack. If Saratoga can manage to make some stops on the first and second down and keep Rhodes in check, Homestead will be forced to pass on third and long, making them much more likely to turn the ball over.

2. Establish the passing game early

In the De Anza division especially, most teams try to establish their run-

ning games first. So far, the Falcons have found success with coach Tim Lugo's modified Wing T offense and have established a thriving run game anchored by seniors Greg Johnson and Marcus Hoffman and junior Troy Doles, who have so far combined for over 300 yards in just two games.

However, a lesser-known secret is that as of mid September they have the No. 1 receiver in CCS in senior Chris Guengerich (104.5 ypg) and the No. 2 quarterback in senior Kevin Smith (207.5 ypg). In addition, Homestead has a solid run defense, yielding only 35 yards on 11 carries to Kings Academy's QB, 4-star Stanford recruit Amir Carlisle, making it tough to run against them. If Saratoga can force Homestead to drop back in coverage more often, that may open up running lanes for the Falcon running backs.

3. Special Teams

Most low scoring games are eventually decided through special teams. Good punt coverage will be crucial in order to start with good field position and make Homestead start too many drives deep in their own territory. On top of punting, the game could very well come down to a late field goal.

Our Pick: Saratoga 17. Homestead 14. ♦

FALCONS V. HOMESTEAD MUSTANGS

1. Force Homestead to put ball in the air
2. Establish passing game early
3. Special Teams



FIELD HOCKEY



Falcon// SARAH HULL

Sophomore Neha Velanki slaps the ball into the net for a goal against Monta Vista on Sept. 3. The Falcons beat the Matadors 2-1 to begin the new season on a strong note.

Young players comprise field hockey team

By SynthiaLing & RenNorris

A typical varsity team is usually dominated by upperclassmen, but this season the field hockey team, after losing the majority of its players to graduation last June, has an unusual dynamic.

With eight out of the 16 team members being sophomores, the team must look increasingly to its younger players to fill in some of the gaps left behind from graduation.

"The younger players have a lot of potential that we have already seen," said junior midfielder Anna Ashe. "I think they will continue to improve as the league season starts."

Out of the sophomores, two—forward Megan Doles and defender Hannah Johnson—played on varsity last year and the remaining six—midfielder Allison Bruno, defender Evelyn Lee, forward Rachel Leonard, midfielder Jenni Miller, midfielder Courtney Ruppel and

defender Neha Vellanki—are new to varsity.

"I think we're fitting in pretty well," said Miller. "It's a very comfortable environment and I think we have a good chance this year to do well—we just need to learn to gel as a team."

Playing with better players has helped us improve so far."

Also new is varsity head coach Staci Ljepava, who coached JV last year. She is working with assistant coaches Amber Wilson and Kellie York, the co-head varsity coaches last year. In the beginning,

JV had no coach but the team found a replacement with Jennifer Dumas.

"I like the new coaching situation—how we have three different opinions, and each coach has their own input and catches things that the others don't," said senior co-captain and attacker Vanessa Block. "It was an adjustment at first to have the head coach from last year be-

come assistant coach, but we still get her same attention and knowledge, she just doesn't get to come out every day. And the new coach is great, helpful and just as good."

The team has always emphasized strong skills but in the start of the season, the team is focusing on building up fitness and endurance so that players can still run and play throughout the fast-paced one-hour games.

"Our main goal of doing conditioning at the beginning of the season is to make us play at the right intensity level," said Ljepava. "We want to finish out the last 10 minutes of a game the way we started the game, and when we go into overtime or stroke penalties, we want to be even stronger and conditioning is a big part of that."

With new team dynamics, younger players and an altered coaching system, the players are looking forward to improvements and hopefully making playoffs this year.

"We need to work on the new players getting to know the old players on the field, but this season definitely looks promising, said Block. "I think we can go pretty far if not all the way this year." ♦

"It's a very comfortable environment and I think we have a good chance this year"

>> Sophomore Jenny Miller

>> scoreboard

Sept. 3

Saratoga 2, Monta Vista 1

Senior Whitney Hansen and junior Annie Barco score to lead team to victory.

Sept. 13

Saratoga 7, Sobrato 0

Senior Vanessa Block scores five times to shutout the visiting Bulldogs. Strong all-around defensive efforts secured a Falcon victory.

Sept. 21

Gilroy 2, Saratoga 1

Block leads the team in blocks, but the Falcons still were not able to overcome the Mustangs. Senior Ren Norris scored the lone goal of the game

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BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY

Boys' Team welcomes new coach, routine

By VijayMenon

Looking ahead at the long road to success for its new season, the boys' cross country team finds itself both in a state of constancy and transition.

The team features several returning members but is undoubtedly anchored by two returning senior captains: Garrick Chan and Kyle Fukui. The lineup has been slightly altered with the addition of junior Harry Curtis and the addition of freshmen twins Will and Sam Guy.

While the nucleus of the team remains intact, the squad members were uncertain for several months as to who would lead their team for the upcoming season.

After weeks of waiting, Dan Ambrico, a runner from the University of Notre Dame who recently moved from New York, was announced the new head coach. He hopes for the team to qualify for the state meet this year.

"We need to see some of our promising underclass continue improving in order to reach the state meet," said Ambrico.

Nonetheless, Ambrico is optimis-

tic that the squad will thrive under the "great senior leadership" of Fukui and Chan.

Under Ambrico, the team has adopted some new techniques in preparation for the year.

"There are many big changes in training, but we are fine with it," said Chan. "Last year's training caused a majority of runners to get burned out. We are trying to change that this year."

The team currently practices intervals around the school campus rather than on the track itself. Most of the team's workouts consist

of a total of three miles.

The team recently competed in the Lynbrook meet with Fukui and Chan placing 12th and 17th respectively.

The team hopes to build off of individual performances as well. Chan is looking for success to bolster his hopes of recruitment for college.

"So far I've been contacted by a lot of D3 schools," said Chan. "I'm working hard to have a great senior year and waiting for some D1 schools to get in contact with me." ♦

"Last year's training caused a majority of runners to get burned out."

>> Senior Garrick Chan

GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

Runners 'use the magic'



FALCON // VIVIAN LETRAN

Senior Mansie Cheung sprints to the finish at the Saratoga Invitational on Sept. 21.

BY Emily Williams

"Use the magic," Coach Danny Moon encourages girls' cross country runners as they sprint the last 200 yards of a grueling race.

No, the girls do not have wands or super speed, but they do have a secret weapon. "The magic" is a code word that Moon came up with two years ago.

"Using the magic is driving with the arms so that you can get the best performance possible across the line and focus at the end of the race," said Moon. "Most coaches will say 'use your arms,' but we don't want to do that because if another athlete is next to you, they will use their arms. So we say use the magic, and no one knows what we are talking about."

Not only does the team have a secret weapon, but it is also packed with potential, said Moon. Although the majority of varsity runners are juniors and sophomores, Moon believes that the team is stronger than ever and may even have the potential to qualify for the state meet this year.

"I think [the varsity girls] are amazing," said Moon. "We have a very young team this year; it's a little more mature than last year [though], because we have experience and depth."

Although only three freshmen joined the team this year, many new sophomores and a few juniors were recruited. Returning runners are also stepping up their game this season.

"Everybody that is returning from last year has basically gotten a [personal record] in one of the two races we have already run," said Moon. "There are a few new athletes that are also

showing a lot of potential and talent."

That potential was evident at the Early Bird Invitational at Toro Park in Salinas on Sept. 11. The race was a preview of the three-mile course that the girls will run at CCS in November. For the sophomore race, Courtney Schlossareck and Maya Nag placed 17th and 28th, respectively. In her race, junior Emily Williams came in 19th place and first for Saratoga.

At the first meet of the season, the Lynbrook Invitational on Sept. 8, Saratoga dominated the 2.1-mile course. The varsity team beat five other teams with the fastest overall time and a placement score of 60.

Three of the seven varsity runners finished in the top ten. Schlossareck placed sixth with a time of 13:15.5, Williams came in at seventh with a time of 13:16.2 and Nag placed ninth at 13:20.4.

"I think that [the win] is an opportunity for us to see if we can actually duplicate it next week," said Moon. "We've got 10 athletes that are varsity qualified so it really makes it great."

The team hosted its annual Saratoga invitational on Sept. 21, where varsity placed first out of 8 schools with a combined score of 48. Schlossareck, Nag and Williams placed third, sixth and fourth, respectively. Varsity will race again at the Stanford Invitational this Saturday Sept. 25.

"My goal for the team is that every single person improves their times and also has a good time running," said Moon. "The frosting on the cake would be if we had several athletes make it to state or even the whole team." ♦

>> score board

Sept. 8

Lynbrook Invitational; 2.1-mile course

Courtney Schlossareck placed sixth with 13:15.5.

Emily Williams came in seventh with 13:16.2.

Maya Nag placed ninth with 13:20.4.

Sept. 11

Early Bird Invitational; 3-mile course

Courtney Schlossareck placed 17th in the sophomore race.

Maya Nag placed 28th in the sophomore race.

Emily Williams placed 19th in the junior race.

Sept. 21

Saratoga Invitational

Courtney Schlossareck placed third.

Maya Nag placed sixth.

Emily Williams placed fourth.

BOYS' WATER POLO

New members crucial to success

TEAM LOOKS TO BELLARMINE TRANSFER AND YOUNGER MEMBERS TO BOOST TALENT AND SUCCESS

BY Tim Rollinson

A common saying in water polo is that the key to being a good water polo player is anticipation.

After for key seniors graduated last year, many team members anticipated a decline in success for the upcoming year. Fortunately for the team, a load of new talent has arrived this year, including a transfer student from Bellarmine. Prospects for success this year are looking more favorable.

"The team looks a lot different than last year," said senior Gavin Peake. "But the talent level is similar."

Key additions to the squad include senior Yeon-Ho Kim, a

transfer from Bellarmine, sophomore Neal Sigantoria and freshman Steven Cho. Returning players include Peake, who will guard this season, senior Tim Rollinson and juniors Tyler Borch and Nick Doyen.

"[Kim] is definitely a huge addition since he has been playing for such a good team for the past three years," said coach Christian Bonner.

The team has been practicing twice a day since school started in preparation for the season. Third year coach Christian Bonner lists games against Lynbrook, Harker and Wilcox as key games during the season.

The team practices in the mornings and after school. This rigorous workout schedule has

improved the squad's fitness and chemistry.

"We all work really well as a team," said junior Eric Wang.

The season began with a 18-9 win against Cupertino at home on Sept. 16. Wang and Sigantoria led the scoring with four goals each. Kim was not allowed to play due to CCS transfer rules. Kim will likely make his Saratoga High debut on Sept. 22 against Wilcox.

"It was a big confidence booster to come out so strong in our first game," said Wang.

The Falcons traveled to Harker on Tuesday, Sept. 21 for the second match of the season but due to printing deadlines The Falcon could not report the results. ♦

GIRLS' GOLF



Courtesy of SHARMILA KUMAR

Team members cheer on freshman Zabrina Chang during practice at the Saratoga Country Club on Sept. 20.

Senior plans to help bring team's newcomers up to par

BY Samika Kumar & Apeksha Sharma

The girls' golf team has an all-time high of 19 players this season. Though only six girls play in matches, all have been meeting together since school started.

Most are new to the game, but the young team prides itself on a promising future of 10 freshmen, eight sophomores and one senior. Coach Casey Hall is counting on senior Uttara Sivaram to help lead the team.

"I think [Sivaram] is going to play a very important role. Not only is she the captain and only upperclassman, but she has been on the team since it started," Hall said.

Sivaram plans to take up a new leading role for the team and help the new golfers reach their full potential.

"I'll try my best to give the newbies the benefit of my experience on the team," Sivaram said. "Golf is a really uncon-

ventional school sport, so I know they're still trying to understand what their roles are on the team."

The team knows this season will be tough. Some upcoming challenges include the Los Gatos match on Sept. 27 at the La Rinconada Golf Course and a Coyote Creek match versus

quite sure what to expect this year, but I was pleasantly surprised with the turnout."

Despite the unprecedented number of golfers, the team had an unsteady start in its first match against Evergreen Valley High School at the Coyote Creek Golf Course on Sept. 9, losing by 28 strokes.

"I think half our team didn't have experience, and I know I wasn't prepared to go back into a match," No. 3 player sophomore Sanjna Verma said. "We could have improved by practicing more."

The team placed fourth in last year's division, and Sivaram hopes she can help lead the team to place into CCS or at least break through qualifiers. But she maintains that sticking as a team is one of the most important things.

"Every golf season so far has been incredibly fun," Sivaram said. "If we achieve nothing else, I know we'll at least have a whole load of experiences we won't forget." ♦

"Golf is a really unconventional school sport, so they're still trying to understand their roles on the team."

>> Senior Uttara Sivaram

long-time competitor Leland on Oct. 6.

Hall acknowledges that the team has much work to do, so her current objectives are straightforward.

"A couple of main goals this year, for the entire group, is to function well as a team and to have fun," Hall said. "I wasn't

GIRLS' WATER POLO

Newcomers put to test

BY Kim Tsai

After a long season last year full of struggles and tough losses, the girls' water polo team has a chance to start over fresh. But with the graduation of several veteran players from last year, the team is struggling to overcome its lack of experienced players and must focus on training new players.

"The team has five new people who have never played before," said varsity goalie Allison Knysh. "A lot of the work is just teaching them how to play and getting them caught up."

However, the team has a strong set of veteran players who can offer guidance to some of the newer players. One key returning player is senior Joyee Woodrow, who, as hole set on the team, is responsible for creating offensive opportunities as an integral part of the team's offensive attack.

"[Woodrow] makes really good shots in the pool," said junior forward Kendall Mil-

ton. "[As hole set] she does a really good job at keeping her defenders off her and making tough shots, and is a big part of this team."

Several other veteran players will also be returning this year to lead the team, including juniors Sneha Belkhale, Sanjana Chetia, Kynsh, Milton and Nicole Shadman and senior Allison Buchanan.

However, the team may be losing its most valuable player, senior McKenzie Crase, a four-year varsity veteran, who will have to sit out for a few of the games this season as a result of a back injury.

"[Crase] is going through physical therapy right now," said Kynsh. "She wants to. I mean, she's really dedicated to water polo, but when her body says no, she has to say no."

This year, the girls play in the highest league, the De Anza Division in the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League, and are coached by special education teacher Courtney Crase.

On Sept. 14, the Falcons were pitted against league rivals Monta Vista but lost 13-5.

The team started out with an 8-0 deficit but finally managed to rack up some points after halftime. The team pitched forward to make up some lost points from the beginning of the game. Players learned some lessons from this first game, said Chetia.

"I think that our game against Monta Vista reminded us that we need to play our best through all four quarters of the game, not just the second half," said Chetia. "It was only in the second half of the game, when we pulled together as a team, that we started playing well."

Despite a lopsided loss to start out the season, the players still believe that with practice, they can steadily improve and potentially beat rivals including Los Gatos.

"I'm pretty excited for water polo this year," said Chetia. "I think we can improve and do a lot this year." ♦



FALCON // VIVIAN LETRAN

Junior Allison Knysh blocks a goal against Monta Vista on Sept. 14.

GIRLS' TENNIS



Courtesy of MARY EDMAN

The team beat Corona del Mar High, winning the Peachtree Classic championship in Fresno on Sept. 11.

Big win makes Falcons No. 1

BY Evaline Ju

With one carefully executed forehand, junior Crystal Yen closed the final match that made the girls' tennis team No. 1 in the state.

After two days of playing under the hot Fresno sun, the girls' tennis team managed to beat Corona del Mar High on Sept. 11 in the final round to take the Peachtree Classic championship for the first time in five years.

Expectations are high for this upcoming season, especially after the team won CCS for the first time in the team's history and had a second place finish at the CIF NorCal Championships last year. With the success at Peachtree, the team is favored to repeat in CCS and to possibly win NorCals.

"After winning in Fresno, I think we have the ability to make it far," said senior co-captain Mary Edman.

All three doubles teams went undefeated 4-0 through the Peachtree tournament, but not without a fight. No. 1 doubles juniors Sarah Lum and Lisa Asai and No. 2 dou-

bles sophomore Niharika Bedekar and Edman both split sets against Corona del Mar but won in the match tiebreakers. Until this year, Corona had not lost a doubles match at the tournament in five years.

"[Winning] was really a good feeling because we had been down," said Bedekar. "We were able to come back and be the first ones on the board."

In addition, key matches were won by No. 1 singles player senior Srinidhi Raghavan and returning players No. 2 senior co-captain Catherine Nguyen and No. 3 Yen.

The team beat St. Mary's 5-2, Redwood 6-1, Archbishop Mitty 4-3 and Corona del Mar 5-2 in the tournament with a total of 112 teams.

Later this season, the team will play against longtime rival Monta Vista High in the De Anza League matches. There is also a high possibility of a rematch against Mitty.

"We have to make sure to keep doubles in order and keep them on their toes because they will be the ones that can ultimately help us succeed [in the rematch]," said head

coach Tom Uyehara, who is returning for his fifth year.

The season brings new assistant coach Florin Marica and five additions to the team: Raghavan, junior Tiffany Tu, sophomore Evaline Ju and freshmen Kalyani Narayan and Usha Raman.

"The biggest challenge will be bonding as a team," said Edman. "Last season we were really close, but with new teammates we have to create new bonds."

Uyehara is fired up about the upcoming season. "[After winning CCS last year] I think we really have a good legitimate chance of repeating this year as well," he said. "We've got depth to both our singles and doubles lineups."

Winning will be no easy task. The Peachtree tournament exposed things that the team needs to work on.

"Right now, we have a target on our backs, and many people will be out to get us," said Uyehara. "We have to play strong; we have to play our best and make sure everybody's prepared every single match." ♦

GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

Team optimistic despite loss of pivotal players

BY Amy Jan & Aashna Mukerji

After the loss of five starters to graduation, the girls' varsity volleyball team is working especially hard on technique since this year's team is younger than those in the recent past.

"[Losing five players] was tough for us, since there are six people on a court at a time," said co-captain and senior Sarah Blegen, who is the team's starting outside hitter and kill leader. "What we lost in height, we make up for in hard work."

With the season just starting, the team hasn't yet figured out its rotations

or what will work best on the court. However, the team is hoping for a return trip to CCS with the addition of two freshmen, passer Jennifer Ho and opposite Katelyn Mollahan.

"Both freshmen show talent and will definitely be leading the team in years to come," said Blegen.

Positions on the team have been set, and the team is gradually familiarizing itself with each new stance. Recruited by UC Santa Barbara next year to be a setter, co-captain and senior Hanna Nielson continues to show her strong leadership during practice and games.

Along with Nielson, Blegen proves her willingness to improve the team and its abilities.

"[Blegen and Nielson] always have energy to go after

the ball and have the drive to win," said sophomore Ramya Swami, who plays in the front row. "You couldn't have picked better leaders for our team. They're some of the most inspirational players I've ever seen."

Since the team is smaller than most in the league, coach Brad Frederickson plans to work on ball skills and defensive play in order to make up for their size.

"Every player on the team is 100 percent committed to working hard, giving their best, and to improving individually and collectively as a team," said Frederickson.

"What we lost in height, we make up for in hard work."

>> Senior Sarah Blegen

To deal with the fatigue of each game, players are working to keep up

their stamina and energy level on the court.

"If you see us after practice, we all get so bruised and battered, but when you play hard, that's when you enjoy it the most. When we play really well and everything works for us, we soar," said Swami.

Although the team has high expectations for their season, they are still ready to work hard to overcome any obstacles in their way. They plan to work on communication more, and will strive to maintain their spirit following a loss.

"On the court, we should be like a family, looking out for each other and holding each other up," said Blegen. "We need to have confidence in our abilities as a team and go out on the court wanting to win." ♦

>> photoreel

Siblings are a blessing



>> **Aasim Naqvi**
Awesome Aasim

My brother Ali and my sister Mariam both attended Saratoga High. My sister graduated in 2000, and my brother in 2003. I graduate in 2013.

Yeah, do the math.

Beyond graduating from great schools, both decided to go into medicine. Mariam is now an obstetrician and gynecologist doing her residency at Stanford. Ali is in his third year of medical school at SUNY Buffalo in New York.

The first thing that most people say when I tell them the above is, "You have a lot to live up to."

What most people ignore is that two successful older siblings can offer a lot of guidance and good advice. From topics such as which classes to take in high

school to where to get an internship during the summer, the advice just never stops.

I have two siblings who have chosen to pursue a profession that requires immense amounts of hard work. For whatever reason, it happens to be the same profession I'm leaning toward now.

So next time you're getting bossed around by your older sibling, consider the positives.

Advice and guidance are well worth a little bossing around. ♦

What most people ignore is that two successful older siblings can offer good advice.

I've always wondered why my peers constantly complain about being younger siblings.

Little brothers or sisters moan about getting beaten up, bossed around or having to meet the expectations set by their older siblings. Younger siblings often seem to pity themselves or wish they were the older sibling. But not me.

Having a brother or a sister is a gift and something to be very thankful for. On top of that, having an older brother and an older sister means a great source of guidance and help during tough times. My siblings help me make decisions, and I can say that their help has definitely impacted me for the better.

And although it may not be obvious to many, I'd bet it's the same for every other younger sibling in the world.

Raised crosswalk draws criticism from students

BY Roy Bisht

"I almost died."

No, this is not from a movie in the "Indiana Jones" trilogy, but the words of senior Soorya Rangan about the newly added speed bump in front of the school on Herriman Avenue.

Added during the recent summer, the speed bump acts as both a crosswalk for pedestrians and an obstacle for oncoming vehicles. Even though its intentions are for the safety of students and others, some students claim that the bump is actually a danger to drivers.

Rangan, who experienced the effects of the speed bump during the first week of the school year, is not a supporter of the new construction. Going at an accelerated pace, he made solid contact with the speed bump and lost control of his car, swerving into the bike lane.

"As one of the first to experience the speed bump, I believe that it is very hazardous," Rangan said.

The speed bump, in fact, was not a work by the high school. The city of Saratoga decided to place the speed bump in front of the

school to make it safer for both vehicles and pedestrians, said principal Jeff Anderson.

But this explanation was of little comfort to Rangan, who complained about the lack of warning. Unlike most speed bumps, which have signs warning drivers to slow down, the one on Herriman leaves students no time to prepare, he said.

"I was driving at my normal cruising speed, and then, 'BAM!' I hit the speed bump and nearly lost control of my car," said Rangan. "It's almost hidden, so I really think that there should be a sign there that warns drivers of it."

Junior Austin Firth also drove over the speed bump and had a close call.

"I consider myself an exceptional driver, and I almost crashed my car on that speed bump," said Firth. "I just feel as though the lack of information that the speed bump is coming is a huge disadvantage for a driver."

Some students may not like the speed bump, but Anderson believes it was a smart choice by the city.

"Kids fly out of [the parking lot] here, they just go too fast and are not the most mindful of pedestrians," said Anderson. "[Saratoga] put it there to slow students down for a good reason." ♦



TALISMAN // JAYA NARASIMHAN



FALCON // SHIVANI CHADHA



FALCON // SARAH HULL



FALCON // VIVIEN LETRAN

REJECTED SENIOR VANESSA BLOCK DENIES SENIOR BRANDON PIERCE'S ADVANCES DURING THE BENEFIT FASHION PREVIEW SHOW AT LUNCH ON SEPT. 14. JUST DANCE SENIOR NINA MOHANTY COLLECTS MONEY AT THE FIRST DANCE ON SEPT. 4. YUM! SOPHOMORE ANDY HSIEH TRIES NEW LUNCH OPTIONS IN THE CAFETERIA. I'M YOUR NUMBER 1 FAN SCHOOL SPIRIT GROUP CODE RED WATCHES THE FIELD HOCKEY TEAM OPEN THE LEAGUE SEASON ON SEPT. 21 AGAINST GILROY.

topten

REASONS TO BE EXCITED FOR HOMECOMING

- 10 Freshman decorations are going to be awesome!
- 9 The costumes for the dance. Somehow girls will make board games inappropriate.
- 8 Homecoming king and queen. I wonder if anyone from band will win.
- 7 The football team playing Lynbrook. Ask Cupertino about the Homecoming game last year.
- 6 The teacher dance. That doesn't make anyone feel uncomfortable...
- 5 Maybe this year's sophomores will finally get a Clue.
- 4 The Homecoming night rally. Remember how well the Candyland rally went last year.
- 3 Playing chutes and ladders. Wait that game is so lame.
- 2 The seniors presentation of Candyland. Get pumped.
- 1 The junior quad day. Hopefully the band makes an appearance.

>> Tim Rollinson