



the saratoga falcon

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BOYS' SWIMMING

Top in the U.S.

by Tim Rollinson

National champions. Until now these two words were never before associated with Saratoga High athletics but after a stunning performance in last May's CCS swimming tournament, which included several national times and national record-breaking relay, the 2009 boys' team was crowned national champions by Swimming World Magazine in its Sept. 5 issue.

Since there are no state or national meets for swimming, Swimming World Magazine compiles results from meets around the country to simulate a national meet. When all meets were taken into account, the Falcons came out on top, beating second place Baylor School of Chattanooga, Tenn., by 9.5 points.

"The victory came as a huge surprise," said swimming coach Christian Bonner. "We didn't even win our league because of a lack of depth but our core group showed what they could do at the CCS meet and now they have a national championship to show for it."

In addition, the Falcons finished second at the CCS tournament because Bellarmine High School had 11 finalists compared to Saratoga's six and grabbed more points to win the meet. But only two of the Bellarmine swimmers finished in the top 16 nationally. The Falcons had five national finalists, making them the best team in the country according to the magazine.

"Saratoga overcame its lack of depth by relying on the immense quality at its tight-knit core," said writer Dan Albano. "And by the end of the season the Falcons established a new standard of excellence and not just at Saratoga."

Ben Hinshaw, now training for his first season with the UC Berkeley swim team, led the way, placing in the top four in his two individual events and two relays events, earning second in the 500-yard freestyle and fourth in the 200-yard IM.

see MAKING HISTORY, p. 25

PE CHANGES

Skills, not sports

by Aanchal Mohan and Emily Williams

This year, the PE department has decided to shift the focus of the PE program. Instead of traditional team sport-based curriculum, the classes will focus on promoting healthy lifestyles.

"Our PE department felt that the original curriculum wasn't an effective way of helping kids get into better shape," said athletic director Peter Jordan. "We were looking for ways that we could promote fitness skills that [students] would be able to use outside of high school."

Thanks to a grant from the district, the PE department created a plan that focuses on developing skills for a gym, such as weight lifting and squats.

The class will spend the first six weeks using PVC pipes to learn proper form for weightlifting. They will also learn how to gauge and document their own fitness in a portfolio.

"Unlike before, this course will be tailored to fit the student's individual [fitness] needs," said PE and world geography teacher Rick Ellis.

The changes have been welcomed by teachers.

"I have a really good feeling that this program is going to work out a lot better than last year's curriculum," said Ellis.

So far, students have displayed mixed feelings. Some students are welcoming the new direction with enthusiasm.

"I like this better because [the program] actually helps us get in shape," said sophomore Farnaz Ahmed.

Other students see the new curriculum as piling more work on top of already busy schedules.

"I think the class seems like it is going to be a lot more work," said sophomore Penelope Burgess.

Despite mixed reactions, Jordan hopes to expand the PE department and if there is enough interest, create a PE elective for upperclassmen.

"We imagine that four years from now every student in the school will know all the weight-room vocabulary and have the skills to do the exercises," said Jordan. ♦

UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct. 9 Alumni tailgate; football game with 1950s halftime show

Oct. 10 Daddy-Daughter Basketball Game on the Court of Dreams; walking tours of SHS; panel discussion with former faculty

SCHOOL COMMEMORATES 50 YEARS OF EDUCATION

by Robin Liu and Tiffany Tung

Saratoga High, circa 1959: 350 mostly white students, lots of orchards and an unfinished school. Fifty years later: 1,400 students, hundreds of homes nearby, a diverse student body and an increasingly state-of-the-art school.

Saratoga High was built on a 30-acre prune drying yard in 1958 after the land was purchased from the Lipscombe family for \$256,000. It was intended to be an addition to the Los Gatos school district and Vernon Trimble, a teacher from Los Gatos, became principal of the school.

Former PE teacher and legendary SHS football coach Benny Pierce was a student at Los Gatos before being hired at Saratoga. He remembers how small the school had been and the basic facilities the school had.

"We didn't have a field, and we didn't get a gym until about two years after [Saratoga High] began," said Pierce. "Also, there was just one locker room with a board down the middle."

Saratoga was still very rural and the school was surrounded by prune and apricot orchards. There was only the cafeteria, the gym, the 200, 400 and 600 wings and the library. The current band room was the library, and the administration was housed in the teachers' lounge.

Much of the school remains as it had 50

years ago; for example, the lockers are still the same, along with several buildings.

Bill Cooper, father of senior Sophia Cooper, was part of the first class to graduate from the school in 1963.

"Our first year was just freshmen and sophomores, so there weren't any cars. We had school buses and that's how we got to school," said Cooper.

"We used to get together on Friday nights and play poker or have root beer but we never got in trouble. Everybody was very honest," said Cooper. "We had nice parties in various

places around Saratoga and Monte Sereno. Especially on football nights, because the football games in Los Gatos, you go down the hill—it was the Burger Fix then—and that was a good place to be."

One thing that has stayed the same throughout the years is the classes. There were, and still are, 20 to 30 students in most classes, and there

were six 50-minute periods each day. Class numbers and types were expanded each year but most have been kept the same such as the newspaper, the Falcon and the yearbook, the Talisman. However, back then the school offered more mechanical classes, such as auto shop and home economics.

After so many years, Saratoga High has become a special place in the hearts of countless students and teachers.

"I have so many great memories about [Saratoga] that it would be impossible to pick just one as my favorite," said Pierce. ♦



The Beginnings

First in an occasional series

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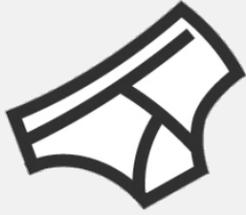
SPORTS

You play WHAT???

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NEWS

BRIEFS



First dance takes place later than usual

Unlike the Kick-Off Dances from previous years, this evening's "Let it Rock...and Roll" Dance is almost a month later than usual. Head dance commissioner, senior Krittika Patil attributes the shift to a timing issue and desire to provide the students with a better experience.

"We tried to coordinate the dance with a football game to make both more spirited, but since games end late, we realized the dance would be short and very hectic," she said. "Students wouldn't get the full three hours at a dance."

The dance commission set the date for the first available Friday without a football game. The dance, as always, will take place from 8-11p.m. in the Quad. Tickets are only available at the door at two pricing levels, \$5 with ASB, \$7 without, each of which can be discounted an additional dollar if one brings two cans. The commission will be donating to Second Harvest Food Bank.

The dance commission settled on a "Let it Rock...and Roll" as the theme and hope for a positive turnout.

"This might be the only dance we get to plan," Patil said. "We'd love to plan another, so maybe if the students give us positive feedback for this dance, we can push for another!"

The dance commission has done much preparation for tonight. Despite the lack of first week hype about the dance, Patil is sure that "all the students will have a lot of fun with this theme and DJ." —*Mary Mykhaylova*

LED scoreboard installed at pool

As a result of the new LED scoreboard recently installed at the Saratoga High Aquatic Center, swim meets will be more organized, water polo players will know how much time is remaining in the quarter and the school will likely host more aquatic events.

The old 10-year-old faulty and out-of-date scoreboard, which continually caused problems for the Falcons swimming and water polo teams, was replaced by a brand new top-of-the-line system, a 9'6" by 15'9" scoreboard from Colorado Display Systems earlier this month.

The previous system created technical difficulties at aquatic sporting events and was extremely out of date.

"Technology changes every five minutes so the old scoreboard was way out of date," said girls' varsity water polo coach Courtney Crase.

The new scoreboard is "the latest and greatest" and features animation capabilities and a wireless system. It has top-of-the-line software for both swimming and water polo.

The previous scoreboard was 10 panels, which limited swim meets to eight participants, but the new system has 12 panels that allow 10 swimmers.

The scoreboard cost a total of \$70,000 and was installed by a crew headed by contractor John Crase, the father of Courtney. The school received a large anonymous donation and a minor donation to pay for it. —*Tim Rollinson*

SHS hires service to build new website

The school has been taking great strides to improve the look and feel of the campus by beautifying different spots. However, one major improvement that involved no bulldozers or noisy jackhammers this summer was the revamping of the school's website (www.saratogahigh.org).

Many students were caught by surprise when they logged onto the site this fall and came across a new and improved interface.

The new website, along with being more attractive, includes new features such as a search, the capability of having web television, transitioning pictures of the campus and students on the homepage, built in e-mail, an active calendar and tech support 12 hours a day.

"The transitioning pictures were definitely the first thing that caught my eye," said sophomore Eric Wang. "The colors also make the site more attractive and modern looking."

A team of teachers, staff and administrators worked with Educational Networks to create the most user-friendly website possible.

Media arts teacher Tony Palma was a part of this team. "We worked with the service we chose to develop the basics of the site," said Palma. "We also tried to make it easier for everyone to have access, not just the webmaster."

Also, with the new design, all teachers and staff can now modify their own part of the website.

Judging by the early reaction, the redesign has been a success.

"Right when I enter the site I feel so much more welcome," said Wang. "The way the website is presented also makes our school look better as a whole." —*Izzy Albert*



Jordan Waite

Assistant principal Joe Bosco cut the ceremonial ribbon on Sept. 9, at the grand opening of the resurfaced tennis courts. Joining the ceremony were the girls' tennis team, chamber choir and city council.

Tennis courts resurfaced

by David Eng
and Sarah Hull

Over a busy summer that witnessed the speedy construction of the new "Court of Dreams" outdoor basketball and volleyball facility, a more subtle, perhaps lesser known project also took place at Saratoga High—the resurfacing of the tennis courts.

What may seem like merely a minor adjustment, though, had in fact a major impact.

"Thank god, finally," sighed junior player Catherine Nguyen at the thought of the recently finished job.

The varsity No. 2 singles tennis player is pleased with the vast improvements made to her sport's playing area. These vast improvements were made more apparent by comparing the retched conditions of the courts prior to the resurfacing.

"There were huge cracks," said assistant principal Joe Bosco. "Just the idea of finally getting them relatively usable again was enough incentive to finally get the job done and chase the cracks away."

The severity of the problem was so extreme to the fact that unfriendly weeds were actually sprouting out of the crevices.

The school paid the \$40,000 price tag with deferred maintenance, or money given to schools from the state of California to refurbish the campus.

The administration had been angling toward resurfacing the court surface for some time; however, the resurfacing didn't take place until this summer because it was not a top priority in times of reduced funding from the state.

"I think it will represent our school a lot better because

before we were one of the best teams in the league, but we had one of the worst tennis courts around," said Nguyen. "Just the idea that we can play without tripping over a crack changes our mind-set a little."

The girls' tennis team celebrated the refurbishing of the courts at a ribbon-cutting ceremony held Sept. 9. This grand opening featured the chamber choir singing The Star Spangled Banner and ceremonial first serve hit by Bosco. The ceremony preceded the first girls' varsity match of the season, a practice match against St. Francis.

Although the problem has been solved for now, the administration is prepared to battle more cracks and crevices if they reappear in the future.

"If cracks come back in the future, we'll just have to do it all over again," said Bosco. ♦

After Sutton's retirement, Peck guides school's poetry program

by Robin Liu
and Tiffany Tung

English teacher Bill Peck first met Judith Sutton when he was her student at SHS.

Little did he know, four decades later, he would take her place as the teacher of the poetry program she created.

After 40 years as an English teacher at SHS, Sutton announced her retirement late in the 2009 school year.

In addition, former English teacher Paul Page and math teacher Larry Bingham retired after decades of teaching.

Their retirements, however, are also marked with new beginnings, including that of English teacher Bill Peck. From

being her student to being her coworker, Peck himself has known Sutton for many years starting from his high school days.

Although he is looking forward to teaching the class, he knows that he has big shoes to fill.

"I'm very excited to be taking over," said Peck. "I'm really impressed with her program and I plan to stick with it."

—Teacher Bill Peck

"Sutton was quite something. She's irreplaceable as a teacher, and I learned a lot from her."

Peck transitioned into his new post by taking over Sutton's former classroom—Peck's previous classroom is now being used by new English 9 and English 12 teacher Valerie Arbizu.

Because Peck has been a part of the poetry program for the past few years, he plans to make a few changes, such

as having one instead of two poetry panels, and simply continue where Sutton had left off.

During her years teaching, Sutton had helped nurture dozens of award-winning poets and writers, and many are saddened by her absence.

Senior Alice Liu was reluctant to see Sutton leave, but she looks forward to having Peck take over.

"I'm sad that [Sutton] left because, even though she was a little crazy, that's what made it fun," said Liu. "We had a bond, like a crazy mother-type relationship, but we loved her all the same."

In her years at SHS, Sutton left a deep impression on students and teachers alike, and she will be remembered for many years to come.

"She was a great teacher, and she was quite something," said Peck. "She's irreplaceable as a teacher. I learned a lot about [poetry and English], and I learned a lot from her." ♦

New school year brings beautified campus

by Kevin Mu
and Anna Shen

In an attempt to reverse the prison-like appearance of Saratoga High, school officials are continuing to make strides towards making the appearance of the school more inviting for the students, parents and community.

Beautification of the school started in the summer of 2007 and has been ongoing over the past two years.

During the last three months, maintenance crew members, led by head of maintenance Brian Moran, have made numerous renovations to the quad. They replaced the old, rotting wooden structures in the quad with new burgundy planter boxes, benches and garbage bins; filled planter boxes with fresh bark; repainted the formerly blue lunch tables green; and coated retaining walls with a muted grey color in order to give the quad a softer, "more earthy" feel. They have also been working in the hallways between classrooms, where planter boxes and benches have been constructed in areas, such as the 300 wing.

"People [who] live here and parents [who] have their students here have often times commented that [Saratoga High] looks sort of [like a] prison," said principal Jeff Anderson.

The school has spent roughly \$100,000 on aesthetic upgrades over the course of two years, which includes the installation of new lawns, benches and planter boxes in the quad, according to Moran. The funds came from a mixture of donations, the maintenance budget and the Facilities Fund.

"Students take pride in [the new quad], and the one thing is we're very happy with

very minimal vandalism, almost none," Moran said.

The school has ambitious plans for future remodeling if it can secure the funds needed to do so. The administration is considering adding a general obligation (GO) bond to the June 2010 ballot, which can be used for physical renovations.

"For now, I want to make [the campus] as nice for the students and staff as possible, even [if] we blow up the whole quad and do something completely different," said Anderson.

If the bond passes, the school has plans to completely rearrange the front of the school by swapping the locations of the main office and the cafeteria. The board is considering demolishing the current office and cafeteria buildings.

In addition to the renovated quad, the school resurfaced the tennis courts and built a new, outdoor basketball court near the parking lot entrance, both of which completed construction just in time for the new school year and are available for student use.

Currently undergoing construction is the \$2 million multimedia building, also known as the MAP building, which is being constructed next to the library and woodshop classroom. This room is scheduled to be finished by August 2010.

The school's future refurbishing remains uncertain, but the main goal of the renovations is to provide a more beautiful campus for the students "right now," and Anderson believes the renovations have done just that.

"We would like to make [the quad] as pleasant as possible," Anderson said. "We can't really build a whole new school, so we're just trying to do what we can to get it more inhabitable." ♦



Photos by Annie Lee

The layout around the tree, the new trash cans and the new benches in the quad is all part of the changes being made thanks to the school beautification plans.

MEET the ASB

What ASB wants you to know...

We are focusing on winter ball, keeping the number of clubs in check and improving ASB-staff relations.



president
senior Haley Zarrin



Vice President
junior David Mandell

ASB is more than a title, it's a responsibility that requires work and follow through.

This year we have secret pals in which students and staff exchange gifts anonymously.



Secretary
senior Cindy Chang



treasurer
senior Annie Lee

Even though we do spend a lot of time getting work done, it doesn't feel like work because everyone on ASB is so closely knit.

I love my fellow ASB-ers. I can honestly say, without trying to sound cheesy, that they feel like my family.



Board Representative
senior Natalie Tkalcevic



head commissioner
senior Maggie Lin

Everyone on ASB has a different personality, so we bounce ideas off of each other and it's amazing to see what we accomplish.

This year we have more people on ASB, with new liaison positions for leadership and two head commissioners.



head commissioner
senior Sonia Sigaporita

by Maggie Lin

Construction of MAP building finally begins

by Serena Chan
and Jocelyn Takahashi

After the two years of hype and extensive planning for the new Media Arts Program (MAP) building, the highly anticipated project has finally broken ground and is expected to be completed by August 2010.

The 4,800-square-foot facility, located behind the weight room and woodshop, will include a TV studio, an audio recording studio and classroom space. It is not only for the students involved in MAP, but also for the rest of the school.

"If someone is a singer and wants to record a demo tape, they can come right in and use the audio studio," said Media Arts teacher Tony Palma.

"If someone is a singer and wants to record a demo tape, they can come right in and use the audio studio."

—MAP Teacher Tony Palma

This addition to the school will provide the students with quality equipment and space that is built to resemble a professional studio.

Many students such as sophomore Megan Yen can't wait to see this building become a reality.

"Having a TV room and special audio recording room is really cool," said Yen.

Although today's economy is still causing issues with state and school budgets, "nothing will be cut from the structural safety of the building," according to Palma. The estimated cost of the project is around \$2.2 million. Palma has received a grant from the state to fund a large part of the building, and the district has also set money aside for the project.

"Although we are a little over budget, the district has absorbed the cost and has

set aside extra money to pay for anything that will go wrong," said assistant principal Joe Bosco.

Although the planning of the building has been finalized and the funds have been put aside, the building has been modified to reduce the cost and at the same time create the most collaborative environment possible. Palma, along with the rest of the MAP staff, met with representatives from Adobe and eBay last year to plan the layout. Current classroom blueprints stray away from the usual computers-around-the-perimeter arrangement. In contrast, the future desks, which will be

placed in pods, are "funky shaped" and in "Google colors." The main focus is creating a unified team atmosphere, according to Palma.

The MAP building will closely resemble studios such as the renowned

NBC.

These students will be able to fully appreciate the equipment with the guidance of the MAP teachers.

This MAP committee includes history teacher Kim Anzalone, World History teacher Mike Davey, English teacher Jason Friend, head of drama teacher Chris Mahle, English teacher Cathy Head, English teacher Kerry Mohnike (also the MAP director), history teacher Margarita Morelle and journalism teacher Mike Tyler.

A lot of time and effort has been put into this building. From the original drawings to the construction site, Palma has assumed a major leadership position.

"Palma has been a pivotal point in this project," said Bosco. "It's his baby, and he's doing a great job with it." ♦

Musicians win despite sickness in Europe trip

by Vivien Lu
and Ashley Tang

From July 6-20, more than 200 members from the entire music department traveled to Europe for two weeks. Unfortunately, over half the students got sick over the course of the trip.

They traveled and performed throughout Switzerland and Austria on the trip, which the department takes every three years. One of the places they visited was the top of Mount Jungfrau in Switzerland which snows year-round. However, even the cold could not stop the students from playing in the numbing snow.

The fun came to a halt that night. One by one, students developed a cough, fever, or sore throat. Soon, more students began taking more trips to the nearest bathroom, coming out pale and disheveled after puking their hearts out for several minutes.

A rumor spread throughout the trip that the illness was swine flu. When sophomore Daniel Hsu returned to Saratoga, he went to the Stanford Medical Center to get tested. The doctor confirmed that Hsu did have swine flu while in Europe.

Despite the rumors, there was no one illness that each student had. Some had bronchitis, some had swine flu, some had

strep throat and some just had a common cold from being in the cold.

Luckily, the spread of the illnesses did not stop them from exploring Europe. Students bonded while going on trips to pharmacies, eating at restaurants, trading sick roommates for healthier ones and taking care of each other at their worst.

"Everyone helped each other out," said sophomore Clara Chao. "Even though we were forced to stay in hotels, we still had a lot of fun together."

Although students suffered from fatigue and exhaustion, the department as a whole still won many competitions.

In Switzerland, at the Jungfrau Festival, the Saratoga High tour band took second place. While visiting the Mid-Europe Music Festival in Schladming, Austria, band took first place, winning a \$2,000 alto-saxophone. At Vienna, choir and band competed at the International Youth & Music Festival. Choir placed second, while the band tied for first with a South African group consisting of musicians up to 26 years old.

"Many people got sick and felt under the weather," senior Stephen Hannibal said, "but most of us were able to compete. We still had a lot of fun because everyone got through it together." ♦

Chess team retools with younger players

Team starts year successfully at Labor Day tournament

by Albert Gu

Although four seniors of the chess team graduated last year, the Falcons are still confident of their success this year with the emergence of rising underclassmen.

Two of the graduating members, Jeff Young and Aaron Garg, were among the strongest on the team, both ranked in the top 100 nationally for their age group and have been staple members of the team for the past four years. Although the loss is significant, the team's strong freshmen and sophomores are bridging the gap.

"The current team is not as strong as it was in past years," said captain senior Charles Sun, "but we are improving and I think there is a lot of potential in our group."

New members this year are freshman Kevin Garbe, also nationally ranked in his age group and senior Rolland Wu. There are a total of seven members on the team.

To start the new year, five members of the team attended the Labor Day

tournament held in San Francisco on the weekend of Sept. 6. Wu placed first in the D/E section after winning four games and drawing (tying) two against tough opponents. As the prize for winning his section, Wu walked away with \$380.

"I was surprised at winning because I haven't played chess in a while," said Wu. "I still retained some basic knowledge, though."

Wu played chess in elementary school and joined the team this year after a nearly six-year hiatus because he feels that being a senior will give him more time to enjoy the game. His accomplishment in the Labor Day tournament may foreshadow success for the upcoming year.

According to Sun, the team has a good chance of winning the state championship again this year.

The chess club meets weekly on Thursdays at lunch in economics teacher Todd Dwyer's room, where they play games of chess against each other and discuss strategies. Their next event is the inter-school chess league starting in two weeks. ♦

Drama ushers in a new year with fall play 'On the Razzle'

by Mary Mykhaylova

Despite it being a mere few weeks into the school year, the drama department has hit the ground running with prompt auditions both inside and outside the classroom. While the annual fall play "On the Razzle" is already rehearsing, advanced and honors drama students have begun to direct and act in mini-productions of their own.

On the Razzle

Production director Chris Mahle settled on Tom Stoppard's farce "On the Razzle" due to the quirky humor and exaggerated characters. "Also, there's plenty of sexual innuendo, which I've discovered appeals to the teenage mind," joked Mahle.

Though casting for this show took less time than usual, Mahle still stewed over placing his actors into their respective parts.

"SHS has a very talented and fearless student body," he said.

Stage manager Jennifer Nelson, a senior, agrees about the caliber of "On the Razzle" actors.

"Looking back at the auditions, I just know that everyone in the cast is amazing," she said.

Seniors Tommy Mednick and Chris Renalds and junior Jay Lee are only a few of the comedic leads to watch out for when "On the Razzle" opens its curtains Oct. 22-25.

As always, Mahle hopes that this production will be a learning experience.

"Theater is so much more than just acting and lines," he said.

Switching Roles

Meanwhile, many "On the Razzle" leads, as well as other Drama 4H seniors, are directing their own productions. Fourteen Honors Drama students have partnered into teams of one director and one assistant director.

"Directing is actually a lot more stressful than I thought it would be," said senior Sung Park. "It's a challenge, a good challenge."

Though the original intent was to have all the plays running simultaneously, the students felt that it would be more manageable to switch off in pairs. Mahle is satisfied with their solution.

"The students are taking ownership of their education and gravitating to solutions that will teach them the most," he said. "In life we all end up overwhelmed at one time or another and it's how we deal with those challenges that separates the grownups from the kids."

The directors have chosen half-hour excerpts from existing plays and the advanced drama students have auditioned to be in these productions. Mahle is assured that the directing process will be a "wonderful source of life skills" for his honors students.



Jordan Waite

Junior Dylan Teter senior Mary Mykhaylova and rehearse a romantic comedy scene from fall play "On the Razzle" on Sept. 16. The play will open its curtains from Oct. 22-25.

Though the gears of these productions have only just been set in motion, the directors are already experiencing the benefit of this opportunity.

"It's been interesting seeing how the younger actors have improved and just watching auditions gives a whole new feel to being an actor," said Park.

This initial project should culminate in a student-produced one-act festival at the end of second semester. It can be a grueling task but the rewards are

amazing when the play-writing and directing students hear the applause.

"It's very inspiring to see," Mahle said.

He enjoys observing his students grow over the years.

"I've been here long enough to see students who played in the ensemble as freshmen now writing their own plays and directing their friends on stage," said Mahle. "I doubt many of them could picture themselves doing that three years ago." ♦

Music department groups bond during overnight retreats

by Kyumin Shim

This year, the music department hopes its students are going to know each other extremely well.

The department is putting more emphasis on building stronger bonds between musicians this year as they plan the annual retreats.

"We make better music when everyone's together," said music director Michael Boitz. This year, Boitz believes that by creating opportunities for each musician to get to know each other better and build new friendships within the band, it will affect the mu-

sic department's overall success. He also understands that when there is a larger group of kids, it's harder for the students to get to know each other, so this year the music department focuses on this problem. Many musicians feel that the overnight camps will have a stronger effect on creating friendships between students.

"It's almost like a giant sleepover," said junior Amanda Jeng. "You really get close to people and it's really fun."

So far this year, the marching band and Color Guard stayed for two nights at Walden West, an overnight campsite, on Aug. 7-9. They spent a night at the

camp and "came out with a sense of togetherness," said junior Nick Renda, after a weekend of playing team-building games and getting to know the new members of the marching band.

Next, the music department planned to give the same experience to the choir and orchestra in their own retreats. The choir recently traveled to Camp Campbell on Sept. 18-19, where they underwent a similar program to what the marching band experienced over the summer. The goal is for these musicians to have a chance to build relationships with one another and to ultimately make better music together. Boitz notes

that these programs are not "content or instruction based...[but rather] for the kids to know each other and to have fun."

For the orchestra students, there was a day-long event on Sept. 19. A widely beloved motivational speaker, Scott Lang, visited the musicians as in previous years. They ended the day with an excursion to Saratoga Springs, for mingling and roasting s'mores by the fire.

"The larger the group, the harder it gets to know each other," said Boitz but the music department hopes to overcome that issue with these bonding retreats. ♦

CHANGES ON CAMPUS

New supervisor hired

by Christine Tseng

Sitting alone at the library computers, Mark Hernandez is one of the few people in the vast space during fourth period.

As he checks his mail, he smiles and continues to read. His golf cart, parked outside, is one of the many things that identify him as the new campus supervisor.

"I'm getting to know my way around," said Hernandez. "I'm trying to meet all the students, but it's hard to meet everyone."

Hernandez came to Saratoga looking for a change from his previous job in security at Santa Clara University.

He wanted to leave the more hectic pace at Santa Clara, but was still looking for something in the same field.

"At Santa Clara, the campus wasn't as calm. There was a lot

of bike theft, drugs, alcohol and fights," said Hernandez. "The campus was about the same size, but we could arrest people and had emergency calls. Also, the hours were long and we worked in 12-hour shifts, which took time away from my family. Another reason for coming to the high school is that I enjoy working with young kids."

Every day, Hernandez goes through a laundry list of items to be completed. While most students are still sleeping, Hernandez has already started his work at 7 a.m.

His responsibilities include everything from setting up cones for parking to helping parents get information.

"I check in with (assistant principal) Mr. Bosco after I arrive to see if there's anything he wants me to do, and mostly I just check for vandalism. I check if students cut class, and just go to the places where they

usually hang out or hide," said Hernandez.

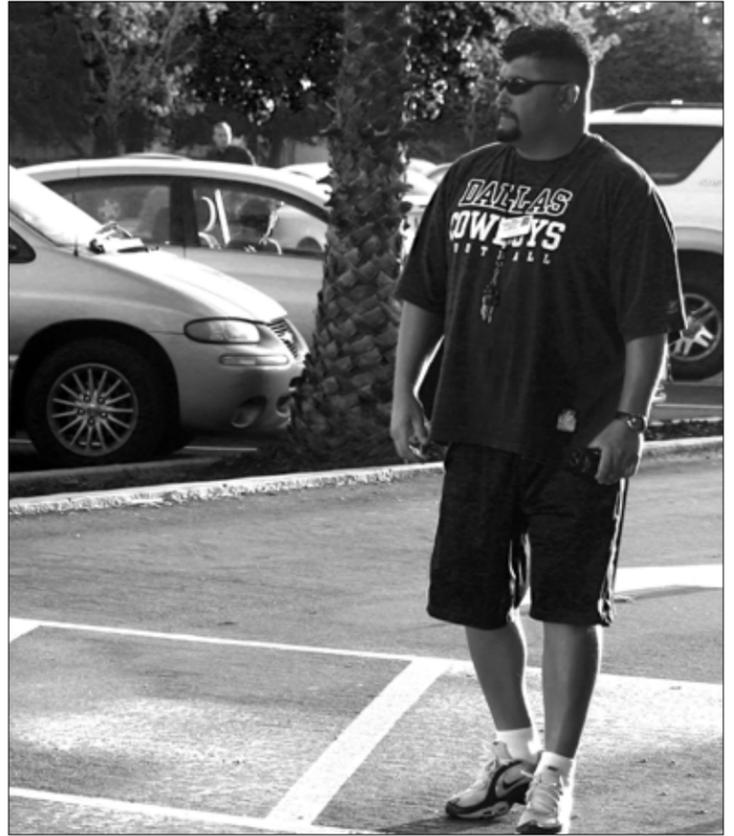
Hernandez usually works with Saratoga's other campus supervisor, Jeanine Sevilla. They work together by splitting up so that they can cover more area.

Hernandez said that Sevilla usually covers parking, registration, permits and office work, while he works more in the cafeteria and patrolling.

Besides working at Saratoga, Hernandez also balances a job coaching football at Lincoln High.

He is the offensive coordinator for the frosh-soph team and the position coach for the quarterbacks and running backs. Hernandez goes to his coaching job right after leaving Saratoga at 3:30 p.m.

"Sometimes it gets pretty boring, so I like to watch football," said Hernandez. "I just like simple things." ♦



Olivia Chock

Supervisor Mark Hernandez performs his routine morning duties.



Amanda Yi

Laura Lizundia teaches, reads and lectures to the new French 1 class.

French 1 class added, Japanese 1 cancelled

by Lillian Chen
and Girish Swaminath

The beginning of the new academic year has brought several changes to the world language department. For the first time in two years, the school is offering French 1 while Japanese 1 has been cut.

Laura Lizundia is currently teaching the beginning French course and is excited to introduce new students to the Francophone world.

"It's great to be teaching [French 1] again," said Lizundia. "Although I have to start all over again and refresh myself with the curriculum, it will be very good for me and my students."

Lizundia speculates that signups for the class increased because of the heightened awareness of French program activities. She also suggests that the recent upturn in Saratoga High's European population could be a factor, in addition to the temporary phasing out of Japanese 1.

"I have observed that more Europeans have moved to Saratoga and are encouraging their children to take French," said Lizundia. "Unfortunately, [the French department] may have gained more signups due to the

dearth of students signed up for Japanese 1 this year."

Japanese 1 was a course that had been offered since the early 1990s. Japanese teacher Yuko Aoki, who had taught Japanese for over 15 years, is disappointed to see Japanese 1 being cut from the list of electives offered.

"When I first started teaching at Saratoga, there were many students that were eager to study Japanese," said Aoki. "I feel very sad to see the number of students who enroll for Japanese 1 decrease every year."

Aoki explains that in March 2009, the district and administrators had already decided Japanese 1 would not be offered for the 2009-10 school year. The four freshmen who were interested, however, made special arrangements during the summer to take a placement test in order to join Japanese 2 for this school year.

"I received e-mails from four students at the end of summer who wanted to take Japanese 1," said Aoki. "But it was already too late for them."

Aoki feels that if perhaps the school had waited longer and saw how many students were interested, Japanese 1 may not have been removed from the curriculum. ♦

Violinist plays to different tune in new country, environment

by Karen Lyu
and Karthik Sreedhara

One of the first things new student junior Reina Muroka noticed that was different about California was how amazingly dark it was at night.

"In Japan, everything's all illuminated. It's really bright. You come here at 8 [p.m.], and everything's all dark," she said.

Muroka transferred here this year after her father got a new job. She was formerly a student at the American School of Japan but had also previously attended international schools in Hong Kong and Shanghai.

"[In international schools], there are lots of people," said Muroka. "We all move around

a lot. I mainly moved around Asia [and] I have never lived in the US."

While Muroka said adjusting to the school has not been too challenging, she admits that the homework overwhelms her.

"Everyone's really nice," said Muroka. "I like the school, [but] the classes are harder. It's junior year [and we have] AP's. It's what I expected [though]," said Muroka.

Despite being in a new environment, Muroka has found her own way to fit in: her love for playing the violin. In Japan, she won a prestigious nationwide award and was part of an orchestra.

She is currently trying out for the San Francisco Symphony and has also been appointed as a concert master in the school's advanced orchestra.

Although Muroka is starting to find her niche at school, she says she misses everything about Japan, especially the accessible transportation in Japan and all the television shows she enjoyed watching.

"[In Japan], there were TV shows that were really stupid, but fun," she said. "I think American TV is really boring."

Muroka plans on staying at SHS through senior year and is considering going to college in the U.S. as well. ♦



Muroka

Exchange student weighs old life in Germany with new one at SHS

by Karen Lyu
and Karthik Sreedhara

New student Johannes Stimmer, who goes by his middle name Manuel, traveled from Munich, Germany, to be a sophomore this year, and is currently staying with the Bedard family.

Although he studied English at his school in Germany, Stimmer decided to come to the U.S. so that he could "study English and learn to do things independently," he said.

"I thought it would be nice to be a foreign exchange student."

According to Stimmer, adjusting to the school has been going well, even with all the differences compared to his school back in Germany.

"[SHS] is much bigger, but in Germany we have about 15 different subjects," he said.

Stimmer also said that his peers have been nice to him and that he felt welcome at school.

"I enjoyed the New Students' Barbecue because I got to meet other new students who were feeling the same as I was," he said. "In Germany, there wouldn't be anything like this."

Even though he traveled

from Germany recently, he says he already feels somewhat homesick.

"I just started school here but I already miss my friends and family in Germany," Stimmer said.

Because Stimmer is an avid fan of soccer and played on his old school team in Germany, he has already attended the Earthquakes game on Aug. 22 and hopes to try out for the soccer team at Saratoga High. As for Stimmer's future plans for his education, he is somewhat undecided. He says that he will possibly attend college in the U.S. after graduation.

"I like it very much here," he said. "It's quite different from Germany." ♦



Stimmer

New clubs challenge students' knowledge

by Denise Lin

This year, two new clubs, Quiz Bowl and Mechanical Science and Engineering Team, or MSET, plan to challenge students intellectually while also allowing them to explore different interests. Quiz Bowl will revolve around trivia competitions, while MSET members will demonstrate their skill in rocketry and robotics at various competitions as well.

For those who would like to build rockets or robots regularly or want to investigate a possible career in engineering, MSET will be sure to offer these opportunities. The club plans to enroll in several mechanical science and engineering competitions and workshops, according to club founder and president Cordell Hollingsworth.

Hollingsworth decided to create this club for students interested in science and technology following the end of Saratoga Robotics Team, or SRT. It ended last year in controversy, not as a result of lack of members or funding.

"It was more of an internal issue," said senior Erika Ye, who led the club as president last year.

But the death of one club led to the birth of another, and MSET will incorporate several parts of SRT.

"MSET's goal is to create a student's science community where you can create, have fun and interact with technology mentors and technology companies," said Hollingsworth.

Members will be able to attend nationwide competitions against other high schools. For example, MSET will compete in US FIRST Robotics competition and Team America Rocketry Contest (TARC). Preparation and working time is crucial, so club members will prepare for these competitions during workshops held on Sundays. However, building a science community requires sponsorship such as cash funding, materials and technical training from parents and technology companies.

"We really need parent and technology company support," said Hollingsworth.

With the interest of several students and previous SRT members, and outside support, MSET hopes to help robotics come back strong.

And for those who watch "Jeopardy!" or have a knack for memorizing random facts, Quiz Bowl will prove to be an attractive choice.

"I have been interested in trivia for a

THE BIG IDEA

New Clubs

QUIZ BOWL: For fans of "Jeopardy!" this club is all about trivia competitions

MECHANICAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING TEAM: (MSET) A club that will take part in competitions and workshops, for students interested in science and technology, it started after the Robotics team ended last year

WHAT'S NEXT: Both clubs are expecting great turnouts for the year

long time," said club creator and president Vijay Menon.

Menon was influenced to create the club after his friends from other schools experienced success with the organization. Members will have the opportunity to battle top teams such as Bellarmine and Harker. To have a shot against such tough teams, the club is going to require preparation and experience from its members.

"Northern California is a powerhouse in Quiz Bowl," said Menon.

The club, advised by English teacher Bill Peck, might host a tournament early in the year to help members gain some

experience and pay for materials such as buzzers and practice questions.

"It would be a way to make money off of registration fees while getting some early-year competition experience for

ourselves," said Menon.

Winners receive trophies, but the best groups are also guaranteed spots at the national tournament. The club's goal is to earn a bid to the national competition, said Menon. The competition caters to a wide audience, offering a variety of interests and featuring numerous categories, ranging from sports to mythology. The club was originally created at the end of last year, but only a few people joined. This year, however, promises a great turnout for Quiz Bowl.

"So far a lot of people have shown interest [in the club]," said Menon. "It's our first full year, and people from last year really want to make it happen."

Not long from now, the founders hope the new clubs will allow students to grow intellectually and socially, all in a competitive environment. ♦

"MSET's goal is to create a students' science community where you can have fun and interact with technology."

—junior Cordell Hollingsworth

ECO FRIENDLY TOGA



Apeksha Sharma

History teacher Kirk Abe uploads assignments onto his website in order to save paper.

by Parul Singh

Recently there have been many efforts around campus to conserve paper and be more environmentally conscious.

The administration has taken a step toward integrating more environmental education into the curriculum.

According to assistant principal Karen Hyde, the school recently applied for a grant from PG&E to provide Saratoga High with more money to educate students about the environment.

"What we in the administration have noticed is that perhaps because of the...lack of environmental education," the school wrote in the grant application, "our students' passions concerning the environment, their concern about sustainability, is lagging behind their knowledge of academic requirements."

The school is asking for about \$2,900, which would be used to pay for speakers to come to the school, create environmental Facebook groups and infuse environmental issues into the curriculum.

There would also be an all-school assembly discussing sustainable energy and along with other concepts to "go green."

The grant would also help fund the annual Alternative Energy Food and Fuel Fair. The fair features hybrid cars, solar energy companies and displays about locally grown food and solar food cookers.

Although the grant has not yet been approved, the school is already planning major changes in order to be more environmentally friendly.

Hyde said the school is looking to put solar panels in the pool area and other spots.

Besides the administration's efforts, teachers have been making changes. In previous years, The Saratoga Falcon had used a system of paper editing that required wasting many sheets of paper. This year the staff has switched to a method of editing that uses the online collaboration program called Google Docs. This online method uses no paper and may also prove to be more efficient.

"It is good from an efficiency standpoint and it is obviously saving us a ton of paper, but there are still some rough kinks to work out," said Falcon adviser Mike Tyler.

Other teachers throughout the school are looking to the Internet to save paper in classrooms. For a few years, history teacher Kirk Abe has had students retrieve assignments from his website.

"I also have some assignments turned in through e-mail," said Abe, "because it saves paper and it is more convenient."

Abe said most teachers are pretty conscious about saving paper, but a greater understanding of technology would encourage more teachers to turn in assignments via e-mail or the Aeries online grading program. ♦

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Boy Scouts complete their Eagle Projects

by Karthik Annaamalai
and Jordan Waite

Despite being a freshman in high school, troop 581 Boy Scout David Zarrin completed his eagle project, one of the toughest tasks on the road to becoming an Eagle Scout, during the last week of July.

"I did [my project] earlier than most people," said Zarrin, "because I know I will only get busier as I get older with school and sports."

First, Zarrin had to get his written project plan approved by the troop leader, the troop eagle board and county eagle adviser. The next step in the process required Zarrin to execute his project.

Rather than doing a common project like building a bench or planting trees, Zarrin decided to take on something original. He built signs for three local trails, the San Marcos and two county trails. The signs contained critical information about nature and directions of the paths.

"Going into the project, I thought the project would be more difficult than the planning," said Zarrin. "The planning required a lot more time than I expected."

Even though Zarrin finished his project and has almost achieved the Eagle Scout rank, he still wants to be a part of scouting and the troop.

"I try to go to as many outings as possible," said Zarrin. "Scouting is a lot of fun."

The Eagle Scout rank is only achieved after years of hard work in a Boy Scout troop. The ranks of scouting are tenderfoot, second class, first class, star, life and, finally, eagle. The requirements for each of these ranks are time consuming and

THE BIG IDEA

Eagle Scouts

DAVID ZARRIN: Built signs for local trails

TIM LYCURGUS: Built bookshelves for a teacher at Country Lane Elementary School

KYLE FUKUI: Built shelf and cubicle for kindergarten teacher at Foothill

MITCHELL TURPIN: Did work for the Saratoga Presbyterian Church

require huge amounts of work. Not only does the scout have to go through the ranks, but he has to earn a total of 24 merit badges, which have specific requirements for completion. Only five percent of all boy scouts obtain the rank of eagle scout, making it a distinguishable award.

Other scouts that successfully completed their eagle projects recently were juniors Tim Lycurgus and Kyle Fukui, both active members of troop 581, and senior Mitchell Turpin. Fukui built a shelf and a cubicle for a kindergarten teacher at Foothill Elementary School for his eagle project. Similarly, Lycurgus built four bookshelves for a teacher at Country Lane Elementary School. Turpin did work for the Saratoga Presbyterian church as his eagle project. Juniors Jordan Waite and Karthik Annaamalai will be starting their projects soon.

"During the project, it was really stressful," said Lycurgus, "but it felt really good to get it done. The project was a lot more fun than I expected." ♦



Jordan Waite

Senior Mitchell Turpin paints the gates surrounding the Saratoga Presbyterian Church on Sept. 6 for his Eagle Scout project to achieve the highest rank in the Boy Scout system.

Junior math genius receives silver in national competition

by Emily Williams

In the world of the high school Math Olympiad, junior Albert Gu is hard to beat. In fact, this July, in the international Asian Pacific Mathematics Olympiad (APMO), he received a silver medal, ranking him top three in the nation.

"It was a pretty big accomplishment for me, even though this test was casual," said Gu. "I was surprised and happy with the result because I was competing against people who I know are better than me and somehow beat them."

Gu started the long process of qualifying for the APMO during his freshman year when he qualified for a program called Mathematics Olympiad Summer Program (MOSP) that only accepts a total of 55 students: the top 30 high schoolers and the top 25 freshmen throughout the U.S. After MOSP, Gu was invited along with 27 other students to take the APMO, which took place last March.

The APMO is a math competition for participating countries around the Pacific Rim. It is organized as a friendly competition, so individuals from different countries do not compete against each other. The test itself is four hours long and consists of five proof-based problems.

"The problems on these types of tests are pretty unique. You don't learn the techniques for solving these problems anywhere, so you have to figure out a lot of them yourself," said Gu. "That's why the time limit is so long."

Despite Gu's humble opinion of himself, he is widely acknowledged in the math community for his skill.

"He likes math and he does it all the time," said math club adviser and teacher P.J. Yim. "If all I did was twiddle my thumbs, I would be a very good thumb



GU

Gu ranked top three in the nation in the Asian Pacific Mathematics Olympiad.

twiddler. He thinks about math all the time. That is why he is so good."

By freshman year, Gu had already completed geometry and was allowed to skip Algebra 2. He now takes classes at local community colleges, but he says most of his math knowledge is self-taught.

"I usually practice between one to three hours a day and up to 10 in the summer. Math is a hard subject to study for because it is very time consuming," said Gu. "Often when I'm bored, I like to pull out a math problem."

For the past three years his main focus has been on scoring high on the USAMO, a more general test for the top 500 people in the U.S. held every April. Last year, Gu ranked in the top 25, but this year he hopes to score in the top six so that he can represent the USA to compete in the IMO (International Mathematics Olympiad).

"The IMO is the last math competition you can take in high school, it's the highest level, and you're competing internationally," said Gu.

Gu is still unsure about what he future beyond high school may hold for him.

"Because of my mathematical background, I think that there are a lot of career options available to me," said Gu, "but after doing math for so long I can barely stand any non-theoretical subject anymore. All I know is that as of right now, I'm definitely planning to major in math and pursue a mathematical career." ♦

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NEW LOOK KEEPS OLD STYLE

School beatification updates campus; more improvements necessary for future

by Mac Hyde

To many students, Saratoga High School is an ugly blight on the gently rolling foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains. But compared to what it used to be, the current incarnation of SHS is the Palace Hotel. We should be happy with what we have, never mind what other schools have, because we have what most want: a strong communal feeling among the students. More can be done, but we should just accept the fact that, while we don't have the most beautiful campus, we are one of the best schools in the nation.

When Saratoga was opened in fall of 1959, half the windows didn't have glass and the lights hadn't yet been installed. Two weeks into the school year, a large storm deposited itself on the high school.

"We had to choose between being warm and darkness or being cold and being able to see the students," said former social studies department chair, Dr. Hugh Roberts.

In addition, the adobe brick wasn't painted and all the poles and their accompanying overhead beams were painted orange. Each hall was assigned its own color; blue, green or brown. Fast-forward to the '90s. A major bond was passed in 1998. Saratoga was painted in its school colors: red poles, grey buildings with blue trim, blue lockers and blue benches with a red stripe down the middle.

The interiors of the classrooms were upgraded with white boards replacing the black boards and carpeting replacing the aged linoleum. The buildings themselves were finally given upgraded heating and air conditioning, as this was a feature many had been missing from the start. The library and science buildings weren't just relocated; they were built to the most modern specifications. The school was most recently upgraded with projectors in all the classrooms and linoleum replacing the

carpeting.

The sports facilities were, to some, abominable. My older sister Hayes, a freshman in 2004, told me, "We were ashamed to have other schools come and play here. For them it was like this is why we (Saratoga) were so bad at sports." The gyms hadn't had the floors majorly refinished in quite a while, and the light came from massive sulfur lights, essentially street lamps, which cast an orange glow. The bleachers were old, wooden and missing parts.

Perhaps the signature building on campus, the McAfee Center, thanks to the generous donations of the community and the McAfee family, draws students, staff and visitors towards the newly renovated grounds and quad. Retaining walls have been painted a mossy green while new redwood planter-facings replace the old grey cement. Even the blue depth

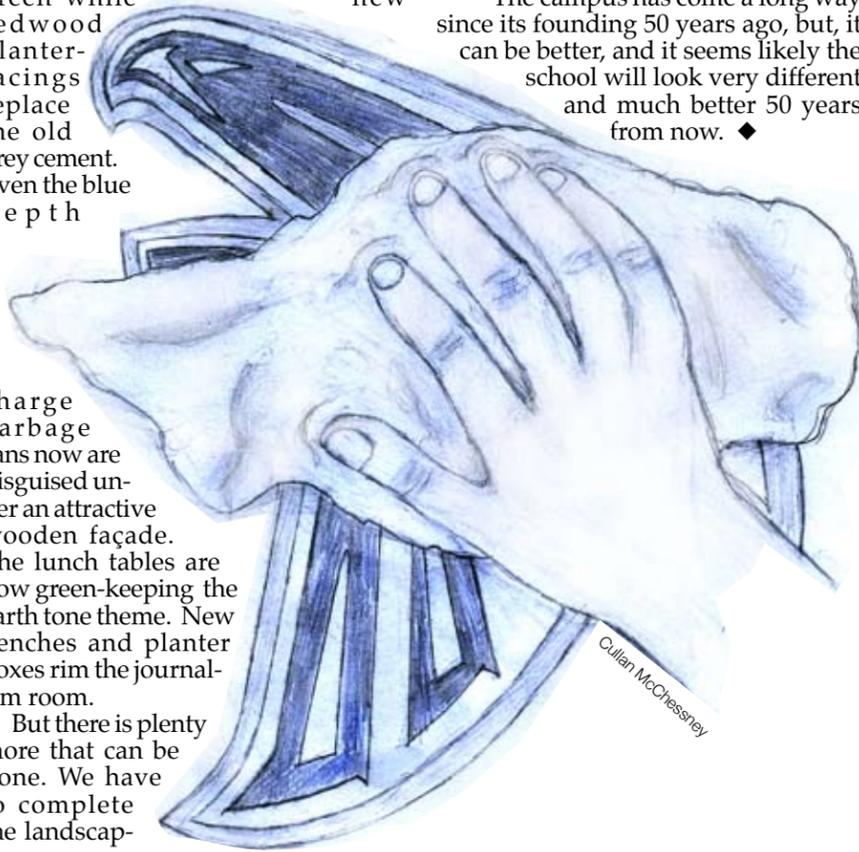
charge garbage cans now are disguised under an attractive wooden façade. The lunch tables are now green-keeping the earth tone theme. New benches and planter boxes rim the journalism room.

But there is plenty more that can be done. We have to complete the landscap-

ing of the school. We need more native plants, and more plants period. There are areas of the school that look like a desert. The falcon on the front of the school needs to be repainted. Student-painted murals could brighten currently blank walls.

We need a colorist to come out and help us decide what colors should go where. We need a traffic analyst to help us with our parking and traffic flow. A complete overhaul of how we use power on campus, i.e. solar panels, would also be nice. The small gym and the cafeteria still await refurbishment. And there is a complete lack of storage space on campus that should be resolved by converting a few of the disused class rooms around campus into storage areas.

The campus has come a long way since its founding 50 years ago, but, it can be better, and it seems likely the school will look very different and much better 50 years from now. ♦



San Mateo incident suggests SHS should work on campus security

by Christine Tseng

A former student goes back to visit his school, bringing along 10 pipe bombs, a chain saw and a sword. It sounds like a scene out of a horror movie, but that's exactly what happened at Hillsdale High School in San Mateo last month. In the end, it took several teachers to tackle him and bring him under control.

Perhaps it's time for people to start asking questions about the safety of their own campuses. Every school has safety measures and drills, but when a real situation occurs so close by, schools should reconsider and re-examine their own campuses.

Saratoga High is a fairly open campus, and just about anyone can go in and out at any time of the day. Community members can be seen running on the track throughout the day and using athletic facilities. The school gates aren't closed until late at night, and there aren't any police, let alone the metal detectors, that many schools have adopted. Students are trusted not to bring in dangerous weapons.

If, however, a situation like the one

at Hillsdale were to repeat itself here, would SHS be prepared? Unfortunately, because of the low degree of security at SHS, students would most likely notice the situation only after spotting blood or hearing bomb explosions. There are so many parents and others on campus all the time that students don't think of a stranger on campus as anything out of the ordinary.

Even at middle school, for those who remember, parents who came in had to sign in and wear a visitor sticker to identify themselves and then sign out again. This way the office could check who had been on campus at a specific time. Saratoga High appears not to be as vigilant with sign-in and sign-out sheets, even though visitors here should technically be checking in.

All these voids in campus security suggest that a more cautious approach is needed. It would be advisable to have a specific time when community members can visit the school, or to make sure the gates are monitored during class hours. Students do not need to leave the school during class hours anyway and it prevents unwanted

people from entering. Also, if you close the gates during class, it gives students more privacy on the school grounds and lets them remain more focused on school instead of thinking about after-school activities.

We already have two campus supervisors, Jeanine Sevilla and Mark Hernandez, but the school is just too big for them to catch everything. Even if one person patrolled the front and one the back, someone could come in once one of them went around a corner.

To fix this, only one entrance to the school should be open at a time, and have one of the supervisors check ID when students and community members enter or leave. This way, there is a record of persons on campus. Attendance is also made easier because once a student checks in, the school will know that they are present, and the student cannot leave without passing a supervisor again. Without a supervisor in front, just about anyone can enter the school unnoticed, making the campus not much safer than a shopping center or any public place.

Even though some of these measures might sound extreme and could be costly, they are needed if the school is to remain safe. People cannot simply wait for the next Hillsdale to happen before they act. ♦

The Saratoga Falcon

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Summer break lost to AP assignments

by Robin Liu

Summer is a time for students to take a break from school. However, with the No Child Left Behind Act and, more specifically to Saratoga, intense AP curriculums, more schools are taking precautions to keep their students from falling out of line. More and more teachers are assigning homework over the summer to help students retain their knowledge over the long months, but it may not be the best way to benefit kids.

A year-round homework load defeats the purpose of breaks. During the summer, kids should be pursuing interests they couldn't fit into their schedule during the school year, spending more time with their families and traveling. By assigning homework over the break, teachers are going out of their bounds by dictating how students spend their vacation time. What students do over summer is none of their school's business.

Although some knowledge may inevitably wither over the summer, this cannot be prevented with book reports and math homework. Students are bound to forget some of what they learn every year, but they will review the information once school reconvenes. If teachers assign excessive homework over the summer, then by the time students head back to school,

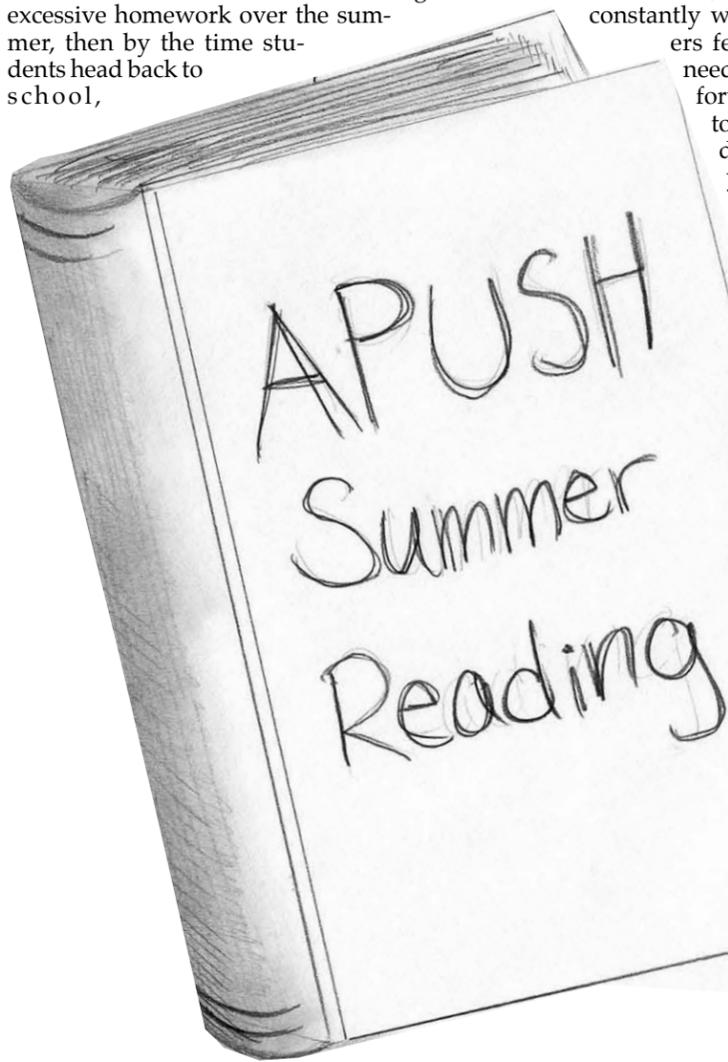
they will be nearly as worn out as they were before summer had even begun. Also, when students are forced to spend too much time studying, the homework becomes a burden rather than an opportunity to actually learn something, contradicting the original reason for the summer assignments.

One example of summer homework at Saratoga High is the assignment for incoming students of the AP US History class. The students are required to read the first five chapters of the textbook and answer corresponding essay questions. Rather than completing the "busy work" over the course of summer, most juniors procrastinate, leaving the assignment hanging over them all summer. The homework is an unnecessary burden, and students usually end up spending the last days of their summer rushing through it.

However, just because students aren't attending school, it doesn't mean they are twiddling their thumbs the whole summer, either. When given the freedom to explore their own interests and read what they want, kids have much more motivation to read than when they're handed summer reading lists.

Besides, with all the activities that kids do over the summer, their minds are constantly working. If teachers

feel that students need to keep moving forward, this needs to be accomplished during the school year. Summer vacation should be reserved for kids. How students spend their free time should not be part of regular school.



Now that the Democrats have had their fill of the limelight, it's time for the Republicans to step onto the stage. After all, there's a reason it's called the "Grand Old Party"

by Shannon Galvin

The Republican Party can be next 'Comeback Kid'

Dear Republican Party, It's been a hard year. McCain lost the presidency by a margin of 8 million votes and the Democratic majority continues to hold power in Congress. You've been outplayed, outdated and outclassed in the political arena.

So take a clue from Obama's campaign slogan—it's time for change.

As Obama's approval ratings continue to drop—now down to a drastically lower 50 percent—there isn't a better time than now for the GOP to focus its message and prepare for its comeback.

It's time for the party to rely on the public's disapproval of Obama's administration and be there to take the lead once again at the opportune time.

As many continue to doubt the Republican revival, it's important to realize that the GOP's resurrection will come from the failure and debacle of the Democratic Party as they struggle over the economy and debate over health care.

In fact, Republicans are in a prime position right now as the economy continues to suffer and angry citizens cause more and more ruckus at town hall meetings. The Republicans have the opportunity to sit back and place the criticism where the blame can clearly fall—on the Democratic majority.

When it turns out Obama doesn't walk on water after all, the GOP should be right there to jump back into the game and secure a political majority.

First of all, the party needs to re-vamp its image. It's time for the Republicans to distance themselves from unpopular figures such as

George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Sarah Palin and Newt Gingrich—all who represent the old, decrepit party, out-of-touch with present times. The GOP could benefit from its own conservative version of the young, charismatic Obama.

Someone like Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal, for example, could be the next big Republican face in Washington. Not only is Jindal the first Indian-American governor in history and the first non-white governor Louisiana has had since the Reconstruction; he's young, conservative and intelligent. Jindal not only has an impressive track record of decreasing government spending in Louisiana, but he also has pledged to fight corruption in

his home state's notoriously corrupt government.

The GOP also needs to find a way to extend its loyal voting base while at the same time not alienating

the one that it currently relies on. While the Republican Party has got a stronghold on the country's white evangelicals, it needs to find a way to welcome and attract minorities as the country grows less and less Caucasian. Since 2001, Republicans have lost votes in every demographic group—a trend they're going to have to turn around to ensure their future success. Latinos, for example, will soon be the largest minority in the United States. If the Republicans can become the next voice of Latinos, they will only be securing their success for future elections.

They also need to focus their attention on the next generation of voters—without them, the future of the party is in serious jeopardy.

Finally, the Republican Party needs to get back to its roots of conservatism. As the current administration pushes further and further with agendas on the other side of political spectrum, Republicans need to direct their platform in the opposite direction.

With increased emphasis on small government, low taxes, and a conservative outlook on social issues, the Republican Party can refocus its message and firmly distinguish itself and what they have traditionally stood for.

After struggling under the administration of George W. Bush, all the Republican party can do now is face forward and argue for on their right-wing views.

For the meantime, they need to focus their attacks on spending, government intervention and job losses.

Now that the Democrats have had their fill of the limelight, it's time for the Republicans to step onto the stage. After all, there's a reason it's called the "Grand Old Party." ♦

Nathan Kim

Patients should have the right to choose physician-assisted suicide

by Tiffany Tung

Since Montana became the third state to rule doctor-assisted suicide legal in the United States, the media has been all over the topic—is it ethical to legalize physician-assisted suicide (PAS)?

Physician-assisted suicide often occurs when a terminally ill patient requests the doctor to provide a lethal dose of a medication, which the patient later takes to commit suicide. Because the physician himself is indirectly involved with the suicide, this is not euthanasia and therefore cannot be considered a "mercy killing."

Since the option of physician-assisted suicide was offered in Washington six months ago, 11 have already taken advantage of the PAS option. In the court case that legalized PAS, *Compassion in Dying v. State of Washington*, Washington justified the option, arguing that individuals have the right to choose how and when they die.

Advocates of PAS argue that people have the right to end their lives with dignity. If someone has a terminal illness and is in a sound state of mind, that person should be able to choose whether or not he wants to prolong his suffering.

Dissenters, however, say that legaliz-

ing PAS would go against the standard morals of doctors; after all, the ancient Hippocratic Oath bids medics to "do no harm." Furthermore, they believe that terminally ill patients could be pressured into choosing this option by family members who are unable or unwilling to cover the hefty cost of hospital care.

The problem that lies with this argument is that there is no right or wrong answer. It's a matter of one's own opinion. If a patient requests to have a physician-assisted suicide, the doctor must share the same sentiments regarding PAS as the patient does.

Oftentimes, doctors suggest pallia-

tive care as an alternative, allowing the patient to live out the rest of his days painlessly.

Though the act of committing suicide is not accepted in society, but PAS should be an exception. If patients are suffering from a terminal illness and are also coherent, it's better for them to live their lives in peacefulness rather than in constant pain. Apparently the 11 who used PAS in Washington thought that it was the solution to their problems.

PAS should be legalized because the decision is one for the patient to make, not the state. The state can set restrictions, but the patient is the one who should decide how to end his or her life. ♦

Tainted tunes pose quandary for artists

by Denise Lin

These days, most teenagers can be spotted, earbuds attached, mouthing the lyrics to their favorite song—idolizing the singer, imitating the singer and, in some cases, becoming the singer to the surprise and fright of the surrounding passersby. Suddenly, her headphones emit an unintentional, high-pitched hiccup and cease to play, leaving our energetic teenager in mid-strum on her virtuoso air guitar performance.

Welcome to the world of illegal downloading.

Considering the sheer number of culprits, illegal downloading poses quite the pickle. This file-sharing lowers the quality of music but, more importantly, it jeopardizes nascent song artists' chances to make it in the industry.

France has already taken action by approving a "three strikes" law that allows officials to block offenders from the web if they continually download copyrighted material. However, this law is proving to be difficult to enforce.

According to *Turkish Weekly*, legal experts say the law will not hold up in court because it requires the government to cut off people's Internet access before they can defend themselves; freedom to use the Internet is considered a right. According to *Cnet News*, the European Parliament has shown its stance on this issue by passing a measure that forbids the European government from interfering with an individual's Internet access without a judicial order.

In this situation, it is difficult for the

government to regulate and limit file-sharing on the Internet without being accused of violating people's freedom to exchange information. The solution to this international dilemma is to draw the public toward buying music legally, rather than repeatedly punishing illegal file-sharers.

People who illegally obtain songs may be swayed toward purchasing legal songs if illegal music became sparse and legal music became cheaper.

The government can further alleviate the problem by unplugging illegal transactions at the source. To avoid potential complaints about privacy invasions and freedom restrictions, they

should switch their target from individuals to companies that are using copyrighted material illegally. It is basically impossible for the government

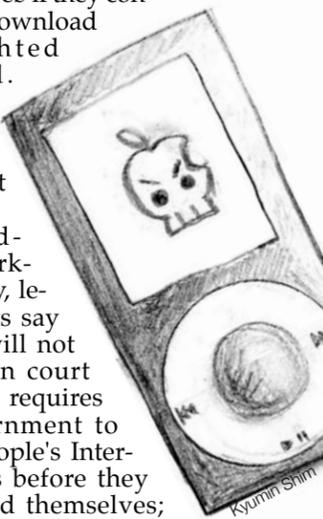
to catch all the people who illegally download material; many people are even dodging the bullet by using overseas sources.

This method has already been proven to be achievable through the case of Napster, which used to be a popular base for exchanging free music. It collapsed after being challenged in court and later became the legal site it is today.

That proved to be a victory for music artists, because Napster users now have to pay for their songs.

The crackdown on Napster was a step forward for the government as well, and if the government takes similar action on companies such as LimeWire, the amount of illegal downloading will begin to decrease.

In order to prevent illegal downloading, preteens should be educated on the topic, especially the effects it has on them and their society. It is time for the end of an era of tainted tunes. ♦



Kyumin Shim

Academic criticism of Wikipedia overblown

by Anoop Galivanche
and Jason Wu

It is one of the greatest academic ironies that one of the most popular sources of information today is also one of the most controversial. Wikipedia, an online encyclopedia that contains 13 million articles in 200 languages, has been criticized by scholars who believe that the website's open editing system makes it unreliable and inaccurate. Despite this, Wikipedia's popularity remains undiminished, as it is the seventh most visited website on the web.

The mechanism of public editing that many perceive to be a detriment to Wikipedia's authenticity is actually its greatest strength.

The core principle of Wikipedia's editing process is that a large number of well-intentioned, competent users will be able to offset the effects of a small number of ill-intentioned vandals. This concept has been largely successful—the average revert time for an inaccuracy is 12 hours. In contrast, an error in a textbook can take years to correct.

This isn't to say that the public editing element of Wikipedia cannot be exploited, but that it gives Wikipedia a great advantage in ensuring the highest level of accuracy in all its articles. In addition, prudent judgment and fact validation are imperative in accepting statements put forth in it as truths.

The unique role that Wikipedia plays in student research has long been misunderstood by teachers and scholars. In the

beginning stages of research, students are aware that they need to consult a variety of sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of a new topic. For this purpose, a specialized source such as the greatly advocated Gale database is essentially useless because it requires the student to have background knowledge in a subject for it to be used effectively. Wikipedia provides this beginning knowledge and allows students to then use other, more specific sources.

In an e-mail circulated to teachers by librarian Kevin Heyman, the utility of Wikipedia is clarified by UCSB English professor Alan Liu. Dr. Liu explains that Wikipedia,

as with any other encyclopedia, should not be used as a student's only source.

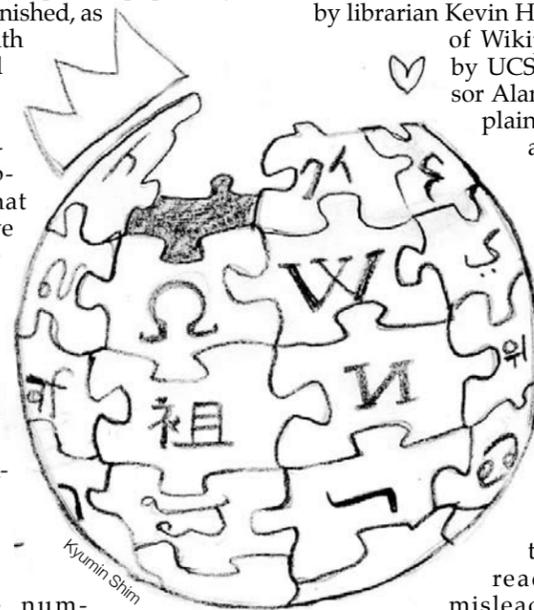
The majority of what he says is true, but the antiquated bibliography of Wikipedia scandals that he suggests

reading is largely misleading. Like most community-oriented presences

on the Internet, Wikipedia is constantly evolving. Measures, such as the recent reform requiring an editor to sign off on all edits regarding living people are constantly being put in place to improve the reliability of articles. As such, many of the incidents Dr. Liu describes are no longer applicable to the current incarnation of Wikipedia.

Teachers should begin to accept that Wikipedia has evolved into a valuable, reliable resource for students and incorporate it accordingly as part of the taught research process. Wikipedia has earned its spot as an informative site. ♦

Wikipedia was used to substantiate the claims made in this article.



Kyumin Shim

Some classes make sense to be taught online

by Arnav Dugar

Can you imagine life without cell-phones or the Internet? With the turn of the 21st century, new means of communication have revolutionized the way we interact with each other, from employees web-conferencing across the globe to the complex social networks developed over applications like Facebook.

Just like these tools have completely transformed our ability to communicate, online classes have the potential to harness the same technology and transform education.

Today our generation is privileged to not only have access to the best information available at the touch of a button but also be able to discuss it with anyone, anywhere, instantaneously. Although the value of the traditional education system in a classroom environment is irreplaceable in a few ways, online classes bring a totally new and invaluable dimension to education.

Exactly how you want it

Imagine sophomore Joe Schmoie who has a burning passion for writing short stories. With sports and the homework from his classes looming in the back of his mind, it is impossible for him to have the time to write.

With an online writing course, Schmoie

would be able to replace his English 10 class with a writing-specific one, dedicate a part of his day to his passion and incorporate that into his homework.

Community college classes offer an inadequate solution to specific courses. These classes are much harder than normal high school classes and are in an adult environment with irregular schedules. Anyway, Schmoie is not even eligible since these classes are offered to only upperclassmen and they are not replacements for core classes.

So convenient

On the other hand, Schmoie is struggling to wrap his mind around his Algebra II homework. He enjoyed geometry because he could visualize what he was doing but needs an algebra class where he can learn graphically.

Tools, such as discussion forums and chat rooms,

provide a unique environment fostering multitudes of diverse ideas and thinking styles from people around the country. If Schmoie has a question at 11 p.m., he does not have to wait until the next day to ask the teacher, but can post it online to have it answered by other students. Also he could see if someone else asked the same question or

check the class's transcript in case he missed what the teacher said. In addition, he can review the teacher's lecture that is posted online, allowing him to spend more time on a concept he finds more difficult.

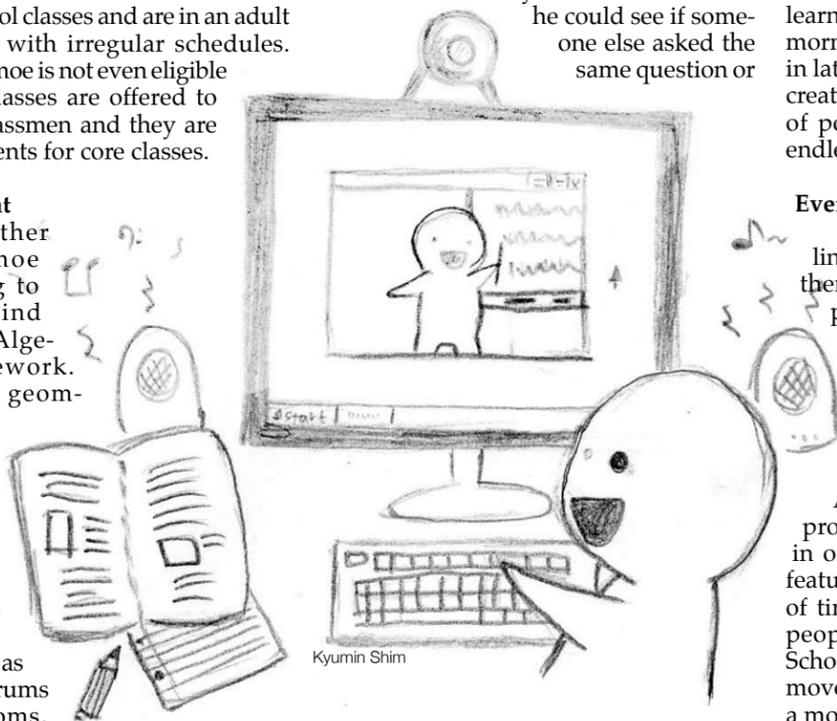
Online classes also allow a flexible learning atmosphere. As Schmoie is not a morning person, he would prefer to sleep in late and work in the evening when his creativity is strongest. The permutations of possibilities with online classes are endless.

Everything is already there

The technology to host effective online classes, as well as the online classes themselves, exists, and it has already proven itself as a successful means of online communication.

Virginia has already begun an online program integrated with their high schools. A few counties in California just started offering online classes this year.

As developments in technology progress, education needs to keep up in order to take advantage of the new features available, from the convenience of time and location to the diversity of people involved and ideas suggested. Schools just have to take the initiative to move from a 2,300-year-old approach to a more modern one. ♦



Kyumin Shim

Gunn suicides cause worry

by Christine Bancroft

“There was no way out.” Since May 5, three students have killed themselves on Cal-train tracks. They all were from Henry M. Gunn High School. They stepped in front of an oncoming train in a public place.

The first was a 17-year-old male who committed suicide on the tracks on May 5. In June, another student was killed the same way. On Aug. 21, the Friday before Gunn’s school year commenced, a 13-year-old girl took her own life after leaving a suicide note.

Most of us can’t comprehend suicide. But according to sophomore Akash Kar, who founded and directs the student-run nonprofit organization called Crisis Education and Support (CrisisES), there can be a number of reasons.

“It is not caused by one major trigger, but many events bottled up. The snowball effect. And one thing will eventually blow it over the top and cause the suicide,” Kar said.

The CrisisES website states that the best way to prevent suicide is education. Unfortunately, there never seems to be any suicide prevention education until after something has already happened. Grief counselors and psychiatrists don’t appear on campuses until something terrible has happened.

According to the American Association of Suicidology, 1 in 7 people reported suicidal thoughts or behavior in 2008. It is the third leading cause of preventable death in people aged

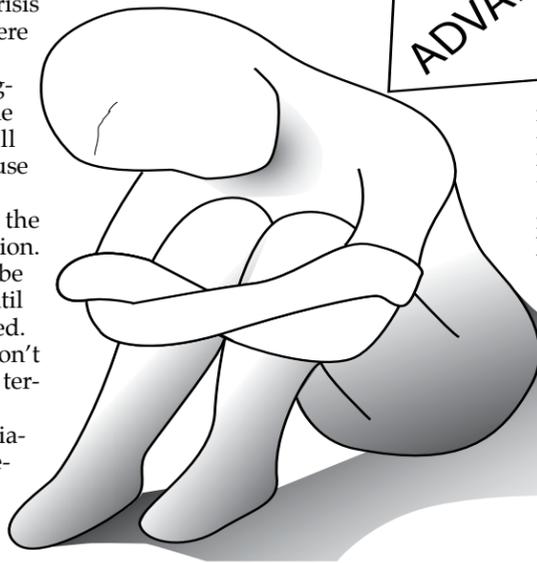
15 to 24.

A person who is contemplating suicide is considered to be in a crisis situation. A crisis, as defined by the state of California, is “a situation where a person is an immediate danger to themselves or others.” But in an immediate crisis situation, many people do not know what to do or where to go.

“At that point,” Kar said, “A person has to call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. You can’t call the lifeline or talk to a therapist.”

Counselors, parents, doctors and mental health specialists can alleviate pressures before they reach a breaking point.

emergency room. You can’t call the lifeline or talk to a therapist.”



An emergency situation, however, can almost always be averted by people and associations whose jobs are simply “to help.” Counselors, parents, doctors and

ACT AND SAT
ENDED RELATIONSHIPS
ADVANCED PLACEMENT CLASSES
SPORTS COMPETITION APPS
COLLEGE APPS

Brandon Yang and Nathan Kim

fellow classmates. Schools need to do something to create an effective suicide education program. Suicide has a certain stigma attached to it that makes some afraid to seek help because they are ashamed or scared. Counselors or doctors are viewed as authority figures, and the idea of speaking to a stranger about such personal and potentially embarrassing topics is intimidating. Students feel trapped and alone and don’t see anyone to talk to because they don’t know their options. With proper counseling, lives could be saved. Schools can’t wait until after tragedy strikes to take action.

mental health specialists can alleviate pressures before they reach a breaking point.

Before it gets to be a crisis, there are many people and associations who can help.

Saratoga High School is, in many ways, comparable to Gunn High.

The schools are both academically competitive and are comprised by students by similar socioeconomic backgrounds.

Students at Gunn are the same age, they have the same worries. Every day, they are reminded of the loss of their

options. With proper counseling, lives could be saved. Schools can’t wait until after tragedy strikes to take action.

Suicide education should not be directed to students alone. Parents have to know that suicide is a serious part of reality. It is imperative for parents to understand how to speak to their students or how to deal with crises.

An annual mandatory suicide prevention session should be held in order to educate the students, so they can understand the risks and statistics.

The free and anonymous number for the Suicide Prevention Hotline is 1-800-273-TALK. Students should know that there is always a way out. Sometimes it’s just hard to find it. ♦

Health-care reform demands immediate attention

OBAMA’S PLAN RECEIVES NO APPLAUSE FROM TAXPAYERS BUT PROMISES LONG-TERM SUCCESS

by Vijay Menon
and Abhi Venkataramana

The recent controversy surrounding President Obama’s proposed health care reform bill has set off a right-wing propaganda mill, generating numerous lies and misconceptions and effectively inundating the public with a flood of misinformation. This fallacy-perpetuating conservative machine has only served to muddle the issue at hand, preventing any real and substantial debate from being held over this much needed reform. Conservative pundits have done everything in their power to try and taint the bill, with several going so far as to deem the proposal “socialist.” However, upon closely examining the proposed health care bill, it is clear that a reform in this direction will be beneficial for the American public.

Propaganda clouds real truth

The most common misconception is that government will completely take over health care and bureaucracy will run rampant. Recent polls indicate that 54 percent of Americans believe that government will be the sole provider of health care if the reform passes, a stunning reality when taking into consideration Obama’s countless speeches and town hall meetings regarding the subject.

However, Obama’s plan would simply create a “public option” for health care, in which people could choose between government provided insurance or private insurance. This option is already available in every developed country in the world with the sole exception of the United States. Obama has made clear numerous times that those who have health insurance that they would like to keep, which applies

to most Saratoga residents, will not be forced to switch insurers. This “public option” is targeted specifically at the segment of the American public that is currently uninsured. Therefore, the reform only really applies those who desperately need health insurance.

Quality of care remains high

Another erroneous misconception about this proposal is that the overall quality of health care is going to decline significantly because of the reform. If anything, increased competition between public and private insurance companies will force all providers to increase their quality and provide a better overall product in order to retain their customer base, thus improving the quality of health insurance. To be fair, those opting for government health insurance may not get the same premium quality as those who already have private insurance. But it is important to remember that the vast majority of people who will take advantage of the public option are those who already have bare-bones minimal health insurance or those who are already completely uninsured due to pre-existing conditions or financial reasons. For this target group, the quality of insurance will be a huge improvement.

Here, however, arises the legitimate concern of many wealthy citizens—that they will be paying hard-earned tax dollars for a service that they will probably never use. This is a fair complaint, but it

will be more than compensated for by the universally positive effects that will inevitably result from such reform.

Economists support reform

Many economists such as Nobel Prize winner Paul Krugman believe that in the long run, the plan will save more money than it costs because the plan focuses on preventive care as opposed to post-symptom treatment. Preventive care and health education for the millions of Americans who currently receive no health care will save billions of dollars in the years to come by substantially lowering emergency room visits and decreasing the medical treatments that could have been avoided, two prominent factors behind the current health care crisis. Further benefits include higher productivity and lower crime and poverty rates due to a healthier society. In essence, the taxpayer that does not use the public option is instead paying for an overall more productive, wealthier and healthier society.

Real system functions properly

If and when it all comes to fruition, America’s reformed health care system will be more like the current Swiss system than the socialist dystopia that many Republicans want the American public to envision. It will be a system largely relying on private insurance companies using an amalgam of rules and subsidies to ensure that everyone

Preventive care for the millions of Americans who currently receive no health care will save billions of dollars in the years to come by substantially lowering emergency room visits and decreasing the medical treatments that could have been avoided.

THE BIG IDEA

Health Care

PETITION: Health care reform that would replace the current system that leaves 1 in 5 Americans uninsured

PROPOSED CHANGES: Universal health coverage, lower costs, public insurance option

WHAT’S NEXT: Congress will continue to debate over the reform until it reaches a vote

is covered. In a country where approximately 50 million people are uninsured, that is the most important step.

Instead of railing against Obama’s proposed health care bill, Republicans should step across the aisle to lend bipartisan support to this worthy initiative. America remains the only industrialized nation that does not guarantee the essential service of health care to all of its citizens. In the short term, the bill would help uninsured Americans deal with their health issues and provide security for them and their families by providing access to health care. In the long run, preventive care and the social ramifications of this reform will more than make up for any potential drawbacks. The time is ripe for President Obama to deliver on the change that he promised. He will need the full support of the public in order to promise health-care benefits, which starts by separating fact from fiction. ♦

Investigation of CIA hurts bipartisan relationships

by Mira Chaykin
and Ben Clement

With bipartisan tensions at the forefront of political news, the Democrats, in quintessential political fashion, have decided to throw more fuel on the fire by initiating an investigation of CIA interrogation techniques under the Bush administration.

Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. began the review following a recommendation from the Justice Department's ethics office. Holder, backed by the Obama administration, is undercutting bipartisan relationships by investigating CIA actions before a consensus of what entails illegality is attained. Under Sen. Diane Feinstein, the Intelligence Committee recently neared the completion of a study of torture techniques. The Obama administration is choosing to continue the CIA investigation before an agreement is forged over what constitutes torture, encouraging suspicion of political motivation.

Obama's policies have already faced scrutiny from conservatives since he took office earlier this year and with health care and other controversial topics dominating the Democratic agenda, the Democrats cannot afford to lose any support they may have generated from within the Republican Party. This recent move by the Justice Department is politically counter-productive and will only create more bad blood between the parties.

Even if there was a consensus on what would be considered torture, the Obama administration would have to prosecute

on a much wider scale rather than just punishing the men who actually did the dirty work. If the people who initiated these morally repugnant interrogations are to be disciplined, the government should also be obligated to prosecute every individual involved in the illegalities, which includes several powerful members of the Bush administration.

Former vice president Dick Cheney recently defended the actions of CIA officers, maintaining that the exposed methods of interrogation are "legal and crucial" parts of the war on terror. This ideology undoubtedly affected the choices made by CIA interrogators because it implied they had permission to and would not be held accountable. These senior members of the Bush administration, though partially responsible, will not be punished unless the Obama administration is willing to damage its relationship with the GOP.

Despite the detrimental repercussions of the government's actions, the administration is now under obligation to follow through with the prosecutions. Actions performed by the U.S. military and intelligence centers under the Bush administration have already harmed America's global reputation. With anti-American sentiments already prominent on the world stage, the Obama administration would only worsen America's image abroad by beginning a risky investigation and then deciding to stop. The American people can only hope that the administration uses this misstep as a lesson to prioritize partisan relationships in the future. ♦

The Democrats cannot afford to lose any support they may have generated from within the Republican Party.

UCs free from SAT II

REMOVAL OF THE REQUIREMENT HELPS POORER STUDENTS, WON'T HURT THOSE STILL TAKING IT

by Brandon Yang

It's 8 a.m. on the first Saturday in June and the Prospect High School parking lot is nearly empty. A small crowd gathers in front of the office, waiting for a staff member to appear. This is not a scarcely-attended school-sponsored event but a futuristic depiction of the SAT Subject Test administration.

Normally, on these fateful dates designated by College Board, the hallways are crowded as students rush to their assigned classrooms. However, in two years, significantly fewer students will gather at the test-issuing schools as the UCs have decided to remove SAT subject test requirements for the graduating class of 2012 and after. Such a decision should be applauded; the UC administration is giving both rich and poor students a better chance to prove their eligibility outside of standardized tests whose results can easily be skewed by privileged students capable of affording coaching.

In addition to being a nerve-wracking test, the SAT II seems to require not only a serious time investment but also a significant money investment. Every year, students pay \$20 to take a subject test and add \$9 for each additional subject test, while the SAT reasoning test is \$45. Two separate SAT subject tests plus a SAT reasoning test and a calculator add up to around \$100. To the students who can even afford expensive preparatory classes, such an amount may be negligible, but many families

are not able to pay for such expenses. By removing such restrictions, the UCs are giving deserving teenagers the opportunity to acquire better education.

The SAT subject tests are not an accurate way to measure what people have learned; the tests are simply too easy to coach. By taking preparatory classes or analyzing practice workbooks, students learn different tricks and rules that do not concern the knowledge tested, but give an unfair advantage to those able to afford SAT classes. Without a

deep education in the subject, students earn high scores not by studying the material, but studying specific information that appear on the tests every year. Instead of focusing on such an inaccurate measurement of a student's abilities, the UCs now focus on achievements in extracurricular activities and school, which are significantly more important.

Despite the benefits provided by this change, some people complain that eliminating the requirement will only give lazy students a better chance of entering the college while those who took the time to study for these tests have their chances decreased. Although people who dislike standardized tests will receive benefits from the decision, students who wish to excel can still use the SAT subject tests to prove their abilities, as the UCs will still accept the scores. Through this change in the application system, both the poor, hard working student and the wealthy, determined student will be able to further their abilities to excel. ♦

The UCs are giving deserving teenagers the opportunity to acquire better education.

APs won't necessarily lead to college hAPpiness

It's that time of year, again. Time for seniors to apply to colleges, write persuasive essays and wait with bated breath as they second guess themselves about whether they pursued the right classes and activities in high school. Watching them from the stands are younger students, who face the dilemma between whether they should bulk up on an AP class-heavy curriculum or instead, pursue their burgeoning interests in drama, art, sports—activities leaning away from academic importance.

In fact, students in the U.S. possess greater flexibility in their abilities to choose and change their majors than in many other countries. They can wait until junior year of college to select a major, when their interests are more developed. Granted, this makes American students more well rounded, but at what cost? Students will too often suffer from a lack of specialized knowledge, and have to spend extra years in graduate school to catch up to international competitors.

The danger with the U.S. system is that students see college as a place to figure out what they want to do themselves, and high school merely as an obstacle in to be surmounted in the path to success. While students everywhere else in the world must introspect in high school to select their future profession, American students delay the soul-searching. As a result, there is little incentive to find and follow a passion, as trying to conform to the mold of an ideal college candidate takes precedence.

So, apart from AP and Honors classes, what distinguishes the average Saratoga High student from the millions of kids around the world? The list is surprisingly short. Apart from the occasional math prodigy or swimming star, Saratoga High students tend to become so buried underneath the debris of AP classes that they forget to pursue the quirks and interests that make them unique.

The past year was tough on seniors. While SHS students usually have the luxury of a wide range of possible, top-tier colleges to choose from, many were disappointed by the rejections they found in their mailbox from schools they expected to easily qualify for. Although many factors are to blame for such exclusion, the culprit may be the absence of creativity in the seniors' resumes.

While 11 AP's over the course of four years may be impressive feat, such a feat is no longer in fashion. AP tests have been beaten, bruised and battered from overuse. There will always be the student with the perfect SAT score and transcript, and competing with them is simply senseless. If your path to individualistic success doesn't lay in academics, strive to find something that will give you success and momentum to stand out. Compete with your strengths, not with a disadvantage against the strengths of others.

This is not to discourage students from taking AP classes; rather, it is to refocus a student's efforts on pursuits that can lift them above the crowd of applicants waiting at the gates of Ivy League col-

leges. Taking the test and earning a five in AP Physics is no longer a novelty to admissions officers, who spend the better part of their days reading thousands of application essays from equally qualified applicants.

What students need is motivation—motivation to not only follow their dreams, but also to take it above and beyond academic excellence. And if this means cutting down on one or two AP classes, so be it—shed a few tears if necessary and then get started on doing what really counts.

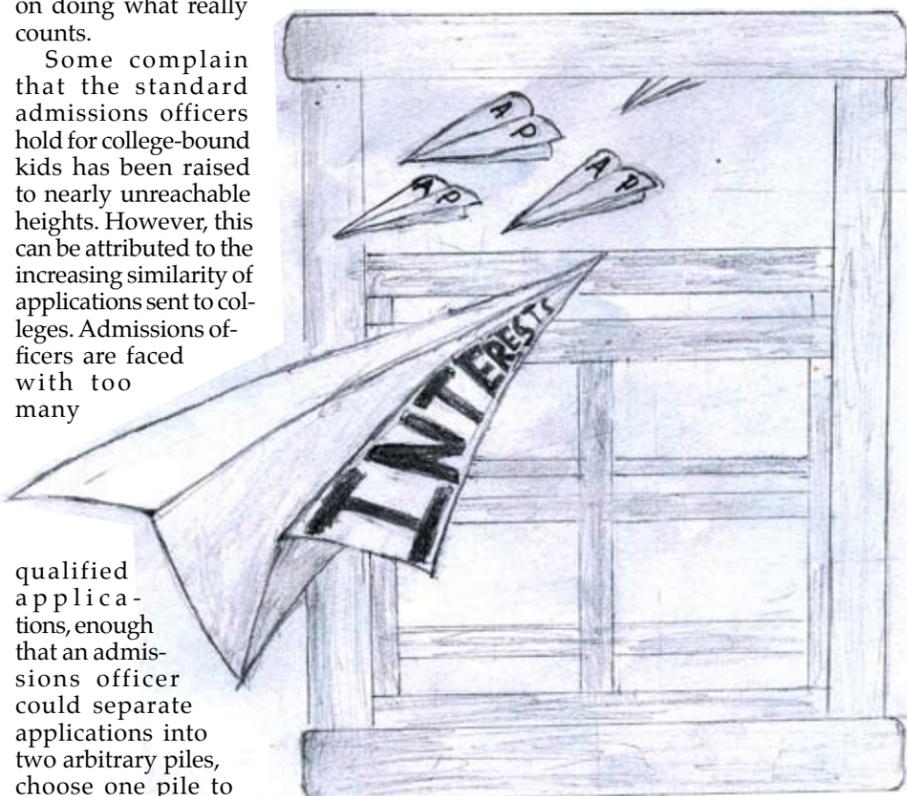
Some complain that the standard admissions officers hold for college-bound kids has been raised to nearly unreachable heights. However, this can be attributed to the increasing similarity of applications sent to colleges. Admissions officers are faced with too many

qualified applications, enough that an admissions officer could separate applications into two arbitrary piles, choose one pile to accept and still not

miss any qualified applicants. Everyone is absurdly overqualified and everyone is applying everywhere.

What applicants need to consider is not their immediate future in college, but their lives in the long run. There is a Chinese proverb that says a diamond with a flaw is worth more than a pebble without imperfections. It is better to be outstanding in an area that genuinely interests you than be run-of-the-mill in everything—even when run-of-the-mill is anything but. ♦

STAFF EDITORIAL
Opinion of *The Falcon*
editorial board



Cullen McChesney

Can you...?

... GO TO THE CHECKOUT COUNTER AND PURCHASE ONLY ONE SHOE?

by Tiffany Tung

There are some questions that people have pondered the answer to but have never bothered to figure out for themselves. Likewise, when fellow staff member Robin Liu asked me if it was possible to purchase a single shoe, I thought that it wouldn't hurt to find out. But before that, I would need an excuse. Why exactly do I need to buy one shoe? I thought of a few ideas, but alas, they seemed a bit faulty.

"Actually, I left my other shoe on the airplane. It's quite a pity. I don't want to buy a new pair."

"Yes, my left foot is significantly larger than my right. It's a birth defect—I know that the shoes that I'm wearing

now look they're the same size—no, I'm not lying."

"The paparazzi were chasing me, and I threw one of my shoes at them. Yes, in retrospect, that may have not been the best idea."

But in the end, I decided to go with the standard, don't ask, don't tell approach.

As I picked up a pair of Nike running shoes, I scanned the area, looking for an employee and spied a greasy looking high school kid.

"Hi, I was wondering if I can get this shoe?" I asked.

"Ah, yeah. Is the fit and everything okay?" replied the employee, who asked me not to disclose the name of the store or his name.

"Yeah, so can I get it?" This seemed easier than I had initially thought.

"Let's go to the cash register and I'll ring you up." He paused, looking at the shoe I had in my hand. "Um. Do you have the box for this, or something?"

"Actually I was wondering if I can just get the individual shoe."

"Wait. The individual shoe?" he replied looking slightly shocked.

"Yes, the individual shoe." I answered looking slightly exasperated.

"I don't know if I can sell you only one shoe," he said. He looked at me as if I was joking, and I stared back at him in all seriousness.

"Maybe you can give me a shoe for half price. It should be fine, right?"

But alas, he was a new employee,

and obviously wasn't experienced with handling difficult customers. He needed to ask the manager. The manager came over, and I explained my situation.

The manager explained that although they can't let me purchase only one shoe, there are websites online that cater to those that actually have different sized feet.

So in the end, the answer was obvious. "Of course you can't buy only one shoe." But you never know until you try. ♦



Tiffany Tung

... GO TO MCDONALD'S AND ORDER A 'SMALL MAC'?

by Izzy Albert
and Emily Williams

McDonald's prides itself on pleasing its customers. Putting all stereotypes about fast food aside, we wanted to see how far they would go to leave us satisfied.

On Sept. 8, we went to a McDonald's on

Prospect Avenue to see if we could order a burger without any meat or bun, what we referred to as a "Small Mac." While we waited in line, we noticed a sign next to the menu stating that a braille menu would be provided if needed. Curious, we started our order by asking for a copy of the braille menu. Obviously, the woman thought we didn't require one and politely

ignored our request, but our questions continued.

"Can we get a Small Mac?" we asked.

"A Small Mac?" the woman seemed confused.

"You know, like a Big Mac, but without the bun or the patty."

The woman finally began to comprehend our order and assured us it would be no problem. We threw her off again when we asked for the cheese melted

on the lettuce. She told us we couldn't because the lettuce was fresh.

We received our order in a large white bag about two minutes later, but instead of our "Small Mac," we got three pieces of bread, "special" sauce, previously frozen lettuce and two slices of pickles, all slapped together in a greasy box.

All we wanted was a Small Mac, but sadly, McDonald's wasn't able to satisfy our needs. Even so, we had a good laugh. ♦

I'm an Irish dancer

TRUE LIFE

Sophomore takes ground to new Irish roots



courtesy of Stephanie Shimizu

Sophomore Stephanie Shimizu, third from the left, poses with her fellow dancers before a performance. Shimizu began dancing when her best friend invited her to join.

by Vivan LeTran
and Maggie Lin

"Oh, so it's like riverdance!" is often the reaction sophomore Stephanie Shimizu receives when she says she Irish dances. From a range of comments, many ask if she is part Irish. In truth, Shimizu, of Chinese-Japanese descent, has no Irish blood in her—uncommon among her dance peers.

"I started [Irish] dancing when I was in third grade because my best friend [who is also Asian] had been Irish dancing for a couple of years and told me I should try it," said Shimizu.

Since then, Shimizu has been dancing for seven years with the same group of people, so any assumed awkwardness among the other dancers has long been overcome. She started out taking beginner classes in a school cafeteria, and after learning the basics, she switched to her current dance studio in San Jose.

"I love being able to hang out with my friends and learning the new steps is a lot of fun," said Shimizu. "I love working on teams with my friends and being able to compete and travel with them."

Not only has she fit in seamlessly, she competes in two to three local competitions and two national or regional competitions annually.

"They have competitions all over the place, but I usually just stay in local areas for small competitions. One of the major competitions is held in Ireland every year, and two other major competitions change locations," said Shimizu.

Irish dancing also has different

categories and rules for competitions.

"I dance both in solos and in teams. There are many combinations of teams, but I usually only compete in the eight and 16 person teams," said Shimizu. "Since we compete, we have different rules that we have to follow, compared to Lord of the Dance or riverdancing. For example, we're not supposed to move our upper body at all and our arms have to stay by our sides while we're competing in solos."

Along with competition, Shimizu and her dance school participate in a fundraiser show each year.

Shimizu said, "Each year we have a theme and create dances and skits that incorporate other types of dancing along with Irish dancing. The last fundraiser we had was based on the theme 'Jigging Through Disney' and we had skits from the major Disney movies, acted out different rides and got to dress up like Disney characters!"

From her love of dance, Shimizu has gained many great memories, one of which occurred in Colorado.

"In November of 2004, a couple of teams from my school traveled to Denver for the Western Regional Oireachtes. One day it started snowing, so we organized a huge snowball fight with around 15 people, and we had dancers from other schools join us," said Shimizu. "It was a blast since we were able to relax from the stress of competing and hang out with our friends from other dancing schools."

Shimizu is living proof that though she isn't Irish, she can jig with the best of them. ♦



http://blog.saratogafalcon.com

@toga update: who

SEPTEMBER 25, 2009

4:17 PM

SEPTEMBER 25, 2009

abe's got chops

i'm o

teacher website

Since the day the first website was officially put online, people all over the world have used the Internet to reach out into cyberspace.

While that very first site taught readers about the World Wide Web and its different purposes, government and world history teacher Kirk Abe took the opportunity to showcase his hobby of drumming.

For the past eight years, Abe has held down a personal website for his hobby. The website was "primitive" as it just had basic features like a calendar of when he played gigs and links to recordings that he played on, but encapsulated his love of drumming, which he still performs at places like Blue Rock Shoot.

The website was also used as a reference for others with recordings to listen to and see if they wanted him to play for a gig.

"If they didn't know my style or my

ability, I may have referred them back to a recording on the website. So if I wanted other people to hear me or if they wanted me to play with them, they had a place to go to," said Abe.

Even the website domain, www.ineedchops.com, was fit for his hobby. As a technical term, "chops" refers to a muscle in the arm used while drumming. But in drumming terminology, "it means your skills that you have, how fast you can play and whether you are good at rudiments," said Abe. "I'm always practicing, trying to get better, hence 'I need chops.'"

However, for the sake of his students and ease of access, Abe has converted the drumming website into his homework

and assignments website with class schedules and research links, still keeping the former domain name.

With the recent changes to the school server, using his own personal website is much more convenient in terms of trying to keep up with classes, he said, because updates are easily maintained and accessed.

"The school website, even though it has some good things, I really couldn't do certain things [like before the change]," said Abe. "I decided to use my own website so that I could have a little bit more freedom in terms of what I used to be able to do [on the old school server]," even if that meant taking down the drumming content. ♦

— Alicia Lee



ABE

Teacher Kirk Abe replaced his drumming website with a new homework and class schedule website.

videochat

Skype Conversation Call View Tools Help

kiss me thru the skype

Sophomore Shivani Chadha is one of the many who uses a webcam to connect with friends over the Internet in lieu of instant messaging. While instant messaging is restricted to conversations that must be entirely typed out, webcams allow a more interactive form of communication.

"It is so much easier to multi-task because you can do homework with your friends without having to type [every thought] out," said Chadha.

Chadha said it was helpful when studying for a test, being able to talk to more than one person to work out problems just like when talking face-to-face in the comfort of one's home.

As talking through a webcam becomes accessible and useful, either for long distance relationships or conference calls, major businesses like Skype have taken notice and amped up their software's capabilities.

Video chatting has helped Skype become a popular and viable option for people looking for a messaging service that offers free voice and video calling.

More and more people are choosing Skype as their first choice for communication.

Sophomore Isabelle Albert's dad, Don Albert, the vice president and general manager of the Americas at Skype, said the popularity of the service has increased rapidly in the past year.

"Skype has been one of the fastest adopted technologies in history, with over 480 million registered users worldwide," said Albert. "We added 38 million users in the second quarter of this year alone, or more than 420,000 a day."

The increased use of Skype has been aided by its easy-to-use voice and video calling system, a free service that is provided by Skype and is hard to find elsewhere.

According to Albert, Skype has benefited from the broad availability of webcams and broadband Internet connections.

Because people love the ability not just to make calls for a fraction of what they would pay normally, but also to make free, high-quality voice and video calls to anyone else on Skype.

Today, video calls through webcams make up 34 percent of the overall Skype-to-Skype calls. Most calls are free of charge.

"What has been amazing about our growth is that it has been driven almost entirely by word-of-mouth, by friends, family and businesses encouraging each other to join," said Albert.

As for the future, Albert said Skype is also committed to innovating in other ways, such as enabling people to use Skype on mobile devices like the iPhone or in their businesses. ♦

— Saniha Shankar



CHADHA

Skype allows sophomore Shivani Chadha to discuss homework with friends.



br

Twitter is often than in the Tw

about 1 ho

Let's face it almost daily

about 2 ho

I microblog

about 3 ho

blogging to

Just last we Obama reg

SEPTEMBER

let's k

Not long ago, people in their diaries, photos and leaving every page, unwilling to eyes on the secrets they

Now, in a more to advanced society, people are eager to share their ideas or interests with just about anyone willing to listen, or rather, read.

In particular, blogging on the Internet has transformed the way people communicate as well as learn.

By simply signing up websites, students are able creative expression.

For senior Lauren Ho ging on Tumblr is an imagination.

"In the past, I've had a where I uploaded lyrics

n.com



are you following?

25, 2009

7:43 PM

now following >>

on twitter!

briankimtweets

Facebook on Atkins, or that's the way I like to think of it. More than not, I come across people who think it's shocking that I tweet in the Twitterverse.

four hours ago from twitterfon

Everybody who's anybody owns a Facebook. The majority post status updates. If you fall in that majority, then congrats, you're a blogger!

four hours ago from Tweetie

or "tweet" in 140 characters or less. Essentially the lazy man's blog, it reduces

four hours ago from TwitterBerry

the simplest blurbs that are more useful than many think.

ek, an ABC News reporter tweeted a ground-breaking statement by President Obama regarding a certain rapper with shutter shades and a love for fish sticks.

microblogging

>> www.ineedchops.com

"I think it's helpful i do'n't necessarily like to download everything off the internet it kinda wastes my paper. i think it's helpful because all the papres are there and i lose stuff a lot, so if i need it ii can just go online and get it."
- senior Hannah Brown

tumblr <<

"There's always something that strikes me as cool or interesting. Sometimes there's something that describes the day perfectly, so that's how I choose my pictures"
- senior Lauren Henderson

blogging

25, 2009

3:16 PM

be buddies

ple were writing spilling confes- g their hearts on o let anyone lay wrote. echnologically

ten," said Henderson. "For my current one, I upload a photo almost every day and I think it's a fun way of free expression and it's a good relief."

Henderson's most recent blog draws inspiration from her surroundings.

"With the photo blog, there's always something that strikes me as cool or interesting," said Henderson. "Sometimes there's something that describes the day perfectly, so that's how I choose my pictures."

Bloggging also provides students with a chance to showcase their hobbies and publicize their work.

Sophomore Stephanie Poo uses her blogs to "post the jewelry I make to show my friends who also have blogs. It's really fun to see what each other is doing."

Not only is blogging a way of expres-

sion, but it is also becoming a way of learning for students.

Recently, Chinese teacher Mariam Fan required her students to create their own blogs as a way for them to directly upload homework, such as media files, onto the Internet instead of having to send files through e-mail.

"It's not that easy to get all of the students' sound files by e-mail," Fan said. "I think [the blog system] provides us a good way to store the files."

When Fan first introduced the new project, her students were mostly reluctant.

"At first I thought it would be troublesome, but now it's kind of interesting to make the website," said junior Gavin Chu. "Also, it's more convenient to have the blogs because it's just posting [files] up." This makes submitting homework much easier for the student as well as for the teacher to check.

Whether it's to do an assignment for school or to share personal opinions, blogging provides a useful tool for any type of situation. ♦

— Rebecca Nguyen and Kim Tsai



HENDERSON

Senior Lauren Henderson uses her tumblr to express her passion for photography.

up for blogging ble to begin their

enderson, blog- outlet for her

a couple of blogs s that I've writ-

>> [twitter](https://twitter.com)

Microblogging is essentially a lazy man's blog. It takes the decadent amount of text and reduces it to the smallest blurbs that are more useful than many would think

- briankimtweets

skype <<

"I use Skype to talk to my pregnant aunt who lives in Canada. I don't get to see her often, but she talks to me through Skype. We get to see how she's doing and how fat she's gotten through the webcamming feature."



Sibling

Competition plays a huge role in the school's high-pressured environment. How do students fare when they have a sibling on campus?

Twins' drama takes center stage

by Girish Swaminath

When seniors Chris and Maddy Renalds were arguing during summer camp a few years ago, matters escalated when Chris accidentally elbowed Maddy in the mouth. Maddy's tooth chipped—it wasn't a pretty sight. Such incidents, though to a lesser extent, are common phenomena in Chris and Maddy's competitive relationship.

Despite this incident, the Renalds have been able to keep most of their competitions friendly. The fraternal twins have been rivals since birth, but they have become more aware of their similar interests when they both joined drama in high school. They knew that things weren't going to be easy—they would have to deal with their "sibling contests" and compete for lead roles and peer attention.

"As twins, we struggled for the same set of things that any other siblings might fight over—attention from parents, friends and instructors," said Maddy.

The quarrelsome pair also like to criticize each other on the stage.

"[Chris and I] always seek to overpower each other and sometimes even criticize each other," said Maddy. "We openly describe each other's technical acting flaws, and it would often lead to arguments."

Such spats occasionally even forced directors and teachers to intervene.

"Sometimes, our differences of opinion went to the extremes, and our instructors had to separate us from each other," Maddy said. "But then, we would recon-

cile and get back on good terms again. In a way, it's sort of a cycle."

Despite the squabbles, Maddy and Chris are extremely supportive and acknowledge each other's natural talents.

"Chris is more experienced, talented and passionate about the theater arts than I am," said Maddy. "For me, it's only my hobby, but he aspires to pursue [drama] as a career. We both value each other's aspirations and perspectives."

Chris also feels that his competition with Maddy is not as intense as others hype it up to be.

"Although Maddy and I are both competitive in the drama arena, we do not compete with each other as much [as some would think]," said Chris.

The Renalds' twins, however, consider their competition to be healthy and beneficial for their personal development.

"I think that it's only fair that competition exists between us, because we are siblings and peers," said Maddy. "[This rivalry] only ameliorates our performances and motivates us to work harder in order to overpower one another."

Despite an innate sense of competition, Chris and Maddy have learned to encourage each other as friends above all else. When Maddy was named Saratoga Idol last year, beating out her twin brother in the performance, Chris was nothing but supportive of his sister's victory.

"I was so happy that [Maddy] won Saratoga Idol, said Chris. I only will encourage her talents and give her all the help she needs to become an even better singer or actor. ♦



Olivia Chock



Melody Zhang



Uma Sambasivam

Clockwise from top: Twins Chris and Maddy Renalds support each other despite an intense sibling rivalry. Maddy sings in the 2008 Saratoga Idol competition, taking first place. Chris performs as Benvolio in the play "Romeo and Juliet" with junior Jay Lee.

Rivalries

TEENS DEAL WITH ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

Students must learn to cope with the academic successes of their siblings and carve out their own paths

by Anna Shen
and Karen Yang

Although many students face academic competition, sophomore Peter Chen deals with more pressure than the average student—the pressure to live up to the high expectations set by an academically outstanding sibling.

Peter is just one of many who deals with having to follow a big shot older sibling. Although he is the younger brother of Michael Chen, former editor-in-chief of The Saratoga Falcon, 2009 salutatorian and current Harvard freshman, Peter does not seem to mind Michael's outstanding reputation.

"I have never really been bothered by my brother's reputation," he said. "Michael is an excellent role model for me in many ways and his success has motivated me to do my best, no matter what the outcome."

Peter does not feel pressured to be a replica of his brother. Peter and his parents acknowledge the fact that he is not exactly like Michael and that everyone has their own strengths and weaknesses.

"My parents have realized that not everyone is the same," said Peter. "So they are okay if I am not exactly like my brother."

Peter sees Michael's success as an incentive to live up to his full potential rather than a cause of intense sibling competition. To Peter, rivalry between sib-

lings should cause motivation rather than competition.

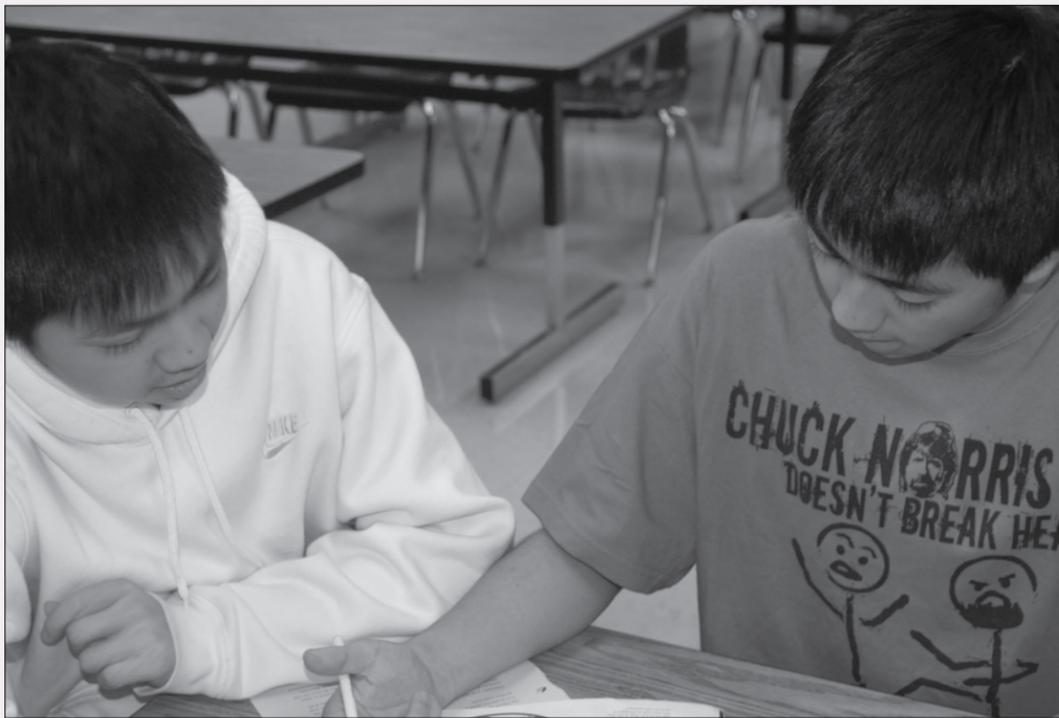
Although many siblings have their fair share of competition, juniors and identical twins David and Daryl Chang say they do not feel the pressures of sibling rivalry. Instead, the key to their friendly relationship lies in their different strengths combined with their ability to cooperate.

"Usually, [David and I] are patient with each other," said Daryl. "We don't get grumpy or frustrated easily."

Since David and Daryl were toddlers, they proved to be extremely different. David was more athletic and was involved in sports such as Little League, while Daryl has beaten David on almost every test since preschool. Because of their different qualities and personalities, David and Daryl feel that they balance each other out.

"I feel in some ways, by collaborating, [David and I] become greater than the sum of our parts," said Daryl. "We do balance each other out; for academics, I can help him, and for athletics, he can teach me what a point guard is."

Unlike Peter and the Chang twins, junior David Wang finds his relationship with his older brother to be extremely competitive. As the younger brother of alumnus Thomas Wang, 2009 valedictorian and current Harvard freshman, David said he often feels the need to live up to the expectations set by



Kevin Mu

Juniors Daryl and David Chang discuss homework problems. Cooperation is key in their close relationship.

his brother.

"Thomas' standards of achievement have set the bar extremely high for me, and I strive to match those expectations in both academics and other activities," David said.

For David, the pressure to be as good as Thomas is everywhere—from his parents, teachers, peers and from himself.

"Many people at school still only recognize me as Thomas' brother, and I find it extremely difficult to carve my own path,"

he said. "I believe it would be difficult for anyone to match up to someone whose reputation has given him such a recognizable name."

Assistant principal and guidance counselor Brian Safine, himself, found sibling rivalry between him and his older brother when they were in high school. Safine offers his opinions and advice on sibling rivalry.

"Sibling rivalry is certainly a natural outlet of time spent with another person," said Safine.

"Good-natured competition is natural and probably healthy; and students do well to discover their own identities."

Fortunately for these pairs of brothers, the bonds of family are stronger than the strains created by sibling rivalry.

"Being too competitive with your own family might break certain relationships," said Peter, "and I think that maintaining a strong relationship with your family is the most important thing to have in life." ♦

Junior moves past sister's daunting athletic legacy

"All I longed for was to beat my sister at something."

Ren Norris



Everything is a competition. At least, that's the mentality in the Norris household. We compete to see who can guess how long the line will take before we board Space Mountain or who can flip to the correct hymn in church the fastest, or even who can get in the last clap during a round of applause. Throughout my childhood, this competitive impulse has led me to push myself to be just as good as Alison, my older sister by two years.

My mother tells countless childhood stories of how I would run to her, crying because Alison could hula-hoop longer than me or could ride a bike with no training wheels when I couldn't or could craftily find all of the Easter eggs before I even had the chance to get one.

All I longed for was to beat my sister at something, anything that would prove I was better than she was in some aspect. Instead, I had to face years of always coming in second.

Things changed when Alison turned eight and decided to join the local summer swim team. My mother assumed that I would want to swim as well, since up to that point I had been obsessed with following directly in my sister's footsteps. At that moment, I recalled swimming with Alison, and how she would always emerge victorious in our races to the far side of the pool. I knew that I would never be able to be beat her at swimming, so right then I decided to participate in something that I knew I could win. I boldly told my mom that I did not want to swim like my sister and instead wanted to pursue something

"By deciding to traverse a different path, I have not only distinguished myself from my sister, but have also escaped having to be constantly measured up to her."

else. Within weeks, I was enrolled on a soccer team.

I know it sounds crazy to try another sport just to be able to beat my sister at something, but our sibling rivalry diminished greatly from that point on. Sure, we still stayed competitive with each other, but I no longer felt as if I was in her shadow. We were never again able to compare our athletic abilities. When she came home with a first place swim medal,

I would match it with a soccer trophy. By the time we were both in high school, we were highly competitive in our select sports—her playing water polo and swimming and my playing field hockey and soccer. It's strange to think that our family could be so athletically diverse, given that so many families who breed track stars and tennis champions tend to streamline all of

their kids into the same sport. But our parents have always been supportive in letting us choose what interests us the most. People constantly ask me why I don't play water polo like my all-star sister, and I have to calmly explain my lack of swimming and throwing ability to someone confused about how talent like that could skip over a sibling.

Actually, I'm relieved that I don't have to be compared to Alison in athletics. By deciding to traverse a different path, I have not only distinguished myself from my sister, but have also escaped having to be constantly measured up to her.

Don't get me wrong, a little sibling competition is healthy—it pushes us to do our best. But it's also important to pursue your own interests, not just those of your sibling. Fortunately, I'm at the point where I no longer feel compelled to match my sister in every aspect of life—she has her sports, and I have mine. The only argument left is who would win in a triathlon, but I guess we'll just have to have a bike race to find out. ♦

THE ARTIST OF THE ISSUE: Ishaara

After performing on "America's Got Talent" in front of millions of viewers, Ishaara, a Bollywood Dance group from Berkeley has become local celebrities. Two members in particular, Prashant Shukla and Nickesh Vishwanathan, both Saratoga alumni share their experiences with the *Falcon*.

Q: What was the experience on AGT like?

A: It was a great experience. We're so grateful for the support from friends and family we received. Even though we didn't get to the next round, we left on a high note. We weren't disappointed at all.

Q: What did you have to do to get on the show?

A: We had to submit a video first, and then we went to an audition at LA. Then we went to Vegas for another audition and came back to LA for the live show. The live one was pretty nerve-wracking because we were the first act.

Q: What is your style of dance?

A: We do Bollywood dance, but you have to understand that Bollywood dance is basically a mix of all different types of dance. We put in moves from hip hop, jazz and a little classical Indian dance

Q: How much do you practice?

A: Regularly, we practice 10-15 hours a week. For AGT, we practiced whenever we could get together.

Q: What is the goal of the group?

A: Basically its to dance and have fun. But our mission is to introduce Bollywood to the US because we feel that in the US, Bollywood has not been represented properly. We want to show what we feel about our culture and share it with America

Q: What past shows has Ishaara performed at?

A: Over the last two years, Ishaara has been to Bollywood Berkeley, Jhoomti Shaam in LA, Phillyfest in Philadelphia, Best of the Best in Chicago, and Best of the Best in Redwood City. We've also done many private performances for weddings, corporate events, and birthday parties.

Q: How did you guys come up with the name Ishaara?

A: The captain Shahil and Prashant were just g-chatting one day, and Shahil had found the name Ishaara somewhere online. Prashant liked it, so they proposed it to the team, and instantly everyone fell in love with it.



Photo Courtesy of Nickesh Vishwanathan

Alumnus Nickesh Vishwanathan and team member Shahil Patel perform on AGT.

Q: What is the teams' plan for the future?

A: We plan to travel to competitions across the country starting with Berkeley, LA, Philadelphia and maybe even Boston this year. The former captain has decided to begin teaching dance classes in the Bay

Area, and also has been contacted for any paid performance opportunities that myself and other members of the "Ishaara team on TV" will be dancing for. Hopefully, everything goes well.

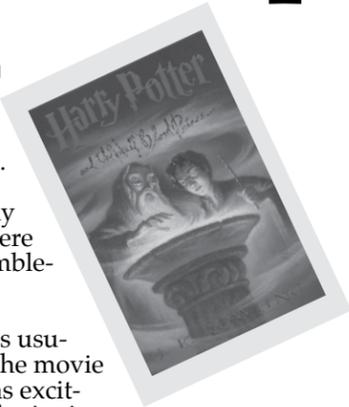
~ by Christine Tseng

From the pages to the silver screen

Book: Seamless and a must read.

Movie: Too many crucial scenes were cut, such as Dumbledore's funeral.

Bottom Line: As usually is the case, the movie was not nearly as exciting as the award winning novel. The producers missed an opportunity to delve deeper into the most dramatic scenes.



ways. But surprisingly, Tom Felton, who plays the part of Draco Malfoy, adds a lot of depth to the character and really gives the viewer an unprecedented perspective.

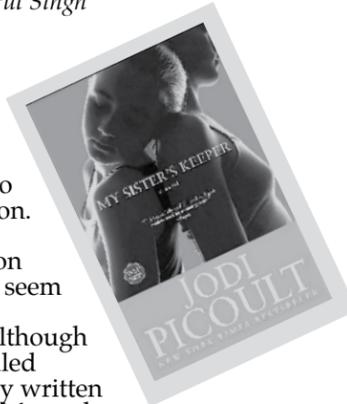
The sad truth is that no film is ever exactly like the book it is based on. This was also true for the "Half-Blood Prince," because, although the film was not as exciting as many people anticipated the critical plot points that were left out might have made the movie that much better. ♦

~ by Parul Singh

Book: Impressive writing that never fails to catch my attention.

Movie: Changing the conclusion made the movie seem incomplete.

Bottom Line: Although the actresses pulled through, a poorly written ending detracted from the storyline.



The highly anticipated summer blockbuster "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince" proved to be entertaining, but it left out a many major plot points that were present in the book.

The sixth book focuses mainly on Harry's discovery of a potions book belonging to the "Half-Blood Prince." The plot also follows Harry and his headmaster Dumbledore's various excursions in an effort to kill Voldemort, Harry's sworn enemy. But Voldemort has also given Malfoy, a fellow student at Hogwarts, a task to kill Dumbledore.

Frankly, I was disappointed when I saw the movie. Since I would consider myself a Harry Potter fan, I noticed many things that simply weren't emphasized enough in the movie. The topic of the half-blood prince isn't given much screen time in the movie while in the book it is one of the dominant aspects of the plot.

Moreover, the romance between Harry and Ginny, another student, which many viewers were anticipating, was barely even touched upon in the movie. Even though this is a major part of the book, the film only shows the beginning of their relationship and never mentions their break-up.

Dumbledore's funeral was also left out of the movie, as well as a huge fight scene at the end of the book. This fight scene is action-packed with Harry and the others chasing the enemies out of the school. If this had been included in the movie it would have made an awesome ending.

The movie did have some good points, though. The movie adds a completely new scene which depicts the burning down of Harry's best friend's house. Although this scene was unnecessary to the plot it did add a certain amount of drama to the movie. The acting was also commendable. The character of Harry Potter, played by Daniel Radcliffe, was superb as al-

to this honorable title.

The book, though, comes up with a much better solution. When Anna seems to have left her sister to her fate, a devastating event alters her choice. She ends up saving her sister as her keeper, fulfilling her role.

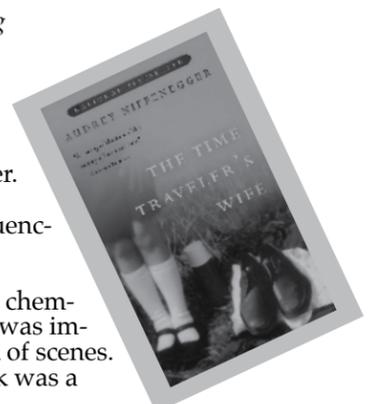
Although the acting present in the movie captured the emotionally riveting essence of the novel, the ill-decided change at the end completely contradicted the title and point of the movie. ♦

~ by Christine Tseng

Book: Stunning from cover to cover.

Movie: A few sequences were neglected.

Bottom Line: The chemistry of the movie was imbalanced by a lack of scenes. However, the book was a masterpiece.



True to its roots, "The Time Traveler's Wife" is a recent silver screen adaptation of the dramatic romance novel by the same name. The story unravels around a man with a queer genetic disorder that forces him to skip back and forth through time without warning.

The male protagonist, Henry, and a woman named Clare fall madly in love; however, they endure many troubles and complications because of his genetic abnormality.

When I first read the summary on the back of the book, it seemed like just another girlish, love story. But after reading it, it turned out to be a fantastic book following an innovative story line adorned with wondrous characters and vivid scenes. The book won two awards and was nominated for several more.

In comparison to the best-selling book, the movie skipped a few sequences but was still able to capture the characters' identities extremely well. Although it didn't include all of the scenes from the book, it still proved to be a touching movie that ranks highly in my personal favorites. I would recommend this movie to viewers who relish films that they can relate to and in which they could feel a connection to the protagonist. ♦

~ by Lillian Chen

your Phone, my Phone, iThink therefore iPhone



Versatility of iPhone expands
handheld horizons



iPhone

“The benefits to
having an iPhone
are endless”

Sulmaan Hassan



I didn't get an iPhone the day it came out. I didn't want to wait in line, nor did I want to get caught up in the hype. But that's not true. You want the real reason I didn't get an iPhone? I didn't have the cash.

I got my iPhone as a hand-me-down from my dad, and I was ecstatic to no longer being limited to ogling at YouTube videos of the iPhone. I'm not one of those Apple cultists who eat, sleep and breathe Apple, but I was pretty excited and more than satisfied. I've gone through several phones, each with extremely awful interfaces. The iPhone was different and supremely comfortable to use. The main reason I am so infatuated with my phone is that it doubles as an iPod, an incredibly handy thing, to say the least. To always have music and to be without the nuisance of carrying six things is incentive enough to buy the iPhone.

The benefits to having an iPhone are endless including: WiFi, e-mail, GPS, camera and many others. And while there are several phones out there with the exact same capabilities, no phone can handle these capabilities quite as flawlessly as the iPhone.

Another feature that I did not expect to care much about is the apps feature. There are so many different types of apps that do so many different things that possibilities are never-ending. Whenever I check out Apple's App Store, there's always something new to download, and best of all, nearly half these applications are free.

However, I do have a bone to pick with the iPhone. It should have been a WiFi enabled device with the option for EDGE or 3G; in my opinion—that would have been truly revolutionary. As it stands, however, the iPhone is a

Parents say phone unnecessary

by Parul Singh

Sometimes it seems like everyone has an iPhone, and no one can survive without one. But for many high school students this just isn't true.

The prices for the iPhone can range from \$99 to as much as \$299. Spending so much money on a phone is superfluous when students could just as easily get a decent \$40 phone, many students say. Although \$100 may not seem like that much for Saratoga students, spending so much money for a single item may teach students bad habits. If parents just buy students whatever they want now, the fear is that the student will never learn the value of money. Later on when students go to live by themselves they won't be able to manage money.

Sophomore Christine Tseng's dad, for example, does not believe in spending too much money on cell phones. "Fancy phones are too expensive and complicated. For me, a cell phone is only for making calls and as long it can do that that's enough," said Ping Tseng.

Also, the many attractions of iPhones can lure students away from studying and homework.

Sophomore Anjalika Goyal said, "My iPhone distracts me from homework if it is right next to me so usually I have to keep it in another room so that I can finish my homework."

Some students who have iPhones agree that the iPhone is not an essential part of their lives.

"I mostly just use it for listening to music, but I would be fine

with any other phone as well," freshman Sanjeev Suresh said.

Suresh does not feel that he is too young to own an iPhone. In fact, his 11-year-old brother has an iPhone as well.

What is the thinking behind parents of students with iPhones? Suresh's parents bought him an iPhone because he got good grades and Goyal's parents bought her an iPhone because it was on sale.

But other parents are against the idea of buying such an expensive phone, arguing that is unnecessary at such a young age.

Given the cost of the iPhone, its distracting nature and the fact that students don't utilize all of its features, it is no surprise that some students have escaped the iPhone tidal wave. ♦

Student 'jailbreaks' iPhone for inaccessible apps

by Lillian Chen

Have you ever felt confined within the meager functions of your phone? Have you ever wished that you could customize your applications or even the operating system? Such was the case for one student who was tired of the limitations of his iPhone and decided to "jailbreak" it.

"Jailbreaking" is a widely growing process that enables iPhone users to write their own code and install applications on their phone unavailable to the general public on Apple's App Store. After receiving an iPhone for his birthday, this student, who asked to be anonymous, began installing software that would enable him to jailbreak his own iPhone.

He began by reading forums and learned how to hack his phone with a program named Installer. This first step unleashed a flood of endless opportuni-

ties with the customization of his iPhone including 65 applications not available on the App Store. Having applications that range from a complete TI graphing calculator to a Gameboy in a handheld, touch screen device, this student's first generation iPhone is packed with never ending entertainment.

"Apple limits and controls the iPhone to sell their applications for outrageous prices when it can do so much more," said the student. "If I ever need [an application], I'd rather jailbreak it."

However, this student doesn't use his iPhone just for amusement. Having a Spanish dictionary and a periodic table on his iPhone comes in handy all the time and proves to be very convenient in class.

Over the course of a mere year and a half, this student was able to drastically expand the possibilities of his iPhone's capabilities. He started by swapping

the iPhone's original operating system with the exponentially faster Linux. He continued by installing software such as Limewire and an application that allows him to send songs directly to other phones. Amassing a total of nearly 70 applications, a few of his favorites include Sketches, a program similar to the Windows software Paint, and his all time favorite, the Gameboy.

"After my friends saw what my phone could do, I jailbroke some of my their iTouches for them," said the student, whose first application was the Camera Pro. "If I didn't get the Camera Pro, I wouldn't have as good quality pictures. [Camera Pro] lets me zoom in and has a function for rapid shots." Studies show that nearly 10 percent of the 40 million iPhones sold have been jailbroken. With such programs at our arsenal, jailbreaking can open possibilities and utilize handheld technology's potential. ♦

FALCON

FIGURES

iPhone apps for students

iStudiez Pro: \$2.99
Set your schedule

AlgebraPrep Series: \$2.99
Hone your algebra skills

Convert - The Unit Calculator: \$0.99
Converts dozens of unit types.

Dictionary.com: Free
This one is FREE

MyHomework: Free
A simple assignment notebook.

The Chemical Touch Lite: Free
"Sometimes all you need is a simply periodic table."

Simplenote: \$1.99
Simplenote syncs wirelessly to a Web interface.

20 school scope

The Saratoga Falcon
September 25, 2009

D. Muntz



Years Teaching: 33
Years at SHS: 1
Hometown: San Jose
Subject: Woodshop
Prior Job: Lifeguard
Fun Fact: teaches at

L. Geer



Years Teaching: 38
Years at SHS: 19
Hometown: San Jose
Subject: CAD
Prior Job: Lockheed Martin
Fun Fact: taught at 5

L. Aguayo



Years Teaching: 29
Years at SHS: 29
Hometown: San Gabriel Valley, Los Angeles
Subject: Ceramics
Fun Fact: married to LG

T. Palma



Years Teaching: 5
Years at SHS: 5
Hometown: Campbell
Subject: MAP, Animation, Multimedia Journalism
Fun Fact: builds electric cars

P. Jordan



Years Teaching: 30
Years at SHS: 10
Hometown: San Jose
Subject: Health, P.E.
Prior Job: Bartender
Fun Fact: hard-core runner

M. Boitz



Years Teaching: 14
Years at SHS: 12
Hometown: Anoka, MN
Subject: Band, Orchestra
Job Prior: Waiter
Fun Fact: fishes in

J. Yowell



Years Teaching: 36
Years at SHS: 7
Hometown: Palo Alto
Subject: Choir, Music Theory, Handbell Choir
Fun Fact: likes to travel

D. Otani



Years Teaching: 8
Years at SHS: 1
Hometown: Kula, HI
Subject: Band
Major: Music
Fun Fact: former rodeo

J. Zevallos



Years Teaching: 3
Years at SHS: 3
Hometown: San Jose
Subject: Spanish 1, Special Education
Fun Fact: just married

C. Crase



Years Teaching: 3
Years at SHS: 3
Hometown: Saratoga
Subject: Resource
Fav. Color: Indigo
Fun Fact: youngest

S. McCue



Years Teaching: 12
Years at SHS: 11
Hometown: Los Gatos
Subject: Art, Photo
Job Prior: Art Director
Fun Fact: is a hardcore

T. Lugo



Years Teaching: 3
Years at SHS: 2
Hometown: San Jose
Subject: P.E.
Fav. Color: Red
Fun Fact: former youth

A. Villalobos



Years Teaching: 27
Years at SHS: 11
Hometown: Grenada Hills
Subjects: Study Skills, History
Fun Fact: loves to travel

L. Lizundia



Years Teaching: 19
Years at SHS: 14
Hometown: Guilford, CT
Subject: French
Fun Fact: soccer mom who also plays soccer

A. Rodriguez



Years Teaching: 35
Years at SHS: 35
Hometown: Costa Rica
Subject: Spanish
Fav. Color: Red
Fun Fact: won Teacher of

M. Fam



Years Teaching: 14
Years at SHS: 10
Hometown: Taiwan
Subject: Chinese
Major: World Linguistics
Fun Fact: has mastered

G. Rodriguez



Years Teaching: 12
Years at SHS: 12
Hometown: Menlo Park
Subject: Spanish
Fav. Food: Italian
Fun Fact: bungee jumps

Y. Aoki



Years Teaching: 17
Years at SHS: 11
Hometown: Maebashi, Japan
Subject: Japanese, P.E.
Fav. Color: Blue
Fun Fact: has a motorbike

S. Voorhees



Years Teaching: 17
Years at SHS: 10
Hometown: Kansas City
Subject: Spanish
Fav. Animal: Fish
Fun Fact: has a tattoo

K. Bergkamp



Years Teaching:
Years at SHS:
Hometown: Los Gatos
Subject: French
Major: World Linguistics
Fun Fact: is an LGHS

B. Yeilding



Years Teaching: 26
Years at SHS: 11
Hometown: Gainesville, FL
Subject: Spanish
Fav. Animal: Alligator
Fun Fact: stole a moose head

K. Thomson



Years Teaching: 11
Years at SHS: 11
Hometown: Hillsborough
Subject: Bio, APES
Fav. Color: Green
Fun Fact: volunteered at

C. Lenz



Years Teaching: 9
Years at SHS: 2
Hometown: Sunnyvale
Subject: Biology
Job Prior: Research
Fun Fact: loves chocolate

A. Obenour



Years Teaching: 11
Years at SHS: 19
Hometown: Rhode Island
Subject: Anatomy, Health, Sports Med, Physiology
Fun Fact: snorkeled with

J. Garcia



Years Teaching: 17
Years at SHS: 17
Hometown: Palo Alto
Subject: Biology, Physics, Chemistry H
Fun Fact: has a pet rabbit

B. Drennan



Years Teaching: 33
Years at SHS: 33
Hometown: Chicago, IL
Subject: AP Physics
Fav. Color: Blue
Fun Fact: used to be

B. Kucer



Years Teaching: 30
Years at SHS: 15
Hometown: San Leandro
Subject: Chem, Biology
Fav. Animal: Cat
Fun Fact: bungee jumps

K. Davis



Years Teaching: 2
Years at SHS: 2
Hometown: Casper, NY
Subject: Physics
Job Prior: Health care
Fun Fact: very good at

K. Nicholson



Years Teaching: 19
Years at SHS: 13
Hometown: San Jose
Subject: Biology, Chem
Fav. Animal: Dog
Fun Fact: often thought of as Mrs. Garcia's twin

J. McIntyre



Years Teaching: 21
Years at SHS: 11
Hometown: Los Alamos
Subject: Chem, Marine Bio
Fun Fact: related to two Declaration of Independence signers

K. Nakamatsu



Years Teaching: 17
Years at SHS: 3
Hometown: San Jose
Subject: Chem AP, Chem
Fav. Celeb: Kevin Costner
Fun Fact: loves to eat

L. Cochrum



Years Teaching: 17
Years at SHS: 17
Hometown: Palo Alto
Subject: Bio, Earth Sci
Fun Fact: only has one more continent to visit

M. Battey
Years Teaching: 7.5
Years at SHS: 7
Hometown: Capitola
Subject: English
Fav. Food: Sushi
Fun Fact: is a youth

B. Peck
Years Teaching: 16
Years at SHS: 9
Hometown: Saratoga
Subject: English, Poetry
Prior Job: Actor
Fun Fact: fought forest fires

K. Brown
Years Teaching: 9
Years at SHS: 8
Hometown: Santa Cruz
Subject: English 9, 10
Prior job: writer for "The Good Times"

V. Arbizu
Years Teaching: NA
Years at SHS: Rookie
Hometown: Gilroy
Subject: English
Fav. Food: Japanese
Fun Fact: loves to quilt

E. Rector
Years Teaching: 4
Years at SHS: 4
Hometown: Saratoga
Subject: English
Fav. Animal: Whale
Fun Fact: goes on bike

S. Tseng
Years Teaching: 5
Years at SHS: 3
Hometown: Taiwan
Subject: Chinese, ESL
Fav. Food: Tea
Fun Fact: used to be a

K. Mohnike
Years Teaching: 20
Years at SHS: 19
Hometown: Whittier
Subject: English
Fav. Food: Cheese Bread
Fun Fact: volunteers at a

S. Herzman
Years Teaching: 10
Years at SHS: Rookie
Hometown: New York
Subject: English
Fav. Food: Fresh Beets
Fun Fact: volunteered in

M. Tyler
Years Teaching: 13
Years at SHS: 13
Hometown: Boulder, CO
Subject: Journalism
Fav. Animal: Dog
Fun Fact: recently learned

J. Friend
Years Teaching: 7
Years at SHS: 7
Town: Thousand Oaks
Subject: English, Media Arts, AP Language
Fun Fact: a fan of both

C. Chatfield
Years Teaching: 1
Years at SHS: Rookie
Hometown: Sacramento
Subject: English
Fav. Animal: Owl
Fun Fact: knits hats

C. Head
Years Teaching: 32
Years at SHS: 20
Hometown: 30 cities
Subject: English
Fav. Animal: Dog
Fun Fact: rolls her eyeballs while she talks

K. Nguyen
Years Teaching: 7
Years at SHS: 1
Hometown: Seattle, WA
Subject: English
Fav. Food: Shrimp
Fun Fact: English was

N. Ritchie
Years Teaching: 8
Years at SHS: 4
Hometown: Los Angeles
Subject: English
Fav. Animal: All animals
Fun Fact: loves to cook with her dutch oven

C. Malah
Years Teaching: 2
Years at SHS: 2
Hometown: Plainview
Subject: Drama
Job Prior: Actor, Director
Fun Fact: worked as a Florist for two years

L. McCathill
Years Teaching: 4
Years at SHS: 3
Hometown: Chicago
Subject: Special Ed
College: SJSU
Fun Fact: just had a baby

A. Purcell
Years Teaching: 34
Years at SHS: 6
Hometown: S.F.
Subject: English, Social Studies, Math, Home Ec
College: SCU

ALL-STAR LINEUP

Getting to know teachers is difficult, brush up on staff trivia for the 09-10 season

T. Dwyer
Years Teaching: 14
Years at SHS: 12
Hometown: Los Angeles
Subject: Economics
Sport: Former tennis coach
Fun Fact: served in the

C. Weaver
Years Teaching: 3
Years at SHS: 3
Hometown: Tustin
Subject: Algebra, Earth Science, Life Science
College: UCSC

T. Vitarelli
Years Teaching: 6
Years at SHS: 4
Hometown: Roseville
Subject: Resouce
College: UC Davis
Fun Fact: received a

M. Torrens
Years Teaching: 15
Years at SHS: 10
Hometown: Petaluma
Subject: US, World history
Fav. Color: Purple
Fun Fact: used to be a cow

M. Drouin
Years Teaching: 10
Years at SHS: 10
Hometown: Daly City
Subject: Math
Job Prior: Admin Asst
Fun Fact: former state

S. Patel
Years Teaching: 12
Years at SHS: 6
Hometown: Wasco
Subject: Algebra, AP stats
Sport: Tennis in school
Fun Fact: MVP of her high

J. Sheehy
Years Teaching: 11
Years at SHS: 11
Hometown: Pacifica
Subject: History
Prior job: Telemarketing
Fun fact: played basket-

K. Abe
Years Teaching: 17
Years at SHS: 14
Hometown: Los Altos
Subject: Gov, W. History
Sport: Wrestling
Fun Fact: plays the drums

K. Hamilton
Years Teaching: 7
Years at SHS: 3
Hometown: San Diego
Subject: Math
Job Prior: healthcare
Fun Fact: husband is a

R. Ellis
Years Teaching: 9
Years at SHS: 8
Hometown: Watsonville
Subject: Geography, PE
Prior job: Odd Jobs
Fun Fact: tried out for

M. Davey
Years Teaching: 18
Years at SHS: 18
Hometown: Santa Clara
Subject: History
Sport: Coach for b-ball
Fun Fact: worked at sport-

P.J. Yim
Years Teaching: 11
Years at SHS: 3
Hometown: Boston, Ma
Subject: Math
Job Prior: Mailman
Fun Fact: attacked by

L. Ridge
Years Teaching: 8
Years at SHS: 5
Hometown: Dorado Hills
Subject: Psych, Math
Prior Job: Coach
Fun Fact: goes to different

K. Anzalone
Years Teaching: 26
Years at SHS: 17
Hometown: San Jose
Subject: History
Sport: Girls' Soccer Coach
Fun Fact: likes to dirt bike

A. Warmuth
Years Teaching: 15
Years at SHS: 4
Hometown: Canada
Subject: Math
College: McGill U.
Fun Fact: runs marathons...slowly

J. Scola
Years Teaching: 19
Years at SHS: 17
Hometown: Hollister
Subject: Math
Prior Job: Waitress
Fun Fact: makes really

D. Troxell
Years Teaching: 13
Years at SHS: 9
Hometown: S. Bend, IN
Subject: Math
Sport: Coach of XC
Fun Fact: loves to go

Junior volunteers at hospital in Malaysia

by *Synthia Ling*

Junior Keerti Shukla spent her summer at a place more than 8,000 miles away—the general hospital in Ipoh, Malaysia.

Shukla's grandfather passed away last year, and it is a tradition in Indian culture for people to perform a religious ceremony one year after a relative passes away. Adhering to this tradition, Shukla went to Malaysia with her family and decided to just stay and volunteer at a general hospital.

Shukla spent six weeks working with the heads of the pediatric and pediatric physical therapy departments, as well as with doctors who went out to rural areas to give medical attention to people who did not have transportation to hospitals.

Working in pediatrics, Shukla got the chance to interact with many children. On one occasion, she helped motivate a patient in physical therapy to achieve the

difficult task of getting out of his wheelchair for the first time since injuring his knee.

"It was really memorable because he was in his wheelchair, and we were trying to get him to stand up for the first time using a walker," said Shukla. "He was really scared because he was in a lot of pain, and we had to talk to him. I got a lot of experience doing that because the doctor let me talk to him, and I finally got him to stand up."

In Malaysia, Shukla got a chance to improve on her Malay. Even though she already knew some of the language, she said that after this summer she was able to speak it fluently. She also saw first hand the poverty in the country.

Volunteering at the hospital, Shukla found that Malaysia did not have a good education system for children with learning disabilities who worked hard in school but still struggled. She said it was "eye-opening to see"

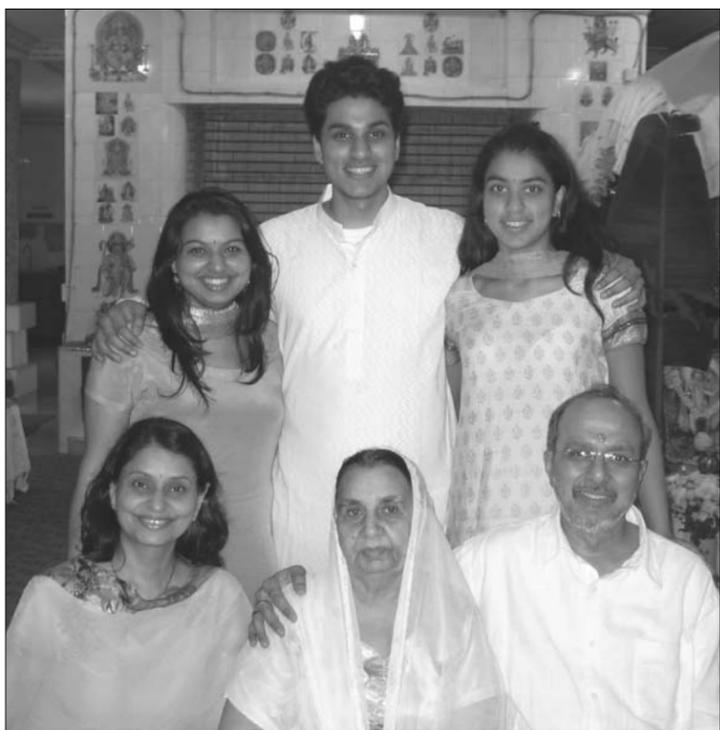
kids with autism, ADHD and ADD who were not in normal school systems but put in special education schools.

"That is basically zero education because they don't give any priorities to those students," said Shukla. "Here, if a kid has ADD, a student and [his or her] parents will work with the teacher to help [his or her] problem, but they don't give any importance to it in Malaysia."

Shukla believes that students here should not take their education for granted when there are other people elsewhere who cannot even receive decent education.

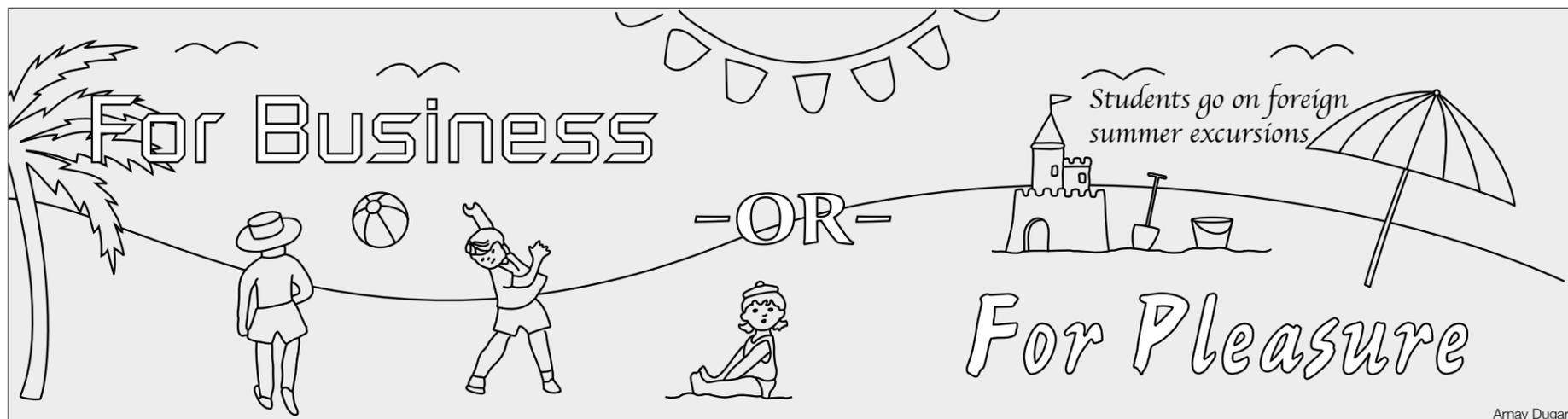
Even though it was far from home, and she had to work hard over the summer, Shukla said that if she could, she would work at the hospital again.

"I'm really thankful for the doctors and all the other people who gave me the opportunity to work at the hospital," said Shukla. ♦



Courtesy of Keerti Shukla

Junior Keerti Shukla, top right, smiles for a family picture in Malaysia.



Arnav Dugar

Overseas summer program brings student to England

by *Apeksha Sharma*

The clouds were dark, and the rain was pouring this past summer when junior Erika Guldner first realized how far she was from sunny California. She was in dark, dreary England spending the majority of her vacation in the overseas summer school program called Oxbridge to enrich her cultural learning.

With high school students from all over the world enjoying the guest speakers, field trips, activities and sports that were provided, this program turned out to be a social gathering. Classes at Oxbridge were held at Oriol College, which is within the grounds of Oxford University in Oxford, England.

"I was looking for a camp in Europe where people could travel with other people their age," said Guldner.

"The freedom of the campus was amazing...It was way different [from] Saratoga. I felt like I was in college."

—junior Erika Guldner

Guldner also wanted to get away from her traditional family vacations.

"I wanted to experience traveling without my parents," said Guldner. "I also wanted to have a situation similar to college."

To get into the program, which is open to sophomores, juniors and seniors, Guldner was required to complete an application and submit it along with a deposit check, a copy of a transcript or most recent report card and three copies of a personal statement.

"The application was a little too much," said Guldner. "Along with all my other school work, I had to write an essay about why I wanted to go into

the program, but it was necessary to get into the program to show that we really care."

A mandatory orientation was held in January, an event during which parents and students were given an introduction into the program. After the orientation, students mailed their schedule and travel information in May.

Students were allowed to choose one major and one minor class. The major is attended from Monday through Saturday and the minor every other day after the major. Guldner took studio art as a major and architecture as a minor.

"I liked the balance of the schedule and how I had a lot of free time," said Guldner.

The teachers in the program were volunteers from schools in the surrounding area of the Oxford school.

Oxbridge also offers students smaller

trips outside of the school grounds. "I took a lot of tours and free activities that they provided," said Guldner. "Some of the tours [included] going to castles or visiting London, [activities] which were a lot of fun. You could just walk outside, and you were already in the city."

The teachers would chaperone each event, while the program provided the transportation to and from the school grounds.

"There were three different classes in one bus," said Guldner. "The castle and London tours were required to go on by all the students."

Guldner originally traveled with



Courtesy of Erika Guldner

Junior Erika Guldner, second from right, spends time at local parks in Oxford, England.

another friend, but because of different classes and scheduling, the two of them were not able to see each other very often.

"Even though I didn't see my friend that much, it was easy to make [other] friends," said Guldner. "The first day everyone got to know each other. People weren't exclusive; everyone was open."

Although the deadly flu H1N1 was supposedly spreading around the campus, Guldner did not let her fears stop her from enjoying her time in the country.

"My friend was quarantined because she was sick," said Guldner. "I really didn't want that to happen to me [when] I could be going into the town."

Guldner also enjoyed time with her new friends and participating in events around the campus.

"The last dance was the best," said Guldner. "It was a fun way to say goodbye to everyone."

Guldner could happily say that she accomplished her goal of a parent-free vacation.

"The freedom of the campus was amazing," said Guldner. "There wasn't anyone really monitoring where you [were] going, so it was always nice to relax with friends at the local parks. I went to three Shakespeare plays, played sports, walked around and went to the dances. It was way different [from] Saratoga. I felt like I was in college." ♦

ATHLETE OF THE ISSUE

Senior shows love for hockey, excels on defense

by Kevin Mu

Junior forward Vanessa Block hits the ball to the top corner. Senior midfielder Sam Li stops the ball and passes to junior midfielder Ren Norris. Norris shoots—no, fakes—the ball goes in between her legs.

Senior defender Anna Schroeder takes her position and strikes it into the corner of the goal for a goal.

Plays like this are what makes Schroeder stand out on the field, but this versatile athlete offers more to her team than just a wicked slap-shot.

"She brings a lot to the team, and as captain she's always really intense," said fellow defender senior Jessica Liscom. "She always helps whenever anyone has a question she's always available to answer it; if the offense is on us she's always there to come back and help us. She's just an all-star."

Even as a freshman, Schroeder demonstrated a strong passion for field hockey. A varsity field hockey player for four years, she currently leads the Falcons as team captain.

Her strong hitting and defensive skills serve her well as a defender, and her ability to slow down the forward is crucial to the team. But it is her leadership that truly

brings her team together.

Last year, the varsity field hockey team only lost two games and made it to the CCS finals.

Under Schroeder's leadership, the team hopes for the same success this season as well.

"She brings intensity to the team," assistant coach Amber Wilson said. "She's improved every year, and she encourages everyone to work as hard as she does. During games, she's like the coach that's [always] on the field."

"[Schroeder] brings intensity to the team. During games, she's like the coach that's [always] on the field."

—assistant coach Amber Wilson

Although Schroeder has rightfully earned her status as a field hockey superstar, Schroeder maintains a humble and down-to-earth attitude by focusing on the camaraderie she feels between her teammates more than anything else.

"I like the team aspect," she said. "We're girls and we're all friends. We're able to be together, [and] whether we win or lose, it's still a good experience."

Despite her healthy attitude toward sports, Schroeder believes that field hockey has brought out her competitive nature.

"I wouldn't say everything is a competition," she said, "but if we're just playing games at home, it's just something to get

into the game—[sports have] definitely shaped my life."

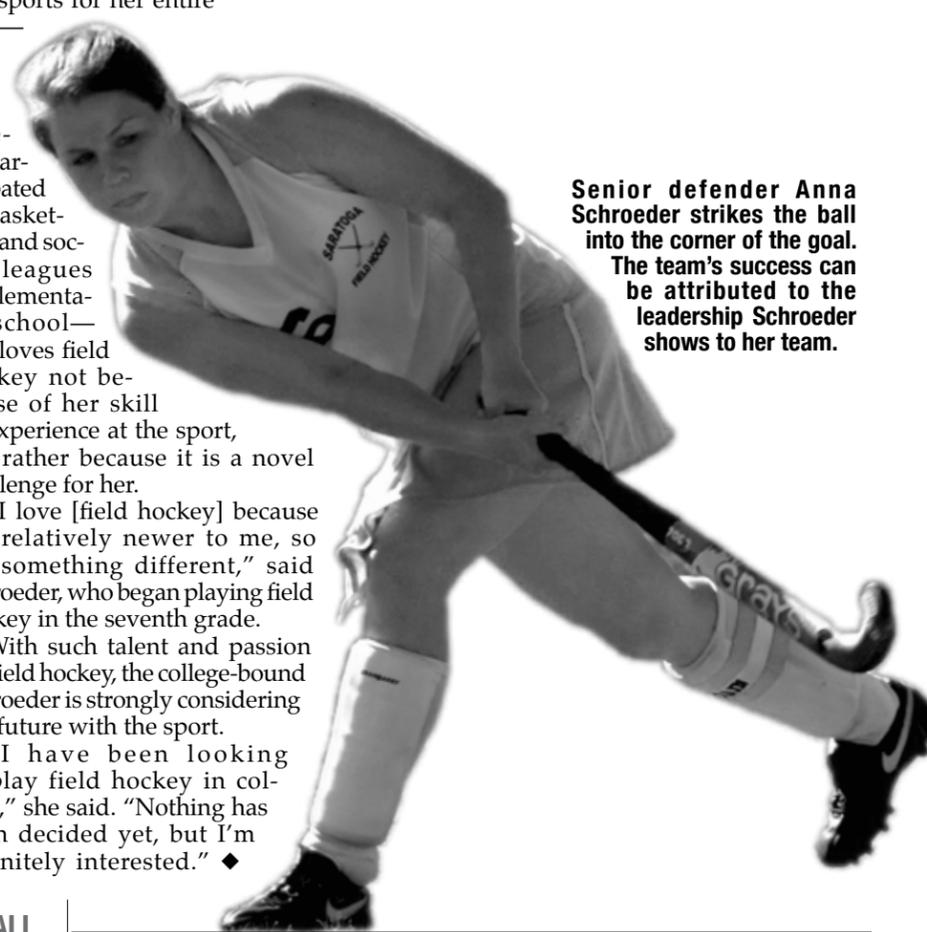
Although Schroeder has been playing sports for her entire life—she ac-

tively participated in basketball and soccer leagues in elementary school—she loves field hockey not because of her skill or experience at the sport, but rather because it is a novel challenge for her.

"I love [field hockey] because it's relatively newer to me, so it's something different," said Schroeder, who began playing field hockey in the seventh grade.

With such talent and passion for field hockey, the college-bound Schroeder is strongly considering her future with the sport.

"I have been looking to play field hockey in college," she said. "Nothing has been decided yet, but I'm definitely interested." ♦



Senior defender Anna Schroeder strikes the ball into the corner of the goal. The team's success can be attributed to the leadership Schroeder shows to her team.

FOOTBALL

Falcons out to prove they belong in upper league

by Karthik Annaamalai and Abhi Venkataramana

If last year's season, which including almost beating Los Gatos, placing fifth in one of the Bay Area's toughest divisions and being just one point away from making CCS playoffs hasn't already shown that the Falcons belong in the "A" League, players have decided to make an even bigger statement this year as they continue to play in the upper league De Anza Division.

"We've already shown everyone that we can compete in this league, so now our goal is to succeed in the league and make CCS playoffs," said second-year coach Tim Lugo.

Topping last year's success could prove to be a tougher challenge than expected, especially as the team deals with replacing eight graduated all-league players. The Falcons will also have to overcome a four-week stretch of games in which they will face their four toughest competitors all in a row, starting with Palo Alto, the CCS medium school champion runner-up, followed by Milpitas, the De Anza League champion, then Wilcox, the CCS large

school runner-up and finally Los Gatos, the CCS medium school champions.

"The only way we can overcome our schedule is if we focus and just take each game one at a time," said junior linebacker Greg Johnson. "We can't beat teams by pure size or pure speed so we need to play together as a team and execute our plays."

But with an established playbook and the leadership of returning seniors, Lugo is confident that the team will be able to overcome these obstacles and make CCS.

"Success in this league won't be easy, but we believe in our players and are confident they will compete at the highest level they are capable of," said Lugo. A strong group of returning players will lead the team's efforts. Senior running back Grant Thomas will be leading the ground attack, along with senior Jian Lee

and sophomore Troy Doles. impressive juniors Marcus Hoffman and Johnson.

"Our biggest strength offensively will be running the ball," said Lugo. "We have a lot of talent up front and have gotten accustomed our running game."

Senior Vinnie Carstens and junior Kevin Smith will lead the offense at the quarterback position behind a strong line led by seniors Connor Clarke, Kyle Keating, Greg Pregulman and Alan Yen as well as sophomores Joe Walters and sophomore Alex Polcyn. Senior Yash Chaudary and junior Chris Guengrich will be the main targets of Smith and Carstens as wide receivers.

As the bulk last year's defense has graduated, Lugo is looking for senior tackle Adam Oreglia and senior safety Trevor Teerlink to lead the defense along

with a group of "physical and aggressive" linebackers consisting of senior Danny Baldwin, junior Miles Emmerson, sophomore Brandon Oliveri-O'Connor, Hoffman, Walters, Lee, Thomas and Johnson. "It's playoffs or bust for us," said Thomas. "I really believe that we can make it this year, with the talent we have, and I expect nothing less."

The Falcons beat Alisal in their third game on Sept. 18, winning 35-17. Thomas rushed for 163 yards and 2 touchdowns. Doles also scored two touchdowns. Teerlink had a key fumble recption and interception to anchor the team's defense.

The Falcons emerged victorious at their second non-league on Sept. 11, defeating host Westmont 52-27. They displayed resilience, recovering from the previous week's loss to Santa Teresa. Their first game featured a second-half letdown, but in this game Saratoga kept its foot on the ignition for the entire game.

The offense was running on all cylinders, led by Lee, who rushed for two touchdowns. Quarterback Smith threw for two touchdowns as well.

The next game will be tonight against Palo Alto. ♦

THE SCORES | Football

Sept 4: Despite a 27-7 lead first half, SHS defense broke down and lost to Santa Teresa 42-36.

Sept 11: The Falcons crushed Westmont 52-27, led by senior running back Jian Lee/

Sept 18: Saratoga played Alisal winning 35-17 with a strong offense anchored by Senior running back Grant Thomas, who rushed for 163 yards and two touchdowns.

GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

Underclassmen provide speed in slow beginning of season

by Sophia Cooper

Runners sprinted in through the finish line, dripping with sweat and a layer of dust covering their teeth.

But it's just the start of another cross country season.

The girls kicked off their year with the Lynbrook Center Meet on Sept. 10. Although many girls were disappointed with the results, head coach Danny Moon emphasizes it was only the first meet of the season.

"It really opened the eyes of a lot of the freshmen and new folks, but in a

positive way," said Moon. "For our returning athletes, it was a refresher to feel their legs again, feel how [the races] go, and how miserably hot it can be."

The varsity team was led by senior Karen Wai who placed fifth with a time of 13:29.30 for the 2.1-mile course. Following Wai for the team was freshmen Courtney Schlossarek in 14th place in 14:04.50. Sophomore Emily Williams

"[The Earlybird Invitational] was beastly! They enjoyed it."

—Head coach Danny Moon

finished a strong race in 14:23.60. Other varsity runners were seniors Sophia

Cooper and Molly Jordan, junior Hannah Harter and freshman Emma Lee.

The Falcons sent 10 girls to the Earlybird Invitational Sept. 12, a 3-mile course in Salinas.

Freshman Caroline Chou came third for the team and 50th out of 149 runners in the freshman race with a time of 23:40.

Next was Cooper in 24:11, followed by sophomore Louise Guy in 24:28. Also running were Jordan, Harter, Lee, sophomores Kylie Tseng and Carolyn Choi and freshman Jenny Guarino.

"[The Earlybird Invitational] was beastly!" said Moon. "The best part is [that] they all wanted to run the race, they all did really well, and they enjoyed it."

The Fremont Firebird Invitational on Sept. 17 yielded better results from the varsity team. Wai led the pack again, finishing in third place. Schlossarek came in next for Saratoga, coming in at 11th place and winning her first medal. ♦

GIRLS' TENNIS

Fresno tournament offers CCS sneak peek

by Lauren Kuan
and Denise Lin

Jordan Waite



Jordan Waite

Clockwise from top left: junior Catherine Nguyen returns the ball; senior Mika Padmanabhan serves a hard shot; sophomore Lisa Asai narrows in on the ball with for a backhand shot.



Jordan Waite

A second-place finish in CCS is a tough act to follow but that's exactly what the current girls' tennis players intend to do after having achieved that feat last season. In fact, with the current impressive singles and doubles line-up, the team expects to place first or second in the league this year.

"This year a lot of teams have added depth with some incoming freshmen, but at the same time we have depth too in our lineup," said head coach Tom Uyehara, who is coaching his fourth season of girls' tennis this year. "That's what is going to help us."

According to Uyehara, the key component is the doubles teams. In addition, singles players such as sophomores Lisa Asai and Crystal Yen and junior Catherine Nguyen will be vital to the team's hopes.

Playing in the De Anza division, the upper echelon of the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League, the team will have to face off against some of the Bay Area's strongest teams including rivals Monta Vista, Homestead and Palo Alto. However, the team that the players really want to beat is Archbishop Mitty. Mitty is part of the West Catholic Athletic League and their team won CCS last year.

"I think that there's not that much a difference between us and Mitty," said Nguyen. "Saratoga deserves a chance to win; we work really hard every day."

Senior team captain Samantha Tsang believes that the connection and friendship that the players share with each other will benefit the team during the season.

"Our team is really tight right now so I think that we can make it

to NorCal," said Tsang. "Everyone needs to work together to pull off a win and if we work really hard, it'll all pay off."

The team traveled to Fresno on Sept. 10 to compete in the California High School Girls Tennis Classic and came back with three wins and one loss, placing third in the tournament.

"They went above and beyond my expectations," said Uyehara, of the players' performance.

The team played against tough teams from both Southern California and the local area. Both singles and doubles players contributed to the success of the team.

"Each match we played, somebody or another stepped up," said Uyehara. "There was a really good balance of play."

Nguyen, Yen and Lisa Asai ranked two, three and four respectively, all went undefeated.

"[I'm] most impressed with [Asai] since it was her first time playing singles for the team," said Uyehara.

In every match, Asai lost the first set but came back and won the second set and tiebreaker.

The tournament marked the start of a successful season, which was continued when the team beat Los Altos on Sept. 17, 6-1.

"Overall, I was impressed and it gave me a lot of high hopes for this season," said Uyehara. ♦

THE SCORES

Sept 10: The Falcons took on the top teams in Northern California at the California High School Girls Tennis Classic in Fresno, taking an impressive third place. There were over 104 teams total at the tournament.

Sept 17: The winning attitude continued in their match against Los Altos where they crushed the Eagles 6-1. They were led by senior Mika Padmanabhan, sophomore Lisa Asai and junior Catherine Nguyen.

BOYS' WATER POLO

Lower league, high spirits

by Cullan McChesney
and Tim Rollinson

Boys' water polo returns for its second year in the El Camino Division of the Silicon Valley Athletic League after dropping down a league last year. However, this year the team has several reasons to be optimistic. After years of constant coach changes, the team will finally have a stable coach for the years to come as second-year coach Christian Bonner agreed to return to coach the team.

"Even though we lost some key seniors we still have a few returning players and [Bonner] is back as the coach, so we definitely have a shot," said senior driver Kevin Rollinson.

Despite a 11-1 league record last season, the team suffered a heartbreaking loss to Fremont in the final seconds of a league final match for CCS qualification. This year, the boys are itching for redemption.

"We proved last year we can win this league," said senior driver Victor Wong. "Now it's time to get it done."

For the team to make CCS this year, they will have to place first overall in league games and the season-ending tournament and beat several tough teams. However, there is tough competition for the league crown, especially from rivals Fremont, Wilcox and Lynbrook.

"Since we have been playing in a lower league than previous years, we haven't faced as much competition," said sophomore player Eric Wang. "Lynbrook and Wilcox were our only rivals."

Key players returning include seniors John Chen, Rollinson, Wong, Kevin Yao and junior Tim Rollinson.

The team played its first game at Wilcox on Sept. 15, losing 20-9 but Bonner believes that the score does not accurately reflect the team's performance.

"This was the first varsity game for many of the players and the ending score did not reflect the amazing effort I saw from the team," said Bonner.

"There are areas we really need to work on but it is still very early in the season."

Leading scorers in the game were K. Rollinson with three goals and T. Rollinson with two. Captains were also announced before the game; Yao and Chen will take the leadership of the team for the remainder of the season.

After ending the first quarter with the Falcons down by three, two quick goals by T. Rollinson put the team behind by only one goal, but a collapse of the defense in the second half led to the overwhelming Wilcox victory.

"Next time Wilcox is coming to our pool and we will have a lot more game experience," said Chen. "It's going to be a close game." ♦

"We proved last year that we can win this league, now it's time to get it done."

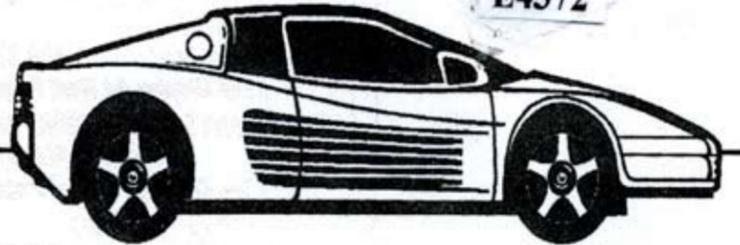
—senior Victor Wong

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GIRLS' GOLF

Incoming freshmen help prevent sophomore slump

by Uttara Sivaram

One year after starting as a new sport at the school, a young girls' golf team has undergone major changes that should improve the girls' chances of a successful season. This year, interest was high among incoming students.

"The team is pretty fun," said freshman Abby Wolf, who recently joined the team. "It's different, being on a high school team instead of on a middle school team. It is so much more competitive."

The team will be led by junior Uttara Sivaram, seniors Natasha Aleksic, Kayla Epsman and Sharon Kikinis, in 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th places, respectively. Freshman Abby Wolf, Jay Kim, Sanjana Verma, Samika Kumar, Liana Riley and Yifat Amir

all show promise, and will prove to be an asset to the team. Also, with the number of freshmen joining the ranks, the team may not be hit as hard next year with the loss of only three players. Thanks to the many freshmen, the team can be sure of a relatively smooth transition for the next few years.

"It will be very interesting to see how the freshmen impact our team," said Kikinis. "I think the success of last year really pumped up the students just coming into Saratoga."

Additionally, Saratoga will be able to compete in more matches, most of which are closer to home, since the team changed its league from the Bay division to the Mt. Hamilton League, home to more familiar schools like Leland and Lynbrook. This move was mainly aimed to relieve trans-

portational challenges and allow the team to focus on improving their scores. Since Los Gatos, too, has made the move to the Mt. Hamilton division, the two rival schools will continue to face off.

"Frequent play will really help the team," said Epsman. "The fact that we will be playing closer to home is an added bonus."

Another development to the team involves coach Casey Hall, who has recently accepted an offer to work at Coyote Creek, a course near Morgan Hill. This gives players the opportunity now to practice at two sites—the home course, Saratoga Country Club, as well as Coyote Creek. Indeed, if there is one lesson that Hall hopes to impress upon the new additions, it is that adapting one's play to the circumstances of a match is essential to success

in competitive golf.

"The girls will get to play a variety of courses, for matches and for practice," said Hall. "It's such a fantastic opportunity for the girls, to be able to play on virtually any course in the area."

The girls have already kicked off the season with two wins, both against Evergreen Valley. The first was a narrow victory; Saratoga won by a mere point, 244-245, after playing at The Villages Country Club. The second was won by a larger, 14 point margin at the Spring Valley course in Milpitas. Although the team was shaky at first, scoring dangerously high scores, the girls pulled it together by the second game and won 212-226.

"We're already off to a good start," said senior Kayla Epsman. "It's a good group to carry the torch for next year." ♦

SWIM | Making history

continued from pg. 1

The 400-yard freestyle relay team, consisting of Hinshaw, fellow graduate Matt Murray, junior Adam Hinshaw and sophomore Ian Burns, set a new national record at CCS finals in May, winning SHS their only first place in the national rankings. The 200-yard medley relay consisting of B. Hinshaw, Murray, Burns and graduate Brad Murray finished third, missing first place by less than a second.

M. Murray was also a strong presence in the national standings, finishing fourth in the 100-yard backstroke and .07 seconds outside the top 16 in the 100-yard butterfly. A. Hinshaw finished as the top sophomore in the 500-yard freestyle.

This is the first national champion-

ship for any sport in Saratoga High history. The national meet sheet published in Swimming World Magazine. The article also touched the key relationships among teammates and accomplishments outside of high school swimming.

The strong team will struggle to match last year's results after losing B. Hinshaw, M. Murray and B. Murray, who are swimming at Division I colleges. Along with A. Hinshaw and Burns, CCS qualifiers seniors Kyle Borch and Michael Zhang, juniors Justin Chung and Tim Rollinson, sophomore Mac Hyde and former CCS champion and new addition senior Mark Liu will look to fill the holes.

If some swimmers fill in relay spots and [reach the] finals in individual events, we can have another great year at CCS," said B. Hinshaw. ♦

FIELD HOCKEY



Jordan Waite

Junior Shea Sullivan battles an opponent from Homestead for control of the ball.

Trio of shutouts give early hope

by Ren Norris
and Synthia Ling

In the last two minutes of the CCS finals last November, Los Gatos edged out Saratoga for the CCS title. This year, the Falcons are back for revenge.

There have been changes this season, as last year's head coach Amber Wilson recently had a baby and doesn't have enough time to make it to every practice and game, so Wilson will be the assistant coach. The head coach will be Saratoga and UC Berkeley alumnus Kellie York.

The girls, however, do not think this change affects the team much.

"We're psyched to have [York]," said senior co-captain Sam Li. "She brings a new perspective but at the same time she hasn't changed anything too much."

A challenge for the team is forming a strong offense, as all three starting forwards graduated last year. A new line-up formation involving five attackers will help compensate for the lost seniors. Li will head the offense at center forward and will be a key player in creating goal-scoring opportunities throughout the season. Joining the team this year are several underclassmen new to the varsity squad. Freshmen Hannah Johnson and Megan Doles also take on the challenge of being the only freshmen on varsity.

"It's pretty intimidating because

you're expected to be at the same level as everyone else," said Doles. "The team is really welcoming, but I'm just trying to keep up with the others."

The team smashed preseason opponents, finishing the preseason with a record of 3-0. They beat Homestead 1-0 on Sept. 3 with a goal by junior Shea Sullivan with an assist from sophomore Anna Ashe. On Sept. 8, the girls pulled off an impressive 7-0 victory over Willow Glen. Goals were scored by senior co-captain Anna Schroeder, senior co-captain Sam Li, junior Whitney Hansen, sophomore Annie Barco and three goals by Ashe.

Two days later on Sept. 10, the Falcons did it again with a 7-0 win against Branham. Goals were scored by senior Jordan Leonard, Sullivan, Hansen and both Li and Schroeder

scored twice.

"I was very impressed by our passing and scoring which showed how easily we can improve and work together as a team," said Schroeder.

Throughout the preseason, the team kept a shutout because of strong defense and saves by senior goalies Madeline Rothenberg and Tanya Valluri.

As the season starts, players say they feel prepared to face field hockey powerhouses such as Los Gatos and St. Francis.

The girls faced Archbishop Mitty on Sept. 22 and Los Gatos on Sept. 24, but those games could not be covered due to publication deadlines. ♦

THE SCORES

Field Hockey
9/3 Saratoga 1, Homestead 0
9/8 Saratoga 7, Willow Glen 0
9/10 Saratoga 7, Branham 0

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GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

Early success with new middles good sign for team

by **Aanchal Mohan
and Amanda Yi**

The girls' volleyball team is relying on teamwork rather than team size for success this year.

"We only have nine people [but] we're all really close already because most of us have played together for two, some of us three years," said senior co-captain and side hitter Chelsea Sabella. "I think that's going to be one of our strong points."

Because of the loss of graduated seniors, the team had to make changes and bring up underclassmen to fill its holes, especially in the middle.

"Last year, we had really good middles like [Samantha Lovelady and Kiersten Dolbec]," said senior setter Alysia Patel. "We had to bring up three middles: sophomores Chloe Knight and Talia Sisco and junior Megan Brading, all of whom are all pretty new at playing middle."

Coach Brad Fredrickson has been working with the new middles separately during practice so that they can be ready for their first varsity season.

"Varsity is the complete opposite of junior varsity," said Sisco. "I'm going to have to work very hard so that I can play the position well."

As the team works to strengthen up its middle, the defense and

offense remain rock solid.

"Defense is a strength for us with Emily Baba as our libero," said Patel. "Our offense is really good with [seniors] Nicole [Grag-nola] and [Sabella] as our outside hitters and [junior] Hanna Nielson as our right big side."

Co-captain Gragnola is looking forward to a good positive season.

"[Our] goal this year is to be able to play as a team," said Gragnola. "Volleyball is a very team oriented game and we need to make sure to support each other and stay positive, especially when someone is down."

The team is hoping to beating last year's record of 1-11 when their only win was over Gunn High School. The Falcons will be playing in the "A League" De Anza Division this year.

"We have a lot of really good teams in our league like Los Gatos and Palo Alto," said Sabella. "[They] are going to be hard to beat."

The girls kicked off their regular season with the Spikefest Tournament on Sept. 4 where they played Archbishop Mitty, the six-time Northern California champions.

The Falcons played a tough match, losing a close game 23-25 but ending up losing to the Monarchs in 2 out of 3 games. Saratoga ended up winning the bronze division (third place)

after winning three out of five matches that day.

"During the tournament, we beat Palo Alto, so that was really exciting," said Patel. "I didn't expect us to do so well, but our middles are improving a lot and I have high expectations."

The team played Homestead on Sept. 24, King's Academy on Sept. 22, St. Francis on Sept. 21 and Gunderson on Sept. 16 (25-5, 25-5, 25-13) but due to printing deadlines not all results could be published. The girls will also play at Los Gatos Sept. 29, and Palo Alto at home Oct. 1. ♦

THE SCORES

Volleyball
9/4 Saratoga 1, Mitty 2

9/5 Saratoga 2, Palo Alto 1

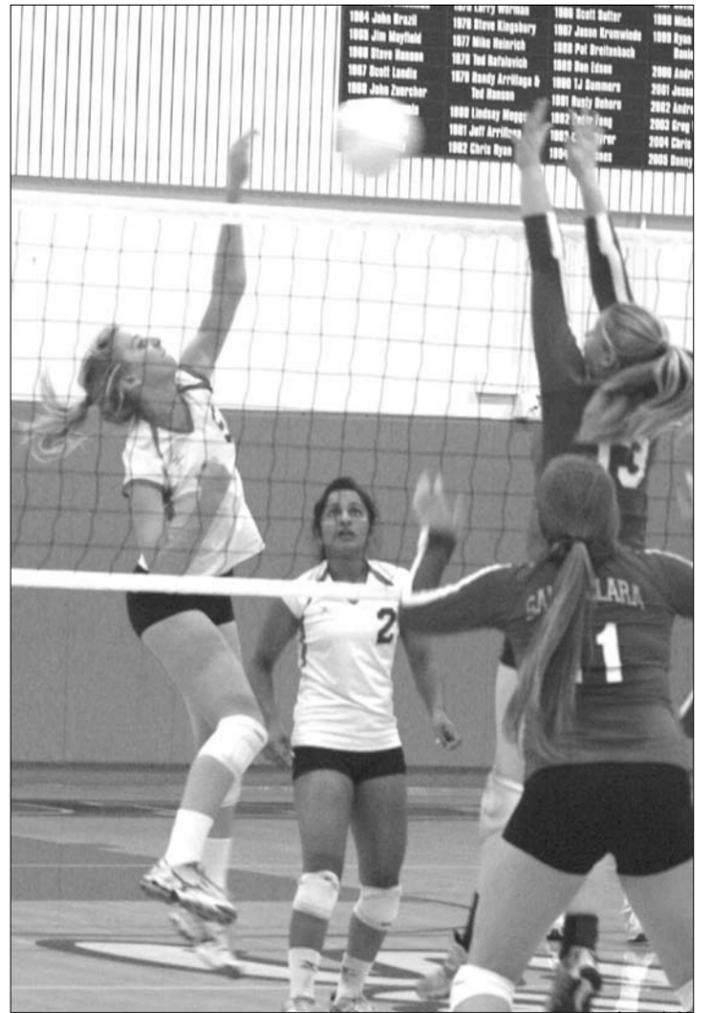
9/10 Saratoga 3, Soquel 0

9/11 Saratoga 3, Valley Christian 0

9/15 Saratoga 3, Santa Clara 0

9/16 Saratoga 3, Gunderson 0

See saratogafalcon.org/sports for more details.



Junior Hanna Nielson spikes the ball over the Santa Clara High defense in a three game win during preseason play on Monday, Sept. 15.

GIRLS' WATER POLO

Loss of seniors makes voids in team line-up

by **Emily Williams
and Pia Mishra**

The girls' water polo team isn't expecting any easy wins this year as they compete in the upper division De Anza League with a brand new roster.

The team lost six of its key players from last year: seniors Lauren Opatry and Megan Nolet as well as graduates Alison Norris, Kaylee Pettengill, Amanda Murabito and Casey Long.

In the offseason they managed to gain a few new faces to fill up some of the holes but as a result, the team is a fairly new group of people still getting to know each other.

This season the varsity team will include Stephanie Borsum, Courtney Chaffin, Courtney Murabito, Sammi Lotti, McKenzie Crase, Joyee Woodrow, Allison Buchanan, Pia Mishra, Elyse Berlinberg, Corinne Moran and Sara Knysh as goalie.

"This year is going to be like starting all over again for us," said senior Stephanie Borsum. "It's going to be tough."

Varsity coach Courtney Crase is expecting a good season and hard work from her team no matter what the outcome is.

"My goals for the girls are for them to have fun, build in-

dividual and team sportsmanship and develop their water polo skills," said Crase.

This year, Crase has decided to put more emphasis on swimming and leg strength exercises to build endurance for the grueling games, especially the game against their league rivals Los Gatos and Palo Alto.

In the past few years Los Gatos and Palo Alto have consistently beaten Saratoga but Crase has hope for this season.

"Every year we come closer and closer to beating them which gets the girls really pumped up," said Crase. "When they get excited about the opponent, their adrenaline gets going and they come out strong and ready to play."

At the beginning of the season team had not voted for new captains, Knysh and Borsum stepped up as leaders of the team. They are now the official co-captains of the team.

"Having good leadership is important to bring the team together in order to play the best we can," said Knysh.

Despite the challenges ahead, the team is eager to put forth their best efforts this season.

"Win or lose, I just want them to play their hardest and give it everything they have," said Crase. ♦

BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY

Runners step it up after slow start

by **Jordan Waite
and Vijay Menon**

Despite the loss of several key team members and the promotion of former assistant coach Dan Hodgins to head coach, the boys' cross country still has high expectations for a great season.

The team's two strongest runners, alumni Alan Menezes and Kian Banks, graduated last year, a big loss for the team considering the talents the duo brought to the squad. The team will also have to deal with the loss of seniors Kyle Borch and Nick Olsen and sophomore Harry Curtis, who elected not to participate this year.

"I wish we had a stronger team," said varsity runner junior Kyle Fukui, "but I'm hopeful that we'll be able to place in CCS."

Because of these key absences, the remaining varsity members are now being forced to step up their contributions to the team. Fukui and fellow junior Garrick Chan, promising freshman David Zarrin and senior captain Joe Stevens will anchor this year's squad. Stevens and Chan have been selected as co-captains of the team. The other members of varsity are yet to be decided.

"Since we lost those guys, [we] all push each other harder in the workouts," said Chan.

The team is also having to deal with injuries. Zarrin has a knee problem and Chan has missed some action with Os-good-Schlatter disease, a condi-

tion that causes knee pain due to growth spurts. Despite these factors, Chan insists that the team is "ready."

Hodgins, now in his new role as head coach and assistant coach Megan Fish are getting the team pumped up for the new season with exercises such as the Kenyan Core, a strength building drill. Hodgins is an experienced runner who works out with the team and Fish is the muscular training coach.

"The new coaches are great," said Zarrin. "I really like how [Hodgins] goes on runs with

"We'll have to work really hard if we want to beat them."

—junior Kyle Fukui

us and acts like a part of the team."

The main events the team is training for are the League and CCS meets. Other important races are the San Francisco RAM on Sept. 22, the Artichoke Invitational in Half Moon Bay on Sept. 27 and the SARA invitational in Crystal Springs on Oct. 10.

"I'm really excited for these upcoming meets," said Fukui. "It's going to be a challenge to compete at such a high caliber."

While the team is confident of making CCS, their ultimate goal for the season is to make state. "Last year we were close but missed by 27 points," said Chan. "We have to get fourth

place [this year at CCS]." The Falcons run in the De Anza League, which is the lesser of the two leagues in the Bay Area. Teams with which they are in close competition with are Prospect and Sacred Heart Prep.

"[Prospect and Sacred Heart] have good teams," said Fukui. "We'll have to work really hard if we want to beat them."

Hodgins has the team training six days a week so they're ready for their tough upcoming season. Weekdays are hard, with speed intervals and hill repeats on Mondays and Tuesday, followed by a medium run and weight workout on Wednesday and a speed workout on Thursday.

The weekend is a little more relaxing in terms of training; Friday is an easy day with a run at a comfortable tempo and Saturday is a long-distance run at Rancho San Antonio park in Mountain View.

"We're doing good level workouts for the beginning of the season," said Zarrin. "The training is definitely helping out the team."

The team raced in the Lynbrook Center Meet on Sept. 9, placing eighth out of nine teams.

"We didn't do so great in this race," said Fukui, "but we'll get better."

Fukui finished 26th out of 64 competitors while Chan, the only Falcon in the top 20, placed 19th. The JV team raced in the Firebird invitational on Sept. 17 but varsity decided to stay back and train. ♦

You Play What?!

Sophomore grabs life by the horns

by Roy Bisht
and Girish Swaminath

Sophomore Andre Figueroa stands on the grounds of the Oakdale rodeo stadium on a cloudy evening. He is alone as he waits anxiously in the center of the arena at the Oakdale rodeo tournament. His heart begins pounding forcefully as a 400-pound steer charges at him. Figueroa then swiftly maneuvers around the steer and quickly thrusts his arms around it. After wrestling with the creature for a moment, Figueroa forces the steer down.



Figueroa

He is a rodeo cowboy—a steer-wrestler, also known as bulldogger, who has won several competitions. Figueroa has had a passion for bulldogging since age nine. His passion only grew after he was exposed to rodeo events by his father, who rides broncos for recreation.

"Once, I visited a rodeo and really enjoyed watching the adults ride steers," said Figueroa. "I wanted to ride them but I saw how people became injured for life after horrible accidents. Then I realized that I wanted to take them down instead of being taken down."

Eventually, he began competing in local tournaments in areas such as Gilroy, Livermore and Oakdale.

"These competitions are very exciting, I get a big rush of adrenaline every time that the steer charges out at me," said Figueroa.

Figueroa primarily attributes the intensity of the tournaments to the variety of prizes awarded to competitors with the fastest time records of tackling steer, such as \$100 checks and cowboy hats. He primarily gained endurance by frequently practicing wrestling and judo.

"During my last tournament at Oakdale, I was able to get a steer

down in 7.6 seconds and I won a huge valuable belt buckle," said Figueroa.

Steer-wrestling is a dangerous and difficult sport. Massive strength and endurance are required to overpower a charging steer.

"The most difficulty in bulldogging is getting a good grip on the steer," Figueroa said. "They have a lot of muscle

"These competitions are very exciting. I get a rush of adrenaline every time the bull charges at me."

—sophomore Andre Figueroa

in their head so they can pull away easily, plus you have to avoid the horns."

Bulls can do a lot of damage to a human body, as steers are about twice the size of an average adult. But so far in his rodeo career, Figueroa has

managed to avoid any serious injuries.

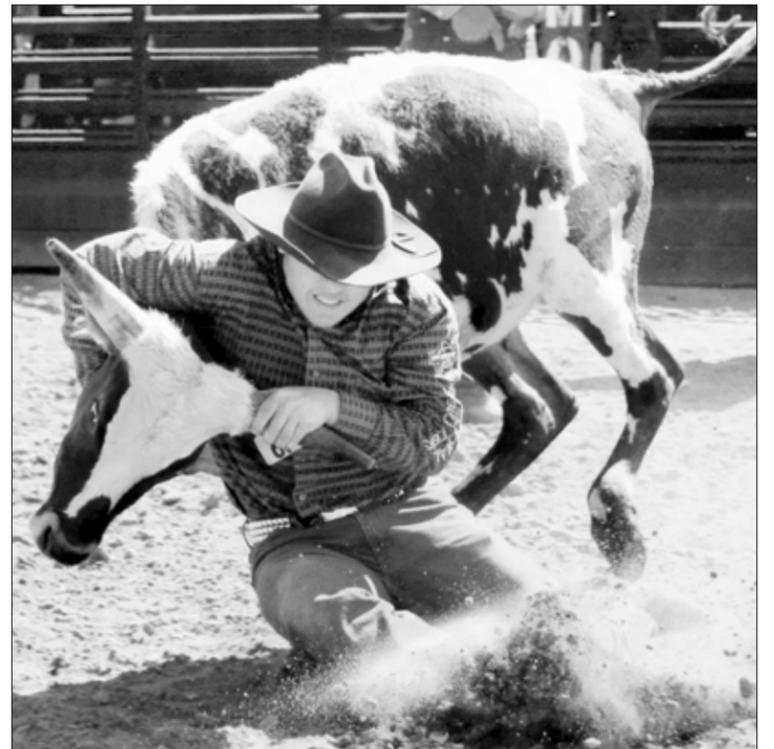
"The worst thing that has ever happened was when a steer stepped on my right calf," said Figueroa. "I ended up with about an 8-inch bruise the next day. Other than that, I haven't really been injured that badly."

Figueroa practices once or twice a week at a nearby rodeo for all his bull riding events but desires to travel farther away to other cities in California to compete in the near future.

"There are a lot of places I want to go to," said Figueroa. "I have never been to Pamplona in Spain and I have always wanted to participate in the rodeo there."

Figueroa believes that his perseverance and enjoyment of the sport have improved his performance and concentration. He does not aim to pursue bulldogging as a career but merely as a hobby.

"No matter what sport you do, you must always have fun and work hard in order to accomplish your goals," said Figueroa. ♦



courtesy of Andre Figueroa

Sophomore Andre Figueroa has placed in rodeos, excelling at bulldogging.

Kang excels at classic Korean martial art of Kumdo

by Anoop Galivanche
and Jason Wu

With a fierce "Eeeeeee-yah!" sophomore Sophie Kang lunges forward in a rapid yet calculated motion, stamps her right foot on the wooden floor and strikes her opponent soundly on top of the head with her bamboo sword, or jook-do. Kang and her opponent are sparring in their dojo, a studio where martial arts students traditionally convene to hone their skills.

Although Kang is a self-professed couch potato, she has been practicing the ancient Korean martial art of kumdo since the age of 11.

"Normally, I hate exercise and try to avoid it as much as I can," said Kang,

but I don't really think of kumdo as exercise as much as I do a form of physical therapy. There's a great feeling of satisfaction that I get when I score a

"I don't think of kumdo as exercise as much as I do a form of physical therapy. Kumdo allows me to take out my frustration in a safe manner."

—sophomore Sophie Kang

solid hit, and kumdo allows me to take out my frustration and anger in a safe manner."

However, Kang had to face many

difficulties when she began learning kumdo, not least of which was overcoming her own insecurities.

"When I first started my training, I was really shy and couldn't do all the shouting and yelling," said Kang, who at one point took a 12-month hiatus to reconsider her participation. "I also hated the feeling of hitting people and being hit."

Because she is one of only a handful of girls in her dojo, she frequently spars against boys during her twice weekly, hour-long practices.

"I usually have to spar with boys since most of the time there's only one other girl with me at practices, and they never go easy on me just because I'm a

girl," said Kang.

In spite of all the hardships that she has had to face, or perhaps because of them, Kang has experienced success in kumdo competitions, once winning a silver medal at a local tournament. But Kang concedes her biggest accomplishment is not winning medals, but mastering the vocal sounds of kumdo.

"People tell me I have the manliest girl voice out of anyone they know," she said.

Kang feels it has impacted her life as a whole.

"Kumdo has given me a way to productively channel my energy," said Kang, "and I really believe that it has made me a better person." ♦



Kang

The Skinny

What's Hot Online
saratogafalcon.org

- **News:** Construction starts on \$2 million Media Arts program building
- **Opinion:** SAT favors the affluent
- **Sports:** Football looking to prove they belong in the "A" League
- **PC:** Blondes bring brain-power

TOPTEN

BEST THINGS ABOUT BEING BACK TO SCHOOL

- 10 New things to learn... and new things to forget
- 9 The chicks... More like turkeys
- 8 You'll get a ton of sleep; all you have to do is drop out of school
- 7 Towering over the freshman...It's "Little People Big World" all over again
- 6 New teachers to mess up your names. Good luck, Abhishek Venkaataaraamabhla
- 5 Delicious lunch food. Would you like some Pepto with those chimichangas?
- 4 Hella sweet and well thought out Homecoming themes that everybody loves. Yeah... We like them.
- 3 The interesting classes...Is that drool all over your desk?
- 2 Freshman quad day. After last year, maybe we'll actually stay on campus for a good laugh
- 1 Yes, all of these are sarcastic.

—Ben Clement and Sulman Hassan

THECRITIC
Glee

Fox, Wednesday 9 p.m.

Glee is exactly the show for people who are looking for something new to watch. It's a unique blend of gossip, comedy, and even singing. It's about a teacher in a typical high school who wants to restart the glee club at his school, but the only members of the club are school outcasts.

Not only do viewers get a taste of the drama and scandal of high school, but they also get to experience a variety of entertaining songs and dances throughout the one hour slot every Wednesday. ♦

- by Kavya Nagarajan

Saratoga Snapshots



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: SENIOR POWER THE SENIOR CLASS, sporting red, GETS PUMPED AT THE RALLY ON SEPT. 4. **ballin'** junior karthik an-naamalai shoots hoops on one of the new outdoor basketball courts on aug. 27. **GRABbin'** a bite seniors rachel doty and cathryn paolini get lunch at the On-campus ptso barbeque on aug. 28. **wild wild west** senior rally commissioners chelsea sabella and bryce dozier fire up the crowd at the western themed first rally on sept. 4.

Will the real BK please stand up?

"I was only two minutes into meeting this kid. He'd already been taking my nicknames."

Brian Kim



Sometimes when you laugh at other people the joke turns out to be on you. For the past few years a friend of mine told me about the frustrating situations she'd gotten into because she shared the same full name as a student a grade above us. She'd been mistakenly called to the office only to be turned away because they got the names mixed up again. She'd even been contacted about internship offers that weren't meant for her. And it didn't help that her Student ID Number was almost identical to her counterpart's.

Being the gentleman I most certainly am, I could only laugh at this close friend.

Identity Crisis

Well, it turns out that karma has a funny way of getting back at a guy for a few cheap laughs. Just as this friend's identity problem had finally been resolved by graduation, it looks like mine is getting started, as there are now three "Brian Kim's" walking this campus, the other two having joined the school as freshmen.

How does that happen? There was never a time in my high school career when I had to worry about another me because I was always the one and only "Brian Kim," "BK," "BKim," etc. Heck, at this point, you wouldn't even know this column was written by me unless my photo hung above my two-times-overused name in bold print.

It gets worse. I've already run into name confusions since before school even started.

Freshman Year Relived

It feels good to receive an unexpected call from a friend but when senior Maggie Lin is introducing herself as my Link Crew leader for the upcoming year, something is clearly amiss. It turns out that there was a mix-up in the contact information and my parents had already been informed that I'd be in good hands as I embark on my supposed first year through high school.

As a way to make-up for this little mishap, Maggie kindly introduced me to one of the two freshmen Brian Kim's, her actual Link Crew kid and as it turns out, he wasn't such a bad guy after all—that is, until I heard from afar what I made out to be my initials, "BK." It's what many have called me for the past couple of years. From my peers to my teachers, "BK" was a good wholesome nickname that I could unfailingly be identified by.

Nickname Theft

My initial reaction (no pun intended) was to turn around and expect to be greeted by a familiar face but, of course, that holler across the hallway was for the other "BK." I was flabbergasted. I was only two minutes into meeting this kid and he'd already been taking my nicknames.

What's So Significant About a Name?

As Shakespeare pondered, "What's in a name?" It may seem like my name is just as significant as the next guy's but to me, it means a lot more. My various nicknames have brought me more than an identity. My initials have been known to make people hungry as they provoke great Whopper nostalgia. But most of all, they are the two most popular consonants people have been hollering across hallways to grab my attention for years, until now.

What can I do? It all comes down to my being unlucky, not necessarily just another face in the crowd. Three years of my friend's being confused with just one other student equated to my upcoming year of confusion with two other students. I guess this means I'll have to work twice as hard to stand out among the three Brian Kim's. Funny how things work out, huh? ♦

buzzworthy

Senior shines in dance show

At 11 at night on a Wednesday, when most seniors were hard at work on homework or their college applications, senior Saniha Shankar was at senior Varun Parmar's house editing music for her upcoming dance show.

On Sept. 5, Shankar had her Bharatanatyam Arangetram, a solo debut performance at the McAfee Performing Arts Center. Not only was this a solo dance but it also lasted two and a half hours.

Traditionally, after many years of training, dancers have a show to mark their debut from dance by "presenting what they know."

Although Saniha fixed the date for the show roughly a year ago, she said she did not start practicing intensely until this summer.

In the months leading up to her performance, Shankar practiced two to three

hours a week. In the week before her performance she rehearsed three to four hours a day, all while trying to keep up with her school work.

"I remember Saniha came over at six on a school night and stayed until 11 just editing music," said Parmar. "After that, she still had to go home and do all her homework. She worked really hard on this show."

Although Shankar was so nervous before the show that "she almost didn't want to go out and perform," all her hard work paid off at the end.

With friends and family supporting her, she pulled off the show.

"She did awesome," said Parmar. "Everyone's really proud of her."

On Oct. 3, senior Kavya Nagarajan will perform her own solo dance as well. ♦

- by Olivia Chock

