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Tough training techniques

IN-DEPTH | 18-19

Highlights of education outside the "Toga bubble"



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THE saratogafalcon



Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA
An Independent School Publication

saratogafalcon.org

Friday >> September 30, 2011

Vol. 52, No. 2

HOMECOMING 2011: CHILDREN'S STORIES



FALCON // IZZY ALBERT



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

This year, the "Alice in Wonderland" senior centerpiece was required to be self-supporting to avoid any excess weight placed on the rooftop. A text message was sent out to all seniors late in the day last Sunday after the administration declared the original framework for the centerpiece too tall. Because of the height, the framework was in danger of falling over and being a hazard to students. In order to fix it in time, a group of almost 30 seniors convened in the quad to shorten the metal backing and make the necessary corrections. (Top) Seniors hoist up the metal framework for the centerpiece. The final product (left) was finally completed around 8:30 p.m. (For full coverage, see pages 12-13.)

PARCEL TAX

Classes salvaged

BY Jennifer Jin & Joanna Lee

Bigger classes, one fewer guidance counselor, a shorter school year—all of these and more were averted this year, largely because of the community's passage of a parcel tax to support Los Gatos and Saratoga High Schools last year, according to school officials.

Voted in on May 3, the passing of Measure A implemented an annual \$49 parcel tax per household to support both Saratoga and Los Gatos High schools. The tax is expected to generate \$4.8 million over a six-year time span, going directly to educational funds.

"To me, there's no other option. It seemed like the right thing to do," assistant principal Hyde said. "We did well and it showed that the community supports education."

Without the parcel tax, the school would have been forced to lay off teachers and significantly increase class sizes. In the long run, the parcel tax will help the school provide classes for students without having to drop courses or lay off teachers.

It is also very likely that a counselor would have had to be laid off if it wasn't for the passing of the parcel tax.

"Those counselors are very important since they make sure that you get the information that you need," principal Jeff Anderson said. "If we cut a counselor, there would have been over 400 kids per counselor."

Although core classes would not have been cut, many electives such as art or drama may have been cut.

According to Anderson, it is very likely that if the parcel tax were not approved, property values would have gone down. Without money to keep the quality of the education up, the value of the property goes down because the quality of the schools is a tremendous factor in determining community value.

"Spending \$49 to ensure that school remain potent and that we're going to get a good education is a win-win situation for everyone," Anderson said.

With the implementation of the parcel tax, the budget for the next couple years looks more secure.

"It's a really good testament to the two communities that they stepped up and passed it," Anderson said. "We're fortunate." ♦

>> thebigidea

Parcel Tax Effects

Guidance Counselors
The school was able to keep all four counselors.

Programs
Electives not cut.

Cost
Community members pay \$49 annually for 6 years.

When HC was not just skits, dances

BY Aashna Mukerji

Back when dinosaurs roamed the earth, as assistant principal Karen Hyde likes to say, Homecoming was a week for alumni to return and show support for their school. Now that idea seems peculiar and out of place. Over the years, Homecoming has developed into an event full of pride and spirit meant for the current

students, not directed toward the mostly forgotten alumnus who was crowned Homecoming queen in the class of '94.

Four decades ago, Homecoming used to involve bonfires and parades displaying floats created by each grade.

"Once we got rid of the floats, [Homecoming] became more about how to involve kids thematically, in costume, without doing a parade," said

Hyde, who has worked as an administrator at the school since the 1970s.

The idea caught on and eventually grew into a strictly on-campus event. Students would dress up to their theme and come to lunch in costume. There would be music, but that was it.

Students shaped Homecoming week into the event it is today by competing with

other grades. Skits began to be performed at lunch, and eventually a system was developed where each class was assigned a certain day. Freshmen would perform their skits on Monday, sophomores on Tuesday and so on, but Friday was left open—a drab finish to a week full of school spirit.

>> **Quad Day** on pg. 12

CLASSES

Friday announcements: SHSTV goes weekly

BY Shivani Chadha & Anika Jhalani

SHSTV, a branch of the Media Arts Program, has begun a new tradition with its weekly Friday broadcasts, a more interesting way for students to receive the often mundane announcements along with short news reports.

"I think it's great that we are putting out these weekly announcements," senior pro-

ducer Talia Sisco said. "But the stress level from last year has definitely increased."

In the previous year, the staff churned out video announcements every other month. They were longer broadcasts and often focused on topics on a more in-depth level.

"Getting broadcasts out every week means we have to get information out and put together quickly," Sisco

said. "We also can't go too in-depth because our time is limited; we can only be as long as the average ASB morning announcement."

The quicker broadcasts mean catching events early on and delivering them on video in a concise fashion.

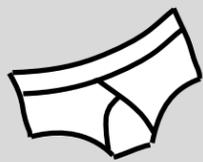
"It is hard work, but it really feels like it pays off," senior reporter Katya Simpson said.

"I love seeing our work

every Friday and the weekly broadcasts are helping the department's recognition on campus," she added.

Many SHSTV team members believe that the biggest difference between this year and last year has been the increased efficiency level, versus trying to get every piece of the broadcast perfect.

>> **SHSTV** on pg. 6



news
>> briefs

New students welcomed by commission

The New Student Commission is adding a new component this year: an upperclassman new student buddy system. Usually, the commission only holds an annual barbecue at the end of summer for students new to the district.

Senior head commissioner Ruchie Bhardwaj, however, felt that they should do more to help students adjust to a completely new school.

Each commissioner is assigned to one new student and will contact him or her by phone or by Facebook for a lunch date sometime during the first few weeks of school. Commissioners will get to know their buddies and help them feel more welcome.

Bhardwaj believes the program will be more effective in the future because it will run more smoothly once the commissioners work out the kinks.

"Ideally, we would have had the buddies matched at the end of the previous year. I think in the future, it could be really helpful to the new students," Bhardwaj said.

—Ashley Tang

Band to compete in new circuit

With a new season comes a new circuit for the marching band. Despite past participation in the Western Band Association (WBA) circuit, this year it is competing in the Marching Band Open Series (MBOS).

Band director Seth Jones had originally planned for the band to participate in Bands of America, yet another circuit. But this plan dissolved when Saratoga's division in Bands of America didn't have enough competitors and was cancelled. By the time of the cancellation it was too late to join their old circuit again, so they decided to join MBOS.

The competitions, however, are not limited to MBOS shows. The marching band will compete in some Northern California Band Association shows, but will go to MBOS's championships in Chino Hills the weekend of Nov. 12.

"Something I don't think a lot of people realize about this circuit is that SoCal has some amazing bands," McPherson said. "The competition will most likely be fiercer than it was in WBA. We just need to make sure the threat of the exponentially harder competition always drives [the band] towards excellence."

—Michelle Shu and Ashley Tang

Needed: New Freddie the Falcon

The legendary Freddie Falcon—in the past, he's encouraged spirit at football games and been revered by SHS students and fans and especially small children. But the beloved character that once could be seen dancing at games is no more. That's right: The school needs a Freddie—and fast.

"Being [Freddie] was fun, especially because it was so mysterious," said the school's last Freddie the Falcon, a student who, by tradition, is anonymous. "It was like I could spy on the crowd, and I knew they'd all be staring at me, but no one would know who I was."

The mascot has been always been a mystery to the student body. Only some are lucky enough to see who hides behind the feathery mask.

"You know, I have a pretty good idea as to who it has been for the past couple of years," said senior cheerleader Rebecca Smerdon.

So the spirit squad has a message for students: If anyone is interested in being Freddie the Falcon this year, fly over to the office of assistant principal Karen Hyde and let her know you're interested.

—Anika Jhalani

>> upcoming events

7:30 p.m. Homecoming Game vs. Los Altos

Oct. 1 Homecoming Dance in Gym

Oct. 3 Staff Development Day (No school)

Oct. 15 PSAT

Oct. 20 Fall Play "Tartuffe"

>> picturethis



FALCON // JUSTINE HUANG

Senior Jocelyn Takahashi edits her video clip for SHSTV in the Multimedia Journalism Lab on Sept. 22. Students in SHSTV collaborate in a group effort to present the weekly Friday announcements.

>> falconfigures

Highest average SAT scores in California in 2011

Gretchen Whitney High (Cerritos)	2004	Piedmont High	1858
Pacific Collegiate Charter (Santa Cruz)	1927	Lynbrook High (San Jose)	1852
Troy High (Fullerton)	1911	San Marino High	1821
Henry M. Gunn High (Palo Alto)	1911	Los Gatos High	1813
Saratoga High	1909	Miramonte High (Orinda)	1805
Oxford Academy (Cypress)	1903	Lowell High (San Francisco)	1805
Monta Vista High (Cupertino)	1880	Davis Senior High	1783
Palo Alto High	1875	Julian Charter	1782
Mission San Jose High (Fremont)	1873	Leonardo Davinci High (Davis)	1776
University High (Irvine)	1861	Homestead High (Cupertino)	1775

Source: LA Times

State Average SAT score: **1517**
(The SAT is out of 2,400 points)

National Average score: **1509**

—Christina Curcelli

Commission thinks green

BY Denise Lin

In recent years, the global community has taken special interest in environmental issues, striving to make the world a greener place. This train of thought has resonated with students and administrators, who have been asking themselves: "How do we begin to make the school greener?"

The answer? The Green Team.

The members of this commission, seniors Mac Hyde, Anshu Siripurapu, Ruchie Bhardwaj, Zara Sheikh and Priyanka Arunkumar, collaborate with the school board and administrators to implement school-wide measures.

Over the summer, Bhardwaj and Arunkumar were involved in a separate green team between Los Gatos and Saratoga High. Assistant principal Karen Hyde talked to them about creating a "super" green team with other students.

The commission decided to get together a group of environmentally-aware students together to tackle a variety of ideas.

The team, created last December, has had an impact throughout campus, acquiring more recycling bins for the school by proposing thermal pool heating to the school board and using smart meters to track the school's energy use.

This team has adopted a proactive attitude on "greenness." While still promoting eco-friendly habits such as "reduce, reuse, recycle," team members have also advanced to more complex issues that play an integral role in student life.

"So far, my favorite project has been implementing thermal pool heating because we were

able to present to the board and talk with the superintendent to get estimates on the cost," Arunkumar said. "We have gone pretty far with that project."

The proposition is still being processed by the school board, but the green team hopes to make the idea a reality in future years.

Part of the team's effectiveness lies in its connections with the school board, which is able to provide realistic perspectives on prospective measures.

The green team is planning to hold another meeting, a "Green Tea," to brainstorm new ideas and plan for the new school year.

This year, the Green Team hopes to raise more awareness regarding the environmental impact students have.

"I think everyone needs to take a part in making our school more green," Arunkumar said. "Anyone interested in helping the school is welcome to join the effort." ♦

THE bigidea

The "Green Team" Commission

The Lineup

Seniors Mac Hyde, Anshu Siripurapu, Ruchie Bhardwaj, Zara Sheikh and Priyanka Arunkumar

Previous Projects

Acquiring more recycling bins for the school, proposing thermal pool heating to the school board and using smartmeters to track the school's energy use

Their Mission

To make the school more "green"

FALCON FOCUS: KATLYN HIROKAWA AND TIM CASEY-CLYDE

Students construct houses in Honduras

BY Sophie Mattson & Deborah Soung

Last summer, junior Katlyn Hirokawa and sophomore Tim Casey-Clyde traveled to Honduras for two weeks with the Sierra Service Project (SSP), a Christian charity organization, to build two houses in the slums of Tegucigalpa, the capital. Today, according to the CIA World Factbook, Honduras is the second poorest country in Central America behind Nicaragua. Nearly 60 percent of the Honduran population lives below the poverty line.

The charity trip, which Hirokawa and Casey-Clyde joined through St. Andrews Episcopal Church, served to help the struggling communities of the city Fuerzas Unidas and open the students' eyes to the troubling living conditions that citizens of third-world countries experience daily.

"Although I was prepared to see a lot of poverty, since Honduras is a third-world country, nothing prepares you for what you see [in the Honduras] unless you have seen it before," Hirokawa said.

Hirokawa and Casey-Clyde bonded with and learned about the Honduran community and workers.

"While we were building these houses, we got to connect with the community and the workers," said Hirokawa. "We also got to visit human rights places and a safe home for kids from the streets or who were forced into prostitution."

The group would wake up at 6:30 every morning and head over to the work site in Fuerzas Unidas after breakfast. They would work until 4 p.m. and go back to their hotel.

After relaxing and eating dinner, they participated in nightly group discussions run by the directors of the program.

During these discussions, Hirokawa and Casey-Clyde would learn about the challenges faced by the Honduran people, such as government corruption and alarmingly high crime rates.

Although Hirokawa and Casey-Clyde focused themselves on learning about the Honduran people during their trip, these Hondurans also wanted to learn about them. Their group received recognition from television stations and special attention from the inhabitants of Honduras.

"It was also pretty unusual getting called 'gringos' everywhere we went, as most Hondurans do not see Americans very often," Casey-Clyde said. "We even got interviewed by two television stations one day while we were in the capital of Honduras and later saw ourselves on television, simply because Americans are a rare sight."

In order to communicate with the locals, Hirokawa and Casey-Clyde had to speak Spanish. For Casey-Clyde, the trip provided an opportunity to improve his Spanish skills.

"A tough part for me was the language barrier," Casey-Clyde said. "I had only taken one year of Spanish before, but I vastly improved my Spanish during the trip."

Needless to say, the experience presented challenges to Hirokawa and Casey-Clyde.

"The toughest part about the trip was seeing the poverty," Hirokawa recalled. "It can be really hard to accept that some people have to live like they do in Fuerzas. It was especially hard to see the little kids living [in poverty]."

The two discovered that constructing houses was substantially more difficult than they had expected.

"The actual building of the houses was pretty tough," Casey-Clyde said. "Most of us had to do a lot of heavy lifting of sand, cement and cinder blocks.



Courtesy of KATLYN HIROKAWA

Junior Katlyn Hirokawa and sophomore Tim Casey-Clyde pause for a picture during a summer trip to Tegucigalpa, Honduras, where they built houses for local communities.

But the hard work was worth it."

Hirokawa also found it difficult to say goodbye to the Honduran community after spending so much time with the people in Fuerzas Unidas.

"We got close with the children in that community, and it was really hard to leave them there and say goodbye," Hirokawa said.

"It was also hard to say goodbye to the families we built houses for and the workers that we built the houses with."

Hirokawa and Casey-Clyde stayed in Tegucigalpa, which Hirokawa called "loud, noisy and smelly." Despite the

unfavorable conditions Hirokawa witnessed and the manual labor she subjected herself to, she found that volunteering in Honduras was an extremely rewarding experience.

"Doing something like this really has changed my life in so many ways, and I'm forever grateful for getting to have that experience," Hirokawa said.

Casey-Clyde also found the trip memorable and would like to attend a similar trip in the future.

"It was an incredible trip that I am extremely grateful I had the opportunity to go on. I definitely hope I can do more mission trips in the future." ♦

SCHOOL CHARITY

Book drive matches Homecoming theme

BY Izzy Albert & Christina Curcelli

As classes prepare to perform their own interpretation of "Alice in Wonderland," "Wizard of Oz," "Where the Wild Things Are" and "Rumpelstiltskin," students will have the opportunity to donate these story books and more to children in need.

The Homecoming commission is sponsoring a children's book drive for charity from Sept. 12

to Sept. 30. At the end of Homecoming week, the books will be donated to either or both of two charities: the Lucille Packard Children's Hospital or Ronald McDonald House.

Books or coloring books with markers can be dropped off in the office in each respective class bin in the main office. The books must be in new or gently used condition.

Classes will have the opportunity to earn class points by donating books,

as well as decorating their designated boxes.

"The boxes will be judged based on 'pizzazz factor,'" according to Homecoming head commissioner Allison Toh.

"Each book will be considered one point, and at the end of each week, the commission will go through the boxes to assure the quality of the donations."

According to the other Homecoming head commissioner, junior Priscilla Chu, the drive was

started with the intention of doing good in the midst of a traditionally spirit-filled week.

"[The Homecoming committee] wanted to throw in some more good flowing vibes ... by helping out for charity!" Chu said. "I think it just makes Homecoming all the better by helping others."

The ASB supported the idea of a book drive, agreeing that it fits in well with the theme this year. ♦

"The Homecoming committee wanted to throw in some more good flowing vibes... by helping out for charity! I think it just makes Homecoming all the better by helping others."

>> Junior Priscilla Chu

COMPETITIONS

Underclassmen to have large role on chess team

BY Priyanka Nookala

Starting the week of Sept. 19, the chess team began its annual participation in the fall Santa Clara Valley Chess League, designed specifically for high schools throughout the Bay Area. This year the team members will use the league as an opportunity to encourage incoming freshmen and sophomores to contribute more to the team.

"I am trying to pull more underclassmen into these matches to support our team in the future," Chess club president Evan Ye said. "Personally, I hope to see both freshmen and sophomores taking up a larger role in both practicing chess and leadership."

The team won six straight state championship titles until it took second place to Mission San Jose High School in the state tournament last May. The team now hopes to re-establish itself at the league, county and state

levels. But perhaps the most important goal for the year is that members will focus their efforts building a new, strong foundation for the team to continue to thrive despite the loss of three dominant players who are graduating this June.

Anticipating the loss of seniors Ye, Sankash Shankar and Brian Wai, the team is now looking for new members. The members have hopes that newcomers can make a positive impact. "Playing with our team is special because the competition binds us together emotionally. Even though we play individual matches, we compete as a team. Each competition is a mental adventure we all share," Ye said.

The team holds lunch meetings on Monday in room 107 and has supplemental meetings on Friday at lunch for anyone who cannot attend the Monday meetings. Any students who enjoy chess are encouraged to join the team and practice their skills during the lunch meetings. ♦

>> **the bigidea**

New and Improved

Goal for the new year
To build a strong foundation for the team to continue to dominate, despite losing three key seniors this June.

Past successes to live up to
Six straight state championship titles before last year's second place finish at the state tournament in May.

New prospects
Underclassmen are encouraged to step up and take leadership of the team.

Successful 'Spelling Bee' paves way for 'Tartuffe'

BY Wren Sutterfield

The drama department has been called strong, talented, thrilling and hilarious, but never slow-moving. Before the successful performances of "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" had even concluded, auditions were happening for the fall play, "Tartuffe," which is about a hypocritical con-artist.

"[Tartuffe] has recently overtaken the estate of a man by the name of Orgon," said senior Josh Harris, who plays the show's title character. "He is a 'religious' man, who has tricked this man into believing he is actually a good guy. In doing so, he has stolen all of [Orgon's] nice goods [and] all of his food and has started to hit on a few of the members of his family."

Sophomore Annelise Nussbacher is excited about the new aspects of the show.

"The show will be bold and exciting," Nussbacher said. "It's going to be one of the most elaborate, exaggerated shows we've ever done."

An unusual aspect of the show is the audience interaction with the characters. The play allows viewers to take part in the show's comedy.

"You can actually bid for tickets to get box seats up on the stage and we

will incorporate you into the show," Nussbacher said.

Rehearsals started at the beginning of September and the cast is already hard at work. The show will run Oct. 20, 22 and 23.

The show features seniors Penny Burgess, Josh Harris and Ariella Yendler; junior Pavi Sadras; sophomore Annelise Nussbacher; freshman Blake Propach and others.

There will also be a separate cast of clowns, working out parallel scenes and making fun of the main cast. They will use lots of physical comedy in another area of the stage, mocking the actors. This group will include seniors Deborah Burger and Shannon Roseberry, junior Karen Peterson and more.

"'Tartuffe' has a lot of very big humor, outrageous costumes, an incredibly elaborate set and physical comedy," Nussbacher said. "It's probably one of the funniest shows we've ever done."

If previous drama productions have set any precedent, Tartuffe is sure to be a hit. The year has already kicked off with a student production of "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee."

"I was absolutely amazed by the level of characterization the cast was able to come up with," said Burgess, president of the Drama Club and director of "Spelling Bee".

Despite obstacles in the rehearsal

>> bigidea

Cast of 'Tartuffe'

Tartuffe: Josh Harris
Mme. Pernelle: Penny Burgess
Valere: Marshall Westall
Orgon: Mitchell McGuire
Lawrence: Jack McCarthy
Elmire: Ariella Yendler
Marian: Valerie Peterson



Courtesy of PENNY BURGESS

Junior Laura Hannibal and the cast of "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" perform the song "Pandemonium" on Sept. 9 in preparation for the opening weekend.

process, Burgess said the show went better than she ever expected.

"I was very impressed by their ability to roll with the punches—we faced countless obstacles throughout the rehearsal process, from a limited amount of rehearsal time to issues booking the Little Theater to injuries and illnesses, but every one of them went with it and did their best to learn the parts and perform them incredibly well," Burgess said of her cast and crew.

With difficult musical numbers such as

"The I Love You Song," "Pandemonium" and "I Speak Six Languages," the production was a big undertaking, but Burgess pulled it off with finesse.

"There was some point during rehearsals when I was watching them perform the opening song and I was just like ... wow. This is really going to happen," Burgess said. "And from then on I continued to be amazed by the cast. I'm so proud of what they accomplished, and I'm so happy that I was able to make this show happen." ♦

Students take advantage of community college courses

BY Andy Fang
& Elijah Yi

Fashion design, anthropology and philosophy are typically not classes one would associate with high school student. Yet, Saratoga High students often take advantage of the plethora of interesting and unique courses offered by community colleges in the area, which range from finance to sociology.

Although the school has a wide range of classes, there are still courses that are not available on campus that students are interested in. Taking classes off campus also enables students to enroll in classes they simply could not fit into their school schedule, but still wanted to take.

Junior Jenny Guarino pursued a class at West Valley College during summer break called Intro to Infectious Diseases.

"[The course] sounded really interesting and I wanted to learn more about biology and what causes illnesses," Guarino said.

With the option of taking classes through local community colleges, such as West Valley College and De Anza College, students are able to broaden the material that they learn and choose classes that cater to their interests. Furthermore, students get the added benefit of being accustomed to the college environment through the courses they take.

"[The course] definitely gave me insight to what college would be like with the abundance of tests and the lectures," Guarino said. "It involved little student interaction, just the teacher lecturing."

The way courses are taught at the college level also differs significantly. Guarino said that in her course, there was less homework, but more frequent

and challenging tests by which more specific information was assessed.

While some students take college courses off campus to cultivate their own interest in them, others like junior Johnny Chang aim to get a step ahead in their college majors and future professions. Chang, who is debating a career in finance, said that he wanted to be introduced to the field of finance with a representation of what a finance major was really all about.

However, with all of the benefits of taking classes off campus, it is still a significant commitment and requires the dedication of time. For students like junior Sasan Saadat, who is taking sociology at De Anza College and plays water polo, it can be a grueling experience.

"While it doesn't directly conflict with my schedule yet, it makes my free time very minimal. I have water polo practice until about 5 every day so then I go to class for another two and

a half hours and done get home until about 8 every night," said Saadat.

The inclusions of classes from nearby community colleges to supplement the classes that are being taught at our school widen the possibilities of high school. Saratoga High students have found that community colleges offer many viable choices that could be beneficial to their future and help them become well-rounded individuals.

"It takes a lot more commitment, but I think it's worth it to be learning what you're genuinely interested in," Saadat said. "There are hardly any advanced humanities courses at Saratoga. Rather than settle for what they offer, you can go a couple blocks down and select from a wide range of all classes." ♦

[Community college courses] takes more commitment, but it's worth it to be learning what you're genuinely interested in.

>> Junior Sasan Saadat

Graduates claim Saratoga has prepared them well for future

BY Sarah Finley

Saratoga High is one of the most rigorous public schools in California. More than 98 percent of its graduates attend college, and in 2011, 90 percent of the AP tests taken earned a qualifying score. As a result, most graduates feel that the school has prepared them to face college and life in general.

Many recent graduates reaffirm that the school's highly competitive atmosphere makes college life—and eventually getting a job in the real world—easier. William Perera, who graduated from the school in 2008 and is currently a student at Cornell University, said he felt almost over-prepared for most aspects of college academics.

"[High school] AP classes were far more difficult than entry level classes [in college]," Perera said.

In addition, Perera felt that time management lessons he learned in high school benefited him in college.

"To do well at SHS, you have to have very efficient study habits," Perera said. "A lot of students from [other] high schools did not develop these before college and struggle in their early years."

Perera also believes that international students are better prepared in high-level math skills.

"The international students are on a different level from even top-level domestic students," he said.

Alumnus Mallika Padmanabhan, class of '07, is currently enrolled in a two-year master's program at Georgetown University called Communication, Culture, and Technology. She shares many of Perera's sentiments.

"I'm pleased with what SHS focused

on, both in the classroom and extracurricular-wise," Padmanabhan said. "The approachable attitude of many SHS teachers made a difference. We were encouraged to actively think through ideas and to discuss our academic opinions with other students and the teachers."

She said the academic workload in high school prepared her well for her undergraduate years at University of California at San Diego (UCSD).

"Thanks to the rigorous AP classes and the high-level reading and assignments, I didn't experience a sudden

jump in the course work during my college freshman year; if anything, my first quarter at UCSD was a bit easier than 12th grade," Padmanabhan said.

Easing the step from high school to college was one of the best attributes of Saratoga High for Padmanabhan.

"Transitions, transitions, transitions—if you can handle academic transitions well, then the last place you went to school has done its job," Padmanabhan said.

Graduates say Saratoga High also plays an important role in helping them to get a job. Tamara Schroeder, class of '07, attended UCSD and now has a job with Solazyme, Inc. in San Francisco.

Schroeder said that there is a direct correlation between her high school education and the job she has now.

"SHS provided me with the academic background and study habits to be successful at UCSD," Schroeder said.

Schroeder agrees Saratoga teaches important life skills.

"The work ethic I learned [at SHS] has been a wonderful foundation," Schroeder said. "The competitive atmosphere toughened me up for university and the working world. What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." ♦

>> THE bigidea

Words from Graduates

William Perera ('08)

"[High school] AP classes were far more difficult than entry level classes [in college]."

Mallika Padmanabhan ('07)

"We were encouraged to actively think through ideas and to discuss our academic opinions."

Football coach becomes athletic director

BY Sarah Finley & Sophie Mattson

As he begins his fourth year as the head football coach, Tim Lugo will also be taking on the new role of athletic director.

Lugo feels this position holds a lot of responsibility. He supervises approximately 50 coaches and their 800 athletes.

"I have to make sure officials are scheduled for every game, make sure the field is prepared, communicate with parents, manage budgets and attend meetings, along with overseeing my football program and teaching classes," Lugo said.

Lugo said that although the department was in good shape when he took over, he has already made some changes that have and will improve the program.

"One thing I did do this summer was write an athletic handbook that outlines our policies and procedures for students and parents," Lugo said. "I also updated the athletics website and [put] information that parents look for on the main page.

Teacher Peter Jordan, who had held the position for three years, decided to return to a more normal assignment.

"The athletic director position can be a very time-consuming, demanding and often stressful job," Jordan said. "After working very hard at it for three years, I simply decided that I would be much happier spending more time in the classroom at school and having more time for my family at home."

However, he still holds his position as department chair for physical education. Jordan is also serving as an adviser to Lugo as he tackles the demands of his new responsibilities.

"[Jordan] has been a great resource for me as I learn [about] this position," Lugo said.

In addition to his positions as football coach and athletic director, Lugo is entering his second year of teaching Health and Drivers' Education. However, he will not be teaching physical education this year due to his demanding schedule.

Lugo hopes the athletics department will continue to expand this year as well as in coming years.

"I want to see our athletic program



FALCON // JUSTINE HUANG

In his new position, athletic director Tim Lugo oversees all of the ongoing sports.

grow in terms of being competitive and increase our exposure," Lugo said.

He also hopes that more students will participate in multiple sports, in order to make the teams stronger.

"There is this belief that you must focus on one sport if you want to play

in college and nothing could be further from the truth," Lugo said. "I'd like to see more students get involved in multiple sports and really enjoy their high school experience instead of trying to use it as a platform for a college scholarship that may or may not even exist." ♦

Newspaper nominated for national award

BY Evaline Ju

The Saratoga Falcon has been nominated for the National Scholastic Press Association (NSPA) Pacemaker award in the category for newspapers of 17 or more pages.

"It was a complete surprise and honor to find out [about the nomination]," said former editor-in-chief Shannon Galvin, who graduated from the school last spring.

More than 300 entries were made into this competition, which had five separate categories for newspapers of eight or fewer pages, newspapers of nine to 16 pages, newspapers of 17 or more pages, news-magazines and middle school newspapers.

The last time the Falcon received a Pacemaker nomination was for the 2005-2006 school year. Falcon adviser Mike Tyler also felt surprised by this year's Pacemaker nomination.

"I didn't expect to do very well because there have been years where I think the newspaper is really strong and doesn't get a nomination," he said. "So it's just one [competition] I automatically don't put much hope into. To be a finalist is a great honor."

Galvin and former editor-in-chief Uttara Sivaram sent many issues of

the school newspaper to many student press organizations for judging in June, including the October 2010 issue, which featured last year's win against Los Gatos in football.

"I think our coverage of the win over Los Gatos was a great display of our strengths as a paper," Galvin said.

Galvin looked at former Pacemaker winners when redesigning the look of the newspaper last school year.

"I think the redesign helped give us the added boost to put us in the running because it made the paper look more modern and easy-to-read," she said.

Newspapers were judged on aspects such as content quality, layout, depth of reporting, photos and art.

Tyler feels proud for the staff, especially the seniors who led the staff last year.

"For newspaper, it's exciting for an issue to come out, and you feel proud, but there's rarely ever recognition for it," he said. "It's nice for the students to receive a pat on the back once in a while from an outside entity saying, 'You're doing a good job. This is high quality work.'"

Final results of this competition will be announced in at NSPA's Fall National High School Journalism Convention in Minneapolis from Nov. 17-20. ♦

The key to PSAT success? Relax, say Merit Scholars

BY Andy Fang

An all-time record of 38 seniors, or 12 percent of the class, has qualified for the National Merit Honor program this year, meaning that they were among the top 1 percent of all scorers on the PSAT exam given each fall.

There were also 50 commended students, which meant that they were just below the level required to be named Semifinalists—sometimes falling short by as little as one point on the test.

Saratoga High usually has a 20% or more of National Merit Scholars and commended students, but this year has yielded more than usual with about 27 percent.

"We were surprised to see such a significant jump in the number of National Merit semifinalists," assistant principal Brian Safine said. "We have seen many high-achieving classes in past years, but most usually produce around 25 or 26 semifinalists. Having 38 semifinalists in one class is truly remarkable."

The key to their success? Surprisingly, some said it was not stressful studying for the PSAT, but rather a more relaxed approach.

Senior Sophie Kang, one of the National Merit scholars, spent the night before the test relaxing rather than studying.

"I definitely thought of the PSAT much more casually than I should have. The night before the SAT, I'm usually freaking out, but the night before the PSAT, I think I was watching a movie or something," Kang said.

This less intense attitude can be attributed to previous exposure to the SAT.

Just by studying for the SAT, students are also adequately prepared for the PSAT, which is a preliminary SAT.

"I felt it was just that—a preliminary SAT. I took the SAT previously, so it felt very comfortable," senior Alex Chiang, another National Merit Scholar, said.

Like Chiang, senior Isabel McPherson, also a National Merit Scholar, found that the PSAT was comparatively less difficult than the SAT as well. McPherson

was able to finish with time to spare for most sections.

"All I remember from taking the PSAT is that it was easier than the SAT, and I finished most of the sections early, so I was more focused on building a fort with [my] pencils and name card," McPherson said.

For some, the National Merit qualification came as a pleasant surprise.

"I definitely wasn't expecting to get the NMS because I had heard the cutoff would be really high and I at the time

I hadn't thought I did very well," Kang said.

McPherson also was not positive whether or not she would become National Merit Scholar.

"I don't think

you can really 'expect' it because the cutoffs are always changing," McPherson said.

Still, students were relieved when they finished the two-hour, 10-minute test.

"After the exam I was just glad it was all over and I hadn't thought I did very well or very badly on the exam itself," Kang said.

The school will recognize both the National Merit Commended students and the semifinalists at a breakfast on Oct. 12. ♦

I felt [the PSAT] was just that — a preliminary SAT. I took the SAT previously, so it felt very comfortable

>> Senior Alex Chiang

>> #bigidea

National Merit Semifinalists

Gautam Bhayani, Penelope Burgess, Desmond Chan, Michael Chang, Sofia Chang, Sanjana Chetia, Alex Chiang, Elaine Chou, Will Edman, David Eng, Anoop Galivanche, Cecilia Hollenhorst, Peter Hsieh, Daniel Hsu, Justine Huang, Chris Jones, Sophie Kang, Isabel McPherson, Ailene Nguyen, Kelsey Owyang, Viraj Parmar, Hansen Qian, Manish Raghavan, Kushal Raj, Krishnan Raman, Varsha Ramesh, Antara Rao, Meghana Rao, Parul Singh, Anshu Siripurapu, Victor Sutardja, Christine Tseng, Paras Unadkat, Jason Wu, Jennifer Yang, Alissa Zhang, Anna Zhang and Myron Zhang.



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SHSTV >> Friday broadcasts commence

continued from pg. 1

The process to put together an SHSTV broadcast is often chaotic.

The anchor must sit up straight and read the teleprompter three times, once looking at the camera that has a shot of both anchors.

Then, another camera with just a shot of one anchor, then once more with another camera that gets the shot of the other anchor.

"We do this on Thursday, one day before the broadcast during our MMJ period, so if we mess up we just restart the whole thing," sophomore reporter Ethan Gelfand said. "And Mr. Palma usually helps us by telling us what to do if he notices something wrong in the other room."

In addition to having to film the broadcast, the process of getting an idea for a broadcast approved can also be tedious.

"The most difficult part is the pre-production because we have to think of a topic to use and get it approved," Gelfand said.

"If you're lucky and get it approved the first time, you have to then set up what questions you're going to ask, who you're going to ask and when to pull them out of class, where to conduct the interviews, etc."

Despite the hard work and long hours put into creating the Friday broadcasts, the 28 students on staff have a great time and enjoy seeing their product on the screen.

"I think overall the Friday broadcasts are a lot more successful than last year," junior reporter Greg Yang said. "Having

the broadcasts weekly reminds students of important information while giving them something interesting to watch."

It seems that students are in agreement, as many enjoy watching their peers during class on the TV screen while getting information from a different take



senior Nicole Shadman

With multimedia journalism we get new people every year, which means they need to get the fundamentals down first before they start working

than the normal intercom announcements.

"I think the SHSTV broadcasts are really good," senior Salmaan Javed said. "They're really infor-

mative and it's interesting to see news broadcast in a different medium than usual."

The timely broadcasts have introduced a new perspective to the program; instead of covering events at a leisurely

pace and reporting them every other month, students must make sure they cover the current news and broadcast it to the student body almost immediately after it occurs.

"With multimedia journalism we get new people every year, which means they need to get the fundamentals down first before they start working," senior producer Nicole Shadman said.

"So while in class, we often observe people learning rather than work getting done. It's difficult, but it's a new aspect to the program, and it feels like a current news broadcast, which is helpful for students who want to know what went on that particular week." ♦

SHSTV has its own website to which it uploads current newsworthy videos, as well as coverage of events such as assembly's, sports, and dances that occur during the year. All videos can be found on shstv.saratogahigh.org.

Stride for Susie >> by: David Sparkman

PARENTS AND STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN 5K WALK ON SEPT. 25 TO SUPPORT THE FIGHT AGAINST LUNG CANCER AND HONOR FORMER COUNCIL MEMBER



Clockwise from top left: Sophomores Lizzie Ioannou and Bronwen Bowen completed the 5K stride. Top middle: The Saratoga cheer team poses for a picture at the start of the course. Top right: Even children as young as first grade came out on Sunday to help fight lung cancer. Bottom right: Saratoga cheerleaders encourage junior Steve Berman as he pushes onward. Bottom left: Parents and pets were welcome to participate. Bottom middle: Water was donated to keep participants hydrated.



SCHOOL EVENTS

More students participating in History Day this year

BY Christina Curcelli & Nelson Wang

Researching, writing and creating a project in five months is not an easy task. Only a select few dedicated and ambitious students take on the challenge of participating in the annual National History Day competition.

The long process of preparing for the 2012 contest began earlier this month. Numbers of participants from the school are up about 10 percent this year, at around 50 to 75 students, with an increase in World History students, according to history teacher Matt Torrens.

This year's National History Day theme is "Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History." Torrens is looking forward to this topic and the upcoming year's projects.



Torrens

"[This year's topic] is fantastic for sophomores," Torrens said. "'Revolution' is a constant theme as they touch on the American, Haitian, French, Russian, Indian and Chinese Revolutions."

The theme will tie in to the upper-class history courses as well.

"In U.S. History and Gov and Econ, it's a great theme because of all the cultural revolutions ... such as religious revolution, judicial revolution, racial revolution, hippie revolution and others," Torrens said.

Each student or group's topic selection was due for approval on Sept. 26 which marked the beginning of the research process. Students will compete in five different categories: documentaries, exhibitions, historical papers, performances, and websites.

One History Day veteran is looking to repeat her successes this year. Sophomore Anushree Dugar, who has par-

ticipated in the contest for the past two years, was a county, state and national finalist last year. Her paper placed fourth nationally. Dugar has high expectations for this year.

"Last year I went to D.C. for the national competition. I'm hoping to improve on [fourth place in the nation]."

Having someone with so much success "helped [the school] set the bar high," according to Torrens.

Dugar emphasized that History Day has helped her improve in other areas as well.

"The History Day Competition teaches you a lot about how to research, how to narrow down a topic and just history in general," Dugar said. "I feel that it's helped me in school."

The History Day experience benefits the students, but teachers find it satisfying as well.

"Seeing the students get that look in their eyes [is really rewarding]," Torrens

said. "I didn't tell them in a lecture or they didn't read it in a textbook, but they discovered it in a document or from an interview. It's great to see that sparkle in their eye." ♦

>> falconfigures

31 Number of students who qualified for the state competition

5 Number of students who qualified for the national competition

3 Number of projects qualified into the national competition

(2010-2011 Results)

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PERFORMANCE VS. EFFORT



EMPHASIS ON TEST PERFORMANCE IN GRADES UNFAIR TO STUDENTS

by McKenna Galvin & Sierra Smith

Tests and quizzes: 90 percent. Participation: 5 percent. Homework: 5 percent. Junior Ramya Swami stared at her AP Biology syllabus the first day of school in dread, realizing that this year, performance on quizzes and tests was going to be more important than ever before. This was not only the case in biology; practically every other class on her schedule had placed a significant weight on test scores.

As students advance through high school, teachers increasingly place a stronger emphasis on a student's ability to perform well on tests and quizzes. While testing is vital as an assessment of the progress of a student's learning, homework and participation should be recognized just as, if not more, crucial in a student's understanding of the material.

"Test scores don't accurately represent how I am doing in the class because there are too many factors that affect

how you do on a test: what time of day it is, whether or not you got sleep," Swami said. Testing also requires the ability to call upon a vast quantity of information, which is extremely difficult for some students.

The fact remains that some students simply do not perform well on tests, no matter how hard they study or prepare for them. Everyone has a different style of learning and displaying how well they know information, and tests in particular limit the amount of people who can succeed on them to those who can quickly fill in bubbles on a Scantron or fill-in-the-blank.

Perhaps the most problem is that a test score fails to indicate the amount of work and time spent on understanding concepts. One student might have studied for hours and asked the teacher for clarification numerous times to receive a B on a test, while another student may have gotten the same grade by copying others' homework and cutting class, relying on a good memory or natural ability to figure out questions. While both

students demonstrated the same level of performance, one clearly showed more commitment and effort than the other.

This and many other factors may have been the rationale to implement the Success Equals Effort program at Benedict College in South Carolina, which weighs 60 percent of a grade on effort for freshmen students. This policy, designed to help students "adopt the behavior and habits that are most likely to bring academic success," is based on the fact that if you put in effort, you are more than likely to have greater success and content mastery.

This is not to say that tests are completely pointless; they can provide valuable information to both the student and the teacher about a student's progress in the class. However, this is only a snapshot of an ongoing process; many factors such as sleep and stress can affect a student's score on any given day and are not fully representative of his or her potential. While tests should be administered frequently enough to gauge how well a student knows the material, they

should not make up the majority of a student's grade.

In addition, standardized tests like the SAT and AP tests are already in place to give colleges a measure of how well a student can perform at a given time, and can provide more accurate information about a student's test-taking skills than a grade might. The class grade should be a representation of the student's effort and commitment to the class, not of how fast he or she can spit out a string of memorized facts.

Twenty years from now, it probably won't matter if someone can recite the molecular formula of acetic acid or recall when the French Revolution began. What will matter are the organization, work ethic and other skills learned in high school that can be carried with him or her to any future endeavors. While the ability to perform and demonstrate mastery matters, effort and commitment are just as important. Teachers should recognize this and change their grading policies to more fairly measure student achievement. ♦

>> togotalks

Do you think teachers should consider effort as well as test performance?

“Yes, there are kids who know the material but just don't test well.”



sophomore Katie Woodruff

“No, as long as partial credit is given on tests it is a fair system.”



senior Michael Chen

“No, tests are an accurate gauge of learning and participation can be skewed.”



junior Spencer Goldman

>> candidcaricatures

9/11 tribute wine shows poor taste

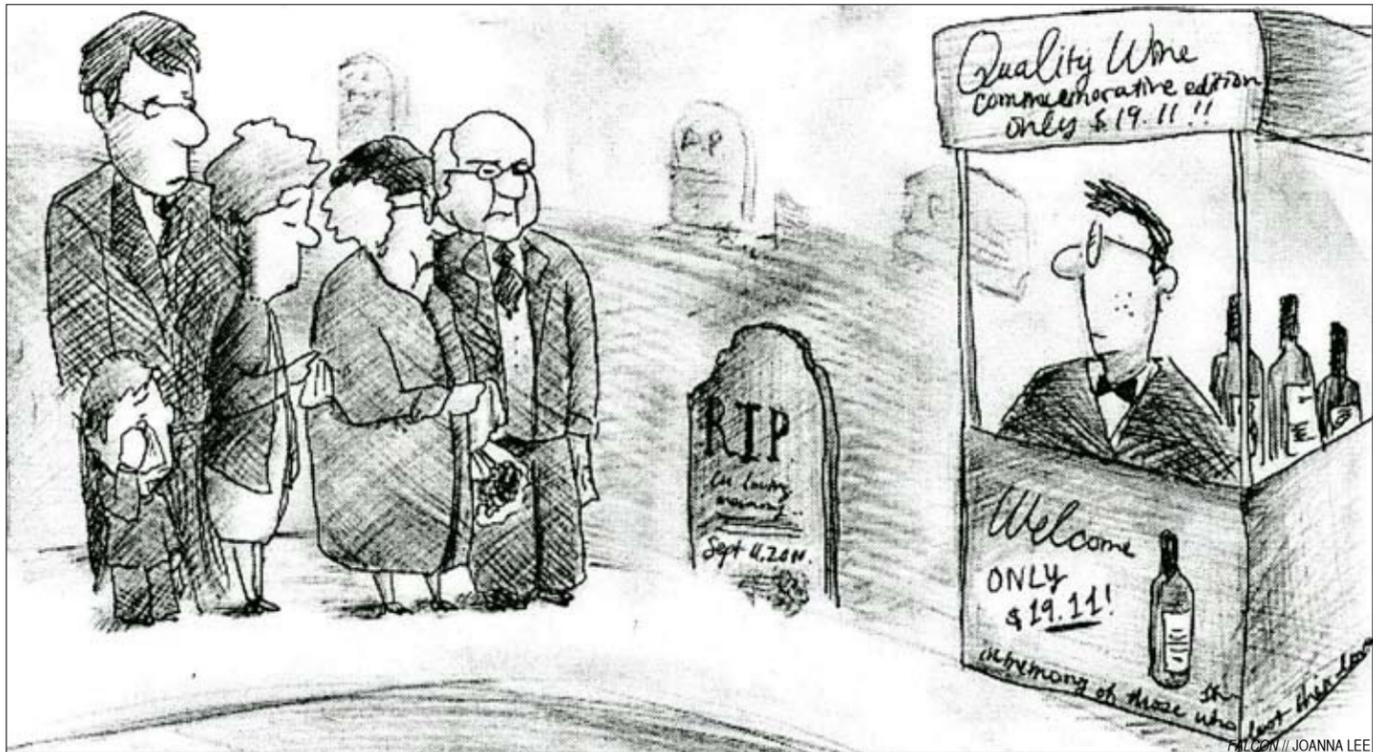
BY Denise Lin

September 11. It's a date that evokes images of destruction, loss and devastation. For some it brings to mind the loss of a loved one, and for all it symbolizes an assault on our nation, and the death of a simpler, safer way of life. But for the vintners at Long Island's Lieb Cellars, it symbolizes a convenient opportunity to make a profit.

The winery has created a 9/11 memorial collection, which includes varieties such as a Commemorative Merlot and a Commemorative Chardonnay. Although workers at Lieb Cellars were probably hoping people would appreciate the complex undertones of their product, most of their potential customers are only feeling sour about the collection.

This seemingly innocuous collection of wine is, in reality, the indication of an excessively commercialized nation.

To pour salt in the wound, the vintners priced each bottle of wine \$19.11, which is a move that seems both tacky and offensive. The date of the horrific event is being used jocularly as a simple dollar amount, which demeans those personally affected by the attack and ir-



ritates nearly everyone.

Lieb Cellars does seem to have a tinge of positive intent in some respects, donating 6 to 10 percent of its profits to the National September 11th Memorial and Museum. However, 6 to 10 percent is still a small portion of the profits, which indicates that donating to help 9/11 memorial efforts is not the first order of business on the winery's agenda. Lieb Cellars does not appear to truly have a

charitable intent, as most of the profits are still flowing swiftly back to the company.

Over the years, companies have become more daring, and they are willing to take more risks to make a profit. They often cross boundaries of taste along the way, and offend many people unnecessarily. Businesses are becoming painfully numb to sensitive topics. Perhaps strength in numbers allows people to act

in a way they would not as an individual. Human emotions are no match for brute strength and robotic corporations.

However, it is not corporations that are harmed when businesses infringe on emotional territory. The ones harmed are people, in flesh and blood.

So, it is necessary for companies to think before they act, because no amount of money can heal the hurt they have the potential to inflict. ♦



Downtown beautification harms parking, businesses

BY Megan Benzing

Downtown Saratoga has long been considered "dead" by many students and young adults. To most, there's not much to do, nowhere to shop and never any parking. It is always compared to the fabulous downtown Los Gatos, which is at least twice the size and has diverse shopping, a variety of eateries, a central park and lots of parking lots. Saratoga's downtown was hardly even in the running to match that of Los Gatos.

Our shops keep closing, people are split on the idea of vertical expansion and our park has transformed into somewhere you may not want to walk into at night. But a recent move by the city has put a nail in the coffin of our downtown's prospects of glory.

In an attempt to beautify and create more places to relax and socialize in downtown Saratoga, the city has transformed street corners into extensions of the sidewalk with benches and comely plants. It would be nice to go sit there with a friend and some Starbucks.

However, there is a crucial issue with this development. I cannot go get my Starbucks or frozen yogurt that I would sit and enjoy because there is officially

nowhere to park.

All the street parking spots that were previously available are gone. To create these social points on the sidewalk, the pedestrian area had to expand into the street. Now, the only parking is in the lot near the old supermarket, behind the village square. But again, some more issues. More than one third of the parking behind La Fondue is valet parking 24 hours a day and parking by the old supermarket is restrictive to those shops only.

Also, there are no time limits to these parking spots, so they have the potential to be filled all day long. The old street parking used to be two hours only. If there are no time limited spots, there is even less of a chance that someone will leave shortly.

Although the city's attempts to try and bring business back to downtown are laudable, their renovations are also detrimental to business. The only way to get business is to have parking that is readily available. Unless Saratoga adds extra parking lots or finds another solution to this problem, more people will avoid the frustration of having to park blocks away and choose to spend their time and money elsewhere. ♦

Apple CEO succession shows gay fixation

UNDUE ATTENTION TO SEXUALITY DEMONSTRATED IN THE MEDIA

BY Aashna Mukerji & Deborah Soung

It is hard to go a day in high school without hearing somebody utter the phrase "that's so gay" in the hallways. This sort of passive homophobia, which has grown rampant over the last few years, has not only gained popularity in communities of immature teenagers, but also, unfortunately, in the media.

"Meet Apple's new boss, the most powerful gay man in Silicon Valley," reads a Gawker headline; "Tim Cook is now the most powerful gay man in the world," reads another from Business Insider.

Newspapers were inundated with stories of Cook's alleged sexuality soon after the announcement of his promotion to CEO of Apple Computers, but his outing by Gawker and this sudden attention to his sexual preference is unwarranted.

Subjected to an unwelcome scrutiny by the media, Cook is not yet publicly out, but the press continues to broadcast his alleged sexuality with little respect for his and his loved ones' privacy. While this may be typical behavior for tabloids like Gawker, reputable publications such as Business Insider should not be stooping to this level. This brings up the question of not only why the media feel the need to label individuals as gay or straight at all, but whether or not the public truly cares about a person's sexuality.

Unfortunately, though a person's sexuality dictates no more over an individual's personality than his race or gender, some people do care. Even in a country

whose constitution preaches equality, prejudice is rampant. By focusing so much attention on sexuality, the media are only inflaming these petty biases.

It is expected that Cook's new tenure as CEO of the world's leading tech company would garner media attention, as Steve Jobs was nearly of celebrity status, but this undue concern about sexuality should be a thing of the past.

The American community must understand that people have different sexualities, and there is no reason to categorize an individual based off of arbitrary characteristics irrelevant to his achievements.

Cook has been unjustly labeled by the media regarding a personal aspect of his life, and for what, exactly? Readership?

His sexuality has no impact whatsoever on his ability to lead one of the world's most profitable companies, so why mention it at all?

The media hardly ever comment on the sex lives of heterosexual tech CEOs; no one is ever labeled "the most powerful straight man in America," and people don't walk through the hallways exclaiming "that's so hetero!" Sexual orientation should be treated like hair color: If it is not relevant, it shouldn't be splashed across headlines.

What the media should be covering is Cook's past leadership as COO and his ability to keep Apple's stock up while inventing efficient, aesthetically stunning products. Fussing over Cook's sexual orientation is a frivolous pursuit that benefits nobody and enforces prejudices. ♦

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>> candidcaricatures

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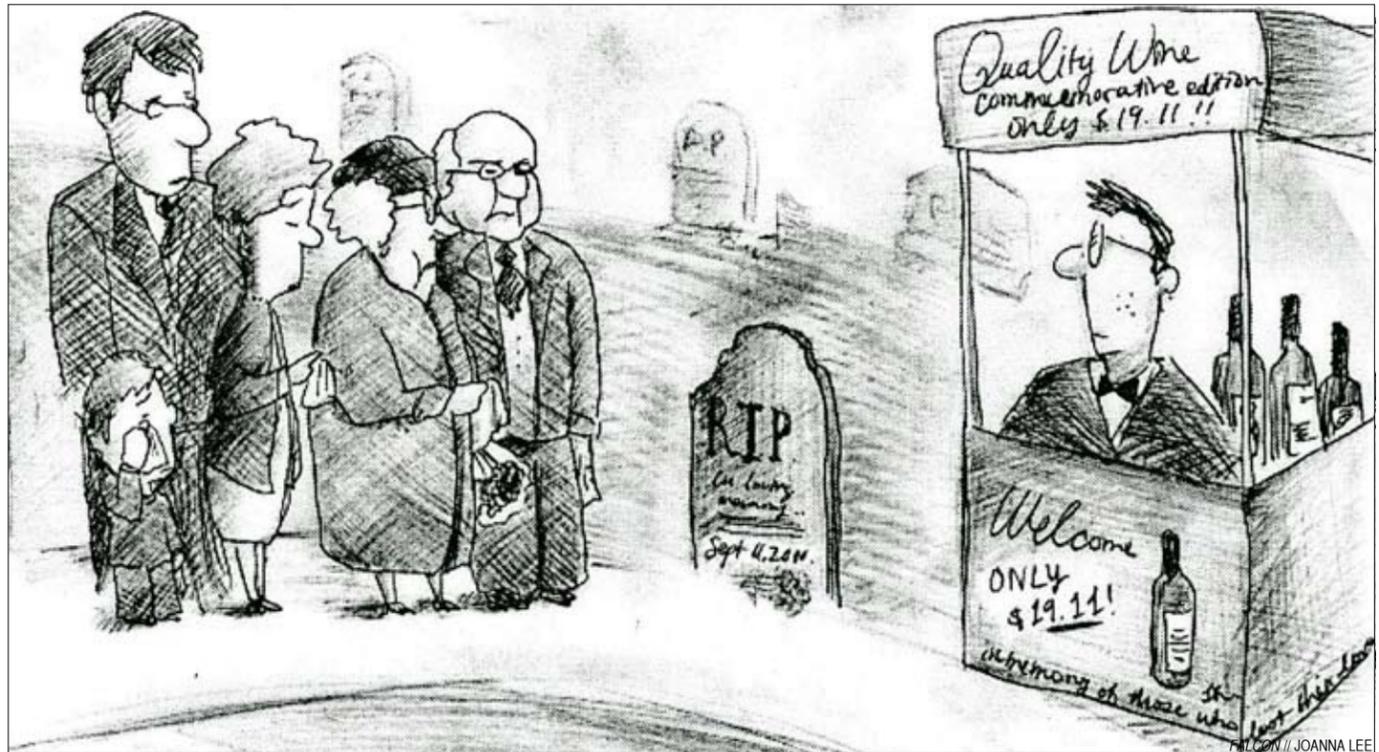
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There is no reason to categorize an individual based off of arbitrary characteristics irrelevant to his or her achievements.

...walk through a drive-thru?

CAR-LESS REPORTER ATTEMPTS TO PLACE AN ORDER IN THE DRIVE-THRU

BY McKenna Galvin

It was a sunny Thursday afternoon as I left school and started to make my way home. Thirsty, I decided to stop by the McDonald's on De Anza before heading back, thinking that some lemonade would be perfect before a long night of studying. There was no line at the drive-thru, so I happily went on up and looked at the menu, pondering what drink to get.

Only one thing was missing from this scenario: a car.

I had heard before about people who were able to go through drive-thrus in cardboard cars, bikes, or just by walking, and here was my opportunity to see if I too could do the same. With the absence of a huge line or big crowd, I knew that this was a perfect opportunity to see if such a thing could actually be done.

I stood next to the menu, realizing after a few seconds that I was going to have to be the first one to speak.

"Hello?" I cautiously asked, curious of the reaction I would receive.

Unfortunately, whoever was taking orders that day was clearly not amused. After a few moments, I finally got a response.

"You can't stand in the driveway. It's not allowed," said an annoyed female voice. No *Hi, what can I get for you today?*, no *How are you doing?*—Just a blunt warning to go away.

Although disappointed, I knew that there was no point in arguing; this lady was not going to let me through. *Well, so much for that*, I thought, and disheartened, I made my way back home. I didn't see what the big deal was, especially when there was barely anyone there and I wasn't causing a disturbance.

When I got home, I contacted customer service, curious as to why they would care whether I walk through a drive-thru or not.

"You may be interested to know that McDonald's values the safety of our customers," said the email they sent me. "As such, for safety reasons, McDonald's policy states that customers who walk up or arrive on bicycles to the Drive-thru windows should not be served at the windows. We hope to have the opportunity of serving you again soon under the Golden Arches."

So there you have it: a harmless attempt at some fun thwarted by a company unwilling to be liable should a car kill me as I walk through. While the chances of this happening are slim to none, it



does protect the company from losing a few million dollars in court if this were to actually happen. And since the drive-thru is not on a public road, McDonald's is allowed to have every say over what does and does not happen on its property.

While my attempt was unsuccessful,

I wouldn't rule out walking through one as a possibility. As long as you find the right combination of an employee that isn't too rigid and a location that isn't too crowded, there's bound to be a drive-thru that will let you walk through. But for now, I'll just stick to driving my car. ♦

Can you...

REPORTERS ATTEMPT TO DEBUNK THE "CAN YOU" MYTHS AND MYSTERIES

All graphics by Michelle Shu

...paint without paint or a paintbrush?

JOURNALIST GOES AVANT-GARDE, TRIES TO CREATE A MASTERPIECE WITHOUT TYPICAL ART SUPPLIES

BY Sophie Mattson

I've never been one to dabble in the arts—the most recent artistic experience I had was exploratory art class in sixth grade. Believe me, I am no prodigy; however, I've always been curious in attempting two artistic eccentricities: painting with toothpaste and creating a picture entirely

composed of lipstick kisses. It may sound disturbing that I would want to create such strange artwork, but I have a reason.

In Señor Yielding's class sophomore year, we were given an informative presentation on famous Spanish painters such as Francisco Goya and Diego Velazquez.

I was surprised to learn that their incredible and intricate paintings

were created using oil paint, which has a consistency close to that of toothpaste. My other bizarre artistic inspiration came from a YouTube video of a woman painting a portrait of Marilyn Monroe entirely out of lipstick kiss stains on a canvas.

When my friend came over, I decided to use her as the model for my two portraits. I grabbed a tube of toothpaste and a white poster board and sat in my backyard to begin working. Unable to find a satisfactory paintbrush, I resorted to using my fingers.

I began with the eyes, haphazardly squirting two almond shaped globs of toothpaste onto the paper. I moved on to making the nose, which turned out as a lopsided teardrop above the pitiful, curved line serving as a mouth. Needless to say, my friend's portrait ended up resembling a kindergarten's painting of his mother made for back-to-school night.

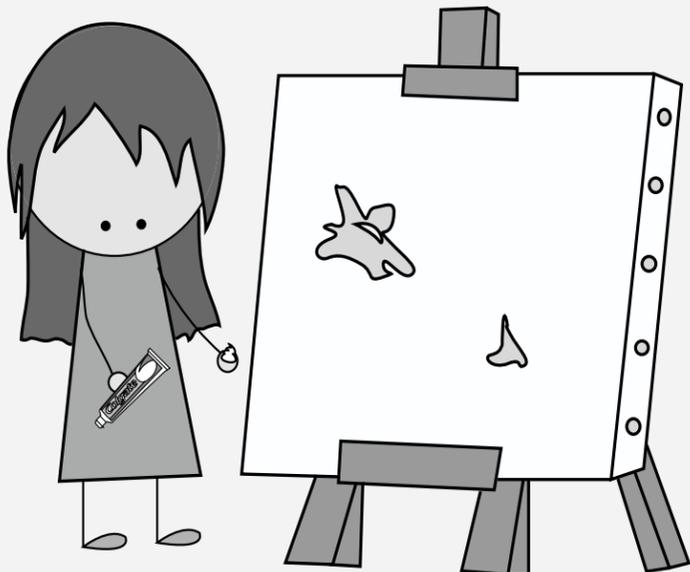
I thought my luck would be better with the next portrait, so I took a tube of pink lipstick and got to work. I was barely finished with the nose when I got tired of the project. Crouching over a paper on the ground while constantly reapplying lipstick isn't the most enjoyable position, I realized.

I began to feel dizzy halfway through creating the hair, and assumed a fetal position on the ground in an attempt to alleviate the head rush. Vowing to never wear lipstick again after that day, I went back to work and created a crude square jawline and a feeble excuse for side bangs. Her hair was lopsided and not nearly long enough; the kiss marks were too faint; and her ears looked like rosy cheeks.

When I finally finished my "masterpiece," it looked nothing like my friend, and only resembled a skull used when celebrating the Day of the Dead. After stuffing the portraits into the trash, I realized that true artists are born with their talent, or must spend great deal of time practicing in order to succeed.

Velasquez and Goya certainly didn't paint with their fingers, and the kiss painting artist must have used up hundreds of tubes of lipstick during practice alone.

I walked away from this experience with a pair of toothpaste-smelling hands and a sufficiently bruised lower lip. I also walked away with, however, a greater appreciation for artists who break traditional artistic barriers using innovative methods, even if it's only toothpaste. ♦





70's

THE BECOMING

QUAD DAY >> An 'evolutionary process'

continued from pg. 1

Once the schedule was rearranged to leave Monday blank, Hyde suggested a staff act.

"For a couple of years, that went really well," she said. "But since then, it's been difficult to get a group together. We're trying again this year!"

Hyde also maintains that the election of Homecoming royalty transitioned from a popularity contest into a competition between students with genuine school spirit.

"The king and queen morphed from being popular into representative," she said. "The elections began to have true meaning."

Contrary to popular belief, Homecoming

skits are neither mandatory nor directed by the staff.

"It really was an evolutionary process," Hyde said. "Most traditions in high school are four years long: They start with the freshmen and end as seniors, but this has been longstanding."

Comparing today's skits with the performances of the freshmen five years ago, observers can easily see the improvement.

"It gets better with time. Every year, the skits are bigger, better, more dramatic. It's just the competitive nature of the kids," Hyde said.

Saratoga High is not the type of school whose students graduate, stay in Saratoga and have their kids follow their parents' footsteps in school. If alumni return, they

usually do so after leaving for college and completing graduate school.

"It seems kind of weird to have alumni back now," Hyde said. "It makes more sense to do our own thing, regardless of what the alumni do."

While alumni are still paid to come back in order to crown the new Homecoming royalty, as they will again this year, that is the furthest extension of their role in today's version of Homecoming.

Homecoming has evolved from a basis of alumni support into a display of school pride and enthusiasm.

As Hyde said, "[Saratoga High's] Homecoming is probably a misnomer, but it is what it is to us." And it is something its students are proud of. ♦

Alumni reminisce on impact of past traditions

BY Cristina **Curcelli**

Each year in late September or early October, we devote one week to celebrating our Falcon pride. Some scoff at the traditions while others embrace them; nonetheless, this week has an impact on our school: It is Homecoming.

Homecoming is a time-honored tradition at SHS, just as it is at most high schools across the nation. And although the majority of students will probably forget in a few years who won quad day and who was the Homecoming queen, Homecoming leaves a lasting impact on many students and on the school as a whole.

Class of 1981 alumna Tina Johnson remembers her years at SHS fondly. Now the parent of junior Mary Johnson, she remembers how Homecoming impacted her time as a student.

"Homecoming was huge," Johnson said. "I'm sure I could find a few people that said they didn't participate in the festivities, but for the most part it was an all-inclusive event."

Johnson said the Homecoming traditions helped to increase Falcon pride and togetherness.

"One of the many things that Homecoming did—and I believe still does—was to create unity both within each class and for the school as a whole," Johnson said.

Alumna Julie Angell, class of '80, agrees that Homecoming helped classes join together.

"I loved the way our class had to band together to create something and compete against the other classes," Angell said. "It definitely brought us together as a class and got us excited about being a Falcon!"

Many Homecoming traditions that once brought the school together live on today.

"Voting for the Homecoming court happened the week prior to Homecoming," said Johnson. "Lunchtime included games, skits [and] activities similar to the performances that occur now."

Many graduates remember the Homecoming football game being an important experience.

"I love the Homecoming game," Johnson said. "It was so special every year—such magic. Halftime was devoted entirely to the student body and the Homecoming court. As is still done, the Homecoming court was paraded around the field in special cars and dropped off on the far side of the field."

1973 alumna Laura Fairchild also agrees that the Homecoming game was a highlight.

"The football game was a big deal because that's when the alumni returned to their old alma mater," said Fairchild. "It was a chance to see our old friends who had moved on to college."

All of these Homecoming traditions impacted the school positively, Angell said.

"[Homecoming] helped instill a sense of school pride and class pride in all of us who participated," Angell said. "You felt proud saying you were a Falcon."

As a parent now, Johnson feels that Homecoming is more important than ever.

"Homecoming happens at the beginning of the school year; it is one of the events that sets the tone for the entire year. At a school like SHS where the academic pressures are enormous, I, for one, am a parent that believes Homecoming is of utmost importance." ♦



90's



80's



Courtesy of TALISMAN

Past traditions remembered fondly by staff

BY Sarah Finley

Old movies and musicals describe huge all-city parades, with floats, a marching band and lots of young children. Yet nothing like that has ever seemed to happen in the small town of Saratoga.

According to Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguex, however, a momentous parade marched through downtown Saratoga in 1984. Back then, each class from Saratoga High built a large float that they paraded down Big Basin Way in celebration of Homecoming.

"The band was there; the cheerleaders and the elementary school kids used to come and sit there to watch the whole thing. It was really nice," said Rodriguex, who has taught at SHS since the 1970s.

Although assistant principal Karen Hyde agrees the parade was a fun event, she says it was difficult and stressful to organize.

"The parade was a one-time only thing because it was either that or throw myself off a bridge. I would never do that again," Hyde said.

Since Big Basin Way is also a part of Highway 9, the school needed permission from the state to close it for the parade, making the event overwhelming to organize, Hyde said. The parade also blocked off downtown from both directions, resulting in numerous complaints from the businesses and townspeople.

"People couldn't get to ... their hair appointments, their nail appointments," Hyde said. "It was inconvenient [for the school] and it inconvenienced the community."

As a result, the Homecoming festivities were moved to the Los Gatos High School track. (Until 2005 Saratoga High did not have a lighted football field, so football games were played at Los Gatos.) But this arrangement still presented problems.

Transportation of the gigantic floats was a major issue. The floats students used to parade around the track had to be loaded onto trailers or flatbed trucks and then driven to Los Gatos.

"I had a ship that I built with my class that was 40 feet long, 40 feet up in the air," Rodriguex remembers. "We had to have a police escort because the thing

was so big. It blocked the traffic over to LGHS."

Despite logistical challenges, creative students still persevered, but Homecoming was much more stressful than it is now. Compared to constructing these floats, merely decorating a section of the quad is easy.

Rodriguex remembers assisting his classes over the years with themes such as Higher Education and China. These amazingly detailed floats were still constructed, often starting months before the actual parade. One of Rodriguex's favorites from 1987, a huge NASA space shuttle, was extremely realistic.

"When we went by the judges we lit it up, and the smoke came out [the back end so that] it looked like it was really taking off," Rodriguex said.

Yet Hyde said new problems arose as the years went by. When LGHS got a new track a few years later, they put a weight limit on the floats for each class, making it more difficult for students. Even with the weight limit, Hyde says these floats were far from environmentally friendly.

"Talk about a complete waste. I start-

ed to have two dumpsters over at Los Gatos so the kids would do the parade once around and then the cardboard would go directly into the dumpsters," she said. "Five minutes [for the parade] and then two dumpsters full of stuff."

From then on, Los Gatos High imposed stricter regulations and began to require students to carry the Homecoming floats.

"We had to reduce the size ... We had to have a lot of pieces. We had to build different things," Rodriguex said. "For example, one year they built small models of famous buildings, like the Eiffel Tower, the Parthenon and the Leaning Tower of Pisa."

Eventually, though, hand-carrying the floats began to be too much of a burden.

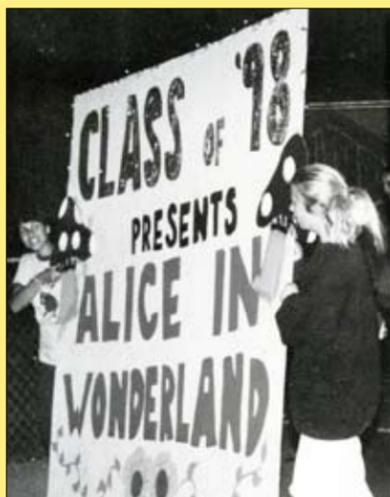
"It just got to be too much for the kids and then they decided to do away with the floats and have [quad day] here," Rodriguex said. What we now know as quad days began in the early '90s.

Despite the complications, Rodriguex still remembers the early years of Homecoming fondly. "It was just fun," he said. ♦

THE HOME COMING

then

now



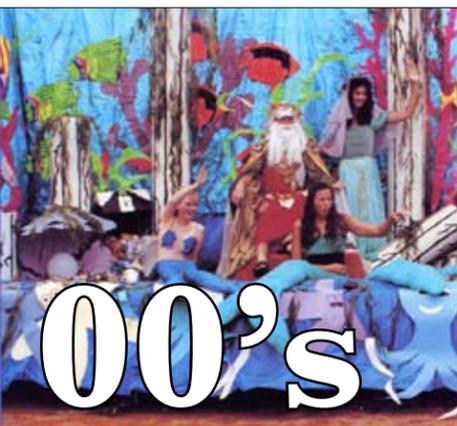
Courtesy of TALISMAN

Two spirited girls from the graduating class of '98 walk in front of their class's float, based on the theme of "Alice in Wonderland." Parades were part of the Homecoming tradition at the time.

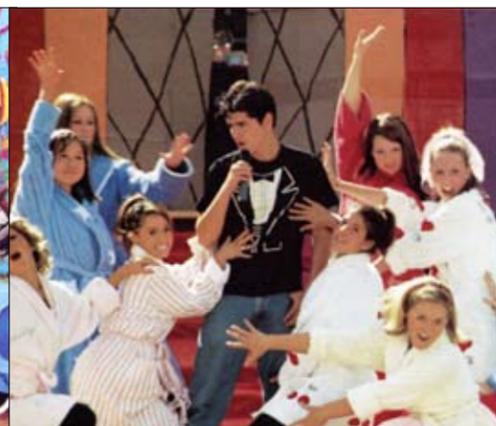


FALCON // IZZY ALBERT

Senior Shivani Chadha adjusts the cutout of Alice for the "Alice in Wonderland"-themed decorations. Students no longer make floats, but celebrate Homecoming with quad days and school decorations.



00's



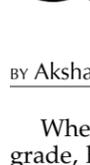
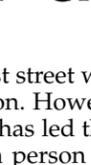
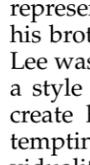
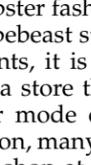
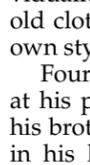
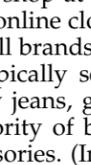
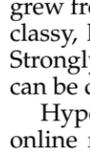
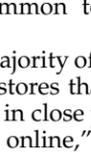
bringin' it back

STUDENTS REP FASHIONS THAT WERE POPULAR BACK IN THE DAY, DATING BACK FROM THE 1950'S TO THE 70'S

ALL GRAPHICS BY MICHELLE SHU

THEN NOW

Returning Styles

		
	1950's	
		
	Senior Lennie Char	
		
	1950's	
		
	Junior Vivian Lin	
		
	1960's	
		
	Junior Kelly Baker	
		
	1960's	
		
	Freshman Nadia Saxena	
		
	1970's	
		
	Senior Ansha Husain	

Source: Google Images

FALCON // ROHAN RAJEEV

High-waisted skirts/shorts

From the time summer began, to its dwindling downfall in the coming days, masses of girls enjoyed dressing in tucked-in tanks with high-waisted skirts or shorts. The style, a resurgence of a 1950s fashion staple, can be worn at a multitude of events. Many girls, such as senior Lennie Char, enjoy the flowing skirt as a symbol for the free, casual look of summer, versus others who prefer the business-casual appeal of high-waisted shorts. Either way, look out for some of these voguish styles among your classmates!

Leather jackets

Leather jackets were trendy in the 50's when the movie "Grease" took place as symbols of the delinquent and rebellious, but now the fad is coming back. Leather jackets can be worn with a top and jeans or even with a cute dress. Junior Vivian Lin rocks the leather jacket at school.

Hippie headbands

During the mid-1960s/early 1970s, hippies were perceived by adults as careless teenagers with an eccentric fashion sense. They would wear colorful and unique headbands around their forehead to promote individuality, protest and peace. Those fashion trends went away for a couple decades, but they are now back. Junior Kelly Baker displays her feathered headband, a cute comeback trend.

Tie-dye t-shirts

Another fashion inspired from the bygone hippie era is tie dye. Tie-dye shirts are cute and comfortable for every day wear, and have never really gone out of style. Whether you're going to the beach or just to school, tie-dye shirts are cute for any occasion. Freshman Nadia Saxena sports her trendy tie-dye shirt to school.

Big sunglasses

Popular for their vintage style, big sunglasses have been coveted from their superfluous use on the popular That 70's Show. They offer a simplistic appearance and can be worn with virtually any outfit. Their widespread adoration has lead the previously Hollywood style fashion into many affordable stores. Senior Ansha Husain sports her sunglasses everywhere she goes.

-Olivia Chock and Akshara Sekar

DEFYING STEREOTYPES: FASHION

Cracking down the hype in 'hypebeast'

BY Akshara Sekar

When senior Ivan Lee was in eighth grade, his wardrobe was in no way the representation of his style. After wearing his brother's hand-me-downs for years, Lee was left with no choice to determine a style of his own and strove to create his own image. After attempting to assert his own individuality, he realized his brother's old clothes were the basis for his own style.

Four years later, Lee looks back at his past and notices the effect his brother's "hype" style played in his life. His sense of fashion grew from hand-me-downs to the classy, laid-back trend he dawns today. Strongly influenced by his brother, Lee can be described as a "hypebeast."

Hypebeast began as a relatively small online magazine, home to blogs, sales,

news about the latest street wear, sneakers and urban fashion. However, the increasing popularity has led the term hypebeast to refer to a person who wears street, urban and hipster fashion styles.

Although the hypebeast style may be popular with students, it is often difficult to find a store that specializes in their mode of clothing. For this reason, many of the fans of this style shop at karmaloop.com, a safe online clothing store that caters all brands and styles. This site typically sells moderately skinny jeans, graphic tees from a majority of brands, and many accessories. (In particular hats are common to complete the hypebeast look.)



Lee

"I purchase the majority of my clothes online, because the stores that carry the clothes I like are not in close proximity. I can find better deals online," said senior

Jonathan Koo, who does not consider himself a hypebeast but does frequently purchase from karmaloop.com.

This is the most important selling point to a hypebeast, because the foundation of their style is the ability to mix different articles of clothing. While some females would find the idea of reusing elements of outfits incomprehensible, hypebeasts frequently do this by pairing their basics of a graphic tee, skinny jeans and shoes in order to coordinate different outfits. This technique increases their available ensembles, while decreasing their spending amount.

"I don't think I am a hypebeast; I would just say 'hype' is similar to my style, like that of many students," junior Derek Chao said. "But it seems like we are hypebeasts, because just like them we wear many brands."

Although "hypebeast" may have a negative connotation around school be-

cause of its association with buyers who solely care about the amount their clothes are monetary worth, the "hype" style is highly coveted and students have made an effort to make this distinction clear.

"In the end, I care much less about the brand of clothing and much rather about simple looks," said Koo. "Although I don't classify myself as a hypebeast, I dress similarly to them, simply because I like that it looks clean and put together."

Most of us possess at least one piece of hype clothing, whether it's last year's skinny jeans or the latest Hurley fleece.

Through their ample presence in SHS, the rising outbreak of hypebeasts is significant.

The style is catching on, now for both girls and boys. As hipster fashion becomes more prevalent for girls, soon hype may be a classier, more modish alternative. ♦

SEASON OF SEQUELS

AN INSIDER'S GUIDE TO THE MOST RECENT AND UPCOMING VIDEOGAME RELEASES



Resistance 3

Zombie games have been tried time and time again, but "Resistance 3" gives players a new take. How about battling endless mobs of monstrous super-human Chimera armies? In the most recent installment of the "Resistance" series, players will again be forced to survive against a

Chimera alien invasion that has taken hold of Earth's population in an alternate 1950s universe. This time, there is a cure for the alien infection. But will you survive long enough to get it? (available on PS3) *Released Sept. 6*



Madden 12

The popular football game returns yet again for its latest installment. The newest version of Madden has been upgraded, with the additions of an advanced defensive artificial intelligence and the custom playbook. With the custom playbook, fans can now build the ultimate game

plan by modifying an existing playbook or creating their own by selecting from numerous pre-created playbooks. By integrating these new features, "Madden 12" is sure to impress many (available on Xbox 360, PS2, iPhone, PS3, Wii, PSP, iPad). *Released on Aug. 31*



Battlefield 3

Play as a member of the US Marine Corps battling the fictional, antagonistic People's Liberation and Resistance insurgent forces. In the sequel of "Battlefield: Bad Company 2," players will be able to play on maps of Paris, France; Tehran, Iran; Sarajevo, Bosnia; Sulaymaniyah, Iraq; New York, USA; and Wake Island, while fighting enemies in urban streets and

metropolitan downtown areas. Battlefield's newest game will feature a new Frostbite engine designed especially for the game, providing more advanced destruction, sound, and graphics than previous versions and ultimately providing players with a more realistic game play (available on Xbox 360, PC, PS3). *Expected Release Date: Oct. 25*



NBA 2K12

In the newest version of the "NBA 2K" series, "NBA 2K12" is perhaps the most anticipated "NBA 2K" game to come out. Finally, there is a chance for people around the globe to settle the debate as to who is the greatest player of all time. The game will be packed of past NBA leg-

ends, such as Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson and Larry Bird, while also including the dominant NBA players of today. "NBA 2K12" will finally pit the world's greatest basketball legends against each other, in a battle to the finish (available on Xbox 360). *Expected Release Date: Oct. 4*



Assassin's Creed: Revelations

The third game in the thrilling Assassin's Creed saga is set in the Renaissance Era. Players will switch between three of the series' major characters: Altaïr ibn La-Ahad, Ezio Auditore da Firenze and Desmond Miles. The game will follow the series' standard open-world game play. New additions include new weapons such as the hook blade, which can be

used to zip-line across rooftops and a plethora of original combo attacks. Multi-player game play is also making a return in "Revelations." Players will be able to customize their characters' appearance and weapons, as well as start a guild and create a unique coat of arms (available on PS3, X360, iPhone, Android, WinPhone, PC). *Expected Release Date: Nov. 15*



Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3

The world famous first-person shooter game returns this fall for its eighth installment. Continuing the action from "Modern Warfare 2," the game features a new Survival mode, where players attempt to fend off endless waves of enemies, as well as numerous new weapons and sce-

narios. "Modern Warfare 3" combines fast-paced action from the previous Call of Duty games with revamped rankings systems and awesome new game modes (available on Xbox 360, PC, PS3). *Expected Release Date: Nov. 8*

Source: Google Images

Source: ign.com

-Nicholas Chow and Nikhil Goel

DEFYING STEREOTYPES: GAMING

Girl's got game

GIRL BREAKS STEREOTYPES REGARDING "GUY-ISH" VIDEO GAMES

BY Nicholas Chow & Nikhil Goel

Footsteps echo through her wireless headset as she scans each corridor for easy points. With her AUG assault rifle at the hip, junior Sarah Frankola tosses a couple of flashbang grenades into the next room, blinding a pair of campers. They stand dazed and blinded, firing aimlessly into the surrounding walls as Sarah unleashes a round of bullets, winning the round. It was all just too easy.

Frankola, like many high school students, loves to play video games. But not



Frankola

every high school girl plays "Red Dead Redemption," "Call of Duty," or her personal favorite, "Mass Effect" religiously.

"The first game that got me into the more guy-ish video game world was "Super Smash Bros: Melee" on the Game Cube. Ever since then it's been a progression to other games," Frankola said.

Junior Jason Seo has played online with Frankola in numerous games that are categorized as "guy-ish," violent, first-person shooting videogames.

"Most everyone thinks it's pretty cool that she plays games, and others tend to be surprised that a girl would even touch a controller," Seo said.



Seo also enjoys playing with and against Frankola in online battles.

"Depending on if she tries hard, she can do really well. Other than when she is fooling around, she is a good player," Seo said.

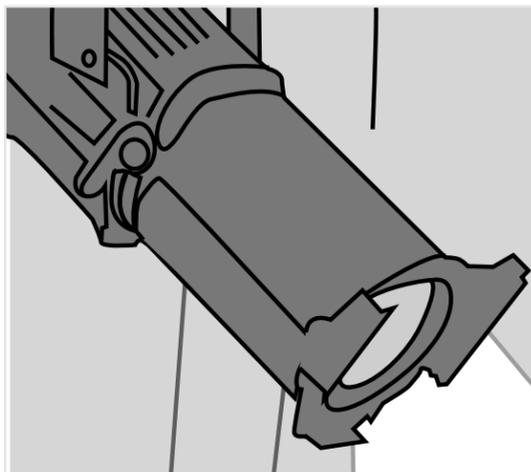
Given the fact that Frankola is a girl playing online in a virtual world filled with teenage guys, communicating online with other players can be a tough task at times. But Frankola learns to take it light-heartedly and enjoy her gaming experience.

"There is a lot of talk back. There are a couple of creepy comments made and

some kitchen jokes here and there. It's actually humorous," Frankola said.

In the gaming world, there are two types of gamers. There are the "try hards" who strive to win and don't necessarily enjoy the game if they do not come out on top. And there are the relaxed gamers who simply have fun no matter what the outcome. According to Seo, Frankola is certainly fits the latter definition.

In a society where stereotypes often cause people not to venture out and try new things, Frankola breaks through these boundaries with guns ablazing. ♦



BEHIND THE

Tech guru brings school into modern world

BY David Sparkman
& Nelson Wang

Saratoga High's technology has not always been the way students and teachers know it today. Ten years ago, SHS had a spotty e-mail system, only some teachers had computers in their classrooms, and there was no wireless Internet. This is why the school hired Julie Grenier in 2001. Her mission: bring the school's technology to the 21st century.

Grenier, the school's IT manager, helped bring Saratoga High into the modern world and continues to push the school's technology forward.

Grenier takes care of all of the computer systems on campus, in-

cluding laptop and desktop support, network infrastructure, the network and even the telephone system. According to Grenier, all teachers have at least one computer in their classrooms today.

Another feature the school lacked was wireless Internet. Students had to bring an Ethernet (Internet) cable to school and plug their computers into one of the blue ports that are still visible near electrical outlets on the walls of some classrooms.

"There were a lot of problems with [the technology in the past], even though there wasn't a lot of technology," said Grenier.

On an average day, Grenier easily helps about 15 teachers and students, fixing anything that could possibly be wrong with their com-

puters, from printers to hard drive failures. Grenier also monitors the school's network and wireless throughout the day.

Although Grenier does numerous things, she doesn't do all of the work by herself. She also has Matt Lipford, her assistant, who started working at SHS this year. Student interns, or student ITs, also help her out during their free periods. One of these student ITs is senior Robert Belpasso.

As a student IT, Belpasso fixes simple computer problems, such as locating missing files or replacing toner in printers.

"[Being a student IT] is really fun," said Belpasso. "It's just a great place to hang out, and Mrs. Grenier is really cool."

Like in every job, there are busy days and calm days.

On calm days, Belpasso usually has time to work on homework and study for tests. However, on a particularly busy and stressful day, he may spend all day fixing a computer or helping teachers if they have a problem.

Grenier said the most stressful part of her job would be troubleshooting when the school's Internet stops working completely, sending everyone into a frenzy.

"[When the Internet stops working it gets] pretty stressful, because you have about 100 teachers calling you, letting you know their Internet is down. At that point it's working as quickly as possible without interrupting classes," Grenier said. ♦

IT DEPARTMENT



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN



FALCON // WREN SUTTERFIELD

Members build, learn hands-on construction

BY David Sparkman
& Nelson Wang

If you were to visit the tech crew's room near the music rooms, the first thing you would notice is probably the loud screeching sound of wood being chopped by members of the tech crew. There would be a smell of sawdust in the air, and you would see wooden planks everywhere. This is a scene from the daily life of a tech crew member.

The tech crew, which also uses the spelling tech crüe, works behind the scenes of school's plays, musicals and student productions to make them successful.

Tech is an eighth-period class in which a group of about 10 students help with the productions in various ways. They are in charge of making sets, which display the scenery and setting of the play.

This process involves cutting the wood into various sizes and then painting it. They also work with lights and sound.

"In tech, we design, manufacture, create and build," said junior David Traina. "We build everything you see in the play."

Members of tech crew all have important responsibilities and strive to get their jobs accomplished on time.

"The techs are mostly in charge of building and creating the sets with little or no help from the teacher," sophomore Katie Burns said.

Burns recalled working on the lights for the "Jekyll and Hyde"

production last year.

"During 'Jekyll and Hyde,' the spring musical last year, it was completely up to me to take care of the light board. Everyone has [his] own prep work to do," Burns continued. "If that specific thing isn't done then it can mess with the show or problems may arise."

Since everyone has their own individual work that they must complete without the help of the teachers, members of tech crew obtain a lot of real-life experience.

"[Tech crew entails] a lot of hands-on experience that you don't get in other classes. It's not just all theory without practice. If

they teach you how to use a screw gun or nail gun, then you're going to get to use the screw gun or nail gun. It's actual practice," junior Stephen Jensen said, who works on the set pieces and sound.

The tech crew works very hard directly before the plays and sometimes will work until 10 p.m. after school; members of the tech crew often grow very close to one another.

"Everyone is just so open. It's sort of like another family because of how much time you spend with them," said Burns.

The tech members all enjoy their work despite the hard amount of work that is required.

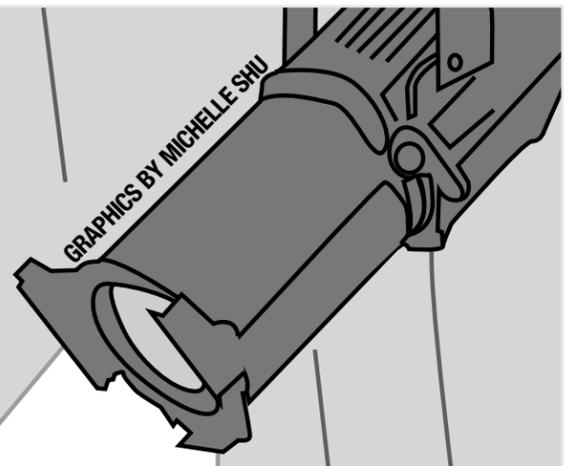
"I've always enjoyed building stuff out of anything. In middle school, I did a bunch of tech stuff and that evolved to where I am in high school," Traina said. ♦

“Everyone is just so open. It's sort of like another family because of how much time you spend with them.”

>> Sophomore Katie Burns

TECH CRÜE

SCENES OF...



VOLUNTEERS

Students help others for greater meaning

BY Andy Fang & Sierra Smith

Volunteering is not only beneficial to others but also to those who volunteer. Through integrating morals with volunteering, individuals are able to improve themselves and grow as people.

Junior Maggy Liu, for example, is the vice-president of the Tzu Chi club, a volunteer organization and charity, which has been gaining traction on campus. Tzu Chi, Chinese for compassion and relief, is rooted in moral education as well as volunteering. These ideals are discussed at meetings and carried out through community service.

"[Tzu Chi] is based on Buddhist philosophy, but the club is

all-inclusive and [membership is not limited to those who are Buddhist]. The philosophy of being truly selfless while doing service is a big thing," Liu said.

Tzu Chi does community outreach events once a month. Members of the club have volunteered at the Computer Literacy Program (CLP), where volunteers help teach autistic kids how to read, and the Winchester nursing home. The club, in conjunction with Liu's church, also ran a fundraiser called 30-hour Famine for malnutrition in Africa where participants fast for 30 hours to raise awareness.

"[30-hour Famine] was really fun because we learned a lot about all the programs going on to help malnutrition in Africa and the

technology going into it to develop food that's nutritious," Liu said.

Not only is volunteer work beneficial to others, but it can also be incredibly gratifying.

"Just knowing that you did something that could help someone else [is gratifying]. With Tzu Chi, we do a lot of stuff where you can see the direct result of your work, like you see the autistic kids [at CLP] being happy or the patients at Winchester Nursing Home smiling because we play bingo with them," Liu said.

Junior Tiffany Yung, president of the Interact Club, is also an advocate of selfless volunteerism.

"I volunteer because it not only helps the community be a better place but also yourself in grow-

ing as a person. Though you can't see the results now, it's good to know that you're giving more than you're getting," Yung said. "We put service above self."

One of the most popular clubs on campus, Interact provides students the opportunities to help the community and give back.

"We find the events and register for them, making it easy for them to just go," Yung said. "Interact is not only a club; it's also a family with one goal in mind: to make this world a better place."

Through keeping the right ideals, such as compassion and selflessness in mind while volunteering, students are able to foster moral growth within themselves and the community. ♦



Courtesy of TC CLUB



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
FIRST: Junior Moselle Main discusses with Adrian Stapleton, the unofficial teacher of tech crew and manager of the McAfee Center, the building of the set on Sept. 22.
SECOND: Sophomore Wren Sutterfield carries a sawdust-laden vacuum to empty its contents
THIRD: IT Manager Julie Grenier takes a call while working on a computer on Sept. 23.
FOURTH: Junior Maggy Liu explains to an autistic child who is part of the Computer Literacy Program (CLP) the meaning of a video being watched on May 21, 2011.
FIFTH: Members of the fourth-period newspaper staff work on their layouts on the computers in the Journalism Room on deadline night, Sept. 22.

SARATOGA FALCON

Student journalists do more than just writing

BY Andy Fang & Sierra Smith

Interview, write, revise. Interview, write, revise. Week after week, this process is repeated as it becomes a rhythm in the life of a student reporter. Yet contrary to what one might believe, newspaper is much more than bi-monthly cycles of monotony.

Staff members are exposed to an accurate representation of journalism through the school's two periods of advanced journalism. They have to follow standard journalistic procedure and are held accountable for their work.

Junior Kelly Liu, who is in her second year on staff and is one of two School Scope section editors, feels that it is the interaction between members of the staff that

sets it apart from other classes.

"[Everyone is] dedicated to put a successful issue out for the public. Because that requires a ton of teamwork, we're like family to each other. A lot of good times are shared in that journalism room," Liu said.

Junior Akshara Sekar, a "chickadee" experiencing her first year on the newspaper, also enjoys the sense of freedom and independence most students get from being on staff.

"I think it's a free environment, which is the nicest environment to write in," Sekar said. "It's much more lenient than other classes, but I think everyone respects each other enough not to take advantage of the flexibility in rules."

Staff members do not have traditional homework to complete or tests to study for. Everything students do is a determined effort to

complete the newspaper.

Each of the two staffs is on a tight deadline, publishing an edition of the Falcon about once or twice a month.

The third-period staff is composed of 39 journalists and the fourth-period staff has 37, all of whom have specific jobs in the publishing process. Each staff member has a range of responsibilities from photographers to ad managers, copy editors to section editors, web managers to business managers..

Falcon writers strive to write stories that are informative and relevant to students.

Stories are assigned at the beginning of each of the two story cycles to reporters who express an interest in the topic.

Then reporters have to get background information and learn about

their topic through interviews and research. It is a common occurrence for students to see Falcon staff running around campus.

When reporters have gathered their information, it is time to write. However, the process does not end after the story is written. The story is then transferred to the editing and revision process where it must go through the section editor, editor-in-chief, journalism adviser Mike Tyler and, finally, to copy editors before the story's publication.

After the story completes the editing process, Falcon students put together the fruits of their labor into the newspaper format on a night known fondly as Deadline Night, most well known for the feasts that parents deliver to students as they stay until 8 p.m. in the Journalism Room. ♦

All graphics by Michelle Shu

Education elsewhere:

Parents' high schools vs. today's

While some immigrant parents believe their own high school education system was more strenuous and effective than their children's, others prefer the American system

BY Allison Chang

In 1979, Charleen Chiang came to the very first time to the United States from Taiwan after graduating from the National Taiwan University. She had been able to come on account of her outstanding grades and was pursuing a degree in computer science.

"American standards for education are too low and teachers need to prepare students more for college," said Chiang, the mother of sophomore Emily Chiang.

Many parents, especially those who have been educated in different countries with different systems, often believe that their children do not work hard enough or as hard as they did. According to Chiang, to even be able to come to America to study, immigrant parents had to work extremely hard.

Naturally, they often push on their expectations onto their children.

Students often ignore their parent's comments about working harder when parents bring up their own educational experience, dismissing them as biased. However, after scrutinizing Taiwanese education during Chiang's time, students can judge the veracity of their parent's claims themselves.

"Our average school day was nine hours long and we would study

for four to five hours each day," Chiang said.

Additionally, according to Chiang, students had tests and quizzes every single day in each subject.

Her finals were also 40 percent of her overall grade when compared to Saratoga's average of 15 to 20 percent. She believes that by placing so much emphasis on the final, students must work harder to master all the material and therefore end up with a better understanding of the subject.

Other parents believe that the U.S. schools provide "more versatile classes and training."

One such parent is Patty Ding, mother of sophomore Evan Ding.

Yet another difference between current American education and Ding's education is the variety of classes in the curriculum.

"All the students [took] the same classes at the same time—in Taiwan]. There were no electives," Ding said.

Ding believes the lack of variety of classes in Taiwan pushed students into classes harder than what they could

manage or made those who were already familiar with the material feel constrained.

Pravin Madhani, father of sophomore Akshay Madhani, who went to school in India, believes that his children are more studious than he was, a somewhat rare sentiment from a parent.

"In my time, we did not have such a big workload and so many different courses to choose from

like honors and AP classes," said Madhani. "Subjects were not as advanced and intense as they are today."

Like Ding, Madhani said that the greater variety of electives and tracks is a great benefit of American education. Despite the benefits of such diversity, Madhani is not satisfied with the college admission process in America.

While Madhani was accepted into colleges based completely based on grades and college entrance exam results, the U.S. system "is quite a subjective process."

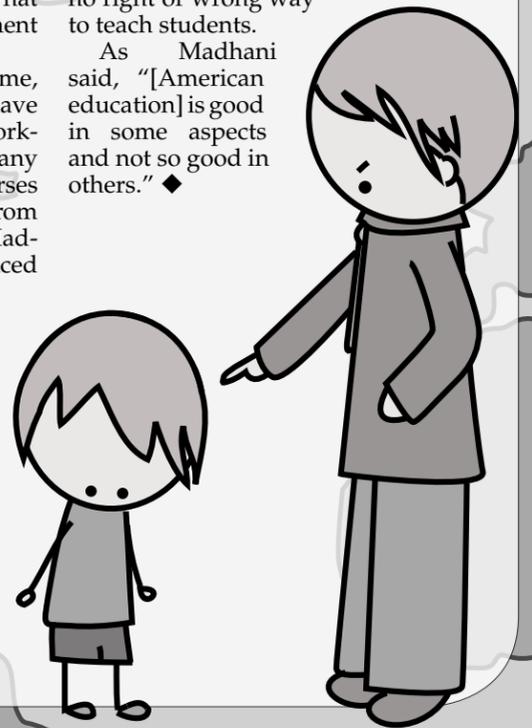
College applications are al-

Our average school day was nine hours long and we would study for four to five hours each day.

>> Parent Charleen Chiang

most always a source of consternation for students. Madhani believes that the college admission process would be much simpler for both parents and students if it was just based on grades rather than on extra-curricular activities. While some parents may firmly believe their education was better, there is no right or wrong way to teach students.

As Madhani said, "[American education] is good in some aspects and not so good in others." ♦



Classes at SHS a breeze compared to Germany's

BY Arnav Dugar

Taking 14 classes every year seems impractical, even for the most ambitious students at Saratoga High, yet this is what senior Michael Gaus is familiar with. Gaus, whose family moved to Saratoga from the suburbs of Munich, Germany, at the start of his sophomore year, has spent the majority of his school years learning under the German education system.

The education in Germany is more well-rounded, with a strong focus in the sciences, according to Gaus. Every year, he took the same core subjects, including biology, chemistry, physics, computer science, English, French, Ger-

man, physical education, history and economics. The classes were shorter in length—only 45 minutes each—but were much more challenging.

"Not only were there many more classes," Gaus said. "The classes were also much more difficult. Physics AP at Saratoga High is like the first day of physics in Germany."

The students in Germany are often two years ahead of the United States counterparts. For example, the concepts taught in calculus, a class generally taken during the junior or senior year at Saratoga High, are a part of the 10th grade core curriculum in Germany.

Unlike the education system in the United States, the subjects in Germany are not broken into individual levels.

"It's not like you take pre-calculus, and then calculus in math," Gaus said. "Everyone in your grade takes the same math and the levels are all blended together."

Instead of letter grades, the stu-

dents are given numbered grades from one through six, one being the highest and six the lowest. Unlike Saratoga High where a large percentage of students receive A's in classes, ones are more uncommon. The majority of students receive twos and threes.

Students also receive final grades eight times per school year for the major subjects, instead of twice at the end of each semester. These grades are comprised only of test and quiz scores, since homework is optional. A student who fails a class at Saratoga High has to retake the class during summer or the following year, but continues on to the next grade.

In Germany, failing a grade involves retaking the entire grade.

"At the end of the year, if you have two fives or if you have one six, you fail the entire grade," Gaus said.

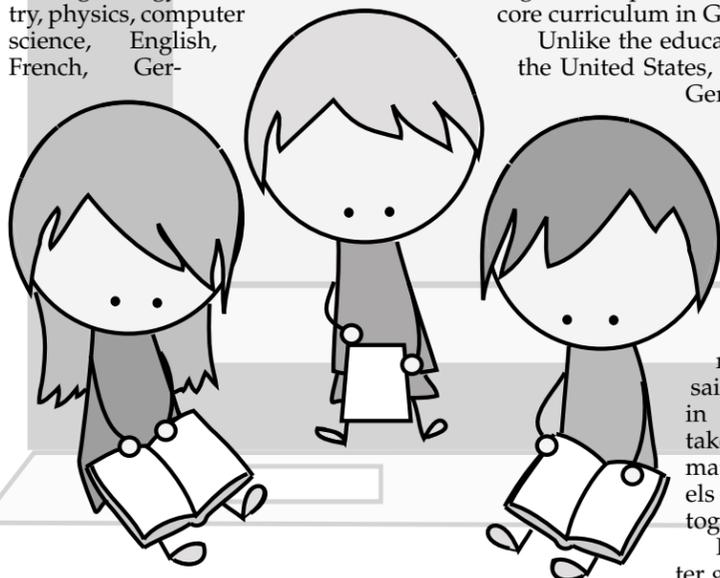
The structure of the educational system in Germany is very different from the public and private school system in the United States.

"There isn't a single school for everybody," Gaus said. "There is an upper school, a middle school and a lower school. Depending on how good your grades are after fourth grade, you get stuck in one of the three levels."

Movement between the three levels is very uncommon, explained Gaus. Occasionally, however, students may drop down to a lower level, but moving up is not possible.



Gaus



Gaus was at the top of his class in the upper level school, explaining the rigor of his coursework, yet the general level of education in Germany is much higher compared to that in the United States.

"I would much rather prefer studying in Germany," Gaus said. "The quality of education and the pace they move at makes learning much more interesting." ♦

>> thebigidea

German Education

School levels

Students are permanently separated into upper, middle and lower schools depending on their grades

Core subjects

Biology, chemistry, physics, computer science, English, French, German, physical education, history and economics

Grading scale

Students receive grades on a scale of one to six, one being the highest; scores are based purely on tests and quizzes

Consequences of failure

Students must retake the entire grade if they get two fives or one six; most students earn twos and threes

With its plethora of cultural diversity, Saratoga is home to a variety of people who have experienced a wide selection of school environments

Schooling differs from state to state

BY MichelleShu

As students move to California from other states, they realize the drastic differences in different parts of the United States. Even if they are just starting school, there are variations between teaching styles, school schedules and curriculum. Regardless of whether they are in elementary school or high school, each state learns differing topics and runs independently from each other.



"In fourth grade in California everyone learned the missions and California state history," said junior Heather Sabel. "We didn't do that in Connecticut so we learned about the different

regions. It was weird coming here." Sabel grew up in New Canaan, Connecticut, but moved to California the summer of 2005.

Sabel's old school district in New Canaan is considered to be the best public school district in Connecticut with the highest average SAT scores in the state. However, Saratoga High School averages at around a 1920, roughly 100 points higher on the SAT compared to the New Canaan school district.

Even so, New Canaan High School has contrasting graduation requirements. The school requires four years of English, three years of history and math, two years of science, one and half years for visual performing arts and physical education and a quarter of

health. They, however, match Saratoga in the number of Advanced Placement classes offered, which adds up to 17 AP classes, although the offered AP classes are not the same.



junior Heather Sabel

Not only do the available classes differ, New Canaan's school district averaged at a cost of \$14,837 per student in 2007 whereas the Los Gatos Saratoga Union High School District averages at \$11,579 per student.

On the other hand, Sabel noticed a similarity shared by Redwood Middle School and the one she would have gone to in Connecticut.

"It was similar because Redwood [Middle School] [has three elementary schools feeding into it] and the middle school I would've gone to would've

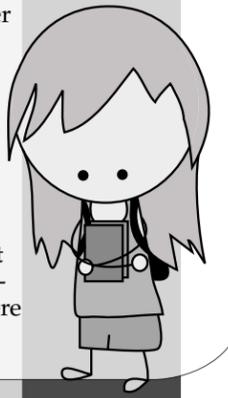
had three elementary schools [feeding into it], too," Sabel said.

After moving, Sabel noticed how her new school varied from her previous school schedule.

"We didn't have a bell back in Connecticut so the teachers scheduled out their entire day," Sabel said. "We read a lot more books together as a class. We also didn't use textbooks."

Sabel found all of the contrasting elements difficult to accustom herself to. Even so, she has become accustomed to her life in Saratoga.

"I was surprised [when I first came to Saratoga]; it was a little hard to get used to everything," Sabel said. "But I really like it here, especially because I've been here so long." ♦



Foreign students share home experiences

BY AnshuSiripurapu

Senior Sangkyoun Shin and junior Carlos Del Castillo were a little confused on schedule pick-up day when they looked at the bell schedules printed on the back of their lists of classes. The classes were in blocks? Only certain classes on different days? What was tutorial? What seemed completely ordinary to most SHS students was completely alien to them. Like many other foreign transfer students, Shin and Castillo were surprised by the differences between SHS and their former schools in Korea and Mexico.

"School [in Korea starts] at the same time as school in the US, and we finished around 4:20," said Shin, who moved to Saratoga in April.

But that is about the only thing that Korean schools have in common with our own.

"After school ends, we had mandatory self-study time until 9 p.m. with a dinner break. I think that's why many Korean students want to come to the U.S.," Shin said, chuckling to himself.

Still, South Korean education boasts enviable results. The country consistently ranks among the highest in international exams of reading, math and science. Shin's school in Korea followed a traditional schedule with 50 minutes for each class and students attending all of their classes each day. But Korean students remain in the same classroom throughout the day.

"In the U.S., classes are always changing, but in Korea you stay with one class, about 30 to 40 students and the teachers change," Shin said.

Like Shin, Castillo said Mexico uses the traditional schedule with 45 minute classes every day. Classes begin at 7:15 and end at 2:30. As in Korea, students remained in one class, with the teachers rotating.

In addition, high school in Mexico lasts only three years, since 9th grade is considered part of junior high.

A major difference that Shin noticed was the proximity of the school to students' homes.

"Some students take the bus or car like in the U.S., but most students walk to school in Korea, which I haven't seen as much here," Shin said.

Students in Korea have the same basic

education requirements as the U.S.: Korean, English, social studies, mathematics and science. Science is further divided into three subsections: chemistry, biology and physics, as it often is in America.



Castillo

"We also get to choose one elective class, either art, music or athletics," Shin said.

Since Castillo attended a Catholic school, his required subjects were English, Spanish, math, science, Mexican history and world history. The school also had required uniforms.

"In Mexico, there's not as much choice for your classes," said Castillo. "You are given the different subjects each year."

But the biggest difference both noticed was the variety of activities offered at schools in the U.S.

"The U.S. is like a freedom nation," said Shin. "In Korea, the clubs and other activities are much weaker than here."

Shin said that athletics are not as emphasized in Korea as in America; they are instead incorporated into the school day as an elective class. Shin was surprised by the huge emphasis on after-school sports in the U.S.

Castillo also pointed to the lack of diverse extracurricular activities at his school in Mexico.

"Most kids participated in activities outside of school in the afternoons," he said. "In school the only things are your classes and soccer."

At SHS, Castillo is a member of the marching band, playing in the pit percussion section.

He said that in Mexico, while there was some music education in elementary school, it was nothing like the organized programs offered here.

"In Mexico, I had to take my music lessons on my own in the afternoons," he said. "It's not like the afternoon rehearsals we have here."

Still, despite the differences, both students are enjoying their time in the U.S.

"I have a lot more freedom here, and most other kids in Korea would be very happy to come to the United States," Shin said. ♦



>> togatalks

What country do you wish you could study in?

"France, because my parents are from France and the culture is really interesting."



junior Melodie Bellegarda

"I would want to study in France because of the culture and architecture."



senior Peter Chen

"Japan, because it's a very interesting country, and I've never been there"



sophomore Sam Kobara

"A country where I couldn't speak the language fluently, like France or somewhere in South America."



sophomore My Lan Le

Boys' water polo stays afloat through practice

BY Olivia Chock

Senior Justin Fang finally finishes his workout, breathing a sigh of relief that it's over. He and his teammates just swam across the entire pool without coming out of the water for a single breath. This is just one of workouts the water polo team has to do on a regular day of practice.

"Underwaters can be really hard because even if you're dying and running out of air you still have to go on because you're afraid [coach Courtney Crase] will punish the whole team," Fang said.

Although practices are tough, they bring a sense of unity to the team as they joke about how it would be better to black out from lack of oxygen than come up for air so no one would have to do the workout again.

Another grueling exercise the team has to do is called "in and outs". For this one, the team has to jump in the water, sprint to the other side, and climb out onto the pool deck.

"If someone doesn't do 'underwaters' correctly, [Crase] punishes us by making us either redo them or with 'in and outs,'" Fang said, "And if we don't do 'in and outs' fast

enough, she makes us redo them."

Even though these workouts are tiresome, sophomore Cameron Borch said they improve endurance and lung capacity. When asked if athletes from other sports could handle their vigorous workouts, Borch said they wouldn't be able to.

"Especially the underwaters," Borch said, "I don't think anyone else could hold their breath that long."

Goalies Clayton Brown, sophomore, Will Edman, senior, and Sean Lee, junior, face another difficult task. According to Brown, they are required to hold up five gallon jugs of water and wait for them to drain while treading.

"Other people on the team say, 'Oh that looks easy balancing jugs on my head, let me try,' and fail," Brown said, "It's definitely a lot harder than it sounds."

Not only does the team have to do these tough workouts every practice, they also have morning practices at 5:45 AM on Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays.

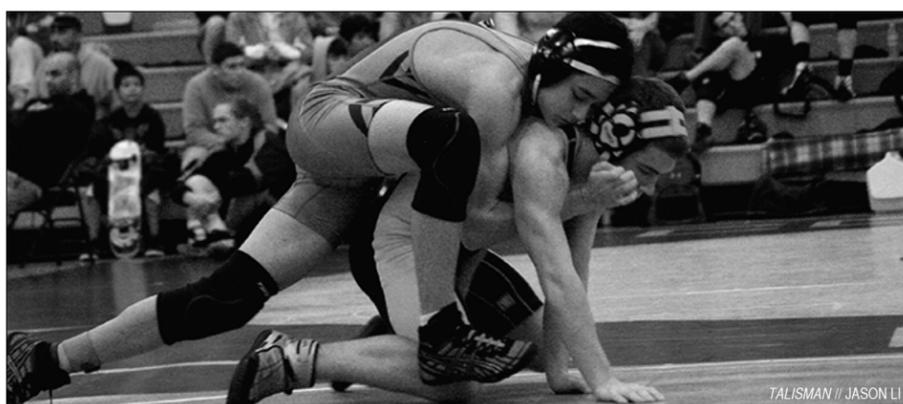
"Every minute late is one 'in and out,'" Fang says, "We all try to get there early to avoid that!" ♦



The objects that goalies such as sophomore Clayton Brown must carry as part of training on legs include chairs, medicine balls and jugs full of water.

SURVIVE AND THRIVE

Team practices can be brutal but effective



Senior Connor Mullaney pins down his opponent as he wrestles during a 2010 match.

Wrestlers face intense training

BY Evaline Ju

Wrestling is no simple tangle of arms and legs.

The sport involves a large amount of both mental and physical toughness, aspects that wrestlers must practice over and over again to gain the necessary endurance.

"Whether it's [in practice or in a competition]" senior Connor Mullaney said, "wrestling is always the hardest part of practice since it involves every muscle of your body and all of your energy if the person you wrestle gives you a good challenge."

A normal practice session lasts about two hours, beginning with gymnastics, including handsprings and cartwheels, yoga and stretching as a warm-up. Sometimes the team members also do plyometrics, exercises that include fast movements, such as jumps. [a]

"[Plyometrics] aren't fun at all, but they're good for mental strengthening," Mullaney said.

Practices also include drilling and techniques. The team works on hand-fighting and takedowns, a series of moves to throw an opponent off balance and bring him to the ground.

"The most difficult drills are the timed ones where you try to get the most amount of takedowns in a given time," junior Henry Wei said.

New techniques are introduced during a practice, and then team members pair up to practice a move with another. Toward the end of practice, the members wrestle live with each other. A drill called "Iron Man" pits one wrestler against many opponents, and the wrestlers rotate to give each person a chance to be the "Iron Man."

"Most of the drilling is pretty intense," said history teacher Kirk Abe, who was the wrestling team's head coach until last year when coach Joe Pele took over. "It is pushing yourself really hard for short bursts. The longer you do short intense parts, the better."

Practices end with conditioning and warm-downs.

In one practice, Wei recalled, the team did not drill but did plyometrics, sprints and push-ups, for an hour and a half.

Fortunately, the team has lighter practices before tournaments and matches. The coach answers questions and the wrestlers go over moves and do some light drilling.

Thanks to the difficult practices, Wei feels that he has become mentally and physically stronger and recommends people to try the sport. Wei says he didn't know if he would enjoy it when he first started.

"One of my friends convinced me to do try [wrestling] with him, but here I am today still doing it," he said. ♦

Runners withstand rain, build team chemistry

BY Jennifer Jin

Members of the track and cross-country teams are expected to grind out their workouts and put in their miles—even it means getting pelted by hail or slogging through rain and mud. Some even enjoy what other would consider torture.

"My freshman year we ran in the worst rain I've ever seen; it was like a tropical rainstorm [but] it was so much fun," cross-country runner junior Suzannah Osekowsky said. "We laughed at the people whose umbrellas were blown inside-out and we splashed in puddles. It was absolutely fantastic!"

Even those who did not enjoy running in the rain were still able to have a good time.

"It's actually quite funny watching everyone huddled under the bleachers trying to avoid the rain and jumping over monster puddles so that they don't get soaked," senior high jumper Michelle Arifin said.

However, some people did not enjoy their experiences as much as Arifin did.

"One time we had to do [ab workouts] while sitting down on the wet, red track and when I got I up had this orange-red colored stain on my shorts," track member junior Michael Cheung said. "It was kind of disgusting."

In addition to the pouring rain, a rare but extremely difficult weather condition runners face is hail.

"The one thing I hate the most is when it rains and hails at the same time," hurdler senior Isabel McPherson said. "Not only is it wet, it's also really painful."

After runners become accustomed to inclement weather, they must re-adapt to hot weather. At first the heat is unbearable for many, but the runners acclimate, and some even gain a competitive

advantage for races by running under the sweltering sun during practice.

"Because we run during the hottest part of the day, we learn to deal with the heat," cross-country runner junior Kiki Shim said. "During some race courses, there is no shade, so running a sunny course helps you get prepared for that."

When running in the heat, runners get tired and thirsty easily, so most runners try to avoid running in the heat as much as possible.

Even in good weather, running long distances is no easy feat, but after a couple miles of running, it becomes a pleasant run, a term

many call "runner's high".

"I love the relaxing and numb feeling you get after you're on your third mile. You can feel your feet moving under you but you're not really putting that much effort into running," Shim said. "It's an odd feeling but an enjoyable one."

No matter the obstacles, practices become more enjoyable when athletes have the opportunity to train and build chemistry with fellow teammates.

"As long as I have fun with my friends while running, it's all good, and I can enjoy practice," sophomore cross-country runner Stephanie Ho said. "It makes the longest runs go by in a flash."

Even though some runners do not enjoy running in unfavorable conditions, they all agree that it pays off in the end because of the benefits of tough training and the teamwork that it promotes.

"Sweat is greater than regret," said junior cross-country runner Maya Nag. "That's my motto." ♦

Sweat is greater than regret. That's my motto.

>> Junior Maya Nag

COLLEGE RECRUITMENT

Senior takes wrestling to next level at UPenn

BY Shivani Chadha

Senior Alfred Murabito's wrestling career began at age 12. At the time he had no idea where wrestling would take him; it all began as just a fun pastime. Now, just five years later, Murabito is taking his passion to the next level and plans to wrestle at University of Pennsylvania next fall.

Murabito's recruitment began at the end of his junior year, when he received an email from the University of Pennsylvania wrestling coach.

Murabito had attended a UPenn wrestling camp in the Bay Area the summer before junior year and the assistant coach took interest in him.

After attending a couple of more camps and even staying with the wrestling team in Pennsylvania, Murabito knew he was interested in the school's program.

"None of my family members have ever attended UPenn and I knew I wanted to wrestle in college. It was exciting that they were interested," Murabito said.

Murabito then received a "likely" email from the coach, which is only sent out to eight people in the nation and is an email demonstrating the coach's interest and Murabito's likely acceptance into UPenn.

Murabito has yet to send in his verbal or written commitment before being officially accepted at the university.

"I had to do year-round practices," Murabito said. "Mostly every day and during the summer it was often more than once a day."

Last year Murabito wrestled in the 132 lb category and will most likely wrestle at 140 lbs this year.

Murabito has been and is currently training with a private coach, CC Fisher, outside of school season.

Murabito's commitment to wrestling sometimes gets in the way of his schoolwork, but he's adjusted his time management and has done exceptionally well

under the circumstances.

"Sometimes I'll put homework off till the next day or morning after wrestling, which sometimes hurts my homework grade, but it's all worth it in the end."

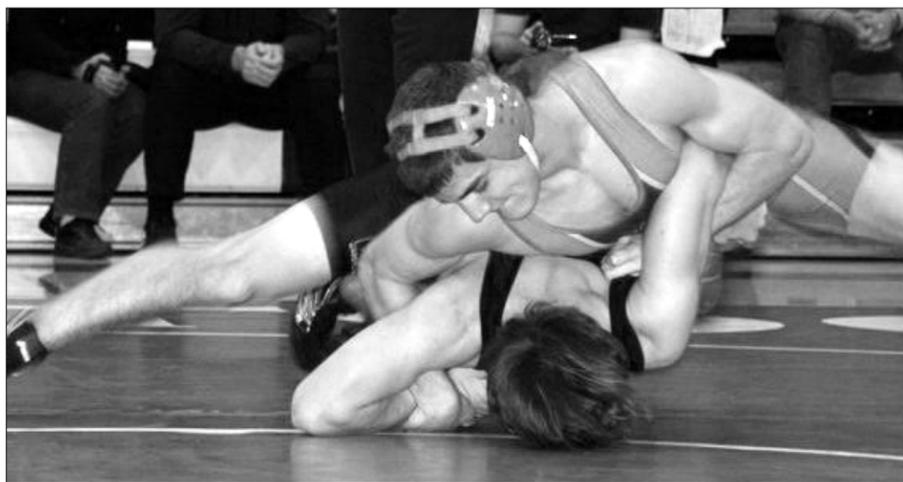
Though Ivy League schools do not offer scholarships, wrestling merely ensures his admission with the proper grades and test scores, which Murabito has worked hard to achieve.

Even with wrestling practices and matches, Murabito keeps schoolwork as one of his top priorities and maintains a rigorous schedule at school.

Despite the hard work required,

"I'm glad that my wrestling has helped me into an Ivy League school. I hope to make the best out of it in the future even though it'll probably be really hard."

>> Senior Alfred Murabito



Courtesy of KAREN PELE

Murabito firmly holds his opponent down with an arm lock as he leads Saratoga to victory.

Murabito enjoys himself and has been able to travel to Virginia, Pennsylvania, Nevada and Michigan for tournaments and camps.

Murabito said his workouts are fairly normal, consisting of drills and practice wrestling against teammates.

"My workouts are mostly drilling moves, there's no secret method or anything," Murabito said. "But occasionally I have to wrestle blind, which is always fun."

Wrestling blind requires Murabito to cover or close his eyes and wrestle while relying on his other senses to improve his reaction time during matches.

Murabito said he's also had to work on his signature move, called the single leg, which is slightly risky but allows

him to transform a failed knee or leg attack into a powerful take-down.

Murabito even works out while at home, often making use of the yoke bar he has in his garage, which requires him to do push-ups while balancing on a bar suspended in the air.

Murabito said the yoke bar makes normal push-ups more strenuous and helps him build his upper body strength.

There have been good times and bad times, but Murabito's hard work has helped him achieve his ultimate goal.

"I'm glad that my wrestling has helped me get into an Ivy League school," Murabito said. "I hope to make the best out of it in the future even though it'll probably be really hard." ♦

COLLEGE RECRUITMENT

Indiana University taps Clark for Division 1 soccer

BY Megan Benzing

During their senior year, students desperately work to finish their college applications ensure a spot at their top choice schools.

However, senior Kari Clark shares none of those worries.

On Aug. 1, Clark received the offer to play NCAA Division 1 soccer at Indiana University.

Two days later, she accepted and her college search process officially ended.

Clark has been playing soccer since she was 5 and has been passionate ever since.

She plays center midfield and defense.

"I have practiced with my club team three days a week with games on the weekend for as long as I can remember," Clark said.

Missing social events and choosing soccer over all other sports have been necessary sacrifices.

"Along with not being able to go out with my friends all the time, I also had to quit field hockey because it overlapped with soccer too much."

Over the course

of junior year, Clark sent a multitude of emails to prospective colleges, requesting for representatives to attend games and watch her play. There were so many options that she was not sure where her top choice was.

"My club coach and my high school coach knew one of the assistant coaches at IU, and they encouraged me to consider it," Clark said.

After speaking to IU assistant coach Orlando Cervantes, Clark decided to attend IU's soccer camp last June.

Cervantes showed her a tour of the campus before the camp began.

"After I learned more about the school and visited the campus, I fell in love," Clark said. "It immediately became my No. 1 choice. Even though there were other schools interested, IU was the only school to officially offer me a spot on their team."

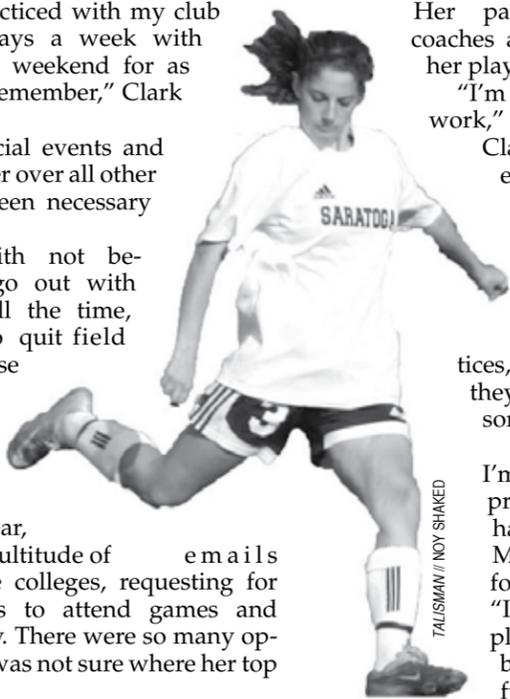
IU is in the top 100 Division 1 schools in the country, according to Clark.

Her parents, friends and coaches are all excited to see her play on the IU team.

"I'm proud of all her hard work," her mother Kathy Clark said. "I'm really excited to see her play in college."

Representatives from Indiana University have not yet attended any of her games or practices, but Clark anticipates they will come watch her sometime this year.

"All this next year I'm going to have to practice ten times harder to get prepared. My goal is to start for them," Clark said. "I'm really nervous to play Division 1 soccer but I'm sure it will be fun." ♦



TALISMAN / NOY SHAKED

GIRLS' TENNIS

Still tough: Falcons bounce back from Peachtree losses

BY Evaline Ju

It's hard to top a perfect season.

Losing a match came as a shock to the girls' tennis team following their 25-0 season last year, but they still succeeded in winning fifth place at the California Girls High School Tennis Classic in Fresno earlier this month.

After a tough match with Santa Barbara High, the team suffered a 4-3 loss on Sept. 9. The No. 1 doubles team of seniors Lisa Asai and Sarah Lum split sets with their opponents and lost 10-2 in the match tiebreaker.

Junior Niharika Bedekar was not present for the first day of matches, causing the lineup to be shifted up.

Nevertheless, coach Tom Uyehara felt pleased with the team's fifth place win. "I felt [winning] was more rewarding as it showed the players that they could beat some of the tougher teams regardless of a complete lineup," Uyehara said.

The team came back with a pair of 4-3 wins over Granite Bay High School and St. Francis High School in the consolation rounds on Sept. 10.

Sophomore Kalyani Narayan, who played the No. 1 singles position, provided vital wins in both matches. Against Granite Bay, she triumphed 7-6, 6-4 in the deciding match that gave Saratoga the win.

"I wasn't expecting to win against such a fantastic player [Granite Bay's senior Karolina Kecki]," Narayan said. "I really think I was inspired by my teammates and coach because they were really supportive."

Against St. Francis, Bedekar, who stepped up to play at the No. 2 singles

position, came back from losing 1-4 in the second set to win her match 6-2, 6-4.

"It was a great feeling to come back and be able to tune out all the negativity of the other team," Bedekar said. "It meant a lot that it was for the team, so I was really happy I was able to win for them."

Narayan's match again was the deciding match when she won 6-2, 6-4. Usual No. 1 singles player senior Crystal Yen and Lum were not present for the last two matches due to an individual tournament and the ACT respectively.

Uyehara remains optimistic about the season ahead. "I am looking forward to repeating the results from last season," he said. "I believe we have the team and talent to do it; we just have to get it done on the court. It will definitely be tougher, but this team has proven time and time again to succeed when it is faced with adversity."

The girls opened the De Anza league season with a 7-0 win over Mountain View on Sept. 13 and triumphed over Los Altos 6-1 on Sept. 20.

Uyehara predicts tough matches against usual top competitors Monta Vista, Archbishop Mitty and Menlo.

"Overall, we match up well against them, but everyone will need to play to the best of their abilities if we want a chance to beat them," he said.

The team will conclude the first round of the league season with a Sept. 29 away match against Monta Vista, but due to printing deadlines the results could not be reported. ♦

FOOTBALL

Injuries pile up, forcing adjustments

BY Rohan Rajeev

After having played three games in the season so far, the Falcon football team has registered one well-deserved victory as well as two disappointing losses to relatively strong opponents.

The Falcon offense was shut down by Hollister on Sept. 16, as they only managed two touchdowns for a 28-14 loss. The week before, the offense shined against the Gilroy Mustangs, running circles around their defense to a 31-21 victory on away turf. The recent decline in performance may be attributed to the increasing number of injured players on the squad.

Injuries the Falcons have had to contend with include a broken leg to senior lineman Mitchell Faylor, a shoulder sprain to senior running back Troy Doles and a knee sprain to junior linebacker Henry Wei.

"Injuries are a reality in football, but we have had more than our fair share of them," head coach Tim Lugo said.

Even though these recent injuries have slightly handicapped the team, Lugo feels that even the most inconvenient of injuries has a brighter side.

"We've played really well on defense so far this year and that is without Wei and Doles. When they return, we become that much better," Lugo said.

Lugo also said that injuries have forced him to move and switch partners in order to find the combination of players with the most stability, especially on offense.

"Offense is our weakness, but by switching players around because of injuries, we have created depth," Lugo said. "That experience will pay off for us as the year goes on. So that weakness



Senior running back Troy Doles pushes past the opposition at the Sept. 16 game against Hollister. The varsity lost 14-28.

could become a strength."

He hopes that the return of these injured players will jolt the team to even more success.

"We've played really well without them," he said. "When they come back, we become that much better."

Senior wide receiver Dominic Guercio believes that incoming sophomores and juniors have filled these holes with resounding capability.

"The juniors are really pulling their

weight," Guercio said. "Also, [sophomores] Davis Berryhill and Clark Rotherberg both have key roles on the team and are doing an outstanding job."

Guercio looks upon injuries as a great opportunity for other players to excel.

"Players getting hurt has allowed the opportunity for others to step up, and many have done a great job," he said.

Lugo thinks that as the team improves, it increases its chances of making it to CCS playoffs. He also plans to mix

up the team's strategy and play more of a running game rather than the usual shotgun passing game.

The new strategy was a success, as the Falcons ran over 375 yards against Gilroy, eventually beating them.

"We'll probably stay in that [strategy] for a while as we work through our injuries," he said.

The Falcons will host Los Altos on Sept. 30 for their Homecoming game. ♦

FIELD HOCKEY

Lack of seniors causes challenges

BY Cristina Curcelli & Sarah Finley

This season, the field hockey team is facing a difficult challenge. Unlike past years, the team has only two seniors to lead the way.

Those seniors, Anna Ashe and Abby Williams, said that although the team's lack of seniors has been difficult at times, they believe it works to their advantage.

"I really don't think the lack of seniors impacts our team negatively," Williams said. "If anything, I think it is good for the juniors and sophomores on our team. It allows an opportunity for other girls to step up and also allows for more people to get experience on the field."

Ashe shared a similar view, saying, "Now that we're almost done with preseason, the team has come together more, and there isn't really a hierarchy."

Both seniors agree that their duties of running summer practices were made more difficult by the lack of seniors to help them.

"It put a [large] load onto both of us to make sure practices went well," Williams said. "Someone was able to coordinate the practices, though the juniors stepped up and helped out if there was

a day where neither of [co-captains Williams, Ashe or junior Hannah Johnson] could make it."

Williams said because she is one of two seniors, she puts more pressure on herself to play her best.

"I feel like I need to step up to make up for the fact that there are less seniors to be there for the other girls," Williams said.

Coach Leaf Huynh believes that the lack of seniors is not a problem.

"The absence of seniors may affect the overall tone and having that 'senior drive,' that sense of urgency, since seniors know and feel it's their last high school hoorah," Huynh said. "We have two great seniors as captains and a junior captain who are all learning to help build their team confi-

dence and self-confidence within their underclassmen."

Huynh said that because younger players have gotten more playing time this year, she expects the team will have a bright future.

"Experience will always be a great asset in the years to come," Huynh said regarding the underclassmen.

Preseason went well, but the hardest part is yet to come as the league games have just begun. As of Sept. 20, the team had a preseason record of 3-0-1. ♦



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>> THE bigidea
Field Hockey

An unbalanced team

Girls' field hockey only has two seniors on the team this year

The co-captains

Seniors Anna Ashe and Abby Williams, junior Hannah Johnson

Current record

The team had a preseason record of 3-0-1

BOYS' WATER POLO

Senior rejoins team despite shoulder injury

BY Stanley Yip

Water polo players from both Wilcox and Saratoga wearing their swimsuits and caps leaped into the pool as they subbed in, but senior hole defender and hole set Nicolas Doyen jumped in with the addition of a menacingly large black shoulder brace.

Doyen played his first game on Sept. 22 against longtime rival Wilcox after suffering a severe shoulder injury last March in lacrosse. Despite his injury, Doyen lead the charge against Wilcox, but the team lost 11-10 to achieve a 6-1 record.

The team, however, remains optimistic about future games under the rallying call of Doyen. Doyen strengthened the morale of the team to keep moving forward even in defeat and constantly motivated the team.

"[Doyen] really kept the team going, especially when the outcome wasn't looking too good," senior goalie Will

Edman said.

Doyen's injury requires surgery, but he decided to postpone it to continue playing.

Doyen said he injured himself during a lacrosse game, resulting in a SLAP tear and an AC joint separation. A SLAP tear stands for a superior labral tear from anterior to posterior. In simpler terms, the ligaments holding the ball of a shoulder have been torn. "Occasionally my shoulder will roll out of the socket or there will be a piercing pain that shoots down my arm," Doyen said.

He said the surgery was originally scheduled for Sept. 23 and would entail a six-week period of being unable to move his arm as well as a six to 12 months of recovery time.

Both recovery periods would lead Doyen to miss crucial events.

"[The six-week period] would lead me to miss an ACT and the SAT subject tests I'm taking. If [the recovery time] lasts any longer than six months, I



FALCON // OLIVIA CHOCK

Senior Will Edman blocks the opposing player's shot from making it into the goal during a game against Fremont High School. The Falcons won 13-11 in this game on Sept. 14.

would miss all sports seasons of my senior year," he said.

He also found that he would be able to play on despite the injury, which was a factor in the decision to postpone the surgery.

"I plan on playing lacrosse [in college]. I'm a senior. This means that this is my last season of water polo ever, so I didn't want to miss it," Doyen said.

Doyen also said that he needs to have a senior [sports] season because they are a major part of his college search.

Postponing the surgery has numerous

drawbacks such as possible permanent muscle and ligament damage as well as chronic shoulder pain.

He will also be forced to use his first year of college as recovery time, which could affect the decision of letting him on the team, he said.

Junior Parth Shah also supported his decision to postpone the surgery.

"I think it was a smart decision [to postpone the surgery] on his part," Shah said. "He just needs to take care of his shoulder and not overuse it. He knows his limits." ♦

GIRLS' GOLF

Players optimistic about season changes

BY Aashna Mukerji

When Casey Hall stepped down as head coach for the 2011 girls' golf season to assume a higher position at Stanford, the previously 19-member team was disappointed, to say the least.

"I didn't know what to expect," junior Sanjna Verma said. "I was pretty sad because I'd had her as coach since I was a freshman, so this year was a big change."

The girls' golf team started four years ago, with Hall as head coach and Raylene Zatz as assistant coach. This year, those positions are filled respectively by Dave Gragnola and Louise Hall (no relation to Casey Hall).

Gragnola was approached to take over the girls' team after accepting the position as head coach of the boys' golf team following former head coach Bill Drennan's retirement. Gragnola has coached a variety of sports including 18 years of soccer, five years of softball at SHS, and basketball. In order to take up the position as boys' golf coach this season, Gragnola resigned as softball coach.

A seven-time golf club champion at Saratoga Country Club, where he has played since age 12, Gragnola describes himself as an "avid golfer." He played basketball and golf as a student for .0 for three years, qualifying for CCS in the latter two.

"My coaching style is pretty simple," Gragnola said. "I like to have fun while I teach my players, but I'm very serious about the success of my team. I'm a firm believer that competition is good in sports."

Gragnola hopes for SHS to become known as a place for people to learn about golf and hopes that his players will qualify for CCS.

Tryouts for girls' golf were held during the first week of school. Only the girls with the top 12 scores made the team, resulting in seven players being cut.

Sophomore Halle Champion believes that the tryouts were beneficial to the team, separating the dedicated players from those who were attracted to the sport's short season and simple reputation.

"People joined last year just to get out of PE, but this year's a lot better," Champion said. "We've been winning! Last year we didn't really win anything, so I'm enjoying this season."

Both Champion and junior Samika Kumar feel that the way Gragnola conducts practice is significantly different from Hall's.

"Casey pushed us, but not as much as Dave does now," Champion said. "It helps us and gets us more motivated."

Kumar added that players are getting more time on the course and less time on the range, which can be both positive and negative.

Matches are usually held on Mondays and Thursdays, and the team has a win-loss record of 4-2 as of Sept. 22. ♦

>> THE bigidea

Girls' golf changes

Experienced coach
Dave Gragnola has coached several teams to victory, including soccer and softball

New practice styles
Gragnola describes himself as simple, but he is "serious about success"

Selective try-outs
Cuts are no longer allowed for any teams on-campus

GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

Volleyball looks to regain A league status in future

BY Sierra Smith

The girls' volleyball team has some ground to regain this year after being bumped down from the De Anza league to the less competitive El Camino league.

This year will serve as a rebuilding year for the team as they welcome six new players to the varsity team. With only one senior, outside hitter Talia Sisco, the players compose a young varsity team.

The Falcons used their five preseason games to get a good feel for working together and getting back in the swing of things. They ended with a preseason record of 1-4.

"Our playing has definitely improved from the first preseason game to the last," sophomore Jennifer Ho said. "I feel like each game we are improving, and since we played A league teams, it was great practice for us."

Ho is a back row defense specialist and will also be filling in as the setter throughout the season while setter Katelyn McKay is unable to play due to injury.

While the team works well together, there are still areas that could use improvement. One such area is team morale on the court after losing a few rallies.

"The team definitely needs to work on maintaining a positive attitude during the entire game," Ho said. "We need to cheer each other up after a mistake and move on to the next play." Outside hit-

ter Julia Lee, sophomore, also acknowledges that keeping positive may be an obstacle for the team this year.

"When we're not fired up, don't keep up the energy, or become frustrated with ourselves or each other, we fall apart," Lee said.

The team will work on improving morale during practice and also during games, and even on their own time. The girls have already done some bonding at a team sleepover. Injuries early on in the season have also caused a slight hindrance. McKay is recovering from a

back injury she received after diving after a ball in the bleachers. The injury has her temporarily benched and is forcing secondary setter Ho to step in her position.

Preseason games came to a close with an upsetting loss to Castilleja on Sept. 15 with final scores of 25-13, 25-10 and 25-10, but the team is ready and excited to play in league games. According to the team, the strongest competitors this season will be Valley Christian and Lynbrook.

"I am looking forward to the rest of the season. With more practice our team could have the potential to be great in our league," Ho said. ♦

"I feel like each game we are improving, and since we played A league teams, it was great practice for us."

>> Sophomore Jennifer Ho

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pictureperfect



Senior cheerleader Sarah Hull teaches elementary school students cheers, dances and jumps as part of the Pee Wee Cheer Camp at Saratoga High from Sept. 12-16.



Junior Yifat Amir climbs the Fort Miley Ropes Course in San Francisco during the MAP trip on Sept. 9, learning to build teamwork and respect while having fun.



The class of 2012 jumps from their seats and cheers wildly at the rally on Friday, Sept. 16, led by rally commissioners who are dressed according to the Pokemon theme.



Ceramics students courageously attempt to create pottery with blindfolds on, relying only on touch to form a perfectly shaped bowl.

>> buzzworthy

Pee Wee cheer camp wows the crowd

BY Anika Jhalani

There may be nothing more endearing than the sight of 4-year-olds trying to shake their pom poms and 9-year-olds practicing their cheers until they're perfect. The cheer team got a chance to see some of the best elementary school talent from this year's Pee Wee cheer camp.

Pee Wee is an annual camp led by SHS cheerleaders to fund raise for the various expenses needed to keep the team running. The camp is extended to any elementary school student, from kindergarten to 5th grade, and usually rakes in students from Argonaut, Foothill and Saratoga Elementary. This year, it was held for a week from Sept. 12-16.

"The camp was awesome this year," junior cheerleader Nadya Shahin said. "Seeing those girls working on their

cheers is adorable; it is what I look forward to every football season."

The Pee Wee cheerleaders perform the material from the camp at the halftime show of that week's football game. They learn three cheers, a dance, and jumps to perform in routines. The song to this year's dance was "Baby" by Justin Bieber.

"I loved teaching the dance this year, mostly because of the song," said junior Haley Wong. "It was so cute because every pee wee girl out there knew the song, and they were singing along the entire time."

As part of the camp, each pee wee receives her own T-shirt and pair of pom poms.

"Whenever we hand out the pom poms," said senior Rebecca Smerdon, "all the girls go wild. It is so funny to watch how excited they get."

Some of the current cheerleaders on

the team remember their times as Pee Wee girls as well.

"Part of the reason why I decided to try out for our high school cheer was because I did the Pee Wee camp," said senior Morgan Webster. "We still have pictures, and it's so surreal teaching the camp now instead of being in it."

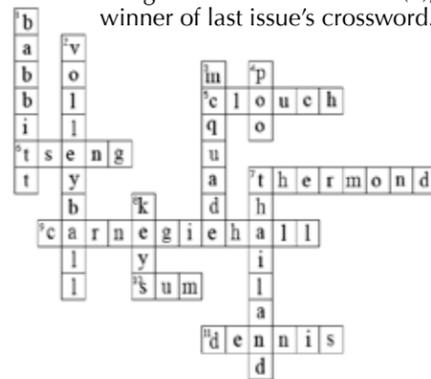
This year's camp had 75 student participants and 28 cheerleaders teaching. Coach and child psychology teacher Laressa Ridge says that Pee Wee is a great way to teach girls how to teach.

"Pee Wee this year was amazing," said Ridge. "A ton of parents came up to me and told me they thought it was a great camp for their daughters to be involved in." ♦



>> crosswordanswers

Congratulations Alex Kim (9), winner of last issue's crossword.



topten

WAYS TO STAY AWAKE IN THE CLASSROOM

- 10 Pinch yourself. Better yet, pinch the person next to you.
- 9 Make a Starbucks run during tutorial. Not that it's against the rules or anything...
- 8 Take a "bathroom break" and go creep on your friends' classes.
- 7 Plant Whoopie cushions around the room and watch in glee as your teacher and peers make some unexpected noises.
- 6 Teach yourself Calculus; it will help you fit in.
- 5 Go to the bleachers and cheer for the freshman running the mile in their mandatory P.E. classes.
- 4 Distract history teacher Matt Torrens by asking him question about Petaluma and stealing from the pizza boy.
- 3 Figure out as many different ways to cut up your homecoming outfit to show as much skin as possible but "keep it classy" of course.
- 2 Brainstorm ways to get back at the juniors who think they can park in the senior lot. Saran-wrap anyone?
- 1 Who are we kidding, you can't.

>> Megan Benzing & Kim Tsai

Reflection of a broken mirror

FRIEND'S ACCIDENT LEAVES SENIOR WITH A NEW VIEW OF THE FUTURE



>> Christine Bancroft

Tinkerbell in Neverland

This past summer, I studied at Stanford for three weeks. I took a psychology class and lived on campus in a beautiful house with 26 other students and four counselors. It was something that, a few years ago, when I was crippled by shyness and a general social awkwardness, I would never have been able to do. But this was something new and exciting for me.

With only 31 people in the house, it was easy to force ourselves into the same room and make friends. Despite the short amount of time that we had, we felt safe in the house—safe enough to share our secrets and hide from the dangerous outside world just a few blocks away.

By the end of the three weeks, we found ourselves scrambling to get cell phone numbers, make promises, exchange photos on Facebook and say our goodbyes. It never occurred to me that when I said goodbye to one of them, that would be the last thing I would ever say to her.

One of these girls I met and said goodbye to was—is—Kaitlyn Parra. She was hit by a drunk driver while crossing a crosswalk on Aug. 13 in her small suburban hometown near San Diego.

She has a bizarre, cheeky sense of humor. She is the editor-in-chief of her school's newspaper; she is exceedingly intelligent; she is easily one of the most beautiful people I have ever met, inside and out. She is in a coma and has been for over a month.

I'm still not really sure how to react. It feels surreal to me, eerily reminiscent of the Los Gatos High sophomore who was hit by a car last year. I feel like Kaitlyn is so similar to me, and everyone I know. We share an equal love of the Beatles and Death Cab for Cutie and also a guilty pleasure of listening to The Fray sometimes, and loving every second of it.

She is everything I wish I was, and now she may never wake up. She is a senior. She is supposed to be at the top of the world, and nervous about college and excited about graduation and taking fast steps into adulthood. She's just like me, I guess, but better.

To most of us, all that matters is something in the seemingly distant future—and yet, any one of us could have been the victim of a freak accident, hanging on to the precipice of life itself. Five-hundred word limits, letters of recommendation and GPAs don't seem like much in comparison.

I have grown up, not because I'm about to legally become an adult and graduate from high school at the end of this year, but because I have seen tragedy and its effects. I will make memories for Kaitlyn while she cannot.

Adulthood isn't something we find by accident or stumble upon or ease into gently. It hits us in the face and knocks us to the ground, and we have to pull ourselves up little by little.

I hope you wake up soon, Kaitlyn. Know that you will be in my thoughts until then. ♦

THE specialty section

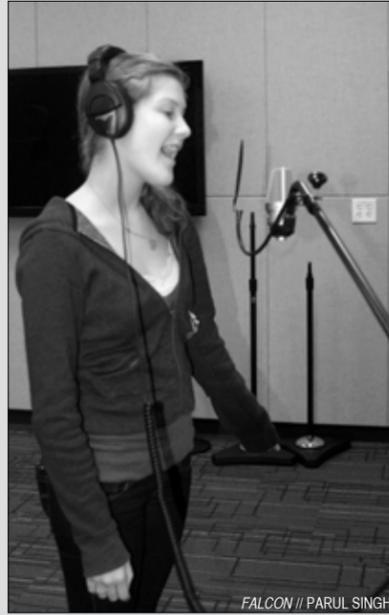


OPPORTUNITIES

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FALCON // DYLAN JEW



FALCON // PARUL SINGH



FALCON // SERENA CHAN

From left to right: junior Venkata Munukutla hands out information about his prospective club, Future Philanthropic Leaders of America (FPLA), with Slam Poetry and Robotics Clubs set up nearby during Club Day in the quad on Sept. 8. Center: Alumna Mikaela Burton, class of '11, tested out the new recording room last year in the MAP Building. Right: Guidance advertises resources for college scholarships and other programs on their bulletin board in the Guidance Office.

Fall's the new season; studying is the new atmosphere. Both indicate that the new school year has begun. Each academic year brings with it the chance to get involved in activities at school; the only question is which one? But not to worry, there are more than enough opportunities on campus. Unfortunately many students are unaware of the chances they are missing by the minute. So you say humanities is your passion—this section will show you how to exercise your speaking skills in **debate**, show your knowledge of our

past through **History Day**, or submit your writing skills for contests and publications like **Letters For Literature** or our very own **Soundings**. Are you more of the engineering type? Challenge yourself by competing in the **mathematics** and **chemistry contests** at school, or go further by attempting district competitions. If your calling is performing arts, you can use the facilities in the **MAP building**. And if your stress level for college is exponentially growing, the **guidance department** is there to blunt the curve. Whatever it may be, this guide will help.

School therapists available to help students

BY Ashley Tang

Go down the hallway in front of administrative assistant Susan Dini's desk in the office, past the teachers' boxes, open the door on the right with the name Judy Jackson written on it, and you will find yourself in the presence of the comfiest couches on campus.

Covered lamps and amber wall-hangings create a reassuring atmosphere where you will feel free to talk about anything that is bothering you. This makes up the room of the school psychotherapist.

Although Jackson has been working at Saratoga High for nearly 10 years, most students do not know that she is a valuable resource available to listen to students' problems. Usually, students talk to their school guidance counselor first before being directed to Jackson. However, she welcomes any students who prefer to make appointments themselves by email or simply wish to drop by.

Jackson has helped many students through hard times, especially when family members are not there for them.

"I see many students with anxiety and stress from school, and I help many of them with family issues too," Jackson said. "We talk about identifying healthy relationships and any other problems like substance abuse or eating disorders."

When teachers assign books or assignments with more mature philosophies, many students are troubled by the moral questions that these topics brings up.

"Students often just need a place to integrate what they learned, a place to go deeper into darker themes brought up in class," Jackson said. "Books sometimes stir up themes including grief, relationship issues, or even war, and they need a place to talk more about that."

On the other side of the spectrum is school psychologist Michael Slone, whose office can be found in the first room on the right side of the guidance counselor hallway. Slone is new to the school district and had previously worked in the Cambrian Elementary

School District in San Jose.

"I have worked at the high school level before—it's my favorite, so I am excited to be back," Slone said.

Slone's role is different from Jackson's in that he primarily does assessments of a student's learning abilities. Colorful puzzles and games are stacked behind Slone's desk, waiting for the next student to use them.

"I pull out assessment tools and have students work on them to figure out how they learn best and what kinds of skills they have compared to other kids their age," Slone said. "We find out if they do a good job with vocabulary and

those types of language activities or if they do better with more spatial puzzles."

Slone then uses that information to help and support the student in the classroom. He puts together a plan with what he calls "the team," the group of parents, teachers and other counselors who he works with to prepare the student to be successful.



Jackson

"If we discover that students learn differently, then it might tell us that they need extra help with certain types of things, that it's easier for them to learn the material a different way or that maybe they should consider taking other classes that would be more suitable for their learning styles," Slone said.

Sometimes, Slone will even go to students' classes to observe the student or the course itself as part of the assessment. He may also look at school records and reach out to students' parents for additional information.

Around 100 students on campus are getting help with learning disabilities, ADHD, or other emotional issues, and they are re-evaluated every three years.

Other students who have concerns usually bring it up with a guidance counselor or a teacher first, but they can also go directly to Slone for help and advice.

"Students are always welcome to drop by, though," Slone said. "Whenever my door is open, I look forward to getting to know more and more students and attending their events and activities." ♦

Academic competitions showcase students' skills

BY Nick Chow
& Denise Lin

Many students are unaware of the competitions and contests they can participate in, or are intimidated by them. But there is no need to worry; there is a myriad of competitions available that allow students of all talents to sharpen their skills and have fun competing with or against their classmates.

Opportunities for the science lovers

For all the dedicated students out there who just can't get enough of those chemical equations or thermodynamics problems, there is no need to fret. There are many opportunities to participate in science related competitions.

Science Bowl, a Jeopardy-style trivia competition, puts a fun game-show twist to science problems. For students looking for a more diverse science competition, Science Bowl is a great opportunity. This competition covers a wide range of topics, including physics and even math problems.

"[The competition] is sponsored by the Department of Energy and consists of teams of 4-5 students competing against each other," chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu said.

Because spaces are limited, students need to tryout in order to compete. Tryouts will have occurred in mid-September for the selection of the team members.

JETS, short for Junior Engineering and Technological Society, is also a competition focused on a broader set of knowledge. This competition occurs at the state and national level.

Branching out into other sciences, Chemistry Olympiad is a great choice for students. The process to participate begins in early spring.

"In March or April, interested Chemistry students [who are enrolled in Chemistry Regular, Honors, or AP] take a multiple choice exam with me," Nakamatsu said.

The two people with the highest scores compete in a regional exam. The winner of the regional exam attends a Chemistry Study Camp in the summer, and will compete at a national level, Nakamatsu said.

Lastly, the Science Fair is a good option for students who wish to conduct independent research projects.

"If you get past the local science fair," said senior Alissa Zhang, "then you can go to the Intel science and engineering fair [at a national level] or you can go to the California State Science Fair."

Zhang did her science fair project on microbial fuel cells last year as part of a summer research program and won multiple prizes.

Although many students, both at this school and at others, take these competitions very seriously, those interested in science should not be afraid to give the

competitions a try.

"People shouldn't be afraid to try, even if they don't think they have enough experience," Zhang said. "Sometimes you'll be surprised at how well you do."

Hungry for history

History Day provides an outlet for students to focus their interest in history and harness their creative spirits. Students should talk to their history teachers or Kevin Heyman for specific information about joining History Day. The process typically begins in September and October.

Senior Sanjana Chetia's group made it all the way to the national competition last year with a documentary about Japanese internment.

"It was definitely fun, and it was definitely an experience I learned from," teammate senior Christine Tseng said.

Since it provides an opportunity to delve into areas students may not regularly explore, History Day always proves to be an eye-opening experience.

History Day allowed Tseng to develop skills such as creating a documentary, something she was not familiar with.

In a good way, the large amount of research required to complete a project also forces students to learn about history, Tseng said.

"[We also learned] how to speak in front of the judges, making sure you impress them," Tseng said.

It is important to have good time management, since History Day is time consuming.

"Don't procrastinate because that's the biggest handicap," Chetia said.

But the most important thing about the process is remembering to enjoy it, according to Tseng.

"We went in thinking [we would] never make it past county," Tseng said. "You would gain more if you saw winning as a side effect, and not as a main goal."

To see more information on this year's History Day, see the article by Cristina Curcelli and Nelson Wang on page 6 of this issue.

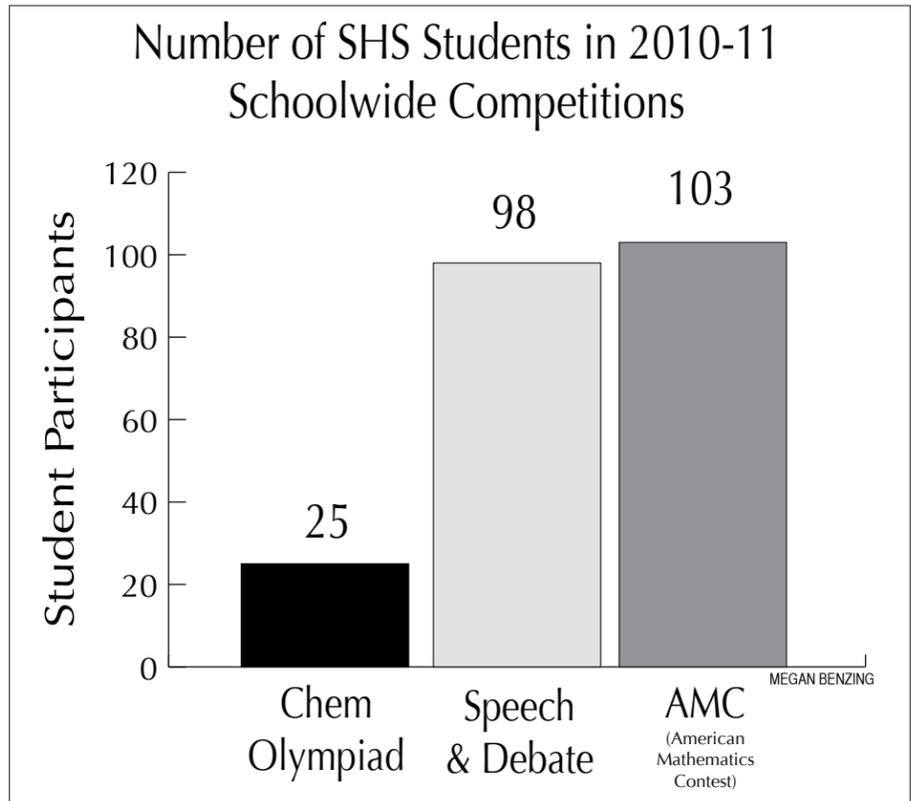
Mathletes exercise a different muscle

The average math problem in most math competitions are so convoluted that a normal math student would have a terrible headache just looking at it. But of course, math club members are among the most elite mathletes in the entire school.

"You must be awesome [in math], unless you have an intense passion in order to be a successful math contestant," says math teacher PJ Yim, the adviser for the math club.

Math club members participate annually in a multitude of competitions, such as the nationally administered American Mathematics Competition (AMC) test.

"There's AMC, which leads to the



American Invitational Mathematics Examination (AIME), which leads to the United States of America Mathematical Olympiad (USAMO), and then to the International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO). In between USAMO and IMO there's also MOSP, which is the Math Olympiad Summer Program," says Yim. "Only about 60 students [nationally] qualify every year. One time we had four students [go to MOSP] in one year, which is ridiculous."

Along with the yearly AMC contests, math club members participate in a variety of other local competitions, such as the Santa Clara University High School Mathematics Contest and the Santa Clara Valley Mathematics Association-sponsored Senior Olympiad and Field Day.

These competitions are geared towards testing students' mathematical problem solving ability and ingenuity, rather than testing aspects of school course math.

Yim said that math club represents a significant step into a student's mathematical endeavors.

The wonderful world of debate

A mob of students dressed impeccably in suits stream through the hallways of the school, chattering loudly. One person is talking loudly about their opponent's inability to defend against his onslaught of questions and another is jabbering away about how the month's topic is one-sided and utterly terrible. Welcome to the world of speech and debate.

In speech and debate, there are a plethora of different events to participate in,

ranging from public forum debate to Lincoln-Douglass debate to extemporaneous speech. In all different disciplines, students are required to formulate and support the arguments with sufficient evidence based on pre-assigned topics.

"Being a member of speech and debate gives students the skill to speak in public with confidence in a highly engaging and educational way," said English teacher Erick Rector, the head coach of the debate team.

In addition to writing persuasive speeches, debate members routinely attend tournaments and compete against numerous other schools. The speech and debate team has league tournaments about five times a semester, with the invitational tours, Cal and Stanford, both in February, said Rector.

The positive effects of speech and debate are apparent.

"I have had quite enriching and enthralling experiences in debate," sophomore Robert Eng said.

"In debate, we have learned about Iran enriching uranium, WikiLeaks exposing top secret United States information, [American involvement in] Afghanistan fighting the Taliban, the abhorrent effects of cyber-bullying and more," said Eng.

Eng said the best part of his previous year of experience debating was competing against other students.

"The most worthwhile part of debating is meeting new friends before the round and talking with your opponents. It's so fun to then go into a round and tear each other apart and come out of the round being all friendly again," Eng said. ♦

Other activities



FALCON // JORDAN WAITE

M-SET Robotics Team: seniors Michael Zucarcino and Rod Jafari work on the robot which ranked 12th out of 50 teams at the FIRST Robotics Competition (FRC) Seattle Regional and 29th out of 56 at the FRC Silicon Valley Regional. The team accomplishes all that it does through extensive time dedication after school and during holiday breaks. Members were assigned specific parts of the robot to work on and also specialized in positions including programmer, builder or electrician.



FALCON // JORDAN WAITE

Mock Trial: sophomore Jennie Werner takes the stand as a witness and gives a passionate testimony during the Santa Clara County finals at the Superior Courthouse. The team qualified for finals for the first time and secured second place. Mock Trial meets once a week to prepare for competitions that begin around February.

Media Arts building offers new technology for students in recording, filming, editing



Alumni Ramiz Sheikh, a student in the Media Arts Program last year, utilizes the technology in the Media Arts building, shortly following the department's opening ceremony. Any student can use the equipment after learning department guidelines for proper usage.

BY Wren Sutterfield

Want to record your new song or maybe film a cool movie using a green screen? You can do it right here on campus.

Last year, the new MAP building was finished specifically with Media Arts students in mind, but few students know of the potential it has to be used by the entire student body.

The facility includes a 30 feet by 15 feet green screen, 35 computers, audio and video recording studios and much more.

According to MAP electives and Media Arts 1 teacher Tony Palma, a few seniors came in last year to record projects to be included in college applications.

Students have also used the facility to create English video projects to record themselves playing music and to make music videos.

"My friend Mark Van Aken is in MAP and had mentioned that there was a recording studio in the MAP building," senior Isabel McPherson said. "I knew if we tried to record it ourselves, the audio quality would be pretty bad, so thankfully Mark was able to help us get into the recording studio. Once there, he and Mr. Palma set up all the mics and recording was really easy."

Palma said he would love for the equipment to see more use. Students simply have to request time to use the building's equipment and facilities.

"Right now it's all arranged through me," Palma said. The best times to con-

tact him are during tutorial, seventh period or after school.

Unfortunately, the full range of equipment that the MAP students use, such as video cameras and other portable recording equipment is not available to the general student population. Soon, though, the cameras, lighting kits, video and voice recorders and other various technologies will be in the library for check-out by students, provided they have attended and completed a training session.

"We don't want people checking out equipment and breaking it, then being responsible for it. That's not fair to them and also not fair to other students who want to check out that equipment afterwards," Palma said.

The goal is to have this transition to public use completed by November, especially as the school year picks up and projects will be assigned more frequently. With access to the portable equipment in the library, students will have a wider variety of options for their school and personal projects.

"I think it's important that we have that equipment available to as many students as possible, because it doesn't do any of us good to sit on the shelf and collect dust," Palma said.

Palma is excited to see what the new school year brings for the facility.

"I know a lot of students on campus who are into music, whether it be singing or instrumental music [or] they have their own bands, and I'd love to encourage them to come in," Palma said. ♦

Guidance department gives great advice with no price

BY Megan Benzing

One place on-campus can help students with nearly any problem and can provide the resources necessary to succeed: the guidance department. At the present time, the guidance department has four counselors and an adolescent therapist.

This year the ratio of students to counselor is 348:1. It has been important to the school board to keep a lot of counselors on hand. They can provide students with everything from a new class schedule to assistance with personal issues to finding a tutor for even the hardest subject.

Alinna Satake has been a counselor at the school for five years. She said guidance has two main goals: to make everyone feel safe and to have everyone know what options are available to them after they graduate high school.

"For the majority of our students options after high school will probably be two or four-year college," Satake said. "Making that information accessible in a variety of ways such as how to prepare for community college, how to prepare for a four-year university and all of that is what we normally do."

Every fall and spring, counselors visit English classes and inform the students about the upcoming year and how to get prepared for grade specific events and requirements. Other than the presentations, guidance also runs other events around campus.

"We will handle all the classroom presentations," Satake said. "All the schedule and course selections, we do all the testing: PSAT, STAR tests, AP. That all gets handled through our office."

During senior year, students visit with their counselors frequently for Naviance check-ups and other college planning questions. Senior Priyanka Arunkumar has found herself in the guidance office quite often since the beginning of senior year.

"This year I've been using the guidance department often to see which colleges I should apply to," Arunkumar said. "My counselor, [Eileen] Allen, has been really helpful. She called a couple colleges for me to answer my questions."

Senior David Adler is also appreciative of the guidance department during his last year.

"Guidance is really helpful this year," Adler said. "They remind me of my due dates [for colleges] and help me get everything done on time."

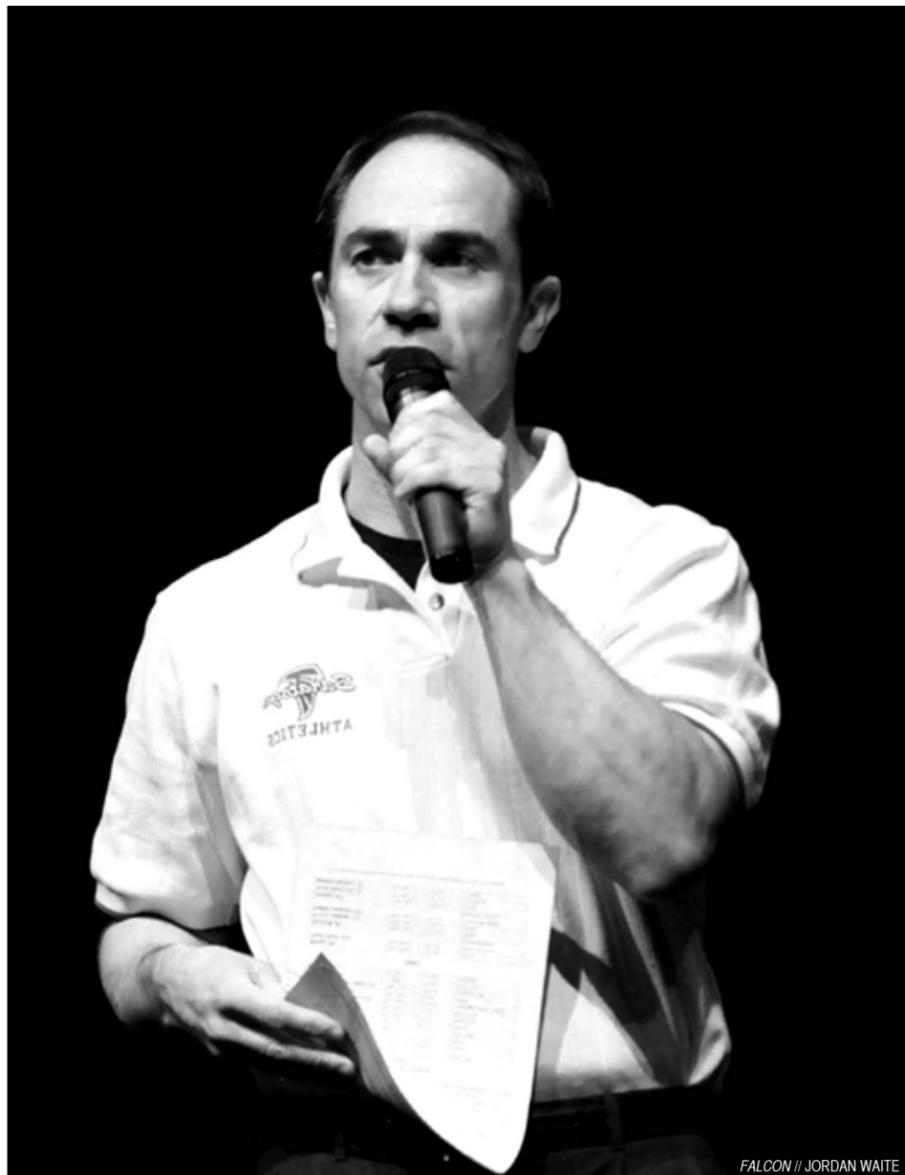
The guidance department gave presentations before school began and have been giving them during tutorials to help seniors apply. They also put helpful information on the school website as often as they can.

"We work really hard to update the guidance website regularly, so students should definitely utilize it," Satake said. "We also offered three separate workshops on applying to private schools. We've done two workshops on college essay writing, and then, of course, we meet with every senior individually to go over their college lists and make sure they're on track for graduation and all of that."

Some students have outside consultants—some charging as much as \$360 an hour—for help with college search and applications, and Satake believes that paying for such services may not be necessary.

"We hear a lot of students considering hiring college consultants outside of school," Satake said. "However, everything a private consultant could do is right here for free. We can help students create a college list; we can help proof-read essays. We've got a good group of people here who are really dedicated to their jobs."

The guidance department can assist with a multitude of problems, and they do it all without charging hundreds of dollars per hour. ♦



Assistant Principal Brian Safine delivers the annual AP presentation in the McAfee center on April 22, 2011. Safine leads the guidance department and helps students along in the college admissions process. The assembly is for students who plan to take the College Board Advanced Placement examinations. Safine's instructions include materials to bring, ways to prepare for the examination and the do's and don't's of the test.

Club creation can be challenging

BY Joanna Lee

Getting involved through starting a club may seem daunting, but all a student really needs is the motivation. Even with the determination to start a club comes unnecessary feeling of anxiety. "Who do I go to for this kind of stuff?", "Will my club be approved?" Questions like these can be easily answered and the opportunities for getting involved around the campus are endless.

Formulating a mission statement

Whether you are an avid reader or a neighborly believer in helping the community, an interest and a strong purpose are key in forming a successful club. The sheer number of club members does not dictate whether or not a club will be ratified by the ASB. Instead, a clear, comprehensive statement outlining a student's intentions and goals for his or her club shines brighter light on the club-in-progress.

To ensure that the student starting the club will follow through and not abandon the club after its uses for bolstering his or her college application, the ASB evaluates the creator's original mission statement. This outlines the commitment and aspirations needed to run the club successfully. Without it, it is difficult to verify the club's validity and to grant it the official title of a "club," and therefore helps ensure legitimacy.

Club verification

Although this stage may seem to be the most daunting out of all the other ones, it is definitely the most significant step into ensuring that the club will be official. After the ASB is introduced to and signs off on the club proposal, there is a one-month trial process in which the clubs are frequently checked in during meetings to prove the commitment of its members and officers.

Clubs commissioner Sasan Sadaat is also a necessary person to approach and talk to, as he is the main facilitator of the clubs on campus. Sadaat makes sure that every club is nowhere near dormant, and he regularly checks up on each of them to make sure things run smoothly. Without checking in with Sadaat, there is little to no chance of getting an idea approved as a club.

Publicizing the club

At this stage, it is a good idea to gather a group of friends and acquaintances. The recommended starting number of original members is about 20, but it is to one's benefit to garner up more to ensure a steady start. Publicizing a club is essential. It can be done by creating posters and announcing weekly meetings to keep the club up and running.

The final stretch

Getting a club signed off by the ASB is

Getting a club signed off by the ASB is not the end to a club president's worries; nor is it the end of the rewards.



Current seniors Kim Tsai and Lillian Chen rallied for Red Cross on Club Day, Sept 15, 2010.

not the end to a club president's worries, nor is it the end of the rewards that come along with a club's formation. Continual effort and commitment are also what the ASB looks for in a genuine club. Although finding things to write for college applications may be the tempting incentive to start a club, genuine club-starters with intentions to aid the school are what the ASB looks for.

With such people and opportunities to form a club around the campus, it is a

smart idea to make good use of what the school has to offer.

Although the process of club approval is, in no way, easy, it is definitely possible if one strives to form the club to highlight the talents and common interests of a group of students.

These opportunities are here to help bring out our strengths, passions and hobbies, and starting a club (and maintaining it) can be the perfect way to do so. ♦

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR ARTISTS

Submit to Soundings

BY Shivani Chadha

Question: What is the name of the school's literary, art and photography magazine that comes out each May? Hopefully students will be able to give the correct answer, and talented writers, artists and photographers will submit their work to the Soundings literary magazine this spring.

"Some people are really good at writing, and you might not even know it until you flip to a page in the Soundings magazine," said last year's Soundings' editor Kim Tsai.

The magazine is a 32-page pamphlet consisting of pictures, short stories and poetry, all of which are submitted by

students of any grade. The magazine is scheduled to come out late spring this year.

"Anyone can submit pieces for the magazine," Tsai said. "But we have people from the Falcon and yearbook staffs work on the layout and design because they already know what to do."

"People in poetry used to compose a major portion of the poetry submissions in Soundings, so we are really hoping the word gets out and more people submit their work," last year's co-editor alumna Nandini Ruparel said.

Newspaper and yearbook adviser Michael Tyler also advises Soundings.

Submissions can be sent to soundings@saratogafalcon.org until April 1. ♦

Write to an author!

BY Anika Jhalani

If Shakespeare is your soul mate, Harry Potter your world, or Lord of the Rings your perfect fantasy, surely the authors of such masterpieces would love to hear it. Letters About Literature is the perfect chance to show your support for your favorite authors, whether they are alive or not.

Letters About Literature is an annual competition in which students from around the world write a letter to their favorite author regarding a speech, work or novel. The competition is separated between different age groups, one being in

the high school level.

Last year, then junior Akash Kar won the national competition in the high school division for his letter to author Jhumpa Lahiri. English teacher Natasha Ritchie spoke of the letter as one that "brought a few tears."

To sign up for the competition, you can go to the website and follow the directions for mailing in the letter, or check with your English teacher if he or she will include the competition into his or her curriculum. Submissions are due mid January and contest results are announced March. There is one winner per age group. ♦

topten

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

- 10 **Police Academy** Pick up an application in the office if you are interested.
- 9 **Over 18?** Contact the City of San Jose to be a youth recreation leader. (You'll get paid.)
- 8 **Good Samaritan Hospital** Freshman, sophomore or junior students who are interested in volunteering, go to www.goodsamsanjose.com
- 7 **Looking for a job?** Apply for a work permit in the Guidance Office.
- 6 **College and Career Center** Interested in being a tutor? Sign up at the center ASAP!

- 5 **Cosmos** If you are interested in science, ask your respective teacher about this internship program.
- 4 **Start a Club** Formulate a mission statement, find interested people and a club advisor and present your idea to the ASB.
- 3 **Tutor at Kwan Academy** The hourly rate is \$9, but sorry underclassmen, seniors only.
- 2 **Want to record a soundtrack?** Check out the recording center in the MAP building.
- 1 **Bored Friday Nights?** Sign up to be the mascot, Freddie Falcon.

>> Anika Jhalani

>> upcoming deadlines

- Jan. 6** Submissions date for Letters About Literature Contest.
- Feb. 2** Final entry submission deadline for History Day.
- March 5** Application deadline for San Jose Recreation Leader.
- Oct. 14** Signup deadline for Good Sam Hospital Volunteering.