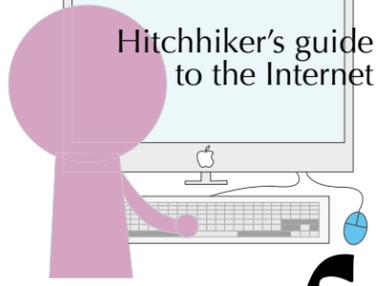




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Conflicts in the parking lot pg. 5  
Santorum impresses masses pg. 10  
Bombay returns to amaze pg. 16-17  
Boys' baseball makes strides pg. 20



Internet hackers, elections and other current events



# THE saratogafalcon

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

saratogafalcon.org

Friday >> April 6, 2012  
Vol. 52, No. 10

## Traditions return for Spring Fling



It's not every year students can drive their cars into the quad and blast their music as loud as they can for class points.

Last Monday, Battle of the Boom was reintroduced to Spring Fling week after a four-year hiatus.

"Our motivated commissioners helped bring it back for us," assistant principal Karen Hyde said.

In addition, inner-tube water polo is scheduled to take place in the pool today at lunch. Students sitting in their own inner-tubes and paddling themselves around play water polo.

"Anyone can play it," Hyde said. "There's no advantage for water polo players."

Regularly occurring Spring Fling events such as Powderpuff football games and the Sadie Hawkins dance were arranged this week in a packed, exciting five days.

"Next year, as long as we have motivated commissioners, we can have just as good of a Spring Fling as we did this year," Hyde said.

For more results, check online for full coverage at [www.saratogafalcon.org](http://www.saratogafalcon.org).  
—Rohan Rajeev

LEFT: Freshman Sara Parden runs with the ball, trying to earn points for the freshman team. Freshman and junior girls battled it out on the football field for the first Powderpuff game on Tuesday, April 3 at lunch. The juniors won 14-0.

TOP-RIGHT: Sophomores Ritwick Roy, Rohan Jhalani, Wilbert van de Hoek and Rohan Hardikar rehearse trust falls for their cheer routines in preparation for the rally today at tutorial.

MIDDLE-RIGHT: Students gather in the quad for Battle of the Boom Monday, April 2. Grades blasted music in the quad to see who had the loudest speaker systems. Senior Austin Firth won the contest, winning points for the Class Cup.

### ONLINE HAZARDS

## Speaker: parents cautioned about cyberbullying dangers

BY Michael Lee

"You can't trust anyone," said the girl, an anonymous senior at a local high school. The March 22 speaker session was approaching its end. The 30 or 35 parents and students gathered in the library were clearly exhausted from sitting and listening for two hours that evening, but they perked up at the new voice. The girl tried to look cheerful, yet as she spoke her face clearly showed the pain of her memories.

When the girl was a new student at her high school, a boy threatened to spread rumors about her if she did not "sext," or send him a sexually explicit photo of herself by phone. She reluctantly complied, and, within a day, the picture had spread through the whole school. Consequently, her reputation plummeted, and her fellow students

began to physically and sexually harass her in the halls.

The worst part, though, involved the legal ramifications. She described how the police "treated her as the criminal" when they came to investigate the issue. They charged her with the creation of child pornography, which she avoided after fighting the charges in court. Even though the distribution and possession of child pornography are also felonies, the boy who spread the photo faced no legal charges.

However, the main speaker of the night was licensed psychologist and social worker Tonja Krautter. A private practitioner in Los Gatos, Krautter has given workshops on topics ranging from eating disorders to rape crisis and trauma, including a training

>> **CYBERBULLYING** on pg. 5

### ACADEMICS

## Zhang, Chou named 2012 valedictorian, salutatorian

BY Olivia Chock & Andy Fang

According to Myron Zhang and Elaine Chou, the two top students for the class of 2012, the key to success in school is working hard, rather than focusing on a title like valedictorian or salutatorian.

"I don't think becoming valedictorian was ever a goal in and of itself," Zhang said. "Although it sounds slightly corny, it was really just a case of performing at the highest possible levels, trying my best. Academics was never about competing to be No. 1."

Chou, the salutatorian, echoed this sentiment.

"Don't worry excessively about receiving any titles, because it just distracts you from doing your best," she said.

Chou emphasized the need for her to be passionate about what she was doing.

"Just find something you're passionate about and go for it. Taking interest in the subject material makes studying feel like a lot less work," Chou said. "It's not worth it to take a class you aren't interested in and kill yourself over it just because it's AP."

Assistant principal Brian Safine said being valedictorian or salutatorian isn't something that should be a goal for

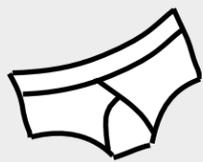
>> **HONORS** on pg. 6



Zhang



Chou



news >> **briefs**

**Orchestra renews game of Assassin**

Made infamous by the controversial events of last semester, the spoon-wielding game of Assassin has resurfaced as "Spoon Tag," a game essentially the same as its predecessor but lacking the controversial aspects that landed it in trouble when students were playing for money, and the administration deemed it to be a form of gambling.

Most games of Assassin are played by matching up the participants with their "targets," who are "killed" by tagging the targets with plastic spoons.

Orchestra manager senior Hansen Qian started the game with the orchestra after hearing that the game would be allowed with certain limitations.

"I heard from friends that we could still play the game if we talked to [assistant principal Kevin] Mount, and he said that we can still do it," Qian said. "There were conditions, though, like how we can't have people put in money, we can't play during class because teachers would be annoyed, and he would prefer if it wasn't called Assassin."

Qian said he restarted the game to allow the three orchestra periods to come together. Out of the three periods, a total of 141 participated.

The orchestra has been careful to stay within the administration's rules, so Qian said that a small gift card paid for by the managers has been put up as a prize.

"The gift card is nothing big," Qian said. "People are playing it more for the game than for the prize."

— Justine Huang

**Few signups force cancellation of China trip**

A trip to France was recently cancelled when not enough students signed up, and now another trip—this one to China—has met the same fate.

Although teachers and students were optimistic about the trip to China, it could not happen because only eight students signed up to go, two fewer than the number of students required. Most of the students who signed up are taking Chinese 1 or 2.

The trip planned for April 11 to 21 included visits to Shanghai, Beijing, Hangzhou, Wuxi, Suzhou and Xi'an. Many students expressed their disappointment at the trip's cancellation.

"I have been out of the country only once in my lifetime, so I figured that this would be an excellent chance to explore and see what's out there beyond the seas," freshman Matthew Stark said. "I feel unbelievably disappointed, but I know that we can always try again next year."

Freshman Anne Witkowski echoed his sentiments, saying she had been looking forward to the trip since it was announced earlier this year.

"Although it would have been the third time I've been China," Witkowski said, "I'm kind of sad, but it's alright because I'm planning to go next year."

Chinese teacher Sara Tseng thinks the trip was cancelled because they started planning too late.

Nevertheless, Tseng thinks that with the right planning, a trip could be possible next year.

"We don't really have any definite plans for next year," Tseng said. "But if we do have a trip next year, we'll try to start planning it earlier."

— Jennifer Jin

>> **upcoming events**

**April 6** Coffeehouse

**April 7** Sadie Hawkins Dance

**April 13** Drama Murder Mystery Dinner

**April 14** Bombay in the Bay (two shows)

**April 16-20** Spring Break

**April 28** Junior Prom

>> **picturethis**

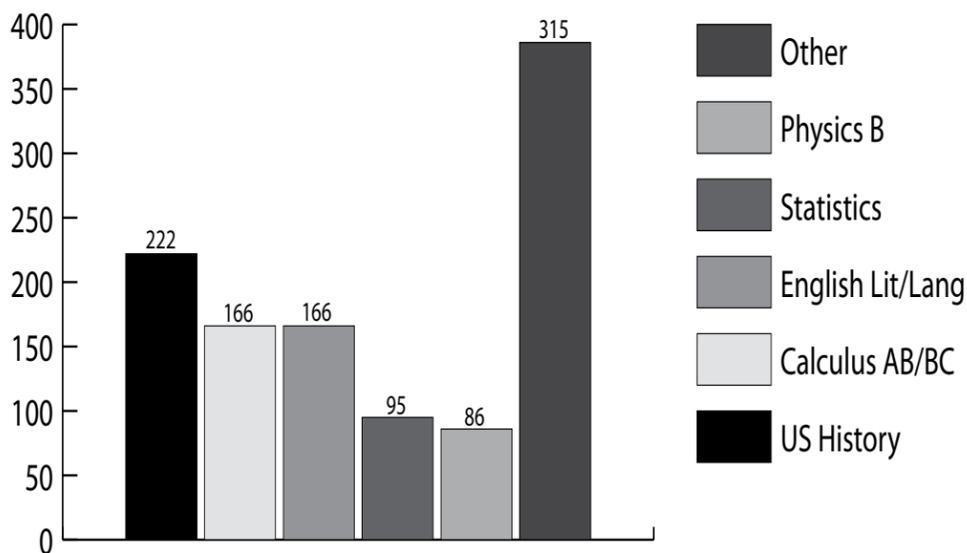


TALISMAN // TIFFANY YUNG

**DANCING THE NIGHT AWAY >> Seniors Jennifer Lydon and Will Edman model at the Benefit Fashion Show on March 17. The two advertised prom attire from local stores, Trudy's and Tuxedo Wearhouse.**

>> **falcon figures**

How many students will be taking each AP test in May?



Source: Bonnie Sheikh

— Allison Chang

**FALCON FOCUS: JASON LI**

**Sophomore named 'Next Teen Tycoon'**

BY Cristina Curcelli & Sarah Finley

To sophomore Jason Li, creating a successful company is all in a day's work. He may only be 15, but being the CEO of iReTron.com, a company founded in last July, which allows users to sell old electronics in exchange for money, makes him seem years beyond his age.

Not only this, but on March 12, Li was also announced as the winner of "The Next Teen Tycoon," a nation-wide video contest put on by VerticalResponse to find the most promising young CEOs.

The contest required CEOs ages 13 to 18 to submit a two-minute long video about what their company is and why they should win the contest.

"I thought it was cool, but I forgot about it. The night before it was due, I was bored, so I decided to work on this video," Li said. "I was sure it would help expand my company even if I didn't win."

Li said that he wrote the script for the performance and chose the song the night before meeting two of his friends in the MAP building to film.

"[Sophomore] Eugene Chiou shot the video, [sopho-

more] Mostafa Rohaninejad was in the video with me, and I directed and edited afterwards," Li said.

The first part of the contest lasted from Feb. 8 to 25, when people voted for their favorite video entrant. Li attributes his victory to his friends, who voted early and often.

"This contest let you vote every 24 hours, so many of my friends voted multiple times," Li said.

On March 5, the top 10 videos were revealed.

"After I found out ... that I made the top 10, it was all up to how well my video portrayed my business," Li said.

These videos were then sent to a group of judges who chose the winners.

"Throughout the contest, though, I think only one or two [other videos] were true competition. They had nice videos, and I wasn't sure if mine was better," Li said. "I had shot the video in one lunch period and edited it in about 30 minutes."

A week later, Li was announced to be the first place winner of the competition, an honor that awarded him many prizes, including \$4,000

in cash, a free trip to New York, two books about entrepreneurship, a Skype session with a business counselor named Steve Mariotti and an invitation to TEDxTeen, a teen business conference sponsored by the nonprofit organization TED—a technology, entertainment, design organization.

"TEDxTeen is basically a place where teenagers or kids speak and meet new people," Li said. "It's a place where ideas and accomplishments are shared with others."

Li feels that winning the contest will also benefit his company's development.

Plans for the money Li won are already underway.

"After I receive the money, I'll give some amounts to the people who helped me make the video," Li said. "The rest of the money will be used to pay off everything I've spent and expand the website."

Li is confident of his company's potential and has ambitious goals for its future.

"I want iReTron.com to grow to be a multi-million dollar company in a few years," Li said. "It's a big dream, but I know I can get there." ♦



Li

FALCON FOCUS: KEN NGUYEN

# Course to America: from Vietnam

BY SanjNalwa

The boat rocks violently, at the mercy of the wind and the sea. The boat has been gaining water for several days in the South China Sea, and in a couple hours, it will go under.

The year is 1980.

On board are several families fleeing the communist rule of Vietnam. Just a few days prior, the boat had been raided by pirates, who had stolen much of the refugees' belongings. Sea sickness is rampant.

It is midday.

A man on board scans the horizon with a pair of binoculars. He excitedly calls his eldest son over to have a look.

Through the clear, bright orbs of the binoculars, the boy sees a black speck on the horizon.

This speck is a U.S. oil rig that will rescue the "boat people," and the young boy is English teacher Ken Nguyen.

Nguyen said he was born in what is now Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, called Saigon at the time. Nguyen lived there for the first four or five years of his life.

With unemployment at over 80 percent after the communists took over South Vietnam in 1975, Nguyen's parents decided to flee the country.

Nguyen's family made two or three attempts before it finally succeeded in escaping Vietnam—down the Mei Kong River into the Indian Ocean.

When Nguyen's family escaped, his parents drugged his little brother, so he would not attract the attention of communist patrols.

Shortly after being saved by the American oil rig, Nguyen recalls seeing their little boat sink.

"Like it just kind of fell in on itself and it went in under the water, under

the waves," Nguyen said.

The oil rig dropped off the refugees at a camp in Indonesia, where they stayed for more than a year.

Nguyen was now six, and the year was 1981.

It was not until a Catholic Church in Louisville, Ken., agreed to sponsor them that Nguyen and his family were allowed to immigrate to the U.S.

"We only lived there a few months. My parents worked odd jobs," Nguyen said.

From Louisville, Nguyen moved to New Orleans to be with a maternal aunt. Shortly afterward, his family settled in Seattle.

Nguyen went on to attend Seattle University on a scholarship. When he returned from a month-long backpacking trip in Europe, Nguyen worked as tech support for an Internet service provider for three months, after which he worked as a clerk in a law firm.

Nguyen was finally picked up by Microsoft on a one-year contract. He worked as a system analyst. Nguyen said the salary was good, and he could be converted to a permanent employee after a year.

"But I decided kind of half-way through that year that I didn't want to stay, at all," Nguyen said. "I didn't even want my contract renewed, and I didn't want to be converted, because it was a boring job."

Nguyen said that he had in fact been thinking about becoming a teacher since his senior year in college.

"And I kept thinking about my high school teachers and how great they were," Nguyen said, "and sort of being instrumental in shaping me into the person that I had become."

Nguyen said he wasn't very confident



English teacher Ken Nguyen instructs sophomores in one of his English 10 classes.

when he was in high school. He said that teachers were people he always could count on for support.

"They, out of everybody that I knew, recognized and helped nourish my love of learning and reading and writing."

Nguyen said he thought it a natural progression that he should go from loving and admiring his teachers to wanting to become one himself.

After his contract expired with Microsoft, Nguyen went back to Seattle University to get his teaching credential.

Nguyen then started teaching at Interlake High in Bellevue, Wash. in 2001. He stayed there for only a year, however.

Nguyen then joined Leland High School in San Jose, where he taught from 2002 to 2008.

He then applied to Saratoga High for

many reasons, ranging from a better salary to a need for change. This is Nguyen's fourth year teaching at SHS.

Nguyen said he plans to continue teaching until he retires.

"I can say pretty clearly, without any reservation, that I see myself doing this for another 20 years; and it would still be as enjoyable 20 years from now as it is today, as it was on the very first day," Nguyen said.

Nguyen said his parents are happy for him in his chosen career, even though they were a little skeptical when he told them he was going to major in English.

"You know, I think they're quite proud of what I've accomplished in my life." ♦ For a more detailed version of this story, visit the Falcon online at [www.saratogafalcon.org](http://www.saratogafalcon.org).

## Project SEED grows entrepreneurial spirit

Students find eco-friendly solution for used grease

BY AndyFang

Restaurant owners like Ram Ramgiri at Mynt Indian Cuisine in San Jose have a difficult problem to deal with every day. The grease used to cook accumulates throughout the day, and they need to dispose of it, a task that costs the restaurant money.

Senior Vishal Goel, sophomore Nikhil Goel and junior Shreyas Doshi, through their collaborative effort on Project SEED, have devised a system that simultaneously helps restaurant owners like Ramgiri with this conundrum and earns funds for the school.

Project SEED's current venture links the cooking oil recycling companies, Salinas Tallow and Sirona, with local restaurants through CaresForSchools programs, in which local venues "pledge" their oil to the school.

"[We] act as salesmen and middlemen for the companies to the restaurants," Nikhil said.

This is beneficial not only to the school but also to the restaurants. Restaurants usually have to pay for the services of disposing cooking oil waste. But since the school is a non-profit entity, the restaurants who "pledge" their oil to the school earn a tax-deductible receipt for the amount donated.

"Under this program, everyone benefits: SHS raises money, restaurants save money and [the oil recycling] companies

get business," Vishal said. "Another benefit is that it disposes of cooking oil waste in an environmentally friendly way—one oil recycling company we work with converts the waste into biodiesel."

Through this mutually beneficial system, Project SEED has already raised several hundred dollars by working with local venues Cash and Carry, Lakshmi Bazaar and The Mynt Indian Restaurant in San Jose and Hindu Temple in Santa Clara. The three members hope to generate \$10,000 per year for the school.

Yet this is only the tip of the iceberg for Project SEED, which has already garnered support from numerous teachers.

Once enough funds are raised, the three founders plan on creating a committee comprised of a handful of teachers and students to distribute the funds as grants to other teachers, clubs and organizations on campus.

They also plan on setting up other projects that will bring in funds, including a car battery recycling program.

By the start of the next school year, the founders may also expand the club to bring in speakers on entrepreneurship or create school events with a similar theme.

Vishal said students who want to get involved can start now.

"If your family owns a restaurant, or you know someone whose parents own a restaurant, then it is your responsibility as a Saratoga High School student to sign them up with Project SEED," Vishal said. "Contact us, help out your school, and help out the environment." ♦

## CRITICAL READING CLASSES

**SAT English**

Monday to Friday, April 16 - 20,  
9 am - 12:30 pm \$425

The Spring Break course is an accelerated reading-intensive course, focusing on vocabulary development and critical reading skills. Instructor consent may be required.

**Sherlock Holmes in A Study in Scarlet**

Monday to Friday, April 16 - 20,  
12:30 - 3:30 pm \$350

Class focus: Vocabulary building (560 words in text, 240 taught), reading for tone and visualization.



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Improve Your English Tutoring Services is a business unit of IYE, Inc.

**Shakespeare's Richard II**

Monday to Friday, April 16 - 20,  
9 am - noon \$350

Class focus: Vocabulary building (399 words in text, 133 taught), reading, reciting, using historical context.

## SIGN UP!

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## HISTORY DAY

# Students proceed to state-level competition

BY McKenna Galvin

Several students qualified for the state History Day competition at the March 24 county competition.

The 23 qualifying students in 11 entries will travel to Riverside during the weekend of April 27 in hopes of advancing to the national competition.

This year's theme is "Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History," and students can compete individually or in a group with an exhibit, documentary, historical paper, website or performance. This year, for the first time, the school hosted the county competition.

"The county competition was especially competitive this year, so this is quite an achievement," said librarian Kevin Heyman, who serves as the school's History Day coordinator. "Students created a number of high quality entries."

The school swept the paper division and took two out of three in the group documentary and individual website divisions.

In addition to the 11 entries that qualified, four entries finished as first runners-up. Several students spent months researching and perfecting their entries.

Despite the time commitment, however, many students enjoyed completing

their projects.

"It took an extraordinary amount of time to research, compile that research, and code our website," junior Johnny Chang said. Chang, along with juniors Kevin Chen and Justin Chiang, created a website on Epicurean philosophy that will allow the group to advance to state. "We did finish, though, and we're proud of our work."

History Day is a year-long commitment that started during first semester with a reflection on the year's theme and the creation of an annotated bibliography.

Though most students did not begin construction of their projects until second semester, many spent the first months of the school year researching their topics.

"The large time investment that we made, at least for me, was offset by the colossal amount of knowledge we gained in the process of completing such an enormous task," Chang said.

History Day was an opportunity for students to explore a topic with greater depth than school history classes provide.

"We decided to do National History

## >> THE bigidea

### National History Day

#### Qualifiers

Sophomore Anushree Dugar; juniors Niharika Bedekar, Chad Nachiappan, Maggy Liu, David Zarrin, Shreya Chaganti, Maya Nag, Rebecca Yang, Sanjna Verma, Christine Xue, Madison King, Emma Lee, Nandita Sampath, Kevin Garbe, Michelle Won, Kevin Chen, Justin Chiang and Johnny Chang; and seniors Meghana Rao, Antara Rao, Jocelyn Takahashi, Megan Yen, and Sanjana Chetia

More details on [saratogafalcon.org](http://saratogafalcon.org)



Juniors Kevin Chen and Johnny Chang walk up the stage to receive an award for qualifying to the statewide History Day competition on March 24 at the Saratoga High library.

Day because we saw the opportunity to combine a common interest, philosophy, with the chance to learn about the historical impacts of an underground topic," Chang said.

Juniors make up the majority of participating students and receive extra credit in their AP U.S. History classes for participating.

"The grade boost was an added bonus," said junior Nandita Sampath, who is part of a group documentary on the Tiananmen Square Massacre with juniors Christine Xue, Madison King and Emma Lee. "I probably would have still done [National History Day] even if

there wasn't any extra credit, though."

Last year, several students found tremendous success with their entries in various categories.

Sophomore Anushree Dugar's paper on the Colorado River Compact, senior Ariella Yendler's performance on the Scopes Monkey Trial and seniors Christine Tseng, Sanjana Chetia and Jennifer Yang's documentary on World War II Japanese Internment all represented the school on the national level.

Qualifying entries from the state competition will then advance to the national level, which will be held this year at the University of Maryland in June. ♦

## PROM PREVIEW

# Junior class anticipates an endless night of dancing

BY Megan Benzing

With April finally arriving and prom season looming, juniors are hustling around trying to find dresses and dates. Junior prom will be held on April 28 at the Sainte Claire Hotel in San Jose with the theme "Forever Young." Students will take a bus to the hotel.

Junior class president Benedict Chiu and other class officers have been planning this event for the past year and hope for a large turnout.

"The most difficult thing about planning prom is weighing out all the prices and figuring how to keep everything affordable, yet elegant," Chiu said. "The most fun thing is ultimately going to be seeing how all the pieces fit together and how everyone reacts to our choices of food, location and theme."

The food choices include the "primo taglio," baked prime rib of beef served medium rare with horseradish and roasted potatoes, broccolini and baby carrots; "pollo al mattone,"

double chicken breast marinated with lemon and fresh herbs and roasted potatoes and sauteed spinach; and "lasagna al magro," housemade pasta layered with ricotta cheese, steamed

spinach, marinara sauce and parmesan. The dessert is "gelati misti," an assortment of Italian gelato and sorbetto with cookie

garnish. The catering is done by Il Fornaio, the Sainte Claire's caterer.

Bid prices went on sale March 28. They start at \$84 with an ASB card and \$86 without, with prices increasing every week.

Junior class vice president Evelyn Lee said the most difficult part was trying to come up with a theme.

"There are so many different songs out there that seemed so per-

fect," Lee said. "We really tried our best to just pick a theme that wasn't too 'couple-y' so we could please everyone. Basically we want everyone to escape from all the stress from school and enjoy a night that will last 'forever.'"

While the class officers are pre-paying to see their work pay off, other juniors are getting excited about the event.

"The most stressful thing

right now is trying to find a pretty dress that I love before someone else finds it and calls it before I do," junior Cathy Han said. "I honestly am just looking forward to feeling like a princess and having fun with my amazing date. Junior prom is very important to everyone in my class because it's such an important and strongly anticipated event for every high schooler." ♦

**The most stressful thing right now is trying to find a pretty dress that I love before someone else finds it and calls it before I do.**

>> Junior Cathy Han



Courtesy of GOOGLE IMAGES



Courtesy of GOOGLE IMAGES

Above: The main lobby of the Sainte Claire Hotel, where junior prom will take place on April 28. Below: The front of the Sainte Claire Hotel, which was established in 1926 and has housed important guests such as former president Theodore Roosevelt.

## AP EXAMS

# Saratoga joins with Los Gatos to provide more test options

BY Joanna Lee

More students than ever have signed up to take this year's AP tests in May. The deadline to submit the application was March 16.

The number of students who had registered for the test reached 507, while the total number of tests climbed to 1,124.

Last year, there were 475 students taking a cumulative number of 1,064 tests, guidance secretary and Career Center

Coordinator Bonnie Sheikh said.

AP exams will be held from May 7 to 18.

The school will offer tests in Chemistry, Psychology, Environmental Science, Computer Science A, Spanish Language, Calculus AB/BC, Chinese Language and Culture, English Literature, Japanese Language and Culture, United States History, Biology, Physics B, Music Theory, French Language and Statistics.

Sheikh noted that every year she had

seen an increase of students who have registered to take the tests.

Sheikh also said that the registration process went fairly well.

"This year's registration for the exams were pretty good," she said. "The majority of the students turned in their forms and availed the deadline, with the exception of a several students who were sick."

This year's most popular test is AP U.S. History, with 221 students regis-

tered for the test.

The price of each test, \$87, has not changed since last year, despite rising costs of almost everything else and budget cuts.

Los Gatos High also opened its AP tests to Saratoga High students, offering other test options including German Language, European History, Physics C: Mechanics/Electricity and Magnetism, U.S. Government and Politics and Comparative Government and Policies. ♦

## PARKING LOT

## Spaces lead to conflicts for juniors, seniors

BY Will Edman  
& Rohan Rajeev

During a lunch period in late February, senior Viraj Parmar parked his car in the second row of the section of the parking lot traditionally reserved for seniors. He noticed that a car in an adjacent parking spot contained a green parking permit, the mark of a junior vehicle. Parmar began speaking to a student who had ridden in the car, informing him that this was the senior parking lot. The junior (who Parmar could not identify by name), to the astonishment of Parmar, swore at him.

"I was speechless and I didn't know what to do. I feel like juniors usually have more respect for seniors," he said.

Similar unpleasant incidents have become increasingly common in the parking lot, as the debate over where juniors should park has reached a peak. The traditional senior section has consisted of the first three rows of the parking lot, while the juniors have taken the last three rows. While such a debate may seem trivial, it has kindled great passion in many students.

"The ability to park in the senior parking lot is an incentive for students to make it through to their senior year," senior class representative Alex Amato said. "That's why some people feel strongly about it."

Early in the school year, a morning announcement claimed that no true rules regarding the parking lot existed. However, assistant principal Karen Hyde claimed that this announcement was a mistake, although she declined to say who created the announcement.

During the first semester, Amato created a flier showing a picture of the appropriate junior parking spots, which he placed on cars in the senior lot, giving a friendly reminder of the areas that were designated for each grade.

According to Amato, parental complaints forced the stoppage of the cir-



FALCON // ELJAH YI

Without clear parking designations for juniors and seniors, there is much dispute over which grade can park in which lot during school.

culcation of these fliers, but his influence has prompted administration to action.

"Hyde is working on re-implementing the designated parking zones for each grade," Amato said. "There have always been parking areas based on grade levels, and right now we are working with the administration to designate parking spots for specific classes."

Hyde confirmed that the administration is currently creating rules regarding the parking lot, although the current setup allows seniors to have significantly more parking spots than juniors have.

Amato believed that his brief stint in direct action was effective. "There was a white junior car which I 'flied' one day, and the next day, it was back in the junior lot," he said.

The parking debate has often sparked

conflict between classes, the most common incidents being the "keying" of junior cars by seniors. This action consists of purposefully scratching a car with one's keys to ruin its paint job.

Junior Parth Shah, who has parked in the senior parking lot before, is sympathetic to both juniors and seniors.

"If I'm late, and there are no open parking spots in the junior lot, I'll park in a senior spot," Shah said. "But I also understand that seniors feel passionate and entitled to those parking spots."

Junior Rohil Taggarsi had his car keyed when he parked in the senior lot one busy morning.

"I usually enter the parking lot right before the second bell rings, when the parents are blocking the junior lot. The senior lot had a couple of spots open so it seemed like a good option that morn-

ing," he said.

When Taggarsi came back to his car at the end of the day, he was disappointed to find a small scratch near the car's door handle.

"It really changed my view of the seniors," he said.

Although a quick clarification of rules by the administration would seem to be an easy solution, the conflict over parking has highlighted a greater issue, the social standing between the junior and senior class.

"I believe that since we do have seniority, juniors should treat us with respect regarding parking," Parmar said. "Just because they have to park a few spaces farther from us, I don't think this makes them less of a people. I do believe that the senior parking lot is a tradition, and we should keep it that way." ♦

## &gt;&gt; togatalks

## What is your opinion on the junior and senior parking lots?

“It establishes seniority because many juniors and seniors drive.”



senior Ben Chung

“The juniors need to realize where they should park and respect the parking areas of seniors.”



junior Fred Feyzi

“The concept is a decent policy, but I feel the students react too strongly when others inadvertently park in wrong areas.”



junior Maya Nag

## CYBERBULLYING &gt;&gt; Presentation raises awareness for students

continued from pg. 1

session on self-injury at Saratoga High.

Her talk in the library was called "Psychological, Physical and Legal Ramifications of Cyberbullying and Sexting on our Youth," featuring the anonymous girl and her mother as visiting guest speakers near the end of the talk.

Krautter started off the two hours by introducing a trend in the underlying causes of "cyberbullying," the harassment or humiliation of others through electronic means like texting, email or social media sites.

"People find a whole lot more courage when they are behind a screen," Krautter said. "So even though the majority of people think [cyberbullying is] hysterical, it doesn't always end that way for the people on the other end of it."

She then gave some disturbing statistics: According to dosomething.org and isafe.org, 42 percent of children have been bullied online and 75 percent have visited websites where bullying is commonplace, but 58 percent of kids did not tell their parents when someone was abusive to them online. Krautter attrib-

uted the reluctance to talk about bullying mainly to children's embarrassment and fear of vulnerability.

"A lot of kids think they can handle it," she said.

Krautter highlighted the anonymous nature of cyberbullying. In traditional bullying, victims can either avoid their tormentors or confront them physically or verbally; however, cyberbullying victims often do not have those escape options.

"If you don't know who your bully is, you can't [use the traditional responses of] fight or flight," Krautter said. "Cyberbullying can penetrate the walls of a home; there are no stay-home days from cyberbullying."

She then showed a cyberbullying prevention commercial created by the National Crime Prevention Council. In the video, a young girl takes the stage of her school's talent show only to slander one of her peers.

"The message of this commercial is if you're not going to say it to someone's face, don't say it online," Krautter said.

According to Krautter, the Internet's weak moderation, easy accessibility and

permanence catalyze cyberbullying. Websites rarely ban bullies or remove disparaging posts, leaving them online for anyone to see at any time.

She said that children should call out people for harassment, refuse to pass along hateful messages and report cyberbullying to adults. Parents, on the other hand, should educate their children about cyberbullying's severe consequences.

Being the victim of bullying can lead to sleep disturbance, a sudden disinterest in school, somatic complaints (unexplained medical problems usually caused by stress), anxiety, depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a decrease in social activity and a new use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs. Additionally, bullying victims often feel like they have run out of options and consider suicide.

Krautter offered two do's and two don'ts for online safety.

"Don't delete; always keep a record of the incident," she said. "Don't respond or seek revenge. It only escalates the problem, and then you can become a cyberbully too and face charges." ♦

She added, "Do tell—to get emotional support, to get the police involved if necessary—tell somebody, preferably an adult who can really help you. [Also,] do send an electronic message of encouragement and appreciation to someone who is not expecting it. That's a really wonderful thing, to be able to give a gift to somebody who might be going through something like this."

Krautter also mentioned the cyberbullying involved in sexting.

"There's a lot of threatening and manipulation that go along with [sexting]," Krautter said. "People don't realize how incredibly effective these online negative messages are in destroying someone."

However, there is hope for the legal regulation and eventual elimination of cyberbullying, Krautter said. As of Jan. 1, 2009, California Assembly Bill 86 gave school administrators the authority to discipline for online bullying.

"A lot of times in the past administrators have said, 'Well, [cyberbullying is] not my problem. It happens at home,'" Krautter said. "But it's among the student body, so [the law] is a really big jump for California." ♦

# HONORS >> Duo earns historically high GPAs

continued from pg. 5

students.  
 "I get a ton of parents asking me how their children can become valedictorians," Safine said. "It's not exactly a set goal with a set route you can take. These extremely smart students take the hardest classes and happen to get A+'s, pull-

ing ahead by ever so little of other very smart students."

For their part, Zhang and Chou both took a multitude of AP and honors courses: Zhang took 16 and Chou took 14.

Together they racked up two of the highest GPAs in the history of the school: 4.82 for Zhang and 4.75 for Chou.

However, because both Zhang and

Chou focus mostly on their interests, both lead balanced lives.

Chou's guidance counselor, Frances Saiki, admired Chou's unrelenting willingness to pursue her interests.

"[Chou] is awesome with computer and technology things. That's what she loves doing," Saiki said. "What's unique about her is that she doesn't hide [it]."

Zhang's guidance counselor, Alinna Satake, applauded Zhang's passion for humanities, especially history, and emphasized his well-rounded personality.

"He's got a quirky sense of humor, very dry and very scholarly," Satake said. "He might discover the cure for cancer, but he also might be the curator of the Smithsonian." ♦

## 'South Pacific': song, dance and tropical delights >>> COURTESY OF John Little



**LISTENING IN >>** Above: Freshman Matt Nobles, senior Mac Hyde, freshman Blake Propach and sophomore Clayton Brown listen to an important war front telegram.

**SINGING >>** Right: Senior Miharu Morishita dances while senior Anjalika Goyal sings "Happy Talk" to junior Ethan Drohan. Goyal's character, Bloody Mary, wants the pilot to marry her vivacious daughter.



**<< ACTING** Senior Joshua Harris and senior Penny Burgess exchange bags of clothing while senior Michael Coe, freshman Jack McCarthy and senior Austin Sevilla stand silently to the side watching in surprise when they discover that a fellow Marine can sew so skillfully for the Navy's nurses.



**<< DANCING** Left: Senior Shannon Roseberry, junior Gabby Corolla, senior Joshua Harris and freshman Nastasia Kutuyev sing and dance to "Honey Bun." Harris dresses in drag to amuse.

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# SUSD parcel tax a necessary measure

BY Jennifer Jin

A furlough day? Sounds fantastic for the students who are elated to skip a day of school. However, to teachers, it means something different: less instructional time, a rushed curriculum and an indicator of a school that is struggling for monetary support, not to mention a day without pay when they are probably grading tests or preparing for upcoming lessons.

This situation became a reality when two furlough days were implemented this year in the Saratoga Union School District (SUSD) and class sizes were increased due to a budget deficit of \$640,000.

To help with the budget situation, the district is trying to convince voters to support the passage of the parcel tax known as Measure B in a special election on May 8 that would require a two-thirds majority. It calls for a \$68 per parcel tax annually for eight years, raising almost half a million dollars per year. This money would support Argonaut Elementary, Saratoga Elementary, Foothill Elementary and Redwood Middle School.

This parcel tax would give stability to the schools by protecting academic programs, retaining qualified teachers, helping protect the full number of instructional days in the school year, and providing books and instructional materials.

It also ensures that no money would be spent on administrators' salaries, and an independent citizens' oversight committee would ensure that funds are spent properly.

There is also a high possibility of a \$1.5 million reduction in funding for the 2012-13 school year. If Measure B is not passed, the school may have to go to even more measures. It would hurt the quality of education if classes were bigger or if enriching elective programs such as music or art weren't as well supported.

Some people have argued that the budget problem could be solved by firing non-teaching staff or lowering salaries, but firing staff would leave jobs undone. Tasks such as cleaning classrooms, answering phones or making copies may seem insignificant, but these jobs are crucial to keeping the school running smoothly. Meanwhile, lowering salaries would be absurd since the Bay Area has a higher cost of living compared to other areas in California and teachers must be able to support themselves.

Although some senior citizen may object to approving Measure B because they do not have any children in the school district, they can apply for an exemption.

Last year's parcel tax, known as Measure A, has so far proven to be effective in avoiding a significant increase in class sizes and teacher layoffs in the Los Ga-

>> candid caricatures



JOANNA LEE

tos Saratoga Union High School District. After seeing the effect of the parcel tax on the high schools, it would be wise for the voters to approve Measure B.

The parcel tax is a small price to pay

to maintain the high quality of education in Saratoga. The measure would support the elementary and middle schools, building a strong educational foundation for the future. ♦

## >> togatalks

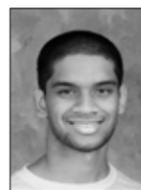
What do you think about the parcel tax for SUSD?

“Yes, as a fortunate community we should use our resources for education.”



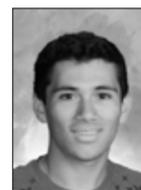
freshman Damee Moon

“This is an important action for future generations of Saratoga kids.”



senior Kushal Raj

“Elementary school education is foundational and needs to be funded.”



senior Eren Veziroglu

# Attempts to revitalize downtown a welcome first step

BY Andy Fang & Sophie Mattson

Saratoga Downtown, also known as the Village, is commonly regarded by students as a stagnant area that really does not have much to offer.

Yet recently, the Chamber of Commerce has launched a bold and sorely needed plan of action to revitalize the atmosphere of the downtown area. Scott Anderson, the president of the Chamber, has confirmed that the Chamber is attacking the plan with full force.

“Our production plan for this year is the most aggressive plan this Chamber has ever had,” Anderson said. “We do a weekly event, the marketplace, which has never happened before.”

The Village Farmers' Market, held every Wednesday afternoon, is notable proof of progress. Local vendors offer a wide variety of products, including Indian cuisine, kettle corn, organic produce and chocolates.

The chamber recently hired a marketplace manager, Johnna Borello, to oversee activities.

Borello is concentrating her efforts on seeking vendors and

publicizing the market in order to achieve a greater community turnout.

### Upcoming events

By hosting an event every week, the Chamber of Commerce is able to raise funds to cover operation fees, and host future community events, which in turn bring the Chamber more funds.

Such events this year include the ceremonial grand opening of the Village Farmers' Market, as well as the upcoming Spring Wine Stroll and Celebrate Saratoga.

Created last year, the Spring Wine Stroll will be held on May 12. Some 300 visitors are expected to attend the event.

The infamous annual Saratoga Street Dance hasn't been held since 2007. The masses of inebriated college students who began to frequent the event led to its eventual end.

However, the Street Dance will be revitalized for the first time in five years on Sept. 16, and will be called Celebrate Saratoga. The event will be a more family-friendly atmosphere in the form of a village

block party. Rather than end at 10 p.m., the event will take place from noon to 7 p.m., and will take place on a Sunday rather than a Saturday in order to curtail rowdiness and excessive drinking.

## >> the bigidea

### Downtown makeover

**The problem**  
*Lack of traffic and business in downtown Saratoga.*

**The plan of action**  
*Hosting more frequent events and promoting the "Saratoga brand."*

**The hope**  
*Saratoga downtown will become the thriving and vibrant heart of the city.*

Celebrate Saratoga may be more low-key than the Street Dance, but people from other towns are anticipated to attend the event.

“If we create a cool event that many Saratoga [residents] love, people from other cities will enjoy it as well. We anticipate that half of the 6,000 attendees will

be Saratoga residents,” Anderson said.

### A new vision

The Chamber of Commerce has also come up with a long term vision for the direction the city is taking. It plans on branding the city as a gourmet food and wine destination.

As appealing as a “gourmet food and wine destination” may seem to an older demographic, it fails to attract the youth of Saratoga. Chic boutiques or pizza parlors would be much more desirable additions for teenagers than expensive restaurants would be.

The Chamber plans to accomplish this branding of the city through a public relations agent, who will launch an 18-month campaign to promote the “Saratoga brand.” However, the Chamber is still looking into possible ways to fund the employment of a public relations agent.

In addition to seeking a public relations agent, the Chamber is hoping to hire and pay a professional executive director who would concentrate solely on the activities in the village.

“That is the single most sustainable improvement we can make to improve the village is to have an executive director,” Anderson said.

The fiscal planning to enact the public relations campaign and the executive director does sound slightly unrealistic, as the only tangible source of the planned funds thus far are the events. Moreover, the funds for the events are already directed towards the hiring of an executive director; it remains to be seen whether there would be enough funds coming in from the events to go to both the executive director position and a public relations campaign.

Although there still seem to be some relatively minor details that need to be ironed out, the Chamber's action plan is a strong step toward fostering a sense of community in the Village.

“We want Saratogans to fall back in love with the village, because they have fallen out of love with it,” Anderson said. “We want to recapture the hearts of Saratogans and have people be proud of their downtown.” ♦

FOURTH PERIOD

STAFF POLICY

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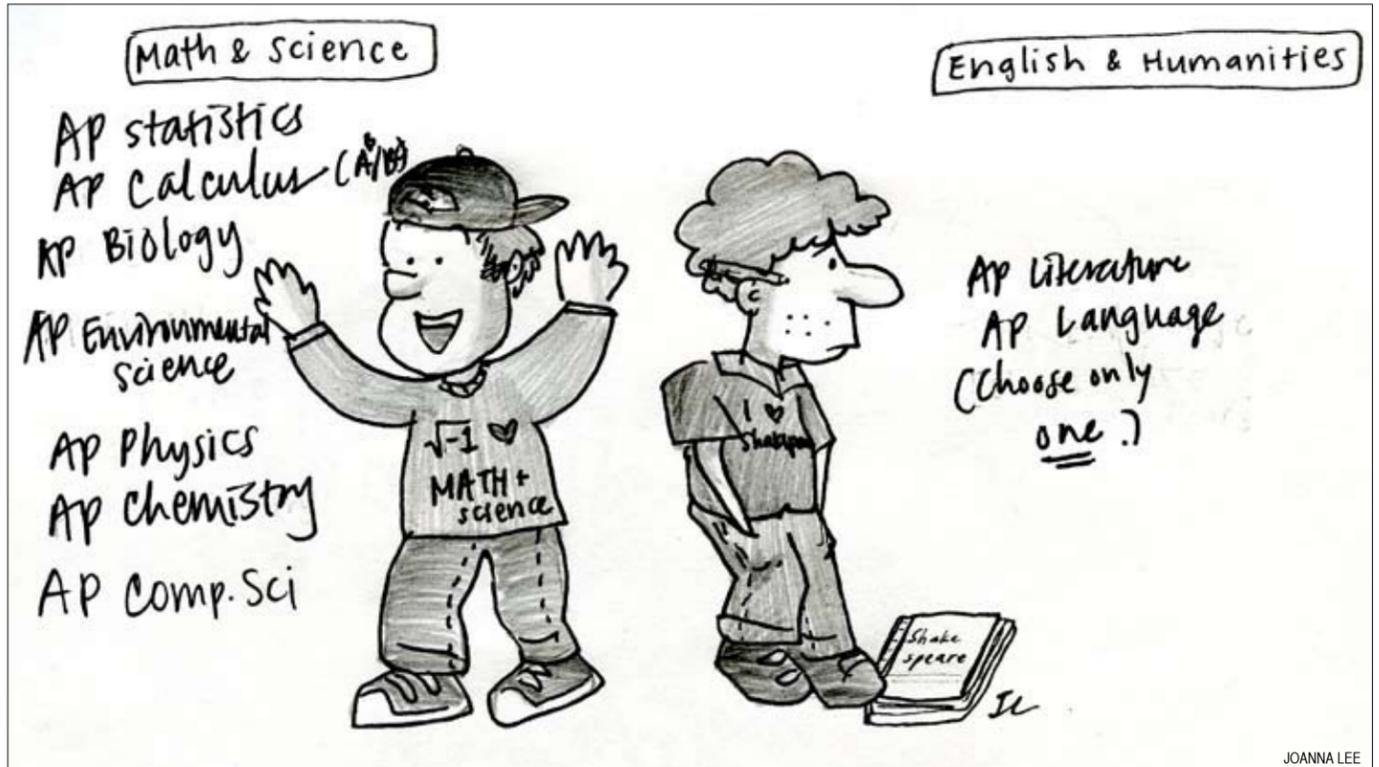
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\*Various contributions were also made by the third-period newspaper staff

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JOANNA LEE

Emphasis on humanities needed

Every year when it comes time for course requests, students peruse the various options available to them: Chemistry Honors or regular? Calculus AB or Calculus BC? AP Physics or AP Bio? With several options available in the math and science departments, students can choose classes that best fit their needs and abilities. Yet for students who are interested in the humanities, these options are limited.

The current curriculum places emphasis on math and science, leaving few opportunities for humanities-driven students. Students cannot take an Honors or AP humanities course until junior year, while some students begin taking advanced math as early as freshman year. This imbalance of advanced classes places students who excel in humanities at a disadvantage.

Living in the Silicon Valley, most students are highly exposed to fields related to math and science; however, students

with an inclination toward humanities should not be neglected. While it is true that many graduates will go on to work in fields such as engineering and medicine, the school should work to recognize the entire spectrum of student talent, not just the dominant portion of it.

Fortunately, the school is working to fix this imbalance, and next year's schedule will allow for the option to take AP European History as well as the opportunity for select students to "double up" AP English Literature and AP Language Composition. However, these options are only available to upperclassmen, leaving underclassmen with no options to take advanced classes.

Only humanities-driven students will benefit from this change, while students who prefer liberal arts to math and science are overlooked. Offering AP or Honors humanities courses to underclassmen allows for schedule flexibility.

Instead of focusing solely on humanities for one year, students are able to place a greater emphasis on subjects they

enjoy.

Compared to other schools, there are currently very few AP humanities classes. Nearby private school Harker offers five AP classes in English and History, including AP World History and AP U.S. Government. At Los Gatos High School, students may enroll in Honors English during freshman and sophomore years, followed by both AP Lang and AP Lit.

Currently, our school offers eight AP courses related to math and science. However, the English and History departments only offer three AP courses that cannot be taken until junior and senior years.

While the budget does not allow for extra spending, the option of English 10 Honors or AP World History during sophomore year would challenge and benefit humanities-driven students. On the college level, the extra grade point from AP and Honors classes would place students on the same level as students who take AP or Honors math and science as underclassmen.

While the addition of humanities classes is a step in the right direction, more must be done if the school wants to truly level the playing field. No matter what their strengths are, all students should have an equal opportunity to succeed academically. ♦

>> **Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board**

<b>Editor-in-Chief</b> Christine Bancroft	<b>Opinion Editor</b> Anshu Siripurapu	<b>Reporters</b> McKenna Galvin Aashna Mukerji
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The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 34-0 for adding more advanced humanities courses.

Unweighted GPAs would benefit students

BY Cristina Curcelli

Years ago, when students' parents were in high school, the valedictorian of their class would have had a "perfect 4.0." Nowadays that seems strange, since many students carry GPAs of 4.0 or higher after the implementation of "weighted" GPAs and the five-point scale.

To be the top student, a measly 4.0 will no longer cut it anymore. But it's time for the 4.0 to make a comeback.

With the weighted GPA system, students gain an extra grade point for Advanced Placement and Honors classes, making the maximum GPA value 5.0. But as students continue to take more and more AP and honors classes and earn skyrocketing GPAs, weighted GPAs are becoming a useless and ineffective way to grade.

A return back to the 4-point maximum GPA system would encourage students to base their class choices less on whether the class is AP or honors and more on whether they are actually interested in taking that particular subject.

Students know that AP or honors classes will both increase their GPA and allow them to receive a lower grade while still earning the same GPA as if they were enrolled in a non-honors or AP class.

This change might also help discourage students from overloading their

schedules with AP and honors classes, which would decrease stress and allow them to devote their time to areas that they are interested in.

By unweighting GPAs, comparing students' grades from different schools would also be easier. If schools did not use the weighted system, students in schools that do not offer higher level classes would not be penalized in their GPAs.

Even in the college application pro-

cess, many colleges do not look at students' weighted GPAs, but rather the classes a student has taken and the letter grades. Colleges can still determine whether applicants have challenged themselves based upon the academic rigor of their course load. Other colleges will recalculate their applicants' GPAs, making the weighted GPA virtually unnecessary.

Although returning to unweighted GPAs would mean that the valedictorian could no longer be calculated based on solely GPA, this change could actually be a turn for the better. The valedictorian of a graduating class could instead be selected based on a combination of GPA, course rigor and excellence in school involvement (such as sports, music or drama).

Using the classic, unweighted GPA system would be beneficial to virtually all students. A return back to the 4-point scale would make the GPA hold greater value when applying to colleges. And, best of all, students might be more selective when choosing which AP and honors courses to take. ♦

Using the classic, unweighted GPA system would be beneficial to virtually all students.

&gt;&gt; strictlysatire

# Santorum: Why God has picked him

BY Aashna Mukerji  
& Deborah Soung

The savior of America will sweep across the nation in an ill-fitting sweater vest, his speech as eloquent as his coiffure. His entire campaign screams "red, white and blue": anti-education, anti-secularism and pro-discrimination. Get ready, America, for a nation run by Rick Santorum.

Currently, Santorum is the only candidate who realizes the truth: Higher education is designed for snobs. College has become a place for impressionable young minds to be assaulted by poisonous liberal propaganda, not to "learn." Anyone who believes otherwise is an elitist whose ego is bolstered by his own education and a heathen who has stumbled off God's intended path.

As for how to prevent liberalism in colleges from taking over the minds of the youth, Santorum has the perfect solution: "Stop it." It is perfectly logical to, as Santorum suggests, stop all donations to secular universities who force their radical beliefs onto innocent young minds because colleges are a scar on American society's otherwise unblemished visage.

Santorum has stated that half of students who entered non-religious colleges with a religious affiliation lost their faiths. In turn, he explained the dangers of secularism John F. Kennedy posed during his speech in 1960.

Though this statistic is unconfirmed and Santorum's interpretation of Kennedy's speech was the opposite of its true meaning, these missteps are rendered irrelevant because the essence of Santorum's comments gets to the very base of

the issue with our nation.

Americans are becoming less devoted to God every day, and it is up to Santorum to salvage what is left of their dwindling faiths. Separation of church and state is obviously an idea of the past, and should be left there, with the other outdated ideals of the Founding Fathers. Secularism is the government's way of imposing its own ideas onto the public, and frankly, it makes good Americans "want to throw up."

Evidence of America's loss of faith lies in its increasing tolerance. More and more states are legalizing gay marriage, a slap in the face to all who hold marriage sacred. Despite rising divorce rates among heterosexual couples and widely publicized 72-hour marriages, it seems that allowing gays to marry is the only true stain upon the sanctity of marriage.

Santorum sees the dangers of the consequences of gay marriage and is doing his best to help citizens see the light. After all, gays will not be discriminated against; everybody has the right to marry a person of the opposite sex. It may not be in the Constitution, but it's in the Bible, and that's what counts in government.

In addition to Santorum's revolutionary beliefs about America's infrastructure, his foreign policy is also a winner. America should not have to apologize for its mistakes. Obama made a grave error in apologizing for American soldiers who burned Korans in Afghanistan in February because it "shows weakness." This sort of unapologetic policy which Santorum would implement will undoubtedly help America gain respect from other nations.

Hark back to the monarchies of ancient Europe, and it is clear that the most well-known leaders (Louis XIV, Kaiser Wilhelm, Napoleon, etc.) ascended their thrones through the doctrine of divine right. It is undeniable that San-

torum is the perfect candidate, since his wife, Karen Santorum, has stated that his presidency is God's will. How can liberals deny his right to commander-in-chief when the divine entity has chosen Santorum for this position? ♦

&gt;&gt; candidcaricature



JOANNA LEE

## College Board makes delusional rule change

BY Sierra Smith

It sometimes seems that there is no entity more ubiquitous in the lives of students than the College Board, the giant that runs the SAT, SAT subject tests and AP exams. Now, in a surprising rule change effective this year, the College Board is trying to prevent the inevitable.

The rule regarding the discussion of AP test questions has changed so that students may only discuss the specific AP free-response questions (FRQs) that have been released online on the College Board website. The College Board claims that this change has occurred because some questions will be reused in future years, and they do not want future AP test takers to have any sort of upper hand when taking the test.

In previous years, all of the AP FRQs have been released and free for discussion only 48 hours after the test.

High school teachers tell students not to discuss tests; they say it is cheating. Despite all of that, students do it all the time. There are no real benefits to discussing questions after taking a test except to satisfy students' curiosity as to how well they did.

The College Board has no way of enforcing this rule, and it is almost guaranteed that it will be broken. Most students can't stop themselves from discussing test questions and answers. The only

change will be that students feel more guilty knowing that they should not be discussing it.

However, while students are likely to talk about AP tests soon after they have taken them, the discussions are not likely to affect future test takers and their scores. The chances that someone will remember the specific questions from an AP test an entire year later are very small. And why would a student want to give someone else an advantage when they are ultimately going to be compared to each other?

The part of this change that would affect future test-takers is that there will be less material to prepare with on the College Board website. Teachers of AP classes will also have less material available with which to prepare their students

for the AP exams, and even though there are fairly good odds that all of the questions will make it online one way or another, it would still be considered cheating if they were to discuss it.

If the College Board wants to prevent future AP test takers from having an unexpected advantage, the best strategy would be to create new questions every year. Questions could maybe be reused every 10 years, but variations will keep the test original with questions that students haven't seen before. ♦

**Why would a student want to give someone else an advantage when they are ultimately going to be compared to each other?**

## NY teacher ratings wrong

BY Cristina Curcelli  
& Sarah Finley

Imagine that all the high school students across the country were ranked based on test scores. What if, then, these scores were released to the public and the press nationwide? Sounds awful.

That nightmare was put into reality not for students, but rather their teachers. On Feb. 24, after a long court battle, the New York City Department of Education publicly released performance rankings of over 18,000 school teachers, known as Teacher Data Reports. These reports used standardized math and English exams to rank teachers based on their students' improvement.

This incident is not the first in a string of many related problems. Over the past decade, there has been a shift toward evaluating teachers with statistics, such as API scores and school rankings. Instead of basing their effectiveness on the opinions of their students and administrators, teachers such as the New York teachers are now being judged on hard data.

But data can sometimes be misleading, and that is the case with many of the New York numbers. Officials stated that only 77 percent of teachers whose rankings were released were still teaching for the Department of Education. Of those who were, many had moved on to different subject areas, grade levels, administrative positions or even schools, resulting in the reports being hard to utilize—which makes it questionable as to why the city decided to release them in the first place.

The teachers have students of different backgrounds, which can either aid the education process or make it more difficult. Students who are motivated

are easier to notice improvements in than students who lack interest in school, have complicated family situations, have a disability or even speak English as a second language.

Many factors play a role in student test score improvement other than effectiveness of a teacher. For example, students in more well-to-do areas often have better conditions in which they are learning. They may perform better on these tests even with a less effective teacher than the students from lower-income areas who face more challenges and happen to have a superior teacher.

While some parents may feel that they have the right to know how effective their students' educators are, a set of test scores is not the proper way to accomplish this. Rather, a teacher's reputation, the way they are thought of by their students and administrators who know their capabilities, is much more valuable.

But now that rankings are released, everyone will start to see the negative effects. Students and families should recognize the faults of these ratings and not allow them to cloud their judgements of the teachers. ♦

&gt;&gt; THE bigidea

### NYC Teacher Rankings

#### What was released?

The rankings of over 18,000 NYC school teachers.

#### The problem

Rating teachers solely on student test scores is unfair.

#### What to take away?

Families should disregard the ratings.

# Can you ... ask a total stranger to prom?

ALL GRAPHICS BY MICHELLE SHU

As I strolled through the nearly empty walkways of Westgate Mall, I kept my head on a swivel in hopes of finding a date to prom. My editors thought it would be funny to assign me, a sophomore, the task of asking a stranger to such a glamorous occasion in a high school girl's life.

If you don't understand the practical joke yet, here it is. If I do succeed and the girl who I ask says yes, then I will have to make up an excuse because I literally can't go to prom as a sophomore. And, if she says no, then my heart will be forever broken.

So, I made my way from Nordstrom to Target, and scanned the stores on either side for a prom date. I noticed a beautiful Asian goddess walking my way. I thought to myself, she is the one.

Even though she looked at least two years older because of the maturity of her facial features, she seemed like she was single and wouldn't mind me asking. What kind of boyfriend would let his girlfriend walk alone through a mall with so many potential date-mongers

like me walking around?

Mustering up the best reason I could think of on the spot to talk to her, I approached her.

"Um, excuse me, miss. I'm from Famous Footwear. How would you like to buy one pair of slippers and get the other half off?" I said to her. "The spring season is coming around, and you know how quickly this area heats up."

Never in my life did I think it would work. I don't even look like I work at Famous Footwear. I was wearing a Saratoga Soccer sweatshirt for crying out loud.

"Sure, I'm waiting for someone to finish shopping," the beauty named Ashley said.

We walked into the shoe store, and the mesmerizing Ashley and I made our way to the female slipper section. As we conversed, I attempted to flirt, and I helped her pick out a few pairs of orange (her favorite color) slippers.

Surprisingly, I was not nervous while thinking about the right moment to ask her to "prom." Since she was a total stranger, I did not feel like a "no" would

affect me as much as the same response from someone who I knew and saw every day would.

The moment came and I asked her.

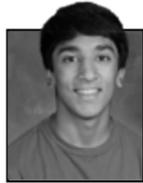
"Hey, Ashley. I know we just met. But, I already enjoy your company. Not to mention you are gorgeous. Will you go to prom with me?"

Never in my life would I expect her to say yes. And she didn't.

"Oh, sorry. I have a boyfriend. He is actually the person I was waiting for," Ashley said. "If I didn't have a boyfriend, I might have thought about it."

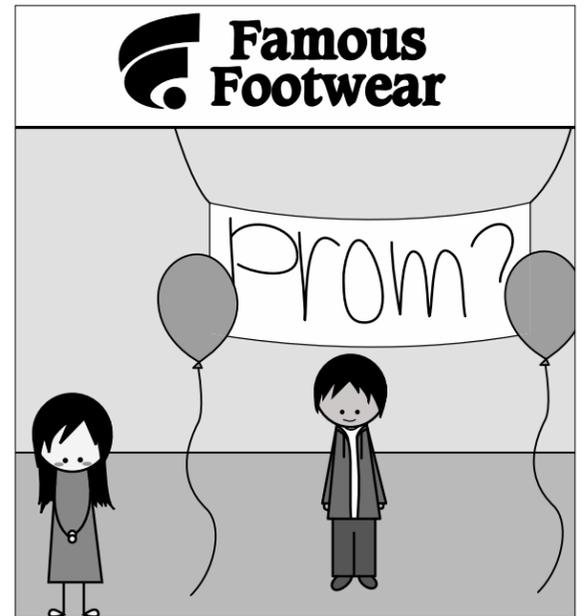
My hypothesis about boyfriends not letting their girlfriends shop alone could not have been more off. At least she was delicate with her response.

If I ever attempt to ask a stranger on a date again, I need to change my game plan and hone my skills. Even though



NIKHIL GOEL

Goel to prom?



I was not successful in my prom date-seeking endeavor, this was a lesson learned. Charming wit and sly flirtation are not enough. The most important line is the opening one: "Are you single?" ♦

## >> togatalks

How did you ask someone/get asked to prom?

I changed the lyrics to the song 'Valentine' by Kina Grannis and I had my a capella group back me up."



senior Rebecca Chen

I got blindfolded and kidnapped by my friends who were in on it. He played piano and had a sign saying 'prom?'"



senior Andrea Liu

He hid inside my car and he tried to get out, but he got stuck and he had flowers that he had ripped out of the garden."



senior Priyanka Arunkumar

## STYLE FILES



FALCON // ROHAN RAJEEV

**Anshu Siripurapu, 12**

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BLACK DRESS SHIRT, NORDSTROM: \$25-\$30

**Varsha Ramesh, 12**

DRESS, BCBG: \$348

SHOES, MACY'S (NINA BRAND): \$59

EARRINGS, NORDSTROM (GIVENCHY BRAND): \$30



Kothari

### My Playlist ...

Senior Ali Kothari shares some of his favorite tunes

**"Somebody That I Used to Know":**

Gotye ft. Kimbra

**"Skinny Love":** Bon Iver

**"Take Care":** Drake and Rihanna

**"Wilhelm Scream":** James Blake

**"Someone Like You":** Adele

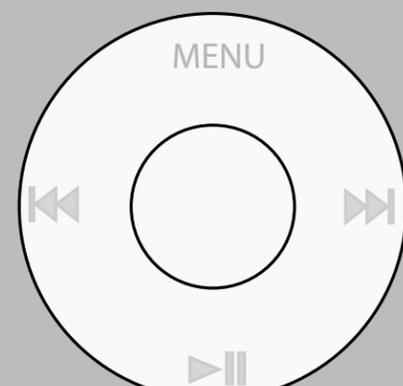
**"Little Lion Man":** Mumford & Sons

**"Prince Ali":** Aladdin

**"Kickstart (Bar 9 Remix)":** Example

**"Two Coins":** Dispatch

**"Drive It Like You Stole It":** Glitch Mob



# From Zero



IN A WEEK-LONG EFFORT TO DEFEAT THE COUCH POTATO, REPO



From left: Michelle Shu, McKenna Galvin, Sophie Mattson, Anika Jhalani, Will Edman

## Simple changes

BY McKenna Galvin

If there's one type of physical activity that I hate, it's running. Memories of timed miles and "Super Cardio Days" from middle school haunt my thoughts as I remember the shin splints, aching muscles and burning lungs associated with running for long periods of time.

When it comes to exercising, I'm the last person to suggest going for a run. Yet for one week, I decided that those 9-minute miles weren't going to cut it anymore.

So mil  
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## Junior strives for toned, shaped legs

BY Michelle Shu

I've never been a person too inclined to work out voluntarily. Just the concept of running over a mile makes me cringe. However, I still need to build muscle, whether it be for dancing or color guard, and I, sadly, severely lack leg muscle.

For this fitness plan, which I did every day for a week and a half, I decided that I would run for 15 minutes, wall sit for 3 minutes, and do 6 rounds of Tabata squats.

The wall sit is basically what it sounds like: sitting against a wall. The squats I did involved doing squats for 20 seconds and then resting at the bottom for 10. I was already decently tired after running and doing the wall sit, but I wasn't finished;

I had to do Tabata squats.

Before this workout, I was not aware of what Tabata squats were. I originally planned to do regular squats, but my friends coaxed me into doing Tabata squats, something they had to do in PE. It sounded simple and easy to do, but I found it to be much more challenging than I had anticipated. I'm not sure if it was so tiring because I did them after running and wall sits, but I was about done after this combination.

The first day of this workout was bearable. I was tired afterwards, but I recovered in a short amount of time. That, however, was just the beginning.

The second day was probably the most difficult. I was sore and tired from the day before and it was painful just to do a single squat. As the

days went by, the workout became more integrated into my lifestyle and it became easier to accomplish.

I will probably continue this regime since I need muscle and endurance. On the other hand, I've never been too consistent with working out. I tend to allow myself to skip days, which leads to long hiatuses. Although they don't take very long, workouts just aren't appealing to me and never seem to last long.

I hope I can bring myself to continue this workout schedule consistently.

The experience was better than I had anticipated and it would be more effective if I maintained working out for over a week and a half. ♦



>>> INTENSITY: 8 >>> LONG-TERM POTENTIAL: 5 >>> STATUS: HERO

## Working out doesn't have to be hard work

BY Anika Jhalani

Last week was the first time I'd ever been to a gym. That's right, in all these years of living in the land that invented the abdominal workout and in the state that has popularized it, I had never even stepped inside so much as a YMCA.

Let me explain. It's not that I haven't tried to stay fit, it's just that I have always relied on a mix of sport, lack of appetite and a hyperactive metabolism to get me into my Abercrombie kids' jeans.

But as I got older, my jeans seemed to get smaller as my metabolism eroded, my appetite for burgers shot up, and my sport switched from daily three hour swims to enjoyable, yet less intensive, cheer routines.

Seeing as senior beach day, prom and shorts season were just a hop and a skip away, I decided that I would try actually going to a gym to feel a little more comfortable while facing the upcoming months.



I decided to use a free ride on a friend's membership at the YMCA and was surprised to see so many Saratoga students. I had no idea that other people had the willpower to drag themselves off their couches and run around on treadmills without anyone forcing them to do so.

When I first arrived, I tried this horrendous machine called the stairstepper. It was like climbing up the stairway to hell, except with an eternal pool of sweat below my feet. I hopped off after twenty minutes and then ran over to the regular treadmill.

After what seemed like an eternity, the machine let me know I had been running at a 13 minute mile pace. The lady next to me snickered at my results while she pranced along at her six minute mile speed.

I was horrified by my lack of gym skill, and ran out the room to get fresh air. But in the distance, I heard a familiar song. It was Bollywood music! My forte!

I dragged my friend, junior and fellow cheerleader Nadya Shahin, toward the sound of the melodious music.

And what we found was a room full of women shak-

ing their hips to the latest Indian music hits.

Without a second thought, Nadya and I jumped into the middle of the dance floor and started moving along with everyone else. Within seconds, my abs weren't cramping and my hips weren't lying; yes, we were in the middle of the legendary Zumba.

Then came my revelation that working out didn't have to be the everyday lifting weights routine.

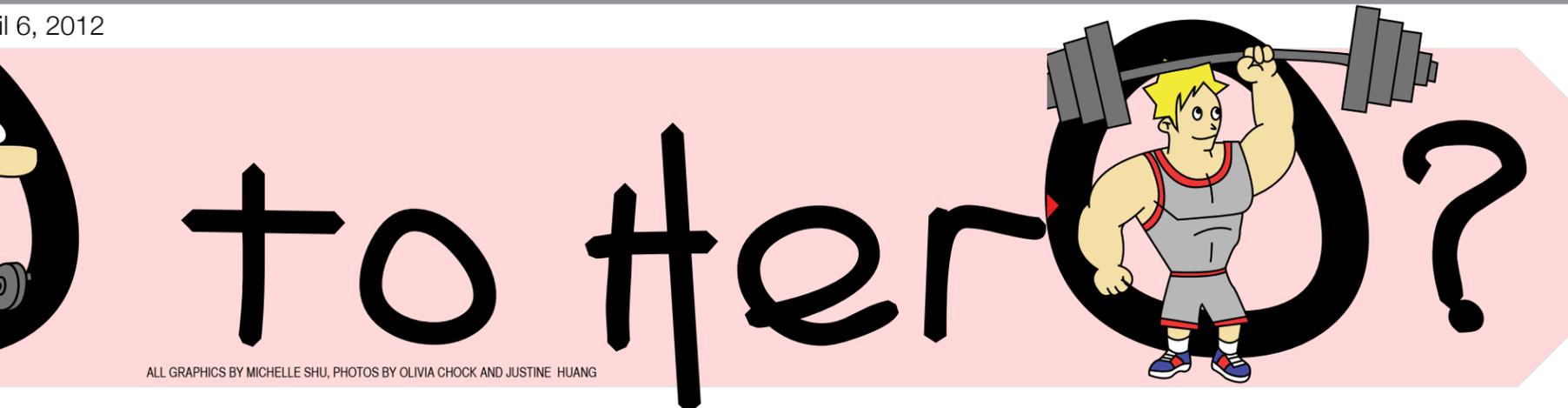
Looking around that day, I saw people of all shapes and sizes, assembled not necessarily to work out, but to have fun. It wasn't a room full of sweat and frowns, but rather an area laced with dance and music.

The truth is, I've always used my small frame as an excuse to never try to get in shape. But what I learned from that day at the Y and the Zumba class was that working out shouldn't be about chasing after a certain body image, but should rather be about being healthy and finding a fun way to do it.

Sadly, my cheer season is over and I won't be able to hip hop my way to a size two. But as one thing ends, another begins, and I believe I have a future full of workouts and dance in the legendary Zumba. ♦

>>> INTENSITY: 4 >>> LONG-TERM POTENTIAL: 8 >>> STATUS: HERO

il 6, 2012



ALL GRAPHICS BY MICHELLE SHU, PHOTOS BY OLIVIA CHOCK AND JUSTINE HUANG

PORTERS CREATED AND EXECUTED THEIR OWN FITNESS REGIMENS.

## s promote healthy, happy lifestyle

for seven days, I committed myself to running one mile per day on either the treadmill or the school track. Admittedly, this feat isn't very impressive, especially if you compare me to people in track or cross country. Throughout the week I saw significant improvement, both in my mile times and in the way I felt. I felt more energized after running and could concentrate more on my homework. After one week, my mile time had improved by over a minute.

As the week went by, I built up endurance and be-

came less tired after each run. Often I would turn on the TV while on the treadmill at home to entertain myself while I was running. Eventually, I forgot why I had dreaded running so much before.

In addition to running, I decided to cut out soda and juice from my diet and to just drink water. This simple change not only cut out excess sugar, but also had other benefits. In addition to flushing out toxins from the body, water also increases metabolism.

Though this routine was initially only meant to last a

week, there's no doubt that I will continue to run more and to choose water over soda.

Especially since I spend several hours a day on the computer doing homework, even spending an extra half hour a day exercising is a step toward a healthier lifestyle.

Being healthier doesn't require a personalized workout regimen and an intense diet; even the simplest of changes is better than no attempt at all. ♦



&gt;&gt; INTENSITY: 6

&gt;&gt; LONG-TERM POTENTIAL: 8

&gt;&gt; STATUS: HERO

## Junior finds solace in running

BY Sophie Mattson

I didn't realize how sedentary my lifestyle would become after beginning junior year. I had always assumed that I would make time to exercise. After being on the cross country and track teams during my sophomore year, I developed a love of running and hoped to continue it.

Sadly, my busy schedule has led me to spend more time at the desk rather than on the treadmill.

I have harbored a tremendous amount of guilt over failing to use my 8-year-old gym membership for months at a time. My desire to regain the healthy lifestyle somewhat close to the routine that I maintained in sophomore year has always remained in the back of my mind.

Joining a sports team was never an option for this semester due to my night class schedule at West Valley College. So I made a goal—exercise at my gym for at least 30 minutes each day, for four days a



week. It seemed doable, but I was worried that I wouldn't prioritize my exercise regime and make excuses for not going. But there was no harm in attempting to develop a new, healthy habit.

Attempting to use the weight room was a hopeless endeavor. My previous attempts to build my upper body strength have been futile, and weight machines seem too complicated. Due to my lack of hand-eye coordination and clumsiness, I didn't want to risk crushing my hands against metal bars or damaging my feet with dropped weights.

I decided to stick to what I am most comfortable with, cardio. Although I have been traditionally against using a treadmill, my current fear of the sun and paranoid mentality that running alone leads to abduction made me decide that pounding the pavement was the less favorable option.

The first day was the roughest. After running on the treadmill for 20 minutes at a decent pace, I could barely finish 10 minutes on the stationary bike. I limped back to my car from the gym, too tired to change out of my workout clothes, and collapsed onto the driver's seat. My face was bright red and the burning in my legs was incessant.

Although I was exhausted and felt ashamed that I had let myself go for so long without exercising properly, it felt satisfying to have finished a workout. I returned to the gym two days later and ended up working out for 25 minutes on the Exercise cycle and for 10 on the treadmill. I was still tired afterwards, but the feeling in my legs wasn't nearly as terrible as the previous time.

I made two more trips to the gym that week, and even successfully used a weight machine for more than five minutes. I immediately noticed changes in my mood and sleep schedule.

It was much easier to fall asleep at night, and I was noticeably less stressed out, which was a much-needed relief from my type-A personality.

Usually when I start a new regime to better my life, I vow to permanently incorporate it into my life.

However, my personal conviction to the promise usually dies down about a week later, along with my progress. It surprises me that I feel like I can continue this plan in the future since it gives me a much needed release from the stresses of the day. ♦

&gt;&gt; INTENSITY: 6 &gt;&gt; LONG-TERM POTENTIAL: 8 &gt;&gt; STATUS: HERO

## Conflicts lead reporter to fail goals within a day

BY Will Edman

For as long as I can remember, I have been a scrawny kid. At 5'11" and 140 lbs, I am all skin and bones, and no amount of food can improve my skinniness. My attempts to eat massive amounts of protein have never produced results, my forays into working out and weightlifting have proved ineffective, and despite my above average height, I have never progressed past the status of a featherweight.

Because of this, I knew exactly what the goal of my week of healthiness would be: to get some bulk on my arms. My plan? To do 200 push-ups every

night, to eat immense amounts of protein and

to hold off on sweets for a week. Little did I know that these simple goals would prove to be impossible to achieve.

The first night of the week, I prepared to crank out push-ups at record pace and to finish within five minutes. I started with 30 push-ups in a row, but my sets shrank to 20 each as I neared the halfway point. However, after I had done 100, the push-ups seemed to become exponentially more difficult, and I began to feel lethargic. By the time I was finishing up, I could only muster 10 at a time, but I still felt satisfied when I finished the 200.

When I woke up the next morning, I immediately felt my triceps aching. That afternoon, I played a tennis match and felt significantly hampered by my overworked arms. Lucky for me, I had six matches during that week, and I soon realized that I would

have no success if I continued my push-ups at night.

Although I felt embarrassed that my adventure had only lasted one day, I realized that I could continue any other week, and that I owed it to myself and to my team to put tennis, my main source of fitness, first.

Although I failed in my push-up goal, I succeeded in creating a sugar-free, protein-heavy diet for myself. I do not have much of a sweet tooth anyway, but I felt more active without the unhealthy food weighing me down.

Ultimately, my experience is a confidence boost for anyone who feels as if they have failed to reach a fitness goal. As long as someone lasts more than one day, he or she has accomplished much more than I did that week. ♦



&gt;&gt; INTENSITY: 9

&gt;&gt; LONG-TERM POTENTIAL: 3

&gt;&gt; STATUS: ZERO

# The do's and don'ts

## The hitch-hiker's guide to the Internet

BY Deborah **Soung**

If "there is no frigate like a book," as Emily Dickinson said, there is no private jet like the Internet. With a few clicks of the mouse and taps of the keyboard, gigabytes of data are instantly unveiled, whisking away users to their own unique niche in the beauteous network system.

Unfortunately, some only know the omnipresent Facebook as their primary source of procrastination despite the plethora of other delectably crafted sites, each created to appeal to select crowds: the ultimate personal experience. The key to discovering one's own home on the Internet is through diligent exploration, schoolwork be forsaken. The following guide is meant to act as a beginner's aide to navigating the diversity of the Internet.

### The bulletin boards of the Internet

Forums began as the uber-technical underbelly of the Internet and still remain very much so. These message boards are usually formatted with "threads," wherein a user usually posts a question which others reply to.

The beauty of forums lies in their diversity; whether a user cannot understand why Ubuntu refuses to download the latest version of Java or wants to know how many hit points a skeleton on "Minecraft" has, there is likely a thread for every question and a forum for every topic imaginable.

These message boards have since expanded from technical sites into entertainment opportunities. One of the largest English-based forums and home to the notorious Anonymous community, "4Chan," is infamous for popularizing Internet memes, and though its original focus lay in anime and manga, it has threads ranging from "cosplay" to "papercraft and origami."

The heavily image-based "9GAG" has been popularized for its focus on memes. "Reddit," a source for "what's new and popular online," has a unique blend between humor and gravity. While many of its threads are story-based or meme posts, trending threads often feature politics.

Users on forums tend to have sardonic leanings, so comments should always be taken with a grain of salt. Those who find liberalism hard to stomach will meet their matches in the massive atheism and free-information movements that overrun entertainment forums, especially since users are unafraid to offend behind their anonymity.

That said, cynicism and sarcasm are deployed to their utmost effectiveness on forums, making them some of the most entertaining places to be on the Internet.

### Sites for people who hate reading

For those visually inclined, image-sharing sites can provide hours of distraction through browsing photography

and artwork. These sites range from forum-like bulletin boards to ascetic image hosting pages.

The tried-and-true image-sharing sites such as "Flickr" and "Photobucket" hold everything from family photos to artistic compositions. Sites such as "Imgur," which is tied closely to "Reddit," prominently feature memes alongside posters' photography and artwork. Though photography is occasionally featured on "DeviantArt," this site, which hosts comics, cartoons and original artwork, provides artists an opportunity to share their work with the world.

Those interested in fashion have taken to "lookbooks" that allow the ordinary citizen to create portfolios alongside celebrities and models. However, the site garnering massive media attention recently, "Pinterest," is unique in its purpose to allow users to "pin" their favorite photos from all over the Internet to create personalized boards.

Unlike the anonymity often associated with forums, photographers and artists can find communities within image-sharing websites. These sites predominantly appeal to users' aesthetic tastes.

### The blogosphere

Blogs are some of the most intimate places on the Internet because they provide users with the chance of peeking into others' lives. These web logs, originally created for users to post personal

anecdotes, have since evolved into news sources for citizen journalists, outlets for litterateurs and portfolios for the artistic.

Each blog-hosting site has its own unique layout, but the content of blogs lies with its owner. "Tumblr" has the Internet abuzz with its snippets of text and excellent photography, while "WordPress" and "Blogspot" provide more text-based blogs, but the main attraction of blogs lies in the fact that average people can propel themselves to their 15 minutes through blogging.

Blogs are for everybody. If writing lengthy posts for "WordPress" seems unappealing, bite-sized raconteurs can make their statements on "Tumblr." If lurking seems like the better alternative, there are countless captivating blogs, each as unique as their writers.

For gaming-oriented individuals, Markus Persson, better known as Notch, has a "Tumblr" under his pseudonym. If fashion or DIY tickles your fancy, look for blogs under Etsy or ModCloth. When in doubt, a Google search of a favorite hobby will doubtlessly turn up hundreds of blogs.

The ever-expanding Internet can provide a much-needed distraction to stressed students, similar to the way early cinemas provided relief during the Great Depression.

But remember, like economic troubles, homework won't disappear on its own. ♦



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Stacy Bennett, College Admissions  
Counselor & Director  
BA, Psychology (UNC Chapel Hill)  
MA, Education (Stanford)

# of online etiquette

ALL GRAPHICS BY MICHELLE SHU

## Facebook homepage annoyances in a nutshell:



-Joanna Lee & David Sparkman

## Social network slang annoying to web user

### SOPHOMORE REFLECTS ON DIFFERENT WAYS OF COMMUNICATING ONLINE

When I go online, I go to lots of different websites: Facebook, Tumblr, StumbleUpon (the cheater's way to find cool websites) and others. The communities are all very different, and people like to make fun of those on other sites. One thing is the same, though: the irritating way people talk.

On Tumblr, for example, there is a lot of slang that would seem like gibberish to those not used to it. What does it mean to "ship" a couple? What's up with the whole YOLO thing? What is a dashboard and why would you want notes on it?

On Facebook, many people seem to find it OK to say things they wouldn't get caught dead saying in real life. The protection of a screen, even on an extremely personal site like Facebook, lets people say things they normally wouldn't, just because it's not "real life."

For example, people will message or comment mean things because they think they're not held accountable. People also say extremely personal information in statuses, not realizing that not ev-

eryone wants to know those details.

Another Facebook annoyance is people who over-comment, over-post and over-like. If you "like" everything you see or separate a three-sentence comment into three separate comments, it only takes up extra space and causes way too many notifications. Just consolidate, and type everything out before you click post.

People don't like using correct grammar online either. When I scroll through my Facebook newsfeed, I see postings using "da" instead of "the," and words misspelled for no apparent reason. Deliberately acting less intelligent online is no different than deliberately acting less intelligent in person: Don't do it unless you really are that brainless.

An especially irritating occurrence is chat and text abbreviations used in statuses. It's fine to abbreviate when typing quickly in instant messenger or text messages, but if you're taking the time to write out a status, there's no point in shortening words. You just sound like

an imbecile. This isn't Twitter—there is no character limit to what you post.

And speaking of Twitter, people misunderstand the usefulness of tweets. Many people use Twitter as a way to constantly update people on their every action. Tweets are only interesting if you're a celebrity.

Lots of people online have issues understanding which website to use for what.

Don't use Facebook to post diary entries. That's what Tumblr and other blogging sites are for. And don't use Tumblr to tell everyone what you're do-

ing every second of the day. It's not Twitter. It's OK to post interesting things about your life, but know when to post and when to save it for your diary.

If the Internet is used correctly, it can be fun and useful for communicating. But it's when people forget basic grammar or don't understand basic social interactions, that it just gets on my nerves.

Oh, and for those who were wondering, "shipping" a couple means you think they should be together (whether or not the people involved agree is another matter). YOLO stands for "you only live once." A dashboard is Tumblr's "homepage" and notes are when people like or reblog posts. The Internet is much less annoying when it makes sense. ♦



WREN SUTTERFIELD  
Wise Time



# bombay in the bay

Students eagerly anticipate both watching and performing in the annual Bombay in the Bay dance performance on April 14

## Choreographers balance school, commitments

BY Akshara Sekar

For junior Shreyas Doshi, April is a stress-filled, head-breaking, fingernail-chewing month. This anxiety comes not from AP classes, extracurricular activities or sports, but rather from choreographing a dance in Bombay in the Bay.

Doshi, along with junior Rohil Taggarasi, is a choreographer of the junior boys' dance.

The good friends and neighbors spend about three to four hours weekly making the dance for approximately two months before the show on April 14.

Although it may seem insane to the untrained, Doshi believes his past helps him through the time struggle.

"Since I have been involved in hip-hop and Bollywood dance for the past six years, I have seen a lot and done plenty of dances, which really helps me do a move and choreograph," Doshi said.

Experience often saves the choreogra-

phers time, allowing them to efficiently teach the dance and add stunts to grab the audiences' attention.

"Many people make a complex routine that is unteachable and others the vice-versa. You have to be able to create a choreography that can please a crowd, that can be easy to teach and retain a coolness factor," Doshi said.

Much like Doshi, junior Sanjna Verma felt her time slip away while attempting to make dances and schedule practices.

"Getting to coordinate times with everyone and then actually carrying out the dance seems to be the biggest struggle for a choreographer. Junior year especially seems to make it difficult to work out timings with the SAT and other classes,"

Verma said.

Although the sophomores and freshmen may not identify with the workload of the juniors, it seems as though their inspiration comes from the same place:

professional collegiate dance teams.

Sophomore Ruchi Jain said most of the time she refers to lots of college dance team videos (NYU/UCLA) for different moves.

She said they use intense choreography and formations;

however, she takes certain elements and incorporates them into her choreography.

While some rely on the advanced movies of Bollywood, others prefer a more innovative path.

"I keep watching videos and taking

lessons to learn new styles of dance and expand my knowledge of the subject matter. I just keep trying to learn new things," senior dance head Aanchal Mohan said.

As much as Bombay in the Bay is an exciting and cultural experience, nearly all the choreographers cited their biggest challenge as time.

"All of the dancers have such different schedules, that it gets hard to find times to practice with everyone there. It's such a huge time commitment!" Jain said. "Most weekends, I am running from volunteering, to choreography, to dance practice, to classes, to more dance practices, and repeat!"

Despite the struggles between schedules and school, Bombay in the Bay is sure to be an exciting ride into Indian culture.

"I never regret joining, and I know in spite of the difficulties with time and school, it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Mohan said. ♦

**All of the dancers have such different schedules that it gets hard to find times to practice with everyone there.**

>> Sophomore Ruchi Jain

## >> Practice makes perfect

ALL PHOTOS BY SHIVANI CHADHA

Practice is really intense, but it is also really fun because all of your friends are around you dancing."

junior Rohan Rajeev

The junior group, both girls and boys, diligently rehearses their routine at junior Rohan Rajeev's home on March 23. This year, the junior girls will perform first and then follow up with a combined dance.



**FAR-LEFT:** Juniors Aashna Mukerji, Shireen Kaul and Ankit Chadha practice their routine.  
**LEFT:** Juniors Rohan Rajeev, Bhavana Vadrevu, Arush Shankar and Parth Shah rehearse the combined dance.  
**ABOVE:** Juniors Rohan Rajeev, Rohil Taggarasi and Shreyas Doshi strike a pose during a run through of the boys' dance.



## Student reflects three years' experience

Three years ago, when I was an insignificant little eighth grader attending Redwood Middle School, I would've scorned the idea of performing an Indian dance on stage at the famed McAfee Center.

Here I am, three years later, preparing vigorously for my third Bombay in the Bay performance, and even choreographing a part of the dance.

It didn't take much persuasion for me to join Indian Club at the beginning of freshman year. I mean, most of my Indian friends joined it and I didn't want to feel left out.

Even though I wasn't really sure what I was getting myself into, I went along with it.

Besides, I had my friends alongside me. I admit, I was comforted by being

able to drop out if I realized that dancing wasn't my thing.

However, after the first dance practice that year, I never once considered the idea of quitting.

We had practice that year every Sunday night for two hours every week from January until the show in May.

Bombay in the Bay (affectionately abbreviated as BNB) practice was what got me through the week and made weekends infinitely more bearable. We were eight guys and girls enjoying each other's company and dancing.

I don't remember exact quotes from the seniors when they first watched us to approve our dance, but most of them went along the lines of, "You guys are SICK!"

We had exceeded expectations for freshmen by a good amount, and we

were thoroughly excited when the day of the show arrived.

The crowd cheered after the freshman girls' solo ended, and all of us boys high-fived and fist-bumped. When we heard our song begin, we coolly swaggered on stage to the delight of the excited crowd.

The audience was amazing. When we performed stunts, the crowd became even louder and more energetic.

After the guys' solo was over, the girls re-entered and in our final, coed act, we all ended with a bang.

After four months of hard work, we were done in barely five minutes.

The other grades then took their turns on stage for the next three hours.

Backstage, the atmosphere was electric. Seniors, juniors, sophomores and many parent helpers congratulated us on a job well done, and we freshmen jumped around excitedly and took way too many pictures. It didn't matter if we were not the best dancers.

We all had the time of our life up on stage. Many people perform on the McAfee stage every year, but it's something different to perform in front of such a vibrant crowd.

Bombay in the Bay has been a great way to bond and make new friends with people of other grades.

It depresses me a bit that I only have two shows left, but at the same time it inspires me to make these two count. ♦

**It didn't matter if we were not the best dancers. We all had the time of our life up on stage.**



ROHAN  
RAJEEV

*I want to make new friendships*

# Time, energy devoted to careful planning

BY Sarah Finley

With the bright lights, colorful costumes and ever complicated dance moves, Bombay in the Bay is always a hit. While the crowd is enjoying the dinner and entertainment, few of the close to 800 audience members truly realize and appreciate the countless hours of organization that go into making the night run smoothly.

According to Indian Club co-president Priyanka Arunkumar, the list of work to be done in preparation for the two-hour performance is long, to say the least.

"We have to get sponsors, find a charity to donate to, find a restaurant to provide dinner, work on the script for the performance, monitor all the dances from the grades, work on decorations and ... figure out lighting and the usual things before a performance," Arunkumar said.

Yet Arunkumar said that even with all these jobs to be completed, one task stands out.

"I think the most organization goes into creating and handling a specific

dance," Arunkumar said.

Arunkumar said that although this process can be difficult at times, the high quality of the dances can make it easier.

"Organizing the show is hard," Arunkumar said, "but it's a lot easier when you have a lot of great performances to incorporate."

She feels that most of the responsibility for organizing the show falls on the over 80 student performers.

"We do get help from parents with decorations and occasionally a choreographer's parents will help organize the costumes, but it is really up to the students to put together a great performance," Arunkumar said.

Arunkumar said that compared to that of other performances put on by different groups, the organization for Bombay in the Bay is unique in many ways.

"I would say it's different because we practice separately as grades and bring it all together close to the show," Arunkumar said.

In addition, Arunkumar feels that Bombay in the Bay allows students to

be more involved with many aspects of the event, such as picking the songs and dance movements.

Senior Manish Raghavan, the Indian Club's treasurer, said that the job of organizing the event is not up to just one person, or even solely the club officers.

"Each class spends 3-4 months choreographing and learning a dance, and the seniors write an overall script for the entire show," Raghavan said. "Everyone contributes in some way."

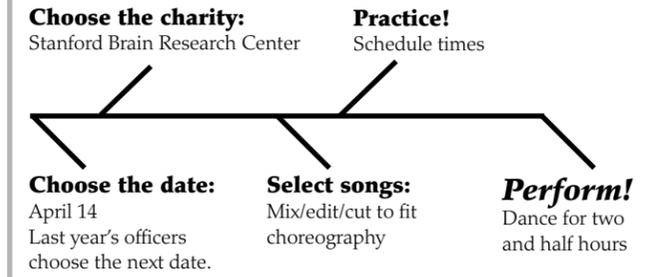
Even so, Raghavan does think that some positions require more effort than others.

"Choreographers spend a lot more time because they have to create the dance and make sure everyone knows it," Raghavan said.

Raghavan feels that the process of

## >> THEbigidea

### Process Schedule



organization is essential to making the event a success.

"[Organization is] important because we want the show to run smoothly and for everyone to have a good time," Raghavan said.

Despite the hardships involved with organizing such a large production, Raghavan still thinks the work pays off in the end.

"It takes a lot of patience and effort to get everyone on the same page, but the rewards are definitely worth the struggle," Raghavan said. ♦

## >> 2009 performances from the Falcon Archives



FAR TOP-LEFT: Alumna Grishma Athavale plays the sitar for the 2009 Bombay in the Bay show. MIDDLE-TOP: Mothers perform a traditional Indian dance. ABOVE: SHS mothers show off their dancing skills with props. FAR BOTTOM-LEFT: Alumna Kaitna Shankar, then a sophomore, smiles for the camera. LEFT: Students shout out and raise up their hands in a traditional dance.

## Event not just for Indians

BY Aashna Mukerji

Peer pressure usually has a negative connotation, but in senior Eric Wang's case, it resulted in one of his best decisions during high school: joining Bombay in the Bay.

Wang decided to take the plunge in his sophomore year, after his close friend and alumna Kaitna Shankar persuaded him to participate in the annual performance.

Shankar and 2011 alumna Esha Roy were performing a singing act and asked their fellow choir student to help them on stage. The next year, Wang took on dancing.

"At first, I was like, 'I'm not Indian! I don't want to wear a kurta pajama!'" Wang said.

"But Kaitna was like, 'trust me, you'll be fine,' and that's how I got started with Bombay in the Bay."

Indian Cultural Awareness Club president and senior Sneha Shivkumar said that Bombay in the Bay "is definitely not an exclusive activity. A lot of seniors last year did it, and it's pretty normal."

Sophomore Katherine Sun, who is Chinese, had a similar experience to Wang's when she joined her Indian

friends in Bombay in the Bay.

"I thought I might be left out because I'm not Indian, but I never feel like that," she said.

This is Sun's first year participating in the show.

"I just did it for fun, and it's great," Sun added.

Although Wang is also not of Indian descent, he feels like he is a part of the Indian community.

"Sometimes they make Indian jokes that I don't get, but for the most part, I'm always included," he said.

He added, "Now that it's my senior year, the show has become part of my life."

Wang is enthusiastic about his third year participating in the event, to say the least.

"It's probably one of the things I look forward to most in the entire school year," he said. "The dancing is so much fun."

Wang tried to convince his sister, sophomore Vanessa Wang, to join the show, but she fiercely protested that she was not Indian and would not fit in as well.

Wang's response to his sisters comment?

## topten

### REASONS TO GO TO BOMBAY IN THE BAY

- 10 Samosas. *Samosas.*
- 5 See your classmates pelvic thrust like you've never seen them pelvic thrust before. (*Except maybe at school dances.*)
- 9 The All-Males Dance pre-dance video. *Or maybe that is a reason not to go.*
- 4 A cute love story, in which a nice mama's boy falls for a bratty city girl. *Original.*
- 8 Guys get to wear makeup. *A dream come true!*
- 3 That one Asian kid who dances better than the Indians.
- 7 A powerhouse freshman class.
- 2 Twist the lightbulb and pat the dog all night long!
- 6 More pictures for you to take with the dancers. *You know you want them up on Facebook.*
- 1 See us, your favorite Top Tennesseers, bust out our spiciest Bollywood dance moves.

# Current events unit 4 test

Name: Saratoga Falcon  
Date: April 6, 2012

- Which case made Prop 8 unconstitutional?  
A. Perry vs. Schwarzenegger  
B. Brown vs. Johnson  
C. Whitman vs. Perry
- What company withdrew its grants from Planned Parenthood in February due to its abortions?  
A. Kaiser Permanente  
B. Pfizer  
C. Susan G. Komen
- What is the minimum wage in California?  
A. \$8/hour  
B. \$7/hour  
C. \$9/hour
- Obama signed into law an update to the G.I. Bill, which allows education benefits to be...  
A. Given to friends  
B. Transferred to family  
C. Traded in for cash
- When is the Republican Nation Convention?  
A. Aug. 2012  
B. Sept. 2012  
C. July 2012
- Drug prices for what age group rose 26%, double the rate of inflation, between 2005 and 2009 and the rising costs are causing this group to be unable to plan for health care costs?  
A. Teens  
B. Young adults  
C. Senior citizens
- What was recently shown, after 26 years of data, to lower the risk of stroke in women?  
A. Taking birth control pills  
B. Consumption of all natural cane sugar  
C. Drinking half a glass of wine per day
- According to the Pew Research Center, about 74% of all foreign born people living in the U.S. are what religion?  
A. Hindu  
B. Christian  
C. Muslim
- Federal judge Susan Bolton deemed which state's law regarding day-laborers unconstitutional regardless of their immigration forms or citizen status?  
A. Arizona  
B. Texas  
C. New Mexico
- What bill did the Florida's state senate barely shut down regarding education?  
A. The "Education Fee" plan that would implement a fee to attend public schools  
B. The "Parent Trigger" plan that would allow parents control over their childrens' failing schools  
C. The "Teacher Bonus" plan that would encourage citizens to teach by increasing teaching salary
- Senator Tom Harkin would like to pass to a bill that allows more eligible children to...  
A. apply for jobs at a younger age  
B. have access to early learning programs such as Head Start  
C. get emancipated with a faster process
- What document did Obama sign with Russia to reduce the number of nuclear weapons deployed by Russia and the U.S.?  
A. START Treaty  
B. Nuclear Action Plan  
C. Commitment to Peace Agreement

Answers: 1. A, 2. C, 3. A, 4. B, 5. B, 6. C, 7. C, 8. B, 9. A, 10. B, 11. B, 12. A  
-by Megan Benzing  
If you got... 11-12: You could be working at the White House; 8-10: You can hold an intelligent conversation; 5-7: Try opening up a paper; 0-5: Are you a freshman?



# CAN YOU KEEP UP?

Find out how students process the incessant maelstrom of incoming news

## Hacker groups unraveling

By Stanley Yip

In the relative safety of Internet anonymity, leaders of hacking groups, such as Anonymous and Lulz Security, command their followers to launch attacks on whomever of their choosing without much worry of being caught. But recently, federal agents have begun zeroing in on these leaders with inside help.

Hector Monsegur, who is known as Sabu on the Internet, was revealed to be the leader and founder of Lulz Security (abbreviated LulzSec), an offshoot of Anonymous, on March 6.

Junior Eugene Che learned of Monsegur on an Internet website called Reddit that aggregates interesting things found on the Internet into a convenient hub. He said that Monsegur was initially arrested and charged with various hacking related crimes in August.

"[Monsegur] has been working as an informant for the FBI since he was first arrested," Che said.

rested several suspected hackers.

Che said that even though some hackers try to protest something, they should ultimately be responsible for their actions.

"I think that malicious actions, done even through the freedom of the Internet, should be prosecuted to the fullest extent," Che said.

He added that even the professed mission of LulzSec marks the organization as criminal.

"Other hacker organizations at least try to effect a political or social change even though they may use questionable tactics," Che said. "LulzSec just wants to cause mayhem 'for the lulz' (for fun)."

Junior Sarah Kuo, who also learned of Monsegur on Reddit, commented that he was trapped between a rock and a hard spot.

"[The situation] is similar to the Salem Witch Trials," Kuo said. "[Monsegur] had to choose between selling out his friends or risk being imprisoned for life." ♦



Through Monsegur, the FBI has since arrested several suspected hackers.

>> **breakdown**

**Hector who?**

**Hector Monsegur**, or Sabu, is the founder and leader of the LulzSec hacking group.

**He was arrested** months ago for various hacking related crimes and has already pleaded guilty.

**He agreed** to work with the FBI to catch other hacking leaders, presumably to reduce his prison sentence because he has a family.

**Several other hackers** have been arrested, but their link to Monsegur has not been confirmed.

## Handling health care

By Serena Chan

With the approaching 2012 presidential election, students are reflecting on President Barack Obama's leadership over the last three years. The issue of health care arises as a popular topic as it goes hand-in-hand with the national budget.

"I believe that it is taking too much of our federal budget, and it will just continue to worsen our debt crisis," senior Salmaan Javed said. "But aside from that, at least it is providing services for a lot of the underprivileged people."

According to CBS News, Obama's health care reform bill, the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act signed into law in March 2010, expanded coverage to over 30 million Americans who were uninsured, but it will cost the U.S. a sum of \$950 billion over 10 years.

"There needs to be some improvements with more of the national budget in mind, but overall it's an OK plan," Javed said, who watches CNN often and occasionally reads The Economist magazine.

Junior Shahab Moghadam agrees with Javed in regard to the financial tolls, but in addition, he wants drastic change in Obama's health care plan.

"I feel that the American health care system is inefficient and fraught with waste," Moghadam said. "But I disagree with President Obama's Health Care Reform plan since it constitutes an unprecedented government intervention in the free market, a situation which should never be allowed to occur."

>> **breakdown**

**Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act**

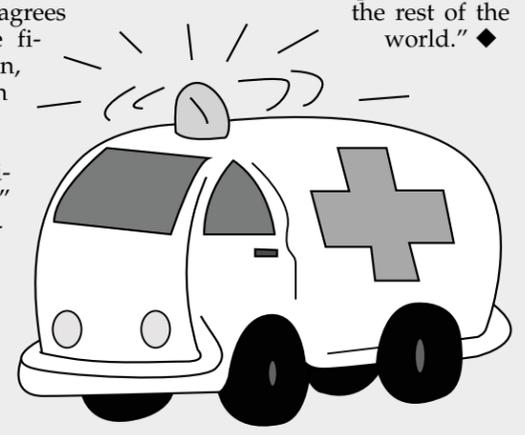
**Signed into law** by Obama in March 2010, the act expands access to insurance to over 30 million Americans.

**It will cost the government** \$950 billion over 10 years.

**It increases** projected national medical spending and lowered projected medicare spending.

Moghadam has been greatly influenced by Ronald Reagan's autobiography, "An American Life," which lays out the case for limited government and fiscal responsibility. Moghadam believes that the free market should be allowed to function unabated, and this should also apply to U.S. health care.

"In a way, these two issues are intimately intertwined," Moghadam said. "Unless we display true free market economic values at home, we will not be able to spread them to the rest of the world." ♦



# Students agree with Prop 8 court ruling

BY Megan Benzing

In light of the recent court case with the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, Perry vs. Schwarzenegger, declaring California's 2008 same-sex marriage ban, Proposition 8, unconstitutional, students have been more vocal on their own opinions about the ban on same-sex marriage.

Junior Shireen Kaul is one of the many students who are supportive of the court's ruling on Prop 8. She began to hold a strong opinion since hearing about the issue on the news and learning about it at school during the 2008 election year.

"To be honest, I think Prop 8 is ridiculous," Kaul said. "I think it's sad how there are people trying to prevent others who love each other from marrying."

Another student just as passionate is senior Isabel McPherson, who has been against Prop 8 since it was first created.

"I was against Prop 8 at the time it was on the ballot, and I still am," McPherson said.

"I have been raised in a religious family, but that has had no bearing on my views of the issue. I think it's important to form your own views, regardless of what any religious organization you're affiliated with believes."

Regarding the court ruling Prop 8 unconstitutional, McPherson believes it was the right decision.

"The government has no place telling people they cannot legally be

with the person they love," McPherson said. "Nor can they deny same-sex [couples] the same protections given to heterosexual couples."

Kaul recognizes the two sides of the debate on same-sex marriage and feels they both have their value.

"I guess there are some people who believe really strongly in 'traditional' marriage," Kaul said.

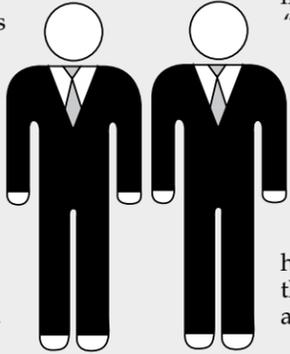
"There are others who realize it's a complete violation of a large population of people's rights and believe two people that love each other should be able to get married."

McPherson's views have been heightened by the recent news stories about adolescents committing suicide after being relentlessly teased and bullied because of their sexuality.

"It's obvious that something needs to change sooner rather than later," McPherson said. "These stories are even part of the reason I've realized I want to become a teacher. I want to protect and stand up for students going through the same struggles I see students around me going through now, and be their support system if they have none."

In looking toward the future of same-sex marriage in California, McPherson feels hopeful.

"Even if they don't personally feel comfortable with the idea, I hope that people will realize that allowing gays to marry really doesn't affect their own life or their own marriage," McPherson said. ♦



## >> THE breakdown

### Gay marriage in California

**The popular vote** on Nov. 5, 2008 resulted in 52.5% (5,387,939 votes) with 'Yes' on Prop 8.

**The clause** "Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California" is officially part of the California state constitution (as of November 5, 2008).

**August of 2010** Chief District Court Judge Vaughn Walker claimed that Prop 8 violated the Fourteenth Amendment, but the judgement was stayed pending appeal.

# Government students' election opinions differ

BY Justine Huang

Due to the recent provocative and controversial statements of several presidential candidates, the polarization between the Democrats and Republicans has grown to an even larger scale.

"I think the issues of the world are changing," senior Jasmine Grant said. "In my opinion, Republicans are stagnant. The world requires spontaneity,

and they lack it."

Grant believes that taking government class this semester has allowed her to better understand politics.

"You realize that you know a lot, but it makes you more aware of it, and it makes you want to go out and learn more," Grant said.

Senior Ariella Yendler attributes many of her opinions to discussions held in her government class with teacher Jerry Sheehy and economics with teacher Todd Dwyer.

"I haven't looked at any of the independent candidates, but apparently they're a 'wasted vote,' as we called it in government," Yendler said.

Yendler believes that the country's belief in a two-party system has led to complications in the elections.

"I think we shouldn't have a party system; it's what makes it so hard to vote for candidates," Yendler said. "We've conformed to a set of ideals, and it's really hard to differentiate between them." ♦

## >> THE breakdown

### The 2012 elections

**The date** of the general election will be Nov. 6.

**Voters wishing to participate** in the election must be registered by Oct. 9.

**The 2012 Republican candidates** are Newt Gingrich, Ron Paul, Mitt Romney and Rick Santorum.

# Abortion sparks conflict

BY Elijah Yi

The concept of abortion has been hotly debated since and before it was legalized in the United States in 1973 through the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision.

Like others around the nation, some students have strong opinions on this topic. Junior Neil Prasad feels that it is really the mother's life affected and that parents should decide

whether they want a child.

"It is the right for the parents of the child to choose what is best for the family and they should have abortion as one of their available options," Prasad said. "It has been pretty hard economically these past years, and a baby brings forth even more financial troubles."

Like Prasad, junior Abigail Lin sees abortion as a right as well and one that should be determined by the parents.

"I think it's not up to other people to decide whether or not someone has the right to choose whether or not to have a baby," Lin said.

Prasad knows that this topic will always be one that is viewed differently from person to person.

"This isn't an issue that the government should be handling," Prasad said. "This is the right of the person with the baby in her stomach." ♦

## >> THE breakdown

### Babies versus government

**50 million** babies have been aborted since the Roe v. Wade case in 1973.

**Abortion clinics** have been bombed and strikes regarding this issue are apparent when relevant

# Maintaining the divide between church and state

BY Elijah Yi

"One nation under God," "In God we trust" and many other American sayings have been coined and embedded into everyday life, and they do not fail to bring up questions once in a while regarding the place of religion in the United States.

So in terms of the national government, what place does the church really have?

Junior and self-proclaimed "straight Democrat" Ishaan Kolluri strongly believes that government should not be affected by forms of religion.

"The only place church and Christianity should determine government decisions is through court cases which involve religion as the center of the conflict; no other conflicts should involve it," Kolluri said. "Unless it involves Christianity as a problem in the decisions, government should never use it."

Kolluri's opinion has been built on years of speech and debate experience and on the views of his family.

"I've learned a lot in my experienc-

es and I feel like I have built a strong opinion while tackling ideas similar to this one," Kolluri said.

Junior Shabab Siddiq also feels as though religion and politics are two separate factors of life. Even so, he says some people just can't help influencing the government through their religion.

"Religious people are always going to be part of America, and that's a part of this country that keeps it so diverse and special," Siddiq said. "But if [religious people] take their religion before politics in governmental positions, then they are doing something that I feel shouldn't be done."

When it comes to references to religion by the government, senior Gautam Bhayani feels that traditional trappings of religion in the U.S. do little harm in the United States and should stay.

"The aspect of religion and government are two very distinct and different things," Bhayani said. "Phrases like 'One nation under God' are parts of American history that shouldn't be removed, and it's foolish to try to change the culture of America no matter the religion or lack of."

Freshman Alvin Kim believes that while citizens do have the right to practice free religion, persuading others to do the same can cause

complications.

"I believe equally in freedom of religion and freedom from religion, as expressed in the Bill of Rights," Kim said. "Bringing in religious beliefs into the government can be difficult, because then it would be harder for people from different religions to agree with your arguments."

At the end of the day, the general consensus remains the same: The separation of church and state in the country is necessary.

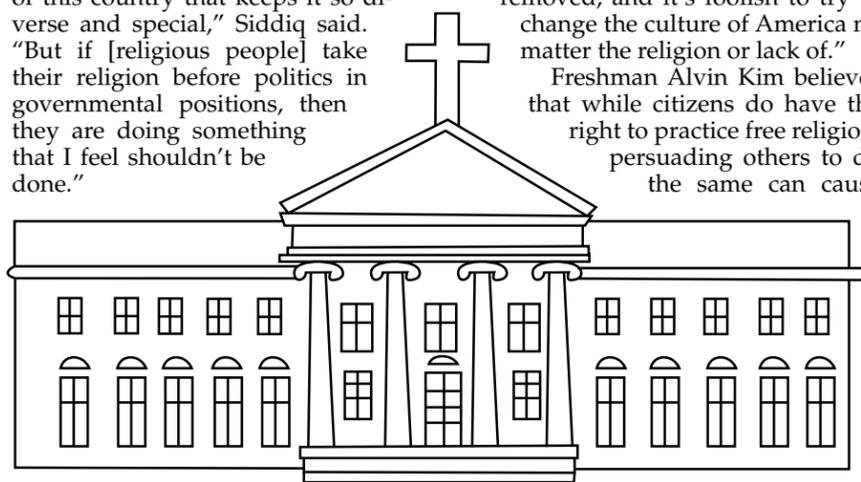
"I think there should be a separation of church and state," Kim said. "Combining church and state will cause problems." ♦

## >> THE breakdown

### Religion and the law

**Legally**, there is no definite law regarding the separation of church and state

**Presidential candidate** Rick Santorum has publicly stated that separation of church and state makes him "want to throw up."



BASEBALL

# Team moving into contention

BY Akshara Sekar

The Falcons have been having a triumphant season thus far. The baseball team defeated Fremont High School on Feb. 24, Lynbrook High School on March 3, Los Altos High School on March 7, King's Academy on March 10, Wilcox on March 14, Anchorpoint Christian on March 19 and Santa Clara High School on March 21 and 23. Although the team lost at Sacred Heart Cathedral (3-2), Los Altos High School (12-2) and Wilcox (5-1), the baseball team is putting these two losses behind them.

**“Everyone realized that we can win CCS this year if we try hard enough.”**

>> senior Will Dennis

“Our team has been able to beat teams that are perennial powerhouses in our league such as Los Altos and Wilcox,” junior outfielder Kyle Dozier said. “It shows how much harder the team is working this year and how well we work together.”

The team faced a transition year last season, but more consistent play and the further development of stars such as Seattle University-bound senior pitcher and first base Will Dennis and junior catcher Stevie Berman has allowed the baseball team to become a contender in

the De Anza League. “We essentially had the same players as last year, but a few new members who have shined like freshmen Tyler Plesse and Joey Medeiros,” senior outfielder Austin Firth said.

These additions helped the team not only to improve their De Anza league record (4-2) but they also added to their team bonding and mentality.

“The team worked really well together against all the other schools this year. It helped them win and showed us [freshmen] what to work on for next year,” freshman Plesse said.

Other than focusing on sole, individual performances, the team realized that they must work with one another in order to succeed.

“I think everyone realized that we can win CCS this year if we try hard enough. We just started buying into what the coaches were saying,” Dennis said.

The team hopes to defeat rival Los Gatos High school in the upcoming



FALCON // ROHAN RAJEEV

Junior Stevie Berman bats in a game against Santa Clara High School on March 23 in a 7-1 victory.

month on April 4 and 6, Saint Francis High School on April 18 and Palo Alto High School on April 18 and 20.

“Last year we came into a whole new program and coach [Adam Varteressian]. This year we just came out knowing all of this and that definitely made it easier to succeed and win games because we

knew the system,” Firth said.

Similar to Firth, Dennis agreed that the team was in a better position in terms of familiarity.

“We’re prepared to dominate this season, because we know what we’re capable of and how our coaches can get us there,” he said. ♦

GIRLS' LACROSSE

## New coaches' style helps team morale

BY Megan Benzing

With the fourth consecutive year of a new coach for the girls' lacrosse team, players were hopeful for something new, and that's exactly what they got.

Head coach Eric Wong stepped up from JV to varsity this year. He brings with him two assistant coaches, alumnus Tim Yen and Leaf Huynh, who is also the field hockey coach during the fall.

Wong does not have a whole lot of experience with girls' lacrosse, but he is not lacking in the sports background.

Wong's versatility is demonstrated in his numerous past coaching positions. He was an assistant coach for a boys' lacrosse team in Michigan in 2009, he was on the University of Michigan's football team's staff for three years, he has interned for the 49ers for two years and he was also an assistant coach for Saratoga High's JV football team last year.

Wong believes he can bring a different perspective to the team from his experience in different sports.

“I am far from the most experienced coach in this league,” Wong said. “But as an outsider who is knowledgeable about a number of sports I can analyze things a bit differently than others.”

Senior captain Carolyn Choi feels Wong's new coaching style is beneficial to the team, leading to success this season.

“Since we've had so many coach changes, it's been a rough few years,” Choi said. “However, the team is responding well to Eric's coaching

style. Last year, we just worked on plays and trying to get easy goals in, but this year, we're working on speed and better turnover technique while moving the ball from defense to offense.”

Choi has been with the lacrosse program since it started in 2009. She believes that it takes a lot of dedication to be able to improve skills and technique and feels that Wong has the same ideals.

“Eric knows how to focus on the essentials and expects us to improve every single day,” Choi said. “He knows what he's doing, and we haven't had a problem with anything he's taught us so far.”

As of March 23, the team is 2-2 in league games. They suffered a disappointing loss to Los Gatos on March 21 with a score of 18-8. It was especially difficult since the team's head coach last year, Merryl Buric, left Saratoga to coach the Los Gatos team.

“When news broke out that Buric decided to coach for LG, current members were surprised at the move, since we were looking forward to having a consistent coach,” Choi said. “Regardless, we're all pleased and thankful to have Wong, Yen, and Huynh step up as coaches, and we are definitely working much harder this year under their guidance.”

Wong also brings great hope to secure a spot in the SCVAL playoffs this year.

“We need to work on attention to detail to improve stick skills and movement fundamentals,” Wong said. “If we continue to work we can do some damage in this league and make a push for the playoffs.” ♦

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## BOYS' LACROSSE

## Falcons overcome difficult start

BY Andy Fang

The boys' lacrosse team got off to a rocky start but has begun to improve its performance.

The team lost its first two games against Archbishop Mitty 8-5 and Scotts Valley 16-5 respectively but eventually found its footing with victories against Sequoia 15-1 and 16-5, Gunn 15-2, Leland 15-1 and Woodside 10-5.

"Our goal of getting better every practice and every game is being achieved," head coach Larry Boehm said.

The team has had to deal with injuries and players having to learn positions that they did not play last year.

"Most of the team has had some sort of injury, but most of us [have been] able to bear through it and keep playing, so it hasn't really affected us," sophomore defender Brian Park said. "[However], we would definitely be playing better without these injuries."

Notable injuries that set the team back include senior midfield and attack Huy Tran's knee injury, which puts him out for the season, and junior midfield Jason Davis's injured back, which also puts him out for the season. Sophomore midfield and attack Clark Rosenberg has also had to deal with a concussion.

On the positive side, the defense and goal positions that the team had to rebuild at the beginning of the season have been progressing.

"[The positions] are coming along. Goalies [sophomore] Holden Peake and [freshman] Addison Polcyn are doing well in the cage," Boehm said. "Our defense players are growing into their positions faster than I expected."

Park is also pleased with this year's defense positions.

"Defense is doing a lot better than I expected," Park said. "Even though we lost our whole defense from last year, I think we filled in the position well; we



TALISMAN // JAYA NARASIMHAN

Sophomore attack Clark Rothenburg cradles the ball against Sequoia on March 8.

just need to learn how to body up and hit someone."

Boehm maintains that the team captains, seniors Eric Van Noorden and Nic Doyen, continue to be influential role models.

"The captains are doing a very good job," Boehm said. "[They are] leading both on and off the field, and their playing on the field has been very good."

Sophomore midfield and attack Tony Capek views Los Altos High School, which the team narrowly lost to 11-12, as one of the team's closest competi-

tors.

"We played Los Altos, which was really a hard team," Capek said. "They stepped it up, which we weren't expecting, but next time we play them we will be alert and come up on top."

Boehm expects the team to win the El Camino division and take it one day at a time during playoffs.

Boehm hopes to boost the team's morale through a supportive crowd.

"We're an excited team and it'd be great if we could get more fans to come out and watch us," Boehm said. ♦

## Fresh start for Warriors?

I'm fed up.

Since 1994, the Golden State Warriors have been less than mediocre and have made the playoffs only once. While I personally have not been a fan since 1994, this fact makes the Warriors the laughing stock of the National Basketball Association.

Warriors fans make up one of the most loyal fan bases in the NBA. Even with the Warriors' history of failure, the fans never cease to sell out Oracle Arena in Oakland, and the fans always cheer their hearts out. While the fans



ELIJAH YI

Yiii buddy

come out and support, it is only fair that the Warriors organization gives back to the "best fans in the NBA."

This brings us to the elephant in the room: the trade that made Monta Ellis, the Warriors' star player for the past seven years, a Milwaukee Buck. In return for an all-star caliber shooting guard, the Warriors finally filled the void of a big presence on the basketball court. They obtained former first overall draft pick Andrew Bogut.

At first glance, I was shocked and disappointed with the trade. Ellis, a fan favorite, was traded for Bogut, who has a history of injuries. However, as I did my research and let it sit with me for a while, I realized that this trade was a potential.

## The reality of the situation

Why have the Warriors been a sub-par team in the past couple of years? They had two great guards in Stephen Curry and Monta Ellis and two solid forwards in Dorell Wright and David Lee, but the last missing piece was the center. The most important defensive player had been missing from the Warriors' lineup and with this new piece, the Warriors are a threat in the west.

It seems as though the departure of Ellis hit the fans hard. During the retiring of the jersey of legendary Warriors player Chris Mullin on March 19, the owner of the Warriors, Joe Lacob, came up to speak. As soon as Lacob took the microphone, boos rang out.

These were boos from anger and sadness for the years of under-performance from the Warriors, and these emotions were triggered by the trade of Ellis. Lacob, who has owned the team for only a couple of years and promised a better team one day, was shocked by these boos and never got to tell his speech of congratulations for Mullin. In fact, both Mullin and another Warriors legend, Rick Barry, had to step in to calm the aggravated crowd.

It is obvious that the team looks like it's in ruin right now. Their star point-guard Curry has been struggling with ankle injuries, their leading scorer Ellis has disappeared, and the center Bogut is still recovering from an ankle fracture that he suffered earlier this year.

## What the future holds

The Warriors have shown a few wins and a handful of losses during this time of transition, but in my opinion the Warriors' future looks bright.

Next year, assuming that all players are healthy, the Warriors will finally have a defensive presence on the court with Bogut. Rookie Klay Thompson has also been performing very well in Ellis' shoes and shows no signs of stopping. With guards Curry and Thompson, forwards Lee and Wright, and center Bogut, the Warriors have a great shot at making the playoffs next year. It wouldn't be a surprise if they make the fourth or fifth playoff seed in the west.

Keep your heads up, Warriors fans: The drought may be over soon. ♦

## SOFTBALL

## Rained out games disappoint players

BY Evaline Ju

Rainout of games in early March caused the softball team to put on hold many games to be rescheduled. As a result during the week of March 19, the team had to play four games in a row, with three of the games as league games.

The team faced Los Altos High in its first league game on March 20 and lost 3-1. The loss brought the team's season record to 1-7, but both the players and coach Ray Sisco think the team has potential to put more games in the win column in the remaining 20 games of the season.

"We didn't know before, but [the coach] told us that [Los Altos was] the best team in the league," senior first baseman Talia Sisco said. "We actually played with them. We just had too many errors, but it was good to know we could play with the number one team. That gives pretty good prospects for the rest of the season."

The coach has expressed that the girls are "a little frustrated and anxious to play" in light of the recent rain.

"They put in a lot of work, and they're ready to play," he said. "Rainouts are not good for our mental health."

Sophomore Lauren Patakay, who usually plays left field, agreed that playing several games a week has not been easy.

"It's rough, but [we] keep getting better through each game, so it helps [us] improve," Patakay said. "We've had a good season; I mean, we'd like to be winning more, but we've had some close games too."



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

Sophomore Tivoli Sisco makes solid contact in a game against Los Altos on March 20.

The team participated in a three-game tournament on March 3 at San Lorenzo Valley High.

"We've played some tough teams," Coach Sisco said. "We lost three in that tournament, but the girls played well. We're just getting in shape, our spring training, if you will."

The team started the preseason with a win on March 1 against Fremont High, which Talia has described as her most memorable game of the season so far.

"They were ahead 7-2 going into the seventh inning, and we got seven runs and beat them 9-7," she said. "It was a pretty good way to start off the season and show us that we should do pretty well in our league."

Sophomore Hera Tang and freshman Analisa Ruff have both been pitching for the team.

Tang said the larger number of games has not had any significant effect on her pitching, but the rain has.

"It's tougher to pitch since the ball's more slippery," she said. "I don't particularly like pitching in the rain."

The team plays in the El Camino League, the less competitive division of the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League, which includes Cupertino, Gunn, Los Altos, Lynbrook, Milpitas and Mountain View.

Planned games include ones against Los Gatos on April 9, Harker on April 10 and Lynbrook on April 12. ♦

## BADMINTON

# Veteran players allow for a successful start

BY JustineHuang

With the experience of this year's returning players, the team hopes to achieve more wins and to overcome old rivals.

The team triumphed over Gunn on March 22 with a score of 21-9 and achieved the expected win against Wilcox. However, the team was unable to defeat Monta Vista and Cupertino on March 20 and March 27.

Junior Lauren Chu said the game against Cupertino was "very close," since the score was 16-14.

"Cupertino is really strong this year," Chu said. "They were in a lower division last year, and we didn't know what to expect from them this year."

Senior captain Angie Chang said that the loss against Cupertino might have cost the team a chance at SCVAL leagues, as the team is no longer tied for first in its league's rankings.

"I think we lost at Cupertino because of last-minute changes," Chang said. "Some people on the team didn't play with their usual partners, and it kind of messed up our games."

However, if Cupertino loses to Monta Vista, Chang said the team still has a shot.

"Similar to last year, it'll be very close in a lot of matches. Cupertino gained some new blood that's very strong," coach Alex Chan said. "Monta Vista and Gunn will still be formidable."

The win against Gunn was surprising, though easily explained through the loss of several key players on Gunn's team.

Chan hopes that the team's experience and star players such as senior Jeff Kuo will lead the team to a higher ranking.

"We were very, very close last year in many games, where it came down to a one point or one game difference," Chan said. ♦



TALISMAN // ALYSSA WU

Senior Jeffrey Kuo makes a quick forehand return against a Gunn opponent on March 22.

## BOYS' GOLF

# Falcons redeem themselves against Los Gatos

BY PriyankaNookala

The Falcons clinched a satisfying victory against Los Gatos with a total score of 196 on March 22 at the Saratoga Country Club to give the team a 7-1 record.

Los Gatos has continually been a challenging opponent, but Saratoga won by 14 strokes after a solid team effort.

"We played well as a team, that's our lowest total this season so far," No. 1

player junior Robbie Parden said. "We definitely used the home course advantage."

The Falcons have wins against Wilcox, Santa Clara, Gunn, Lynbrook and Monta Vista, but sophomore Christian Galvin, the No. 2 player, considers the victory against Los Gatos particularly rewarding. He feels that this win is a satisfying comeback for the team after the loss to Los Gatos on March 5.

"We're glad to redeem ourselves," Galvin said. "We lost to them at their home course, and it feels nice to beat them here."

The starters Parden, freshman Robby Gagnola, Galvin, junior Spencer Goldman, junior Oliver Chen and senior Michael Chen shot 36, 38, 40, 41, 41 and 45, respectively.

Parden, Gagnola, Galvin, Goldman, Michael Chen, Oliver Chen and senior

Zachary Galvin have all been working hard to help the team do well in league and reach CCS. Parden feels that in addition to returning players, Gagnola is a definite asset to the Falcons because of his skill as a golfer and his contributions to the collaborative efforts of the team.

The next match will be on April 16 against Santa Clara, followed by the SCVAL finals which are scheduled for April 30 and May 1 at San Juan Oaks. ♦

## TRACK AND FIELD

# Athletes face challenges, adjust to De Anza League

BY JenniferJin & SophieMattson

Last year, the boys' and girls' track teams enjoyed strings of victories against opposing schools in the West Valley League. This year, the track teams have been moved up to a higher degree of competition in the De Anza League.

So far, moving up has been nothing but trials and tribulations. The team lost both its meets against Mountain View and Milpitas by scores of 92-35 and 86-46 respectively for the boys, 78-42 and 73-53 respectively for the girls.

"I'm disappointed that we lost because, obviously, I want to win, but I thought everyone ran well and was doing their best," head coach Archie Ljepava said.

Ljepava believes the team has been losing because of the size of the other teams.

"The league schools are bigger, so they overwhelm us with their population," Ljepava said. "[Their teams] have twice the number of people that we have."

In addition, many key players of the team are out because of injuries, including senior jumper Ailene Nguyen, junior sprinter Melodie Bellegarda and senior jumper Michelle Cummins. However, Ljepava looks forward to training the team, which consists of many under-

classmen.

"We have a young team, and we're trying to develop everyone properly so we can keep them around for the next three years," Ljepava said.

Due to the challenges that come with competing at a higher level, the track team practices have increased in difficulty.

Sprint coach Michael Xiatry and Ljepava have conducted weight room workouts for the team in the past but have recently handed over the responsibility to a new coach.

Coach Danielle Burks, a recent addition to the ring of track team coaches, has been in charge of conducting weight room workouts. Junior sprinter Olivia

Whiting has noticed that the weight room workouts have a more professional tone to them.

"She plans different workouts involving lifting weights, pushups and burpies and customizes a workout for us every day," Whiting said.

Burks's customized workouts are designed to fully prepare the track team for upcoming meets.

Afterwards, the team gathers together and discusses the positives of the day and what the team can improve on in the future. ♦

**This year, the track teams have been moved up to a higher degree of competition in the De Anza League.**

## BOYS' SWIMMING

# New members bring success

BY ElijahYi

Four meets into the season, the boys' varsity swimming team has been performing well and holds a 3-1 record so far this season with wins against Gunn, Homestead and Lynbrook and a loss against Palo Alto.

While there have been many contributions across the board from various players, the freshmen have been doing their part to contribute towards the team.

"The freshmen have been really scoring points for us," Coach Christian Bonner said. "One of our freshmen, Randy Tsai, made his CCS cut in his 100 backstroke in his first meet."

Another important freshman for this season's team has been Aidan Burns, who has been filling in his role on the team very nicely.

"Aidan Burns is a good distance swimmer and has sort of replaced [alumnus] Adam Hinshaw from last year and so far this year has been faster than Adam," Bonner said. "He's a good addition to the team and he has a bright future."

A top contributor, junior Patrick Xiao, also believes that though the team has lost some of its key swimmers, it has been doing well.

"I think we are better overall even though we lost Justin Chung and Adam Hinshaw because of a lot of fast freshmen," Xiao said. "They are all really fast."

Another new addition to the team is sophomore Patrick Wang. After a stel-

lar performance in JV this year in which he won multiple races, he has been placed on varsity to swim on the A-relay, the most competitive relay.

"I'm really nervous because this will be the first time I am swimming on varsity," Wang said. "They also put me on the A-relay, and I'm not sure if I can handle that. But I will definitely do my best to help the team."

Wang had been the top scorer for JV before his switch to varsity with five first-place wins and one second. Though Wang does not swim in a club like his fellow team members do, he has improved and has performed very well this swim season.

"I think that I have improved a lot since last year because I am putting effort into practices instead of goofing off like I did last year," Wang said. "That has helped me a lot and has made me better."

Bonner believes that though the freshmen are doing their part, the team is relying on the juniors and seniors to obtain a majority of their points at meets.

"For returning seniors we have Ian Burns, who is a top contender in CCS this year, and he will most likely be swimming 500 freestyle there," Bonner said. "[Junior] Michael Lee is also having a great season."

Bonner said that the underclassmen on the team ensured that the team would be strong in the future if they kept improving their times.

The Falcons took on Los Gatos at home on April 5 and will take on Monta Vista away on April 13. ♦



Burns

BOYS' TENNIS

# Young Falcons battle, gain experience

By Nick Chow

After losing key players last season to graduation, the boys' varsity tennis team has been working to regain its top status in the tough De Anza league, with numerous underclassmen playing important positions. All of the top three singles spots on the team are occupied by underclassmen, with sophomore Kial Kaiser at No. 1, freshman Neel Bedekar at No. 2 and sophomore Zach Hewlin at No. 3.

"I think after losing many players we have really [recovered] well and are having success," Kaiser said. "Overall, I think everyone is playing well."

**I think after losing many players, we have really [recovered] well and are having success. Overall, I think everyone is playing well.**

>> Sophomore Kial Kaiser

man Rohit Rao lost in a heartbreaking tiebreaker in the third set at number four singles.

"It's tough to lose a match like that as a freshman," Raman said. "It will be a good learning experience for him."

March 21, the team lost an extremely close match against Archbishop Mitty, 4-3, in which Mitty swept all four singles matches.

Like the loss to Los Altos, this match also came down to a third set at number four singles, with sophomore Kush Maheshwari faltering this time.

Finally, the team rebounded with a good win against Leland, winning 5-2. The victory was one of the season's hardest-fought wins, said Kaiser.

During this match, all three doubles teams lost their first sets as the team trailed in four out of seven matches. However, all three doubles teams fought back to win their second sets, and this momentum allowed the No. 2 doubles team of senior Troy Posadas and junior Deepak Ravikumar and the No. 3 doubles team of freshman Vikram Ramesh and Maheshwari to win their third sets easily.

Kaiser thinks that the team can become even more successful in their next matches with more solid playing. "[During matches] our singles is sometimes more consistent, and sometimes the doubles is more consistent," Kaiser said. "I think that everyone can



FALCON // ROHAN RAJEEV

Sophomore Kial Kaiser hits a forehand in a 5-2 win against Leland High on March 22.

improve something."

On March 26, the team had an impressive 5-2 victory over a very tough Palo Alto team.

On March 27, the team's match against Lynbrook was rained out yet again, making it the second consecutive rained out match against Lynbrook this season. The Lynbrook match was moved

to the next day, in which the Falcons dominated 6-1.

The team's next match was against Gunn on March 29, which they easily won. The Falcons completed an easy sweep of the Titans, 7-0.

The Falcons played Los Altos on April 3 and then met rivals Monta Vista on April 5. ♦

BOYS' VOLLEYBALL

## New season, new start

FIRST LEAGUE WIN COMES EARLY VS. SANTA CLARA

By Allison Chang

On March 14, the boys' volleyball team played its first league game at Santa Clara High School, and unlike last year, it started its season with a bang, winning its game in three sets.

Last year, the team ended with a dismal record of 0-12, placing last in the De Anza league. To top it off, the team lost two key players, '11 graduates Brandon Pierce and Garrett Huening.

Despite these setbacks, the team is even more determined as it faces lower level teams in the El Camino Division.

"We all made pledges to be better team players this season," sophomore Justin Liu said.

Liu is new to the team this year, but former team members are also working out the holes in their playing styles as they adjust to the new team.

"We're all familiar with each other," said senior captain Brandon Pak, who plays the position of the main setter. "But we're still working on playing with each other and finding the right fits."

The team members have done remarkably well in cooperating with each other despite the short time that they have been able to practice properly.

"We only got two days of practice with our whole team before our first game this season, so we're still working on our team chemistry," Pak said.

Additionally, the team has a new coach, Daniel Lopez, who was the JV volleyball coach two years before.

"He is focused and committed to ensure that the team is successful...he is more calm and relaxed in his coach," senior defense specialist Alex Amato

said. "He is also more focused on the technical elements of volleyball, which has helped the team."

Other team members have also risen to the challenge of filling the footsteps left by the previous seniors.

Senior James Huang plays as an outside hitter, senior Arjay Parhar plays as an opposite hitter, senior Stanton Ho and junior Erik Martin play as middle hitters, and Pak plays as both an opposite hitter and a setter.

Regardless of the changes, the team rose to the challenge and accomplished on its very first try what it had been unable to do last year: secure a win.

"We played a solid game and played well together as a team," Amato said. "It was exciting to get a win."

However, Pak believes that the team could have performed even better by playing with their true skill levels.

"We lowered our level of playing to theirs, but it was still a good win for our team," Pak said.

The key strategies that the team plans on using this year are to play smart and to use the opposing team's weakness to their advantage.

With these strategies, the team hopes that it can win league and reach CCS.

This goal may not be far off. The team has played two season games and has won both of them, defeating Sacred Heart Prep on March 16 in three straight games, 25-19, 26-24 and 25-18.

However, the team will need to strive even harder to play to the level of the De Anza Division schools.

On March 9, it lost to Lynbrook High School in three sets, 25-14, 25-23 and 26-24. ♦

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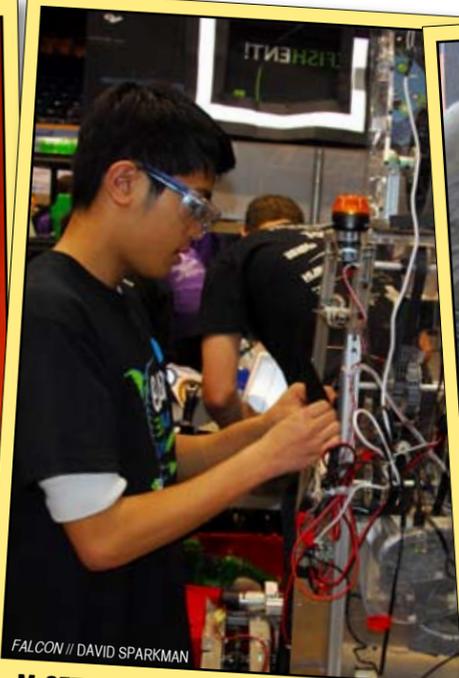
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# polaroids



FALCON // ROHAN RAJEEV

Seniors Parthiv Mohan and Manish Raghavan perform "Stay Young, Keep Dancing" by Death Cab for Cutie as an intermission act during Saratoga Idol on March 21.



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

M-SET member junior Stanley Yip works on the wiring of "Spitfire" during the Silicon Valley Regional at San Jose State University on March 30.



Courtesy of THE MAP PROGRAM

MAP juniors pose for a snapshot outside of the AT&T ballpark during a scavenger hunt in San Francisco on March 23.



Courtesy of MOSELLE MAIN

Drama students rehearse a performance to enter into competition at the International Thespian Society Conference from March 22-25.

## Columnists finally find worthy nickname: It's a Fincelli thing

One of the many problems that Falcon writers face is coming up with oh-so-clever nicknames for their personal columns. This problem usually makes its appearance the night before an issue is scheduled to be sent to the printer, when the journalism room is a mixture of chaos, stress and excitement.

During this time, there's little time to be creative. At most, the layout artist gives you a solid five minutes to decide on the nickname, so it's often best to go with one that is classic, if not a little boring or ridiculous.

Alliteration is always quite easy in a pinch, like in-depth editor and junior Debbie

Soung's nickname "Dangerously Debbie." Unfortunately, for those of us with names starting with common letters, past writers have already taken all the good adjectives.

When alliteration doesn't work out, a play on words with your name is always a crowd pleaser, or better yet, a funny pun like senior David Eng's nickname "2 Deng Good." But as writers who lack wit and/or names helpful to this cause, we're at another

dead end.

If worse comes to worst, there's always the option of telling the layout artist to come up with a creative nickname for you, playing the old "Umm

I don't know... you can put whatever you want" card. More often than not, they'll just add any old adjective, to make names like Cool Cristina and Super Sarah, and then call it done. There's always some amount of risk involved with this move, and frustration on the addled layout artist's part. And where's the fun in that?

This is where the benefit of having a clever editor-in-chief comes in. Thanks to senior Christine Bancroft's somewhat irreverent sense of humor, this dilemma was quickly resolved for many of the new writers on staff this year, putting an end to their struggles.

Within a few months of the start of school, Christine had nicknamed around half of the staff. Some of her best nicknames are so catchy that

the whole staff converted to using them (sophomore Nelson Wang's nickname "Mandela" caught on within weeks).

By giving us an ever-so-clever nickname, Christine solved our trivial dilemma in no time. "Fincelli." It has a nice ring to it, right?

Maybe Fincelli (a combination of Sarah Finley and Christina Curcelli) is just a mockery of our constant presence around each other during newspaper, a subtle way of making fun of the fact that we are somewhat antisocial in newspaper. We'll try to work on that.

Or, if we look at it in a more positive light, we could say that Fincelli is simply a compliment to our co-written field hockey stories. Maybe?

Whatever the reason, our

nickname has become a part of us. While always a fun topic of conversation, it plays a greater role, too.

The nickname is like a bond—one that not only bonds us to each other, but also to newspaper. And we'd be lying if we said it wasn't fun when other people look at us with confusion over the topic.

As seniors leave for college and new members are added to the Falcon staff, changes are bound to occur in every regard. Can Fincelli persevere through these conditions, year after year, to remain an accepted nickname? Of course.

Over the last few months, we've come to appreciate the convenience of having a nickname. It's an added bonus that the nickname sounds super cool too. ♦



SARAH CURCELLI  
Fincelli

### topten

#### WAYS TO ASK A GUY TO SADIES

- 10 Pass him a note. To say yes, he has to blink. To say no, he has to take off his shoes and lick them. *He's bound to say yes.*
- 9 Pass him a ball of his favorite sport with a note to Sadies. Or, if he swims, throw him a leopard-print Speedo. *If he does ballet, throw him a leotard.*
- 8 Ask over Draw Something. *It'll be better than those drawings of "dancing."*
- 7 Be up front about it; ask over text. *You might as well ask over Facebook.*
- 6 Use a key to write "Sadies?" on his car. *That's not vandalism ...*
- 5 Bake him cookies with "Sadies" written in frosting. *Satisfaction guaranteed.*
- 4 Get a Nerf gun and shoot a note at him. *Boys appreciate pain.*
- 3 Have your parents ask him for you. *Nothing says courage like having your mom embarrass you in front of the school.*
- 2 Serenade him with an old Enrique Iglesias song. *"Will you bailamos with me at Sadies?"*
- 1 Give him a case of Old Spice and say "Spice up my Spring Fling—be my date to Sadies." *I'm on a horse.*



>> Nikhil Goel  
Rohan Rajeev

GRAPHIC BY MICHELLE SHU

## buzzworthy >> Students drawn to Draw Something

BY Andy Fang & Sophie Mattson

The sketch first appears to be a rotting banana, then a dirty blonde wig. Suddenly and inexplicably, a light bulb goes off in the student's head and he types in "Lady Gaga" on his smartphone. The student squeals in delight; he just won three coins.

It's the new iPhone and Android app that everyone seems to be playing, Draw Something, from the online multiplayer gaming website OMGPOP.

In the game, students are given a word, out of three choices separated by difficulty, to draw. The person they are playing attempts to guess the word. The harder the word, the more coins the players can win.

Of course, the drawings aren't always dead ringers. Players are initially restricted to only using the colors blue, red, yellow and black. They also have to draw with their fingers as opposed to drawing with more accurate styluses.

Junior Path Shah, an avid player of the game, recalls less than ideal drawings that he has had to guess.

"One time for [the word] Holland, someone drew 'ho' and then drew 'land' and I had to combine [the two] for the word," Shah said.

Junior Kristen Leung has also had to guess ambiguous drawings.

"One of my friends sent me a drawing that literally [just] said 'David,'" Leung said. "I had no idea what it was because it could mean so many things, but I did guess it in the end. It was 'Beckham.'"

Some may even be tempted to cheat due to the high stress of the game.

"I've sometimes accidentally written parts of the word but then caught myself and erased them," Shah said.

Despite the difficulty of the game, students have no intention of giving it up. The adrenaline rush that comes from successfully guessing the word "squid" from what looks like a black and white scribble of a woman weaving a basket is just too gratifying.

