

SHS Journalism One Yearbook 2012

IT REALLY HAPPENED



# BONJOUR, JE SUIS UNE FRESHMAN

Freshman ventures into junior and senior class

# HELLO, I AM A FRESHMAN



**PONDERING** Sophomores Oskar Johansson, Clark Wang, Rachel Perera, Stephanie Tsang, Simon Spector discuss a French project during break on May 31st. "We meet up during tutorials to work on projects that we don't have time to work on in class," Perera said.



**ALL SMILES** Sophomores Rachel Perera and Stephanie Chu smile as they scroll through their iPhones, checking facts online. "iPhones always come in handy when I forget something," Chu said.



**TOWERING UP** French teacher Mrs. Lizundia decorates the corner of her room with a tall replica of the Eiffel Tower this year. "I think it gives the room more of a french like feel," Kohler said. "It's really pretty, except I get distracted by it a lot during class." All photos by Jade Bisht



**SCARFING IT UP** Sophomore Stephanie Chu practices her skit in which she's a peasant living in France on May 31st. "Skits are always fun," Chu said. "I'm always chosen for the weird roles though, but I don't really mind."



**MUNCHING AWAY** Sophomores Simon Spector, Oskar Johansson, Clark Wang, Stephanie Tsang and Rachel Perera work on their project as Wang multitasks, eating a cup of noodles. "I always try eating during break because I hate skipping meals," Wang said.

Freshman Celia Kohler walks into her French 4 Honors class, immediately greeted by various students. She sits down at her desk, tuning into conversations of those around her.

Because she is so much younger than her classmates, she has difficulty learning the concepts meant for those in higher grade than her.

Kohler is in French 4 Honors, a class mostly filled up with juniors and seniors. Though Kohler has been speaking French since she was little due to her Swiss origin, she still has some trouble keeping up with the advanced class.

"I get lost sometimes, because they talk about books and people from history that I haven't learned about yet," Kohler said. "It's hard to follow when I don't know anything about the famous people my teacher is referring to."

Due to the fact that she is the only freshman in her class, Kohler has the opportunity to interact with those who are in other grades. Kohler said it's fun to be able to talk to people who have more experience in high school.

"I ask them all the time about teachers for upperclassmen, and what classes I should take in the upcoming years," Kohler said.

Kohler has taken the opportunity to make new friends all the while learning more about her native language. Since she sits in the middle of the class, people have been talking to her more frequently now. In result, Kohler has a lot of new friends who she's comfortable with.

French 4 Honors is a combined class with French 5 AP this year, causing a lot of confusion when it comes to working with the students in French 5 AP. "Being given things to read from the AP textbook is extremely difficult since no one in 4 Honors understands it," Kohler said.

Mrs. Lizundia's teaching style is "pretty different from freshman teachers," since she gives harder material than the teachers who give lessons meant for freshmen.

To get into French 4 Honors, Kohler had to take an intro test during her 8th grade year. It was filled with French vocab and grammar that was difficult for Kohler, due to the fact that she was only taking French 1 in middle school.

"The intro test was hard, but I feel like the AP test this year made it feel like a piece of cake," Kohler said.

Not only is Kohler taking French this year, she's also taking Spanish 2 as her other elective.

"It's unfair, since French and Spanish are similar, Celia sees a bunch of similarities between the two languages," Freshman Tia Jones said. "Some Spanish words and French words are similar, so she easily guesses some words and is correct."

Kohler even has the habit of sometimes speaking French in her Spanish class, since she "forgets" what class she's in sometimes.

Kohler has had trouble accustoming to learning material meant for students older than her, she keeps a bright smile on her face whenever she enters the class.

"It's one of my favorite classes," Kohler said. "It helps me connect to my culture and I've made so many new friends this year. I'm really happy I'm taking this class."

by jade bisht

JUNIOR PABLO RIESGO AND FRESHMAN CAROLINA RIESGO HAVE LUNCH ON CAMPUS. The siblings chat with freshman Jessica Yang and soak in Saratoga high's atmosphere. The move from England has been a "whole new and fulfilling experience", according to Carolina, and they have adjusted well. *photo by Meghna Chakraborty*



by meghna chakraborty

# A whole new world

## Foreign students Carolina and Pablo Riesgo make the transition from London into Saratoga in the middle of the year

For most Saratoga students, the new year is just another relaxing break before returning back for the second semester to old faces and familiar surroundings. However, for freshman Carolina Riesgo and junior Pablo Riesgo, this particular new year brought a fresh start and a new beginning.

Carolina and Pablo Riesgo moved to Saratoga from Guildford, England, in January of 2012. Previously, they lived in Madrid, Spain. Because of their dad's job transfer, the family packed their bags and traveled across the ocean to a completely different country.

"Moving to Saratoga was a whole new experience and a big change," said Carolina. "It's very different from the UK."

Carolina said that coming to a "real" American high school showed her how different it is compared to movies. She was also able to compare it to the atmosphere at St. Peter's Catholic School, the school she previously attended.

"I like both atmospheres, but I think the students in the U.K. tend to enjoy school time more," Carolina said. "Here, there is a larger academic focus."

At the school in England, class periods were only 50-60 minutes long and were not as planned or structured, according to Pablo. In addition, the city was busier than the relatively quiet Saratoga.

"In our old neighborhood, there were many more places to hang out and places to shop than in Saratoga downtown," Pablo said.

On the positive side, the siblings have noticed the diversity on Saratoga High's campus, and are soaking in the California weather.

"Some memories I did not enjoy include having to carry an umbrella wherever you go, just in case," joked Carolina about London's unpredictable and often cold weather.

Carolina said she misses all the crowded areas, and mostly her family and friends back home, but has no regrets in moving.

Pablo agreed with his sister, explaining that "moving around and living in different places gives you new experiences to learn from."

The Riesgo siblings have adjusted well to Saratoga life and American customs. Over the past few months here, the siblings have been involved in various on-campus activities including sports, proms, and more, making several friends along the way.

"Everyone here has been so welcoming, and we've made a lot of new friends," said Pablo.

Language has not been a barrier because of their experience in English in London, but their unique Spanish accents make

The family plans to stay here for at least the next four years, but are unsure of what will happen later.

Until then, Carolina said that they are "looking forward to the next few years here!"

BEFORE ←



**LONDON LOVIN'**  
Pablo and Carolina stand in front of London's Big Ben with their family in Feb. of 2008. *courtesy of Carolina Riesgo*

AFTER ←



**CALIFORNIA LIVIN'**  
Carolina, her little brother, and her mother pose in front of the golden gate bridge after the big move in Feb. of 2012. *courtesy of Carolina Riesgo*

# Saratoga's got Talent

Bay Area citizens showcase their skills in a monthly talent show in downtown.

As sophomore Nina Jayashankar made her way up to the tiny platform used as a stage, she was showered with applause and cheers from the small crowd she is proud to call her fans. Unlike how she feels before most of her performances, she wasn't one bit nervous, just excited to entertain the audience with her musical talent.

When Jayashankar reached the microphone, she smiled as she scanned the crowd for familiar faces. In one corner of the room her parents gave her a 'thumbs-up.' In another, her friends shouted "Nina! Nina! Nina!" Without further delay, Jayashankar signaled to the sound manager that she was ready to begin, as she opened her mouth and began to sing.

Jayashankar, along with many other Saratoga citizens, is a proud performer at the monthly event, Saratoga's Got Talent, held at the Blue Rock Shoot in downtown Saratoga.

Saratoga's Got Talent's organizer, Seema Kumar, said that she and her husband decided to create this event last summer in order to bring more traffic into downtown Saratoga.

The event is held on the first Saturday of every month, with a different theme at every event. A 'kid-performers' session is held from seven to eight thirty and is followed by an adult session that runs until ten.

The event also has a weekly half hour segment on KSAR TV (Saratoga's community channel,) and CREATV (San Jose,) Kumar said. The intention is to put original performances on TV in order to publicize the event and let performers see themselves on television.

"Besides hooking up with the TV channels, and working on our facebook page to publicize the event, it is easy to organize because it is an open-mic type setting," Kumar added. "The Blue Rock Shoot even lets us use their facilities for free."

According to Kumar, the Blue Rock Shoot is a great place to hold this type of event because it is just the right size to have the audience right up close to the performers but also not get too crowded.

Senior Varsha Ramesh, another regular performer, added, "The restaurant is in the perfect location and sometimes people just walk by, hear the music and come inside and watch."

The Blue Rock Shoot also lends its sound system, three of its vocal microphones and piano to Saratoga's Got Talent, making it convenient for any type of performance from electric guitars to classical piano tunes to simple jokes or comedy.

"It's great to see the variety of hidden talent that we have in Saratoga," Ramesh said. "Sometimes the performances are really unique because all talents are welcome."

Ramesh and Jayashankar said that although the talents of the performers are amazing, what impresses them the most is the support of the audience.

"The small but spirited crowd is always so welcoming," Jayashankar said. "It's great to perform in front of people who are so excited to hear your music."



**SOPHOMORE NINA JAYASHANKAR** sings 'My Heart Will Go On,' from the movie 'Titanic,' in the love themed event in February. "I love to sing at and watch [Saratoga's Got Talent,] whenever I have time," Jayashankar said. "I mostly sing pop songs, but I mix in traditional tunes as well."  
*photo by Seema Kumar*



**AUDIENCE MEMBERS** Maria Chen, Anna Alberico, Caitlyn Chen, Hannah Fan, Shivam Kumar and Seema Kumar intently watch the beginning of the May 5th event. During an average Saratoga's Got Talent event, around 40-50 spectators cycle into and out of the performance area over the course of the night.  
*photo by Sabrina Chen*



**SEEMA AND RISHI KUMAR**, the organizers of Saratoga's Got Talent, finish off the May 5th event with the Hindu song 'Tere Haath Mein.' "If time is not a problem, and everyone who wants to perform already had a chance, my husband and I love to perform and sing the last act of the event," Seema Kumar said.  
*photo by Sabrina Chen*

## How to sign up and perform:

- 1. RSVP** for the event on its facebook page "Saratoga's Got Talent." Although walk-ins are welcome, RSVP is preferred due to the limited seating.
- 2. Prepare** your act- dance, or even tell a joke! The Blue Rock Shoot has an outstanding sound system, supplemented by 3 vocal mics and an unright piano.
- 3. Sign-up** on the whiteboard when entering the performance area. Our policy is first come first serve. Your name is called when it is your turn to perform.
- 4. Perform** in front of the small but spirited crowd! You'll be sure to get a phenomenal applause or maybe even a standing ovation, when you finish!
- 5. Watch** your performance on a weekly show on KSAR TV (Saratoga's community channel) and CREATV (San Jose,) or even on the facebook group!

# Freshman Rising

by aditya chetia

## In their first year at Saratoga High School, freshmen get involved in the school's long list of clubs and programs.

Since the start of the year, hundreds of freshmen have joined Saratoga High programs and clubs.

Freshman Chris Nasser enrolled in Drama this year. He was heavily influenced by his older brother who is nine years older and a former Harker High acting star. However, Nasser himself did not have a background in theater.

"At first, I felt like I wasn't going to fit in because I had no experience and wasn't good at talking in front of crowds, which we needed to be able to do. I was timid, and I messed up my lines, but I kept at it. It took a lot of practice. Without any previous experience, I had to work really hard," said Nasser.

Freshman Atharv Patwardhan had a similar experience. He has always had an interest in breakdancing and was persuaded by his friends to join Dance Club.

"The atmosphere was a bit uncomfortable at first because

there were a lot of breakdancers and other choreographers who were way better than me."

Both Nasser and Patwardhan faced nervousness and challenges in their first weeks in their new activities, but they eventually assimilated.

"Once I started coming regularly though, I was given tips by my friends who were already there," said Patwardhan.

To Nasser's rescue, the drama family "instantly accepted" him. "I was cared for by a very welcoming and funny community," said Nasser. "Their spirits were high in everything they did, enjoying every second of it. Not only were they laid back, but they were also all great actors. I was in awe of how well they could perform while being so calm, as they helped me get better with improvisational skits and speaking in front of the class. In time, I started gaining more and more confidence."

Patwardhan was also coached by the more experienced dancers, as they helped him learn "tons of new moves. They also taught me new moves to mix up in my routine," he said.

After months of practice as Nasser learned to love drama more and more each day, and soon during the month of November, signups for the Spring Musical, *South Pacific* came.

Nasser asked himself "Why not?" and signed up. Although he had greatly improved on drama techniques, Nasser still

knew absolutely nothing about big productions.

"In the beginning, I felt I was way out of my league," said Nasser. "Here were all these talented seniors and juniors who had been in drama for years and had done many productions outside of school. I thought to myself that there was no way I could get a speaking part in this musical - not with all these pros ready to trample over me."

This was not the case for the fortunate Drama 1 student. The upperclassmen helped him to understand the basics behind a major production and get over his fear of speaking to a crowd. Nasser was ecstatic when he found out he got a speaking part.

Patwardhan attended nearly every practice during the year and practiced at home as well, to improve his skills and master all different sorts of moves. He wants to improve the flow in his moves and transitions and "one day choreograph a cool dance like the 'Jabbawockeez,'" one of America's best dance crews.

"I hope to continue with Dance Club for the rest of my high school years," Patwardhan said.

Nasser knows that next year he will miss the graduating class of seniors, as they taught him almost everything he knows about drama today.

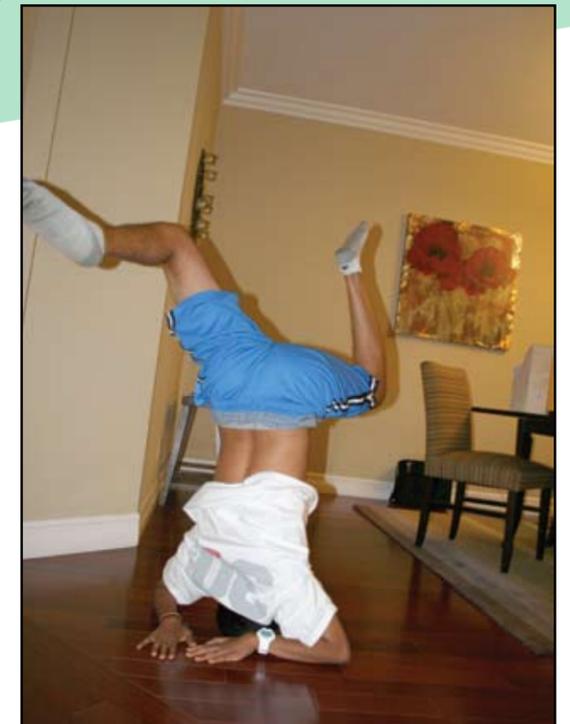
"They told me to teach the incoming groups throughout my years here how to do what I learned from them, basically a hand-me-down of the knowledge and skills being kept here in Saratoga High Drama program," said Nasser.

In his coming years of high school, Nasser sees himself advancing through drama and partaking in future school productions. He looks forward to teaching future freshmen the tricks and trades of drama, and most of all, "seeing the hard work and laughter on everyone's faces."

(RIGHT) SAILOR'S SALUTE, Freshman Chris Nasser pays respect to his general, senior Mac Hyde, in the World War II Musical *South Pacific*.



(ABOVE) A SAILOR'S TUNE, Nasser sings with fellow sailors during the musical. "I didn't like singing because I didn't think I was good at it. Luckily, all of my songs were in groups," said Nasser. photo by francesca ordona



(ABOVE) LIFE UPSIDE DOWN, Freshman Atharv Patwardhan performs the "Headhollow," a move consisting of balancing on the head and forearms.

(LEFT) HALFTIME SHOW, Patwardhan enjoys himself while dancing in the gym. photos by aditya chetia



# STRUTTIN' FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Students put the fashion into the student-organized Benefit Fashion Show 2012



The annual student-organized Benefit Fashion Show was the place to be on March 17. There were colorful outfits and smiling faces all around.

Every year, students put on a fashion show for fun and a good cause. The commissioners pick a charity that the fashion show will benefit. This year the head senior commissioners; Annie Barco, Kari Clark, and Anika Jhalani chose the St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.

Students split up by grade level, borrowing clothes to wear from different stores and walked the runway dressed as their clothing theme. The 2012 theme was "Life's a Show."

The show could not have been put on without preparation in advance.

"Overall I think I had about five practices and at every one we were hard at work," freshman model Emily Penuen said. "We also had an all day rehearsal before the night of the show. A lot of work was put into this and I'm glad the crowd was full."

Penuen was in two acts; Toga wear and pajama girl.

Many teachers, viewers, and students who participated in it were impressed with the outcome. "When you're onstage and when it's all done

you feel so happy because all your time was worth it," sophomore model Bronwen Bowen said. "It turned out better than I thought it would and looking out at the crowd onstage was just awesome."

Junior Jenni Miller was also impressed with the fashion show. "I was so shocked to hear that the show raised about \$7,800," Miller said. "It's just honestly the greatest feeling when you can help people out by doing something that you love."

Benefit, surprisingly, started out as a casino night, then soon became a dance, and ten years ago it became a fashion show.

Before the show, this night also featured a silent auction at 7 p.m. The show started at 7:30 p.m. starting with freshmen and ending with seniors. Teachers' children were also featured during the show. There was a singing performance done at intermission by junior Shireen Kaul and senior Shayda Khorasani, along with the acappella group Tensync.

Although Benefit was a huge success, many students were still a little anxious before their act.

"I was a bit nervous to begin with, but to be honest, there's nothing to worry about," junior model Neal Siganporia said. "If you know your part, then the rest is easy. It's just all about having fun and that's just what I did."

And that's exactly what the rest of the audience, commissioners, and fashion models did.

Students who participated agreed that all their hard work was worth it. "Life's a Show" was a huge success and the Benefit Fashion Show will continue in future years with new students.

Teachers kids perform on stage, gathering "aws" from the crowd. Niko Rodriguez high fives his friend while looking cool in his sunglasses and summer outfit.



While smiling out at the crowd, seniors Vishal Goel and Samantha Hoffman showcase the prom collection at their last Benefit Fashion show before graduating.

Posing for the audience, sophomore friends Lizzie Ioannou and Maddie Kingston put the fashion into the benefit fashion show. The girls both wear bright and colorful dresses.

Juniors Amanda Schwartz and Neal Siganporia walk the catwalk to the popular song "My Heart's a Stereo". This duo attracts the crowds eyes.



# DANCING THE YEAR AWAY

## Students come together on Saturday nights to party

Saratoga High has always known how to party. From the kick off dance to senior prom there is never a dull moment, so long as there is a school dance.

Throughout the year there were a lot of dances to keep the school year interesting. These included the kickoff dance, homecoming, winter formal, sadies and junior and senior prom.

Freshman Samie Davey says, "I've liked all of the dances this year. The kickoff dance was the most fun of them all though."

The kickoff dance is an informal dance that "kicks off" the new school year with a bang. It is an outdoor dance under the stars.

Another informal dance is homecoming. Homecoming is not only a dance but a week of excitement with a rally, football game, quad day skits and even the crowning of high school royalty.

"I think the people chosen for homecoming royalty were well chosen," Freshman Robert Gragnola says.

Homecoming pits the four classes, Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors, against each other in a creative competition involving a long choreographed dance routine.

"Homecoming was really fun," Davey says, "the dance topping it all off really made it a fun week."

Winter formal is the first formal dance of the year. Usually students go with a date whom they have asked in an original and interesting way.

There is even a video contest for the best and most creative way to ask another student to winter formal. The winner of this contest wins free tickets to the dance.

Sadies is formal with a twist. Instead of the traditional guys ask girls, girls ask guys and it the event is a more casual evening.

Though there is no contest for most creative way to ask, it is still a very interesting dance with a very fun girls ask guys twist.

Finally, to end the year, is a formal dance like no other, prom. Prom is very formal usually a big deal.

Junior prom precedes senior prom. Only junior classmen and their dates are able to attend. It is a large event second only to senior prom.

Senior prom is the biggest dance of the year. It is the last formal dance for the senior class to attend before graduation.

With so many dances it isn't a mystery as to why Saratoga High keeps the school year so entertaining.

"I think the dances have really made this a memorable year," Davey says. "I hope they're as fun next year."



Senior classmen Izzy Albert and Shivani Chada enjoy themselves at the kickoff dance ready to take on any challenge their last year at Saratoga High School has to throw at them.



The entrance to the homecoming dance invites SHS students into the gym for a night of loud music, dancing and an overall good time.

Senior Spencer Perry and Junior Mary Johnson bust out some moves at the classic homecoming dance.

Junior Adriana Ivanko and her friend pose for a photo showing off their stylish dresses and great smiles.



**Students discover why choir is a fun and engaging class**

# Encores!

by megana iyer

Freshmen Allison Chan and Supriya Khandekar clutch their black dresses and rub the fabric between their fingers in anticipation. They have been careful with their throats all day, and now they clear them, hoping that in this time of need, their voices will not fail. The soft murmurs in the audience die down and the lights dim. And then, the music begins.

In the front of the stage is Jim Yowell, the conductor. He raises his arms, this way and that, pointing at one section, and then another. Each member of the choir looks at him intently, waiting for their signal to begin.

Both Khandekar and Chan are part of Saratoga High's award winning choir program, which puts on various performances and takes part in a variety of competitions.

Khandekar, like her fellow choir members, loves to sing. In fact, she has always loved to sing.

"I always sang when I was younger," Khandekar said. "I

never remembered a time where I didn't. At four, though, I

actually started taking voice lessons."

Khandekar, who is part of the Cantare Choir, which consists of about 20 girls, was one of many who took part in the concert on Friday, May 18th.

"The concert was great, and there was a variety of pieces and the crowd really loved it. We had some great reactions from the audience," Khandekar said.

Chan, who also participated in the concert as part of the Cantare Choir, explained that it was the end of the year concert, where students show how they progressed throughout the year.

"Everyone gets together, and sings pieces they have been working on all year. It was a great event because I got to see everyone putting their heart into it," Chan said.

Chan, like Khandekar, began singing earlier at the age of eight as part of a private singing group, the Crystal Choir in Saratoga.

"I started singing because of how you work with other people to create something that sounds great. It is a masterpiece, and you use just your voice," Chan said.

So instead of working at a desk, solving endless problems, or writing a long essay following the English formula, these choir students spend one period making music and letting all their feelings out, and participating in many activities they would not be able to in other classes.

"I chose to be in choir because there is so much bonding and fun activities that people participate in," Chan explained.

Khandekar chose the choir elective not only because she loves to sing, but because it is a great way to express herself.

"When you sing, there are so many emotions involved. Sometimes you need happiness. But other times, there is a hint of sadness in the song," Khandekar said. "You have to channel your emotions, and just let them out into your song."

Chan agrees, explaining that her favorite type of music is "emotional, because you can really put your expressions in there."

Chan and Khandekar said the choir atmosphere is relaxed and

"[Yowell] makes it really fun, and you learn a lot. I am happier than in any other class," Khandekar said.

All choir students agree that singing is an art, one that takes an immense amount of work and skill, and is most definitely a class worth taking.

"When I get out there, and really, really, sing," Khandekar said. "that's when I remember why I love it. It makes me come alive."

## Concert Pieces

Music Down in My Soul -Moses Hogan
Follow Me Down to Carlow- Traditional Irish Song
Mata del Anima Sola- Antonio Estevez
Jai Ho-Sukhwinder Singh
Bayushki Bayu-Gr Tolstoy



**TAKING A BOW**, Freshman Sonal Pai bows after her solo performance on Friday, May 18th, receiving a loud applause. Pai has been singing since the age of nine, taking various voice lessons. *photo by Jaya Narasimhan*



**MEN'S CHOIR**, Freshman Akhil Ghirnikar and Seniors Anshu Siripurapu, Joshua Harris sing as part of the Men's choir at the November 1st concert. *photo by Jaya Narasimhan*

**ADDRESSING THE CROWD**, Choir Director Jim Yowell turns to face the audience's applause after a successful performance. Yowell has been the teacher for 12 years. *photo by Jaya Narasimhan*

# Chemistry Honors and its Phosphorusness

by shahnoor jafri

**The class and its preposterousness make the students go mad, trying to study as hard as possible to survive, grade wise.**

Sweat drips down his face, his heart rapidly beating, struggling to carry nutrients to his brain while he digs through its library of information for the right formula. The pressure is on as the clock ticks until the end of class. Moreover, the thought of the sophomore's teacher grading his test fills his mind with dread.

Students in Chemistry Honors face many challenges, and those who don't survive often are forced to drop out. The students who successfully survived explain about how they adapted to the class while the student who didn't explain about the difficulty.

"I have Mr. Kucer...[he is] extremely strict..he is probably, arguably the toughest teacher on campus," said sophomore Eric Taw.

According to sophomore Farshad Feyzi, many students say Bob Kucer is strict because of his brutal grading. He is a very funny person but when it comes to the grading of the homework, labs, and tests, and especially the fast pace of the class, students tend to say he is very harsh.

"He grades homework based on accuracy, so one time I spent about thirty minutes doing my homework and I got it back eight out of ten," said sophomore Margaret Maccoun. Kucer is very picky on homework and especially in labs. The student has to analyze each question and experience and have it as detailed as possible.

Sophomore Emily Chiang said that Ms. Nakamatsu also teaches the material in a very fast pace. She also says that if someone cannot understand the lectures and concepts then they will not be able to understand the homework and therefore not understand the tests "which are a big part of the grade".

"The class is definitely challenging because there's a lot of concepts thrown at you and you won't get much time [to understand them]," said Chiang.

The students who have survived the class say that they have studied a lot and really tried absorbing the information as quickly as possible. Some of them have also taken some tutoring which really helped them.

There are two parts of Kucer's test, the multiple choice and the concept calculations (which are used to test one's understanding of the concepts) it gives the student questions they have never seen before. Although the homework is on the concepts, it only gives the student a basic understanding of the knowledge.

"Everybody "failed" the first test," said Taw

Students in the chem honors class have underestimated the tests, the tests are not about the memorization but the understanding about the material. Whereas students would normally memorize the vocabulary but when in the honors class they would have to actually understand the concept, especially for the difficult critical questions.

Studying a lot for chemistry honors can help but it is very time consuming, especially for the students who slowly absorb the information. Since it takes a long time to study, it takes away time for other classes and sleep, especially for students who have extra-curriculars.

"I'm in band, so it's really time consuming...which is why I dropped out.....," said Maccoun.

Maccoun studied for hours trying to understand the material, taking away her time for other classes and also time for sleeping. While everyone in class was able to understand the concept, she was falling behind, therefore being placed in the end of the grade curve.

Although many of the sophomores who are currently in the class have gone through chemistry paranoia, they have still survived and became successful. The finals are coming but a lot of sophomores say that the final exam is pretty easy, which is almost an award for hard work and patience.

KUCER HELD A TIE DYE LAB IN THE END OF THE YEAR, sophomore Aris Hooman works on his tie dye shirt, creating different designs. "The tie dye lab doesn't have anything to do with chemistry, it's just another way to apologize for what he has put them through," said Emily Chiang. photo by Shahnoor Jafri





**READY? SET? RELEASE!**  
Senior Arjun Desai and junior David Ball, test out their catapult on April 30. Hoping for great success, they get ready to “fire” another water balloon.  
*photo by David Sparkman*

# H heads up!

## Physics students create catapults for extra credit and test them out on the field.

Ready? FIRE!

For the 11th year, the physics students got together in different groups and created catapults, some more successful than others.

With exactly two weeks to create the challenging assignment, students worked very hard to complete the tasks they were assigned.

“It got a little frustrating at times,” said junior Rohan Cotah. “But, in the end, the catapult was a great success.”

Students were expected to come up with a design and manually create a catapult that would be able to shoot a water balloon a certain distance.

After completing the hardest part of the project, creating the catapult, students went onto the soccer field to test their contraptions. Each group received a number of water balloons that they had to “fire”.

Some of their targets happened to be teachers.

“The students do enjoy it. Faculty who didn’t get bombarded with water balloons thought it was cool,” said physics teacher Jenny Garcia.

As they stood out in the blazing sun, one by one students used the catapults to shoot the water balloons toward their targets. Stu-

dents cheered for their great accomplishments. It took them a couple of weeks of hard work, as well as most of their time.

Even with all the fun of making the project, there were some difficulties that occurred along the process. But that didn’t stop senior Roy Bisht from being successful.

“It was difficult to meet up with the group at times because of our busy schedule,” said Bisht. “But we got through it, and I think it was a great success. It was a great experience and I think it was a lot of fun too.”

For the juniors, creating this project was a lot harder than the seniors. With AP exams and the pressure of keeping up their grades, making time to work on the project was a challenge.

“I thought it was a complicated project since I had to come up with a design and build it, especially because I chose to do it myself. I’m usually very busy on the weekdays, so I only had time on the weekends to create a functioning catapult,” said Cotah.

Nevertheless, Cotah was determined to ace the project. Most seniors and juniors in the physics classes will agree that this project was fun and a great experience, even with the difficulties that arose.



**CLOSE, BUT NO CIGAR.**  
Teachers Kelly Nicholson and Laressa Ridge, stand in the soccer field waiting for their students to test out their contraptions on teachers.  
*photo by David Sparkman*



**IS IT GOING TO WORK?**  
Physics students Alyson Nilan and Jennifer Guarino watch their catapults shoot the water balloons on the field. “They like seeing their contraptions in action,” said Garcia.  
*photo by David Sparkman*

### HERE IT COMES!

Juniors Jerrick Fong Michelle Tran and Austin Chang smile as their catapult flings a water balloon across the field. “I felt really excited when I saw our catapult work. We were all really proud of it,” said Fong.

*photo by David Sparkman*

## Every 15 Minutes Schedule

### April 11: Car Crash

- 1) Participants arrive in team room for breakfast.
- 2) Police officers read out obituaries of the “dead” students in their classrooms.
- 3) Participants set up for the car crash simulation and plant grave stones in the quad after the assembly.
- 4) Seniors Izzy Albert and Sasan Saadat are taken to the Valley Medical Center, where they are pronounced “dead.” Senior Brandon Oliveri O’Connor is arrested and taken to jail as well.
- 5) After school, participants attend a retreat in a convent in the Los Gatos mountains to write letters and complete icebreaker activities.
- 6) Police visit parents of the participants to tell them about their child’s “death.”

### April 12: Funeral Procession

- 1) Event commissioners set up chairs and distribute tissue boxes.
- 2) Participants dressed in black walk down the aisle while bag pipes play “Over the Sea to Sky.”
- 3) A video of the previous day’s activities is shown.
- 4) Friends and family members of participants read out eulogies they wrote to the “dead” participants, followed by the sharing of letters written by the participants themselves.
- 5) Los Gatos parent Judy Peckler shares her experience of losing her husband and two children in a drunk driving accident, along with a slideshow presentation.
- 6) The living dead are resurrected, leaving them with an experience that has greatly affected their judgement about drunk driving.

**STRAPPED TO A STRETCHER**, Senior Izzy Albert, who plays an injured victim of the crash, is prepared to be taken to the Valley Medical Center on April 11 on the football field. “My heart was racing because of how real it all felt,” Albert said. “It was really crazy to hear all the doctors around me panicking about my imminent ‘death.’”  
*courtesy of Now and Forever Studios*

**FRESHMAN NATALIE MILLER** plants her own grave stone in the quad during lunch on April 11. “I’m so glad I was picked to be in it because it was so fun and I met so many new people,” Miller said. “It was a great experience.”  
*courtesy of Now and Forever Studios*



# I died today

by deepthi kannan

Every 15 Minutes program teaches students consequences of drunk driving.



**SENIOR BRANDON OLIVERI O’CONNOR**, who plays the drunk driver in the simulation, is arrested on the scene of the crash on the football field on April 11. He was later taken to the county jail to fully experience the consequences of drunk driving.  
*courtesy of Now and Forever Studios*

The entire student body fell silent. Every eye was strained on the football field, staring at the two-car crash. As sirens wailed in the distance, emergency medical services immediately attended to injured victims seniors Izzy Albert and Sasan Saadat. The drunk driver, senior Brandon Oliveri O’Connor, stumbled out of the car and was arrested for driving under the influence.

The grim reaper paced back and forth, followed by a group of somber students with painted faces, each representing someone who dies every 15 minutes from an alcohol-related car accident.

On April 11, the national organization Every 15 Minutes joined with Saratoga High to simulate an alcohol-related car crash and a funeral procession in order to convey the seriousness of drunk driving: a program that is only held once in four years.

Freshman Anshul Aggarwal learned a lot from witnessing the program.

“When someone dies by some unfortunate accident that could be prevented by not picking up that beer, it affects an entire community of people— not just us,” Aggarwal said.

With the help of parents, the California Highway Patrol (CHP), American Medical Response (AMR) and 17 other organizations contributed to the simulation, senior head commissioner Christine Bancroft said.

Twenty students also participated in the program, selected by the Events Commission headed by seniors Bancroft and Mac Hyde and junior Spencer Goldman. The commissioners met weekly with assistant principal Karen Hyde for a year to plan the event and choose the participants.

“We tried to choose high profile students who could be recognized by anyone,” sophomore commissioner Jennie Werner said. “We wanted an even mix of girls and guys, balance of grade levels and a variety of ethnicities.”

On the night of April 11, participants stayed at a retreat in a convent in the Los Gatos Mountains. At the retreat, students listened to guest speakers, made posters and wrote letters to their parents. Some of the letters were chosen to be read out during the assembly on the second day of the simulation.

Freshman Natalie Miller, who played one of the living dead in the simulation, said the saddest part of the program was listening to her friend, freshman Maddie Sloan, read her eulogy at the assembly.

“When she started walking to the podium, I just broke down,” Miller said. “But everything she said was sincere and heart-warming, so I felt really good after listening to it.”

For the duration of the program, the participants were not allowed any communication with the outside world in order to make the simulation of their death as real as possible.

“I couldn’t talk or make eye contact with anyone, and I couldn’t go on Facebook or use my phone, so I was completely disconnected from the world,” Miller said. “There’s this invisible wall and you feel like you will never see [your friends and family] ever again, which is a really scary thing to feel.”

After all the extensive planning put into the event, Aggarwal said the message that Every 15 Minutes was trying to bring across really hit home.

“We all have this innate belief that we are going to live forever; it almost feels like nothing is ever going to happen to us,” Aggarwal said. “But seeing how people’s lives can be taken away by a small mistake brings it down to earth.”



**LYING ON THE HOOD OF THE CAR**, Senior Dominic Guercio plays a dead victim of the crash on the football field on April 11, accompanied by the grim reaper who stands over him. “My head was spinning, my heart was pounding and I was really nervous,” Guercio said.  
*courtesy of Now and Forever Studios*



# Victory at last

by naveen kashyap

## The JV boys tennis coach and her assistant try new methods to win this year.

Despite losing key players who graduated to Varsity Team last year, this year's tennis team has performed well. The team was challenged with many hurdles but came out a winner. "No matter the size of the challenge, the team stayed together like a family," said Albert Lin.

The season began on a low note having lost key players to the Varsity Team, but they trained hard and soon brought the team together. "We started off extremely overconfident, but the sophomores explained the competition level which got us thinking about a new strategy," said freshman Hans Sun.

Although the team had the same coach, Yuko Aoki, as the past years, their strategy was much more different because of the different levels of the players in the team. "I was switched so many times that after a while, it messed up my game," said Minu Palapanian.

Aoki, the current JV tennis coach, had a different plan in mind when it came to rankings for matches. "She called it 'innovative placements', but we just called it 'stacking,'" said sophomore Tommy Chiou. The rankings of most players was modified and never stayed the same.

The original line-ups included No.1 singles as Jeffrey Chen, No.2 singles as Hans Sun, No.3 singles as Tommy Chiou, and No.4 Casper Chen.

To add to the mix of problems, several injuries added to the challenge faced by the team. Granted that these are part of the game, but

the team showed its unity in getting over this challenge as well.

Despite injuries and 'innovative placements', the team was still somehow able to grapple 3rd place in leagues. They managed to maintain a decent record of 9-2.

The team faced two tough opponents one of which was the Monte Vista Tennis team and the other was Gunn High School. They lost to the Gunn High School team and faced a difficult situation while playing Monte Vista, winning the first game 4-3. but unfortunately losing the second 7-0.

"The team tried really hard, it's just that we lost so many really good players this year. I feel that we could have won with a little bit more training and less complaining," said Jeffrey Chen.

"We had one match that was really scary for us because we needed one more win and only one person was left playing," said freshman Samir Ingle. According to Ingle, sophomore Tommy Chiou was the team's savior and was given the rare title, "MVP".

This was not just one of the titles given to students. On the last day of the season, the team had a party in which they distributed several awards.

Of course, though the contributions of the people who achieved the awards cannot be underplayed, every individual player's contribution added to the success of the team this season. ♦

### Scoreboard

Cupertino	7-0 W
Gunn	6-1 L
Monta Vista	4-3 W
Lynbrook	5-2 W
Palo Alto	5-2 W
Los Altos	5-2 W

Mitty	7-0 W
Lynbrook	4-3 W
Gunn	7-0 W
Cupertino	6-1 W
Los Altos	7-0 W



**VICTORY** Jeffrey Chen (10) raises his hands in victory screaming 'huzzah'. Playing No. 1 singles was a tough situation for Jeffrey because he was playing the toughest players in the competition. "This season was different from the past years," said Jeffrey Chen. "It was definitely more relaxed than last year." photo by Now and Forever Studios.



**STOOPING LOW** Aditya Aggarwal (9) stoops low to scoop the ball from his partner, Tommy Chiou (10), during a fun game the team played on the day of the last practice. "It was a great way to end the season," said Hans. photo by Now and Forever Studios.

**BALL THIEF** Hans Sun (9) steals the ball from his partner, Tommy Chiou (10), during a fun game the team played on the day of the last practice. "It was a great way to end the season," said Hans. photo by Now and Forever Studios.

## State Qualifiers:

- Niharika Bedekar
- Maggy Liu
- Chad Nachiappan
- David Zarrin
- Shreya Chaganti
- Maya Nag
- Rebecca Yang
- Sanjna Verma
- Christine Xue
- Madison King
- Emma Lee
- Nandita Sampath
- Kevin Garbe
- Meghana Rao
- Antara Rao
- Jocelyn Takahashi
- Megan Yen
- Sanjana Chetia

## National Qualifiers:

- Michelle Won
- Anushree Dugar
- Johnny Chang,
- Justin Chiang
- Kevin Chen

by michelle leung

# BRINGING HISTORY ALIVE

## History Day 2012 competition produces outstanding results for SHS students.

**RETURN TO NATIONALS:** Sophomore Anushree Dugar stands as her name is announced at the school History Day open house on Feb. 16. Dugar has participated in two previous national History Days, and will compete again this year. "I came across the National History Day competition in eighth grade," Dugar said. "I went to nationals that year. I guess that kind of motivated me to keep working." *photo courtesy of Anushree Dugar*



Elated students filled the school library on the night of the Feb. 16 History Day Open House. The event, themed "Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History," was what countless hours of hard work had led to.

History Day is an annual competition. Students enter in groups or individually, and create websites, papers, performances, exhibits or documentaries. Staff volunteers then select qualifying entries, which move on to county, then state, and finally national competitions.

The school saw a particularly high number of participants this year, with 19 entries advancing to county competitions, nine qualifying for state, and three going all the way to nationals.

School librarian and History Day coordinator Kevin Heyman said the school showed well at the competitions.

"I'm most proud of the wide range of students that we had participating at the school level," Heyman said. "I'm really happy that it's catching on."

History Day coordinator Matthew Torrens also said the school produced high quality entries.

"The big thing I'm proud of is the depth of the topics that [students] chose," Torrens said. "The topics, like Swing Youth during the Nazi period, were very creative."

Students participated in History Day for many reasons, including the extra credit offered to juniors in AP US History classes. However, most students entered for the valuable learning experience.

Sophomore Anushree Dugar has gone to two previous National History Days. This year, her Constitutional Revolution paper also qualified for the national competition. Dugar said she gained much from History Day.

"When you write a paper you have to learn how to analyze the information," Dugar said. "I also learned how to research very well."

First time participant freshman Jasmine Deng also profited from her experience.

"I learned a lot about [Claude Monet and the Impressionist Revolution] that I didn't know before," Deng said. "I am glad that I joined."

Junior Sanjna Verma, who created an exhibit on the Tiananmen Square Massacre, enjoyed the social prospects as well as the educational opportunities offered by History Day.

"Going down and meeting a whole bunch of other people was the most fun," Verma said. "Just hanging out and having a chance to chill while getting academic credit."

History Day required tremendous effort and time on the parts of both students and teachers involved.

"I started working actually in summer," Dugar said. "I worked at least 10 hours each week in the summer."

In addition to the time commitment, students faced other challenges such as researching and interpreting the topic.

"When I first started out I had a very hard time figuring out how to find primary sources," Dugar said. "I made a lot of mistakes on the way but I learned how to find reliable resources on the web."

Junior Wesley Park, who created a website on the Reign of Terror, said the theme was difficult to write about. Both Torrens and Heyman agreed the narrow topic made History Day challenging.

Heyman said despite the difficulties and time commitment, History Day offers greater overall benefits to all involved.

"One thing that History Day allows students to do is to go into depth on a topic," Heyman said. "This is a way to show students how wonderful it is to study and learn in an exciting way, and I like making history exciting."



**FINALLY EXHIBITION DAY:** History Day coordinator Matthew Torrens reads a student's Chinese Cultural Revolution exhibit at the school History Day open house on Feb. 16. Students presented their websites, papers, performances, exhibits and documentaries at the open house. "Watching our kids defend their topics against adults was most memorable," Torrens said. *photo by Anushree Dugar*



**AWAITING RESULTS:** Students listen attentively as History Day coordinators Kevin Heyman and Matthew Torrens announce qualifiers at the Feb. 16 History Day open house. This year, 300 students joined History Day, up from 75 last year. "The most memorable experience was when they said our group qualified for county," freshman Jasmine Deng said. *photo by Anushree Dugar*

# STEPPING IT UP

by Amy Lin

## All the teachers in the science building take a shot at walking more.

Biology and Human Anatomy teacher Michael McQuade paces the front of the classroom as he lectures his third period Biology class. Clipped to his waist is a new pedometer, its numbers flashing as it changes with every step he takes.

McQuade is in a weekly walking competition against science teacher Kelly Nicholson for the trophy currently residing in McQuade's room. The start of the contest actually began early on first semester, said McQuade.

"I used to work in the maintenance department and I was going through a box of junk and I found a step counter," McQuade said. "So I put it on just to see how many steps I would take."

Later that day, McQuade went to Nicholson's room, where she noticed the pedometer he was wearing. From then on, they would compare steps periodically, gloating when beating the other. At the end of the year, Nicholson bought new step counters for herself and McQuade, as well as all the other teachers in the science building.

"We talked and we decided we would try to include all the teachers, so we bought a bunch of step counters and gave them out," McQuade said. "For a while, everyone was doing it, but now it's back down to me and Mrs. Nicholson."

Many of the teachers have won, including Health and Driver's Education teacher Amy Obenour, Chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu, Physics teacher Kirk Davis and of course, both Nicholson and McQuade.

An ex-member of the contest, Physics and Biology teacher Jenny Garcia was forced to leave the competition early. She had developed Plantar Fasciitis, a condition that in which the thick tissue in the foot is inflamed, from walking in the Susan G. Komen three-day walk to support breast cancer earlier in the school year and it still hadn't healed.

"I walked more when I was still in the contest," Garcia said, "but I got a foot injury so it hurt to walk."

Another teacher that quit early was Biology and AP Environmental Science teacher Kristen Thomson.

You had to put it on in the morning and take it off at night, and I just kind of forgot, said Thomson.

While this contest has not worked so well for some of the staff, McQuade has been focused since day one and has had the trophy for five weeks straight.

"It absolutely has encouraged me to walk more. My goal at the beginning of the contest was to win when eight or nine people were involved," McQuade said. "I actually went out a couple of times and actually walked when I normally wouldn't have."



SMILE FOR THE CAMERA: Physics teacher Jenny Garcia walks to the science building during lunch.. photo by Amy Lin.



TASTE OF SWEETNESS! The winner's trophy sits in McQuade's room. "I've had the trophy for about a month now." photo courtesy of SHSTV.

SHOWING OFF! Two science teachers point at their pedometers. The contest started at the beginning of the second semester. photo courtesy of SHSTV.

# Ups and downs of Junior Year

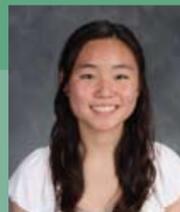
by Lauren Louie



Juniors cheer in the center of the quad, as a memorable finish. "Quad day was easily one of my favorite moments of Junior Year," said Suzannah Osekowsky. *photo by Noy Shaked*

## > Then and Now:

### How is Junior Year different?



"[This year] was different from other years because I learned how to really study. I was able to focus on what was really important while I did homework," Junior Kiki Shim said.



"I felt like I never had enough time. When it wasn't studying, it was sports. When it wasn't sports, it was band. I suggest spending the weekends doing activities unrelated to school," Junior Maya Nag said.



Deepak Prabhakar and his friends study during their lunch hour. "Studying for my classes this year definitely took up more time than expected," Prabhakar said. *photo by Javed Salmaan*

## Junior Year is well known for the stress of SATs, but it also comes with new and exciting opportunities and activities.

A swarm of underclassmen crowd the hallways, seemingly carefree. But amid the swarm is junior Lauren Chu, who makes a beeline to her locker, knowing that her busy schedule has just begun. From 6 to 10 p.m., Chu has marching band rehearsal. Afterwards, she has to study for both a math test and an AP Biology test. And all of this while running on three to four hours of sleep.

For Chu, the pressure does not ease off at the weekends either, which are packed with extracurricular activities and SATs.

"It just never ends," says Chu. "It's terrible."

Junior year is notorious for being the most stressful year of high school, whether it be due to teachers, grades or the SATs that loom ominously in the future. According to some juniors, junior year serves as the first year where one learns to focus on classes that will help prepare simulate college classes.

"You get to take classes more specific to you and your interests and specialize in areas important to you," junior Suzannah Osekowsky said. "Pursuing your passions and interests is a really big part of junior year because you're starting to flesh out your career ideas and decide where you want to go as an adult."

While grades tend to matter regardless of age, junior year is the greatest chance to impress colleges. Most UC colleges will look at student's sophomore, junior year and the first half of senior year, giving a student only two and a half years of intense studying to make the cut.

"The pressure starts to get to you because suddenly you realize there's only two years of high school left and only a year left until college applications," junior Kiki Shim said. "You really learn how to learn. From the get-go, you need to learn what is most effective for you to learn, whether that be doing a study guide, reading the book, talking it out with friends, etc."

With the pressure on and stress levels high, social life can change as well.

"This year I really got to know who was there for me; under all the stress, the 'real' personalities of people begin to emerge and friendships can either get a lot stronger or fizzle out with the chaos," junior Maya Nag said.

And while it may sound like a social life and academic life is headed toward the drain, there are benefits that junior year offers; driving, independence and freedom, to name a few.

"Some great things are you are finally an upperclassmen," Shim said. "Administrators give you a lot of respect. You have so much more freedom and that comes with the price of responsibility."



**MUDDERFINGERS** After crawling through a pool of mud, Mihir Samdarshi (09) got completely coated in a thin layer of mud that dried into a light gray dust.  
*photo by Kristyn Nakahira*

# Down and dirty

**For the first time in Toga history, teachers and students take on Terrain Mud Run.**

On Saturday, March 28 at 11:15 a.m., a pint-sized cannon fired off for the 10th time that day and “Team Toga” started its 5+ mile Terrain Mud Run.

Held at Joseph D. Grant County Park in the Santa Clara hills, this event attracted competitors from all over the Bay Area and in some cases as far away as Chicago.

This year, teachers Peter Jordan, Rick Ellis and Yuko Aoki offered this mud run as an alternative to their PE final. However, Jordan said that if participants were going to do the mud run solely to earn an A on their final, they were doing it for the wrong reason.

He added that this would be much longer, tougher, and more expensive than the final, but this warning did not deter freshman Shivaram Yellamilli.

“I knew this event was for me,” said Yellamilli. “I would have done it even if it didn’t replace the final.”

Participants faced 90 degree weather, a 6.7 mile trail course that was figured to be a bit more than 80% uphill, and more than 20 obstacles just to reach the finish.

“The hardest obstacles were probably the hills,” said freshman Jasmine Deng, “and the heat made it even worse.”

As they neared the last five obstacles, runners found the mud at last. “At first I was really excited because there was finally mud, but then I

saw someone swallow some, which was pretty disgusting,” said freshman Eunju Pak.

Deng reasoned that they probably saved the mud until the end so that runners didn’t have so much mud on their bodies or in their shoes as they ran.

The last five obstacles were a set of peaked monkey bars, a cargo net, a scaling wall, mud trenches, and a mud “slide.” The monkey bars were suspended over a pool of mud, so if a participant slipped, there was a chilled muddy 4-foot-deep pool waiting for them.

The mud trenches involved getting down on participants’ hands and knees to army-crawl through a shallow, yet pebbly, pool of mud while avoiding the barbed wire overhead.

Having taped her shoes at the start to keep the mud out, freshman Tia Jones thought she would be safe crawling through the mud trenches. But she was not.

“The mud was really squishy and gross,” said Jones. “Even though I taped [my shoe], the mud saturated my whole foot and sock.”

After nearly seven-mile course packed with obstacles and a bit of mud at the end, competitors could call it a day.

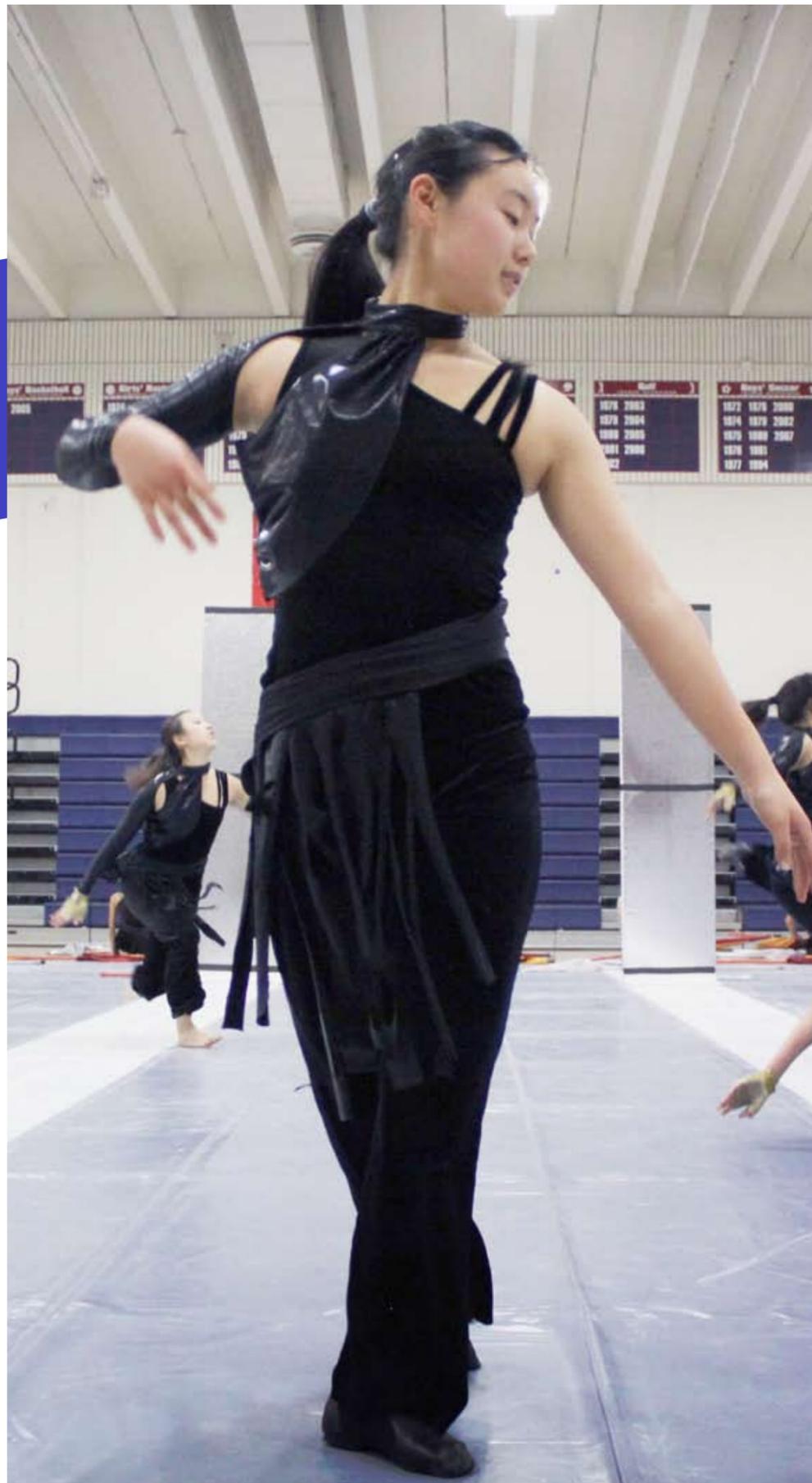
“Honestly? I was wondering if I could do it again,” said Yellamilli. “I want to run a marathon someday and I thought it would be good practice.”



**MUDSLIDE** Jonathan Huie (09) and Kristyn Nakahira (09) trudge through the rocky waters after sliding down a slippery slope. “The mud was more like dirty water than mud,” said Huie.

**ARMY CRAWL TIME** Arsh Khandelwal (09) makes his way through a shallow pool, where he had to get down in the mud in order to avoid the orange tape. “The end of the course was muddy, cold and icky,” said Khandelwal. “The mud soaked my shoes and clothes completely.”  
*photo by Kristyn Nakahira*

**GOING FOR A SWIM** PE teacher Peter Jordan wades through four feet of muddy water after falling from the monkey bars. “I had been looking forward to the mud during the whole race,” said Jordan. “Slopping in the mud makes you feel like a little kid.”  
*photo by Kristyn Nakahira*



**PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT,** Kristy Lin (10) spins rifle in the big gym before performing for a crowd at electives night. *photo by Kylie Tseng*



**SPIN...TWO...THREE...FOUR,** Alex Ju (12) twirls into a fouette simultaneously along with several other major dancers. *photo by Kylie Tseng*



**Dinner for 31,** Marissa Phi (09), Stephanie Poo (12), Annalea De Luca (09), Vivian Li (10), Amy Han (10), Victoria Fontanilla (09), Sarah Liddie (09), Jackie An (09), Iris Xu (09), take a group picture at Buca di Beppo on their night out before competition. *courtesy of Sarah Liddie*

# Dancing to semifinals

## Winter guard makes it to semifinals, setting the new school record.

Burgundy flags and white rifles spin high in the air and land right on time to the beat of the “Orinoco Flow” remix. Traveling 452 miles to San Diego, winter guard finally made it to semifinals for the very first time in Saratoga history.

Following the guard legacy from her sisters, freshman Sarah Liddie participates in this year’s semifinals hoping to impress all who come to watch. According to Liddie, competing against some of the state’s top guards was one of the most exciting yet nerve wracking moment of the entire season.

“Just knowing that we were performing before really advanced winter guards motivated us to make a good impression,” Liddie said. “I never expected to make it this far.”

After continuous practices of their show, “Juxtaposed,” the hard work payed off when winter guard entitled third out of 26 schools in prelims, the pre-performance leading them to semifinals.

“Practicing was sort of tedious, but because everyone was working towards the same goal of making it to regionals, it was really worth it,” junior Selena Xu said.

The team left for San Diego right after prelims on March 25. Being the very first to perform was scary to many on the team.

“Even after practicing the routine over and over again, I was still really nervous,” freshman Jackie An said. “Because it was our first time in

semifinals, we had to look really good in front of the other schools since they were so high ranked.”

Instructor Tony Crapo was also another huge motivation to do well in competition.

“We really wanted to make it to regionals and he believed that we could do it, so we all tried our hardest to reach that expectation,” freshman Iris Xu said.

Aside from practice, the trip to San Diego gave the students some free time to hang out with one another. Crapo even surprised the team by taking them bowling before the big performance.

“It was a lot of fun because the team doesn’t get a lot of extra time to do whatever. We all pitched in for dinner and bowling which was really nice bonding time.” Liddie said.

Though winter guard didn’t make it to finals, the hard working team claims the experience was more than satisfying.

“It was exciting, even if we didn’t make it to finals, because we got to watch a lot of great Southern-California guards that we usually don’t get to see,” Liddie said. “It wasn’t really about winning. It was about putting a good show and having fun.”

With hard work and determination, this year’s winter guard finished the season reaching great achievements and setting a new record for the school.



**FOLLOW THE LEADER,** Captain Michelle Shu (11) practices her flag work with the rest of the guard in the big gym while they go over their show for the upteenth time. *photo by Kylie Tseng*

**STANDING OVATION,** Jackie An (9) poses after she dances her solo during the performance, “Juxtaposed.” *photo by Kylie Tseng*

# NEW Tools, more success

## Adding new tools to their supply, the Media Arts Program (MAP) grows and develops into a new and improved course.

In the 2008-2009 school year, the Media Arts Program (MAP) was added to Saratoga High School's long list of classes. Four years later, MAP is now one of the most advanced and sought after classes.

In 2008, the MAP program was started with only sophomores being able to take the class.

"Each year after the first one, we've added different classes into the program. In 2009, we added juniors. The next year, we added freshmen and the year after that we added seniors," MAP teacher Mike Davey said.

The program has also added a new state-of-the-art building in fall 2010 entirely devoted to the media arts. Since it was built, it's helped the MAP program become "more advanced than some small colleges," Davey said. Some of the new equipment that has been added to their "arsenal" include high definition cameras, tripods, Macs, two green screens, and even a soundproof room for the video announcements.

"Now MAP students have the hands-on experience with professional equipment that producers and directors use," MAP English 9 teacher Suzanne Herzman added.

Many MAP students have agreed with teachers as well.

"I like the MAP building because it has really advanced technology which makes filming easier. An example would be the high definition cameras, which make it easier to see video because the quality of the video is better," sophomore Ethan Gelfand said.

Since the introduction of the MAP Building, a visible increase in the viewing of video announcements has been seen.

According to Gelfand, announcements last year were hardly ever seen because they were only on the MAP website. Also they were only on once a month so there was no point in watching the videos.

"Now, it's on the website every Friday and there are no p.a. [(Public Address)] announcements so we have more motivation to make a good video. Also, it's better to view announcements visually," Gelfand said.

Announcements are watched by the entire school now, because of its cool introductions and interesting news topics. Many students agree that the video announcements have gotten better from the beginning of the year.

"The announcements are definitely better. The reporters have better

stories and the technology that they are using is better so the video is enhanced," sophomore Drew Kriens said.

Now that the MAP program has developed, new changes are being made to the curriculum.

"We are planning to make MAP 12 integrated in the 2012-2013 school year. We also are going to make the curriculum more modern and get rid of the Greeks and Romans. World War Two and onward will be our main focus. We are still talking about making changes in the lower levels like MAP 9 though," Davey said.

"We are constantly revising the curriculum and we meet regularly to make any changes that are needed," Herzman added.

With the MAP Building and all the new technology inside of it, there are expectations for the MAP department and the video announcements to rise to a new level in the next few years.

**WELCOME TO SHS TV:** In the Media Arts room, Henry Wei (11) announces that prom tickets are on sale while being filmed on camera. "Video announcements were weird because we were speaking to a camera and not an audience," Wei said.

### Equipment costs

Macs (30)	\$700 each
Green screen (2)	\$40
Tripods (25)	\$20 each
Cameras ( 15)	\$60 each
Keyboard(30)	\$70 each



**ACTION! (LEFT):** Ethan Gelfand (10) positions his camera to make sure that partner Eric Ko (10) is in the frame near the softball field on January 20, 2012. **HEY YOU (FAR LEFT):** Teacher Tony Palma points at a student while teaching a lesson in the MAP building. "I like Mr. Palma because his classes are always fun and interesting," said Gelfand.

# Dancing in the limelight

by maya ravichandran

## New and returning dancers share their experiences creating Bombay in the Bay



**TAKING A BOW**, Freshmen Meeta Marathe and Ranjini Nagaraj smile with their friends after finishing their last dance in Bombay in the Bay. Marathe has danced in many shows before, but this is Nagaraj's first major Indian performance. *photo by meghna chakraborty*

Freshmen Ranjini Nagaraj and Meeta Marathe waited anxiously backstage at the McAfee Center. After receiving the cue, both girls and their fellow dancers made their way on stage.

As the music started playing, the nerves disappeared and the girls relaxed, letting the music lead them through the choreographed dance movements that they had been practicing for the past two months. After the song ended, the audience applauded long and hard for the amazing performance.

Marathe and Nagaraj performed in the two shows in Bombay in the Bay, a show put on by the Indian Club that features Indian dances, on April 14.

The show included dances from all grades and skits in between the dances. Different styles of Indian dance that had students from all grade levels were showcased as well.

"I liked watching all of the other performances as well as performing in the one that I was in," Nagaraj said.

To make the show successful, a good deal of work went into the planning and practices.

"All the practices were about two to three hours long, and it was a big time commitment when the date for the event was nearing," Marathe said.

Though there were many practices that occurred several times a week, many practices did not accomplish much.

"Some practices were productive, but in others, many people just goofed off and didn't take it seriously," Nagaraj said. "I don't think we actually had everybody rehearsing at one time until the actual day of the performance."

Nagaraj said everyone voted on the music, even though the seniors got first choice. The choreographers in each grade picked the costumes for both girls and boys.

"We had many different ideas [for the costumes], but then we narrowed it down a lot, and finally picked the best one," Nagaraj said.

The long practices were a great place to meet new people, according to Marathe, who said she got to know everyone in the group a lot better.

"All of the dancers had surprising traits or interests that I had never known before," Marathe said.

Returning dancer sophomore Nina Jayashankar participated in the show again because she loved dancing with her friends onstage.

"Seeing groups of kids, who wouldn't necessarily be spending time together, having so much fun and working so hard really fascinated me," Jayashankar said.

Everything was hectic on performance day, according to Nagaraj. But in the end, the dances all came together. All three girls said they had fun dancing.

"I really enjoyed performing because I love dancing," Marathe said. "Everyone was showing a lot more enthusiasm on the day of the performance."

Because all of the dancers had never seen any of the other dances, they had no idea what to expect. Seeing the final product on stage after months of practice was the best part, said Jayashankar.

"The feeling of being on stage is completely unique," Jayashankar said. "It gives me a rush of energy and everything becomes a blur. Performing on stage is almost an out of body experience."

All three dancers said they look forward to participating in the show next year.

"I think I will do [Bombay in the Bay] again next year," Nagaraj said. "It was a really fun experience that was completely new to me and I really enjoyed it!"



**STRIKING A POSE**, Junior Samika Kumar and freshman Meeta Marathe dance Kuchipudi as part of the traditional dance in Bombay in the Bay on April 14. Marathe has been learning Kuchipudi for seven years. *photo by tiffany yung*



**JUST FOR LAUGHS**, Seniors Ruchie Bhardwaj and Kushal Raj pretend to drive a cardboard auto rickshaw during Bombay in the Bay on April 14. In the hilarious skit, the two seniors were about to have an arranged marriage and were trying to get to know each other. *photo by tiffany yung*

## Dance Schedule

Traditional Dance (All grades)
Garba (All grades)
Freshman Dance
Sophomore Dance
Junior Dance
Senior Dance
All Girls Dance (AGD)
All Males Dance (AMD)



(DOMINANT) **SPLASHING HIS BALL OUT OF THE BUNKER**, junior Robbie Parden hits it onto the green. "Hitting out of the bunker takes a different approach than any other shot on the golf course," said Parden.

(ABOVE) **SENIOR MICHAEL CHEN** swings at the ball on the par three 7th.. "To find the yardage I judge how much wind there is and what direction it is going then I just let it fly," said Michael Chen.

(TOP LEFT) **CHRISTIAN GALVIN TESTS** the greens before the big match against Los Gatos.  
by now-and-forever studios



# Going low

by Robby Gragnola

## Head coach Dave Gragnola and assistant coach Micah Hall teach the team how to manage the course and how to shoot low scores.

There have been significant changes for this year's golf team compared to last. There is a new coach and five new freshmen, there was one new freshman last year. This year the team got to practice and play matches at Saratoga Country Club. Last year the team had to practice at a variety of different courses including Coyote Creek and the practice range Pin High.

"I liked playing only at Saratoga Country Club this rather than at different courses all of last year, it was definitely an advantage playing at Saratoga rather than Coyote Creek", said senior Michael Chen.

Saratoga Country Club is a big advantage to have when playing against other schools because it is very narrow and there is lots of trouble, so the players must keep it in play. Last year the players competed in matches at many different courses unlike this year, so they never got comfortable at a course.

The team played in four tournaments this year. One freshman played in all of them and that was Robby Gragnola. "Robby has been a big help this year, he has taken over the third spot from Andrew Cho, a senior that left last year," said junior Robbie Parden. "Robby played in every match and all of the tournaments, he stepped up when the team needed him to."

There were also three others that normally did not play in

the matches that got to play in a couple of the tournaments. Freshman Arman Vaziri got to play at the Aptos tournament, freshman Noah Jung got to play at Aptos and at Rancho Canada where CCS was held and sophomore Edward Lin got to play at Rancho Canada as well.

The team will be losing senior Michael Chen next year and he played in the fifth spot most of the year. Last year the team lost Andrew Cho and Kent Paisley. The team will not be changing much this year.

The coach this year was much different from years past. Last year's coach was Bill Drennan. This year it was Dave Gragnola who coached the girls and boys golf team this year. "Coach Dave knows a lot about the game and knows what he is doing," said sophomore Christian Galvin. Coach Gragnola led the team to an 8-2 record this season.

This year the team got second in the league tournament and made it to CCS also, but next year the team should be the best it has been in a long time. Everyone is returning to the team except for Michael Chen and there will be at least three freshmen coming to the team next year. The team is looking for another successful season next year like the one they had this year.



(LEFT) **Junior Oliver Chen studies** which way his ball will go on the tricky 6th green. "My favorite part about putting is the tricky putts that show up," said Chen. Those down-hill side-hill putts are the putts that I really pay close attention to."

by now-and-forever studios

## Roster of boys golf team

- |                     |                 |                     |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Robbie Parden    | 5. Michael Chen | 9. Arman Vaziri     |
| 2. Christian Galvin | 6. Oliver Chen  | 10. Lukas Petterson |
| 3. Robby Gragnola   | 7. Edward Lin   | 11. Zach Galvin     |
| 4. Spencer Goldman  | 8. Noah Jung    | 12. Edwin Chen      |

# LEAVING THE BUNCH

## NCL hosts the Class of 2012's senior recognition to say farewell to senior graduates

**SENIOR GRAD**  
Isabel Mcpherson waits for others to arrive on stage during the recognition so they can have a picture taken.



Every year, National Charity League (NCL), hosts a senior recognition to recognize the graduating class. The goal of National Charity League is to create chapters of mother-daughter teams who volunteer at local places.

With chapters all over the nation, each chapter serves 6 years in NCL starting from 6th grade.

A number of girls who were NCL members waited 6 years to be the center of attention at their senior recognition. From picking out white or black gowns to dancing with friends and family, the senior recognition is certainly a night to remember.

The senior recognition is not only a night of honoring the seniors, it is also a time to reminisce in the journey each girl has had throughout the years.

For Katie Cummins, senior recognition was a special night because she felt her class was more unique than others.

"I think what's special about our class is that we all accepted our differences. For example, while most of the moms wanted to stick with white dresses for Senior Recognition, the rest of the girls voted to have black or white dresses which was a first in a long time," said Cummins.

The girls of the NCL class of 2012 started as shy sixth graders who barely knew one another. However, through the six years of getting together for monthly meetings and doing philanthropy projects, they branched out more and became comfortable amongst one another.

At the beginning of the six year journey, it's not easy for all the girls to feel comfortable with one another because each class has girls from different schools. However Senior Recognition showed how close each girl has become with one another through a slideshow of the years that have gone by.

Cummins felt that the beginning of NCL was tough because the girls were really cliquy and didn't talk with other girls who were from different schools, but through the years they all became good friends. She also says that some of the girls she met were some of the most amazing people she's met.

NCL which is meant to make a difference in lives around the nation, has also touched the lives of the girls of the league.

The NCL seniors will leave the class with three core values; be humble, give back, and realize that a little change can make a huge difference.



Seniors Kendall Milton and Allie Ventlisten intently to a speech given by board member Maria Chu at the recognition



SENIOR GRADUATES Katie and Michelle Cummins listen to a speech during the recognition.



GRADUATES OF SARATOGA HIGH which include Christine Bancroft, Katie Cummins, Michelle Cummins, Isabel Mcpherson, and Nicole Fetsch, stand among

# M NO EXIT Makes an entrance

## No Exit's cast of four delivers an enjoyable show on May 24, 25, and 26

After school one afternoon, the parking lot is slowly emptying out. Students wave goodbye to their friends as they leave the campus to go home after a long day of school. But inside the Thermond Drama Center, a cast of 4 people continuously rehearse their scenes to perfection in preparation for the opening of senior Josh Harris's student-directed production, "No Exit."

The show was performed in the Little Theater on May 24, 25 and 26.

Written by Jean Paul Sartre, the play takes place in Hell, where 3 characters, Garcin, played by Marshall Westall, Inez, played by Annelise Nussbacher, and Estelle, played by Laura Hannibal, are eternal roommates. After being shown in by valet, freshman Nastasya Kutuyev, they all expect some sort of medieval torture, but find themselves in a small room with three chairs and a table with a brass ornament.

Throughout the show, as they confess their crimes to each other, they begin to realize that Hell is not torture, it's the people in the room with them.

Though some may find the idea of such a dark show odd, director Josh Harris sees differently.

"I wanted to do something that would be original-- different from things commonly done in the Little Theater," Harris said. "I wanted to do a show that was darker than the usual fare-- something that would draw a different audience and have a different tone to it."

Not only was this production unique with its tone, but also with the different elements incorporated into it. Harris directed the show in a round, which means there is an audience sitting on each side of the stage, which, according to Harris, would "make the show more intimate."

On the technical side of things, Harris put his own spin on the show and added multimedia elements.

"In this specific show, tech plays a big role; the lights are purposefully not that complicated, because we want to create a sense of monotony," stage manager Natalie Berg said. "But we have a video stream going of the entire show. It's a live feed that goes on a projector, and it adds a lot to the show because it's another view to watch the show other than one of the three sides."

A whole new element adds to the stress of putting a production together. Harris faced some challenges while directing this show, but managed to make everything work out in the end.

"I've been really lucky to have such responsive and hardworking actors; it's made [the show] a whole lot easier," Harris said. "Otherwise it was tough to direct in the round because I had to make very sure that at all moments, there [was] something that was animated for the audience to watch, even if they may not be able to see the person that [was] acting."

The one thing Harris was most excited about was to see it all come together in a final product.

"My favorite part has been seeing it evolve, seeing it going from just a wisp of an idea into a show," Harris said. "Having the actors totally together in a set that compliments them, and all of the sound and the ambiance that will make it a real thing."



FIRST: A view of the stage from the back of the theater. Nussbacher, senior Marchall Westall, and junior Laura Hannibal act as their characters. SECOND: Nussbacher calls to Westall, insulting him and calling him a coward. THIRD: Hannibal's character looks off into the distance as she too gets a vision from Earth. FOURTH: Hannibal's character makes an effort to get rid of Nussbacher's character by stabbing her. This doesn't do anything, seeing as they're already dead. All photos by Simi Srivastava



LEFT Sophomore Annelise Nussbacher's character, Inez, looks off into the distance, and she sees people living in her old room down on Earth. Nussbacher says that Inez is "Not just the textbook sadist. Her sadism comes from her own insecurity and her own self loathing." photo by Simi Srivastava

SIMI SRIVASTAVA

# Pretend Parents

by Audrey Sun

**Junior and Senior students are parents for robot babies and teachers for preschool kids.**

As students hold their robot babies in Laressa Ridge's child psychology class, their faces show a variety of expressions. Some are overjoyed to be taking care of this "robo baby" as junior Ashley Joshi calls it, and others would show faces of disgust. Along with all the other students with babies, Joshi must take care of this infant for the next 42 hours, as part of her grade.

"I was excited to get the baby since I knew that it would be so fun to take care of," junior Angela Kempf-Luu said. "It wasn't until after I got the baby that I realized it would be such a pain to take care of".



TOP: Preschool children come to Saratoga High to play and be taught by the child psychology students in Ms. Laressa Ridge's class. *photo by Noy Shaked*

ABOVE: Junior Nadya Shahin takes notes as her student is playing around. The notes help her learn about the student. *photo by Noy Shaked*

Getting the baby seems fun at first, but after taking care of it for a period of time, it becomes very painful. Getting up in the middle of the night to burp the baby is just one of the many jobs the students have to do in order to get an 'A' on the project.

"I remember the time that the baby wailed in the middle of my third period class," Joshi said. "It was wailing, and it was embarrassing when I had to walk out of the room to calm the baby. I had to pat its back, check the diaper, and if all of that didn't work, I got frustrated".

Taking care of the babies made the students realize how hard it was being a parent.



CHATTING WITH KIDS: Senior Nicolas Doyen talks with a preschool student and plays with her. Students are required to play with the preschool kids that come. *photo by Noy Shaked*



PLAYING BASKETBALL: Senior Amanda Wu plays with her preschool kid as she holds a basketball. Aside from teaching them lessons, getting to know the kid by interacting with them is another thing they have to do. *photo by Noy Shaked*

Some students liked the experience, others thought that it was the worst experience ever.

"Robo babies are the best way to convince teens that abstinence is the best thing in the world," Kempf-Luu said. "The babies are hard to connect to, annoying, and woke people up at 4 am to feed and burp them for an hour."

Aside from taking care of robot babies, another big assignment the student in child psychology had to do was take care of real kids.

"We teach them lessons like art, math, science, and writing," Joshi said. "We also have to have an interesting project, like color by numbers for math, or a painting, or a treasure map with the letter X."

Interacting with the kids have been a big part of child psychology. Each person taught for nine weeks, two times per week.

"We did them in rotations, so it was 3 weeks teaching, then 3 weeks of campus at a different school, then 3 weeks teaching etc," Joshi said.

Teaching the preschoolers have been very fun a lot if not all of the students. The kids they taught and interacted with would be excited to see them each time, and they always look forward to playing with the bigger kids.

"We make lesson plans and teach the preschoolers at world of discovery," Kempf-Luu said. "Off campus, we help the children they're stuck on classwork or aren't staying on task. In general we play with the kids when we're not teaching them."

Students like Joshi wanted to take child psych since they were in freshman year, but they couldn't since the course is a junior and senior course only.

"I actually knew I wanted to take child psych my freshman year when I saw people walking around with babies. The preschool buddies was just an added bonus for me!" Joshi said. ♦

GETTING THE BABY: Junior Daniel Castronovo gets his robot baby and awaits instructions from his teacher, Ms. Laressa Ridge. *photo by Noy Shaked*





**CHU FACES FELLOW FENCER SAMUEL KWONG** in a practice open bout at the Cardinal Fencing Club at Stanford University, where she practices up to five times a week. “I try to work on new techniques and new strategies and try to do new moves and experiment [during practice],” Chu said. “It doesn’t really matter what the score is.”  
*photo by carolyn sun*

### Scoreboard

Finals	Julia Greene	15-6
Semi-Finals	Christina Boitano	15-9
Top 8	Anastasia Turin	15-4
Top 16	Sara Papp	15-11
Top 32	Deborah Abiri	15-9
Top 64	Lotus Lum	15-11



# Fencer's “First first”

by carolyn sun

**Freshman Lillian Chu won her first gold medal at the North American Cup national tournament on March 16 in Ohio.**

“En garde!” the referee warned. “Ready, fence.”

Just six minutes earlier, the two saber fencing finalists had been trying to calm their nerves in preparation for the final bout. Now, with the score 14-6, the leading fencer needed just one more point to be proclaimed the winner.

Within two seconds, freshman Lillian Chu landed a scoring touch and screamed in triumph, making her the winner of the March North American Cup (NAC) Division II Women’s Saber.

Fencing since she was 12 years old, Chu won an NAC this year on March 16 in Cincinnati, Ohio. The 61 fencers competing in the Division II saber event in the national tournament included participants from Canada and Mexico.

“I felt really happy because it was the first time I won a national championship,” Chu said.

Ken Chu, Lillian’s father, accompanied Lillian to the tournament.

“I’m really proud of her,” said father Chu. “She got pretty close before, but never quite winning [the gold medal]. She worked hard at it, so she earned it through her hard work and dedication.”

After achieving a C rating in March 2011, Lillian entered this year’s tournament with hopes of advancing to a B rating.

To prepare for the tournament, Chu took additional group and private lessons, practiced more drills and footwork, and temporarily adjusted her diet and sleep schedule.

“About two days prior to the tournament, I would eat lots of carbohydrates and drink lots of water. I slept earlier to get used to jet lag,” Chu said. “I didn’t do much hard exercise before because I needed to save the energy for the tournament.”

Although the tournament went smoothly, there were a few aspects Chu had not expected.

“When I got into top eight, I was really surprised that some people got in. Some lower ratings were in the tournament while higher ratings weren’t,” Chu said. “A D rating got into top eight and earned her C.”

The tournament finale was not as challenging as Chu had predicted.

“I think [my opponent] wasn’t really trying to fence,” Chu said. “I think her mental fight was already gone, so she didn’t really put up much of a fight, which I was really surprised about.”

Since Chu had faced her opponent before at the Junior Olympics in February and had seen her fence many times, she anticipated a tough bout.

“She is usually never non-aggressive,” Chu said. “The last time I fenced her, I lost really badly. The score was around 15-4.”

Winning the NAC upgraded Chu from a C rating to a B rating, making her eligible for Division I events. The higher rating also gives Chu an advantage in pools, the first part of the tournament in which fencers are divided into groups and given one chance to fence every other participant.

“Now I have a better chance to get a better pool because I am rated and ranked higher than others,” Chu said. “If your ranking is higher at the pools, you get to fence worse people, which gives you the opportunity to win a tournament.”

With an NAC added to her list of achievements, Chu hopes to continue improving.

“I want to get an A rating,” Chu said. “I really enjoy [fencing], and I want to do my best.”

**CAREFULLY WATCHING A BOUT**, Chu refs for two of her friends while taking a breather. “I just determine who’s touch it was,” Chu said. “Usually in open fencing, you have to ref so it is more fair. Everyone gives everyone advice.”  
*photo by carolyn sun*

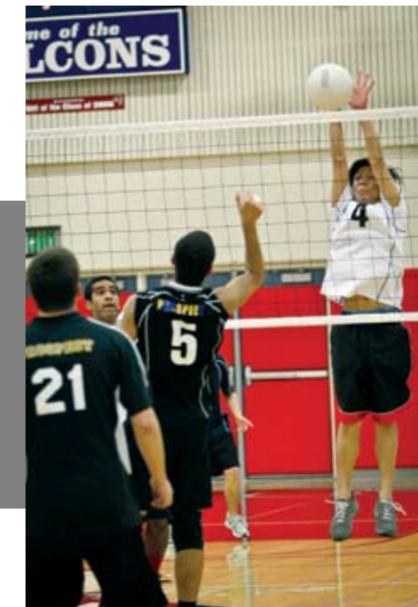
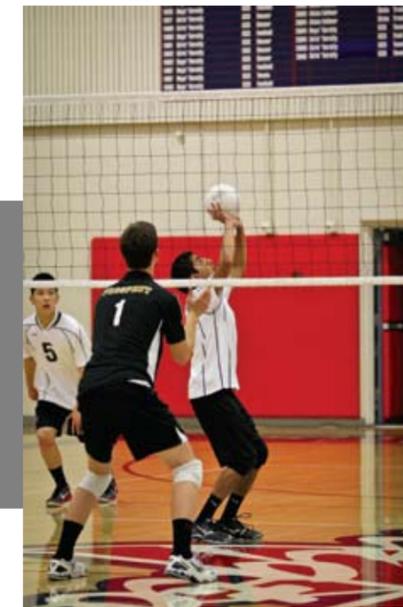
# AIMING A BIT HIGHER

by trung vandinh



NEAR THE END OF SARATOGA'S HOME GAME AGAINST PROSPECT HIGH, team captain Brandon Pak (12) gets ready to strike the enemy team. Pak then hits the ball into an uncovered area of the court and scores his team the winning point.  
*photo by now-and-forever*

BEFORE THE ATTACK, Paras Unadkat (12) receives the ball from one of the passers and is about to set the ball to opposite hitter Brandon Pak (12).  
*photo by now-and-forever*



DURING THE GAME, Teddy Sun (11) successfully blocks a powerful attack from the Prospect team's opposite hitter.  
*photo by now-and-forever*

**After the successfully placing first in the league, Saratoga will be moving up into a league with stronger teams and will need to try harder if they want to do as well as now in the following years.**

In the 2012 volleyball season, the boy's varsity team showed miraculous improvement in the way they played compared to how they played last year, but before the team started playing in February, the depressing losing streak of the previous years moored the team's confidence, not having won a single game for two years; however, the first game of the season proved victorious, and the team crushed their opponents three to one. From there the team went on a winning streak, scoring enough wins to place first in the league.

This was a happy surprise for the team and their coach, Daniel Lopez, who trained them for the season. "I cannot express how rewarding it feels to see them win against such unfavorable odds," Coach Lopez said. "But I know I shouldn't be surprised since they all worked their hardest."

Lopez gives credit for the amazing season to the hard work from the returning players, with the seniors as the pillar of support. The team's captain Brandon Pak has been playing in the varsity team for three years in total and competently led his team to victory this year. Brandon said, "Our team didn't win anything the last two times, so [this season] made me extremely proud and happy to be on this team."

This streak left a redeeming impression for the team and set a high expectations for the following years to keep up the work.

For the teams current juniors of the varsity team, they

will be filling the role as mentors for the new players when they become seniors in the next season. Also, as a result of the team's rank this season, the team will most likely move up a league into a higher division where the opponents will be tougher and the games will be more difficult.

In response to the probable division rank-up, sophomore Kevin Tran said, "That's great! It would be no fun if it wasn't challenging too. I hope that we can do just as well in terms of wins next year in the more difficult league." Tran has been playing volleyball for two years and is to join the varsity team; he knows the difficulties he and the team will have to face but stays optimistic.

The junior varsity captain Hareet Jhutti will also move up to varsity next year and will be a valuable core player in the team. He said that when all is done and the goal has been accomplished, the only thing to do is try harder and aim higher.

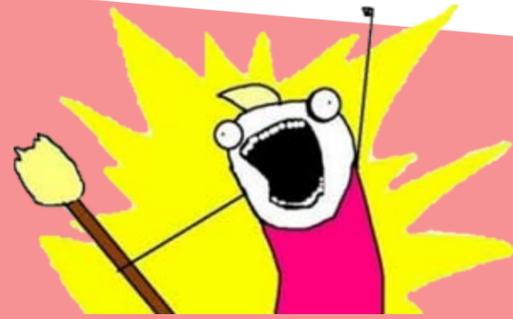
AFTER THEIR FIRST LOST, coach Daniel Lopez works hard to train the team for the next game.  
*photo by now-and-forever*



This is coach Lopez's last year teaching at Saratoga High because he will be moving back to L.A.

# Preserve ALL the memories!

York Wang



## How the paper time capsules are created and delivered to students

As bustling students walk out of the small gym during lunch with their newly acquired yearbooks on Wednesday, May 23, loud chattering resonates throughout the school while others flip throughout its “legend gloss 100 #” paper. Many students take for granted a yearbook each year; however, they do not understand the true work that goes into the making of these thick, heavy books.

For everybody on the Talisman staff, the yearbook is the work of an entire year and then some. Development of each year’s rendition actually begins in the last months of the previous year. Covers and themes are brainstormed after sending that year’s final spreads to the printer.

This year’s yearbook theme is “180 days”; unlike all Talisman yearbooks before it, it is organized in a chronological order. Every previous yearbook has been divided into different sections, such as student life, academics, and sports. Instead, the Talisman 2012 covered the school year into different sections, with each representing a different month throughout the school year. It covers the 180 days of school on a day-to-day basis.

“It was a lot more efficient than the previous method,” said senior editor-in-chief Ailene Nguyen. “We could create articles directly after the events with fresh memories rather than at the end of the year.”

However interesting the division of yearbooks is, stories and layout are also important. Researching and writing articles takes effort as well as time; the events must happen before the writers can create the piece. Layout is also particularly important as visual appeal is crucial to a yearbook.

“Everybody on the staff had their weaknesses and strengths,” said junior head designer Cody Cai. “This way it’s easier for everybody. For me, I am a designer and creativity is easier than story writing for me.”

In addition to creating the yearbook, distributing it is equally important. The team received 106 boxes filled with yearbooks a day or two before they are given to students. On distribution day itself, the staff had to move 50 lb boxes of yearbooks from the Journalism room to the small gym as well as set up the dispersion unit.

“Distribution day went pretty smoothly,” said Cai. “We didn’t have as many damaged books as last year because we had each one individually wrapped during the shipment process.”

The end result was a beautiful book, created by the Talisman staff and loved by Saratoga High’s students.

“This year’s yearbook is amazing!” said freshman Jonathan Huie. “I didn’t really have high hopes based off of my middle school yearbooks but this one exceeded expectations.”



**LOOKING BACK** (top) Jonathan Huie (9) gets his first glance at the yearbook in the quad after attaining it on May 23. *photo by York Wang*

**INTENSE SCRUTINY** (right) Josh Pi (9) focuses on the yearbook in the quad during lunch to absorb every little detail. *photo by York Wang*

**THE PROCESS** (from far bottom left to right) 1) Jonathan Yang (10) asks Mr. Heyman about his overdue textbooks in the library during lunch so he can receive his yearbook. 2) A line of freshmen pile up in front of the steps leading to the small gym on distribution day, all eager to receive their yearbook. 3) Yearbook staff cater to the students’ yearbook pre-orders in alphabetical order in the small gym during lunch and tutorial. 4) Ailene Nguyen (12) and Angie Chang (12) hand out yearbooks to the students at one of the many stations for receiving pre-ordered yearbooks. 5) Students, yearbook in hand, walk to lunch after obtaining the thick, heavy books. 6) Kristyn Nakahira (9) and Audrey Sun (9) flip through the detailed pages during lunch near the quad steps. *photo by York Wang*



# THE STUDENT'S STUDENT

by vanessa wang

## Sophomore Eric Taw forms a tutoring club to help Bay Area students achieve success in school.

Sophomore Eric Taw scrolls through essay after essay, editing and proofreading his classmates' arguments based on *All Quiet on the Western Front* until words begin swimming through his mind.

This is only one of the things Taw does as a tutor and founder of the SHS tutoring club, which offers free tutoring to any student in need, mainly SHS students.

Taw explained that his main goal for the club was to aid not necessarily the Saratoga community but in San Jose, where education isn't often the top priority for the city government.

"I especially wanted to help low-income students who strive to do well in school but can't because of their financial status or because their school simply does not have the proper resources," Taw said.

Taw created the club with a desire to help the community.

"I thought of what talents I could utilize in order to help those around me," he said. "Our lives tend to be very education-oriented, so I began this club to use the excellent education we've all received as a service to the community."

The club is open to assisting any student at SHS with whatever subject they need help in, providing that a volunteer is available. When a student is in need of a tutor, Taw notifies the club's Facebook group to find a volunteer.

"It really depends on the tutor's preference. I let them choose where they want to go and who they want to tutor," Taw said.

Junior Cynthia Chen often steps up to aid students who need help.

"I tutor on and off in chemistry, various math subjects and frequently in psychology," Chen said. "My goal is to make sure that anyone who needs help with school is given the help they need to succeed in the class."

Taw is an active tutor as well, helping students understand concepts in chemistry and algebra.

However, some members, but not all, prefer to help children read through Reading Partners.

Reading Partners is a South Bay organization dedicated to aiding children from low-income communities with reading.

The organization not only provides one-on-one instruction to children in high-need elementary schools, but also an opportunity for volunteers to make a difference in a child's life.

"These children's reading skills are often much lower than those in higher-income communities," Taw said.

Sophomore Vivian Wang enjoyed her experience volunteering

for Reading Partners.

"There is a welcoming atmosphere, and I really enjoyed helping out," Wang said.

Taw was amazed at how quickly his club had grown to help students and children.

"I think we've come a long way from a vague starting idea to something that has substance and results," Taw said. "We plan to do big things next year."

Chen agreed, saying that while they may not be professional, they are able to provide help for those in need.

"I love it," Chen said. "It's great that this club gives the opportunity for students to teach fellow students."

Taw added that this experience was beneficial to not only the students but the tutors as well.

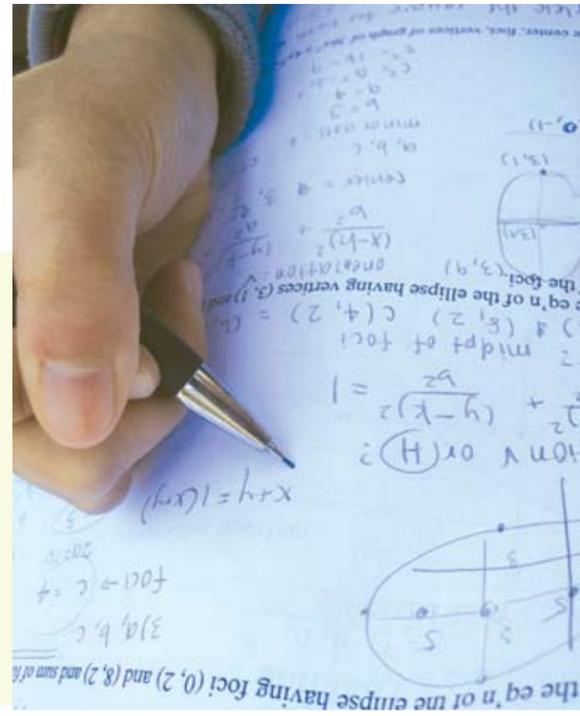
"My original goal was to help others better their education," Taw said, "but some tutors even came back to me saying their own lives were changed because of this tutoring experience."



**SOPHOMORE ERIC TAW THINKS** over a biology question that freshman Catherine Cheng has asked during a tutoring session in the math quad. "[Taw] has really laid a strong foundation for me to keep on building on," Cheng said. *photo by vanessa wang*



**READING PARTNERS** Coordinator Lauren Silk and sophomore volunteers Julia Lee, Vivian Wang and Jaskiran Nat display a book they teach San Miguel Elementary students to read on Nov. 11. "By helping these kids I can pass on my love of reading to them," Wang said. *photo by kristen zung*



**PRACTICE PROBLEMS** Junior Cynthia Chen demonstrates an algebra problem at a lunch tutoring session. "There's no charge for tutoring," Chen said. "It's great for people who just need a bit of help." *photo by vanessa wang*



**JUNIOR CYNTHIA CHEN HELPS SOPHOMORE CANDICE ZHENG** with algebra in the math quad at tutorial. Tutors often allowed their students to choose where and when they met. *photo by vanessa wang*



INTERACT-ION Juniors Jason Chao and Evelyn Lee sign up new members while junior Michelle Won unfurls the banner of the Interact club. Interact is a community service club with one of the largest member populations. *courtesy of Now and Forever studios*

# The Passion To give

by devin zhao

**Junior Michael Bancroft's club, like many others, give back to the community by actively doing community service and helping others.**

At the beginning of each school year, students take time to adjust to new classes and schedules, so forming a new club is probably not on the list of to-do things at school for many students. However, junior Michael Bancroft is an exception to that.

His club, Under the Roof Reading Begins: Saratoga Chapter, formed in September, is relatively small compared to giants such as Interact and Key Club, but still holds its unique values.

Under the Roof Reading Begins: Saratoga Chapter is part of an organization that gives books to those who are less fortunate and unable to afford books.

"We also donate books to areas that we can't reach directly by car, such as Los Angeles," said Bancroft.

Although the club was created just this year, it already has 20 active members.

"Many others participate by posting on the club Facebook page, so the club really isn't as small as it looks," said Bancroft with a smile.

Bancroft said that creating and being the president of the club is a job that requires a lot of effort. He said that he often spends a quarter of his time on the club itself.

"Creating the club seemed generally easy, but in reality it is time-consuming with the paperwork and the recruitment [of new members]," said Bancroft. "Meanwhile, being the president is also time-consuming. It isn't easy to organize fundraisers to buy books and to wait for charities to respond back so we can deliver the books to them."

According to Bancroft, getting the books and delivering them are just as hard as planning. He usually takes a group to travel around, and has a box of books handy for a quick donation. He also said that the club covers a respectable area for one of its size: the whole San Jose area.

"We went as far north as Milpitas, and we went as far south as southern San Jose," said Bancroft.

Meanwhile, according to Bancroft, getting the books to donate to charities can be tedious and time-consuming.

"We usually hold book drives to get the books to donate to charities," said Bancroft. "At other times, we hold fundraisers to get money to buy books from stores, such as the Book-Go-Round. I sometimes have to sacrifice my own time for fundraisers."

Junior Harrison Su, a member of the club, said that the club generally requires a lot of effort, but the end is rewarding.

"Sometimes I feel that I spend too much time on the club and not enough time anywhere else," said Su. "But when I see the final reward, I feel that that effort has not been wasted."

Bancroft hopes that the club will become a more popular club over the years. He also hopes that every child in the San Jose area can receive books from his club.

"The club is small right now," said Bancroft, "but if we spread out the word enough, I'm not going to be surprised if we double or triple in both members and the number of books we donate per year."



Right: Juniors Michael Bancroft and Sam Shinnick, and sophomore Lauren Casey-Clyde help load books onto the Salvation Army trailer. Getting the books, according to Bancroft, was a long and tedious process. *photo by Michael Bancroft*

Down: Bancroft, Shinnick, and Casey-Clyde go to deliver the books to the Salvation Army. "It was hard to take all the books to them," said Casey-Clyde. "There were so many in the car that we used." *photo by Michael Bancroft*



# WE WILL IMPROVE UNTIL WE ARE THE BEST.

BY Andre Baluni

## Varsity swim team, is it better than before?

Many people may think that they have better stuff to do instead of swimming because they may say that it is lame or boring. But the few that accepted the sport and practiced until their muscles were sore and cramping may be healthier than others.

Many doctors recommend swimming as a healing activity to participate in after you get injured. And from a lot of people's experiences it really does help.

The varsity swim team has improved a lot over the years according to Christian Bonner the swim coach. "Many of our good swimmers may be leaving for college but I am not so worried about next year's team. I am sure they will do great."

Each year more and more athletic swimmers join the team and are excited to start practice everyday after school. The coach gives them the set and they jump in and do. "In the past years we didn't do very well in the swim meets but this year we almost beat every team we went against," said Bonner.

"The sets the coach gives us are hard but I have improved a lot since the beginning of the year. I've been doing much better in meets and have been dropping a lot of time," said swimmer James Guzzo.

Even when you're sick the coach makes you do dry land which is an out of the pool exer-

cise which continuously in shape. "There are no breaks in my practice," said Bonner, "when one set is over I make them go right into the next one. When someone slacks off I tell the whole group to start the set over. They may hate me but they are improving because of it."

At the meets this year they are able to start off in the lead because of their new fast swimmers and staying there for the rest of the meet. Los Gatos is the only team they have not beaten but they plan to next year being sure they will be getting even more good swimming.

"I have a feeling that each year we will be getting better and better until we are able to beat every other team with ease," said Bonner.



(Top) Aidan Burns swimming butterfly at the Homestead swim meet.

(Right) Kia Hosseinian and James Guzzo resting on the wall and looking at their times on the timer after they finish their race.

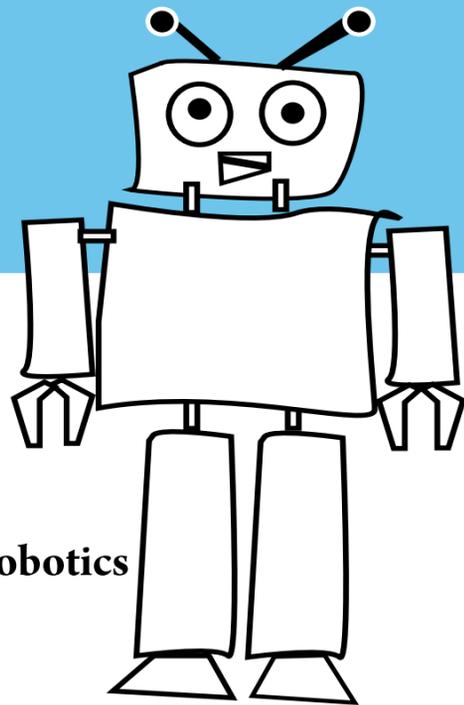
(Bottom) Cameron and Tyler Borch dive off the block at the beginning of their race.

(Left) Andre Baluni and Steven Cho taking the lead in the 200 freestyle.



# ROBOTS IN THE ROOM

by catherine cheng



## Junior Stanley Yip tells about his past and present in robotics club and what he can do to improve it for the future.

Beep, beep, boop. These are not the standard noises of a classroom, but they are just part of the robotics room's normal ambience.

"When I was a freshman, I was inspired by the upperclassmen in the club and felt very connected when I worked with them after school," junior Stanley Yip said. "I felt a sense of achievement when a simple vision of a design became reality in just six weeks."

As the years went by, Stanley has experienced a lot more than most people have in the robotics club.

While the majority of students were probably doing homework at 6 p.m. or eating dinner, Stanley stayed in the shop, working away at his robot during building season until late at night.

"I think during building season, the latest I've stayed in that room would be around one to 2 a.m.," Stanley said.

Ever since Cordell Hollingsworth, a former captain of Mechanical Science and Engineering Team (MSET), graduated, the members are working very hard by constantly trying to improve the robotics club and gain new leadership.

"The team definitely moved forward; we won the Silicon Valley regionals in 2010. I really want to keep the team's momentum going," Stanley said.

Robotics have given Stanley a greater insight into the programming, electrical and mechanical side of things. He also has made a lot of friends and gained knowledge by working with teammates.

At the moment, the team consists of one president, senior Michael Zuccarino, and three vice presidents, sophomore Ivan France, junior Todd Nguyen and senior Rod Jafari. This year, they led the group through the rigorous robotics competition called the First Robotics Competition (FRC).

In January, the problem of the year was released, and the team had exactly six weeks to build their contraption. This year's theme revolved around basketballs.

"We are given a large manual that we have to follow step by step. There is an evaluation before the competition to see if everything is set up right," Stanley said. "[If we fail the evaluation], we get disqualified."

The real fun happens during the competition, Stanley said. Not only does every team compete their hearts out, but sometimes, unusual things happen that make a scene.

"Last year, I saw a robot just light on fire, and it had to be put out by a fire extinguisher," sophomore David Sparkman said. "On some occasions the 120-pound robots just lose control and are forced to spin until they run out of battery."

David also said during technical difficulties, the sponsors would blast out music and everyone would just break out dancing. These events relieved some of the stress put into the competition.

This year, they became semi-finalists in the competition, but they fell short to Team 254 (Bellarmine) and Team 971 (Mountain View). Even though they didn't win, they became Alliance Captains for the first time, which meant they could pick any three schools to join their team for the length of the competition.

"This was a very successful season. Not only did we become Alliance Captains, but we have progressed tremendously," Stanley said.

Overall, the members are proud to be part of the robotics club. Stanley says he enjoys working together with his teammates as he meets up with them every Sunday afternoon, and encourages anyone who's interested to join.



DURING THE COMPETITION, being on the sideline is anything but relaxing, "It looked so crazy knowing that robots can shoot better than I can," freshman Anisha Nagarajan said. *photo by David Sparkman*

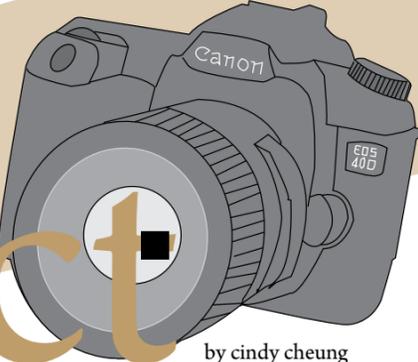


JUST BEFORE THE COMPETITION, junior Stanley Yip fixes and modifies his team robot, with the help of other robotics club members. *photo by David Sparkman*

PEOPLE SPONTANEOUSLY START DANCING DURING THE COMPETITION. Whenever a technical difficulty occurs, the room turns black and widely known song gets blasted out of the speakers. "It's not lame at all it's awesome!" Sophomore David Sparkman said. "The only people who look dumb are the ones not dancing to the music." *photo by David Sparkman*



# Dixel Perfect



by cindy cheung

## Talented students expose stunning photography to the light.

As the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words. They are like snippets of experiences that can always be referred to.

This year, more and more students at SHS are starting to appreciate and master the well-respected art of photography. From individuals who take photos as a hobby, to the photography club, which explores all the fields of photography.

Juniors Angela Kempf-Luu and Todd Nguyen, who are the presidents of the photography club, helped bring together a group of interested photographers. The two presidents present fascinating techniques and different types of photography to the members each meeting. This year, the club grew from a tiny group of three, into a club of 20 members. Some members who joined the photography club even came from Harker.

Kempf-Luu believes that people shouldn't be limited by anything in photography. She encourages using what is available.

Photography also proves to be a great way to meet people and make new friends.

"It's really fun to [take photographs]," Nguyen said. "Not just because of the photos you produce, but also the people that you meet doing it."

Junior Kristen Zung, who moved to Saratoga from Taiwan this year, became known for her amazing photography. Although she only has two cameras, she loves to photograph candid shots of people with "personalities that shine through their smiles," interesting textures, and peaceful objects found in nature, Zung said.

In eighth grade, Zung first became interested in photography because of the different point of views seen through every individual's photos. She finds that this is the one way she can really connect with everyone else around her.

"Everyone sees beauty from different angles in different forms," Zung said. "Photography is my way of expressing myself and the world from my perspective."

Sophomore Jason Li, who is a part of the yearbook staff, also shares this view. Although he is not very good at art, photography is a way to express his artistic side, said Li.

Li began relatively early, and has been continuing ever since he took yearbook in sixth grade. He uses a Canon 7D, which is a Digital Single Lens Reflex Camera (DSLR), to shoot his photos. A DSLR is a digital camera that has larger image sensors to produce more versatile images of higher quality.

"It's not an easy art," Li said, "but being able to capture a moment in time is really pretty magical."

But how can students start documenting memorable and meaningful moments? These experts had different advice on how beginners should start off.

Nguyen advises new photographers to edit their photos until they are satisfied, whereas Luu just wants beginners to explore the environment.

Li's best tip is to read the instruction manual and learn the ways of the camera being used.

"Your camera is like a girlfriend. Become one with it," Li said. "Your photography is only as good as your relationship with your camera."



**SNAPPING THE SHOT**, students watch junior Kristen Zung as she captures the moment. *photo by todd nguyen* **GROUP PHOTO**, a group of photographers meet to take pictures right above the quad steps. *photo by janey heyman*



**CIRCUMLOCUTION**, junior photography club president Angela Kempf-Luu takes a photo with an interesting angle and pattern. *photo by angela kempf-luu*

**CHARLOTTE'S WEB**, Zung takes an up-close photo of a shimmering spider web. "I love to take pictures of textures of tree branches, and calming things in nature," Zung said. *photos by krsten zung*



**CHASING THE ACTION**, sophomore yearbook photographer Jason Li's favorite type of photo to shoot is sports. "It really tests how well you know your camera, and how good of an eye you have for the angle, and the timing," said Li. *photo by jason li*

**SWOOPING IN**, junior Todd Nguyen takes a photo of a bird delicately skimming the water. *photo by todd nguyen*

# A the epic Assassin Game

by marian chu

**Students participate in a cunning game where they must hold onto their spoon at all times and try to “kill” their targets.**

During lunch, you are walking quickly down the hallway of Saratoga High school with a spoon tucked in the front pocket of your backpack. You glance around looking for any suspicious faces that look like your “assassin.” Then suddenly, you feel a poke on your arm.

“Tag, you are out!” your assassin shouts. This is the typical way an assassin “kills” their target. The spoon assassin brigade is a game to test the students’ cunning skills. It only has a few rules to keep it simple.

“In the beginning of the game, everyone gets assigned a target, but you don’t know who your assassin is,” says freshman Michael Ong. “Then you try to tag your target when they aren’t holding their spoon. At the same time, you hold onto your spoon at all times in case your assassin will try to tag you.”

The last person in the game gets a reward, which is unique to different classes.

Since the beginning of the game, there are only a few people left; Ong is one of them. His next target is senior Carolynn Choi.

But some people aren’t as skilled as player Ong. Some

students don’t even hold onto their spoons, so they “die” really easily.

“My assassin, Joy [Tang], ran up to me after I came out of my World Geography class and poked me conspicuously until I confessed I didn’t have my spoon with me,” says freshman Sheryl Lin. “I had to give up my spoon to her. Then I was officially out of the game.”

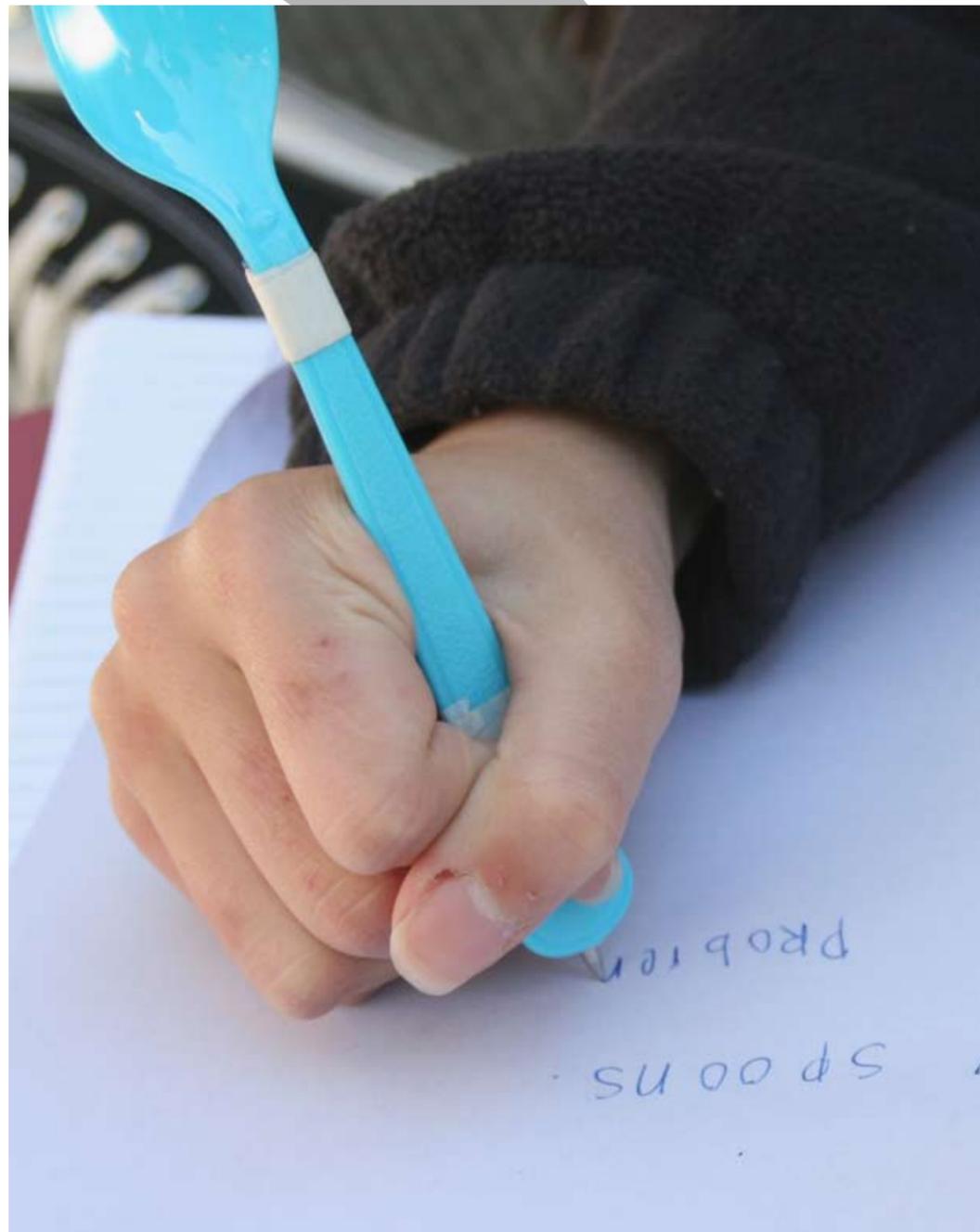
Lin wasn’t aware of her target, so she didn’t hold onto her spoon. Many students act the same way as Lin. This made it a lot easier for people that really wanted the reward to “kill” their targets.

“I tagged most of my previous targets easily since most of them never carried their spoon,” said Ong.

This game started in the beginning of second semester, but it hasn’t ended even with the upcoming finals. Ong said that it might end before finals since not that many people are still in the game.

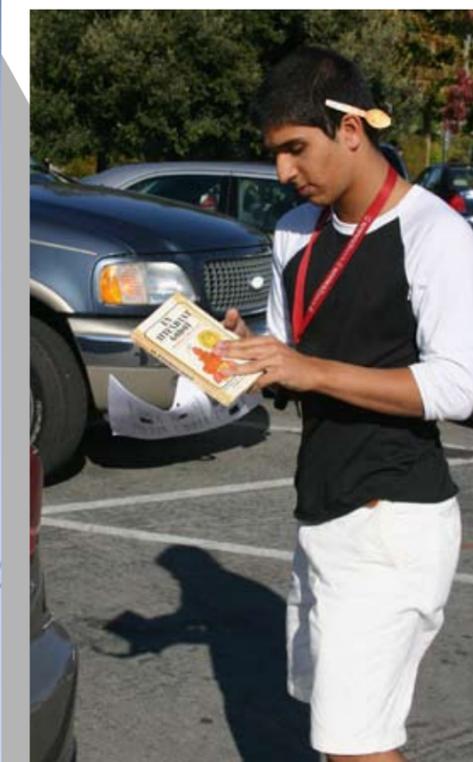
Many other classes already played this game, such as band, the Falcon staff, etc. They all ended already, though.

“It was a fun experience playing this epic game,” said Lin.



**WRITING A PROTEST**, Kayla Lenshoek (12) tapes a pen to a spoon to make a “spoon-pen” and used it to write a protest against banning the assassin game. *a photo by wren sutterfield (10)*

**WAITING FOR THE ASSASSIN**, Sesan Saadat (11) stands next to his car after school with his spoon hooked on his ear. He is reading a book called *En attendant Godot*. *photo by wren sutterfield (10)*



**KEEPING THE SPOON**, Cera Culbert (10) puts her pink spoon in her hair to show her assassin that she is holding onto the spoon. *photo by wren sutterfield (10)*

**HOLDING TIGHT**, Yashaswini Vuruputoor (10) and Yasmin Kakkar (10) smile at the camera as they walk to their next class during break. *photo by wren sutterfield (10)*

## >Then and Now:

How do you “kill” your targets?



“I tagged most of my previous targets easily since most of them never carried their spoon.” —freshman Michael Ong



“I sometimes stock my targets by finding out their schedule. Then if I have the same class as them, I wait for the right moment to strike.” —freshman Sheryl Lin

# MAPPING THE WAY TO SUCCESS

**MAP is exciting and brings in a new element to high school English. However, is it worth the trouble of switching from normal English?**

by Steven Fan

The man's eyes flick back and forth intently, cautious of the stifling darkness around him. A foil on his waist glimmers in the light of the dim lantern as it swings around through the empty courtyard. Suddenly, a figure leaps out of a nearby bush. Two blades clash, and the attacking figure retreats.

"Ha! Now I've...uh..." The figure stops. He wracks his head in great concentration and thought. "Andrew, what were the lines again?"

Andrew York and Jimmy Xiao are but two of the many students enrolled in English 9 MAP, a program designed to teach students about multimedia and the various uses it contains in modern and ancient history. As a result, most large assignments come in the form of group projects, most of which are caught in a form of media, usually film.

The projects cover a wide berth of subjects, often requiring a multitude of different, specific skill sets to achieve anything remotely resembling a professional video. Often, individual members of the groups have to each take care of many different areas of the projects.

"It's really fun though," said Xiao, a freshman and actor in the video adaptation of Romeo and Juliet, Act V, Scene iii. "In the end, all the effort is really worth it for the kinds of videos we manage to create."

Why would students choose MAP instead of normal English? The question especially rises for freshmen, who have yet to experience high school English before making their course choices.

"I chose the course because I liked Multi-Media in 8th grade, which was fun and actually taught me a lot of new things I never knew," said freshman Indraneel Tambe.

Plus, in the case of a student not liking MAP, the choice of switching to a normal English class always lay open for most of the school year. This meant that even if students made a "bad" choice, they could still resolve it, and also have gained something from experiencing something new instead of the normal academic school course.

"There's not really any reason to not try it, but you should really only take MAP if you actually like multi media and that kind of stuff," said freshman Arman Vaziri. "It focuses on teaching you a really multimedia oriented course."

However, people should have no preconception that the MAP program only attracts certain kinds of people. As mentioned before, the projects in MAP often require several diverse talents, often simultaneously, and the people needed to fill these niches are just as unique and different.

From talented, rising actors with a bright future, like freshman Andrew York, to the quieter but just as important tech workers, such as editors and camera operators, like Nima Vassighi, English 9 MAP classes are an explosion of personality, learning, and excitement and a joy to have.



SEVERAL SHOTS FROM A TEAM PROJECT, a film reenactment of Romeo and Juliet, Act V Scene iii. Like most other MAP projects, students are encouraged to use a form of media as the medium for their project, as opposed to a simple, basic essay. The end result is students achieving at the very least a basic understanding of multi-media and the effects of it on modern culture, as well as the many possible applications of it in daily life.



WALLS OF MS. HEAD'S ENGLISH MAP CLASSROOM, filled with art and drawings from various projects completed during the school year. Pictures are graded on visual composition and various rules of photography, as well as symbolic representation, among a

## >Then and Now:

### What we learned this year



"I learned how to professionally compose graphics and how to film projects and plays." —freshman Aditya Chetia



"I learned to use elements of art effectively and to enjoy art." —freshman Varna Jammula



# Mapping it out

## Students from the Media Arts Program recount their experience about their trip to Los Angeles in May.

by Rohan Hardikar

Sitting in the audience of Cirque du Soleil's recent show, Iris, is junior Ankita Chadha, who waits anxiously for the masterpiece to unfold. She is learning all about the media industry and watching Iris is the perfect show for her to watch to further her knowledge.

Chadha is on the Media Arts Program field trip to the Los Angeles area, where the students were able to witness many works of art in the media business. The participants had the chance to visit famous film industry locations, such as Hollywood Boulevard, Universal Studios, Warner Brothers, and Paramount Pictures.

"We actually stayed in Marina Del Rey, and we took tours at University of Southern California and Chapman University because they have really good film schools," said Chadha. "Also, we saw some Comedy Sports shows at the Santa Monica Pier."

The actual trip itself was only open to members of the junior class in any of the three Media Arts Program electives, and was designed so that the students were able to learn about the professional media industry. According to Chadha, the trip was optional to go on, but was "strongly recommended."

Junior Henry Wei also joined Ankita on the journey to the film studios and the universities.

"All the places we went to were awesome. We learned a lot and in general the trip was really cool," Wei said.

The trip provided unique experiences so that the participants could learn a multitude of skills that

would be beneficial for them.

"As MAP students we work very closely with media and technology and the entire trip seemed to portray what we could do with the skills we've learned, and how we could develop those skills in the future, whether it be in college or in the actual industry," Chadha said.

Although learning about the media industry was the main part, the students who went had an amazing experience.

"We grew a lot closer from spending so much time with each other and truly became a family, and I think everyone has amazing memories from the trip," Chadha said.

Junior Haley Wong also took away great memories from the trip.

"It was so much fun getting closer to the MAP students and I really feel like we know each other so much better," said Wong. "Hanging out with the teachers was so much fun and all those bus rides will never be forgotten."

Taking the time to go to famous places like Hollywood Boulevard, Universal Studios, and Warner Brothers proved to be a great learning experience and one of the most beneficial school field trips, according to Chadha.

In general, the participants loved this trip, and encourage many of the future Media Arts Program students to take on learning experiences like this, so they develop important skills for the media industry.



**CRUISING AROUND TOWN**  
Juniors Vanessa Diez, Haley Wong, and Ankita Chadha pose outside the Warner Brothers studios in downtown Los Angeles. They toured the studio to learn about professional techniques. *photo by Ankita Chadha*



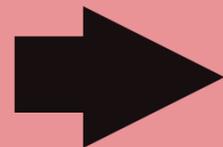
**LOOKING DOWN FROM ABOVE**  
(Left) The Media Arts Program students visited the Griffith Observatory as part of their tour of Los Angeles and the media arts buildings. *photo by Ankita Chadha*



**CHILLING IN THE STUDIO**  
(Top Right) Junior Vanessa Diez and MAP teacher Mr. Palma take a quick break on a couch on the set of the television series "Friends". "Being on sets of famous TV. shows was really cool because instead of watching the show on the screen, we were actually on the set," Diez said. *photo by Ankita Chadha*

**WHAT AN AMAZING VIEW**  
(Bottom right) Juniors Ankita Chadha and Haley Wong relax on the top of the Griffith Observatory. "The view of Los Angeles was beautiful, and this experience really summed up our trip," Wong said. *photo by Ankita Chadha*

# TIME IS ON MY SIDE



by aria hooman

## The track and field team perseveres through a challenging season despite major struggles and disadvantages

They came prepared. They were aware of what new challenges awaited. They had trained even harder. But sometimes, even that work just fails to be sufficient. This was one of those cases.

The track and field team had recently been upgraded to the next highest division due to their impressive success in the prior season. However, with a better division comes better competition. Despite their hard work, the team faced many hardships last season and ultimately was not able to achieve nearly as much success as last year.

Sophomore Will Guy, regarded as a very crucial aspect to the long distance team, was personally affected by the new and improved competition.

"My freshman year of track, I finished some of the races about 150 meters ahead of the competition. This year, the teams were much better. The best I did was second place," Guy said.

Guy's dilemma was similar to the problems faced by most of the team, and that loss of points strongly affected the ability of the team to score points. Some-

times they ended up only earning a quarter of the points their opponents did.

"It obviously was not encouraging to know that, while I had improved my times a bit from last year, I was actually doing worse in terms of the competition," Guy said.

Even if an athlete can accept the fact that they tried their hardest, it is still difficult to know there are factors like the strength and experience of the opposing team weighing down on their chances. And for track this season, there were plenty of discouraging problems like that.

Another one of these problems was an imbalance between the dedication and performance of certain events.

"I think it is fair to say that the other events may not have been as strong as they should have. The sprint team was lacking in people, for example," junior Sujay Khandekar said.

Just as a football or basketball team needs to have good players all around, the track team will surely fail if some of its integral parts are not functioning at the same caliber as the rest.

Additionally, the team suffered from the losses of some key athletes. One such runner was sophomore Sam Guy, who was afflicted by a serious back injury during the soccer season and rendered unable to participate in track this year.

"It was hard because I saw a lot of my friends running and beating their personal records, and even getting close to mine. I really wanted to be out there with them but I knew I couldn't," Guy said.

Guy also noted that many of the students who had participated in varsity track last year as juniors did not come back this year, tremendously limiting the team's capabilities.

Despite these problems, it seems that many of the athletes view this season with progressive thinking and focus on the positive.

"[The season] was a great success. It was definitely an uphill struggle because we were in a new league," Khandekar said. "However, we still had many people working hard and being successful."

Thus, the team managed to improve and put itself into a better position to do well in the coming years, even when the odds were stacked against them.

"The main goal is and always has been a league championship," head coach Archie Ljepava said. "I do think this goal is attainable, since right now we are still a very young team with lots to learn. I truly believe that we could win in every division if we can keep progressing the way we have this season."

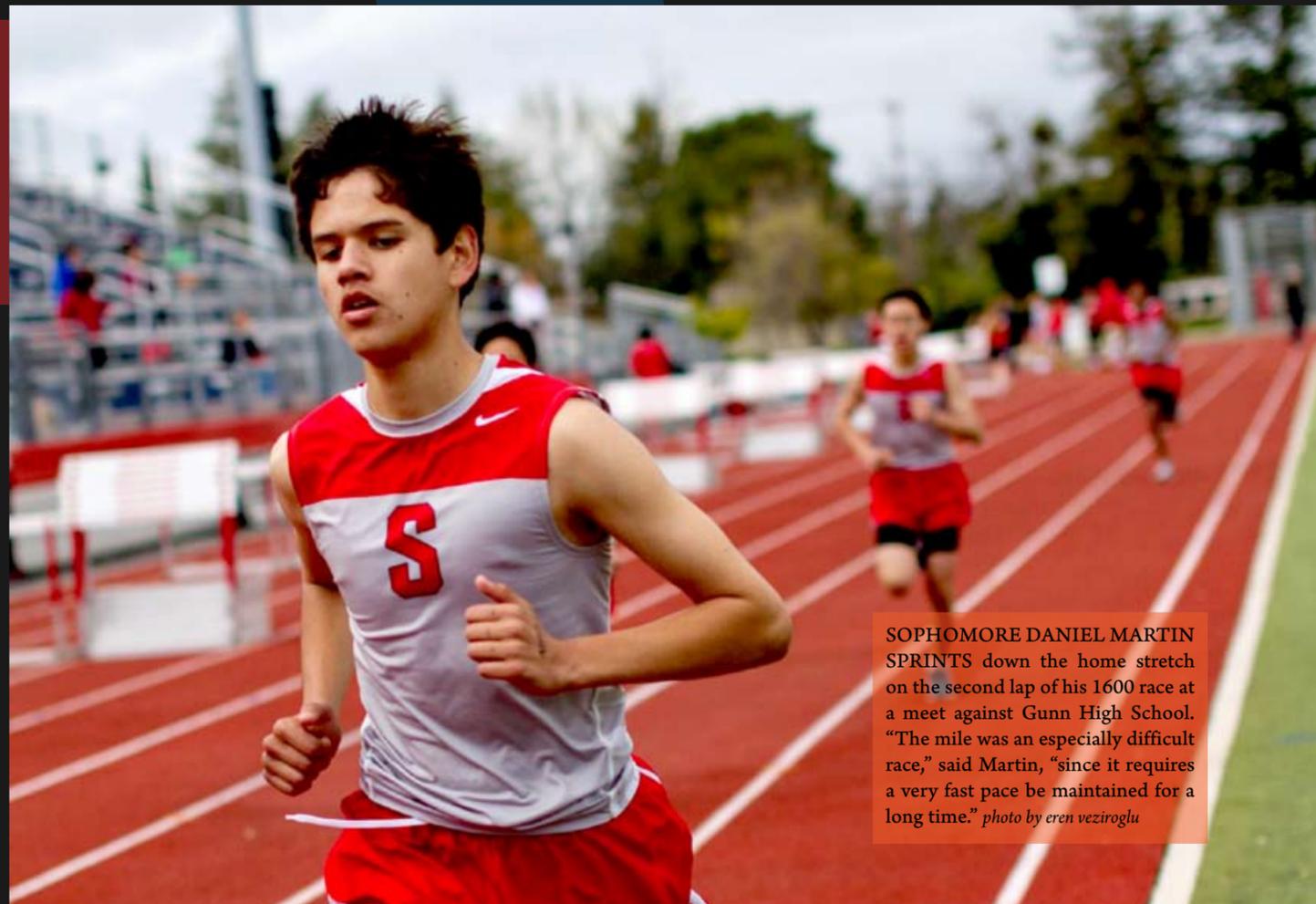
### >Then and Now: What we learned this year



"I feel like we did a lot worse because we lost every meet. We had a really strong distance team but we just couldn't score the points against the teams in the higher league —senior Eren Veziroglu



"It was a really good team and we were very supportive of each other. However, I think we needed to practice harder to perform better in the meets." —freshman Valerie Lensch



SOPHOMORE DANIEL MARTIN SPRINTS down the home stretch on the second lap of his 1600 race at a meet against Gunn High School. "The mile was an especially difficult race," said Martin, "since it requires a very fast pace be maintained for a long time." photo by eren veziroglu



(LEFT) SOPHOMORE EVAN LEE STRIKES A POSE while cruising at first place in the 1600 race at Milpitas. Although Evan was only 120 meters into the race, he seemed almost immune to fatigue. photo by eren veziroglu

(TOP RIGHT) JUNIOR DAVID ZARRIN, SENIOR EREN VEZIROGLU, AND SENIOR PARTHIV MOHAN running in the 800 meter race at Mountain View. "I felt that this year we had a very strong distance team," Veziroglu said. photo by eren veziroglu

(BOTTOM RIGHT) FRESHMAN STEVEN SUM SPEEDS down the last stretch of the 3200 meter race at Los Altos. Sum was considered the fastest runner on the team this season, and even broke the school's record for the 3200 meter, clocking in at below 10 minutes. photo by eren veziroglu



**RUNNING TO VICTORY** Sophomore Manini Desai races to the finish with a baton during a relay in fifth period P.E., with freshman Tia Jones close on her heels. Students in P.E. were not only graded on meeting minimum standards, but on effort as well. This challenged them to always try their hardest and push themselves in whatever they were doing. *photo by noy shaked*



**JOY IN THE FACE OF MISERY** Sophomore Jason Kao is encouraged by his partner, sophomore Ozgur Karacuk, as Kao performs air squats during a workout of the day in first period P.E. These workouts were typical of P.E. and could involve everything from carrying sandbags to rowing to lifting weights. "The workouts were pretty hard," Karacuk said. "They were pretty challenging, actually." *photo by rachel hull*



**JUST RUN WITH IT** Freshman Alex Kim forces himself to keep going in a relay on the track during fifth period P.E. The relay served as a way for students to improve their running skills, which they were tested on about once a week. Even if students passed these tests the first time, they were asked to run them again in the hopes of improving their times. *photo by noy shaked*

# Perils of P.E.

by rachel hull

**Despite intense workouts, challenging assessments, and difficult standards, students in P.E. have somehow still made it out alive.**

Gone are the days in which P.E. was nothing more than a time to bond with classmates or play enjoyable games. Instead, those days were replaced with ones filled to the brim with exercise that took true effort and commitment. The few laps or sports that students had to complete in middle school didn't hold a candle to the physical demand that high school P.E. required this year.

According to freshman Anjali Manghnani, a typical day in P.E. was often taxing on students both mentally and physically. Many students found activities which required high amounts of strength to be rather difficult.

"The most challenging part [of P.E.] for me was being able to lift more weights, because I don't have that much upper body strength," Manghnani said, "but I'm working on it."

Besides the actual difficulty of the class, the resentment some students felt towards P.E. was fueled by the rule that every student must earn 20 P.E. credits in order to graduate.

"Some of us are really, really busy," Manghnani said, "and to be able to fit sports or P.E. into our schedules makes us sacrifice other things in our lives."

Because participating in some form of physical activity is mandatory, it goes without saying that actually passing P.E. class is also necessary. However, according to Manghani, earning a passing grade could sometimes be a challenge.

"[Your grade] depended on how much effort you were willing to put in," Manghnani said. "If you tried hard every day and really challenged yourself, then you'd get a good grade. But if you were just slacking

off, it wasn't that easy to get a good grade."

According to freshman Sheryl Lin, the desire to get a high grade, as well as annoyance at the difficulty of the assessments and workouts, often drove P.E. students to drastic measures: namely, cheating.

"[Students] would cheat because maybe they're really tired and don't want to do as many reps as they should," Lin said. "In a workout, you don't do exactly the amount that you're supposed to; like if you're supposed to do nine push-ups, you might do eight but say you did nine."

Manghnani added that this sort of attitude often angered other students who earned the same grade and received the same amount of appreciation as those who did half the amount of work.

"[Cheating] is really unfair to those people who are actually trying," Manghnani said. "But I guess the reason that [students cheat] is that they're too lazy, they're too tired, or they just don't want to put in any effort."

To take measures against cheating, P.E. teachers gave P.E. dollars, which earned Otter Pops or days off, to reward students for dedication and honesty and assigned burpees or running to those who acted out.

Though students who had never set foot in a P.E. class often amused themselves by imagining P.E. students rolled up in agony, running miles every single day or being asked to lift impossible weights, Lin said while these notions held some truth, they were often over-exaggerated.

"The rumors are pretty accurate; they're just a pessimistic way of putting it," Lin said. "P.E. is fun. At times."

# Coming from Canada

by taegyun kim



## Freshman Boyu Pang learns about the unknown differences of the US and Canada as he adjusts himself to Saratoga High

Throughout this past year, freshman Boyu Pang walked throughout the main hallways onto his ways to class. From the outside, he would seem like any other ordinary student who was here from the start of middle school. He had many friends, had people to talk to, and spoke fluent English. However, what most except his friends did not know was that he is a Canadian citizen that contrary to opinion, originally had challenges adjusting to America.

Pang originally lived in the suburbs of Toronto, Canada until 8th grade. At that time, he moved to California due to family reasons.

“My dad received an offer from a firm located here, and he thought it would be good for us since this place (Silicon Valley) is one of the most vibrant areas in the world,” Pang said.

When Pang knew that he was going to come to America, he did expect there to be some differences. However, when he came to SHS, he noticed differences that he didn’t realize were there between Canada and the US.

“Here, students take 7 classes per 1 semester, but back in Canada, students take only 4 classes per semester,” said Pang. “Also, in Canada, everyone took the same level of math, unlike here.”

Pang also bumped into some vocabulary difference between the two countries. “Some words in Canada that make sense didn’t make sense in this school,” Pang said. “For example, in Canada the word “eh” was frequently used. However, in America that word was not used, so that was something different,” said Pang.

Because of this vocabulary difference, Pang first had difficulty having conversations with students.

“When American students were talking to me, I first didn’t know what “hella something” meant because Canadian stu-

dents did not use that term,” said Pang. “That made the first conversations pretty hard for me.

Despite all of these differences, Pang managed to adjust to his new school by joining many clubs and trying to meet as many people as possible.

“I think that joining Band was probably the biggest thing that helped me out because I met so many people there,” said Pang. “Also, the fact that I had to spend about 3 hours a day with the people in there also helped me know what the culture was like in America.”

Besides Band, Pang has also joined swimming, Speech and Debate, Math Club, and French Club.

Also, his outgoing personality and honesty has helped him make new friends.

“Boyu was really outgoing and had many interesting things to talk about. It was like he was some kind of social genius,” said freshman Albert Lin.

Pang is now happy with his new life, but still he sometimes feels the difference between his old home and Saratoga.

“Although I do have many friends and enjoying my life here, I also still feel that I’m different sometimes,” said Pang about his life at SHS. “For example, sometimes when everyone else thinks a video from Youtube is funny, I somehow don’t feel that way.”

Pang also feels that it is annoying that Americans have stereotypes about what Canadians do that are not true.

Despite this, Pang still feels that coming to America has had and still has a positive impact on his life. He also feels that the students in Saratoga have also been very nice to him as well.

“Overall, I believe that coming to America opened my knowledge, as well as changing what I think about the world to a better view,” Pang said.



FRESHMAN BOYU PANG IS PRACTICING HIS PIANO SKILLS in the room on May 24 to make sure he is ready for an upcoming concert. Pang says that he often comes to the piano room because “he can be away from the world there” and practice his skills in peace. photo by taegyun kim



Above: FRESHMAN BOYU PANG IS POSING WITH his debate partner, freshman Taegyun Kim, after winning the Sanra Clara Invitational on Apr. 1. Middle: Freshman Boyu Pang is checking the school website in the library on May 19. Down: Freshman Boyu Pang is studying for his English exam in room 705 on May 18. photos by boyu pang and taegyun kim.

### Q&A about CANADA:

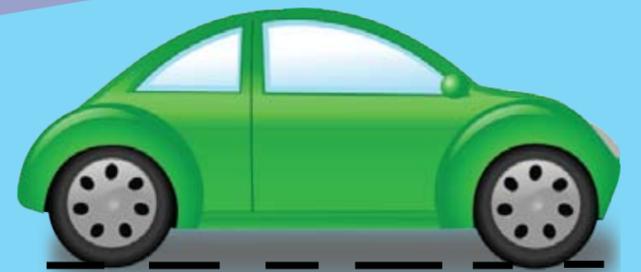
Q: Do Canadians always eat bacon?  
A: No, not at all. Where did anyone get that assumption?

Q: Do Canadians overuse the word “eh?”  
A: Well, we do use it, but we don’t overuse it.

Q: Do Canadians eat food with maple syrup every meal?  
A: Not at all, we rarely do that.

Q: Do Canadians love Justin Bieber?  
A: No.....

# THE DRIVING EXPERIENCE



## D riving already?

by somya lalwani

**Sophomores and Juniors have gotten their permit and even their license this year. It really happened!**

A student is waiting in line nervously at the DMV, he is ready to take his driving test.

A sophomore has got his permit. Another sophomore has finally gotten his licence. A junior has finally gotten her licence despite her busy schedule.

Sophomore Nikil Ramanathan had to prepare for the writing test to receive his permit. He tried to get a feel of what was going to appear on the test by taking tests online.

"The online tests really helped me. In addition, the driver's ed class we took in freshman year helped me prepare too," said Ramanathan.

The driver's ed classes that freshman classes are required to take have many difficult tests for the driver's ed unit.

Ramanathan went to Los Gatos DMV to take his writing test. He went as soon as he could as he could. "I went there the day I turned 15 and a half. I couldn't wait any longer," says Ramanathan.

Once Ramanathan passed his permit test he began to take a class where a driving instructor teaches you how to drive. The instructor has a special car with two wheels. If Ramanathan was to make a mistake then the instructor would drive with his own wheel right in front of him.

"I have 3 lessons with him until I am eligible for my license. Each lesson is about 2 hours," says Ramanathan.

While he isn't practicing with his instructor he is practicing with his mother.

Sophomore Rohan Jhalani was one of the first in his grade to get his license. He got his license four days after his sixteenth birthday at the Santa Clara DMV.

"The person who tested me was straight up the most boring lady I've ever met," says Jhalani.

Santa Clara DMV is known to be the easiest out of all DMV's around the county.

Jhalani didn't practice a whole lot before he got

his license. When he had time, he would go and practice with his dad.

"Luckily, I took it only once and I passed," says Jhalani.

While taking the test he realized his mistakes and the instructor didn't really care.

"My advice would be to practice a lot, get familiar with the roads, and emphasize all the head movements you need to make during the test," says Jhalani.

Junior Tina Pourani turned 16 on July 20. She decided to wait a bit longer to get her license. In November she decided to take the test to get her license.

Before taking the test, she prepared a whole lot with her mother and her driving instructor.

"I had a driving instructor who took me on the freeway for the first time. But for the most part it was my mom who ended up being the passenger wherever I went," says Pourani.

Her driving instructor just showed Pourani the basics and the ropes.

Pourani decided to take her license test at Los Gatos DMV. Los Gatos DMV is known to be more difficult and harsher on future drivers.

Pourani was scared at first because she had friends who had both passed and failed at Los Gatos.

"I was kind of nervous, but I had been around the DMV area, so I felt okay on the streets," says Pourani.

Fortunately, Pourani passed and got her license. Just like any teenager, Pourani was extremely happy.

Just a week after, Pourani's mom got her a brand new car. Pourani got to drive to school the following week in her new car.

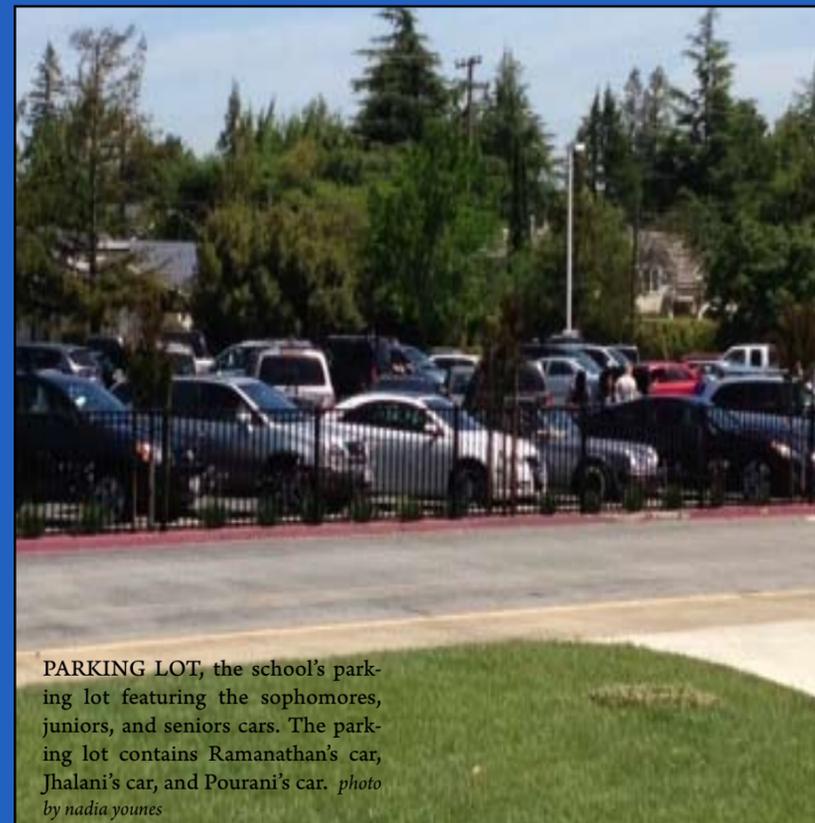
Students have gotten their permit and even their license despite their busy schedules and the big jump in high school.



FIRST DRIVER OF THE YEAR, sophomore, Rohan Jhalani, was one of the first people in his grade to get his license. *photo by somya lalwani*



FIRST THING IN THE MORNING, junior Tina Pourani, is driving to school first thing in the morning in her pajamas. *photo by somya lalwani*



PARKING LOT, the school's parking lot featuring the sophomores, juniors, and seniors cars. The parking lot contains Ramanathan's car, Jhalani's car, and Pourani's car. *photo by nadia younes*



DRIVING WITH THE MOM, the sophomore, Ramanathan, is driving away with his permit. Of course there is his mom sitting next to him pointing out advice. *photo by somya lalwani*

### >Then and Now:

#### What we learned this year



"I learned to always practice as much as I can. Even if I get a little time, I should just grab the keys, grab my mom and practice."  
—sophomore Nikil Ramanathan



"I learned to not drive and text at the same time. After seeing a lot of accidents that happened, I now know I should never do it."  
— sophomore Rohan Jhalani

**MAJOR DECISION FOR THE BAND** Kevin Chen is auditioning for the role of drum major by going through the conducting audition. "I was so surprised when I was chosen because I felt that my nerves got me during the audition," incoming drum major Kevin Chen said.  
*photo by Henry Ling*



**PREPARING FOR MACYS** The announcement of the band's invitation to the 2012 Macy's Day Parade means that the band will have to start preparing in advance. This means that they will have to start preparing the music, raising money, and practicing the march.

# MAJORITY RULES FOR THE NEXT DRUM MAJOR

by Henry Ling

## New drum major Kevin Chen shares what he did to prepare for the application process

Junior Kevin Chen had longed dreamed of becoming a drum major. He had always watched the drum majors on the podium, whose position always seemed so respected, and so unattainable. Through the weary days and nights of marching band, his dream of becoming a drum major was the major thing that kept him in band.

And finally, as an incoming senior, he had the opportunity to fulfill his dream. It was no easy feat.

The audition process for drum major required each candidate to rehearse their own marching workshop. Then, they had to conduct the entire band through some music passages from next year's march, all the while being closely evaluated by the marching band staff for leadership qualities.

"Every candidate, including me, felt that this was the most nerve wracking experience in our lives," sophomore Robert Eng said.

All in all, Chen spent 15 hours preparing for the audition. Most of his preparation consisted of coming up with what to say, coming up with a rehearsal plan and looking over the music.

"I even air-conducted a fantasy band for a few hours day and tried to memorize the most important nuances of the piece and how to would bring them out," Chen said.

Although the musical portion was the most nerve-

wracking portion of the audition, the most influential part came later on. Each candidate was required to respond to questions designed to test a person's leadership. Chen felt that this was the most time-consuming part to prepare for because he felt that he needed to convey his aspirations and ideals effectively. He also wanted his answers to be the most genuine they could be.

His answers included how he could change up the band's routine to help it become better. He also wrote things like how he is willing to stay longer after practices to help clean up.

But after all that was said and done, when the results finally came out, Chen was extremely surprised. He was glad to have so many people support him and think him worthy of his leadership position.

"A lot of people feel that a downside to being a drum major is having to spend more time than usual with the marching band," Chen said. "But there really is not much else I would rather do."

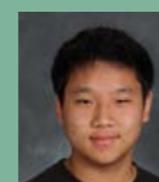
So when the 2012 Macy's Day Parade comes along, Chen will be, as usual, an integral part of the performance. Only this time, instead of marching on the field with the rest of his band members, he will be up on a podium as a drum major, directing the band not just as a student, but a leader.

### >Then and Now:

What do you think of the new drum majors



"I can't wait for next year because it feels like we are going to have a really strong leadership."  
—sophomore Alex Renda



"I think the candidates chosen for drum major are going to lead us into another great year of band."  
—Junior Timothy Chen

# Down the state to states



## FBLA travels to Irvine, CA for their state competitions.

A group of eight students endure an eight-hour long drive, sitting together in anticipation. Each hour seems to pass slower than usual as they attempt to find ways to pass the time.

Some try listening to some stress-relieving music to calm themselves. Others squeeze in some last minute studying, feeling nervous and flustered.

These eight people are active members of the club, FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America), and are on their way to state competitions in Irvine, CA. Three of their teams: Business Communication, Parliamentary Practice and Global Business, qualified for states. They must take exams to determine whether or not they will make it to round two.

"The preparation and competition we experienced gave us all headaches," junior Chris Luo said. "We were going against tough schools such as Lynbrook, Monta Vista, and Troy."

The first groups to be tested were Parliamentary Practice and Global Business. They drove to the Hyatt, prepared to take the tests. Once they arrived at the doors, they were informed that seats had been filled, pushing them into the next testing session. After waiting a couple hours, they were finally able to take their tests and return to their hotel.

The morning after, a few eager members went back to the Hyatt to find out if either Parliamentary Practice or Global Business qualified for the next round. Unfortunately, neither of the groups made it through. Still, failure only encouraged member Jasmine Tan of the Global Business team.

"Even though my team didn't make it through, I learned how to study my competitive event better," Tan said. "So hopefully next year we can go further!"

Later that day was the test for Global Business. The individ-

ual taking the test, Secretary and junior Nikki Thareja, was tense about it all day. After days of preparation, she took it and curiously awaited her results.

In the meantime, all the members had a day to ease off and enjoy sunny Irvine. They went shopping at the Irvine Spectrum Center, took a breather at the beach and indulged on ramen and Indian takeout.

"We spent the morning chasing waves and burying each other in the sand," sophomore and Parliamentarian of the club, Susanna Lee said. "This was probably the best part of the trip, we were all able to relax and have fun together."

That night, the group headed back to the Hyatt hotel for the awards ceremony to unearth whether or not Thareja had made it to the next round. After anxiously waiting, it was announced that Thareja had placed sixth in her category, and was high enough to qualify.

That was the only qualification for SHS, but the entire club was overjoyed for Thareja.

"I'm so glad I placed, it's a really great feeling to be able to make your club feel proud," Thareja said. "This was a great accomplishment for me, and I hope the club can improve with each year to come."

Despite the two losses at the competition and many struggles in between, the members of FBLA appreciated and cherished the experience. Every member agrees that they gained much from the trip.

"After seeing how successful people have been, I want to try harder next year," freshman Michelle Luo said. "I wasn't planning on continuing FBLA, but after this experience I definitely want to come back."

## >Then and Now:

### What we learned this year



"FBLA showed me a lot of ways you can become successful," freshman Michelle Luo said. "It makes me want to keep going."



"Despite all the competition and preparation of this trip, this trip was helpful and I learned from all the workshops and presentations," junior Chris Luo said.



CHASING WAVES while waiting for test results, Jasmine Tan (11), Michelle Luo (09), Nikki Thareja (10), and Susanna Lee (10) enjoy some stress-free time at the beach. *photo courtesy of Susanna Lee*

ALL UP IN YOUR BUSINESS Hansen Qian (12) and Vivian Tsai (12) attempt to find new members to join the club. "Vivian and Hansen both convinced me to join!" freshman Michelle Luo said. "I'm glad they talked to me, or I never would have joined on my own." *photo by Kylie Tseng*



WINNER OF THE NIGHT Nikki Thareja (10) places sixth in Global Business, showing off her award. "It's good to know I made my clubmates proud," Thareja said. "Next year I'm going to work to place even higher." *photo by Jasmine Tan*

RAMEN FOR EVERYONE Jasmine Tan (11) and Michelle Luo (09) stop by Ajisen Ramen for a bite to eat and pose with a statue at the entrance. *photo by Susanna Lee*

# WHEN ORCHESTRAS COLLIDE

by bruce lou

## Orchestras enjoy the warm SoCal sun in Santa Monica on trip

On Monday, April 2, while students in Saratoga woke up to another dreary Monday, the orchestra woke up in sunny Santa Monica, to get their heads dizzy, their heads soaked, and to have a great time at Six Flags Magic Mountain.

That was the last day of the trip that left many orchestra students wishing they could stay for more.

"Damn, I wish I could stay in Santa Monica for at least another week," said freshman violinist Vincent Huang.

The orchestra left on Saturday, May 31, for Santa Monica. They stayed at the DoubleTree Hotel.

"Ordinarily a high school group would not have stayed in a hotel of this quality, but it was the perfect location: only two blocks to the beach and pier and right next to Santa Monica High," said orchestra director Michael Boitz.

On the second day of the trip, the orchestra students had a few hours to explore Santa Monica Pier, the beach, and the glitzy Promenade. In the afternoon, SHS, Santa Monica High, and Carmel High orchestra members gathered at historic Barnum Hall, which was built in 1891, to perform and to hear other schools perform.

The SMHS students were friendly towards the SHS students, showing them around and breaking the ice, engaging them in pleasant conversation.

"We love inviting people to come to our school. Samohi (SANTA MONICA High) is an awesome school, and I love to show people around," said SMHS freshman trumpeter Christopher Pak.

The performances were stellar. From the very first note of the country tune played by the Saratoga Philharmonic Orchestra to the last grand fanfare by CHS, the audience was held captive by the speedy fingers and intense dynamics of the orchestras.

"Carmel High's Symphony Orchestra was very impressive, probably the

best high school symphony orchestra I've ever seen," head manager and senior violinist Tsai said. "The experience was special because we got to see how amazing other orchestral programs from different parts of the country are and see what they do better than us and reflect on how we can improve."

Boitz's opinion reflected that of his students'.

"For our advanced ensembles, as opposed to going to a heritage festival or competitive festival, this is probably more meaningful," Boitz said. "It makes a lot more sense for programs of comparable backgrounds and comparable achievement to combine forces together."

Monday was the day which the thrill-seekers rejoiced. The biggest, fastest, and most terrifying roller coasters awaited the orchestra members.

"That was so fun. I was screaming from joy and the pure thrill of it," said freshman violinist Corey Wong.

Others did not find the rides as pleasant as Wong.

"That was the scariest experience ever. I was screaming and swearing at the top of my lungs," said Huang, thinking back on his experience riding the roller coaster Tatsu.

The trip left lasting impressions on many of the students. Some were blown away by the sheer skill of the orchestras, others were taken in by historic Santa Monica Pier and Barnum Hall, and still others enjoyed the warm Southern Californian sun.

"The orchestra should do more trips like this. It's such a nice change from all that work we have to do in school," said Huang.



**THE SANTA MONICA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** performs in Barnum Hall on April 1st. "The trip was an exciting way to meet other high school kids with similar music programs to ours," said junior band major Bennett Lopez. "Listening to them play was an awesome experience that demonstrated the talent of those groups." Lopez also was in awe of the amazing architecture, especially Barnum Hall. *photo by hansen qian*

**VIOLINISTS VINCENT HUANG (9) AND COREY WONG (9)** pose for the camera with their chopsticks in a Japanese restaurant on the Promenade during their free time in Santa Monica. "The food was great, the service was better, and the camaraderie was best of all," said Huang. *photo by gavin chueh*

>Then and Now:  
What we gained from the trip

 <p>"I was inspired and relaxed by the trip." —freshman Alexander Yeh</p>	 <p>"The best part of the trip was probably the campus of Santa Monica High, which had an amphitheater that was enormous." —junior Bennett Lopez</p>
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**Who:** SHS, Santa Monica High, Carmel High  
**What:** Orchestra exchange concert  
**When:** April 1, 2012  
**Where:** Barnum Hall, Santa Monica  
**Why:** To inspire students by exposing them to more advanced orchestras

## FUN IN THE SUN

# When pigs fly: Biology Dissections

For the majority of the Saratoga High School population, it is an average Monday afternoon, filled with homework and scantrons and last minute quiz cramming. However, take one step into Mrs. Garcia's fifth period Biology class, and you'll be met with sights quite out of the ordinary. Students bend over tall desks, fingers sheathed in plastic gloves, passing scalpel's and probes from hand to hand. Pale wet specimens lie splayed out in front of them, jagged lines slicing through skin to expose the organs within. Some students seem engrossed in their tasks, peering intently at the figure before them and asking questions of their groupmates. Others, however, stand off to the side looking about ready to pass out.

Welcome to freshman pig dissection.

Every year, during the last few weeks of school, biology students are paired off into groups to dissect and study pig fetuses. The basic premise is that, through hands-on experience and in person observations, students will learn more about the the body's organs and the way that they function. However, they also learn a lot about themselves, and just how squeamish they are after all.

"Students are generally very apprehensive about the whole process," says teacher Jenny Garcia. "The first thing they see is a wet, smelly, dead pig, and the last thing they want to do is touch it, let alone cut open its belly. But after they get used to it, they are usually very good at locating the parts and applying their knowledge."

Freshman Neesha Malik hasn't quite gotten used to it

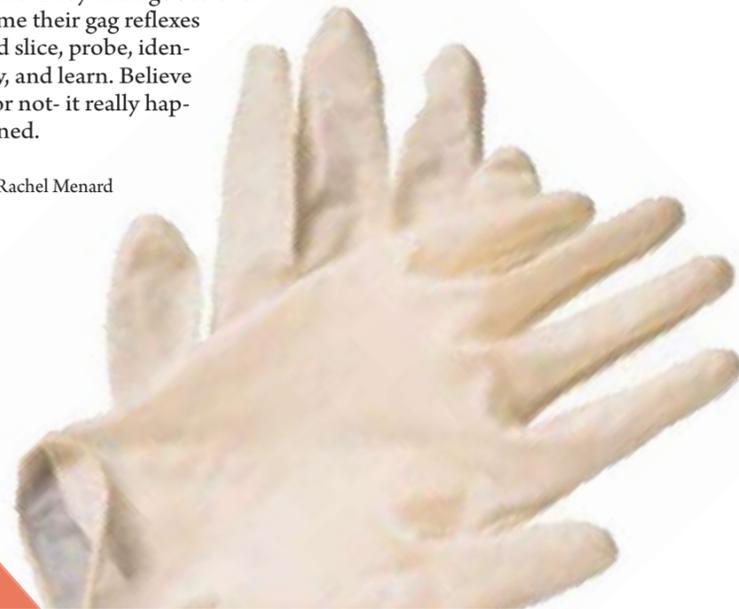
yet. "If I could describe my role in the group, it would be the 'stand-far-away-and-don't-do-anything' role," she laughs. "I just find it to be so disgusting, and unethical too. We're cutting open a fetus for heaven's sake!" Many other students can relate to this sentiment- squeals and abrupt exclamations are common occurrences in the classroom, and, on the first few days, many people had to go outside for some fresh air.

Freshman Shreya Kanchan doesn't find it as disgusting, agreeing that it's gross, but that "it's not that bad." She represents the other half of the students, the ones who can rise above the initial squeamishness and get the job done. "Everyone knows that it's part of their grade, so you just sort of have to do the work and get it over with. The smell is honestly the worst part- the rest I can deal with."

The exception to that rule? "Well, there was this one time, when one of the kids in my class accidentally poured pig juice all over my socks...."

No matter what the experience, Biology students come away from the endeavor with not only a better sense of the body and its organs, but a sense of pride and accomplishment. They managed to overcome their gag reflexes and slice, probe, identify, and learn. Believe it or not- it really happened.

by Rachel Menard



Captions: 1. Emily Penuen (9) helps her group dissect their pig. 2. (Left to right) Kevin Lee, Emily Penuen, James Freeman, and Randy Tsai (all 9) joke around as they work. 3. (Left to right) James Freeman, Samuel Junqua, and Kathy Chu (9) watch as Mrs. Garcia demonstrates the proper way to cut a pig. 4. Mrs. Garcia illustrates where incisions should be made. 5. Matt Nobles (9) closely watches an example dissection. 6. Jimmy Zhang (9) helps to identify organs in the pig.

# A Taste of the WORLD

by anisha nagarajan

**The World's Fair provides a fun way for the whole school to celebrate and learn about different countries in the world.**

As you enter the small gym on September 25, 2011, the sound of chatter, laughter and music fills your ears. The smell of chips and salsa comes from the Mexican display on the left, and a sweet pastry smell from the French display on the right. The bright colors of flags of the world decorate the tables and a girl in a Japanese kimono offers you sushi.

This is the World's Fair: An event put on every semester by the Saratoga High freshman taking World Geography. The students are split into groups and their assignment is to choose a country to put together a display for. These displays are shown at the World's Fair and the whole school is invited.

The project involves researching the physical, cultural, economic and political geography of a group's chosen country then displaying it in an appealing way to be presented.

According to freshman Jonathan Tran, the first week includes planning, researching and finding photos: "the boring part", as he calls it.

"I didn't like the project at first," said Tran, "but when the research was done, we got to work with our teams and assemble the display, which was really fun."

The hardest part for students was finding a way to get sufficient information on the poster while using as few words as possible.

"[My World Geography teacher] said he didn't want any more than 100 words on the whole poster so we used a lot of graphs and charts," said freshman Amy Shepherd.

The displays were not just trifold posters. The tour guides were dressed up in clothing from their countries and some displays even included music.

Freshman Charlotte Beam said that attending the fair was really fun "because there was a lot to look at and a lot to do."

Most of the displays included food or drinks from their respective countries varying from Chinese green tea to Swiss chocolate to South African stew.

Beam added that the best part was definitely the food. The final part of the assignment was presenting your group's display to the spectators. The "tour guides" had to know the information not only about their research, but from all the other group members' research as well so they could answer questions.

"I would go over the notes from my group at passing periods and whenever there was no one at my stand," said Tran.

Many classes came to the World's Fair with assignments to take notes on different countries or evaluate displays.

Shepherd said she was glad they didn't ask for too many specifics and that her poster was mostly self-explanatory.

Tran and Shepherd both agreed the project required a lot of hard work but they enjoyed working on a team and learning about their countries.

"The World's Fair was educational, fun and yummy," said Beam, "and I am excited for the one next year."



DRESSED IN TRADITIONAL INDIAN CLOTHING, tour guide Simran Srivastava shows off an Indian artifact to a group of students admiring her group's display. Srivastava's display is one of the ones that was placed in the library. *photo by tiffany yung*

JAPAN REPRESENTATIVE, ANANYASRIVASTAV explains her group's display to Nadia Saxena. Saxena was taking notes for an English assignment. *photo by tiffany yung*



JULIE HAN, OF THE SOUTH AFRICA DISPLAY dons a traditional headdress and beads for the fair. Han explains the different aspects of her country's geography to freshman Annie Kung. *photo by tiffany yung*

ANSWERING QUESTIONS FROM THE "TOURISTS" is fully dressed tour guide for Nigeria, Kushol Bhattacharjee. "I thought he represented his country really well with that outfit," said freshman Catherine Tang, a visitor to the fair. *photo by tiffany yung*

EUGENE CHE PREPARES TO “PUT DOWN THE BOX” IN EFFORT TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT. He worked with the TC club at Supermicro in March trying to help them flatten the boxes to be recycled. “The recycle company only accepts them that way,” said Che. *photo by Michelle Shu*



# Community's little helpers

by carolyn qi



**SWEEPING THE WEEDS AWAY.** Hana Micheal helps clean up the area behind the Library on Martin Luther King Day. *photo by Jaya Narasimham*

## Students find that helping others in the community can help themselves too.

The games started innocently, but it ended up in a massive tickle fight. “There was one kid there and instead of playing the games, he started tickling [a girl in our group] and it ended up in a huge tickle fight instead of playing the games,” said Maggy Liu. It was at the computer learning center where they were helping “kids with autism and down syndrome learn how to use the basics to using the computer, computer games”.

Liu said there is rarely any volunteering trip that does not end up being extremely fun with everyone being completely crazy. Liu said that it is much more enjoyable than “what many people would think that volunteering is”.

Many students at Saratoga spend their time volunteering to help others. They do work ranging from picking up trash to helping the elderly in a nursing home. Helping others gives them “a good feeling” says senior Cynthia Huang.

Many other volunteers would agree that spending time helping others with friends can be really enjoyable and they really enjoy it.

“Volunteering is a very good way for you to spend time with other people. When recycling, it is always a great way to spend time with friends and

help our environment. In a nursing home, it is a great way to spend time with people you like to spend time with and also see people in the nursing home and see how happy they are,” said senior Connie Chien.

Eric Kao also says that he uses volunteering time to “catch up with his friends and make new memories”. Kao recalls that whenever they go somewhere new there are “always new people to meet and new memories to form between [his] friends and [himself]”.

The time used to catch up with friends also makes volunteers feel good about themselves because they are capable of making a difference in the community around them.

Liu said, “Volunteering makes me feel good about myself. Makes me feel like I have something to give, and that I am capable of helping others even during the tough times in my own life. And after helping the kids or elderly citizens, the smiles I receive really make my day.”

But in the end, volunteering is more than the hours and the friends.

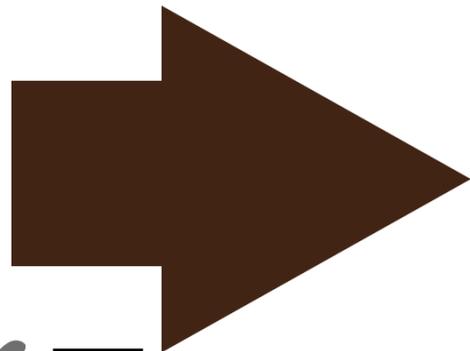
“We don’t do community service because we want the hours, we do community service because we actually care about the people we are helping and we actually want to make a difference,” said Chien.



**WORKING HARD TO CLEAN THE EARTH BOX BY BOX.** Junior Samantha Cheng helps a recycling facility by flattening boxes. Cheng said, “Every box made a difference toward saving the environment, and that made me feel successful.” *photo by Michelle Shu*

**HANGING OUT WHILE HELPING OTHERS.** Sarah Menard helps blood donors by offering cookies, but also gets to catch up with her friends. *photo by Jaya Narasimham*

# Moving toward a Better Future



by Sudeep Raj

**With new coaches and dedication from the speech and debate team, Saratoga is starting to become a competitive program.**

"The death penalty must be abolished to protect the rights of criminals in the United States. We of all countries..." freshman Jerry Yang continued, as I walked in on him, in speech and debate coach Erick Rector's room on a tuesday night.

One of his opponents leaned over and whispered into his partner's ear with a smile on his face, presumably because of something Yang had said. His partner wrote it down, shuffled his papers, and stood up to the podium as Yang finished.

Captain and judge for the practice round Shauray Aggrawal jotted some notes down and reset his timer.

This is the setting of a Parliamentary Debate practice that is preparing freshman like Yang, for competitive tournaments with other schools.

Saratoga has lately been placing high in these tournaments and sending more people to state and national competitions.

"Dedication. That is what got our program where it is today," Yang told me after. "We worked towards it and got here." Practice makes perfect and out of many new things, the dedication of the team's captains and newcomers is definitely a big part of the rise of Saratoga's speech and debate programs.

"Right now we are at fourth, but looking to take over Presentation to be third best in our league of 30 schools," Rector said. "this program is on the rise."

The hiring of coach Steve Clemmons four years ago has also been a big part of the success.

"He is a big impact on their (the students/debaters) debating," Rector said.

"It is not only us. The students show so much passion and interest in debating," Clemmons said. "That's why I

like this school."

The love of debating draws the line between good and great.

"I remember one kid who held a practice at his house before a tournament," Rector said. "He didn't tell me because he wasn't looking for recognition."

One debater actually change his middle name to Parli -- on Facebook. Yang, also known as Jerry Parli Yang added "Parli" to his name on Facebook.

"It raises team spirit," Yang said. "Team unity is very important."

With the rise of social networking, comes the rise of team unity.

"We can communicate easier now just by posting in the Facebook group," junior Venkat Mantakuntala said. "It definitely helps."

Due to dedication from students and coaches, the overall success of Saratoga's debate team has risen.

"LD (Lincoln-Douglas debate) was added this year and the team also had more freshmen than ever," junior Michael Zheng said. "With success comes more people wanting to join."

The team's novices excelled too, because of the large influx of freshmen. Saratoga took home sixth in novice parliamentary debate, fourth in novice lincoln douglas debate and first in novice public forum debate at the Santa Clara University Invitational Debate Tournament this April.

"We hope to see them (the freshmen) becoming the future of SHS debate," Rector said.

Whatever may happen, Saratoga's debate team looks promising and should continue to excel.

As Yang would end his speech, "... and with that, I rest my case.



**JUNIORS NEIL PRASAD AND ISHAAN KOLLURI** tell jokes during a break at the UC Berkeley tournament on February 18, 2012. Both made it to quarter finals in the tournament, where they lost to tough competition.

**WITH PAPER IN HAND**, sophomore Alex Mabanta practices his speech on January 12, 2012 at the Milpitas speech tournament. Saratoga did well that tournament, sending five people, including Mabanta, to octofinals. *photos by Kylie Tseng and Jason Li.*



**WHILE TYPING ON THEIR LAPTOPS**, sophomores Ajith Kossireddy and Aditya Choudhry prepare for a practice debate on Oct. 5, in room 704. The two sophomores do public forum and went to the Milpitas tournament that weekend. *photo by jaya narasiman*

## >Then and Now:

### What speech and debate taught us



"I learned how to talk in front of a group." —junior Ajay Kirpekar



"I learned how to tie a tie." —freshman Kushol Bhat-tacharjee



**GOING FOR A SPIN** Junior Nandita Sampath learns to drive a jeep with help from their guide, Tim Anderson, Justice of the Peace of Monticello. Jeeping was a new experience for many of the students on the trip.  
*photo by christine xue*

# Winning the west

by nitya sampath

**The AP US History classes took a trip to Utah over spring break to learn about life in the wild west.**

Standing on a cliff, a group of about 25 students peered over the edge to see the ground 180 feet directly below them. A sturdy rope was attached to a single peg at the top of the cliff. One by one, each of the students was strapped into a harness and stepped right off the edge of the cliff. They hung off the cliff, parallel to the ground; they should have been terrified, but instead they were excited. This was definitely something they would want to try again.

These 25 students were part of APUSH, rappelling a cliff during their “Wild West” trip to Utah in April. Their history teacher, Mr. Torrens, decided to take his students there to give them a more hands-on learning experience.

Their trip lasted for five days over spring break.

One of the students who went on the trip was junior Christine Xue. To her, the rappelling was especially scary, but she still enjoyed it.

“I tried not to look down because it was so high up. I kept thinking I was going to fall,” Xue said.

She said they visited three different cities during their time in Utah.

“We landed in Salt Lake City. Then we drove to Moab and stayed there for two days. Then we went to Monticello, where Mr. Torrens used to live,” Xue said.

According to Xue, the towns and the people in them were all quite similar in nature.

“It was almost in the middle of nowhere,” Xue said. The towns were small and quiet. The people were really nice but most of them were white. There was not much ethnic diversity.”

Another student on the trip, junior Kara Dimicco, had a similar reaction to the natives people’s attitudes.

“The people were extremely nice but they were surprised that we wanted to visit a small town in Utah,” Dimicco said.

There were many activities the students’ teacher wanted them to try out.

“We went mountain biking on the first day and we hiked a lot in general,” Xue said. “We went rappelling and jeeping. We also visited the school where Mr. Torrens used to teach.”

Xue also said most of the things they did were actually fun, even though it was really hot during the day. The weather in Utah was very different from what she regularly experiences in Saratoga.

“Most days it was pretty hot, but the nights were freezing and it drizzled for a couple days,” Xue said.

In addition to the different weather patterns, there were natural landscapes that interested both Xue and Dimicco.

“There were a lot of rock formations everywhere that we don’t see here at all,” Dimicco said.

Even though all the seeing exotic landscapes and the new people were enjoyable experiences, Xue said her favorite part of the trip was jeeping.

“[Jeeping] was fun and scary since we drove on steep rocky hills, and the driver let us drive on the way back,” Xue said.

Xue also said this trip would be something she would love to try again some time in the future.

“I got to see a different part of the US and see new people,” said Xue.



**CATCHING TUMBLEWEED** Senior Vivian Liao holds up a tumbleweed found on one of the group’s hikes. Liao found it along with juniors Nandita Sampath and Christine Xue. *photo by nandita sampath*



**BREAKING DOWN** The group visits a crashed plane a few miles away from Monticello, Utah. This plane was the site of a B-52 crash in 1961. *photo by nandita sampath*

**CIUTCH PITCHER** Freshman Mikayla Davis pitches her last out in the Cupertino game. She led the De Anza league in outs. photo by Now and Forever Studios



# Sliding out of an obstacle

by Risha Shah

## Freshman Samie Davey's injury changed everything for girls' JV softball.

It was February 18, the first day of JV softball practice and the first hit of the season. Freshman Samantha Davey was moving from first to second base. Suddenly, there was a cracking sound that lasted for a split second. The whole team turned to second base to see what had happened. There on the ground was Davey, who laughed and then abruptly began to cry.

Davey broke her left ankle on the first day of preseason practice and was out for six months. Since the pitcher is an important position on the field, the team had little hope for a good season.

"It was devastating because I was looking forward to a great season with my teammates and coaches. I am a very active person and it was really hard for me to be on the sideline watching," Davey said.

Davey was the only pitcher on the team and the coaches did not know who to put in her spot.

"Losing Samie was a major drawback. But she still managed to be a major part of the team," head coach Katie Reed said.

The team had to come together and overcome this obstacle. Since there was no substitute for Davey, coaches asked freshman Mikayla Davis to step up to the plate and become the new pitcher.

"She has a lot of natural talent and we thought she would learn how to pitch pretty easily because of her athleticism," Reed said.

The coaches made a good decision. At the end of the season Davis received First League All Star in the De Anza League.

The rest of the team also stepped up their game to make up for the loss. Freshman Sara Parden played shortstop but also became a pitcher. "She was a really key part of the team," Reed said. The sophomores brought advice and experience that the team needed. "They were so nice and helpful," Davis said.

The freshmen were also a great addition alongside the veteran players. "The freshmen were fun to play with and they made the team so much better. The team had a chemistry that I had never experienced before, which is part of the reason for our success," sophomore outfielder Sana Ali said.

The team had a record of 3-5. "This has been one of the better seasons in past years but we still have a lot we can improve on," Reed said.

They also created some lasting memories. "One time we hooked Mikayla's helmet to the fence and she was stuck there for 10 minutes," Parden said.

"I can't wait for next season because I will come back a stronger player, mentally and physically. It has been a great season even though I didn't get to play, I was able to cheer my team on and be a part of it," Davey said.



Left: Throwing or Freshman Sara Parden is throwing the ball from third base to home for an out against Cupertino.

Middle: Sophomore Lois Om, runs from second to third base during a game against Mountain View.

Right: Sophomore, outfielder, Sahiba Ratra goes for a ground ball against Gunn. all photos by Now and Forever Studios

# Playing for the win

by chichiger shyy

## Scoreboard

Mountain View	7-0
Palo Alto	7-0
Los Altos	6-1
Gunn	1-6
Monta Vista	2-5
Lynbrook	7-0

### Girls' JV tennis did well this season, winning all but 3 of their matches.

The coaches and players sit nervously as they watch their teammates play against their adversary. As the opponent hits a ball, number one doubles player, sophomore Caitlin Hung got the winning ball by returning a strong volley to the opponent.

The crowd cheers with enthusiasm as the Saratoga players cheer for their victory. The ambiance in the tennis courts was jubilant; everyone was cheering and congratulating each other. This type of scene is usually normal for Saratoga's JV girls' tennis team.

Overall, this year's season generally well, with the team ranking third place in the DeAnza League. They only lost three games total, two to Gunn High School and one to Monta Vista.

"We did pretty well overall even though our league record isn't as solid as last year," said sophomore Karen Sung, who is number one in singles. "We learned a lot as a team."

The team's practices consisted of daily warm ups and pre-game practices. The team learns from previous matches by practicing giving and receiving shots that they had seen during their former matches.

"The practices help us improve and defeat the other teams because we know what their weaknesses are," Caitlin said.

Everyone thought the season was fun, especially when they had the opportunity to play with their friends and to eat food.

"I really enjoyed the season because it was fun and I got to meet so many new people," Caitlin said.

Hung's favorite part of the season was when the team won the matches.

"I felt proud when we won because I could see that we were improving," she said. "I felt disappointed when we lost, but I knew that we would do better next time," Caitlin said.

Caitlin is excited for next season, but might not take part in it if her participation brings about academic hindrances.

"I'm hoping to play next year if I get good grades in sophomore year," Caitlin said. "The season was super fun, and I want to play a higher position."

The team's only weakness was playing with their toughest rival, Gunn High School. The team lost to Gunn in both games, resulting in scores of 3-4 and 1-6.

"I thought we could have won because I felt that we weren't playing our hardest," said freshman Sonal Pai, who is number 3 singles for the team.

Overall, the team played relatively well in most of their matches. In their match with Mountain View, their effort led to their successful 7-0 win. The team also did well against Lynbrook High School, resulting in a 6-1 win.

"I think our performance at Lynbrook was good and fairly expected," junior Ashwini Velchamy said. "We had played them before, so we knew how strong their players were,"

The season ended in early November after the CCS finals. Despite their high expectations, most players thought that this year's ranking was relatively good.

"I definitely think that we could have done better," Velchamy said. "Our team has strong players, but I think that all of us had the potential to play better than we did."



Above: Junior Jennifer Jin returns a strong forehand to her opponent, letting her win the tiebreaker with the score of 8-7. photo taken by Jason Li. Left: Freshman Sonal Pai serves a fast ball against her opponent in the game vs. Monta Vista. photo taken by Jason Li. Right: Freshman Puck DeRoos, who is number four singles, hits a strong serve against her opponent. photo taken by Jason Li.



Left: Junior Ashwini Velchamy gets ready to serve against her opponent. photo taken by Jason Li.



Top: Sophomore and singles number one Karen Sung returns the ball back to her adversary. photo taken by Jason Li.

**> Then and Now:**  
What you are looking forward to



"I am looking forward to joining the team next year" —sophomore Caitlin Hung



"I am looking forward to making it to varsity next year." —freshman Sonal Pai

# Spirited to the top

**Another year at Nationals shows whether the team has improved or not.**

by Gerlou Shyy

It all ended in two minutes. Half a year of hard work for the cheerleaders training for nationals, and now the whole routine was over.

The SHS cheer team took part in the annual USA Nationals Cheer Competition on March 29, 2012 at Anaheim, California. For some of the seniors, it would be their last time doing it, and for freshmen, it would be an interesting experience.

From SFO International Airport, the cheerleaders boarded a plane for LAX, on their way to Disneyland.

“Once we got there, we rode on a bus for an hour but mostly slept and did homework on the plane,” said freshman Uma Kumar.

First day at Anaheim, done. A day spent traveling and settling down at the hotel. However, day two was not quite the same.

The cheerleaders faced an action-packed day as they rehearsed for nationals starting at 10 in the morning. When the clock struck six, it was the beginning of an exciting and tense moment for some of the new cheerleaders.

“I felt nervous! We had to perform in front of what felt like thousands of people. It was my first nationals competition and seeing all the other teams was frightening,” freshman Katelynn Moriarty said.

The nationals competition includes high schools from all over the country, some of which the Saratoga cheerleaders were already familiar with from other competitions. Everything is scored about of 10s or 20s, with 20s being the highest scores. Performances usually do not take too long.

“It was about two minutes and 15 seconds of dance, jumps, stunting, cheering and some tumbling,” Moriarty said.

Awards started at 8 p.m. and the cheerleaders finally could see where the judges had placed them. The judges were not available to talk to after the routine, but the cheer team got score sheets. Deductions were made for a fall and showmanship (facials).

This year, the Saratoga team just missed finals, receiving 11th place out of 21 teams in the division, a drop from last year’s 6th place. Although the results didn’t turn out to be as good as before, the cheerleaders regained their excitement when they entered California Adventures.

“There was a welcome party just for cheer from 9 to 12. They closed down the park just for cheer people, so it was really cool!” said Kumar.

The team stayed in groups of three or more at the park, and for Moriarty, being with friends at Disneyland made it very entertaining.

Together, the team rode on Tower of Terror and spent most of the next day at Disneyland, going on the rides and shopping.

“We had a team dinner at Rainforest Cafe in downtown Disney and stayed out until 12,” Kumar said.

Sunday morning, the cheer team slept in and headed to Disneyland again for three hours. Near evening, they spent the night watching finals and packing to head home. The plane landed at SFO at around 10:30 at night, the end of the experience for freshmen cheerleaders.

And the best part about it all?

“Just being with the team and having a whole new experience. It was so fun to go to Disney and just relax. We got to be ourselves,” Moriarty said.



LEFT: SENIOR REBECCA SMERDON flashes her pom pom up into the night sky, cheering on the football team at the Homecoming game.

Below: Sophomores Madison Morrocco, Nicole Mackenzie, Stephanie Tsang, Abigail Small, Shannon Archer, and Kayla Berlinberg prepare for the award show, after performing their routine at nationals.

photo by Stephanie Tsang. Far below: Senior Sarah Hull, sophomore Stephanie Tsang, Junior Haley Wong, and seniors Nicole Fetsch and Ansha Husain pose quickly for a snapshot of Disneyland as a memory of this year’s trip to nationals. photo by Stephanie Tsang.



## >Then and Now: Funniest Moment in Cheer



“Just mostly at everyday practice we always laugh a lot, so just practice were always fun!”  
—freshman Uma Kumar

Far right: FRESHMAN MEGAN MARSHALL BALANCES herself at the top of the pyramid of cheerleaders., right before the first football is about to start. To support her, freshmen Jillian Bellamy, Katelynn Moriarty, and Nella Leppa hold on to her legs and finish up the cheer. photo by Kylie Tseng

Right: Junior Mary Johnson, Geneva Fairchild, Haley Wong, and Nadya Shahin show off their moves at the Homecoming game. photo by Kylie Tseng



Right: Junior Haley Wong smiles at the audience during the first rally of the year, making sure she is a good example for the other freshmen cheerleaders. photo by Kylie Tseng.

Below: Freshmen Uma Kumar, Jessica Uong, Megan Marshall, Jillian Bellamy, and Katelynn Moriarty wait for the whole cheer team to show up at Rain Forest Cafe in downtown Disney for a team dinner. “I think this was on Saturday,” Uma said. photo by Stephanie Tsang.

Far right: Freshmen Madeline Ryan, Katelynn Moriarty, Megan Marshall, sophomore Stephanie Tsang, freshmen Jillian Bellamy, Uma Kumar, Jessica Uong, and Nella Leppa stand together for a picture on Picture Day. Professional photographers came to take pictures of the cheer team. photo by Kylie Tseng.

Lower right corner: Freshman Jillian Bellamy teaches the kids at the peewee some moves the cheer team learns throughout the year. “It made the learning process easier when we just did what we were told and we had a good time with it!” Jillian said. photo by Kylie Tseng.



# The Junior Prom Experience

by Carol Suh

Juniors dance the night away at their prom of Forever Young



Juniors Parth Shah and Juhi Pahtel exchange corsages before taking off to the dance

Junior girls pose for their group picture in the format of a rainbow color



BEFORE DANCING THE NIGHT AWAY, Junior Evelyn Lee, sophomore Jane Chang, junior Candice Suh, and junior Amy Jan pose for the camera at their friends house.



Junior Tina Pourni exchanges corsages with junior Shreyes Doshi as he shows up in front of her house to escort her to prom.

Prom was the moment that everyone has been waiting for. It's the one night when nobody cares who wore the varsity jacket, and who got cut from the team. It's the night when people might find themselves singing at the top of their lungs with people they've never spoken to before. That one night has a way of bringing everyone together. The night of the annual Junior Prom, with the theme "Forever Young," began with the ring of a doorbell at every girl's doorstep.

"Well I wanted to be a gentleman so of course I drove there and picked her up," junior Alex Wang said, "I told her she looked pretty and opened the door for her and stuff like that."

Afterwards, everyone gathered together at people's houses for group pictures bringing people from different social groups together.

"We all gathered together at a friends house before leaving for the bus," junior Akshara Sekar said. "There were actually a lot of people I knew but didn't really talk to, which was nice though since by the end of the day it was like we were one big family."

But for some juniors, the hours and time they had to take to get ready was pretty stressful.

"It took me forever to find the perfect dress I wanted!" said Sekar. "But after I found one, I had the hair, makeup, and shoes to worry about on top of that. I think I took a couple of hours to get ready before prom started."

But for the junior boys, it seemed to be a completely different story.

"It took me about 5 minutes to get ready," Wang said. "It's pretty easy for me since I have no hair."

The juniors were later taken on a bus ride to a hotel. They ate food and danced the night away.

"I think Prom is special in a way that you only have so many you can go to. One junior year, and one senior year," junior Arthur Tsao said. "It brought me to meet new people and become friends with the people I didn't know really well."

Prom. A night when friends can surprise you. When you find what you're looking for. Or maybe just finding yourself. One night can bring everyone together. Because when it ends, it's really



Junior Vaneet Jain asks Anjalika Goel to junior prom at night in the quad steps of Saratoga High, holding huge letters with the help of his friends

## >Then and Now:

### How we got ready...



"It took my like five minutes to get ready since I have no hair." — junior Alex Wang



"It was really fun getting ready, but it took awhile. It took me about a week to find the right dress, then I had to buy matching shoes for it. Afterwards I had to go and get my hair done, and my makeup." — junior Juhi Pahtel

# H

# omecoming

# miracle

by Katherine Sun

## The sophomore class bonds over quad day mishap.

Beep. The announcements go off, interrupting sixth period on Sept. 28, which is sophomore quad day.

It announced that sophomores were disqualified from Homecoming due to inappropriate jokes incorporated in their Homecoming skit.

"I felt so angry and ashamed at the same time because we were disqualified last year too" sophomore Vivian Wang said.

Wang expressed her anger through venting to her friends, but many other sophomores turned to the "Saratoga High Class of 2014" Facebook group.

"It really all started with a sarcastic wall post in the group, then people just blatantly started pointing fingers" sophomore class rep Manini Desai said.

According to Desai, the class became really divided based on the comments written in the group. There was a more "superior" group, who was responsible for the direction the skit would go in, and the other group, who did not participate in Homecoming.

Many of the people who did not participate in Homecoming had much to complain about.

"In future years, Homecoming should include anyone who wants to be in it. Not one person/group should control everything" sophomore Raiza de Vera commented.

People in the "superior" group felt attacked, and defended themselves by saying the other group

should have participated so they could have had a say in things and made Homecoming better. The comments went on back and forth for a very long time, only getting longer and more emotional.

It escalated until sophomore Eric Taw tried to break the fight by trying to be positive instead of trying to pin the blame on somebody.

"Let's put this thing behind us and learn from our mistakes. Let's make our apologies sooner rather than later to those who felt insulted by our jokes. Let's make sure that we can fix this error in the future" Taw commented.

Later, many others chimed in by writing comments with apologies and promises to participate next year. The negative energy that was in the air had been replaced by a new sense of unity in the class.

"I was so glad to see our class finally come together in the end [of the Facebook posts]" Wang said, "I'll definitely join Homecoming next year, no doubt about it."

Despite the disagreements and differences this year, sophomores are enthusiastic about next year's Homecoming.

"I'm excited for Homecoming next year, because I feel like people really want to be proud of our grade and will work hard to exceed everyone's expectations and erase our bad reputation," Desai says, "we've already hit rock bottom, so there's nowhere to go but up."

### >Now and Tomorrow:

What we will do next year:



"We'll work with each other, cooperate, and compromise next year; instead of working against each other" —sophomore Elnaz Ahmadi



"I'm going to choreograph with my friends and rally more people to participate. It's going to be great!" —sophomore Catherine Kim



**WORMING THEIR WAY TO SUCCESS**, Tony Capek (10) and Rohan Jhalani (10) win cheers from the crowd when Capek does the worm during their dance named "evolution of dance". photo by Noy Shaked



**MONKEY SEE MONKEY DO**, Anup Kar (10) leads other sophomores in their alternating crisscross move in their monkey dance, which was inspired by the music video of "The Lazy Song" by Bruno Mars. photo by Tiffany Yung

**KING OF THE JUNGLE**, Wilbert van den Hoek (10) shows off sophomore class pride by holding up a "class of 2014" sign while sitting on Anup Kar's (10) shoulders. "I loved being high in the air," van den Hoek said, "I felt like a king." photo by Noy Shaked



# SO YOU think You Can Dance?

by tesia sun

**Club members share an exciting experience together in the dance club, learning new dances and dance styles.**

As she entered the dance studio freshman Hajin Kim marveled at its large mirrors and polished floors. She watched the dance club members show off their skill in the form of break dancing and pop dancing, moving their bodies to form head hollows, baby freezes, and other dance moves. I want to be just like them, Kim thought.

Just a few weeks ago, during the club exhibitions, the dance club immediately caught her attention with their style and exuberance.

"It sounded and looked like a lot fun," Kim said. "I wanted to try it out."

After attending the first session, Kim was not disappointed.

"I really liked the cat daddy dance," Kim said. "It was probably the first dance I ever learned and it was really fun. The teachers went through it step by step so we can actually keep up."

Kim was met by club presidents and teachers Peter Hsieh and Megan Kao. Seniors Hsieh and Kao and alumni Ricky Chu formed the dance club three years ago.

"Because the school doesn't have the dance community we wanted," Hsieh said. "We decided to form the dance club."

Hsieh started dancing in his freshman year when his friends started c-walking and watching America's Best Dance Crew. He enjoyed watching his favorite dance crew, I am Me, rock the stage of America's Best Dance Crew. Through online tutorials, he learned how to dance and slowly began to develop his skills. His skills and charisma has inspired others to join the world of dance.

"After I participated in the senior quad day with Peter, I talked to him," said senior Alex Chiang. "I decided to join the dance club."

Chiang is currently a dance instructor and ad taught the mem-

bers a well known dance called "Let Me know". The "Cat Daddy" dance, which was taught by Hsieh, and the "Let me know" dance were performed in the senior talent show by some members of the dance club. The members that performed were Hsieh, Kao, Chiang, Kim, freshman Audrey Sun and freshman Tesia Sun.

Some of the members thought the ordeal was extremely nerve-racking.

"I was so nervous," said Audrey. "I couldn't get the moves right and kept messing up."

Others saw the talent show as an opportunity build up their confidence.

"Even though I made a lot of mistakes, it was still pretty fun and exciting," said Kim. "Dance club lets me put myself more out there."

Because of the seniors, the members have a lot of fun during the sessions which every Friday lunch.

"It's so fun and energetic," said freshman Anshul Aggarwal. "It's just awesome, there is no other way to explain it."

Through dance club, the members learned a variety of choreographies, like Bollywood dances.

"At first, I was kind of reluctant to join dance club since I never really danced a lot," said Audrey. "But after learning Bollywood, it was just too fun to quit."

Some members of the dance club never had any prior experience in dancing; however, that never stopped them from joining. Some students, like freshman Anish Ramanadham, didn't join the dance club because they were afraid of feeling awkward.

"I actually thought about doing it but I thought it would be awkward if I did," said Ramanadham. "But seeing my friends join, I am going to join next year. I am going to try to learn break dancing over the summer just in case."

**DURING HIS B-BOY PRACTICES,** freshman Patrick Huynh demonstrates a "nike" in one of the Friday sessions. *photo by tesia sun*



**(LEFT) BALANCING UPSIDE DOWN ON HER HEAD,** freshman Hajin Kim is in the midst of performing a "head hollow" in the dance studio near the small gym on a one of the weekly Friday sessions. "It hurts my head, but its really fun to be up-side down," said Kim. **(LOWER) Junior Wesley Sun** scours his play list for a song with a great break dancing beat, and, eventually, he chooses the song "Ice Box" by Omarion. **(LOWER RIGHT)** Freshmen Jonathan Huie, Hajin Kim, and Anshul Aggarwal strike a model's pose for the camera as they take a break from their dancing practices. *photo by tesia sun*



## >Quotes:

What is your favorite dance choreography?



"Let Me Know, of course." —senior Alex Chiang



"I liked the Bollywood [dance], it was really fun." —freshman Anshul Aggarwal



# Stepping up to varsity

by catherine tang

Underclassmen learns that varsity is much more exciting, but also brings many more responsibilities.



AS A TEAM TRADITION, everyone gets in the middle at the beginning of the game and does the “together win” team cheer. *courtesy of now and forever studios*

ON SEPT. 27 AGAINST WILCOX, senior Talia Sisco goes up for a block. “The block is a vital part of defense,” sophomore defensive specialist Stephanie Ho said. *courtesy of now and forever studios*



DURING THE GAME ON SEPT. 20 AGAINST SANTA CLARA, sophomore Julia Lee goes up for a spike. They ended up winning 3-0. “You really have to read the blockers so you don’t hit right into their hands,” Lee said. *courtesy of now and forever studios*



“You’re on. Go,” the coach says. This is right side sophomore varsity volleyball player Julia Lee’s first varsity game. Her mind is racing as she is trying to follow the ball. Instructions from practice are running through her head as she tries to follow them. Then she jumps up for a spike and bam! She just made the first kill in her first varsity season.

“It was really exciting to make varsity because I didn’t expect to since I’m only a sophomore,” Lee said.

Making varsity also comes with a lot more responsibilities than JV.

“Varsity is a lot more serious because people expect us to be really good,” Lee said.

JV players are still learning and developing their skills, so mistakes are expected and okay. When a varsity player makes too many mistakes in a row they’ll get switched out. Everyone messes up once in awhile, but varsity players are expected to minimize their mistakes.

Varsity volleyball isn’t the only team that is pressured to minimize their mistakes.

“Although I’m only a freshman and no one expects me to be as good as the upperclassmen, I still feel bad when I make mistakes,” freshman varsity lacrosse player Nicolas Rios said.

Whenever someone makes a mistake, teammates are always there to support them and cheer them on.

“Teammates always encourage each other even if we don’t like

each other,” Lee said.

Everything else is forgotten on the court or on the field and the only the thing that matters then is the game.

Many teams this season bonded through sleepovers and team dinners.

“Team bondings really helped me get to know my teammates on a personal level and in fact I met one of my good friends on the team,” Lee said.

At first they would just talk about the sport and plays, which was the only thing they thought they had in common, but then they started talking about other things. As they started talking about other things such as school, upcoming events, and even their favorite stores, they realized they had a lot more in common than they originally thought.

Meeting new people and making new friends made the transition from JV to varsity a lot easier; although, the first few games were still nerve-racking.

“I was really nervous the first few games because I was afraid to make mistakes, but after that I wasn’t nervous at all because I know my teammates are supporting me,” Lee said.

Varsity games also move at a much faster tempo. The faster tempo made Lee nervous at first, but after the first couple games she said it actually makes the game more exciting and interesting.

“I really look forward to my future varsity seasons because I learned so much this season and made many new friends,” Lee said.



AFTER THE GAME, everyone, including the coaches, shakes hands with the other team to show good sportsmanship. “Sometimes I would be really mad at the team, but I would still have to smile and say good game,” senior Talia Sisco said. *courtesy of now and forever studios*

# Practicing, not playing

by arman vaziri

## Bench warmers, the people on the team that are overlooked.

It's his senior year, the last year to make his mark at Saratoga High School. Despite having been in high school for four years, it is Zach Galvin's first year on the boys' golf team, and he is the only senior on the bench.

Bench warmers are defined as substitutes who rarely get to play in a game, and there are some in every sport. They're the players who want to play but don't have the skill level to compete and do well. But Galvin didn't mind not starting; he thought of it more as just a fun experience.

"I took on a role of helping the other younger bench warmers, which is also important in building the team," Galvin said.

A starter in golf is a player who plays in matches, people like Galvin are non starters because they only practice with the team, not play in matches.

Being a senior bench warmer, Galvin was able to help the younger golfers when they needed help when the coach was absent.

"When the coach wasn't there, I took on more of a teaching role, I helped the other bench warmers learn the rules and help them if they had problems," said Galvin.

Freshman Michael Lee became a bench warmer on the boys' tennis team after he hurt his wrist and back and eventually made the decision to stop playing this year because of his injuries.

Quitting the team bothered Lee because he knew if he wasn't injured he wouldn't have been stuck on the bench not playing.

"I thought it was really boring being a bench warmer, and if the injuries weren't in the way I could've done a lot better," Lee said.

Lee's opinion on being a bench warmer greatly contrasted that of Galvin because being a freshman and trying to constantly improve without being able to play in matches frustrated Lee and made it boring for him to be on the team.

Galvin's opinion on being a bench warmer was that it's about having fun and not only playing in matches.

"I don't mind not starting that much, it was more about playing golf and having fun," Galvin said.

Being a bench warmer is frustrating, and it isn't always fun watching friends on the team play while sitting on the sidelines, but with determination, it's always possible to advance.



**SITTING ON THE SIDE:** Players on the bench sit in the cold during the varsity soccer game while their team member dribbles down the field. *photo by tiffany yung*

**PREPARING TO STRIKE:** During the varsity volleyball game, the bench warmers watch as their team member is about to return the ball to the other side. *courtesy of now and forever*



### >Then and Now:

What we think about being bench warmers



"Being a bench warmer didn't bother me that much even though it was sometimes hard watching the other players do so well." —senior Zach Galvin



"I didn't like being on the bench because I knew I could do better but my injuries stopped me from playing my best." —freshman Michael Lee



**WATCHING FROM THE BENCH:** During the varsity basketball game against Lynbrook, senior, Brandon Pak dribbles the ball while players on the bench watch, wishing they could play. *photo by kylie tseng*



**CHEERING THE TEAM ON:** Players on the bench cheer on the batter while he's swinging during the jv baseball game. *courtesy of now and forever*

PUTTING THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON HER PROJECT, freshman Megan MacInnes takes advantage of Monday Tutorial to come early into her Biology class to add the last details to her project before she has to turn it in next period. "I had already stayed up really late the night before," she said. "But I needed to fix it up a but before turning it in." photo by helen wong



TAKING ADVANTAGE OF IN-CLASS STUDY TIME, freshman Connor Peebles studies as fast as he can in the given 5 minutes before the big Geometry test in Ms. Drouin's class. "Of course, I'd studied the night before," he said. "It's just that any extra time to study is really appreciated." photo by helen wong



# I survived Freshman Year

This year's freshmen worked as hard as they could to make it out alive, cramming for tests and organizing schedules like crazy.

by Helen Wong

"Freshman year can't be that hard, right?"

Most of the freshmen that entered SHS this year echoed those words all around during the first month or two of school, confidence bolstered by older siblings or friends who all assured them that ninth grade would be easy.

But by the close of the year, the attitude became quite different, and instead of those optimistic, carefree words, most of the freshmen started saying, "I can't wait for freshman year to end!"

This year's freshman class in particular confronted deadlines, tests, stressful hundred-point projects and many other problems, yet they still forged on relentlessly.

One of them is freshman Megan MacInnes, who hates deadlines with a passion.

"They seem to arrive so fast," MacInnes said. "It's like I never have enough time to complete whatever's due, especially because I do vaulting outside of school, which requires a lot of my time."

Extracurricular activities added to the problems this year's freshmen had to face and overcome. Dedication is a trait to be respected, but when dedication to outside activities and school assignments clash, things can get complicated.

"I had a project due for Biology recently," MacInnes said. "The assignment was to make a model of the inner systems of an organism. But I do vaulting, and both weekends before the project was due, I had full-day competitions, and every weekday, I had three to five hours of practice."

MacInnes ended up having to stay awake until three in the morning to finish her project the night before it was due.

Freshmen, as the newbies, have to learn how to organize

their schedules and prioritize activities. Unlike older students who are seasoned veterans of the SHS War Against Time, freshmen have to learn it from the top. For this year's freshman class, it was no different.

"It was really rather challenging and confusing at first to figure out where and when to do things because suddenly everything seemed to get a lot more complicated real fast," said freshman Corey Wong.

Many students have trouble managing their time spent studying for tests, because they all vary in difficulty and one can never be completely sure how much studying is needed in order to pass.

Many of this year's freshmen said they had stayed up extremely late to study, sometimes only getting about two hours of sleep or less, especially for this year's midterm finals. The new finals schedule demanded a lot more stress and cramming.

"I've stayed up until six in the morning studying before," freshman Connor Peebles said. "I barely got any sleep that week of midterm finals. I know it probably wasn't good for me, but I needed to study. My grades matter a lot to me. I'm probably going to do the same thing for end of year finals."

Freshman Kacey Fang agreed with Peebles. She'd had her own experience of having to study late into the night for finals.

"A few days ago, my dad took me to his office at ten o'clock at night so that I could 'study in peace'," Fang said. "I got back home at four in the morning."

Between grades, extracurricular activities and whatnot, it's almost hard to believe that this year's freshmen are still alive and kicking after such a harrowing year. But it must be believed--it really happened.

## > Freshmen QUOTES

### Comments on the year

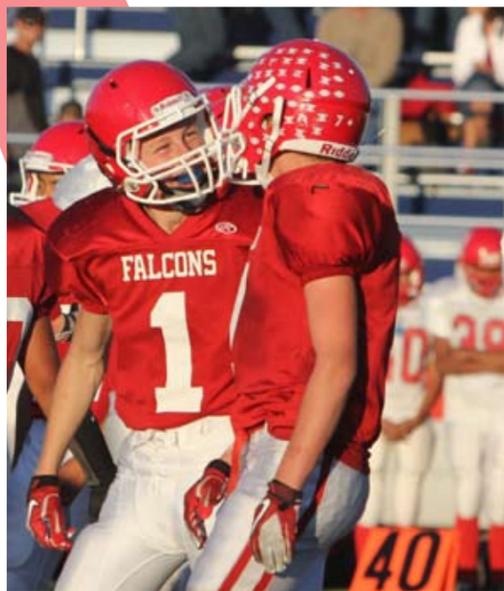


"It was really hard to organize my schedule and stuff at first because it seemed like there were suddenly mountains of stuff to do."---freshman Lauren Louie



"The finals schedule this year was a lot more stressful since we couldn't study over break and we just had to cram as hard as we could. It's just our luck."---freshman Patrick Huynh

DURING A POSSESSION CHANGE sophomore Grant Faylor and Jacob Marr joke around. “when you are winning by 40 points, we start to joke around and chat.” said Faylor *photo by Now and Forever*



MIKE FITSIMMONS LEADS THE TEAM IN A TRADITIONAL PRAYER. The prayer is a Red Pride tradition done before every home game. It is used to pump the team up.. *photo by Now and Forever.*



JOEY MEDERIOS FRESHMAN QUARTERBACK ON JV, prepares to throw a long pass to one of the wide receivers during warm up. “I always like to warm up my arm before the game, that way I would do my best.”*photo by Now and Forever*



SOPHOMORE JACOB CAMP IS RUNNING DOWN THE FIELD-dragging defenders with him as he manages to get the first down for the falcons. *photo by Now and Forever.*

# NEVER BACKING DOWN

by ken wu

**Despite the injuries, the JV team still pulled through with a 7-3 season, fighting against the all odds and achieving a successful season.**

“Red Pride on three; one, two, three. RED PRIDE.” The Jv football team yelled for the last time as their 2012 season ended with seven wins and three losses. The team looks back at their season and waiting for the new season to come.

The Saratoga JV football team ended with a good season of seven wins and three losses. “We could’ve done better; we shouldn’t have lost to Pally(Palo Alto), or Lg or even Wilcox,” said Freshman Addison Polcyn. The team lost three tough games to Pally, Lg, and wilcox by only a touchdown or a field goal. During the Pally game they only lost by only one touchdown. It was during the fourth quarter and Saratoga was only down by a touchdown and was on offense with four minutes left of the game. Toga was able to drive the ball all the way to the red zone when the ball was intercepted and the falcons lost. “We were devastated because it was our first lost of the season,” said Freshman Joey medeiros. What was truly unfortunate was that the Jv team lost to Los Gatos and Wilcox(who went undefeated) by only one field goal at the last couple seconds of the game. “I’ve never seen this happen twice in a row in a JV game before,” said Coach Stephen Matos of the JV team.

There were setbacks to those losses for example, there were many injuries not just on the Varsity level, but also JV which caused players to play both offense and defense which tired them out really easily. “I played line for for offense and defence which is really tiring and we don’t have a lot of subs so sometimes you can’t even go out.” said Sophomore Wilson. Many of the teams we played usually has double the amount of players which enables them to substitute.

Another reason was our size. Saratoga football is not known for their size and strength, but the team overcame that with their speed and intelligence. “ During my sophomore year, I would always study the opponent’s formation that way during the game i would be able to know what they are running; Now i’m just big,” Junior Henry Wei jokes.

JJ WALTERS SEES JACOB MARR FOR A PASS DURING BURLINGAME. Later on JJ makes the complete pass to Marr, who runs it in for a touchdown. The ending score was 49-7. “I was excited about that touchdwn because it was my first passing touchdown of the season.” Said Jacob Marr *photo by Now and Forever*

With that they were able to overcome their lack of size and strength and win games.

Another reason was our size. Saratoga football is not known for their size and strength, but the team overcame that with their speed and intelligence. “ During my sophomore year, I would always study the opponent’s formation that way during the game i would be able to know what they are running; Now i’m just big,” Junior Henry Wei jokes. With that they were able to overcome their lack of size and strength and win games. Playing Football isn’t just about winning games or getting big hits. It’s all about learning and continuing the Red Pride tradition. Many people think that Red Pride is just a saying but it means much more than that to us football players. In means protecting our house and living up to good deeds and being our best to elders and much more.

It’s something you learn through football at Saratoga. You also learn about having each others back and sticking up for one and another. For example, if a player misses a tackle you get his back by running in and helping to make the tackle and you stick up for one and another if one of your player gets hit, you hit the person that hit your friend.

Even though Saratoga plays in one of the toughest league in football, they were still able to come out with a positive season and having almost beat their biggest rivalry Los Gatos.



## Scoreboard

Burlingame	41-6(w)
Gilroy	37-6(w)
San Benito	21-0(w)
Los Altos	41-17(w)
Homestead	47-6(w)



(BELOW) THE RAT-RACE MERITOCRACY: Senior Peter Hsieh raps at the senior talent show on April 4, 2012. Slam poetry, like rap, uses rhythm and rhyme for expression. *photo by Kylie Tseng*  
 (FAR BELOW) EARNEST HONESTY: Freshman Annie Kung reads her heartfelt poem. In the team slam poem "SAT," Kung came up with the golden line: "It makes me wonder: why do people hide in their turtle shells?" *photo courtesy of Eren Veziroglu*



# the art of slam

by yvonne ye

**From the founding to the future, the slam poetry club expresses beliefs, sentiments, and political commentary through spoken word.**

Senior Alex Mabanta knows that there's only one artistic medium in which an "f-bomb"--a certain swearword--can send the crowd wild.

Mabanta, president of the eight-member slam poetry club, sometimes digs out explosive phrases like the "f-bomb" in order to express himself in the up-and-coming art of slam poetry, or spoken word.

"Slam poetry is different from [traditional poetry] in that it has a competition and performance aspect to it," Mabanta said. "Slam has a more impressionistic aspect to it, bringing to poetry a lot more flair and pizzazz."

This year, Mabanta founded the first high school slam poetry club in the Bay Area.

"I thought the club was a success because there were devoted members who came to every meeting," Mabanta said. "I knew not a lot of high schoolers would have motivation to write poetry, so I was happy with the participants."

Junior Venkat Munukutla, next president of the club, also felt that slam poetry club was a success.

"The club's performance greatly exceeded expectations," Munukutla said. "We competed,

and even advanced several members to later rounds."

Throughout the year, the slam poetry club performed at events like coffeehouses and open mics, events where anyone could sign up to perform.

"The most memorable experience for me was performing our team slam poem 'SAT' at the Saratoga Library Coffeehouse," Mabanta said.

The poem, advocating for reform in the American education system, received a standing ovation from the audience.

"It was kind of humbling," Mabanta said. "It seemed my leadership was producing products."

In addition to community events, the slam poets competed in a total of five tournaments, including the YouthSpeaks National Qualification Rounds in Oakland and San Francisco, even advancing one member past quals.

"I did hope more people would get to nationals," Mabanta said.

While Mabanta was oriented toward competing and performing, he noted that "...[some]

kids in the club wanted to win, and some just wanted the beauty of the form."

One such member, freshman Annie Kung, joined the club halfway through the school year.

"To be honest, I don't know why I joined slam poetry," Kung said. "I was just talking to my friends about how I was writing poetry and then the PA announced slam poetry during lunch."

Kung found the club an enjoyable experience.

"Slam poetry is a lot easier because it's on speaking terms--I can connect with the audience," Kung said. "I can't normally talk to people, but with [slam], I can speak my mind and no one will judge me."

Munukutla also agrees with Kung's sentiments, which is part of the reason why he writes slam poetry.

"I envision slam poetry as an escape from the everyday competitiveness as a high school student," Munukutla said. "In slam poetry, no one is judged, evaluated, or marginalized. Everyone is accepted and understood."

## >Poetic excerpts:

**Everyone:** SAT!

**Charles:** What's an SAT?

**Yvonne:** Some Annoying Teacher?

**Samir:** Hah! In that case I have a lot of SAT's!

**Charles:** Noo... it stands for Slimy and Atrocious Torture!

**Alex and Yvonne:** It means Standardized Aptitude Test.

**Alex:** Because somehow its better to rank kids by how well they can fill in small ovals.

**Yvonne:** Because somehow, knowing the definitions of the words "bucolic" and "somanambulist" measures someone's intelligence.

**Annie:** Someday, I wish I was judged on my ability to create ideas

**Samir:** To engineer solutions outside Pythagorean's Theorem.

**Alex and Yvonne:** To write about what I stand for. To speak with conviction.

**Everyone:** Because the only standard left to keep is the future of education for every single kid in America!

~excerpt from team slam poem "SAT"



(ABOVE) SLAMMING INTO OFFICE: Freshman Samir Ingle delivers a slam poem on why he should be vice president of the club next year. In the persuasive spirit of slam, club president Alex Mabanta asked all members who were interested in the office to write a slam on why they deserved it. *photo courtesy of Eren Veziroglu*

(LEFT)REVIEWING AND CRITIQUE: Senior Alex Mabanta and junior Venkat Munkutla watch members perform their slam poems. Mabanta believes that people participate in slam poetry because its style "...really empowers poets to become less a spectator and more the hero of their story." *photo by Yvonne Ye*

(RIGHT) DRESSING UP NERDY: Freshman Samir Ingle and sophomore Charles Li perform the team slam at the senior talent show. *photo by Kylie Tseng*

# Order in the Court

by Nadia Younes

## Freshmen Michelle Luo and Sonal Pai tell us what Mock Trial is really about.

Walking into the courtroom, the Mock Trial group is ready to win this case. Sitting down with their heads held high, they get into character.

Preparing from the beginning of the year, the group is split into two teams, prosecution and defense.

Everyone in the state of California gets the same packet with the same case. Knowing that all the other groups have the same case as them, Saratoga is prepared.

This year they have been given a case where someone has killed another person and the groups have to defend their sides of the story.

"We have about two months to prepare our lines before we go into the courthouse to compete," said Michelle Luo.

During this the witnesses have to be in character and act like their person would act. But the attorneys have to be attorneys.

Being in front of many people while trying to defend your case can be very scary.

"It teaches you a lot about being in a courtroom," said Michelle Luo, freshman. "And speaking in front of a crowd also helps your speech skills."

The trials can last up to three hours each. They must attend four trials before advancing.

"It can get pretty tiring," Sonal Pai, freshman, said, "but if you try and engage yourself into it and make it interesting, it goes by much faster."

The defense has to go against another school's prosecution, while the prosecution has to go against another school's defense.

"I try not to get nervous, because if you are than it is much scarier than it is if you just stay calm," said Pai.

Although Saratoga did not come back winning the trial, they still held their heads high.



Junior Ashwini Velcemy (left) and , Sophomore Casey Takahashi (right) pose for a picture together at the tem banquet at Florentines in Downtown Saratoga.

(right) Freshman Catherine Cheng takes the podium, defending her case, "I defending my team on our case about It was really fun but I wasn't take a picture of me



Sophomore Casey Takahashi (left) and freshman Anshika Maheshwari (right), share a hug in front of the San Jose Courthouse.

The Mock Trial team stands in front of the McAfee , FRONT ROW Charles Li (10) Ashwini Velchamy (11), Sachi Verma (10), Yvonne Ye (09). SECOND ROW Sonal Pai (09), Anshika Maheshwari (09), Darius Tooyserkani (10), Casey Takahashi (10), Catherine Cheng (09), Michelle Luo (09) THIRD ROW Max Chang (09), Jennie Werner (10), Timothy Chau (09), Rohan Cotah (11). BACK ROW Jimmy Zheng (12), Michael Chang (12).



### >Then and Now:

#### What we learned this year



"I learned that I needed to get over my fears of speaking in front of people and just do what helps your team"  
—freshman Sonal Pai



"I learned that I really had to under the surface to find out what you really wanted to know to do good during the case."  
—freshman Michelle Luo

**SAFETY FIRST** Varsity singles player Bryan Chow (10) stops to tighten his shoelaces after his first match on March 22. The matches resulted in a 15-8 and 15-4 win. He recently ranked first in the U17 boys singles playoff. *photo by Stephen Wu*

**PERFECTLY IN SYNCH** Home and away captains Derek Chao (11) and Lauren (Chu) keep return the bird during an intense rally against Gunn on March 22. "My brother was captain last year, so I'm kind of following in his footsteps," Lauren said. *photo by Stephen Wu*



**DOUBLE DEFENSE** Varsity players Jeffrey Chen (10) and Alvin Huang (10) defend against Wilcox players on March 15. "One of my favorite memories of the season was the Wilcox match where we had a double bagel, meaning we won 15-0, 15-0," Alvin said. *photo by Alyssa Wu*



**TAKING A BREATHER** Catherine Kim (10) catches her breath during her match against Wilcox on March 15. "It was my first year playing badminton," Catherine said. "I really learned a lot." *photo by Alyssa Wu*



**LUNGING FOR THE WIN** Jeff Kuo (12) lunges for the bird during a pick-up game against Wilcox on March 15. "I won my actual game pretty easily," Jeff said. "I had a lot more fun playing with the players on the team that I know from outside training." *photo by Alyssa Wu*

# Victory at Last

by Candice Zheng

**The Toga badminton team celebrates defeating and ranking above Gunn in the De Anza league after seven years.**

For the past seven years Saratoga badminton has been steadily outmatched by Gunn High School in an irritating losing streak. Since the presidency of George Bush, SHS has been placing one or two slots behind them in our school ranking within the DeAnza league. But this is no longer—recently Saratoga has won the home game against Gunn and successfully ranked above them this season.

Despite losing to Gunn 16-14 during the away game on April 26, we have managed to top Gunn after winning our home game 21-9 on March 22. This surprising victory was also helped by placing above the schools Gunn has lost to during the season. According to badminton coach Alex Chan, this is an impressive feat.

"Gunn's badminton has always been very strong. Although we didn't win leagues, defeating them is still something to be proud of," Chan said.

Compared to the past years, Gunn has graduated a lot of senior players and is currently still in "rebuilding mode," according to Chan. Even so, the team still viewed them as tough opponents. Bryan Chow, a sophomore currently slotted as varsity one boy's singles, thinks that we put in a lot of effort to win.

"They have some strong players that are tough to beat," said Chow. "I think Coach Alex contributed a lot by planning the line-ups that would optimize our chances of winning."

The team's success against Gunn was largely helped by the carefully planned line-up crafted by Chan and several parents supporting the team. Since many of Gunn and Saratoga's varsity players train outside of

school together, the line-up was produced with their strengths and weaknesses in mind.

On the other side, aside from the team's hard work that paid off, Gunn made a number of mistakes that helped us push past them and win.

According to Chow, one of these mistakes was stacking up their line-up to compete against our varsity players.

"[Gunn] put all their best players in the top slots and sacrificed their other games," said Chow. "I don't think this was a good idea for them because we have strong players for every event."

For Gunn senior Brian Yu, who played varsity three mixed doubles, it was his first year playing on varsity, but not his first following the team's progress. In his eyes, he thought Gunn was weaker this year compared to the past few seasons, but still thought Saratoga's players were impressive.

"We were weaker since we lost some players, but I still thought Saratoga's varsity was really strong," Yu said. "Some of them were scary good. Especially the boy's doubles and singles."

For Saratoga's badminton team, this year's performance has only been okay, finishing fourth in the league. But despite some mistakes the team made, the win against Gunn was definitely a highlight of this season and something to be proud of.

"I do feel like we stepped it up a notch this year and I think we performed well, considering that many other teams have also gotten stronger," said Chan. "Winning against Gunn was good, but next year we should be beating them again and winning leagues!"

## >Then and Now:

### What has changed?



"We have another assistant coach who really helped us master our badminton skills." —sophomore Vanessa Wang



"We had a lot more playing time compared to last year, and the gym was open for much longer." —sophomore Grace Ma



"It was a lot more organized and a lot of people put a lot of effort into the line-up to help us win." —junior Christopher Lee

# Cuernavaca, Mexico Anyone?

This year's Mexico trip took place in Cuernavaca, the largest city in the state of Morelos.

by Alvin Kim



THE MEXICO FLEE MARKET COLORFULLY DISPLAYS ITS FRUIT, the Mexican flea market fruitfully displays its wide variety of fruit. *photo by Shivani Chadha*

On April 12th, underclassmen and upperclassmen alike from school went to Cuernavaca, with hopes to learn more about the diverse and interesting culture of Mexico. Students lived in homes with their families, in order to learn more about the stories of the city.

The city, known as the "city of Eternal Spring", stays 75 degrees Fahrenheit throughout the year, and is known for its tourist attraction and its sunny, vivid flowers.

Freshman Mackenzie Rosenthal said she went to the trip to "get a better understanding of the culture and also to improve my Spanish because that's all anyone spoke." She also learned that things are never wrong or weird, but they are just different.

For many of the people who went on the trip, they said coming back seemed like a whole new world to them, junior Tina Pourani said, "Everyone is a lot more closer in Mexico than America because people greet each other with a kiss."

The two diverse cultures is what separates them despite the relatively close distance between both countries. Cu-

ernavaca is known for its high tourist population, most of them being student tourists who want to know more about the Spanish culture and language.

Pourani's goal for the trip was to "was hoping to further improve my Spanish, understand when people spoke to me, and learn more about the culture, such as food and dance."

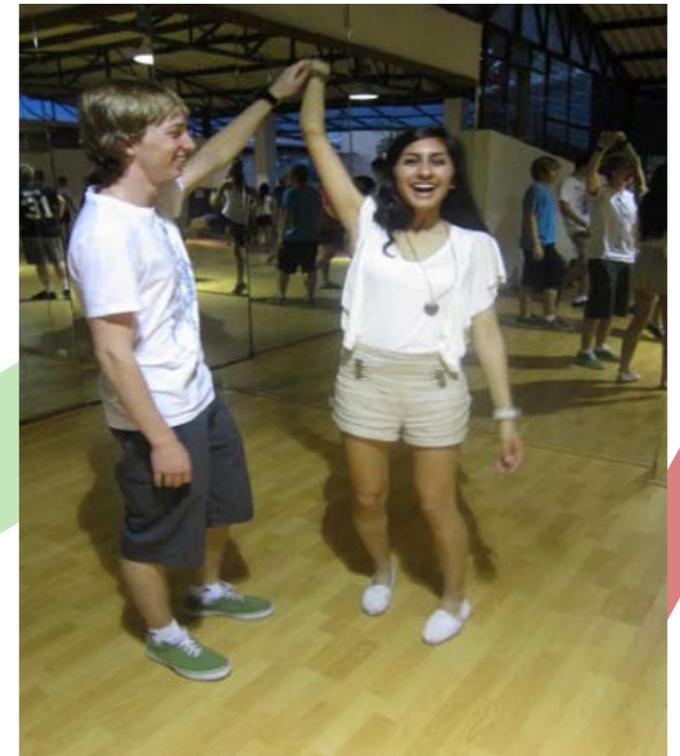
One of the interesting culture the people of Cuernavaca celebrated was the flower fair, "Feria de la Flor," which is one of the city's most important holidays. Held in early spring, the streets are filled with flower displays and related competitions. Contributing to a true carnival atmosphere are fair rides and a sound and light show that occur every evening at the city's main plaza.

Chinelos, very distinctive dancers with costumes and masks, dance tirelessly in festivals and parades to the rhythmic beat of a drum.

Cuernavaca has taught many things about itself to the students in the school, such as its language, culture, and its natural beauty, and many of the students have claimed it to be the "experience of a lifetime".



CITY OF ETERNAL SPRING, Cuernavaca is commonly known for maintaining its steady 70 degrees Fahrenheit throughout the year. *photo Shivani Chadha*



NIGHT OF MY LIFE (Right), Shivani Chadha dances with her partner during the Mexican dance-off. *Michael Zhang*

