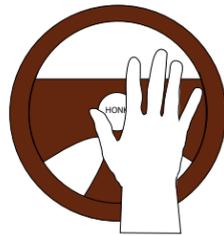


The Wall of Rejection pg. 7  
TV pilots, premieres and finales pgs. 12-13  
Everything about reading pgs. 16-17  
Different faiths, different lifestyles S1-S4



Apocalypse 2012: Yes, we survived!



Problems in the parking lot

# THE saratogafalcon



Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA  
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## Robinson envisions campus renovations



BY Nikil Ramanathan & Akshara Sekar

Principal Paul Robinson and various architects have recently been scanning the school for ways to make better use of facilities and classrooms.

"We have about four or five areas on campus that are not being used well," Robinson said. "We have people being crowded into spaces that the classrooms weren't really built for."

Possible projects include renovating the old preschool and woodshop

buildings for new uses, finding more efficient locations for various departments, including band and drama, and creating a student center in the heart of campus.

Robinson said these changes are necessary because of larger enrollment and fewer classrooms, leading teachers to combine classrooms. Classes from different departments sometimes use the same classroom, which can become a problem.

>> **RENOVATIONS** on pg. 5

### Proposed Renovations

1. **Room 804** would become a multipurpose student center.
2. The **900 Wing** would change into a robotics and programming lab for the growing robotics program.
3. The **Preschool** would become a sceneshop for the drama program.
4. Because of its location, **Woodshop** would be converted to a music room.

### LEADERSHIP

## Focusing on change

BY Sarah Finley

When students returned from this year's Martin Luther King holiday, there was more waiting for them than piles of homework and projects.

Speak Up for Change Week, four days dedicated to promoting change on campus, took place this week. The week was created by the leadership class, led by assistant principals Kerry Mohnike and Kevin Mount.

"The objective is to empower students to not just talk about change, but do something to effect positive change on our school campus and maybe in the wider world," Mohnike said.

Classes were slightly shortened on Tuesday and Friday to make time for school-wide activities and assemblies. On Wednesday and Thursday, teachers were asked to devote about 15 minutes of class time to teach a mini-lesson on a topic specific to their department. Some lessons were about cliques, cheating and the power of words.

Leadership students came up with these mini-lessons and met with members of the department for whom they created a lesson plan. For leadership student and junior Jennie Werner, collaborating with members of the English department was rewarding.

"We met with the English teachers during lunch in the English Palace, we shared with them a rough draft of

>> **SPEAK UP** on pg. 4

### SCIENCE FAIR

## Intel announces Semifinalists

BY Evaline Ju

On Jan. 9, seniors Nikki Bedekar, Amanda Chow and Kevin Garbe were announced among the 300 semifinalists for the Intel Science Talent Search.

Bedekar's project is titled "A Novel Environmentally Promising Alternative to Lead-Based Piezoelectric Materials — A Study of Lead Free (NaK)(NbSb)O3-LiTaO3-BaZrO3 Ceramics."

She spent seven weeks in China this past summer studying piezoelectricity, a branch of materials science. Since many materials use lead but are toxic to most biological creatures, the materials cannot be used in biological environments, Bedekar said. Thus, she looked at a branch of alternatives that have the same performance as lead.

"Doing research in any setting is really interesting, but I was even luckier because I got to improve my Chinese at the same time," Bedekar said. "And it's [also] interesting to see how different people approach research."

Chow's project, called "Electrocatalytic Hydrogenation of Furfural using

Solid Polymer Electrolyte Electrolyzer," involved the chemical modification of bio-oil, a renewable fuel derived from plant material.

Chow was also named a Siemens semifinalist this past October. Garbe's project is named "Patterns in the Coefficients of Powers of Polynomials over a Finite Field."

According to Garbe, it combined number theory, combinatorics, polynomials and matrix algebra to discover several theorems that improve understanding of fractals, mathematical sets.

"The research is relevant to a range of practical uses since fractals have been used in diverse applications such as cryptography, seismology and even weather forecasting," Garbe said.

Garbe started his research in May with a mentor from the Research Science Institute (RSI). He wrote a draft at RSI in MIT during the summer, then continued his research through the fall.

The names of finalists were announced on Jan. 23. The final competition for 40 students will take place in Washington, D.C., on March 10. ♦

### STEVE MCCUE: 1965-2013

## School mourns loss of art teacher

BY Kelly Liu & Sophie Mattson

Beloved art and digital photography teacher Stephen John McCue passed away on Jan. 4 at the age of 47 after suffering from a rare form of lung cancer. McCue was diagnosed last February but chose to continue teaching as much as possible because of his love for his students.

According to senior Sarah Menard, a student in his Advanced Art class, McCue "always felt better after coming to school," even in the midst of battling a devastating illness. Substitute art teacher Diana Vanry periodically filled in for him, and is currently teaching art classes.

The school will hold McCue's memorial service tomorrow at 1 p.m. in the McAfee Center for friends, family and students alike to attend. At the service, the science department plans to place a thousand origami paper cranes made by teachers and students; in Japanese culture, a thousand origami paper

cranes are thought to be able to grant one wish.

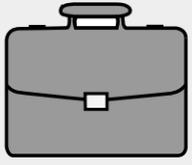
McCue was born in Ontario, Canada, on Jan. 16, 1965. He graduated from Leigh High School in San Jose, and earned his bachelor's degree in Fine Arts and his teaching credential from San Jose State University. Spanish teacher Gina Rodriguez met McCue at the same credential program. Before his 15 years of teaching at the school, McCue worked as a photographer and graphic designer at Creative Publications in Mountain View for several years.

Art students spoke of McCue's special way of starting his classes with an art demonstration.

"Those art demos would be my favorite part of the class," said junior Emily Che. "We would gather as close as we could, and he made us smile and laugh about the stories of his past."

Menard said that his stories were so compelling that "he would say that the situation was problematic because

>> **MCCUE** on pg. 4



news  
>> briefs

**Ethics bowl team prepares for regionals**

An SHS team will compete in the California Regional High School Ethics Bowl Competition at UCSC on Feb. 2. Team captain senior Kevin Chen started the Ethics Bowl group this year to provide a competitive side to the Philosophy Club.

"I saw how close team members could get when I looked at other teams, such as the History Bowl and Quiz Bowl teams," Chen said. "The atmosphere really brings people together, and that was what I was going for."

The team includes seniors Chen, Edward Dong, Jacqueline Gu, Nessa Kim, Sasan Saadat and Sujay Khandekar. Chen and adviser Erick Rector chose the members through an audition, a discussion on the role of man in society.

The tournament is divided into a series of rounds, each round with two cases. One team presents the first case, the opposing team provides commentary, and the first team responds to the commentary. Then the teams switch sides for the second case. A panel of judges scores the students on aspects such as clarity of the presentation and awareness of different viewpoints in the case.

This year's cases include topics such as enhancing academic performance with prescription drugs, the role of the SAT in college admissions and the captive breeding of polar bears.

"My goal for the upcoming competition in February is to just have fun," Chen said. "We have a very strong and talented team, and I am confident in their abilities. We're just going to try our best and have fun with it."

— Evaline Ju and Devin Zhao

**Newly introduced 'Wall of Rejection' to be created in hopes of encouraging seniors**

During the spring semester, many seniors often begin to feel disappointed after receiving college rejection letters. In an effort to alleviate this overwhelming sense of unworthiness, ASB has proposed a "Wall of Rejection."

"Basically the idea is to have a wall where you can post your rejection letters from wherever you applied to," senior co-head commissioner Shireen Kaul said. "The purpose is to show how it's OK to 'fail' sometimes because it happens in life all the time, and that you aren't alone in your rejection."

The "Wall of Rejection" was proposed during the 2011-2012 school year in ASB but didn't see much development. In November, ASB asked second-period representatives to share the idea to their classes. The responses were largely positive, but there were some concerns.

"Some people may not feel comfortable sharing their letters or don't feel the motivation to post their letters," Kaul said.

In response to these worries, ASB members said letters can be posted anonymously.

A "Wall of Rejection" like the one proposed by ASB was implemented at Gunn High School, where it received positive feedback.

At the ASB meeting on Jan. 8, the Wall of Rejection was approved and will occupy the wall space below the attendance office counter.

"We will have a box in the office and a white out next to it," Chu said. "If people are inclined we would love to have them drop off a copy of their letter and it is up to them whether they want to make it anonymous or not."

— Aashna Mukerji and Sierra Smith

>> corrections

If you notice any factual errors in this issue, please feel free to contact The Falcon at editors@saratogafalcon.org.

>> upcoming events

**Feb. 7** Souper Bowl ceramics fundraiser

**Feb. 18** First day of February break

**Feb. 27** Redwood staff vs SHS staff basketball game

**Feb. 28** Opening night of the spring musical

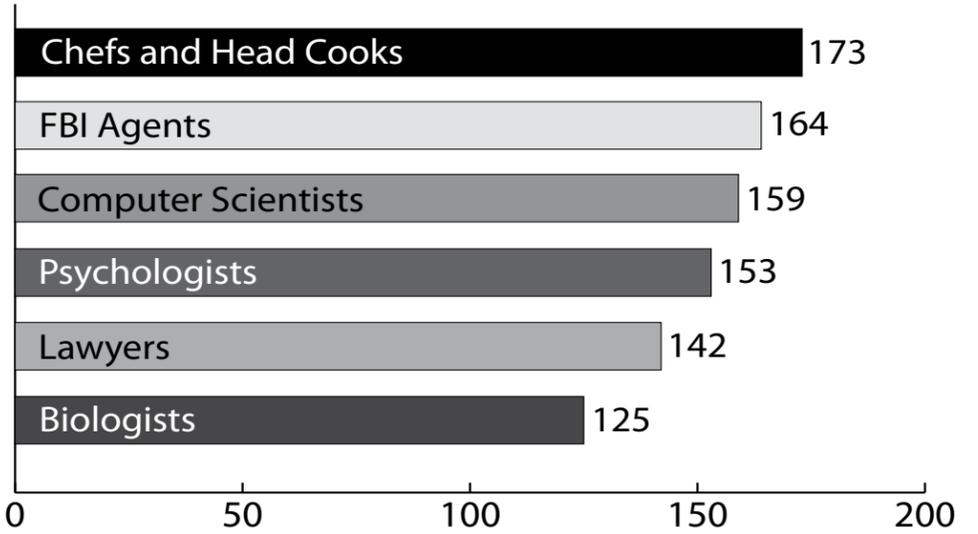
>> picturethis



**COUNTRY CONCERT >>** Lead singer and songwriter Brodie Stewart of the Brodie Stewart Band performs "Mississippi Mud" in front of students in the McAfee Center on Jan. 17 for a MAP fundraiser.

>> falconfigures

Top 6 Career Day Choices



— Deepti Kannan

COURTESY OF CAREER DAY COORDINATOR BONNIE SHIEKH

COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

Seeking fixes to rec letter issue

BY DeeptiKannan & SierraSmith

Teachers, counselors and administrators attended a lunchtime meeting in English teacher Natasha Ritchie's classroom last month to brainstorm ways to lessen the burden of letters of recommendation for teachers.

Assistant principal Brian Safine said approximately 20 staff members attended the meeting, during which they pitched their ideas on how to ease the process of writing letters of recommendation, especially for teachers of juniors, who receive dozens of requests each fall from seniors applying to private universities.

Ritchie, who had to write 24 letters by Nov. 1 and an additional seven letters by Dec. 1 for this year's applications, said junior teachers are being pressed by deadlines, as there was a sharp increase in the number of students applying early.

"One of the biggest problems we're facing right now is the sheer number of students that are applying early," Ritchie said.

In addition to the trend of more early applicants, teachers are being hit harder for let-

ter requests because they teach freshman or sophomore classes in addition to junior classes.

With the stress of early applications and summer program requests, several possible solutions were mentioned at the lunch meeting to help lessen the letter-writing burden.

One proposed solution is to spread the letters among more sophomore and senior teachers in order to reduce the number of letters that junior teachers have to write, AP Chemistry and Chemistry Honors teacher Kathy Nakamatsu said.

However, Ritchie pointed out some complications with spreading the burden to senior and sophomore teachers.

"If a teacher teaches ninth and 12th grade, and a student's applying early, then can the student really get to know the teacher again in two months?" Ritchie said. "I think as a junior teacher I can provide a stronger letter than perhaps a freshman teacher could because students have evolved in so many ways."

Another step proposed at the meeting was to make the process of uploading letters to Naviance smoother and less confusing.

"There's no sort of way for me to quickly look to see if any-

thing is actually completed [on Naviance]," Algebra II Honors and Calculus BC AP teacher Audrey Warmuth said.

In addition to improving Naviance, another suggestion to help write letters is a new plan for allotted letter-writing days.

Safine said the school will try to persuade senior and sophomore teachers to write more letters in the future.

"Moving forward, we plan to communicate both to staff and students that it is acceptable for senior [and sophomore] teachers to write letters of recommendation," Safine said. "We've said that in the past, but we need to remind folks that this is something that really helps with the balance of letters."

Despite the burden of writing so many letters in so little time, Ritchie said she understands the importance of writing letters of recommendation and therefore enjoys writing them.

"I want to write [recommendation letters] because I don't want a student to just be represented by their grade or their GPA," Ritchie said. "I think the anecdotal evidence that comes from a letter can be really valuable." ♦

ACTIVITIES

# Mock trial competes at invitational

TEAM EVALUATES FLAWS AND STRENGTHS, LOOKS FORWARD TO COMPETITION

BY Ashwini Velchamy

After months of preparation, the mock trial team competed against other schools for the first time at an invitational hosted at Apple's Litigation Building in Sunnyvale on Jan. 12.

This invitational allowed Santa Clara County teams to practice against teams from around the state. At the invitational, the prosecution side faced American High School from Fremont while the defense side competed against Grigori High School from Modesto.

"The intriguing thing I noticed is that the invitational wound up being similar to practice," social studies teacher and teacher coach Jim Chin said. "It's great to see the kinds of arguments that other teams use."

Chin felt that observing other teams gives the team a "better sense of the arguments and characterizations that work for them."

Freshman Karthik Padmanaban, playing the role of an attorney, found his first time competing against another school a "really fun and completely different" experience.

"It felt different being in the room with the judge watching

you, and there is a lot more pressure," Padmanaban said.

In addition to Padmanaban, six other members are newcomers to mock trial, and the invitational gave them and the experienced members a chance to come together as a team. The experience serves as an advantage going into the team's upcoming competitions.

"The invitational is when the team starts to bond for the first time and is always fun," junior Jennie Werner, who plays the defendant, said. "Since it is more laid back than competitions, it is a great way to see where we are at without the high stress level while still being able to simulate a real trial."

Werner used the invitational as an opportunity to learn more about her character and have a little fun as well.

"During the invitational, an attorney on the opposing side asked me an open ended question on cross, which you're not supposed to do," Werner said. "I then told the court my entire life story while she stood there awkwardly unsure of how to shut me up. It was really entertaining to try new things out."

Chin felt that the invitational overall went well.

"Our attorneys acquitted



FALCON // WREN SUTTERFIELD

Junior Jennie Werner and senior Ashwini Velchamy rehearse their case during mock trial practice on Jan. 15.

themselves well under some tough questions from the judges — I was scratching my head trying to come up with responses to some of the questions raised during pretrial," Chin said. "And our witnesses were professional and quick-thinking during cross-examination. They did a really good job maintaining their composure under pressure."

Despite doing well at the in-

invitational, the team members in general agree that they have a lot of work to do before competitions begin, starting with memorization.

"Our team needs to make sure we get off book," Chin said. "I also wonder if it will be more helpful for team members to think about getting the flow of an argument down as opposed to memorizing lines."

Werner agrees that there is

definitely room for improvement.

"The invitational pointed out our weaknesses," Werner said. "However, now that we know what we need to focus on, we will be better prepared for competitions."

The team held a practice trial against Los Gatos on Jan. 14, and will have another against Lynbrook on Jan. 28. The competition starts Feb. 5. ♦

SECOND SEMESTER

## Senioritis: anathema for some, escape for others

BY Michael Lee

The symptoms: lethargy, baggy eyes and a loss of interest in the productive activities of one's life. The diagnosis? Senioritis — the laziness that strikes seniors during their second semesters, about when they complete their college applications.

Some accept senioritis as a relaxing fantasy — a blue-pill-esque escape — while others reject it as a self-inflicted Placebo and choose the harsher reality of hard work. Opinions are split; some, like senior Tiffany Yung, argue that the second semester of senior year is a good time to relax a bit before college.

"I think that [senioritis can be] good, because all these years, you've been working for grades," Yung said. "Now you're still working because of APs, but you're more relaxed, and there's less pressure on you."

People like English teacher Catherine Head, however, argue the opposite — that seniors should hold second semester just as highly as their previous years of high school.

"I think that it's very tempting," Head said. "Certainly, the seniors have put in four years of extremely hard work. However, because there's that mythology out there that you can slack off and it's OK, it's very tempting to go ahead and do that. But I think it is a myth. There is not an acceptable reason to slack off."

Head also warns about the dangers of loosening one's work ethic.

"In fact, people do find themselves losing their acceptances," she said.

Head continued, "There's also, in my senior classes, an added commitment if you're taking AP. That even goes for people who aren't planning on taking the AP test, because what they do affects how the whole class feels."

Physics teacher Kirk Davis agrees that senioritis has the potential to mar one's second semester of senior year.

"I admit I was afflicted by it when I was a senior. It was a real mistake" he said.

Both teachers have noticed the so-called "senior slump" hurt their students—and their performance.

"Have I seen concrete evidence that there is such a thing [as senioritis]? Oh, absolutely," Head said. "Every year I see it, and the people who really slump do regret it."

Senior Bhavana Vadrevu, too, believes senioritis is erroneously based on the misguided importance students put on grades.

"I don't think that grades are only to show to colleges," Vadrevu said. "They're a way of proving to yourself that you did a good job."

Instead of giving into the laziness of senioritis, Vadrevu saw the value of her final semester at Saratoga High.

"For me, it was like, 'Wow, this is really important. This is the last time I have in high school, ever,'" she said.

However, Davis recommends that the seniors should relax a little during their final months of high school.

"In terms of senioritis ... Don't resist it too much, but don't change your behavior so that you're a different person than who you really are." he said. ♦

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## SPEAK UP >> Encourages kindness among students

continued from pg. 1

the lesson plan, and they gave us feedback," Werner said. "It was helpful to see a teacher's perspective. They helped us realize the things we had overlooked."

Senior Sasan Saadat, also a member of the leadership class, first broached the idea of Speak Up for Change Week.

"I came up with the idea after an interscholastic ASB meeting," Saadat said. "They do something called 'Not in Our Schools' week at Gunn High, and I thought we could use it as a template for something cool at Saratoga."

Saadat hopes the week inspired students to take action.

"I hope that students approached the week with an open mind," Saadat said. "I hope that they were eager to

push themselves to change anything they identified as negative with this campus, and saw that rather than complain or tolerate, we can take action and improve our Falcon family."

According to Mohnike, the week was largely student produced.

"I hope the leadership class felt ownership of it," Mohnike said. "Students have a language unto themselves."

Mohnike believes the week taught students lessons that can be applied for the rest of their lives.

"We're really trying to make them understand that the world outside of high school is so big and wide, and the only way you can navigate it is if you learn these kinds of skills on top of all that academic [material]," Mohnike said. ♦

## APPLICATION DEVELOPERS CLUB

# Club works on Falcon website app

BY DylanJew  
& JenniferJin

After the release of the SHS App on Sept. 27, the Application Developer's club has been working on its next project: creating an app for The Saratoga Falcon's website.

"I initially talked about the idea with [journalism adviser Mike] Tyler and he thought it was a great idea," senior club president Sujay Khandekar said.

The newspaper app requires a different approach to the coding. Instead of storing all the information in the phone like in the SHS App, articles are stored in the Falcon's web server and must be pulled from there.

"The format will most probably be the same tab bar interface as seen in the SHS App," Khandekar said. "However, the biggest change will be that it will have to be more dynamic

since new stories are always published regularly."

The main goal of the newspaper app is to allow students to read Falcon stories on their phones or tablets. The developers are working to create a local database that caches, or stores, articles so they can be read without Internet.

"[The Falcon App] is a fun opportunity for me to explore webservers and the inner workings of a newspaper database, being outside of journalism," senior Eugene Che said.

The club hopes to release the Falcon App in early February.

Another project the club is working on is an electronic version of the goldenrod textbook forms.

The club hopes that the app will replace the existing paper goldenrods and expects to have a version ready for testing by February.

According to Che, the club

is a good experience for people with all sorts of coding backgrounds and those new to coding can learn from other members and tutorials posted on the club website.

Students familiar with a language can help beginners and develop apps of their own.

"We found that teaching everyone how to code [in organized sessions] was inefficient and took way too much time to get anything done," Che said. "Instead we do it outside of class so if people have questions they just ask people who are more veteran at the process."

The club is making great progress with each app, learning the process and helping the community at the same time.

"The long-term goal is to push out as many apps onto the AppStore and Google Play Store as we can," Khandekar said. ♦

## MCCUE >> Loss of art teacher

continued from pg. 1

rather than watch him paint."

McCue was also known for his love for Cher, an American singer and actress, his blue plaid shirts and Apple products, Menard said. According to senior Sanjna Verma, McCue worked at the Apple store before the first iPhone came out and met former CEO Steve Jobs. He also put photographs of Cher over his walls and called his office a "Cher shrine."

"Everyone knew he loved Cher, which I find to be the best quirk about him," senior Kellie Baker said. "He'd always say 'Oh my Cher' instead of 'Oh my God' and 'Cher-licious.'"

According to ceramics teacher Leah Aguayo, McCue liked ice cream, pumpkin pie, and enjoyed the days when his hair "laid perfectly across his head."

"He loved perfection, and we loved him for it," Aguayo said.

As a teacher, students found McCue to be dedicated, patient, kind and most of all, inspiring. One of his idiosyncrasies was "proclaiming everything 'juicy' or 'meaty' or 'delicious,'" Menard said.

"He was not only a teacher, but a mentor, a confidant and a dear friend," Baker said. "Through each of [my] problems, Mr. McCue was there to listen and make sure I was always okay. It is rare to connect with a teacher the way I and so many other students did."

Aguayo said that McCue was "would always take the time to listen to you." One of her most cherished times with McCue was lunchtime at school.

"On any given day our art office would be a gathering place for faculty at lunch. We laughed so hard every day, and then the bell would ring and we'd all go back to our classes," Aguayo said. "It was very special. One of the last things he said to me was that he was going to miss our lunches together."

Another friend and colleague of McCue, health teacher Amy Obenour, said that McCue fought all the way to the end, trying to stay as healthy as he could to make it to school as many days as he could for his students.

"Up to his last days, he still was thinking about all of them and wanted them to know that he tried his best to last as long as he could," Obenour said. "His influence in all students lives is profound and will continue to spread as his students go out into the world. I will miss him terribly. Our school has suffered a profound loss." ♦

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## RENOVATIONS >> Campus changes

continued from pg. 1

The funding for these projects would come from private donations as well as district sources.

He said the cost is still unknown, because architects working with the school still need to finalize plans.

"What I hope SHS will get out of this is better-used space on campus. We have tremendous student leaders," Robinson said. "To give them a home that they can actually work out of is something that our students will value. We will see stronger student leadership because they have a home."

One high-priority upgrade would be to convert the old woodshop into another music room, Robinson said.

Music groups now sometimes meet in room 804, a room far from the rest of the music department. A new music room in the old woodshop would be close to band events and large enough to store band instruments.

In turn, Robinson hopes the 800 wing could house a new students center—a home for students and student activities he thinks is sorely needed.

"This is a center for our CAH-SEE counselors and students to come to whenever they need any kind of help at all, whether it's academic, whether it's personal, or even if it's a situation where a student needs a bagel

or something because they had to miss breakfast," Robinson said.

He also hopes students will come to the center to seek any support they might need.

"There will be some smaller offices in there if students want to talk privately with somebody and make sure they are OK," Robinson said.

Junior Alex Renda likes the

**Adding a student center to help students cope with increased stress and other issues we often face will be a boon to the environment.**

>> Junior Alex Renda

idea of a student center and thinks the school will benefit from it.

"It's nice that the school is putting much more emphasis on the students," said Renda. "Life at Saratoga High School is changing, so adding a student center to help students cope with increased stress and other issues we often face, will be a boon to the school environment."

Another change would be to move drama-related technical work and equipment to the former preschool classroom near the administration building. That way, it would be close to the McAfee as well as the little theater, Robinson said.

This change would allow the school to stop using classrooms as storage space.

With more open classrooms, Robinson hopes to evolve some programs on campus that often struggle for space.

"One of the biggest needs we have right now is to find more space for the robotics program. It is booming, and we hope to be offering classes in engineering that are actually incorporating a lot of the techniques for robotics within those classes," Robinson said.

With the new renovations, the 900 wing would be turned into a robotics lab and computer programming center to allow students to take pre-engineering and computer programming courses.

As a member of the M-SET robotics team, Renda is also excited about the additions of space as well as new classes.

"Shifting the various technology and engineering spaces as well as taking an increased interest in the development of science and technology courses will greatly benefit the many students interested in possibly pursuing a future in a STEM field," said Renda. "The robotics program in particular is exploding in size, so allocating more space and even potential classes will improve on both the success of the program and its many members." ♦

### ELECTIVES

## Redwood to bid French 'adieu'

### SHS PROGRAM WILL REMAIN

BY Samuel Liu & Trung Vandin

As schools around the nation experience severe budget cuts, Saratoga has not escaped unscathed.

Because of a combination of falling interest and the fiscal situation, Redwood Middle School has cut its French program. The decision was made by site and district staff, with the collaboration of the school board.

According to Redwood's Spanish and French teacher Markus Puhvel, there were still students signing up for French at Redwood, but because of the lack of funding, something had to be cut.

"This process is never easy," Puhvel said.

"I don't think anybody is happy that French will no longer be offered at Redwood."

Having spoken with teachers at other schools, Puhvel has found that many French programs around California and the U.S. have also been cut usually for budgetary reasons.

Saratoga High French teacher Laura Lizundia said she

was "saddened by this move at Redwood, but there is no chance that Saratoga will cut our program here at the high school level as long as students continue to enroll in French."

Saratoga's French program is, according to Lizundia, thriving. French at Saratoga starts at level one, and the highest level is AP.

"I actually think it is beneficial for students to start with level one at the high school level because the transition to the subsequent higher levels is much smoother," she said.

However, Lizundia still thought that French might be negatively affected.

"It is unfortunate because Redwood pretty much feeds [Saratoga] its more advanced French students," she said.

Puhvel expressed hope that French might one day return to Redwood.

"This is a sad consequence of the economic reality facing our state and our school district," Puhvel said.

"Hopefully the future will bring some relief from the budget problems of the last few years." ♦

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MISSIONSTATEMENT

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

LETTERS OF THE EDITOR

The Saratoga Falcon welcomes all signed letters of opinion, which are subject to editing for length, accuracy and grammar. Please send them to [editors@saratogafalcon.org](mailto:editors@saratogafalcon.org). For ad information, phone (408) 867-3411, ext. 222.

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

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# 'We're all in this together!'

## WALL OF REJECTION WOULD HELP EASE DISTRESS

Gut-wrenching sobs, tear-stained faces, endless moping. As seniors finish the last of their college applications, colleges have already begun sending acceptances and rejections.

Some students will inevitably be disappointed. To combat this, the ASB has planned a wall where students can post their rejections. The idea is that instead of bemoaning rejections, students would celebrate them as just another part of life.

In fact, the Wall of Rejections sounds like a great idea. Not only would it comfort students during the stressful college admission season, the wall would also foster a stronger sense of school unity as students realize that they're not alone.

Of course, students will have the option to remove their names from

their letters before submitting them to be put on the wall.

College rejections aren't the end of the world, which seems like a rather obvious idea up until results start coming in. At that point, it's almost inconceivable for seniors to consider rejections anything less than the apocalypse.

At one point or another, everyone faces rejection. And as with all rejections, people desire to be comforted. The Wall of Rejections is like that invisible friend knocking on your door, armed with five buckets of ice cream, ready to listen and tell you that everything will turn out perfectly fine in the end.

Sometimes the reassurances from another person are simply not enough. It's hard to listen to that friend who got into the top Ivy League school or

that classmate who laughs and asks why everyone cares so much about college decisions.

That's where the Wall comes in, to provide a more neutral view of rejection — something that happens to everyone, and something that you will get through.

Although publicizing rejection letters may on the surface level seem to emit a negative vibe — "We sincerely regret to inform you...", "I recognize this will come as a disappointment to you" — the Wall would actually serve to encourage positivity among students. And by posting their letters on the wall — where hundreds of other students have already done the same — they would be able to move past the rejection.

College rejections are tough. There's no doubt about it. But they are also a part of life. So why should you wallow in solitude when you can take part in the group hug that is the Wall of Rejection?

And if you want to truly show the colleges that you are strong enough to move past a rejection, post your letter on the Wall and send them a picture. We are sure they'd love that. Good luck! ♦

>> Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

**Editor-in-chief**  
Jackie Gu

**Opinion Editor**  
Paul Jung

**Reporters**  
Ashwini Velchamy  
Evaline Ju

The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 23-12 in favor of a Wall of Rejection.



# People should be informed of increasing rate of cybercrimes

BY Allison Chang & Trung Vandinh

On Dec. 5, Nationwide Insurance issued a public notice on its website informing customers that a breach of security had occurred on Oct. 3, joining a whole host of companies that have been infiltrated by hackers.

According to the report, the hackers got names, Social Security and driver's license numbers, birth dates and other confidential information.

With the rise of online banking, shopping and other online services, there is a greater chance than ever before of becoming a victim of cybercrime. However, the general public remains blissfully unaware of how easily their private information can be accessed.

In order to combat the increasing rates of cybercrime, any crime commit-

ted over a computer or network, it is imperative that the public become more aware of how vulnerable their information is on the Internet and take steps to prevent these thefts.

According to a statistical study published by Symantec Corporation in 2011, there are 1 million victims of cybercrime every single day. That calculates out to 50,000 victims every hour, 820 every minute and 14 per second.

**There are one million victims of cybercrime each day. That calculates out to 14 per second.**

Even so, only 31 percent of individuals thought they would be more likely to be a victim of online crime than physical crime.

Providing information about cybercrime, such as installing antivirus programs or avoiding accessing sensitive information while using public Internet, would make people more likely to take precautions when going on the web.

Educating Internet users about what

not to do on the Internet is equally essential. A common misconception supported by many online sites that require user accounts is that as long as one has a complex password, information held within such accounts is safe.

In fact, hackers can easily use a password-cracking program to find even the most convoluted and complex passwords.

They can even simply steal passwords using keyloggers, which log every keystroke made on a computer, that are inadvertently downloaded by an individual while browsing the Internet. Or, as in the case of the Nationwide invasion, hackers can break into the company's computers and steal massive amounts of valuable information at one time.

The lack of proper information about Internet safety needs to be corrected. If not, online crime will continue to pervade the cyber world unopposed and weed out everyone's secrets.

Without changes, no one who has a phone or computer with Internet access will be safe. ♦

# Public humiliation unwise punishment

BY GraceMa & KarenSung

On Dec. 2, an Arizona principal punished two high school students who had fought in the courtyard Westwood High School. Principal Tim Richard presented the boys with two options: either be suspended from school for a week, or hold hands in front of everyone at school for a few hours.

Soon, videos surfaced of the two students covering their faces in shame while their peers hurled insults and sneered at the pair's predicament. Instead of trying to correct the tension between the two students, the school had actually increased bullying among the entire student body.

This form of public humiliation as discipline is not an unheard-of concept; many other schools have also begun to adopt "Scarlet Letter"-esque forms of public humiliation to reprimand students.

School administrators intend for these approaches, like any other punishment, to force students to reflect on their misbehavior and to prevent future violation of rules while avoiding the necessary

staffing needed to oversee students in orthodox punishments like detention.

Despite honest intentions, these alternative punishments often do not solve the underlying issues. Instead, public humiliation can backfire because it perpetuates a system in which people don't respect each other at best and bully each other at worst.

While public humiliation may be effective in stopping the troublemakers temporarily, this punishment reaps many consequences for the school in the future.

For one, schools are supposed to teach students how to grow into respectful adults. But how can a student do so when his or her own school has disrespected them? The "sticks-and-stones" saying does not apply in this situation; emotional abuse scars more deeply than physical abuse does. As a result, humiliated students become victims of the administration, placing them in a position schools have no right to place students in.

This loss of respect for the school can in turn create more bullies. It is generally known that bullies are really just kids with low self-esteem. When schools



CATHERINE TANG

enforce methods involving emotional abuse, which contributes to lowered self-esteem, administrators are initiating a new generation of bullies.

Some may say that as long as the approach proves effective in stopping troublemakers, the approach is good.

However, effectiveness is not the question at hand; the effect on the student is. Instead of teaching the students their lesson, schools actually cross over from justified punishment to emotional abuse when they implement public humiliation as a punishment. ♦

## >> togatalks

**Should public humiliation be used as punishment in school?**

“I guess it depends on the transgression and the people; for some, high school is traumatic enough.”



senior Suzannah Osekowsky

“No, I don't think it is serious enough. They might hate it, but it probably won't help resolve the situation.”



junior Byron Fan

“No, it builds resentment in those who are punished and encourages the public to act cruelly.”



English teacher Jason Friend



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# Heavenly sushi

BY IngridHong

Before I start this review, I just want to say that I'm always wary of establishments that might not live up to their name. So when a brand new restaurant named Sushi Heaven opened, I was skeptical.

I decided to eat dinner at the restaurant, located in a quiet strip mall next to Peet's Coffee on Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road. In the end, I was pleasantly surprised. I thought the food was going to be exactly like Masu, another popular sushi restaurant in downtown Saratoga. However, I was proven wrong.

Although it was a busy dinner hour with several parties still there, I was seated after only a few minutes by a friendly waitress.

When I first walked into the room, I thought the atmosphere itself was enough to make me want to come back.

The walls were painted a beautiful coral color and worked well with the black decor accents. The decor was polished and modern, and the music was lovely and soothing as I waited for a seat.

The cooks were attentive to the order, and were also quite friendly. The waitress even took 20 percent off my bill even though the promotion date was over.

The food was delicious. The miso soup was savory but not too salty. I thank them for getting the California roll just right with the crab and avocado. Too many times have I eaten what is advertised as a California roll but must be some sort of joke.

As a loyal salmon-lover, I didn't think I would like the tuna rolls. However, I was thoroughly surprised that I

Sushi Heaven



(OUT OF FIVE)

**Where:** 12108 Saratoga Sunnyvale, Saratoga

**Type of Food:** Japanese

**Price range:** \$\$

**Reporter's Favorite:** Salmon Sushi and California Rolls



FALCON // INGRID HONG

Sushi Heaven serves a satisfying Salmon Sashimi plate that comes with wasabi and ginger.

did. I think I may have been converted. I loved the sushi and the atmosphere was conducive to a stress free dinner.

In terms of creativity, I would say that the rolls are typical of any other Japanese fusion place. The only distinction from Masu is that Sushi Heaven's ingredients tasted fresher.

The rolls range from \$10-13 and the nigiri ranges from \$4-5. After ordering two rolls for myself, and another roll to go, my total came out to be only around

\$24 — a pretty good deal if you ask me.

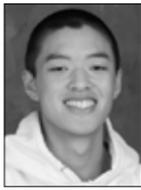
There were plenty of business people who also seemed to enjoy having their meetings there, as well as a large group of women. This restaurant is a good dining place for families, singles and groups. The bar was pleasant and also had plenty of space for large groups.

Although I wasn't exactly in heaven after eating here, I still highly recommend this restaurant. They also gave me free ice cream for dessert: yum. ♦

## >> togatalks

What is your favorite type of sushi?

“Tamago because I like yellow eggs.”



senior Alex Wang

“Cucumber and avocado rolls. They're my life.”



junior Ruchi Jain

“Spicy tuna rolls, because I like spicy tunas.”



sophomore Stephen Peng

# Can you ... fake a public proposal in high school?

BY IngridHong

Like any avid YouTube fan, I've seen many hilarious fake marriage proposal pranks. Whether the proposal is done with a crazy flash mob scene on the streets of New York City or with a simple down-on-one-knee at a restaurant, it's sure to get people's attention. Right?

Well, I decided to test this theory with my own fake proposal. On Dec. 27, senior Tyler Tanaka and I headed to Westfield Valley Fair Mall in San Jose to put my plan into action.

We decided to keep things simple, just in case we made a fool of ourselves. You know, if anything were to go miserably wrong. Realizing that we didn't exactly look like we were old enough to get

married, we ditched our "high-schooler" clothing, for a more mature look.

Sadly, the way we dressed was the only detail we thought about beforehand. With no prior plan on how to go about executing this prank, Tyler and I decided to just wing it.

We walked around the mall for at least two hours trying to get inspired for a creative proposal idea that would catch people's attention. And it didn't help that the mall is pretty much my second home; I got a little distracted halfway through, dragging him into various stores we passed by to just "look."

After a tedious two and a half hours, we were hopeless. Our brains and feet ached and throbbed as we rested on a bench near the Haagen-Dazs stand. I

had a sudden craving for their delicious Belgian Chocolate Chocolate ice cream when I just thought, "How about a simple ring-in-the-food/drink maneuver?" I knew this wasn't the most romantic proposal ever, but at this point, I just wanted to get it over with. Don't many girls get proposed to that way, anyway?

I don't know if people actually used that idea; I had just seen this done in tacky chick-flicks. After I proposed this idea to Tyler (pun not intended), he agreed. He would buy me an ice cream cone and place the \$3.50 ring bought from Claire's 30 minutes prior in it.

After all that time spent walking around, I was hoping that we would get some reaction from bystanders.

Tyler bought me an ice cream as a I

waited on the bench nearby. He came back and went on one knee and proposed. Anyone who knows me understands that I wouldn't be able to act if my life depended on it. So I understood when Tyler started laughing as I attempted to act surprised and taken aback.

From the corners of my eyes, I tried to see if anyone stopped to notice us. And I was devastated when no one noticed.

Even though we didn't think of a very elaborate or thought-out plan, I've concluded no, you cannot fake a proposal as a high schooler. Tyler and I, both disappointed and embarrassed from the failure of this prank, quickly got rid of any evidence and left the mall to get comforted by some Chipotle. I didn't even get to eat the ice cream. ♦



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REPORTERS UNVEIL THE TRUTH AROUND DECEMBER 21, 2012, THE END OF THE MAYAN CALENDAR.



# The world is ending; nothing new

## HISTORY OF HOAXES PROVES ETERNAL GULLIBILITY

BY Aashna Mukerji & Ashwini Velchamy

It's time to gather your belongings, pack your bags, head out to the nearest bomb shelter and hold on for dear life. The apocalypse is approaching, any second now. Wait for it, wait for it ...

But wait, nothing happened. Apparently the world will not be ending this time, and the Mayan prediction was false ... again.

The Mayan Long Count calendar may have ended on Dec. 21, but clearly we are still alive. Is this really the first time we have been fooled by a false apocalyptic prediction? Ironically enough, there have been countless such predictions. Whether they are based on the calculations of an ancient civilization or the prediction of cult members, people time and time again have fallen for hoaxes.

### Apocalyptic predictions:

When freshman Delaney Milton first heard about the Mayan apocalypse with the release of the movie "2012" in November 2009, she said she was scared that it could actually come true.

"When [the movie] first came out, I was really scared that the world would end," Milton said. "Boys in my class convinced me that it was true, but it was a really long time ago."

Besides the Mayan apocalypse, junior Annelise Nussbacher said that there are several cults led by preachers who repeatedly and incorrectly calculate the end of the world.

"A cult leader [will do] a bunch of calculations and say, 'Oh the world is going to end and Jesus is going to show up here on this day,'" Nussbacher said. "All these people will drop their things, sell their homes, to wait for the second coming, wait for Jesus."

Predictions like these have been made dozens of times over, such as the supposed May 21, 2011, apocalypse. Christian radio host Harold Camping predicted that the Rapture and Judgement Day (when Jesus returned and decided who would go to heaven) was in May, and the physical apocalypse was to occur in October of the same year.

"Every time a preacher says 'Oh, oops. Miscalculation. Here, let me redo it. Oh OK — it's going to end this day,'" Nussbacher said. "And it will go on for a while."

Numerous cults and religions have predicted a coming apocalypse, warning of Judgement Day and predicting hellfire and damnation. So far, though, the world seems to be in (mostly) one piece.

### Planet X Theory

In addition to religious predictions, the variety of hoaxes also includes radical theories that lots of people believe and follow. One such theory is the Planet X theory, which proposes that there are actually 10

planets in the solar system instead of nine.

"They believe that the 10th [planet] has such a large orbit that we can only see it every few thousands of years and on Dec. 21 of 2012, mark your calendars, Planet X is going to collide with earth because it's on its trajectory path," sophomore Andrew York said. "Sadly this theory has not been proved by any scientists whatsoever and all mathematicians and planetarians say that this is utterly false information."



### Reasoning behind Hoaxes:

From theories to apocalyptic predictions, Nussbacher said the number of hoaxes that people believe, have believed and will believe in is infinite.

"It's natural for people to fear that which they do not understand," Nussbacher said. "You can argue that's the basis of religion in general, to try and find an answer to the unknowable. As long as people are still in existence, they will try and find an answer for the end of the world."

However, Nussbacher said that despite the incalculable number of hoaxes to come in the future, one of them will eventually prove to be true.

"Eventually one person is going to say there is going to be some catastrophic event here on this day," she said. "And just statistically, someone is going to be right at some point."

In that case, we may have avoided an apocalypse this time. But you never know when the next prediction might come true. Just in case, keep a suitcase packed ready for next time. ♦



# Post-a

## A REPORTER

BY Derek Sun

Dec. 21, 11:00 p.m. The sky turned dark. The sun disappeared. The temperature didn't drop. We don't know what the solar flare is, but it will cool the world. We are going to take a break and hope for the best. We should probably get some sleep.

Day 4 7:50 a.m. My neighbors have left. My family and I are the only ones left. The solar flare prediction was wrong. We have enough supplies. We are unable to leave. The solar flare might have been harmful to the neighborhood. It's on and on. There is no end to the day.

Day 9. 5:40 p.m. I had to go outside and find some sunlight. I am still here because of the left side of the solar flare. There are no neighbors. It seems that I am incinerated in the solar flare in their houses. More people are staying up even though they are being pent up with supplies.

Day 15. 4:35 p.m. The solar flare happened today. The sun is on the horizon, and the sky is dark.

# End-of-the-world preparations!

BY Catherine Tang & Jonathan Young

We cannot believe the world is going to end on Dec. 21. In the midst of studying for finals, we made time to prepare for the apocalypse. We have prepared for everything including natural disasters, alien invasions, meteor strikes and even zombie viruses.

We made a Safeway run and stockpiled large amounts of food and water for our underground bomb shelter. Our underground bomb shelter is complete with bunk beds, bathroom and a kitchen and dining area.

This may seem like hoarding, but it's only hoarding if it is unorganized. Stockpiling will just lead to survival, or so we think. It's all still a little hazy.

In case of alien invasion, we have learned Morse Code.

This secret way of communication will be essential in escaping the possible torture of the aliens.

After learning the morse code and going to Safeway, we went to REI and bought gas masks and protective gear. When the zombie viruses land on Earth, we will be better protected than everybody else.

It is December 21, 2012. We climbed into our bomb shelter last night and now we are just waiting for the world to end. The day, as it turned out, was uneventful. As we hid in the bomb shelter, the anxiety was palpable, but as the 21st passed, it turned out to be one of the most boring days of the year.

Sitting here, clearly alive, the events of Dec. 21, 2012 didn't happen as the Mayans claimed it would. With an excess of supplies and end-of-the-world experience, the only thing to do now is wait for another apocalypse. ♦

## 1. Gathering wood to keep wa



25, 2013



ALL GRAPHICS BY GRACE MA

# Apocalyptic diary

'S SPOOF ON THE END OF THE WORLD

11 p.m.: The sky just  
The sun has disap-  
end is beginning. I  
what will be worse:  
re or the destruction  
me after the "end of  
Oh well, now I am  
e cover in my bunker  
r the best. My shelter  
ect me from the cha-

was happening I will never know. I still am unable to play outside so I am relegated to running around in the house.

My jolly days of baseball had come to a crashing end, as my love for the outdoors intensified for every moment I was cooped up in this house. The morale between the family members is gradually weakening. Everyone is a lot more tense and confrontational. Supplies are starting to deplete and not being able to scrounge for food is hard on every-one's psyche.

a.m.: It seems that my  
all perished. My fam-  
only survivors of the  
ed by the Mayans. We  
lies to last for a while.  
eave the house as the  
ave left pockets of ra-  
humans throughout  
Days seem to stretch  
nothing to do during

Day 21. 7:53 p.m.: Supplies are running low. The family is starting to fall apart. We are rationing the food now. The environment is becoming pugnacious and negative. With only a modicum of food, every day the family is coming closer to the brink of starvation. I will brave the radiation in hopes of getting to the store and getting the much needed supplies.

: The sun taunts me  
olick and bask in the  
unable to go outside  
over radiation from  
is still no sign of the  
at they have all been  
ar flare or are pent up  
ale with the family is  
ugh it is very difficult  
them in a house for

Day 24: 10:15 a.m.: It is a sunny day. I walk out of the house and start heading towards Safeway. I still have not seen any of my neighbors, but I don't feel any of the radio-activity that should have been left from the end of the world. I finally make it to Safeway and as I walk into the parking lot, I notice a very strange phenomenon. There are cars in the parking lot.

: The strangest thing  
e sun sank below the  
y turned dark. What

As I tentatively walk through the door, I find that it is buzzing with activity and people seem to be shopping like they would before the apocalypse. They all look at me strangely. I guess wearing a gas mask and a Haz-mat suit into Safeway isn't protocol. There can only be one explanation for this: The Apocalypse never happened. ♦

# Seniors postpone college applications!

Because the great Mayan gods felt the need to lie to us for the past however many centuries, our lives are now ruined. The world was supposed to end. And we, thinking ourselves quite clever, decided not to waste our precious time on earth suffering through finals and college applications when we wouldn't even make it to college.



AASHINA  
**MUKERJI**  
*Aashmananana  
Batman!*



ASHWINI  
**VELCHAMY**  
*Wini-the-Pooh*

So, instead of scrambling for essay ideas and filling out tiresome applications along with the rest of our classmates, we — actually, I don't know what we did, but we basically decided that anything that required effort was a waste of breath, seeing as we only had a limited number of breaths left anyway.

And don't even ask us about finals. Our scantrons were filled with zig-zags and other aesthetically-pleasing patterns. We spent the allotted time drawing pictures of post-apocalyptic earth on our test papers and testing just how valid the "C" theory was (over 50 percent in some classes!), clearly demonstrating to our teachers that we had our priorities in perfect order.

We haven't even gotten to the best part yet: We haven't submitted any apps. The logical question is, "Why didn't you throw together something after the Dec. 21, once you realized the world hadn't actually ended?"

We might have been in denial — just a bit. And funny story, we never actually asked teachers to write our letters of recommendation because being the kind old souls we are, we didn't want to burden them with any more work when all the computers (and colleges) would be piles of dust in a few short months. Our transcripts are in no condition to be sent across the country, and as a matter of fact, neither are we.

Instead of exploding with stress and banging out more than 10 college essays in a mere matter of days, we decided that the fake-pocalypse could serve as a valuable lesson: The world may not end tomorrow, but life's too short to spend constantly worrying about the distant future.

Watching our friends grow increasingly hysterical over the college is disheartening. All seniors can talk about these days is admission, deferral and rejection.

We don't feel ready to get sucked into that college-vortex just yet. So, perhaps we'll take a gap year to get our affairs in order and try again in 2014. Till then, you'll find us enrolling in some community college courses, summer programs, traveling abroad and spending a little more time with our friends and families. College can wait.

And who knows? Maybe the world will end this year. ♦

## 2. Shopping for water at Safeway



## 3. Admiring our stash



ALL PHOTOS BY NIKIL RAMANATHAN



PILOTS, FINALES, AND SEASON PREMIERES KICK OFF THE NEW YEAR FOR TV

## 'Elementary,' my dear 'Sherlock'

NEW SPIN-OFF OF A CLASSIC FAILS TO LIVE UP TO THE HOLMES LEGACY

BY Allison Chang

The first time Sherlock Holmes appears in the latest CBS television series, "Elementary," he is shirtless, walking toward Watson while spewing an ardent confession of love. Watson drops her purse in shock, while Holmes flips on the television and reveals that he is reciting the lines of a movie.

In this latest take of the iconic "Adventures of Sherlock Holmes" by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, CBS has tried to distinguish its version from its British counterpart, "Sherlock."

Sherlock, unsurprisingly, is played by a British actor, Jonny Lee Miller. Both Miller and Benedict Cumberbatch, who plays Sherlock in the BBC series, have taken on the role of one of the most notorious and skilled detectives in literary history. So which show is better?

"They're both pretty good, since they portray slightly different Sherlocks," senior Patrick Xiao said. "Miller

seems more on edge, which fits since his character was a drug addict."

However, Xiao still considers Cumberbatch to be the better overall Sherlock. Senior Natalie So agrees.

"[Cumberbatch] portrays Sherlock's quirks and quick wit really well and it seems natural," So said.

"When you're watching you would feel that he is Sherlock, not only acting as Sherlock."

John Watson's character has undergone a more significant modification. No longer a limping war veteran, Watson has transformed into a youthful Asian-American woman played by Lucy Liu.

"A female Watson definitely made the character pretty unique with a pretty different personality [from

"Sherlock"'s Watson]," Xiao said.

The plot of "Elementary" is also notably different from the plot of Doyle's original short stories. Instead of re-vamping the original story lines as the

creators of "Sherlock" have, "Elementary" is almost completely different, with only small aspects of each case relating to the original novels, if at all.

The background of the plots also differ. While the setup of "Sherlock" is almost identical to that of the novels, "Elementary" portrays Sherlock as a recovering drug addict who has chosen to leave England and live in New York City. However, the essence of Sherlock Holmes has remained despite the geo-

graphic change.

"The element of Sherlock Holmes is pretty much just a brilliant guy solving crimes," Xiao said.

"Elementary" follows a traditional format of 60-minute episodes, aired every week with several months between each season.

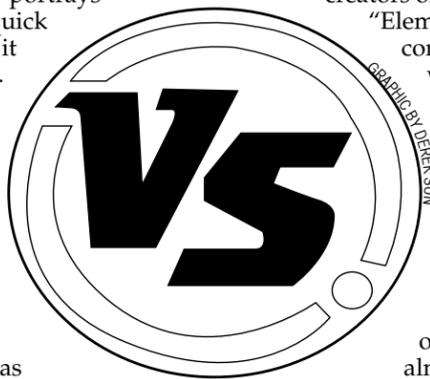
On the other hand, each episode of "Sherlock" is 90 minutes long, with seasons sometimes years apart.

Xiao's favorite between the two shows is "Sherlock."

"I like the way it always connects to Moriarty, [the main antagonist of the Sherlock novels]" Xiao said. "And everyone has British accents."

Senior Benjamin Yang also leans towards "Sherlock" as the better remake.

"The BBC version sticks to the classic stories more, but they put really cool twists on them," Yang said. "[Elementary] is a good attempt to bring Sherlock Holmes into a modern setting, but it loses Sherlock's more appealing idiosyncrasies in the process." ♦



### topten

#### REASONS TO WATCH 'SUITS'

- 10 To feel like you live and work in the scenic skyscrapers of the Big Apple while remaining on your comfy couch in Saratoga.
- 9 It's a great inspiration for those drug dealers seeking an alternative use for their overbearing intellect.)
- 8 To learn all about the experiences of attending law school without the pain of attending or paying for it.
- 7 Louis Litt: Who doesn't love the chubby underdog?
- 6 The Harvey-Mike bromance puts the Turk-J.D., House-Wilson, and Joey-Chandler relationships to shame.
- 5 Everyone dresses like it's prom season, taking "suit up" to a whole new level.
- 4 It will probably be our best glimpse into the lives of Harvard grads.
- 3 Harvey Specter. Hot. So hot.
- 2 To learn fancy new words like "affidavit" and "subpoena." Then you can show off to your friends and act pretentious.
- 1 It's like watching a mystery show without the unnecessary blood and drama, but rather the beauties (yes Rachel...) and briefcases.

>> Dylan Jew and Akshara Sekar

# 'Community' laden with refreshing wit



SOURCE: NBC.COM

Señor Chang blasts the group study room with his professional paint-ball equipment.

You can call me uncultured or tell me to get lost, but I was never much of a TV person. I had never followed a TV show other than "Teen Titans" up until last summer. Indeed, my life under the rock was so severe, I had never even heard of "How I Met Your Mother."

My only exposure to "Breaking Bad" was former chemistry teacher Bob Kucer, who bears an uncanny resemblance to the drug-selling chemistry genius, Walter White, and often referenced the show in his class.

I didn't know what I was missing.

Last summer, I discovered "Community," a show that centers around smarmy lawyer Jeff Winger and his eccentric study group. "Community" is chock-full of satirical references to other shows.

The show's organization, with a group of misfits who regularly meet at a table, references "The Breakfast Club." Abed Nadir (Danny Pudi), the half-Iranian, half-Polish 20-something eclectic whose entire life revolves around pop culture, even randomly shouts quotes from "The Breakfast Club" in the pilot episode.

But the pop-culture references aren't the most alluring trait for me. I don't understand half of them, given that my TV experience is so limited. What makes "Community" so great is the characters; each and every main character changes, and all their personalities are unique and colorful.

Perhaps the most defining trait of "Community" is its diversity. Granted, a majority of television shows include a blend of races and religion, but "Community" really leads the pack in this "race."

Take, for example, Shirley Bennett (Yvette Nicole Brown), a divorced, black housewife whose tone of voice frequently changes from threatening to sweet. "So, why do you hate me and Jesus?" is a common Shirley refrain.

Throughout the series, Shirley becomes more accepting of different religions as she spends time with Troy (Jehovah's Witness), Britta (atheist), Jeff (agnostic), Abed (Muslim), Annie (Jewish) and Pierce (some kind of cult).

A crazy Asian man, Señor Chang (Ken Jeong), the Spanish teacher in season one, also assaults stereotypes. "Every once in a while, a student will come up to me and ask, Señor Chang, why do you teach Spanish," he says, giggling menacingly in the way only Señor

Chang can. "...why not math, why not photography, why not martial arts. Now I don't want to have, any conversations, about what a mee-steerious, een-scrutable man I am." He snarls, "I AM A SPANISH GENIUS. En español, my nickname is EL TIGRE CHINO."



Samuel Liu

Chicken Master

Of course, it later turns out (to no one's surprise) that Chang is not a "spanish genius." Jeong's "Community" character is quite similar to his in *The Hangover* (you know, the naked guy who crawls out of the car trunk). Chang is anything but the stereotypical Asian.

This diversity is also frequently highlighted by Pierce (Chevy Chase), the homophobic, racist, retired billionaire.

## >> thebigidea

### The Study Group

**Jeff Winger:** Smarmy ex-lawyer who makes epic speeches and sarcastic quips.

**Britta Perry:** The worst. A pizza-burn on the roof of the world's mouth.

**Abed Nadir:** Pop-culture fetishist with the most endearing case of Asperger's the world has ever seen.

**Troy Barnes:** He likes football, butts and Abed.

**Annie Edison:** Little Annie Adderall is a perfectionist who recently... developed.

**Shirley Bennett:** Middle-aged mother with a passion for Christ.

**Pierce Hawthorne:** Should have just been a guest star.

Pierce is nearly always politically incorrect, and not always by accident.

When asked to draw a windmill, he draws a swastika, to the disgust of everyone else in the room. He calls Abed (pronounced "Ah-Bed") "Ay-Bed the Ay-rab" when they first meet, and proceeds to butcher the names of the rest of the group. The least likable member of the group, Pierce's brand of "Family Guy"-esque humor is nonetheless an important aspect of the show.

Unfortunately, Chase will be leaving the show for the fourth and possibly final season, probably due to a dispute with the show's former executive producer, Dan Harmon (who has also left the show). "Community" has promised six seasons and a movie, but I worry that the fourth season will disappoint. It was originally scheduled to come out last October, but it has been delayed until Feb. 7. The cult-like fan base, myself included, can only hope that the behind the scenes turmoil doesn't affect the show.

It'll be tragic if "Community" dies. "Community" presents 20-minutes of thoughtful comedy every week, a rarity in these dark days of reality shows. Its morals and themes are powerful, and its characters lovable. "Community" has also been my gateway show; it's literally opened the world of TV to me.

After finishing all the seasons of *Community*, I'm up to speed on *Parks and Recreation*, and I just finished Season 5 of *How I Met Your Mother*. An episode a day keeps the frowns away, as I like to say. Or, as my mom puts it, three episodes a day and I'll take your laptop away. ♦

# 'Fringe' series ending

BY SierraSmith

After five seasons, sci-fi thriller "Fringe" is coming to a dramatic end. Its twisted plot has explored bizarre occurrences from flesh-mutating viruses to vanishing buildings, alternate universes and, most recently, oppressive governments.

Fringe agent Olivia Dunham operates in a futuristic world controlled by bald, emotionless, fedora-clad men. Her Fringe team fights with the Resistance to defeat the Observers and save the world.

The Fringe team joined together when agent Dunham (Anna Torv) requested the release of mad scientist Walter Bishop (John Noble) from a mental facility early in season one. Walter could only be released by a family member, which led to his son, Peter Bishop (Joshua Jackson) joining the team. Astrid Farnsworth (Jasika Nicole) was brought on for her research and computer skills and serves as a lab assistant and Walter's right hand woman.

The show has a character for everyone, from the very friendly, incredibly intelligent licorice-loving Walter to the determined, brave team leader Olivia. The team bonds and becomes a family over the seasons — literally; between

seasons 4 and 5, Peter and Olivia have a daughter together.

Since episode one, the Fringe division, a section of the FBI, has investigated seemingly inexplicable events that would make most people's skin crawl. The show constantly brings morals into play as scientists secretly experiment on children in labs and people are kidnapped from alternate worlds without explanation.

For two seasons the team investigates these events with an open mind until they discover the source — an alternate universe, with which they collaborate for the next two seasons.

The final season begins in 2036 in a world that is controlled by Observers, men whose emotions have been eliminated to make room for more intelligence, and all happen to be bald. By portraying the Observers as cold-hearted control-freaks, the Fringe writers have the audience questioning how much they are willing to sacrifice for advances in technology that are rapidly approaching in today's society.

The goal of the team this last season is to fulfill a checklist for a plan to defeat the oppressive Observers. The fate of the world of "Fringe" was only revealed in the two-hour season finale that aired on Jan. 18. ♦



SOURCE: FANART.TV

The aristocratic Crawley family poses regally in front of their Yorkshire county estate.

# 'Downton Abbey' is going up town

BY AksharaSekar

BBC's beloved British masterpiece classic "Downton Abbey" shocked viewers during its American third season premiere on Jan. 6. The long awaited arrival garnered 7.9 million viewers, many more compared to the 4.2 million viewers the second season premiere received. Guess Americans were shocked by the plot development of this one episode, considering our standards are measured by whoever the perceived "A" this week is on "Pretty Little Liars."

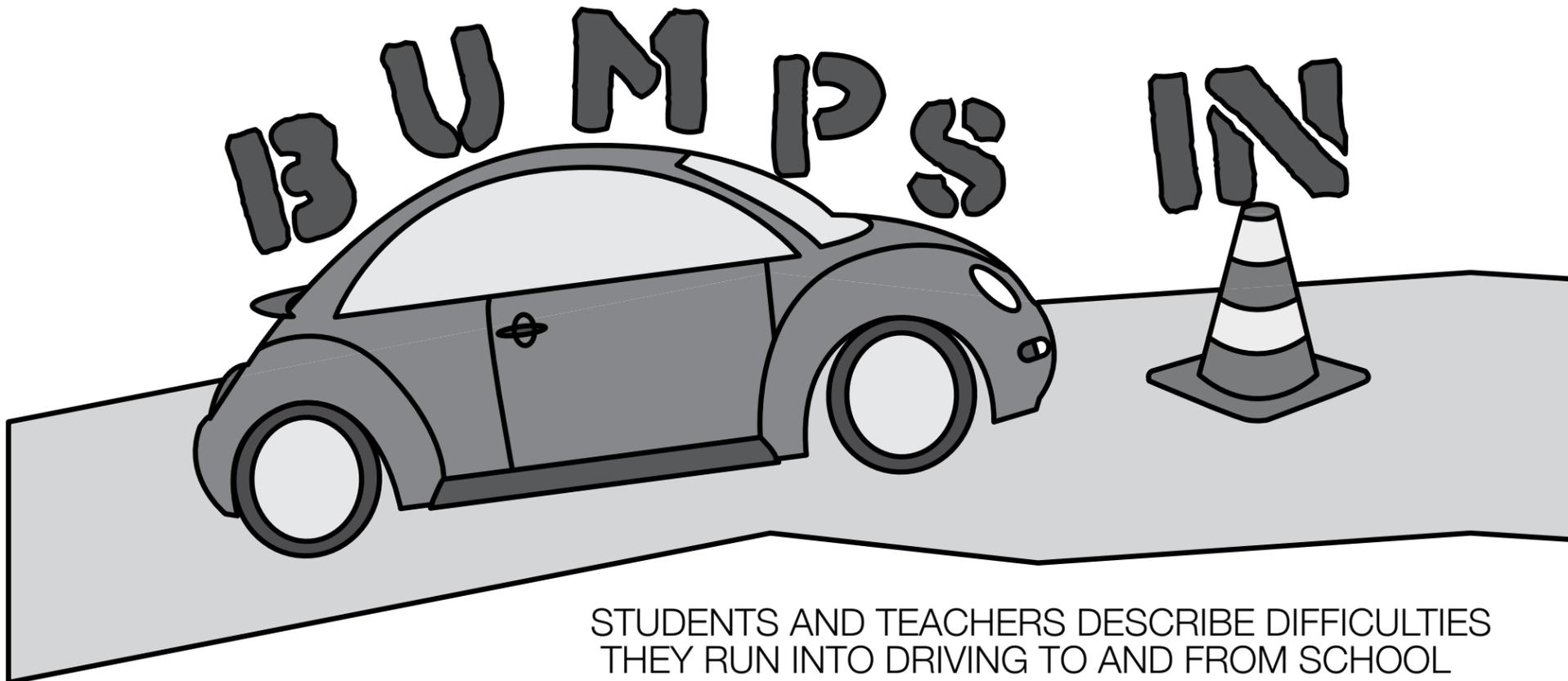
Jokes aside, this season, set during World War I, may not be Downton's grandest but surely is its juiciest. With one Grantham sister married and the other one pregnant with the former chauffeur's child (God forbid!), "Downton Abbey" promises more than just Maggie Smith's jokes of the last two seasons, but the dramatic story of a royal family forced to

face their beloved home and lifestyle slipping away in the brink of war.

The Grantham sisters bring more drama this season. Lady Mary struggles with married life, believing her husband to be more loyal to himself than her family. Doesn't he know when you marry the girl, you marry the family? Lady Edith shuns 20th century etiquette and courts an elderly man despite her parent's disapproval. No one likes the ugly sister ... sorry, Hedith. Lady Sybil, the rebel child, struggles with her bourgeois husband and his fanatic ways.

Other than the histrionics of the Crawley family, this season welcomes a new character, American actress Shirley MacLaine, who plays Cora Crawley's mother. She may be the only hope to save Downton from its financial woes.

Although the season has completed in England, not even the surfacing spoilers can disdain the refreshing dramedy that is "Downton Abbey." ♦



# Upperclassmen upset by parent drivers

BY Sabrina Chen

It is 7:45 on a Monday morning, and the last thing senior Amanda Schwartz wants is to be late to first period. She breathes a heavy sigh of relief when she finds a parking spot to the entrance of the school, but just as she turns on her blinkers to claim it, a parent driver pulls into the parking space from the opposite direction.

"The parking lot can get really backed up," Schwartz said. "And parents who take our parking, instead of dropping off at the drop off, can get super annoying."

Schwartz, among other upperclassmen, believes that many parents in the parking lot are bothersome and dangerous.

"It's very dangerous because not only are all new drivers dangerous, but there are also parents aren't looking where they are going," Schwartz added.

Senior Shireen Kaul said the problem is mainly in the morning when parents park to drop off their kids at school.

"Parents will take our parking spots, the ones that are up in the front. They wait for their kids to take a nap, or eat their breakfast, and they just stay there," Kaul said. "They wait for their kid to go to the trunk and get their backpack, and by that time, a line starts forming."

Kaul recalls one morning when she witnessed a parent parking horizontally across three parking spaces in the junior lot.

"The parent wasn't supposed to park there in the first place, and then they took up two extra spaces," Kaul explained. "They moved five minutes before the bell rang, so anybody who would actually want to be on time for school couldn't park there."

Additionally, Kaul said that she often sees parents doing unsafe things in the parking lots.

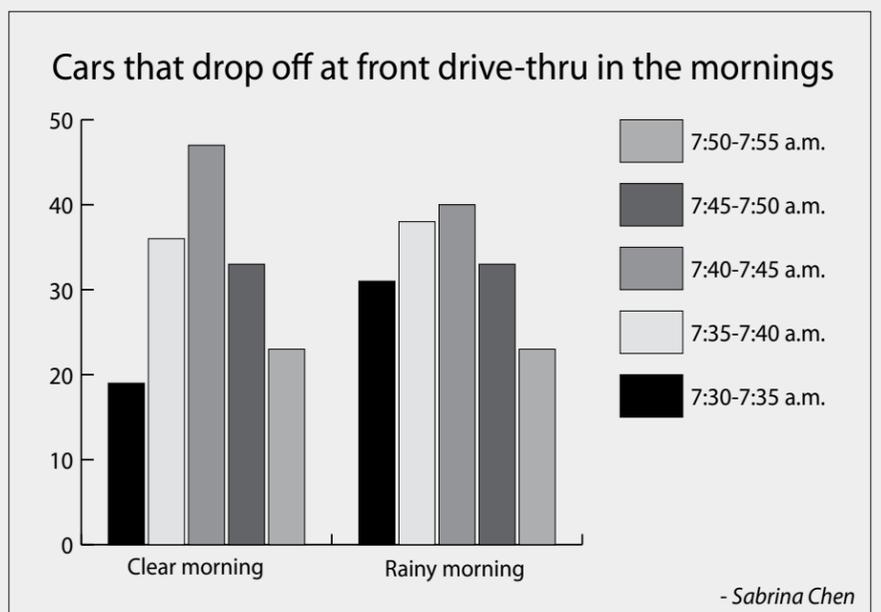
"Sometimes, when an arrow on the ground is obviously pointing one direction, I see parents driving the opposite way," Kaul said.

Kaul added that most accidents that occur are the effect of a parent and a student hitting each other.

This October, senior Allison Bruno got in to an accident when she backed out of her parking space after school. She said that although there was little damage, it was extremely awkward and annoying.

"I was thinking, 'Well you are not exactly supposed to be in the parking lot in the first place, and if you are going to be here, you might as well be careful,'" Bruno said.

Bruno added that it is unfair that students have to pay for a parking permit when parents can "just take our spots." She said the best way to keep parents out of the parking lot is to have the



school issue tickets anyone who parks in the lots without a permit.

On the other hand, Schwartz takes matters into her own hands by talking to parents who park in the parking lot.

"I have started to knock on car windows and say, 'Hey, you're not supposed to be here,' in the politest way possible," Schwartz said. "Most parents are pretty nice about it, but this one woman that I tried to talk to didn't even open the window. She just screamed the words, 'I know!,' from

inside her car and sped away."

Schwartz said that another popular method to reduce the number of parents in the parking lots is to lecturing the students whose parents park in the parking lot.

"Some people will just go to the kid and tell them 'you shouldn't be here,' so it makes the kid feel bad and think, 'Shoot, I don't want to be yelled at by an upperclassman, so maybe I shouldn't get dropped off here anymore,'" Schwartz said. ♦

# Campus supervisor oversees lot violations

BY Grace Ma

While students drive and walk in and out of the parking lot every day, it is campus supervisor Jeanine Sevilla who knows the parking lot best. With safety

as her first priority, she keeps a strict watch on the parking lot to maintain a safe, protected environment for the students.

Working at SHS since 2004, Sevilla manages the parking situation on campus

by walking around and ticketing students for parking violations. Common violations Sevilla sees on campus are cars parked with the front of the car facing out.

"The reason why I don't want [students] to park with the nose out is if they take off,

they could hit somebody — it's a safety reason," Sevilla said.

Another frequent cause of ticketing is students forgetting parking permits. As a solution to the forgetful students who leave their parking permits at home, Sevilla suggests leaving a note with their permit number on the dashboard when they arrive at school.

Although students may be aware of the separate senior and junior parking lots, Sevilla says, in fact, that the school currently does not distinguish between the two parking lots.

"We did, a long time ago, have designated senior and junior parking," Sevilla said. "As staff we don't have designated parking either, so it's first come first serve for us [as well]."

However, one place where students

cannot park at all is in the front row of the leftmost lot, close to the McAfee Center. This row, reserved for the cafeteria, is used to cart food back and forth between the cafeteria and the parking lot.

"Unfortunately, kids come in late [and] they park [in the cafeteria's spots], so I ticket them," she said.

The most interesting parking incident Sevilla witnessed also dealt with students parking in the wrong spot.

"I saw a kid with a Jeep park over the curb, where the flower boxes are," she said. "I guess they were in a rush."

Despite some minor violations, Sevilla is impressed with the behavior of students on campus this year.

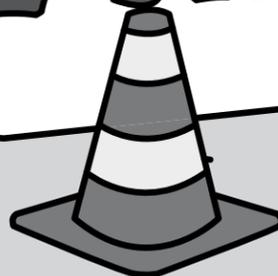
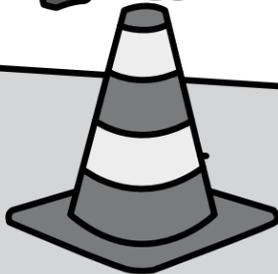
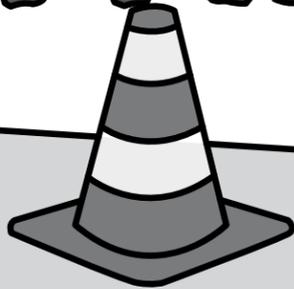
"It's been a great year. The kids have been spectacular, and they're very respectful," Sevilla said. ♦



Sevilla

TIME

ROAD



GRAPHIC BY GRACE MA

# Parking lot hierarchy noticed by students

BY Katherine Chang & Nikil Ramanathan

Driving into the parking lot in the morning, a subtle divide can be felt. While seniors park in the coveted front spots of the "senior lot," juniors choose to skirt around the front two rows closest to the school.

Although there are no rules specifically outlining the hierarchy of the parking lot, juniors and sophomores have felt this divide.

"All the juniors and seniors know where their class parks and, of course, the seniors get the best spots," junior Eric Ringsrud said.

The two front rows of the parking lot are designated for the seniors while the "junior lot" consists of the back two rows. The parking lot alongside the football field is referred to as the "sophomore lot."

Senior Lisa Porter has experienced first hand the effects of the hierarchy when she parked in the wrong lot several times during her junior year.

"I parked in the senior lot on accident and someone put my windshield wipers up every day," she said.

Now as a senior, she feels the hier-

archy is still a significant part of the school.

"It's nice to be able to park wherever I want," she said. "I like it a lot better now that it's in my favor."

Second semester brings sophomore drivers and, consequently, more cars and even more rules.

"Second semester will be interesting with all the sophomores moving in," Ringsrud said. "I might end up moving spots because that area will probably become flooded with new sophomore drivers, and I don't want me or my car in the danger zone."

With all the rearranging in spots, Porter is still adamant about the hierarchy.

"If a junior parked in the senior spots, it would be pretty annoying," Porter said. "But for the most part, people stay where they're supposed to so it's not usually a problem."

However, some don't feel that the hierarchy is a valid tradition. Junior Raiza de Vera says that the lack of consequence in parking in the senior lot has led her to ignore it.

"The worst [thing] that's ever happened was one of the seniors advised me not to park [in the senior lot] because of the vandalism," she said.



FALCON // WREN SUTTERFIELD

After parking in the senior lot at lunch, senior Matt Allen exits senior Eddie Ruppel's car.

The legitimacy of whether the parking hierarchy exists or not is clearly split, even within each grade.

"I don't think there needs to be anything official; everyone learns pretty quick," Ringsrud said.

De Vera knows that there is an un-

written rule about the senior parking spaces, but as there is no real rule, she chooses to ignore it.

"I understand it's a respect thing, but if I arrive early enough to school and there is an available spot near the school, I will take it," de Vera said. ♦

# Teachers face daily challenge in parking lot

BY Allison Chang

Each school day, students drag themselves up from their comfortable, warm beds to face their first morning class. Rushing their children to class, many parents opt to drop off their children in the back parking lot. For many teachers, this daily traffic jam has caused numerous headaches and plenty of annoyance.

The back parking lot has always been reserved for staff members, but this restriction only applies to the parking spots. Parents and students are free to drive through the lot whenever they want, disrupting teachers' arrival and departure schedules.

"Parents are so intent on dropping their kid off and then going someplace

else, like work or errands or whatever, that they really do not pay attention," history teacher Kim Anzalone said. "It has been a problem for years and years."

Anzalone says there are several main parent behaviors that cause problems for teachers trying to arrive at school on time in the morning.

"They stop their car and let their kid out in the middle of the parking lot to let their kid get to class on time, backing up the rest of the traffic," Anzalone said. "And it's like, 'Is it all about you?' Also, parents drive right in the middle of the lane. If they could go to the right side a bit, we teachers could come in on the left side a bit and get into a parking spot."



GRAPHIC BY DEREK SUN

She has also noticed that the safety of other students is put in jeopardy by the presence of parents in the back parking lot.

"Parents do not pay attention to the kids that are walking across the parking lot to get to school," Anzalone said. "I see a lot of people putting on their brakes because a kid walks in front of them."

For English teacher Amy Keys, parents picking up their children after school is more of a problem for teachers trying to get out of the lot.

"If someone has an appointment, it is hard to actually pull out, because parents are waiting for their children to go home [and blocking the road]," Keys said.

In previous years, traffic directors were posted at the back parking lot to keep the flow of traffic moving and to help ensure student safety, but this measure was not very effective, according to Anzalone.

"You have to pay an extra person and it doesn't always work anyway," Anzalone said. "It puts a [large] burden on the [traffic director]."

Anzalone believes that closing the back parking lot to parents and students would make it much easier for teachers to arrive and leave on time. It would also keep students safer, according to Anzalone.

## >> THE bigidea

### Teachers' Lot

#### The Facts

Parents trying to drop off and pick up their students add traffic to the back lot.

#### The Problem

The teachers have difficulty getting to and from school on time when the lot is crowded.

#### The Staff's Solution

Most teachers try to arrive at school early to avoid traffic and dangerous situations.

"I would love to have [the school] change how it is structured, because I think it is dangerous right now," Anzalone said. "[But] you can't really make it bigger, because it is a finite amount of space."

Teachers have different ways of dealing with the daily time crunch of getting to school and dealing with the parents in their parking lot.

"We've talked about a ton of solutions, but none are practical," Anzalone said. "So the staff have to take it upon themselves to get here early. 7:35 at the very latest, if we want to avoid the headache." ♦

# Much Ado

## How do you stay informed?

BY CarolSuh  
& CandiceZheng

Arriving home from school on the weekdays, many students get up to date with Facebook updates, blogs, news sites, YouTube subscriptions and countless other media and social networking outlets. Even a few years ago, this effortless access to information would not have been possible.

Junior Mostafa Rohaninejad believes the evolution of media turnaround has a positive effect.

"I actually appreciate the trend because I feel like it's causing more people to get involved with politics and to be more aware of how the world is getting around," Rohaninejad said. "I feel like it gives an outlet for people in third world countries who are facing rebel movements like the Arab Spring

to tell the rest of the world what's going on."

A new and surprising news source comes in the form of Tumblr, where users post and reblog many newsworthy events. Junior Jessica Pham credits Tumblr for her knowledge of current events.

"Actually, [Tumblr] is useful," Pham said. "I remember on Election Day, right when I refreshed my page, I found out that Obama won the election."

Pham said that although Tumblr is mainly known for blogging, it can also be a reliable news outlet and can always be counted on for its timeliness in delivering information.

"People always blog things right when it happens and [news] always shows up on my dashboard," Pham said. "I knew about the tsunami in Japan and hurricane in Hawaii before most people."

Recently, YouTube as a news source is also becoming more popular. Freshman Naveed Riazat relies on satirical channels such as The Phillip DeFranco Show and SourceFed to keep up with current events.

"I like [the channels] because they mix news with humor," Riazat

said. "It's very opinionated and interesting."

Nowadays news is often mixed with satire and humor such as "The Colbert Report" and "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart." Rohaninejad appreciates these programs for "pointing out problems that you would not be able to do otherwise," as well as voicing their opinions.

Even social networking sites like Facebook are used by some people for quick news references. English teacher Suzanne Herzman occasionally relies on the statuses and stories from her Facebook news feed for quick updates on current events.

"Right after the Giant's World Series ended I felt an earthquake and wondered if I was the only one who felt it," Herzman said. "Instead of going to some government site, I went on Facebook to see if other people had felt it too."

These transitions from paper to websites, to YouTube, and many more have become a part of students' lives and ways to keep up with current events.

"When I watch news," Riazat said. "I want to get information and enjoy it at the same time." ♦



Rohaninejad

## Of Sparknotes and Men

STUDENTS DISCUSS THEIR EXPERIENCES USING THE WEBSITE FOR CLASS READING

BY AasimNaqvi

With nearly all English classes assigning daily reading, students' overall reading load can reach a difficult level quickly. As a result, many have taken to simpler means of receiving the necessary information to ace reading quizzes and understand key themes instead of actually reading the text.

Sparknotes, a website that offers chapter-by-chapter summaries of works frequently read in high school, has caught the attention of nearly every student on campus at one point or another. A senior boy interviewed said he believes that Sparknotes can often ensure a student digests the information without investing too much time.

"If I have time, I read the actual text, but that's not always the case," he said. "Sometimes I'm forced to use online summaries in order to be prepared for class and still get a good night of sleep."

The senior said that the desire to read the assigned reading often varies from novel to novel, citing an example from his junior year.

"At the time, ['The Scarlet Letter'] definitely fell into the online category nicely," he said. "It was definitely a strong candidate for Sparknotes."

Senior Tiffany Zai always is sure to read each assigned novel, although she does tend to check Sparknotes for summaries from time to time.

"I've never used Sparknotes for a whole book, although I have for a few chapters here and there," Zai said. "I find

reading the books more enjoyable, and the content sticks with me better when I read the book also."

Students are sometimes less inclined to read books they would otherwise enjoy simply because the literature has been assigned for academic purposes.

Zai said that the most difficult part of English classes is the pace of the reading.

"I enjoy reading school books less than other books because I hate being forced to read a certain amount of pages before the class," Zai said.

One junior boy said he has a simple rule for English books: Read the actual book until boredom hits and then switch to reading Sparknotes.

"I start by reading the actual novel," he said. "But sometimes the books make me fall asleep, so I'm literally forced to log onto Sparknotes."

The junior added that the presence of deadlines for each portion of the novel takes away from the experience of reading each piece. The greatest way to ensure that students actually read each book is to have looser deadlines, he said.

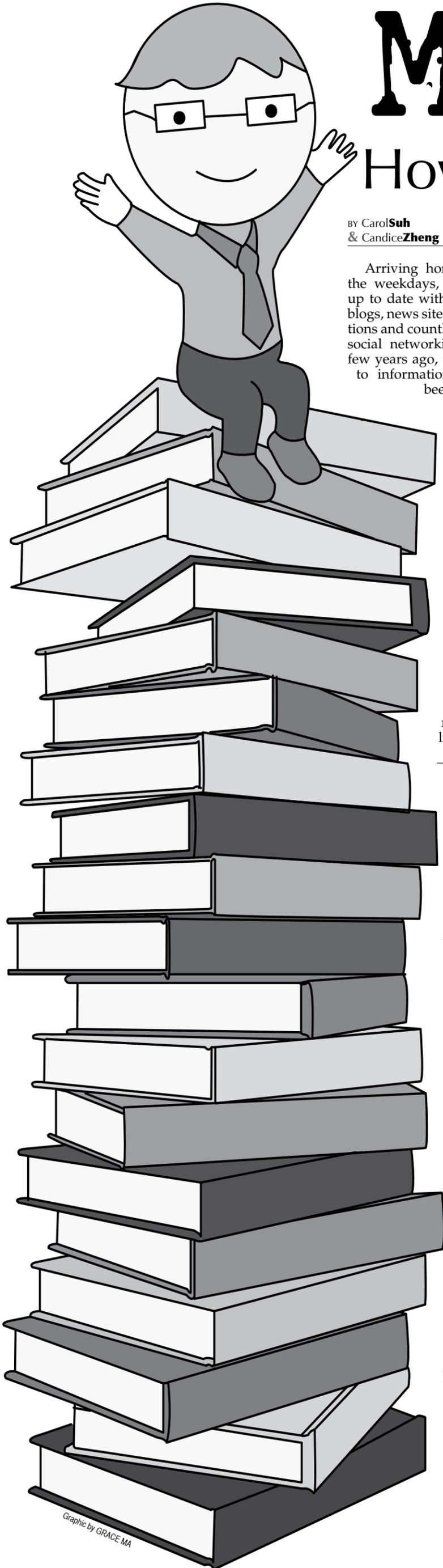
"Deadlines for reading kind of kill the whole experience," he said. "I feel like I have to read a certain amount and understand it on a certain level before a certain day, and it destroys the possibility of enjoying the book."

On the other hand, senior Eugene Che said that he stays away from Sparknotes and tries to read each book.

"I want to be a better reader," Che said. "It's a skill that applies itself extensively in the future."

Che does not necessarily look down on those who use Sparknotes, but said that students should just read what is assigned, since that is what is expected by the teachers.

"School gets busy, but sometimes you need to do the right thing, even when the wrong thing would be a whole lot easier," Che said. ♦



Graphic by GRACE MA

# About Reading

## English teachers adapt to varying reading levels in the classroom

BY SherrilynLing

"To be, or not to be, that is the question: whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing end them?"

Every English 11 student reads these famous words spoken by Shakespeare's character Hamlet. For many students, the meaning of this passage is fairly clear; others, however, struggle, unable to analyze passages quickly or comfortably.

When it comes to assigned reading, the disparity between the best and not-as-great readers can cause difficulties for English teachers who teach all these students together in one class.

"There are some people who are avid readers, and some people who are much more math-science oriented and would rather not read for pleasure," English 10 and 11 Honors teacher Amy Keys said. "As for the kids who read for pleasure, reading in-class comes more easily to them."

Because there are no English honors classes available to them, the range of reading levels grows even larger for freshman and sophomore classes. To effectively teach such wide varieties

of students, different teachers use different methods to guarantee every student's full understanding of a reading.

Keys said that she tries to develop a "sense of contextual understanding," such as the history behind the reading or the author's purpose in writing the book. By doing this, students start the novel with some understanding, and the reading isn't "just a bunch of words on a page."

If the class is reading something difficult, Keys breaks down and deconstructs the language together with her students. With her document camera, she models different examples of text, and students use colored pencils to color code any patterns or connections they notice within the text.

"My sense is that [students] understand better when they can interact with the text and write on it themselves," Keys said.

Some teachers ask discussion questions and have students respond to their readings in journals.

Sophomore Anish Ramanadham usually does not find comprehending the reading difficult, but when he encounters something unclear and cannot decipher it himself, the in-class discussions led by teachers help clear confusion.

"When I don't understand something, I will re-read the passage a couple times and try to figure out which words don't make sense to me, or ask my teacher," Ramanadham said. "During class, teachers are helpful in explaining the hard-to-read parts of the text."

English 9 MAP and 12 teacher Sariah Tolley said that she requires her students to summarize the story aloud to a partner, and in the case of Shakespeare and other difficult texts, section by section.

"Other things that have helped include study guides to lead them through a text, and even previewing a tough text before reading so that they start the reading process with key ideas in mind that they then look for," Tolley said.

Tolley said that she makes adjustments to assignments to meet her students' needs on a regular basis. She also sometimes meets with her students individually to figure out different ways to help each student fully reach his or her potential.

While there are many students at lower reading levels, teachers are still frequently surprised by some of their other students, who exceed above and beyond in their reading skills.

"I have some great readers who have impressed me from how quickly they can pick up a theme, or notice interesting elements of style," Keys said.

Although having a large variety of reading levels is tough enough, an even greater struggle for teachers is having students who are learning how to speak, read and write English.

"[These students] are in the process of learning the language while trying to succeed in a class that requires language proficiency, which is such a challenge," Tolley said.

Even with the trouble that comes with teaching such a wide array of reading levels in the classroom, Tolley is glad to have the opportunity to spread a love of reading.

"It is definitely a challenge, but this is what teaching is all about." ♦

### >> falconpoll

#### Hardest Book to Read

**Freshman Year:**  
"The Odyssey"

**Sophomore Year:**  
"All Quiet on the Western Front"

**Junior Year:**  
"The Scarlet Letter"

## EBooks open a whole new world for readers

BY DevinZhao

Junior Kristy Lin needed a copy of the book "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass" to help her finish her Independent Reading project due the week before finals for English. Instead of heading to a library and braving check-out lines to check out a book, she pulled out her iPad and downloaded the eBook version.

"[An eBook] is more convenient because it saves the time of trying to get a book at the library or in a bookstore," Lin said. "I couldn't find any copies of my IR book in the Saratoga library so I just got an electronic version instead."

Lin is one among many students who use eBooks in place of hard copy books.

"I wouldn't say it makes a project more efficient, but there are some features like adjusting the size of the text that make reading easier," Lin said.

Senior Jaya Narasimhan, who uses an Amazon Kindle, said eBooks are better than paperbacks not only for projects,

but also for reading for pleasure.

"What I really like most about [a Kindle] is that you can download a sample before you buy a book so you know that it's worth it," Narasimhan said. "The books are also cheaper on the Kindle."

English 11 teacher Carolyn Bohls says that she is indifferent on having eBooks in class.

"I have never used an eBook reader; I like hard copy books better," said Bohls. "I don't oppose them because I see them as a way to proliferate reading among our younger generation. I usually see people at airports reading eBooks."

English 9 teacher Meg Battey believes that eBooks are better suited for students rather than for a more mature audience.

"Scrolling for me just doesn't have the same effect; however, a number of my freshmen prefer to use eBooks and have chosen to read their books electronically," Battey said. "Having talked to one of my students about this subject, she enjoys the convenience."

In addition to having the ability to

read eBooks, some recent eBook readers, such as the Kindle, have other forms of entertainment that users can enjoy.

"[My Kindle] also functions like a tablet so I can do things like play games or watch Netflix," Narasimhan said. "Although I do miss paperbacks, it's just useful, especially if I am travelling."

However, Bohls said that these distractions divert focus from the subject at hand, which can lead to poor comprehension.

Bohls said that she would learn to use an eBook if she was able to afford it.

"If the Kindle was more affordable, I would definitely learn to use them," Bohls said.

English 10 MAP teacher Jason Friend is supportive of eBooks being the next step in learning.

"I am excited by the prospect of eBooks becoming the norm in classrooms," Friend said, "because students will easily be able to highlight key passages and type marginal notes on their readings, which is much more akin to

the college experience."

Friend also sees a more practical benefit.

"Students will be able to carry one small tablet as opposed to an elephantine backpack, which might make chiropractors sad but will make everyone else happy," Friend said. ♦

### >> thebigidea

#### Books vs. Kindles

**Price**  
The initial price of Kindles can be steep, but each eBook is cheaper than paper books.

**Features**  
Like books, Kindles allow readers to highlight key passages and type notes in the margins.

**Convenience**  
Kindle users can access all their books in one location.

### >> togatalks

What is your all-time favorite book and why?

"Water for Elephants." The book was eye-opening, and I walked away learning a lot."



junior Ruchi Jain

"I highly recommend 'Black Swan Green' because the narration is very compelling."



teacher Amy Keys

"Where the Red Fern Grows; I read it together with my mom."



sophomore Catherine Cheng

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

## Saratoga has high hopes for CCS

BY Katherine Chang & Jennifer Jin

The girls' basketball team took first place at the Dec. 26-29 Santiago Garden Grove Tournament in Los Angeles. The Falcons beat Santiago High School, Corona High School and Firebaugh High School to place first. The JV team also did well, placing second.

Not only were they successful in the tournament, the team grew much closer over the course of the four-day road trip.

"The whole trip was really good for team bonding," coach Mike Davey said. "I know the girls pretty well, but they know each other better as friends; an experience like that is one that you remember for a lifetime."

The bonding must be working because the team finished 11-0 in the preseason.

"We are really pleased with our preseason," Davey said. "Those games are important because they count toward CCS; in fact, we have already qualified for CCS."

However, the team still has many hurdles to overcome in order to compete in CCS.

"We will be trying our best this season, so I hope we will earn some respect from the teams," sophomore forward Puck DeRoos said. "But I know that we are in the highest league, and it will definitely be a challenge."

Being in the De Anza league



Courtesy of NOW AND FOREVER STUDIOS

**Junior Trishika Shetty races down the court, avoiding her opponent during a tough game against the Los Gatos Wildcats on Jan. 4.**

with three of the 10 top-ranked high school teams in Division 1 of CCS is a challenge, but sophomore center Mikayla Davis is not discouraged.

"We're hoping we can be the underdog and gain the other teams' respect," she said.

The Falcons lost against Wilcox, Los Gatos and Palo Alto, but won their Jan. 11 game against Milpitas with a score of 48-29.

"I'm really happy that we won. We really needed it to help lift our spirits and to drive us to work harder next time," DeRoos said. "I was really proud that everyone worked really hard. We had a good night."

The team is remaining positive.

"We are focusing on how

well we can play rather than if we are winning or losing, and focusing on getting better," Davey said.

Junior shooting guard Dharni Ramaswamy has several goals for the upcoming season.

"I want to win all of our home games, I want to take a charge and get more rebounds per games, and I need to score more," she said.

Chou is also optimistic, hoping to become an anchor point for the team.

"My personal goal as a point guard is to be able to be able to lead the offense and create opportunities for my teammates," Chou said.

The team has an away game against Los Gatos High School on Jan. 25. ♦

GIRLS' SOCCER

## Falcons fired up for regular season

BY Sabrina Chen & Deepti Kannan

After an undefeated record in preseason of 4-0-2, the girls' soccer team lost to two tough teams at the beginning of the regular season, but plan to power through with newfound confidence.

The Falcons lost 1-0 to Los Altos on Jan. 7. Los Altos scored on a penalty kick 15 minutes into the game, but Saratoga was not able to score after that.

Coach Ben Maxwell said the girls "dominated from start to finish," but attributed their defeat to unlucky circumstances.

"I think the difference between preseason and regular season is we got a few breaks during preseason, and we haven't had any breaks yet," Maxwell said. "Breaks, like the ball just not dropping your way, hitting the post instead of going in."

In their first game of the season against defending CCS champion Mountain View on Jan. 4, the team also lost 1-0.

Although Maxwell said the girls had several chances to score, Mountain View scored 10 minutes into the second half, from which Saratoga could not recover. Although the game

was much closer than in previous years' encounters, he still expressed disappointment.

"We had our chances but weren't quite clinical enough," Maxwell said. "But we certainly got a chance to see how we would play against the top teams, and that gave us a lot of confidence because we know we're capable of hanging with them."

**"We don't have to win, as long as everyone tries their hardest."**

>> Junior captain Taylor Moran

Senior goalie Alyson Nilan Axline said the team could work on strengthening their defense and pushing their offense further for future games.

"Our defense needs to work on tracking people, because we can't see the people behind [us], and that's how [Mountain View] scored," Nilan Axline said. "We also need to work on getting up the field and getting up five more yards, because if that happens, the score would be 10-0."

Despite these close losses, the team is fired up after a suc-

cessful preseason record of 4-0-2, during which Saratoga defeated Palo Alto 1-0 on Nov. 26 and Silver Creek 3-0 on Dec. 5.

The girls also competed at the Palo Alto tournament, where they beat Gunderson 5-0 on Nov. 29, tied Carlmont 1-1 on Nov. 30, defeated Palo Alto 2-0 on Dec. 7 and tied Sacred Heart 1-1 on Dec. 8.

In the Sacred Heart game, Maxwell said the Falcons were ahead 1-0 until Sacred Heart scored "on the last kick of the ball" to tie up the game in the final minutes.

As a result, Saratoga ended up taking second place at the tournament.

"We were one second away [from winning the tournament]," Maxwell said. "But that just [gave] us even more motivation to go into the season. The girls are fired up now because they don't want that to happen again."

"I [will] try to bring the team together, focus them on the games, focus on each person individually [and help them] do their best," junior captain Taylor Moran said. "We don't have to win, as long as everyone tries their hardest and walks off the field feeling like they accomplished something." ♦



### Wrestling: Team off to a good start

After losing their first meet on Dec. 20, the wrestling team had its first victory of the season with a forfeit by Cupertino on Jan. 10.

Although the Falcons lost their first meet to Lynbrook, senior Henry Wei thought that "it went well" and that the team got out to a good start for the season.

Sophomores Christian Murabito and Jason Tsai won matches, three wrestlers got forfeits and three lost.

However, senior Eric Tran's disqualification due to a medical condition hindered the team's chances at the first meet. Tran ended up being disqualified even before he stepped onto the mat. The meet turned into the deciding points.

In their second meet of the season against Cupertino, the Falcons won all of their matches. Everyone from the Cupertino wrestling team showed up at the wrong school, and were therefore all disqualified.

"It was unprofessional, and a mistake that could have been avoided," said sophomore Alex Hansen.

The team also took on Santa Clara on Jan. 15 and won their match. They will take on Homestead Jan. 17, and will face Harker on Jan. 24.

—Nikil Ramanathan

### Boys' soccer: Saratoga recovers from tough loss to improve to 2-2-2

The boys' soccer team kicked off its season with a rough 5-0 loss at home to defending league champion Mountain View on Jan. 4. Now just two weeks and six league games later, the Falcons sit dead in the middle of the table with a record of 2-2-2.

On Jan. 16, the Falcons faced league rivals Los Gatos. Going into the game with nearly identical results and records of 2-1-2 for the Falcons and 1-1-3 for the Cats.

Both teams had their chances, and the Falcons nearly broke through with senior forward Keaton Matusich. In the end, the game ended in a draw with their goalies coming up with huge saves to keep the score to 0-0.

The Falcons traveled to Gunn on Jan. 14 to battle against the Titans. The score was even until the last 10 minutes of the game, when senior right midfielder Erik Martin broke the deadlock, giving the Falcons the lead that they would hold for the 1-0 win.

On Jan. 11, the Falcons hosted Homestead. The Falcons took the lead at the end of the first half with a goal from Matusich. Matusich struck again in the second half, giving the Falcons a 2-0 lead. However, with just eight minutes left, the Mustangs scored two goals in rapid succession. The game ended in a 2-2 draw.

The Falcons also faced current league leaders Santa Clara away on Jan. 9, with the game ending in a 3-2 loss for the Falcons, and Los Altos on Jan. 7, finishing with a 6-3 win for the Falcons.

—Matt Foley

### Boys' basketball: Falcons kick off this season with a 4-1 record in league play

After a strong start to league play with a 4-1 record, the Falcons are second in the De Anza League.

On Jan. 15, the Falcons played at Mountain View in a game that came down to the wire. While the Falcons had a 7-point lead in the third quarter, instead of pushing the lead to double digits, the team allowed a 7-0 run, and Mountain View tied the game. The Falcons, however, were able to regroup, and the team escaped with a 55-54 win. Senior forward Stevie Berman scored time after time to help build the lead against the Spartans.

On Jan. 11, the team played the Milpitas Trojans at home. They earned a 57-52 win despite all the shooting struggles. Senior guard Alex Wang paced the team with eight points he Milpitas defense.

On Jan. 8, the Falcons played the De Anza league leading Palo Alto Vikings. The team lost a tough 57-47 game. Palo Alto's size proved to be a difficult obstacle for the team. The Vikings' length helped force many turnovers, making it difficult to run the Falcons' offense.

The Falcons were projected to be the last place team in the De Anza division according to preseason rankings. However, with a strong senior group and up-and-coming juniors, the team has had a strong season so far and looks to build on its success.

—Jonathan Young

# Injuries deny girls chances to compete

BY Maya Ravichandran

Although it started out as a typical field hockey game, sophomore Nidhi Vellanki knew something was wrong when she saw her knee bent at an unnatural angle. As she fell to the ground, she heard a slight pop and crack. She lay helplessly on the grass as the game was called to a halt.

Vellanki tore her anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in her left knee at Gilroy High in an Oct. 9 match, about halfway through leagues this year—one of dozens of athletes who lose parts of seasons or whole seasons to severe injuries.

"I couldn't get up for around ten minutes, and [even then] I couldn't stand," Vellanki said. "So I got to ride on a golf cart."

Vellanki was in crutches for about one month after her injury.

Although she doesn't need crutches anymore, Vellanki is still unable to jump or even bend or straighten her leg completely. Consequently, she has been un-



Vellanki

able to play any sport for a few months. "After I found out that I couldn't play sports for a while, I was really disappointed," Vellanki said. "After I got injured, I didn't show up to a few field hockey games because I couldn't stand watching the game on the sidelines."

Vellanki is part of the girls' basketball team, but she cannot play in games. Vellanki said she is doing rehab exercises in hopes that she can try to participate in games later in the season.

Sadly, Vellanki is becoming accustomed to major injuries. This knee injury is just one of many that she has received while playing field hockey and basketball. Vellanki has sprained both her ankles more than 10 times, gotten two concussions, and even had nerve damage and microfractures in her elbow.

Similar to Vellanki, sophomore Christine Schlossareck injured her knee during a practice run with the girls' cross country team this past season.

As she ran downhill, her knee turned

in, causing the meniscus in her knee to become irritated and swollen. This was not Schlossareck's first injury during cross country; she also strained her hip muscle during freshman year.

Schlossareck's injury happened just before the first meet was scheduled, so it continued to bother her throughout most of the season.

"It was hard and painful to walk for the first few weeks, let alone run," Schlossareck said. "I had to completely stop running and just ice [the injured knee] and rest it."

To get her knee back to its original strength, Schlossareck stayed on turf for two weeks before gradually going on short runs.

"When I realized I couldn't run [properly], I was frustrated and felt like I would not be able to get back into shape like the rest of the girls," Schlossareck said.

Schlossareck was glad she was able to recover in time to run for the last two regular meets of the season.

"It feels good to be able to run again and participate in cross country with my teammates," Schlossareck said. ♦

# GS off to a golden start



JONATHAN YOUNG  
Young Money

When was the last time the Golden State Warriors have been fifth in the Western Conference playoff picture? Heck, it's been a long time since the Warriors have even been above 0.500.

The Warriors have started the season with a 23-14 record, their best start since the 1991-92 season. They reached 20 wins before the new year, a feat they haven't accomplished since 1980.

This Warriors team is more focused on winning than teams in recent memory. As a whole, the Warriors are playing cohesively. The starting lineup of sharpshooting guards Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson, rookies Harrison Barnes and Festus Ezeli and skilled forward David Lee have the team on a roll.

## Off-season moves

Their impressive record thus far can be attributed to their savvy off-season moves. In last year's draft, the Warriors got three talented rookies in Barnes, Ezeli and Draymond Green, all three of whom have been in the Warriors' rotation.

After drafting the rookies, the Warriors signed NBA veterans Jarrett Jack and Carl Landry. Jack and Landry have become the co-sixth men of the team, and both have played at a high level off the bench. This added depth has not only been helpful on the court, but since Jack and Landry have had much experience in the NBA, they bring a strong locker room presence as well.

Another strong presence is head coach Mark Jackson. In only his second year as coach, he has done a beautiful job of giving the team a new defensive identity.

Last season, the Warriors were 20th and 26th in the league in opponent field goal percentage and three-point percentage, respectively. This season, they are ranked third in both categories. Furthermore, the Warriors were the worst defensive rebounding team in the NBA last season, but this season, they are so far the second best.

This new mindset of defense that coach Jackson has focused on this season has led to a more consistent team. However, it is possible that this is just the tip of the iceberg for the Golden State Warriors.

## Injury troubles

In the 2011-12 season, the team traded a fan favorite in Monta Ellis for a franchise center in Andrew Bogut. Bogut has only played in limited action this season because of complications with an injured ankle. When healthy in the past, Bogut has been one of the top defensive centers in the league and could add a whole new dimension to the Warriors. Bogut still has no real timetable on his return, but he hopes to be back anytime between the All-Star break and the start of the Playoffs.

Earlier in the season, a player expected to make a huge impact this season off the bench was guard Brandon Rush. However, Rush tore his MCL and ACL. Rush will be out for the rest of the season, but hopes to be back for next season.

These injuries may limit how far the Warriors can go. But even without Bogut and Rush, the Warriors have one of the best records in the Western Conference. And Bay Area basketball fans haven't been this excited in years. ♦

# Sophomore takes on two sports in one season

BY Meganalyer

Sophomore Adrienne Kim has a lot on her plate this year. From 3 to 5 p.m. most weekdays, she attends soccer practice. Immediately after, Kim rushes off to basketball, finishing at 7:30. She is finally then able to eat dinner and start homework.

Kim is a three-sport athlete who plays soccer, basketball and track. Starting this year, she is playing two sports in the winter, basketball and soccer.

"At first I was thinking about quitting basketball this year and just doing soccer," Kim said. "Then I talked to my coaches and decided to do both soccer and basketball."

Kim has been playing basketball for the last three years, but she just started soccer this year. She made the JV teams for both sports.

Kim explained that she enjoys playing both basketball and soccer equally, though she likes them for different reasons.

"In soccer, you get to be super aggressive," Kim said. "You get to push people over, and it'll still be okay. I like basketball too, since I also get to hang out with friends."

Though she finds sports to be fun after a long day of school, playing and practicing two sports every day has been a chal-

lenge.

Kim explained that it can be extremely tiring to practice for four hours and then start homework, but as long as she is not distracted, she finds it manageable.

"I try not to go on Facebook or watch movies. If I don't talk to anyone, I can usually focus," she said.

This year, however, Kim finds the time going much faster since she is always kept busy.

Additionally, she finds herself in much better shape this year than she was last year. Though she only played basketball last year, she was more sore since she was not in as good shape.

However, staying fit is not the only reason she enjoys playing both soccer and basketball, sports she says she'll play only in high school.

"Because I'm playing two sports, I get to make more friends, and I get to know more people," Kim said.

After the winter season, Kim will not have much time to rest. She will be participating in her second year of track.

Kim plans to participate in all three sports all the way through high school. Being part of a team, Kim explained, gives her a sense of belonging.

"When you're on a team, you know your team is behind you," she said. "You know you get along, and you feel at home." ♦



Sophomore forward Adrienne Kim plays in a JV game against Monta Vista on Jan. 9.

# Athletes recall their glory days of states

BY Aasim Naqvi

Senior David Zarrin looked up and saw close to a thousand runners stretching, jogging and preparing. Zarrin made it to the cross country state meet in Fresno with six other runners in December of his junior year.

"The level of talent all around you was just incredible," Zarrin said. "No matter how good you are, you still feel like a small fish in a really, really big sea."

Zarrin said that while the meet could have gone better personally, the experience of simply being there was more special than anything else.

"Making it to the state meet was definitely something I wanted to do before graduating," Zarrin said. "To be able to run there was a privilege in itself."

For junior Mostafa Rohaninejad, reaching the state meet in May 2012 with his Los Gatos rowing club was nothing short of spectacular.

"I have never felt more alive at a start-

ing line," Rohaninejad said. "As soon as you hear 'go,' you just start going all out."

The race at the state meet was by far the most painful he had ever competed in, Rohaninejad said.

"I had to keep on pushing myself through the excruciating pain to keep in front of the other boats," Rohaninejad said. "All the while, the coach is yelling at you, trying to motivate you."

Despite the race being in insufferably cold temperatures, Rohaninejad said that it felt more rewarding than any other rowing venture he had previously attempted. Rohaninejad's club finished fifth in the race with four rowers to a boat, and sixth in the race with eight rowers to a boat.

"It was overall a great experience," he

said. "It just felt like the cumulation of all the hard work I had done over a very long period."

Senior Nikki Bedekar was part of the girls' tennis team that advanced to the state tournament in 2011. While Bedekar and her teammates were not able to win their final match against Monta Vista, Bedekar said that the team's strong effort through the season was more than enough compensation.

"We were all really proud [to reach the state tournament because all of our hard work had paid off]," Bedekar said. "The match was tense, but we were all really happy that we were there."

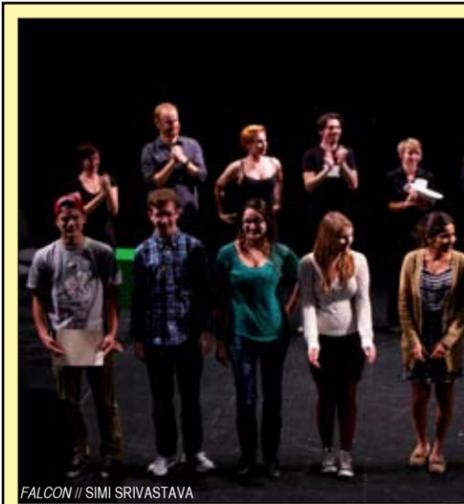
The fun factor of the experience was what made it special, she said.

"We ended up losing, but it was still super fun." ♦

**I have never felt more alive at a starting line. As soon as you hear 'Go,' you just start going all out.**

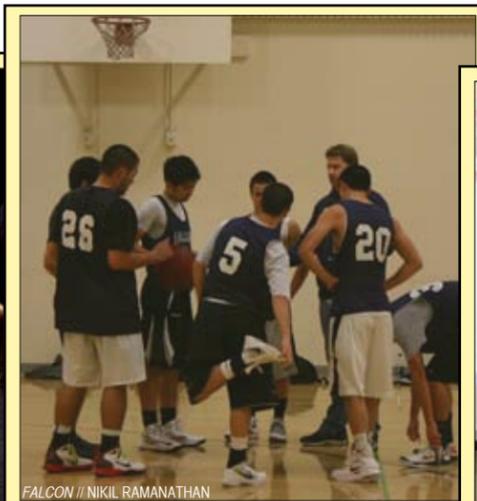
>> Junior Mostafa Rohaninejad

# polaroids



FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA

The Young Playwrights Project participants take a bow after the performances of their original plays on Dec. 10.



FALCON // NIKIL RAMANATHAN

The boys' basketball team meets for a huddle during a rigorous evening practice on Jan. 17.



TALISMAN // NOY SHAKED

Senior Shahab Moghadam addresses students during a JSF meeting on Jan. 10.



TALISMAN // ABIGAIL LIN

Senior Michael Lee listens to senior Heather Sabel make her point during a Leadership meeting on Jan. 15.

## Things that make me cry (aka "Les Miserables")

While everyone around me was looking forward to this past Christmas for the presents and the celebration, I was eagerly awaiting the holiday for a different reason: the film release of "Les Misérables."



KAREN SUNG

KareBear

Ever since I first watched the San Francisco production back in the summer, I counted down the days until I could watch the movie adaptation of possibly the best musical ever created (unbiased opinion, of course).

However, my Christmas morning began with a rocky start; after missing the 9 a.m. showing, which I had originally bought tickets for, my friend and I went on a mad dash looking for the next showing, only to find out that both the Cupertino and Saratoga AMC theaters were sold out.

Eventually, we decided to watch the evening movie, but not without first

shamelessly running across Vallco mall trying to make sure we were ahead of everyone else in line (we can be a bit aggressive). I knew that all the driving and running around was worth it as soon as I settled into the theater, though.

When Anne Hathaway sang her mind-blowing rendition of "I Dreamed a Dream," I started choking on air, causing my friend to look over and ask, "Are you OK...?". At this point, I thought I was doing pretty well, tears-wise, and I naively thought that I was strong enough to last the rest of the movie without crying. I was wrong.

As soon as Samantha Barks opened her mouth to sing "A Little Fall of Rain" before she died, tears began to roll down my face, and I had to hastily grab the tissues that my mom had handed me with a sigh before I left the house (she knows me too well).

The tears kept flowing without end, and by the time the battle scenes had taken place, I was literally sobbing, and my friend, who had already seen the movie and exhausted her supply of

tears, side-eyed me.

I couldn't seem to stop crying, and when — spoiler alert! — Valjean sang his last song before his death, my sobbing reached a new intensity, complete with horrible noises that sounded like I was being gagged. Maybe something was wrong with my tear ducts that day, who knows?

After the movie had ended, I sat in the theater with my friend, who was also crying by now, and a group of elderly ladies, and together we continued to cry, and we bonded as the end credits rolled. I was so emotionally drained that it took me several tries to just walk down a flight of stairs.

Now, though, I've moved on to constantly humming the entire soundtrack to myself, including an unsuccessful attempt at trying to sing everyone's parts simultaneously in "One Day More."

When my mom asks me to do something, I respond in typical theater fashion with, "Who am I?" ("Two-four-six-oh-one!")

So what I'm trying get at here is this: If you somehow haven't watched the movie yet, go watch it! (You can thank me later). Don't let my tears deter you; the movie was truly phenomenal in all aspects.

As an extra incentive, I can assure you that the cast is not only very talented, but also extremely attractive. (Look out for the revolutionaries especially.) And if you already have watched the movie, feel free to come up to me, and we can gush about the movie together, in which you can proceed to watch me have a breakdown over how much emotion (and love) I feel toward this movie.

But now it's time to look ahead to another date on my calendar: the revival of the Les Misérables Broadway production in 2014. New York, anyone? ♦

If you already have watched the movie, feel free to come up to me, and we can gush about the movie together.

## buzzworthy >> Musicians triumph

BY MeganaIyer & SherrilynLing

Ever since they were young, seniors Maya Nag and Rebecca Yang have both played the piano and the bass clarinet, among other instruments.

Over the past year, however, the two have taken their love of music to an even higher level. From Dec. 2011 to Dec. 2012, Nag and Yang worked together to compose an original piece. The piece was written for wind ensemble, which contains the flute, clarinet, oboe, english horn, soprano saxophone, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone and more. They titled their composition "Arab Spring."

They entered their piece into the County Honor Band, a yearly event hosted by the Band Directors' Association in Santa Clara County.

"We were inspired to write the piece because we were thinking of ideas for the National History Day competition and we wanted to do a project on Arab Spring," said Nag.

Yang explained that their topic was too recent to be entered into the National History Day competition; however, since both students took an interest in the Arab Spring and music, they decided to combine the two.

Nag and Yang participated in the sep-

arate competition for soloists and composition. Once the scores are entered, the judges look at them and listen to the recordings to see if they like them.

"In the beginning, we'd play some tunes on piano and send each other recordings," Nag said.

Nag and Yang were able to get help from their band director and others, since they did not know much about percussion.

However, they did not have any formal composition teacher. The writing process was lengthy and frustrating at times.

"The writing took us awhile. We hit some roadblocks, kind of like writer's block," Nag said.

Nag and Yang were contacted on Dec. 5 by the judges via phone call, and were told that their piece had been selected as the winning composition. For winning, their piece was played by the SCCBDA county honor band.

"We were ecstatic when we received the phone call from the S C C B D A president informing us that we won," Nag said. "It is such an honor to have our piece played by such a talented group." ♦



## topten

WAYS TO MEET YOUR SIGNIFICANT OTHER AT SHS

- 10 **Make a YouTube video requesting a boyfriend/girlfriend.** Wear lots of makeup to guarantee a surprise for your date the first time he/she sees you.
- 9 **Play Twister with people.** I dunno, this one is pretty self-explanatory.
- 8 **Invite 25 people to a movie.** Email 24 of them and tell them not to show up.
- 7 **Pretend to be hacked.** Post something semi-naughty on your crush's Facebook, and turn your apology into an invite to La Fondue.
- 6 **Watch "The Notebook" with ANYONE.** If they don't fall into your arms immediately after, then the world honestly should have ended on Dec. 21.
- 5 **Snapchat random people.** Make sure to include as a caption in every snap, "Do u like wat u c???"
- 4 **Use GQ and/or Victoria's Secret as a clothing template.** Don't expect to pull any of the outfits off if you're American-born.
- 3 **Go to prom with someone.** What follows prom is traditionally a wild game of Scrabble, a great opportunity to really get close to your friend's date.
- 2 **Join a popular social group or clique.** Within a year, you will have inevitably dated every person of the opposite sex.
- 1 **Keep "accidentally" bumping into people.** Sooner or later, you'll bump into someone you actually like.

>> Aashna Mukerji, Aasim Naqvi and Akshara Sekar



## DO YOU BELIEVE?

MORMON, JEHOVAH'S WITNESS AND CHRISTIAN STUDENTS SHARE THE STORIES OF THEIR FAITH.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SAMUEL LIU

## Hope in an empty glass

SENIOR FINDS SOLACE IN GOD AND CHRISTIANITY

BY Sabrina **Chen**  
& Candice **Zheng**

Senior Kiki Shim watches the group of students socializing and eating their lunches in Mrs. Janny Cahatol's room. It's the fifth meeting of the 2012 Impact Christian Club.

One of the six officers of Impact Christian Club, Shim is a devoted Christian with a cheerful personality and is confident in her faith.

But for Shim, it wasn't always this way. For a long time, she thought that "no one really knew the true me."

"I've backstabbed, lied, swore, cheated — I've done so many bad things, so I thought that no one could possibly like me," she said about her experiences in middle school. "It got to the point where I wanted to run away. ... I was too afraid to attempt to kill myself."

But Shim somehow found herself turning to God, and she has never looked back.

"I realized that even if I felt alone, there was someone who always loved me," she said. "[That person] was God."

### Shim's connection to God

Up until high school, Shim's parents took her to church every day. At first, she saw church as just a place to hang

out with friends, but in middle school she began to realize the true meaning of her religion.

In eighth grade, Shim's self-confidence began to nosedive. She began to feel as if she was faking her own personality, unsure of how to present herself and become accepted by others.

As she started to believe no one actually knew her, loneliness began to kick in.

"I wanted to do something drastic and get away to some new place where nobody knew me," Shim said.

Then, something unbelievable happened.

It was a December day of her eighth grade year. After dragging herself up from bed, she groggily shuffled into the kitchen. Saying a monotonous good morning to her parents, Shim made her way to the breakfast table.

As she was eating breakfast, she accidentally knocked over her glass of water. Sighing, she reached over to clean up the mess, but as her gaze focused on the spreading puddle of water, her eyes widened in disbelief. Glistening, the water seemed to spell out the word "hope."

"It sounds crazy, but I think part of it has to do with that fact that the word hope was what I was looking for,"

Shim said. "It sparked a Bible verse in my head, Corinthians 13:13. 'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.' And from that I realized that there was someone who always loved me: God."

Immediately after that incident, Shim began to find strength in her faith.

"Christian faith has told me that I was never going to be alone," Shim said. "There's a God out there who loves me no matter what and that just rang true."

Shim said that when she saw the word hope, she realized what being a Christian truly meant.

"It finally brought all those memories in church to mind, listening to the pastor talk about God. Before they had just been empty words, but somehow, that word made me understand what it had been about," Shim said. "It encouraged me to continue looking for solutions and opened my heart to understanding Christianity."

Although she realizes many people don't think God is real, Shim feels comfortable with her faith.

"God will never turn his back on me no matter what's happening; he's the person who knows me,"

>> **SHIM** on pg. S3

## >> what'sinside

**Mormons on campus** pg. S2-3

"It's probably going to sound weird—but the main reason why I want to go [to Brigham Young University] is because I want to find a wife, a good wife who is Mormon."

—Sophomore Michael Cole

**'Witness' goes door to door preaching the gospel** pg. S2

"More than once, I've had people answer their door with a phone to their ear, signaling that they're busy. As we turn to leave, the phone (still held to their ear) starts ringing."

—Senior Chad Nachiappan

**Junior lives by God** pg. S4

"I was just hit by a wave of something, as cheesy as it sounds. I almost felt like God was giving me a hug. And I thought 'this is actually real.'"

—Junior Alvin Huang

# Door to door

'WITNESS' PREACHES THE GOSPEL

BY Simi **Srivastava**  
& Wren **Sutterfield**

Tired after a long day at school, senior Chad Nachiappan trudges along the streets of Saratoga. While most of his peers have gone home, Nachiappan spends a few hours a week going door to door to visit people's homes and spreading the word of God.

Nachiappan is a Jehovah's Witness, which is a branch of Christianity. Like most Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses believe in the Bible. However, they do not believe in hell, or the trinity [the belief that God exists in three parts, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit].

According to Nachiappan, Witnesses hold several other beliefs that distinguish them from other religions. For example, they don't believe in becoming involved in politics, because they believe that to be putting their faith in man rather than in God is wrong. Because of this, they don't vote in elections.

Their religion also forbids receiving blood transfusions, because in the Old Testament of the Bible, God constantly instructed his followers to abstain from blood.

Their beliefs on Heaven, Hell and clergymen are very different from other forms of Christianity as well.

"We believe a select few go to Heaven, while the rest of us live forever on a paradise Earth. We do not believe in the existence of Hell," Nachiappan said. "Also, we don't have a clergy-laity distinction. We don't have a paid body of men that are 'better' than the common person."

Along with these views on Christianity, Jehovah's Witnesses also differ in the celebration of holidays. They don't believe in celebrating holidays, because they have lost their religious roots.

"A lot of holidays are of pagan origin, and some come from secular roots," Nachiappan said. "For example, Santa's typical red and white suit came to fruition as the result of a Coca-Cola campaign and a Thomas Nast cartoon; Coca-Cola's colors are (surprise, surprise) red and white."

Nachiappan said that even though he sat at his desk during classroom celebrations, he had no problem not participating with his friends.

"I never felt like I was missing out on much," he said. "My friends got presents twice a year (birthdays, Christmas), while I got presents all year round!"

While some of these beliefs, such as not voting, may seem strange to the average student, Nachiappan said his religion has been very important to him ever since he was young and was taught about it by his family.

"[I've been a Jehovah's Witness for] basically all my life," Nachiappan said. "I think the main reason I became a Jehovah's Witness is because

my mom is one, so she kind of raised me in it, and that's how I got to know it."

Witnesses attend "Kingdom Hall," which is their place of worship — much like Hindu Temple or a Muslim Mosque, Nachiappan said.

"We have bi-weekly meetings, and I attend those. Basically, on Thursday we have a Bible study, and each meeting usually lasts an hour and a half," he said. "On Sunday we usually have a public talk given by a speaker which is taken from the Bible."

Being a Jehovah's Witness involves a lot more than simply attending Kingdom Hall meetings, however. Nachiappan also participates in "door-to-door ministry."

"We'll [spend about four hours] walking around and knocking on people's homes and talking to them about the Bible," he said.

As with anything that involves contacting random strangers who may or may not be open to discussing new ideas, Nachiappan says his volunteer time has earned him many interesting stories.

"More than once, I've had people answer their door with a phone to their ear, signaling that they're busy. As we turn to leave, the phone (still held to their ear) starts ringing," he said. "Some people go out of their way to avoid us, and we respect that, understanding that everyone has their own beliefs."

Nachiappan's reception isn't always negative, though. He said he's met a lot of people who are honestly interested in discussing the Bible.

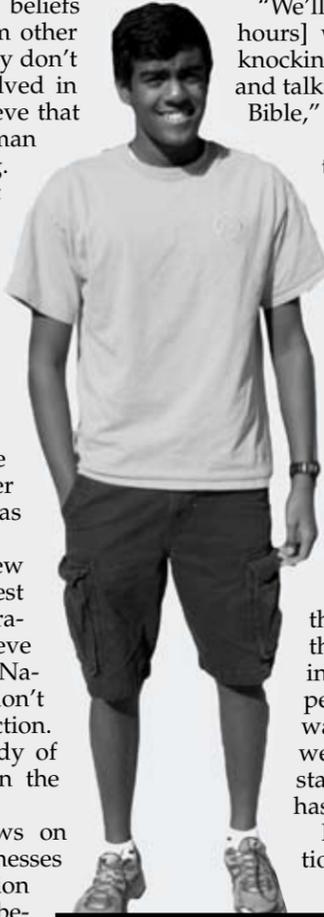
"Often times, we'll find people who are very willing to talk about the Bible," he said. "I've met people who are really interested, and we've spent like half an hour just speaking with them."

The purpose of these conversations is not to gain new converts, but simply to get the word out and promote debate on religious issues.

"Our main goal is to encourage Bible discussion with our neighbors and to provide comfort through an encouraging thought from God's word, the Bible," Nachiappan said. "We don't try to convert anyone because religion is each person's own decision."

Although being a Jehovah's Witness takes up a lot of time, Nachiappan doesn't mind because his beliefs are very important to him.

"It's given me all I know," he said. "When people belong to a religion, they do it because it makes sense to them. That's the reason for me as well." ♦



Senior Chad Nachiappan

## >> THE bigidea

### What is Jehovah's Witness?

#### Doctrine

Jehovah's Witness is a restorationist Christian denomination.

#### Witnesses around the world

The group has over four million members world wide. "Witnesses" recruit 200,000 new members who every year. It is the fastest growing denomination in America.

#### What it's best known for

Door-door preaching, as well as literature such as *The Watchtower*.

# Cousins dedicate lives to

BY Sabrina **Chen**  
& Deepti **Kannan**

It's 5:15 a.m. on a Tuesday and sophomore Hannah Hulme is already awake, before the sun, as usual. School doesn't start for hours, but Hulme has a busier morning agenda than the average teenager.

Still wearing pajamas, she enters the Church of Latter Day Saints on Allendale Avenue for an early morning seminary with her cousin Michael Cole. The two enter a small classroom in the church and are greeted with sleepy hellos and yawns from other high school students who are waiting for the seminary to begin.

As devout Mormons, Hulme and Cole attend an early morning seminary from 6 a.m. to 6:50 a.m. each weekday.

"I like [the early morning seminary] because you learn more about what happened in the Bible," Hulme said. "Sometimes I'm really tired, but I think it's worth it because it's always interesting."

For Hulme and Cole, Mormonism plays an integral role in their daily lives.

"Being Mormon has made me want to choose [to do the right thing], make good decisions and just be a good person and serve others," Cole said.

Hulme said the religion often helps her through tough times and always makes her feel better.

"There are times when I have a stressful night and if I just keep praying and going to church, I know that it helps me through it," Hulme said.

### Early morning seminary

As Cole and Hulme make their way to their seats in the back of the classroom, teacher Timothy Henry, known to the students as Brother Henry, greets the class warmly.

After the morning prayer, Brother Henry begins the seminary by listing the attendance record of each student. He said the Church recommends that high schoolers complete the seminary course with at least 80 percent attendance, but it is not mandated.

"I guess, more than anything, it is just to demonstrate your dedication to the Lord," he said. "We believe that starting the day off with Scripture study, with prayer, can only help people go on to school with the different influences and peer pressure that come their way."

Hulme smiled when Brother Henry announced her perfect attendance record. Cole's attendance grade in seminary this year is 98 percent.

Brother Henry explained that the day's lesson was on hypocrisy.

"Hypocrites go to church, put on a façade and don't live according to the church," Brother Henry said to the class.

Hulme nodded in agreement, commenting that "[some people] say they're Christian, but they don't even go to church."

After reading Luke Chapter 11 in the Bible, Brother Henry explained that Jesus disapproved of the hypocritical behavior of the Pharisees.

Applying this lesson to their everyday lives, he said, "We cannot fool God. I know he watches us and expects a lot of us."

To end the lesson, Brother Henry expressed the importance of reading the Bible.

"I am grateful we have gospels as examples for ourselves," he said. "Jesus is



TOP: Sophomores Michael Cole and Hannah Hulme. The early morning seminar at The Church of Lat

our savior, Amen."

### Life as a Mormon

In addition to their frequent church attendance, Hulme and Cole both follow strict rules mandated by their religion. For example, they are prohibited from doing drugs, drinking alcohol, smoking, swearing and engaging in premarital sex.

"We know [when something] is not the right thing to do," Cole said. "Everything the church tells [you] to do is to protect you and to keep you safe, so it's easy to follow stuff like that."

Hulme added she also follows some less obvious rules such as never drinking caffeine or coffee and always dressing modestly. Although many teens would be frustrated by having to adhere to such stringent standards, Hulme does not mind.

"It's not that big of a deal," Hulme said. "I can wear a short-sleeved shirt instead of a tank top."

Hulme and Cole also said that they have never dated anyone, since the church recommends not to date before age 16. Additionally, both have never attended a high school dance.

"It's sort of up to the person on how much you feel like it's the right thing to do," Hulme said. "I've never been to a high school dance because I know it gets

## >> togatalks

### What restrictions do you have as a Mormon?

[The church] tells us not to drink caffeine or coffee, so I don't do that."



sophomore Hannah Hulme

I don't swear, don't drink, I never watch R rated movies we can't date 16."

sopho

25, 2013

# Mormonism



FALCON // SABRINA CHEN



FALCON // DEEPTI KANNAN

Hulme with Brother Henry, their teacher. ABOVE: Latterday Saints.

inappropriate and I wouldn't feel comfortable there."

For Hulme and Cole, their parents strongly influence their adherence to church rules.

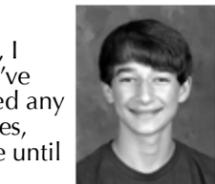
"It's probably a factor that plays into it, that my parents are pretty strict and they don't want me to do [things that are prohibited by the church]," Cole said. "I probably wouldn't be as strict without their influence."

However, Hulme said regardless of her parent's influence, she would still adhere to the strict standards.

"If I had never known about the church, I don't know if I would have [followed all the strict rules]," Hulme said. "But I'm grateful that I was [introduced to the church] because then I can go to church and know about it. Knowing now what I know, I would probably still [follow strict standards]."

Although the church and her parents have a strong influence on Hulme, she said that ultimately she is the one who makes the decision to follow these rules because she believes it is the right thing to do.

"Whenever I learn something new, it kind of makes sense to me, so it's not like I'm getting brainwashed by them, like 'Oh, of course it's right because they say it.' It's just because it kind of makes sense," Hulme said.



more Michael Cole

FALCON // SABRINA CHEN

# SHIM >> Solace in God

continued from pg. S1

Shim said. "I don't have to pretend to like something or be afraid of doing something stupid."

Her religion helps her endure the trials of school.

"A lot of times when I'm stressed, I just want to give up," Shim said. "But then I remember I'm not doing this for myself but because I want to glorify God and he has some sort of plan for me. When I get good grades, I try to give thanks to God first."

Shim said that her favorite Bible verse is Timothy 2:13, which states, "If we are faithless He will remain faithful for he cannot disown Himself."

"It's encouragement," Shim said. "It reinforces the message of eternal love and acceptance."

### Shim today

Revived by Shim and three other students in 2010, Impact Christian club is an organization that creates an envi-

ronment for students to be Christians outside of church. She said that when the club first began, people thought it was boring and didn't attend. According to her, the club's current success results from the close friendships formed in the group.

"Although the leaders have different goals for the club, for me it's the empowerment on campus," Shim said. "It's kind of like making a way to support Christians and a way to get fellowship. We're trying to build a Christian community within the school."

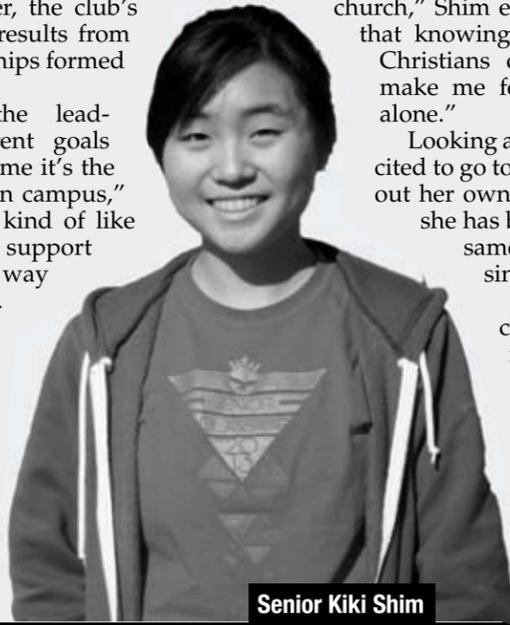
Shim said that Impact helps to connect Christians who

don't go to church together.

"For me, the Christian community on campus is a way to let Christians develop [their faith] outside of church," Shim explained. "I find that knowing there are other Christians on campus also make me feel that I'm not alone."

Looking ahead, Shim is excited to go to college and pick out her own church, because she has been going to the same church ever since she was 6.

"Although [the church I am at now] is a good church, there is something exciting about looking about and finding a place where you belong," Shim said. ♦



Senior Kiki Shim

### The Mormon minority

Hulme said most Mormons reside in Utah, and Mormons here in the Bay Area are a minority. She estimates that no more than eight Mormons attend Saratoga High.

Hulme said that people often make jokes about Mormons and stereotype the religion, including the misconception that mainstream Mormons still practice polygamy.

"Whenever you say you're Mormon, people say 'Oh, so how many moms do you have?' And it's like, 'One, I only have one,'" Hulme said. "That's not really offensive, but it sometimes gets annoying because they don't understand that [polygamy is] not in practice anymore."

Hulme added that she sometimes feels left out of activities or conversations that she does not feel comfortable participating in.

"Whenever my friends are talking about something that I don't feel comfortable talking about, I try to change the subject," Hulme said. "It's not really [annoying] because I feel better if I do [change the subject] because I don't want to feel awkward."

Additionally, Hulme said conflicts sometimes arise when her friends invite her to parties on Sundays. Because Sunday is the Sabbath Day for Mormons, they are not supposed to go out of the house or work on that day.

"If my friends have a party on Sunday, I really want to go but I know that it's better not to," Hulme said. "Even though I'm sad, I know it's the right decision."

### Politics and Mormonism

In light of the recent presidential election, both Hulme and Cole said their families voted for Mitt Romney, the first Mormon to be nominated for the presidency by either party.

Although Cole said that Romney's religion had little to do

with his family's decision to vote for him, Hulme said Romney being elected could have helped promote Mormonism.

"[If Romney had been elected], it would get people more exposed to Mormonism," Hulme said. "But if he [didn't] please the country, hopefully people wouldn't look at [Mormonism] as a bad thing."

Hulme also said some issues such as gay marriage and abortion have caused controversy, especially within religious communities. Hulme said most Mormons, including herself, oppose gay marriage.

"I oppose [gay marriage] because you can feel [homosexual], but I don't think people should carry it out. I don't really know how to explain it," Hulme said. "Mormonism doesn't really prohibit gay marriage. They word it in a certain way where they don't look down upon you if you are having those kinds of feelings, but they try to recommend not to."

### Aspiring to make BYU

Both Hulme and Cole said they plan to practice

Mormonism for the rest of their lives, and hope that their children will go to church as well some day.

In order to help make that dream a reality, Hulme and Cole said they aspire to go to Brigham Young University. BYU is located in Salt Lake City, the most populated Mormon city in the world. According to the school's website, 98 percent of students who attend BYU, including Hulme and Cole's older siblings, are Mormon.

As a result, Hulme said BYU would be the best place for her to feel accepted.

"People always struggle when they grow up in a place that's not very Mormon, like here, because you're a minority," Hulme said. "I think [at BYU] everyone has a lot of fun because they are all with people like themselves so they can fit in."

Cole added that BYU would be the ideal place for him to meet a Mormon who he could potentially marry.

"It's probably going to sound weird — but the main reason why I want to go there is because I want to find a wife, a good wife who is Mormon," Cole said. "I think it would be hard to find someone who is really good as a wife that doesn't practice Mormonism."

Both Cole and Hulme agreed that being Mormon and having different standards has had a huge impact on their lives

"[My religion] helps me want to be the best person I can be by being kind to others around me," Hulme said, "and I know that if I make the right decisions, it will pay off someday." ♦



THE CHURCH OF THE LATTERDAY SAINTS THAT COLE AND HULME ATTEND



Early on the morning of Sunday, Oct. 7, Huang and the rest of his Worship Team practice various hymns before performing for the River of Life Christian Church later that day.

# Pious junior devoted to faith

By Jonathan Young

On a Sunday morning in October, like every other Sunday, junior Alvin Huang wakes up at 6:30, eats breakfast, brushes his teeth, grabs his guitar and heads out the door.

Forty-five minutes later, Huang boards his mom's SUV and dons ear-phones for the otherwise dull 30-minute car ride.

He arrives at the River of Life Christian Church in Santa Clara and heads to the worship room, where the services are held. Here, Huang meets the rest of his Worship Team, a band that plays hymns before sermons. Huang, who plays guitar and is the lead singer of the group, joins them in their morning practice.

Huang is an outstanding student who recently received a perfect 2400 on his SAT. But he attributes his academic success to his religious faith as he prays for success before every test. Huang also spends many hours every week at church, keeping his faith even during the academically trying junior year.

On the October Sunday when a Falcon reporter followed him, Huang enters the church a little late, but he quickly sets up his instrument as he warmly greets the other members.

"I always have to arrive earlier than everyone else to practice and that's sometimes a hassle, but it's great to be a part of the group," Huang said.

The first service begins at 9 a.m. and the Worship Team performs as part of the service. The hymns are rhythmic and, with the lyrics being projected, easy to sing along to. Much of the audience of 50 individuals gets caught in the moment, singing and dancing along, expressing their love of God.

After their hymns, the pastor delivers a sermon about the Pharisees and how, one day, God had entered the house of a few Pharisees and dined with them.

Huang carefully takes notes in his journal and asks a few clarifying questions. He is enthralled by the pastor's words.

"We aren't really required to take notes, but I do it anyway," Huang said. "It helps me remember what I learned and lets me reflect on the lesson of the day."

After this first service, Huang joins some other high school students in a Sunday school class at 10:30 a.m. The chairs are organized in a circle, with a whiteboard and television at the front. The lesson revolves around Holy Fear and its actual meaning.

"Holy Fear is not necessarily being scared of God, but more like respecting him," Huang said. "Holy Fear pretty much means to obey God because people fear disobeying and offending those they love."

After a short film, the group assembles into a circle, resembling a Socratic seminar, and shares what they have learned.

"Holy Fear was a really interesting lesson because I was a little confused at the extra meaning," Huang said. "I always found it confusing because we were always taught to love God but Holy Fear sounded like being afraid of Him."

The hour-long lesson concludes, and then lunch is served in the recreation room.

"Lunch and having fellowship with my peers is my favorite part of the day," Huang said. "After a long morning, the food just tastes so much better."

After everyone eats, the noon service is set to commence. As more and more people enter the room of worship, Huang and his group start to perform.

"I love singing with the Worship Team. It gives me a sense of fulfillment singing [for God] in front of everyone there," Huang said.

The pastor enters and preaches the lesson of the Pharisees once again. His message resonates throughout the whole audience, with a loud chorus of "amens."

Soon, it's 2 p.m., and the services have already ended; it's time to go home. Huang gathers his belongings and, guitar in hand, walks out into the bright Sunday afternoon.

## Moment of revelation

Huang's religious commitment increased three years ago during an altar call at his church.

He remembers curtains draping the sides of the altar and lights above. Numerous individuals lined up to get prayed for.

When Huang waited patiently for his turn, he was nervous, but excited. Then, he slowly scaled the altar and was joined by many others.

"I was like, 'Oh nice, everyone else is doing it, so I'll do it too,'" Huang said.

However, as soon as the speaker started praying, Huang's outlook changed. "I was just hit by a wave of something, as cheesy as it sounds," Huang said.

While he was devoted to his faith before, this was the first time Huang had actually experienced and really felt God.

"I almost felt like God was giving me a hug," said Huang. "And I thought, 'This is actually real.'"

During the altar calls, the Worship Team usually stays on state to play a sort of "response song," according to Huang.

"I guess it was loud [on the altar], but for me it was really quiet," Huang said. "It was like a one-on-one moment with God."

Huang began to focus more on God and his religion after the experience. He then started serving in more areas of the church, including the Worship Team.

In the future, Huang hopes to continue his relationship with God.

"I hope to retain all the passion I have right now," he said. "I intend to continue serving in the church and to continue to know God better."

But for the future, Huang is thankful that he can expect guidance from God. "First and foremost He's a friend," Huang said. "But He also guides and helps me discern right and wrong." ♦



Junior Alvin Huang

## >> religion

### By the numbers

2500

Years since Buddhism was started in India.

5

Pillars of Islam. Islam means "Peace through submission to God."

15

Percent of Chinese who identify as Athiests. China has the largest Athiest population in the world.

85

Percent of American citizens who identify as Christians.

79

Percent of India's population that practices Hinduism.

96

Percent of Thailand's population that is buddhist.

16

Percent of the world population that is nonreligious.

2

Number of Christian clubs on campus: Faithwalk and Impact.

21

Percent of the world population that practices Islam.

—adherents.com

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