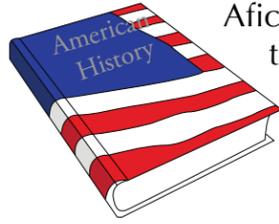




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When journalists play cupid pgs. 12-13
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THE saratogafalcon



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

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Friday >> February 8, 2013

Vol. 52, No. 8

GRADUATION GOWNS

Senior boys vote to reject red, keep traditional navy

BY Brandon Judoprasertijo

It seems red pride only goes so far. At least, that's the result after a recent movement to change the boys' graduation gowns from navy blue to red. It all started last year when senior Oliver Parr was working with former assistant principal Karen Hyde for college counseling. "We were talking about traditions in Saratoga High and I was really curious as to why the robes were navy blue instead of red, since our school's primary color is red," Parr said.

According to Hyde, the graduation gowns used to be red but for some reason were changed to navy blue. The color remained navy from then on with the exception of only one year. With Hyde's explanation, Parr came up with the idea of reverting the gown color back to red this year. "I just felt that if we're going to represent red pride, we shouldn't have navy blue gowns," Parr said. "I wanted to be graduating in the same color I wear Friday nights to football games and the same color that the senior class wears to rallies." Parr shared his idea to the senior class

Facebook group where he had received mixed feedback. Seniors such as Sasan Saadat were open to supporting "red pride," but simply preferred navy over the red. "I thought navy was classy, understated, and it's looked good in the past," Saadat said. "When I think of red robes next to white ones, the first thing that comes to mind is High School Musical. That wasn't the image I wanted for graduation." After talking to principal Paul Robinson, Parr held a class vote. Ballots were distributed through senior English classes where all senior boys would have to vote.

The result was a 82-64 majority in favor of keeping the robes navy blue. Although the class of 2013 has decided to remain with navy robes, the idea of having red graduation gowns has been revived. Perhaps sometime in the near future the idea of "red pride" will be reflected in a radiant red graduation gown. "I definitely feel the next class has a chance [to change the robe colors]," Parr said. "It's going to take somebody to talk to Mr. Robinson [to start it.] It's up to the senior class and I do think that robes are going to be changed to red within the next couple years." ♦

ASSEMBLY



Freshman Nina Nelson sings "Imagine" by John Lennon during an assembly on Jan. 25.

Leadership speaks up for change

STUDENT BODY ENCOURAGED TO 'JUST BE KIND'

BY Jay Mulye

The whole school crowded into the gym on Jan. 22 expecting to listen to an ordinary speech on bullying. To their surprise, motivational speaker Scott Backovich held their attention from his first awkward joke to his inspirational call on students to make school a welcoming place. Many students were captivated by and receptive to Backovich's speech that urged them to speak out against bullying because of his sense of humor. "The speaker kept us engaged throughout the assembly with his humor," junior Farshad Feyzi said. "He really made us feel inspired to make a differ-

>> **JBK** on pg. 4



Former band director Seth Jones conducts the jazz band at last year's Jazz Cabaret on March 3.

BY Amy Lin & Jane Park

One of the school's most beloved activities, the annual Jazz Cabaret, will take place a month earlier than usual this year, and organizers say it will be as big as ever. "This is a major fundraiser for the music programs on campus," said parent Mary Eschen. "Although only the jazz bands and choirs perform, all the [music] programs benefit from the funds that are raised." Although the event takes place tomorrow, preparations for this annual event started over three months ago. Volunteers were chosen a year in advance and more than 100

volunteer jobs were available for parents to sign up for. The event budgeted \$4,700 with most of the money spent on sound, lighting, table and chair rental, food and refreshments. "It is such an energetic environment with dancing and food available that students are finding it a really fun event to participate in, get dressed up for and hang out at," Eschen said. Five hundred tickets were sold each year in the past six years, and organizers expect at least that number of attendees this year. "Jazz Cabaret is really fun because it's a different style of music than we're used to listening to," sophomore Sarah

>> yougo

Jazz Cabaret swing dance

Event details
Tomorrow at the Large Gym, 7 p.m.
Tickets
\$10 in the Activities Office, \$15 at the door for students; \$20 and \$25 respectively for adults

Liddie said. "I love the decorations and they always have amazing food." The 1950s-themed event allows students, parents and faculty to socialize and dance in a lively environment. Attendees come dressed up and ready to relax in an evening of good music and food. ♦

TRENDING

Take a photo, and express your 'selfie'

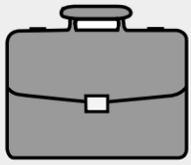
BY Jade Bisht & Elijah Yi

Walk around the campus and it is common to see at least one student holding his or her smartphone high, aiming the camera at his or her face to snap a picture. Coined as taking a "selfie," the act of taking a picture of yourself has become a rising trend over the past year.

Taking selfies became more popular when phones were equipped with front cameras, simplifying the process of taking a picture by not holding a camera phone backwards. "I think people take selfies because they are fun and a good way to pass time," sophomore Smedha Gupta said.

Some applications for Apple and Android products put front cameras into use and encourage users to take selfies on a regular basis. Snapchat, an app that hit the No. 3 spot on the iTunes free app chart in November, is a quick way of communicating through pictures and short captions. Junior Jane Chang uses Snapchat because it's "fun yet entertaining" to make different faces.

Selfies also blend well with Instagram, a photo-sharing app. Instagram is a "fast, beautiful and fun way to share your photos with friends and family," according to its website. However, other students view "selfies" as wasteful. "I think taking selfies is a poor use of time and those who do it need to find better hobbies," senior Benedict Chiu said. "I don't mind other people doing it; I merely roll my eyes at them." ♦



news >> briefs

Roses for this year's Valentine's Day grams

In celebration of Valentine's Day, Interact is selling Valentine grams. This year, as opposed to past years, instead of candy or balloons, each gram will include a rose.

"It's not just for people who are in a relationship, but also for people who just want to give them to people as friends. It's something more cute than a piece of chocolate," president senior Tiffany Yung said.

The club chose roses for a variety of reasons, but most importantly because of their symbolism of Valentine's Day. The history of Valentine's Day roses comes from an old custom of sending a bouquet of flowers to a person, each flower having its own meaning would allow people to send non-verbal messages.

"I think roses are really a symbol of friendship and Valentine's Day as a whole," Yung said.

The money received from selling Valentine's Day grams will be going to the club's international project, Room to Read, which provides education in Bangladesh.

—Sudeep Raj and Arman Vaziri

Orchestra to go to Spain in 2014

Although the summer of 2014 seems far away, the music department is already preparing for a tour of Spain from June 21 to July 4.

All the orchestras and the Symphonic Band will go on the tour. They will be joined by the advanced Spanish classes: 3, 4H and 5AP, led by Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodrigueux. However, freshmen that year will not be permitted to go.

The tour will start in Madrid, then go to the cities of Valencia, Peñíscola, Barcelona, San Sebastian, and finish in Madrid again. The groups will perform in Valencia, Peñíscola, Barcelona and San Sebastian.

However, some students expressed concern over the price of the trip, which is tentatively about \$4,500. Even though price may be a concern, music director Michael Boitz says it will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

—Bruce Lou

History trip to Normandy cancelled

A summer trip to Normandy, France, planned by the history department, has been canceled after too few students signed up.

"A lot of kids really expressed interest, but once they came by and got all the information, it was just [too expensive]," history teacher Kim Anzalone said.

The total cost of for the trip, which included airfare, hotels and 90 percent of the meals came to about \$3,500.

"I'm pretty disappointed it was cancelled, because I really love military history and was really looking forward to the D-Day beaches," senior Sarah Frankola said.

Anzalone also suspects that some students and parents were also daunted by the distance students would be from home.

"Not many parents want their kids to go to [Europe] without them, and I get that," Anzalone said. "We'll probably offer the trip again next year, and see if we can get even more sign-ups."

—David Sparkman

>> corrections

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

>> upcoming events

Feb. 9 Jazz Cabaret swing dance

Feb. 18 First day of February break

Feb. 27 Redwood staff vs SHS staff basketball game

Feb. 28 Opening night of the spring musical

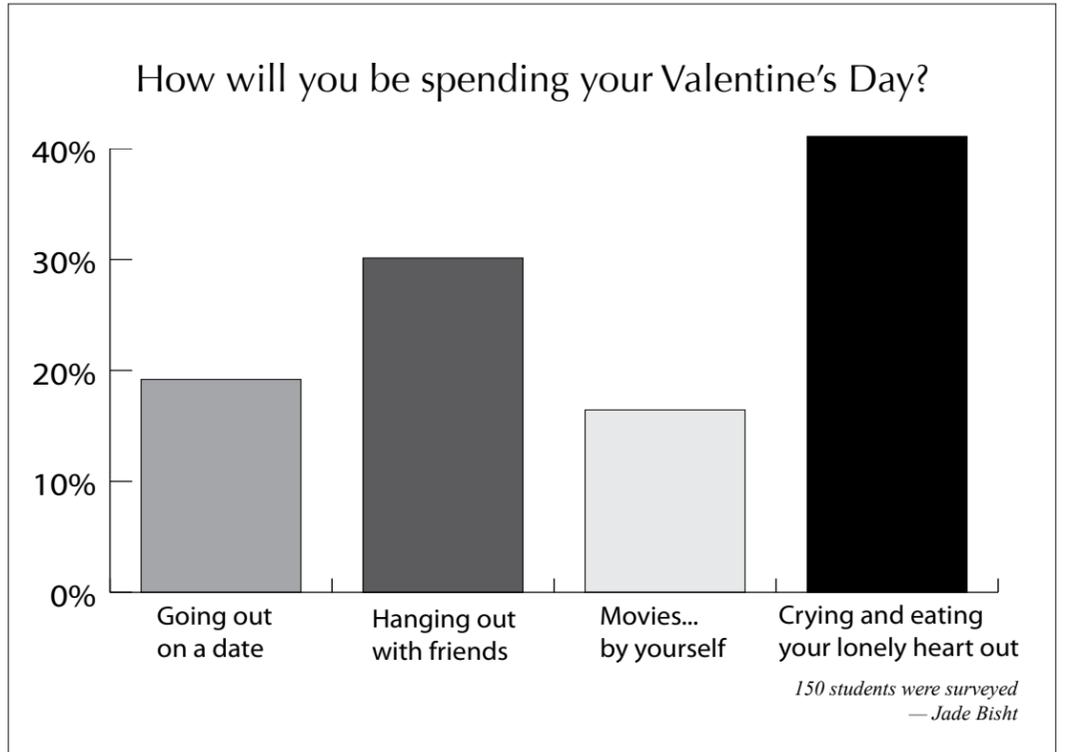
>> picturethis



FALCON/JADE BISHT

VOLUNTEERING >> Freshman Nupur Maheshwari and sophomores Sumedha Gupta and Kimberly Zai put together care packages for soldiers overseas at the school's service for Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

>> falconfigures



CLASS OF 2017

Incoming freshmen express interests at Electives Night

BY Nikhil Goel & Nick Chow

The gym was packed with bright, young faces as hundreds of incoming students and their parents watched performances by the winter guard and the cheer team on the evening of Jan. 28. Getting a glimpse of just a few activities offered at the school, eager students and parents piled into the small gym where they were able to sample their options of elections in the coming years.

Among the activities at Electives Night were performances by drama, orchestra, choir, band, Winter Guard and Cheer. After music director Michael Boitz and athletic director Tim Lugo encouraged incoming freshmen to join their respective departments, students walked around from booth to booth, but some already had an idea of which electives they wanted to take in high school.

"Next year I'm hoping to take band and Spanish," eighth grader Peter Vandevort said, "band because I've been in band for the past five years and Spanish because I took it last year, and I want to get back into it."

Although, according to assistant principal Brian Safine, this year's electives night had an unprecedented 800 people attending the event. The main difference was in a new elective being offered to freshmen: engineering.

The new engineering class came about during the discussion about the possibility of an open freshmen class due to the recent cancellation of ninth grade health and drivers education.

Math teacher Audrey Warmuth said that initially the class was geared toward an introductory program for computer science, but the math department decided to integrate many aspects of science into the class.

"[The math department] got together, and we were like, why just make the class computer science?" Warmuth said. "Why shouldn't it be STEM, because STEM is science, technology, engineering and math?"

Not all electives were new, however. Current electives such as music, art, drama and journalism garnered heavy interest.

Ultimately, Electives Night gives incoming freshmen a chance to preview the multitude of activities that they will be involved in for the next four years of their lives.

Incoming freshman Eric Wang, who has been playing the cello for six years, is interested in being a part of the music department.

"I like how [there is] a lot of variety [in electives], and it's a lot different than middle school," Wang said. "There's a lot of people you can meet, and a lot of new things that I can choose from." ♦

FALCON FOCUS: PRISCILLA CHU

Senior embraces her passion for fashion

STUDENT EXPRESSES STYLE WHILE WORKING, BLOGGING ABOUT CLOTHES

BY Cristina Curcelli & Sanj Nalwa

Two years ago, senior Priscilla Chu went in search of a job selling clothes at Nordstrom at Valley Fair Mall. For two years, Chu worked at the store whenever she was needed.

On Jan. 1 of this year, Chu finally became an official employee when Nordstrom offered her a regular part-time job.

There, she is able to do what she loves best: helping people find the clothes they look best in.

Chu is one of the school's fashion experts and is widely admired for her sense of style.

The number of people who inspired Chu's passion can be narrowed down to just a few.

"[Class of 2011 SHS graduate] Senem Yilmaz inspired me to dress well," Chu said. "[My family friend] Bertrand from Monta Vista inspired me to learn and follow all the fashion houses and designers such as Alexander Wang, Rag & Bone, Chloe, etc. through their seasonal runway connections."

Fashion has also led Chu to become closer with some of her friends.

"One of my best friends, [senior] Jaya Narasimhan and I really connected over the Elie Saab show of Spring/Summer 2012," Chu said. "We have both been obsessed with fashion since then."

Chu's favorite designers change based upon the designer's most recent shows.

"My favorite Spring/Summer 2013 shows were Balenciaga and Alexander Wang," Chu said.

Though her favorites often vary, among them are usually Louis Vuitton, Jason Wu and Altruzza.

"I love shows that are similar to my own style: very classic, simple pieces," Chu said.

As a sales representative at Nordstrom, Chu works about 34 hours a week.

She mostly works with customers to pick out "the best pieces of clothing" for them but also helps with returns.

She works six hours for five days of the week, except on Saturdays when she works for a longer period of time.

Chu loves working with clothes and enjoys the added benefits, too,

which come with the job.

"I love working amongst clothes ... and really getting to know the merchandise," Chu said. "Also I use my paycheck to buy my own clothes."

Even with the challenges of working in retail, Chu says the benefits far outweigh the negatives.

"Sometimes you have to deal with difficult customers," Chu said, "but it all works out when I can buy something a bit more expensive with my own money."

Chu's interest in fashion also led her to start her own fashion blog (called peas-dress-me.tumblr.com) about a year ago.

Her friends Narasimhan and senior Nadya Shahin assist her in this endeavor.

"Nadya is the model, Jaya is the photographer, and I am the stylist, but we always switch up roles," Chu said. "It was a great way to combine our passions and do something original!"

Although Chu's passion for

fashion is as strong as ever, she does not plan to major in fashion in college, instead opting for a different path.

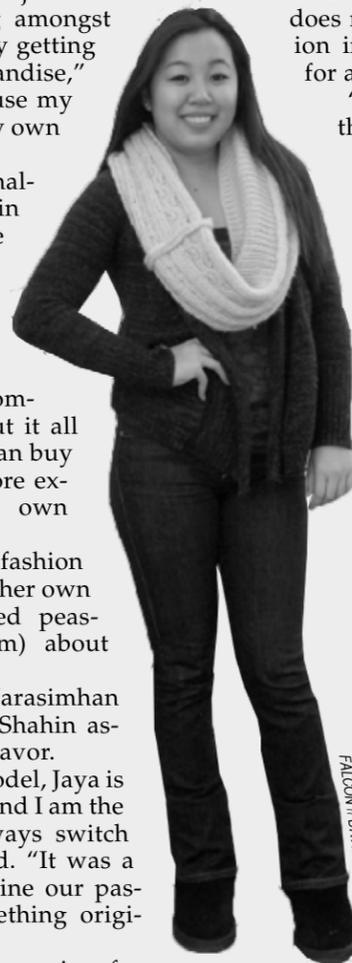
"I am more interested in the business behind the retail industry," Chu said, "so I am hoping to major in international business."

She hopes to do this at a school in New York City or Los Angeles, which she calls "the mecca of the industry."

"From college, I hope to build connections and break into the industry," Chu said.

Chu's career plans may not be set in stone yet, but she has plenty of ambitions for the future, which she looks toward with an open mind.

"I hope to work as CEO of some huge luxury company, or at a magazine or fashion house," Chu said. "Honestly, all I know is that I know what I love, but I don't know exactly what I'm going to do." ♦



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

Priscilla Chu

I hope to work as CEO of some huge luxury company, or at a magazine or fashion house... All I know is that I know what I love.

>> Senior Priscilla Chu

CHARITY

School hosts MLK service

BY Michelle Leung & Priyanka Nookala

Approximately 135 students came to school for three hours on Martin Luther King Day for National Service Day.

Students participated in a variety of activities such as making care packages and thank you cards for soldiers and Valentine cards for local senior citizens. Students also cooked Italian dinners for a family shelter in San Jose, prepared bag lunches for a local church that distributes meals to homeless people, packaged dehydrated meals for the Stop Hunger Now project and restored the landscape outside the McAfee.

The Service Day was a rewarding experience for volunteers.

"I [felt] good about myself after, like I made a difference," freshman Hannah Leney said.

Freshman Miles Albert was inspired by the less fortunate in the world.

"I thought [Stop Hunger Now] was a great thing to do since there are so many people in the world who are starving," Albert said. "I feel like we take everything we eat for granted and I wanted to give to [others]."

For junior Nina Jayashankar, MLK day was an opportunity to come together to help others.

"It just gives me happiness to know that spending some time out of my weekend will put a smile on someone else's face," Jayashankar said.

Compared to last year when only 74 students volunteered, this year there was a tremendous increase in attendance.

"It was a joy to see how the ASB and student commissions helped publicize the event and took leadership roles in activities," parent and co-chair Nirmala

Nookala said.

Student involvement also went more smoothly this year because of the new technology students used to RSVP.

Compared to Google Docs, which was used last year, "Sign Up Genius allows sending mass emails to volunteers and helps with communication," parent and co-chair Sujatha Mudupalli said. "It was easy for the kids to sign up."

With more help from students, parents and faculty, volunteers were able to put together 199 food care packages and 79 toiletry care packages using items donated by students and the community. A new project, Stop Hunger Now, was added to the agenda this year.

Stop Hunger Now was able to accommodate 40 more students. Within two hours they packaged 10,000 meals to be used in crisis situations and school feeding programs. Each meal costs only \$0.25, and has 21 essential vitamins and minerals.

Mary Eschen, the lead parent for Stop Hunger Now, said the event required coordination with both the PTSO and the national Stop Hunger Now organization. This year, the \$2,500 was sponsored by a local foundation.

Eschen said that in contrast to other hunger organizations, Stop Hunger Now is more organized and lets students to make a difference while enjoying themselves.

"This organization provides for the world's hungry in a way that [teaches] so much about hunger [through] a hands-on activity," Eschen said.

Eschen believes Stop Hunger Now and MLK day give those who are blessed a chance to have a positive impact.

"When people give back, we all feel the world is a better place," Eschen said. ♦

Math & Science Questions?

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JBK >> Students and faculty tackle social, academic issues

continued from pg. 1

ence on campus."

Besides two assemblies, the week incorporated lessons about improving the school atmosphere. Working with members of the leadership class, departments took on a wide range of topics.

English: social inclusion and exclusion

Students organized a deck of cards with descriptions of social interactions into two piles that represented two different kinds of social groups to emphasize the dangers of cliques.

English teacher Amy Keys said the richest part of that activity was the students coming up with the categories because many different ideas arose when she separated the kids into groups.

Keys is thinking of incorporating different lessons from Speak Up for Change Week into the curriculum more often.

"I was thinking of having more personal writing shared [in class]," Keys said. "We don't do much of it in English 11 and it would be good for both building community as well as for developing writing skills."

Social Studies: power of words

History teacher Kim Anzalone found

a parallel between her AP US history curriculum on immigration and the lesson plan for Speak Up for Change Week.

"We are talking about Coolies, Padies, names for different ethnic groups that are derogatory, which fed right into Speak Up for Change Week," Anzalone said.

Anzalone said she enjoyed teaching students life lessons.

"Both as a department and personally, the overall feeling was that teaching lessons such as the power of words was immensely important as we like to prepare our students not only for college or a career, but also try to help create more positive social relationships," she said.

Science: academic integrity

Chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu chose to deliver her lesson through a survey and a discussion on beliefs about academic integrity.

The students anonymously answered "yes" or "no" to these questions and discussed their yes and no percentages afterwards.

"I think the students got awareness out of the survey and I was able to give percents and awareness [on the topic] of passing answers off," Nakamatsu said. Nakamatsu calculated that 87 per-

cent of her students said that it was not OK to pass off answers to following classes, so she said that maybe the other 13 percent will think twice before passing of answers.

Math: competition

Math teacher Audrey Warmuth showed her class an article from the L.A. Times and a video on YouTube talking about the "difference between pursuing something which you perceive to have a value or pursuing something that has genuine value." Warmuth said this topic was relevant to her Calculus BC classes.

"We discussed choices on 'why did you take this class' and 'did you take the class because you are really interested in it or because of your parents?'" Warmuth said.

By showing these stories through different media, Warmuth hopes that students will have a new perspective on their education and life plans.

"I'm trying to have the kids reflect on why they make decisions as opposed to just following the crowd or doing things because they think they should be doing them," Warmuth said.

Concluding assembly

On the Friday of Speak Up for Change

Week, the Leadership class put on an assembly to wrap up the week. The assembly began with a moving video of students who courageously spoke of their struggles and how they dealt with them.

"I feel really lucky to have been able to film them because hearing these people's stories was so eye opening and truly enriching," said ASB president and leadership student Sasan Saadat.

Guidance counselor Eileen Allen and English teacher Erick Rector, both SHS alumni, talked to the school about the ups and downs their high school experience.

They were followed by a slideshow of pictures of the leadership class organizing Speak Up for Change Week and freshman Nina Nelson singing an inspirational version of John Lennon's "Imagine."

One of the coordinators of Speak Up for Change Week, senior Rohil Taggarsi, said that the Leadership group's hard work and planning since November paid off with the success of the week.

"It was amazing how far we were able to delve into each individual aspect of a student's life and tie it into how we could take steps to better our future," Taggarsi said. ♦

>> togatalks

Do you think Speak Up for Change week was effective?

Yes, I think the speakers had a lot of things to say, and the videos were really personal."



freshman Katie McLaughlin

I thought it was OK; it just came out of the blue, and I wasn't expecting it at all."



junior Phillip Young

It was effective, but not as effective as they hoped it to be. Those who needed to hear what was said probably ignored it."



junior Mihir Iyer

BUFFALO WILD WINGS

Senior class hosts fundraiser

BY Amy Jan

The hunger-inducing smell of meat and the idea of raising money for the senior class convinced many to attend the Buffalo Wild Wings fundraiser on Jan. 18, making a small dent in the deficit that the class inherited from last year.

According to senior class president Evelyn Lee, the class entered this year in the red after losing money on junior prom. The officers are trying to make up for this by planning more fundraisers.

"One of my main goals for this year was to plan as many fundraisers as we, the officers, could," Lee said. "So far we've been doing very well."

The funds will mainly go toward lowering the prom bids because senior prom

is anticipated to be expensive due to the venue and bus prices. The class made \$154.75 from this fundraiser.

Through the use of handing out miniature flyers, changing Facebook statuses and creating a Facebook event, the senior class officers highly publicized the event to ensure the success of their event.

"Some officers and I stood outside Buffalo Wild Wings for around an hour each, since they let us hand out flyers," Lee said. "Basically it took a huge group effort, but I think it was worth it."

According to Lee, the fundraiser was a success and the seniors plan to have more fundraisers before prom comes around.

"It was really heart-warming to see that people thought about us in their Friday night plans," Lee said. ♦

COLUMBIA AWARD

Yearbook staff 'Crowned'

TALISMAN RECOGNIZED FOR 2011-2012 YEARBOOK

BY Sophie Mattson & Bruce Lou

Last year's Talisman yearbook recently received news that it was one of 66 books in the country to be nominated for a Crown Award by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association.

Columbia Crown Awards are, according to the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, "the highest recognition given by the CSPA to a student print or online medium for overall excellence."

The three Talisman editors-in-chief for the 2011-2012 yearbook were alumna Shilpa Nagesh, Ailene Nguyen and Alyssa Wu.

One major change in last year's yearbook was organizing it in chronological order, as opposed to arranged by section, such as an academics or a student life section.

The theme of the book, 180 Days, was tailored to the new style of content organization.

"We really deserved the Crown award last year because it was the first Saratoga High book that was chronological," senior 2013 editor-in-chief Shreyas Doshi said. "I think it turned out really nicely, and hopefully we'll get a Crown award [again] this year."

Last year for the first time, yearbook staff worked in four groups: Magenta, Yellow, Cyan, and Black, named after printer colors.

This is the first time the yearbook has won a Crown Award since 2006.

"I feel [winning the award] is surprising, [because] for the past few years, we haven't really won anything," senior editor-in-chief Cody Cai said. "I feel like it's a milestone we've reached."

Other yearbook editors agreed with Cai.

"The fact that we were able to come up with not only a cohesive book that we all liked but one that was recognized by a prestigious organization means a lot more because we were

able to overcome a lot of barriers within ourselves," senior editor-in-chief Sanjna Verma said.

To the yearbook staff, the award validates the hard work and ceaseless effort the staff put

into it.

"[Yearbook] takes a lot more time than people think," Cai said. "Many people feel newspaper is the more prestigious [publication], but just come after school or to a yearbook class and we'll show you differently."

Cai said that the award would motivate the current staff to keep up their hard work.

"[The award] motivates us to do good journalism and design, to step it up each year," Cai said. "I hope we win it again."

The Talisman staff will find out if they will receive a Gold Crown, the highest honor, or a Silver Crown, the second highest honor.

CSPA, the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, will announce these awards in New York City in March. ♦

[The award] motivates us to do good journalism and design, to step it up each year.

>> Senior Cody Cai

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BROADCAST JOURNALISM

SHSTV sets goals for improvement, growth

BY Rachel Hull & Nitya Sampath

In a far-off corner of the school campus near the upper field and past the library, there lies a building labeled MM1, with papers taped to the wall motivating students in creativity, innovation and leadership, with spinning chairs and oddly-shaped tables that each hold six computers.

This room is home to the 20 staff members of SHSTV, a student-run Multimedia Journalism production, who meet there on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays in preparation for the broadcasts that air every Friday during fifth period.

According to Tony Palma, the adviser and station manager of SHS TV, these broadcasts started off in 2008 as a show called "Falcon Punch," a comedy that aired twice a year which Palma described as "terrible" and "great." This show developed into SHS TV in 2009.

"SHSTV came out of a need and desire to expand journalism on campus," Palma said. "We have had the paper and the yearbook for a long time, and a lot of schools were starting multimedia productions. I said, 'Hey, we're starting MAP; let's use that as an opportunity to create SHSTV.'"

Palma believes that the broadcasts' quality this year has increased significantly from previous years.

"It's been an amazing change because

every year I'm trying to push [the staff] to do more," Palma said. "We went from one broadcast a semester to weekly broadcasts, and that's just an amazing growth. It is challenging, but helping them grow is the important thing."

According to Palma, making each broadcast requires a tremendous amount of work: getting visuals, interviewing people, writing up plans and stories, creating voice-overs and editing.

After the broadcasts' producers, seniors Neil Prasad and Greg Yang and junior Madison Morocco, provide a peer review of a reporter's story, it may be

edited multiple times before either being uploaded to the website or put in a package that will eventually be inserted into the weekly broadcast.

Sophomore Shahnoor Jafri, who joined the SHS TV staff this year,

said the most challenging part of this process for creating a 30- to 60-second story is the editing, using the program Final Cut. Reporters generally have only one to two weeks to finish this step, depending on the story's air date.

"The editing takes a very long time," Jafri said. "You have to make everything perfect, and you have a lot of pressure on you because usually I start editing two, three days before it's due."

According to Palma, a vital part of making a successful broadcast is the close relationships the staff members have with each other.

"Everyone comes with their different personalities and their different

My goal for the future for the program is to see the students branch out, get out of the community and try to make the broadcasts more entertaining, as well as informative."



Teacher Tony Palma



SHSTV reporters Kayla Berlinberg, Neesha Malik, Olivia Anderson, and Shanoor Jafri prepare to film the SHSTV newscast that airs every Friday after tutorial and break.

strengths and weaknesses," Palma said, "and I think the idea is to harness [teamwork], because we work as a team. The students work well together, because if they didn't, we wouldn't have a broadcast [every] Friday."

Jafri said that in the future, she looks forward to possibly seeing a weather person in the broadcasts, changing the introduction and most importantly covering more intriguing stories.

"If there aren't enough cool stories, then the broadcast tends to be a little bit boring," Jafri said. "If we had more interesting stories and our reporters were more hardworking and passionate, then we would have an amazing broadcast."

Palma said that although SHSTV has already come a long way from its humble beginnings, he too hopes to see many changes to the broadcasts, with the main focus on fixing technical glitches like skips or backlogs.

"My goal for the future for the program is to see the students branch out, get out of the community and try to make the broadcasts more entertaining, as well

as informative," Palma said. "Most importantly, [I want to] eliminate any of the technical flaws we're having."

Palma said he also wishes to step away from filming during class or seventh period in favor of live broadcasts.

"There are some disadvantages and advantages to having it live," Palma said. "Live's cool and fun and sexy, but it's harder to do, and it may not make the report any better."

Jafri said she most enjoys being on the SHSTV staff when she views the broadcasts each week.

"The most rewarding part of this is when I'm finished with the story and I get to watch myself every Friday, and I get to be proud of my work," Jafri said. "Every time [the broadcast] comes out, I get really excited and I [think], 'Wow, I can't believe I did that. I'm so proud of myself.'"

Added Palma: "I'd love to encourage anybody who's interested in signing up to be a part of it," Palma said. "It is a lot of fun; it's different and there are lots of opportunities to be successful." ♦

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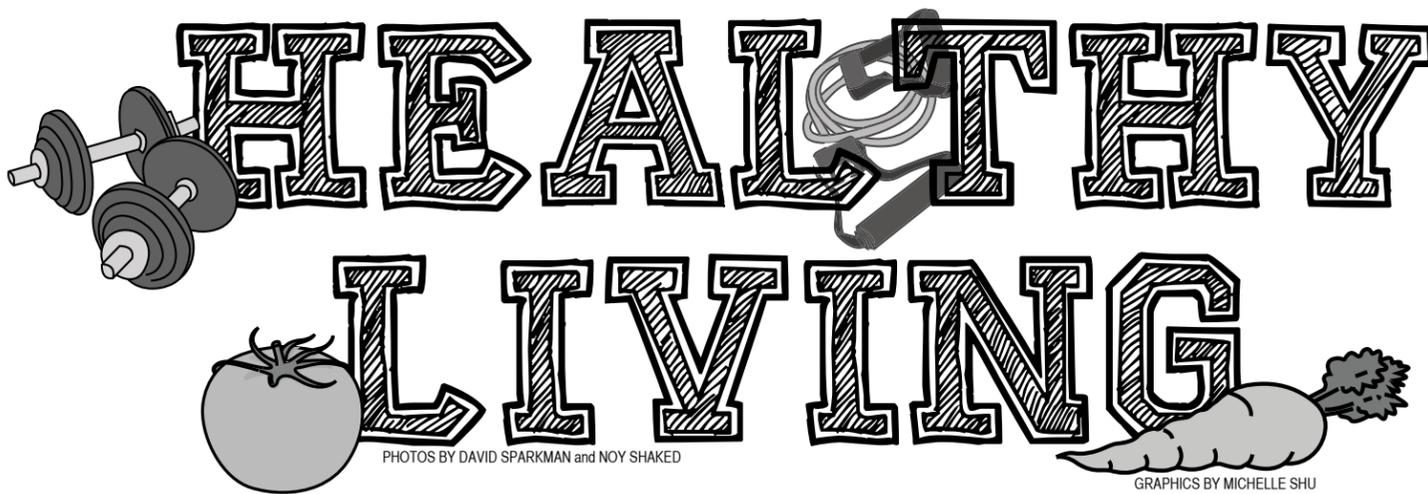
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Veggies build confidence and provide medical benefits

BY Helen Wong

So we've all heard about vegetables being good for your body — those miracle stories about losing 20 pounds in a week after becoming a vegetarian seem quite tempting. And then there are all those studies that have proven that consumption of greens over an extended period of time produces all sorts of benefits — from better eyesight to better strength and increased intellect.

Because I thought that some of these benefits were desirable, I decided to become a vegetarian for two weeks: no meat, veggies only.

It was an interesting experience, by the end of which I really craved some

meat, preferably stir-fried in soy sauce; however, I won't deny that I might have felt marginally healthier.

On the first day, I had margarine on toast for breakfast. Honestly, I preferred the margarine and ended up continually eating it with toast for the entirety of those two weeks running. In fact, I still do have it for breakfast.

During those two weeks, I endeavored to try a different type of salad each day for lunch. Ranch, vinegar, olive oil, sesame sauce, Caesar-style — I tried them all and hated most of them.

Perhaps I should have stopped trying new salads after the first week, but since I'm rather stubborn, I continued to try new salad dressings each day.

Eventually, on the last day, I found a combination of chili oil, sesame sauce and vinegar, which is now the only type of salad dressing I really enjoy.

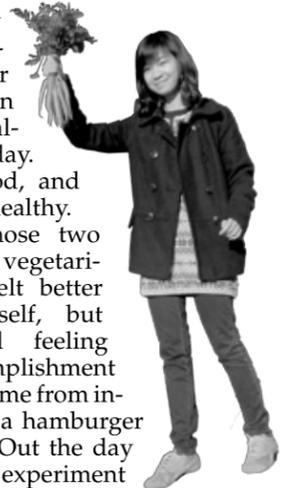
Dinner became my favorite meal of the day; I had vegetables prepared many different ways. It turns out that there are infinite combinations to be tried if you have any vegetables at all, some salt and a bottle of soy sauce.

For dinner, I often had stir-fried vegetables with rice, which wasn't disagreeable at all. One of my favorite dishes, which I would recommend to anyone who wants to try a vegetarian meal, was a mix of baby corn, spinach and bok choy with liberal dashes of any savory sauce.

As for snacking in between meals,

I had celery with peanut butter rather often — practically every day. It was good, and definitely healthy.

After those two weeks of vegetarianism, I felt better about myself, but that good feeling of accomplishment didn't stop me from indulging in a hamburger from In-N-Out the day after my experiment ended. ♦



Student incorporates an active lifestyle with a balanced diet

BY Nikhil Goel

I am no health expert, but it is safe to say most moms know a thing or two about keeping their kids healthy.

About six months ago, my mom started something new. She will routinely make what I like to call a "miracle juice" for me when I come home from school. These are just some, not all, of the ordinary ingredients: Apples, oranges, kiwis, almonds, celery, tomatoes, carrots, pears, blueberries, and coconut water.

Although I cringed at the sight of the purplish-brown fluid when she first made these blends, I have started to get

used to the taste of such a vast combination of fruits and vegetables packed into one Vitamix. Now this isn't some Dr. Oz hoax that will help you lose 100 pounds in two weeks, but these blends give me the energy and vitamins that I need to function on a daily basis.

But eating right isn't enough. First off, there is a difference between being healthy and being fit. Being healthy means eating the right food in moderation and doesn't require six-pack abs or massive arms. Being fit is exercising on a daily basis so that your body works off the "bad stuff."

I run almost every day to stay in shape. Whether it is through soccer or

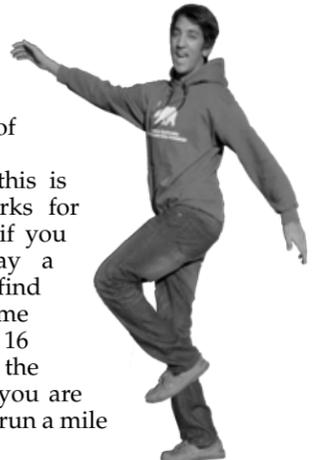
running on the treadmill, I have made it a habit to stay fit. Along with the miracle juice, doing cardio does wonders to stay both healthy and fit.

Although all guys want sharp physical attributes, and all girls want to have slim waists, the reality is that getting trim requires a lot of cardio and does not just happen overnight by some miracle trick. In order to start seeing results, I had to run every day, whether it was on the treadmill or on the turf or even on the street outside my house.

Unfortunately, jogging and walking don't cut it for me. I really have to run in order to get fit. Soccer is my way of staying in shape because a typical game re-

quires about five to seven miles of running.

Now, this is what works for me. But, if you don't play a sport, find the time in the 16 hours of the day that you are awake to run a mile or two. ♦



Color Guard painstakingly demanding, but gratifying

BY Michelle Shu

I never imagined spinning a flag would be so difficult. Coming from middle school, I thought participating in Color Guard would prove easy, more mentally challenging than physically. I was completely mistaken.

Running then dancing. Dancing then running. Being in the high school Color Guard for almost four years has been more strenuous than I anticipated. Continually hauling equipment while sprinting across the field or dancing through the gym, each Color Guard member emerges gasping for breath after every show. Numerous benefits result from partaking in this activity; however, staying fit is not one aspect that most consider.

I, for one, have been assisted in staying fit by having to constantly attend practice. I would not allot time to exercise frequently otherwise. Believing I was done with laps, push-ups, sit-ups and planks once leaving middle school

P.E., I was shocked to find the exercises awaiting my arrival during my first summer of band camp.

Occasionally running laps with the band or as punishment, we began our day trekking around the football field, warming up our muscles. After going through a series of stretches, we cranked out a few hundred crunches, depending on how active our instructors are feeling, maybe a cycle of planks and side planks and push-ups. Although the beginning of each exercise starts out well for me, I find myself struggling to properly execute them entirely, especially for push-ups.

I was never particularly strong in middle school; the idea of having to do push-ups was horrific. However, over the years, I have developed my strength, improv-

ing from a whopping three push-ups to grand total of 25.

Until the number of sit-ups I could do and the amount of time I could maintain a plank position significantly increased, I had not realized I was building much muscle. I had just assumed that the amount of time I spent at guard evened out my peculiar eating schedule, involving my constant snacking, particularly late at night.

I suppose there are plenty of ways to stay in shape without participating in a sport, marching band or cheer, but that requires lasting commitment. People often try exercising to lose weight and attain the "ideal" body or get in shape for their sports teams; however, few workout for their enjoyment and those who are dieting tend to lose their motivation to refrain from unhealthy foods and continue exercising.

During my few attempts at trying to stay in shape during summer vacation, my workout sessions lasted for two weeks at most, failing to continue due to my laziness.

On the other hand, when I was required to attend practice, there was no option to skip my workout, making me consistently active.

The activity, however, contains more than just opportunities to exercise. Bringing the members closer together, we spend each rehearsal together with friends, making the activity even more worthwhile. Without those bonds, staying in an activity would become difficult, making you unable to see the point in staying in the team. Staying in shape is just a bonus.

Whenever guard ends for the year, I feel inclined to continue working out in order to maintain my current weight, but there are few moments when that inclination outweighs my laziness.

I, however, have never really been a strong believer in the idea that you could eat a lot if you knew you were going to burn it off later in the day. Granted, I have never been deterred from eating throughout the day. I'll simply feel bad for indulging in my plethora of snacks.

Even so, it is reassuring to participate in an activity that helps keep you in shape. I'm not sure what I would have done without guard in high school. Perhaps I would be stuck unable to do a single push-up my entire life. ♦



Senior focuses on his internal beauty after juice fast torture

Like most self-respecting Americans, we in the Fang family do not view the holiday season as a time to be grateful for what we already have but rather as a time to thoroughly abuse our first-world privileges. Be it from washing down that superlative number of honey-baked ham slices with mashed potatoes or treating cheesecake as an appetizer, the holidays always guarantee that I look more like Santa than I probably should.

However, after this holiday season, when I noticed with distress that my man bosom needed the help of a bra, I knew I had to resort to drastic measures.

I initially scoured the Internet for diet ideas and had almost given up hope after my research yielded disturbing diets like "drunkorexia" when I remembered an article I had read in Time about juicing. From my understanding of the article, juicing met both of my standards. It did not require physical exertion nor did it seem likely that it would lead to my untimely death.

The article mentioned the juicing company BluePrint-

Cleanse in a relatively favorable light, claiming that the variety of juices the company offered were nutritious, yet still drinkable. After looking at the company's website in greater detail and reading that actress Olivia Wilde no longer felt like she ate a Goodyear blimp halfway through the BluePrintCleanse, I was sold.

The cleanse, which is available at Whole Foods, comes with 6 drinks each day, two of which are potent green juices which consist of kale, parsley, romaine, cucumber, spinach, apple and more. Being weak-willed and allergic to cashews, I skipped their cashew milk option and replaced it with a slice of whole wheat bread.

Since the juice is ridiculously expensive at \$65 a day (including the cashew milk), and I did not want explosive diarrhea from only drinking liquids for a week, I decided to limit my experiment to two days. Don't fret, two days was already far too long.

The first day, I started off with the green juice for breakfast. For such a miserable combination of ingredients, the taste was not actually that

insufferable since most of the kale and spinach madness was masked by pronounced lemon flavor. I followed it up with easily the most delicious drink of the bunch: a pineapple, mint and apple concoction.

Oddly enough, those two juices left me feeling full until the afternoon. For my late lunch, I drank another green juice, followed a couple hours later with a surprisingly tame spicy cayenne lemonade. At around 7 p.m., I indulged in the slice of bread and choked down an absolutely noxious beet, apple and ginger amalgam that I am still too upset about to describe in detail.

Relatively unscathed after my first day, I went to bed early, feeling like I had conquered the diet. Yet, debilitating defeat was imminent.

I approached the next day with the same apportionment as the first. Morning was, once again, without incident but during the afternoon, I ceased to feel like a human being. Having polished off my "lunch" juices, I was still coping with crippling hunger during Mr. Dwyer's econom-



The BluePrintCleanse cleanse drinks are available in six different options.

ics class.

Resorting to fantasizing about fried chicken in a morally base manner, the only time I paid attention to the lecture was when he brought up a tantalizing hypothetical. "You go to Jake's and you get a garlic chicken pizza," he said in what I perceived to be a perversely teasing tone.

But then he continued the hypothetical with a question about how that purchase affects gross domestic product and I quickly ignored him once more, instead fantasizing about garlic chicken pizza from Jake's.

The next period, I am ashamed to admit that I glared at senior Jackie Gu during Mr. Rodriguex's Spanish class when she offered to give me a bite of her Rojow Wrap.

I proceeded to thank her

for her well-intentioned generosity by dropping endless insinuations regarding how disgusting the wrap probably tasted.

My mental stability only continued to unravel further as the day progressed.

My relief when the fast was over can only be likened to finishing a standardized test. I did lose two pounds, but to be honest, I gained that back after five minutes of gorging myself on garlic chicken pizza from Jake's the day after finishing my fast.

Ultimately, I learned that lose-weight-quick schemes are probably too good to be true. I also realized that more often than not, working to attain an ideal weight or physical appearance just isn't worth sacrificing mental health and garlic chicken pizza. ♦



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Legacy a vital part of college decisions

BY McKenna Galvin

As the heat of college-decision season draws near, it's hard not to get caught up in the stress. Like many of my pressured peers, I continuously find myself scrutinizing scattergrams on Naviance and the pages of College Confidential, viewing statistics of accepted and rejected students. Various factors determine an individual's fate — academic performance, extracurricular commitment and personal essays, among others — but perhaps the most controversial of these factors is legacy admission: the practice of admitting students whose close relatives have also attended the private institution.

Its opponents claim that it is unfair and allows less qualified students to be admitted over higher qualified ones. For a long time, I agreed.

Legacy just didn't seem fair. I wished that my parents hadn't gone to public universities, where legacy is not a factor. Why should these students have an advantage just because their parents went to a particular school?

Yet as bad as a world with legacy may seem, the alternative is worse. Essentially, legacy is a necessary evil.

Although we'd like to think that private colleges and universities are some admirable symbol of justice, they're not. They're businesses, dependent on alumni donations and student tuition to function.

With private college tuition as high as \$60,000 a year, a student from a family who can not only pay full tuition but donate more would allow these institutions to provide more financial aid to those in need.

Is using legacy as an admissions factor "unfair"? Perhaps. But isn't depriving lower-income students of the chance to receive more financial support just as unfair?

Some members of the "one percent" pledge millions of dollars to a college to ensure that their child gets in, giving the university the opportunity to

fund new projects. As annoying as the fact that some people could just buy their way into college is, these institutions rely on these generous donations to provide the best resources they can to students.

While they do receive a significantly higher chance at being admitted to a school, legacy students often are already sufficiently qualified. The impact of legacy varies, but for most, colleges it is a secondary consideration, often the factor that pushes students to the side of acceptance when they have proven their merit.

Colleges do not accept just any legacy applicant. Many of these students may have been accepted even without legacy. It helps, but only to a point.

In reality, getting into a reputable undergraduate school is only a small part of the battle.

What really matters is what one does once he or she is actually there. Graduating with the students at a prestigious institution may look nice on paper, but a low GPA — even at a highly ranked school — will not.

Private colleges aren't meant to be "fair," nor do they claim to be. They strive to create a diverse environment where students can learn and appreciate each other's differences. Legacy gives financial support to those who need it, allowing students of all backgrounds to thrive.

A world with legacy admissions may be unfair, but a world without it is even more drastically so. ♦

Familial relations offer unfair edges

BY Rohan Hardikar & Rohan Rajeev

Colleges want a well-rounded class. They want the science fair winner, the well-decorated musician, the 16-year-old entrepreneur, the Eagle Scout and the published author. They also want the hefty donations that they often receive from proud alumni.

Many private college application supplements on the uni-

versal Common Application require that all applicants fill out information about parents and siblings and their affiliation with the school. Imagine the discomfort applicants experience when they leave the entire section blank because their parents, siblings and other close relatives had never studied and received a degree from the institution.

Students whose relatives have attended certain universities and have donated significant sums of money will have a higher chance of being admitted. This idea of "legacy admissions" is practiced by many private schools and a select few public schools.

While these students are not guaranteed admission, their applications are put in a separate category than those in the common pool. In the private Ivy League schools, 10-30 percent of the incoming class is admitted with the assistance of legacy, according to The Harvard Crimson. These students have prob-

ably worked hard during their time in high school, but they also have a built-in advantage that other students lack.

A study in 2005 done by Princeton University showed that being a "legacy child" was the equivalent of scoring 160 points more on the 1600 scale SAT. This boost could potentially place the "legacy child" over a more qualified applicant with no legacy ties.

Legacy admissions not only unfairly punish students for not being born to parents with big-name credentials, but they also limit the economic diversity of the incoming classes. Adults who attended first-rate universities like Harvard and Stanford are generally more prosperous than adults with, say, only a high-school diploma.

These successful parents send their children to first-rate high schools, and these young college hopefuls are further aided by their "legacy" at prestigious universities, which increases their chance of admission.

Colleges like Stanford and Harvard pledge to provide financial aid to any admitted student that requires it. However, to even be admitted to these extremely selective universities, students from underprivileged backgrounds need to stand out over other unattached students and outshine the legacy applicants, which is by far the more difficult feat.

This is not to say that poorer students are the only ones hit hard by legacy admissions. Talented, deserving

students from all economic backgrounds are rejected when legacy applicants take up the available spots.

While it is appropriate to thank graduated alumni in some way, it is unacceptable to allow their children into universities through special criteria. In the end, legacy seems to be nothing more than a form of bribery that stains the entire admissions process. ♦



<< PRO CON >>

GRAPHIC BY MICHELLE SHU

>> THE big idea

Legacy admissions

What is it?

Many private and some public colleges give special weight to the applications of certain students.

Who gets the boost?

Applicants who have parents, siblings or close relatives who have graduated from the school in question

Isn't depriving lower-income students of the chance to receive more financial support just as unfair [as legacy]?

Talented, deserving students from all economic backgrounds are rejected when legacy applicants take up the available spots.

How some fishy science can mar your dinner

BY Jade Bisht & Amy Lin

Imagine a nice fish dinner: Cooked salmon, maybe a few spices sprinkled on top. Now imagine a nice fish dinner supplied by AquaBounty — the same thing apart from one difference: This fish has been toyed with. Behind the big words and long descriptions gracing this new product lies an advertisement for genetically modified salmon.

AquaBounty Technologies is "a biotechnology company dedicated to the improvement of productivity in aquaculture," its website proclaims. It uses biomolecular technology to create sterile female salmon that grow twice as fast as the typical wild salmon. Despite these "miraculous" claims, these salmon in no way help the world, rather posing a considerable risk to natural habitats.

Genetically altered products are on the rise as science advances into areas never explored. Extensive research on altering animals has been done on various areas of life, ranging from attempts at cloning to enhancing food flavor.

Seemingly safe and beneficial for the

scientific world, these salmon could cause damage if released into the wild by taking up space and food that the native fish need, according to www.salmonnation.com. Fish farm escapees are routine, and sometimes impossible to prevent.

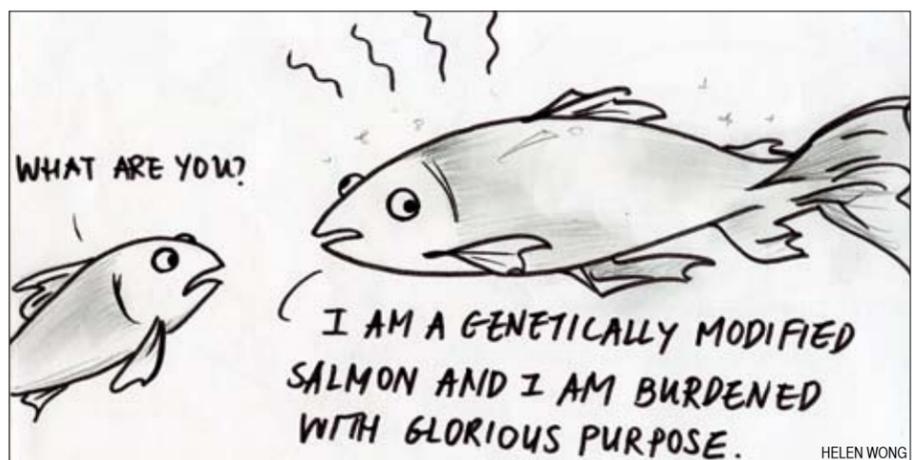
Once free, the fish can move to other countries via the world's waterways, thus threatening the genetic sanctity of other fish habitats, according to Greenpeace, an environmental organization.

Additionally, genetically modified fish would be economically unfavorable since many people would refuse to buy, eat or distribute them.

"If my patrons don't want genetically engineered fish, then I certainly don't want to serve it. My customers congratulate me for signing the pledge," said Todd Gray, award-winning chef and owner of Equinox Restaurant in Washington, D.C.

Generally speaking, modifying fish for a more beneficial meal is unnecessary due to fish's already large contributions to healthy living. Fish is a good source of protein and sometimes can have fewer calories than other meat sources.

According to the Harvard School of



Public Health, fish consumption can lower people's risks of death from heart disease by 36 percent, reducing blood clotting all the while. Fish straight from the ocean can reduce the risk of heart disease without the genetic modification.

Harvard states that the fatty acids of fish can raise the levels of certain brain chemicals, aiding in reducing depression. There is no logical reason to alter fish when they have a long and growing

list of benefits Harvard has compiled.

"Enhancing" fish has no initial benefits besides being able to put that on the list of useful things that science has accomplished. Imagining more commonly eaten foods like bread being genetically modified is disturbing. This giant science experiment carries too many risks to be worthwhile; scientists need to keep their equipment away from the dinner table for the sake of the consumer. ♦

FOURTH PERIOD

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

School should not follow wacky scheduling trends

>> candid caricatures

When students returned after winter break, some found that their school schedules had evaporated from their minds; others could not even recall their locker combinations.

Coming back to school after one or two weeks off is often wearisome, since upon returning to campus, students find that they are out of practice or utterly lost in the academic environment.

Now, according to the Mercury News, some schools — in states such as Colorado, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York and Tennessee — are considering a longer school year, including extended spring and winter breaks. This, however, raises the question of whether Saratoga High should do the same.

If either winter or spring break were lengthened, the amount of information lost and the difficulty of readjusting to the school schedule would increase significantly.

A longer break would also mean a shorter summer. Many students at this school use summer vacation time for classes, internships or jobs. In addition, summer is intended to enable students to relax, providing them with a rare moment during which they can go on vacation, spend more time with family or simply sleep in.

Some schools in the aforementioned states even want to have



classes all year-round, with a month-long summer break, as has been modeled in certain schools in San Diego since the 1970s.

A longer school year might make sense in places where parents are not able to provide their children with the lunches they need. If students in these circumstances spent more time at school, they would be less likely to get themselves into trouble, legal or otherwise.

More conservative schedule change ideas include tacking on 20 to 30 days to the end of each school year; the five states previously mentioned have already added 300 or more hours to their school calendars this year.

Many schools already use calendars

with more days than the 180 required by law. However, adding even more class time simply overloads the teachers, staff and students.

Though some may associate more time with the chance to absorb more information, academic success depends far more on a number of other factors, including students' individual needs, competency of the teachers and difficulty of the material being learned; time plays a lesser role in the grand scheme of things.

There are even a few schools where all students and teachers are divided up into four groups, with one group on vacation at a time while the other three are in school. This method not only rips friends away from each other, but it creates constant gaps in everyone's school year.

Where this outlandish calendar came from, one can only wonder, but one knows this about Saratoga High for sure: More school days would only weigh the school year down, and it's important for it to keep a trim figure. ♦

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

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Opinion Editor
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The *Saratoga Falcon* staff voted 23-9 of changing the grading period policy.

Cap-and-trade system not effective

BY Nikhil Goel

California legislature approved the cap-and-trade system in 2006, which places a limit on the amount of carbon the state as a whole can emit. Companies that can reduce their pollution enough have the option to trade their surplus carbon allowances — permits to emit pollutants — to companies who cannot reduce their carbon emission.

The idea behind this system is that it gives businesses the choice to either spend money to clean up their production or pay for their emissions by buying allowances from other companies.

This market theory was thought to be the most feasible solution to reduce carbon emissions in California, but while it may be idealistically sound, this system is not as pragmatic as initially thought.

The system may seem like a fool-proof way to reduce carbon emissions while letting companies have financial flexibility, especially in pro-cleantech California, but there are numerous problems that make this system unviable for California's economy and environment.

Since this system's inception in 2006, carbon emissions have gone down in California from 479 million metric tons (MMT) in 2005 to 453 MMT in 2009; however, according to

the New York Times, the majority of this reduction resulted from the economic decline during the late 2000s and not actually to the success of cap-and-trade.

While companies should ideally have more flexibility in carbon reduction through allowance trading, such a system actually hampers California's economy. According to the Huffington Post, the California Chamber of Commerce filed suits in hopes of blocking the cap-and-trade program, saying that the system hurts consumers and the ability for businesses to expand in California. Companies often raise prices of products in order to generate the funds necessary to buy allowances and meet the set cap on carbon emissions.

James Hansen, the director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies and one of the leading voices in the U.S. on the dangers of global warming, believes that the cap-and-trade system is better off being replaced with a simple carbon tax on companies' emissions, with tax revenues redistributed to citizens in order to offset raised fuel prices.

This standard carbon tax, based solely

on metric tons of carbon emission, would be more beneficial to businesses because they would not have to auction for high-priced allowances and could focus on expanding without dealing with the complexities of the trading system.

While an increase in consumer costs would also result from a carbon tax system, the government and energy companies would generate greater revenue that they could then give back to ordinary people to use as credit when paying for home energy bills.

This greater revenue comes from the state not having to pay half of its generated revenue on cap-and-trade administration costs.

And, after all, any saving of money is good, especially in today's sort of economy.

It seems that while the cap-and-trade carbon reduction system seems ideal for California, it is not practical and has not had much of an effect in the time that it has been in place.

The problems definitely outweigh the benefits, and a simple carbon tax would not have to deal with the difficulties that the cap-and-trade system is currently facing. ♦

>> THE big idea

Problems of Cap-and-Trade

Administration Costs
Administration costs require half the revenue generated from the system

Effects on the consumer
Companies raise product prices to pay for allowances

Distracts companies
Having to deal with the complexities of the trading system hampers expansion

Bright idea: more street lights in city

BY Michelle Leung
& Jane Park

The lack of streetlights in Saratoga has always been one of the town's most noticeable features. Some streets, such as Lexington Avenue and Franklin Avenue, have no lights and are pitch black at night.

Although the absence of streetlights appeals to those who enjoy a sleepy, small-town atmosphere, adding street lights can provide substantial benefits.

Even so, many residents are still reluctant to consider installing street lights. Many argue that the initial and maintenance costs of streetlights would drain the city economically.

However, the safety of the residents is infinitely more important than the cost. There are also many street lights avail-

able that are more cost efficient than previous models of lights.

For example, LED lights have life spans almost 50 times that of incandescent or compact fluorescent light bulbs.

They produce less than half the waste of other types of lights. They also cost less than half that of other light bulbs.

Street lights make it easier for drivers to see pedestrians, bikers and animals in the dark.

They also allow residents to see where they are going and provide security lacking in darker areas for the community.

In a study done by the University of Michigan, researchers found that pedestrian fatalities are up to six and three-quarter times more likely in the dark than in the light.

Another study done by the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing shows that

crime also increases with a lack of street lights.

Installing street lights ensures safety and security, and would be a long-term investment that could benefit Saratoga for years.

Another concern about the installation of street lights is that lights are not environmentally friendly.

In the past, lights have disrupted views of the night sky, interrupted migration patterns of birds and used incredible amounts of energy.

However, recent innovations have made it possible to install lights that will save energy, allow an uninterrupted view of the sky and leave birds alone.

For example, solar-powered lights can eliminate the majority of energy costs.

Low-pressure sodium lights can be easily filtered out of telescopes for view-

ing. Hoods over the lights can limit the scope of the light to a smaller, specific area.

Dimmer forms of lights both save energy and don't interfere with wildlife.

Because of the greater severity of issues involved in the lack of street lighting, installing street lights creates many more benefits than negatives.

Nearby cities have already made improvements to their lighting systems. In 2010, Cupertino upgraded its 2,950 High Pressure Sodium lights to brighter, cost efficient Induction Fluorescent lights. Cupertino.org estimates that these lights have already reduced the city's utility bill by a massive 40 percent.

Saratoga needs to join cities like Cupertino and, for the safety and security of all its residents, install more street lights. ♦

>> togatalks

What do you think about putting more street lights in Saratoga?

I don't think we should install too many, but we should install some for the more public spaces."



freshman Jacky Lee

The streets seem so dark—not that they are dangerous, but lights would be nice."



junior Ozgur Karakucuk

I think they'd be good because afterschool activities need the light to get home."



freshman Amy Zhang

Trend in shootings rooted in sensation

BY Nick Chow
& Nikhil Goel

Last year, within the span of five months, America was wracked with three major public shootings. A total of 40 people were killed, and 71 people were injured. Years ago, consecutive shootings like these were unheard of. Why does America have so many mass shootings now?

The answer lies in the mental health of individuals nationwide who feel that they are alone against the world. Most shootings occur because the shooter was bullied or ostracized by his classmates or peers, and he feels that killing them will send a message to America.

Furthermore, because of the way the media sensationalized the Aurora theatre shooting last summer, other students in America also wanted to go out with a bang. As Kern County Sheriff Donny Youngblood, the sheriff overseeing the investigation in the Jan. 10 Taft Union High School shooting in Bakersfield, Calif., said to CNN, we have had the same students and the same laws regarding guns for the past 20 years.

The exact reason that a person would resort to such violence may be unknown, but the increase in copycat shooters has been caused by intense scrutiny into the lives of these shooters by the media. According to the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime (NCAVC), reasons for shootings include a desire for attention, power or revenge. We are seeing a change in the national shooting trend because every kid hears about Columbine and Newtown, and all potential shooters know that shootings bring national attention.

In order to reduce the number of mass shooting crimes, the media needs to stop focusing on the shooter and giving him extensive media coverage. Rather, the media should leave the shooter unnamed and respect the victims.

While Vice President Joe Biden's effort to reduce loopholes through thorough background checks may make it harder for potential shooters to access automatic weapons, it will not fix the problem of school shootings.

In the case of the most recent school shooting at Taft Union High School, the high school shooter specifically targeted two students who had bullied him, and then open fired on others.

He did not use an automatic weapon, which certainly lessened the number of possible injuries, but he still used a shotgun stolen from one of his relatives.

Guns are so omnipresent in American society that it is almost impossible to control gun ownership.

Laws will not stop a person who is committed to killing or hurting someone from obtaining a gun. Just as it is impossible to fully prohibit alcohol or drugs, it is similarly impossible to prevent those who want guns from obtaining them.

The government can reduce the chances that a mentally unstable person will get a gun by regulating the commercial sale of guns, but more effective way to prevent disasters such as the Newtown shooting is to improve mental health.

The problem is that crazy people like Adam Lanza and James Holmes cannot be stopped because they do not follow the laws. In order to fully solve this problem, the government needs to address mental health of those who are bullied nationwide, rather than focus so much attention on extending gun control, something that has a much smaller chance of producing beneficial change. ♦



Texting while driving threatens drivers' safety

BY McKenna Galvin

In a world where finding a strong Wi-Fi signal or checking Facebook notifications can be a teenager's top priority, sparing a minute away from the increasingly connected world can be hard. Teenagers send and receive an average of 60 texts a day, according to a study by the Pew Internet and American Life Project, and cell phone usage is expected to grow significantly over the coming years.

Lately, however, this issue has extended to one of a teenager's most dangerous settings: behind the wheel.

Texting and driving can have more dangerous implications than one may initially think. According to KeepTheDrive.com, texting and driving can increase one's risk of crashing 23-fold. One text while driving has the same impact of four beers; texting while driving is effectively just as dangerous as driving drunk.

Despite California's Wireless Communications Device law, which prohibits writing, sending or reading text messages while driving, many people, especially at the high school level, neglect the disastrous consequences of texting while driving.

Yet it's not just texting that's the issue; distracted driving in general is a serious danger. Just reaching for a phone — whether it be to change the song that's playing or check driving directions — can increase one's risk

of a crash by nine times, according to KeepTheDrive.com. Eighty percent of all crashes involve driver inattention within 3 seconds of the crash.

Even at a seemingly safe location such as a stoplight, drivers should continue to devote their full attention to the road and their surroundings.

Adding to the already high risk for young drivers, many ignore the rule prohibiting teenagers from driving other passengers within the first year of getting a license. A simple walk through the school parking lot during lunch time reveals dozens of students outright ignoring this law.

Before getting their "year," many upperclassmen — if not all — drive past the 11 p.m. curfew or take their friends along in the car.

These young drivers are not just putting themselves at risk; by driving peers illegally, they risk others' lives as well.

Motor vehicle-related injuries are the leading cause of death for ages 1 to 34, ahead of suicide and homicide. Furthermore, teens crash four times more often than any other age group.

While a single text message may not appear to make that much of an impact, the few seconds it takes to send could mean the difference between life and death.

It's time that young drivers realize the consequences their decisions can have — not only on themselves, but on the people around them. ♦

>> THE bigidea

Shooting Trends

The trend

Lately, shootings have been more often and more deadly, such as the Aurora shootings and the Newtown massacre.

What's the problem

The media focuses too much on the killer which leads to copycat killers.

The solution

Stop profiling the killers and improve mental health, rather than extending gun control.

I'm cheating on my girlfriend with another girl.

I secretly smell the hair of people who sit in front of me.

I feel worthless sometimes.

Sometimes, I purposely go to sleep late so I can sleep in boring classes the next day.

I sometimes pretend to be Batman.

I'm addicted to "Dance Moms."

I think about suicide every day.

I am hairier than my boyfriend is.

I constantly feel alone at school, even with others around me.

I created a fake account on Facebook to talk to people I normally wouldn't talk to.

I like to mix rice with ketchup and eat it.

I sometimes pick my ear wax and nibble on it for fun. I know it sounds gross, but it just tastes peppery.

I watch "Downton Abbey."

I don't believe in love.

I don't know what I'm doing with my life.

Some of the people who organized "Speak Up For Change" are the very same ones that make me feel worthless every day.

I study while I'm in the shower.

Confessions >>

We asked readers to anonymously submit a confession. Some are more serious than others, but all offer an interesting glimpse into student life.

I think some of my friends only got into college because they have legacy.

Band is overrated.

Sometimes I put dollar bills or quarters in the fancy cafeteria vending machine for the sole purpose of getting a presidential dollar coin in return when I press the cancel button.

My pet dog is more popular than I am.

I've driven without my year.

I stepped on the Falcon during game day.

I'm a lesbian. This is anonymous. And pushing the "submit" button was still one of the hardest things I've done.

I lied on my college apps.

I hate In-N-Out.

I have a crush on one of the lunch ladies, so I get pizza sticks every day, even though I get sick of them.

I like big butts, and I cannot lie.

I sometimes don't shower for days on end.

Sometimes, I think I'm the next Jesus.

I don't know what I'm doing with my life.

I sleep in my socks.... just my socks.

I hate the person who was my best friend. And worst of all, she has everything I could ever want.

I pretend to study during lunch because nobody will eat with me.

Sometimes, I think my teachers are racially prejudiced.

It's hard to hear my friends joke about going to West Valley, when that's probably where I'm going to end up going at this point.

I pee in the shower.

I have mental breakdowns every day due to school and friend stress.

I'm bisexual.

I secretly am in love with my bed. A little too much, some may say.

The Falcon plays Ma

AUDREY SUN (10)

What did you think of Harrison?

He's a really nice guy, but the date was really awkward. I enjoyed it, though.

What did you do?

We talked about school in general. I asked him about the college application process and about what it's like being a senior.

Did the age difference affect the date?

It did affect it a bit heavily. We didn't have much in common to talk about, except for school.

Did you enjoy the date?

Yeah, it was nice.

Will there be another date?

Probably not.



Sophomore Audrey Sun and senior Harrison Su met at the downtown Starbucks for a casual after-school date. Although the date was "awkward" to a small degree, both parties expressed more or less favorable opinions about the experience.
Matchmakers: Carolyn Sun and Helen Wong

HARRISON SU (12)

What did you think of Audrey?

I knew her a little because I know her older brother, so that helped with the conversation. There were fewer awkward moments than I thought there would be.

What did you do?

We talked about music, tips about colleges, and about my future plans, since I'm a senior.

Did the age difference affect the date?

There wasn't much of a problem for me. I think since we were a sophomore and a senior, we had a better understanding than if we'd have been freshman and senior.

Will there be another date?

I don't know, maybe.

ANNELISE NUSSBACHER (11)

What did you think of Rick?

I thought he was (more or less) a respectable gentleman.

How do you think the date went?

Admittedly, it was rather awkward, but we both laughed a lot. All in all, I've had worse dates.

What was it like being blindfolded?

I recognized his voice fairly quickly, but not being certain meant that I had to broaden the demographics of my many awkward jokes in the hopes that he would relate.

Will there be another date?

I rather doubt it, due primarily to not having many interests in common. However, if football and fangirling over Taylor Swift is your thing, he's a real catch.



Juniors Annelise Nussbacher and Rick Roy met at Starbucks for an afternoon. Both were physically blindfolded so that they had to focus on getting to know each other only through conversation. Since both of them had good senses of humor, the conversation was fun and filled with laughter.
Matchmaker: David Sparkman

RICK ROY (11)

What did you think of Annelise?

She seemed like a really outgoing person who was easy to talk to.

What did you do?

We had some fun conversations about our hobbies and classes. Drinking water while blindfolded is quite the challenge.

What was it like being blindfolded?

It allowed us to focus on talking, although it got pretty awkward when it was quiet. Her voice is pretty distinct, so I knew it was her right away.

Will there be another date?

No, because I'm currently involved with Taylor Swift (T-swizzle, T-money, Lil Swifty, etc.), but I got the opportunity to get to know someone, so that was chill.

Matchmaker

ALL PHOTOS BY ARMAN VAZIRI

WITH AN OPEN MIND AND A LITTLE FAITH, STUDENTS VOLUNTEERED TO GO ON BLIND DATES ... WITH A TWIST

KATE BELOTTI (12)

What did you think of David?

David was cool. It was a fun hangout-date.

What was it like to have your hand tied to David's?

It was difficult to walk around, because we couldn't always fit in doorways, but it was fun. The fact that we were tied together made it a little funnier.

Did you encounter any difficulties?

We got a lot of weird looks, but besides that, not really. We messed with people by making it look that I was dragging him along.

Will there be another date?

No, we're just friends.



Handcuffed date

Despite the logistical problems with being tied to another human being, seniors David Ball and Kate Belotti managed to stay "handcuffed" together throughout their date. The pair ate at Pizza My Heart and saw "A Haunted House" at AMC 14, where they encountered teacher Lisa Cochrum. Both had fun, but decided to remain friends.

Matchmaker: Michael Lee

DAVID BALL (12)

What did you do on the date?

We just went to Pizza My Heart to eat and saw a movie.

What did you think of your date?

It went pretty well, because we already knew each other.

What was it like to have your hand tied to Kate's?

It only really affected us in the restaurant, because we had to eat one-handed. Other than that, it wasn't really bothersome.

Did you encounter any difficulties?

It was a bit tricky during the movie, like where to put the hands.

Will there be another date?

No, we're just friends.

TEJAS SIRIPURAPU (10)

What did you think of Phillip?

He was nice. He was friendly and I wish I had met him sooner because he seems like a really fun guy.

What did you do?

We talked and ate, and I found out that he has cool eating habits.

Is he like your other friends?

Not really. He's a little different, because he's white, but I'm sure we can overlook that.

Will there be another date?

Yes, because he was fun to hang out with. I'm definitely going to hang out with him again sometime in the near future such as next year or the year after that (or never).



Bromance

Because their busy schedules made it nearly impossible to meet, sophomores Phillip Carlier and Tejas Siripurapu settled for lunch in the journalism room. Luckily, the casual environment did not take away from the budding friendship. Both had nothing but kind words for one another.

Matchmakers: Arman Vaziri and Lauren Louie

PHILLIP CARLIER (10)

What did you think of Tejas?

I think it went well. He was a fun person to get to know. He's really easy to talk to and down-to-Earth. It wasn't a date, though; we just hung out and talked to each other.

What did you do?

We talked about each other's sports, what we do in our free time, and hobbies and movies that we like.

Is he like your other friends?

He is similar to some of them because he's funny and easygoing.

Will there be another date?

Sure, we will hang out sometime again in the future. I could see us being good friends in the future.



ALL GRAPHICS BY JANE PARK, MICHELLE SHU, AND CAROLYN SUN

AS FEBRUARY 14 APPROACHES, THERE ARE MANY APPROPRIATE FILMS, BOOKS AND SONGS TO GET YOURSELF IN THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

Movies:

"Silver Linings Playbook" (2012) [R]

An odd relationship develops between a man and a woman both trying to get their lives back on track while figuring out how they feel about each other.

"The Notebook" (2004)

A man and woman fall in love yet can't be together because of social differences.



"500 Days of Summer" (2009)

A sequence of unordered scenes in which a boy is in unrequited love with a girl who wants nothing more than a friend, despite liking him. Yet another example of sadly being friend-zoned.

"Juno" (2007)

A high school student faces unexpected pregnancy and struggles to figure out her feelings for the unborn baby's father.

"Titanic" (1997)

A young woman and her fiance board the famed Titanic for a trip to America when she realizes she doesn't want to go through with her marriage and falls in love with another passenger on board, right before the boat hits the iceberg.

Honorable Mentions:

"Pride and Prejudice" (2005)

"Love Actually" (2003) [R]

"Away We Go" (2009) [R]

"Beauty and the Beast" (1991)

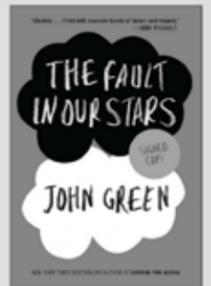
"Forrest Gump" (1994)

By Jade Bisht, Amy Lin, and Carolyn Sun

Books:

"The Fault In Our Stars" by John Green

A girl fighting thyroid cancer reluctantly joins a support group and meets a disabled boy with cancer.



"Jane Eyre" by Charlotte Brontë

A classic about a young woman who overcomes Victorian-era class barriers in her quest to find true love.

"Lock and Key" by Sarah Dessen

Two people with completely different views of life are pushed together, and they realize that they have more in common than they originally thought.

"Just Listen" by Sarah Dessen

Last year, Annabel was the "girl who has everything." Now, she is alone with no friends until she meets Owen, a music-obsessed, broody boy.

"Twilight" by Stephanie Meyer

Normal, utterly human Bella Swan meets a sparkling, 108-year-old and ridiculously perfect vampire, Edward Cullen, with a voice "like honey and velvet" and skin the temperature of an icebox.



Honorable Mentions:

The Perks of Being a Wallflower by Stephen Chbosky

Remember Me by Sophie Kinsella

Thirteen Reasons Why by Jay Asher

Vampire Academy by Richelle Mead

Perfect Chemistry by Simone Elkeles

Famous movie scenes make great date ideas

MODERN FILMS EASY TO RECREATE

By Carolyn Sun

Having trouble coming up with an idea for the perfect date? Scenes from romance movies or books could be a source of inspiration for fresh and innovative ideas.

1.) A walk and dance:

Sophomore Nadia Younes suggested a "really cute" scene from "The Notebook," a movie centering around a poor man and a wealthy woman

struggling to overcome social differences, in which the couple take a walk through town and then begin to slow dance in the street.

"I think it's something that pretty much every girl would love because it's super sweet and adorable," Younes said.

2.) Revisiting meaningful places:

A date based on a scene in "The Vow," a film about a man who has to win his wife's heart back after she suf-

fers from severe memory loss, would be an "amazing date idea," sophomore Lucille Cao said.

In the movie, the couple revisits places they visited at the beginning of their relationship.

"It would be sweet to spend time together somewhere that had a special meaning, like the first date or a significant place that contains a special memory," Cao said.

Couples could spend quality time together, while making more good memories.

3.) A picnic in the meadow:

A simple but romantic picnic could also make for an ideal date. In the "The Time Traveler's Wife," a romantic novel about a man who has a genetic disorder that causes him to travel through time involuntarily, the protagonist and his wife have a picnic at a meadow for

their first date, which is "charming," said sophomore Riddhi Sangam.

"I love that scene because it's really romantic and because it set the stage of their atypical dating life," sophomore Riddhi Sangam said. "[It] could work in real life because it would be different from the stereotypical plan for a first date."

4.) A picnic and movies:

"Pitch Perfect," a musical comedy film that follows a college freshman who joins an all-female capella group, provides a picnic date idea as well.

"A good scene is when Jesse shocks Beca by bringing a picnic and movies to her," Oliveri said. "I think a good idea for a date is if a boy surprises you by bringing the best classic movies to watch with you. And, of course, brings food, too." ♦

Songs:

"My Heart Will Go On" by Celine Dion
Who hasn't heard of this?

"Words of Love" by The Beatles
A classic about true love.

"I'm Yours" by Jason Mraz
A country track about giving your heart to the person you love.

"Tip Toes" by Jayme Dee
Upbeat and bubbly, this song describes a girl falling in love for the first time.

"Valentine's Day" by Linkin Park
A song about being alone on Valentine's Day. If you call Feb. 14 Singles Awareness Day, this is the song for you.

Honorable mentions:

- Ours - Taylor Swift
- Hey There Delilah - Plain White T's
- Deer In the Headlights - Owl City
- Start of Something Good - Daughtry
- Drops of Jupiter - Train



Pictures courtesy of tumblr.com

Classics much better than modern movies

by Jade Bisht

Love stories have been shaped differently through movies, ranging from chick flicks to the stereotypical running through the pouring rain down an empty street in the melodramatic films. Movies have altered considerably since the classics, with love triangles rising in popularity and cliché plots hiding beneath a werewolf's unrequited love.

"Gone With The Wind," which came out in 1939, tells the story of two lovers in a complicated relationship who string out confessing to each other over the course of a few years. Comparatively, the infamous "Twilight," which was released in 2009, is a "complicated" story in which a girl helplessly falls in love with a sparkling, mysterious vampire in her classroom.

Relationships portrayed through movies have changed drastically as decades pass, not always necessarily for the better. Occasionally the directors consider remaking and usually completely re-vamping the plot and characters of classic relationships.

Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet," originally made into a film in 1936, has been the subject of two remakes with a third coming out soon. The first remake, done in 1968 and directed Franco Zeffirelli, involved dramatically scaling the sides of stone fences.

Although simple and considerably similar to the original play, the 1996 version, starring Leonardo DiCaprio, beats the first remake in originality, taking place in a "modern Verona." Using far-fetched slang and climatic car scenes, this version is nothing more than a few too many quick zoom-ins and Leonardo DiCaprio's pensive walks along a beach featuring a beautiful sunset.

Movie remakes

Today's movie industry seems to believe that high quality shots and unexpected deaths will help benefit the movie's future ratings. While Disney is known for its classic animations and unique love stories, Hollywood consistently takes these and recreates multiple of Disney's movies among other early 1900 animations in order to bring a modern and more realistic twist to it.

The first "Beauty and the Beast" was released in 1991 and was recreated in 2011 with "Beastly." The biggest difference between the movies, quite obviously, is that the original is animated while "Beastly" stars Vanessa Hudgens and Alex Pettyfer, using special effects to make the latter appear to have deep scars and tattoos covering his face. "Beastly" is set in modern day, a high schooler being the alter-

nate to the Beast of Disney's movie.

A trend in movies these days is to set the timing and location in a high school, attempt to portraying modern high schools and include sarcastic yet light hearted humor here and there in between the dramatic love lines. Some movies pull this off well, occasionally nominations for various award shows, like "The Perks of Being a Wallflower."

However, some movies don't meet any standards and rather prove that maybe Valentine's Day should be spent watching the classics rather than all those movies conveniently being released on Feb. 14. A night in could be enjoyable with "The Breakfast Club" where five high school students get along in detention or "Ghost," a movie where a murdered man is able to watch over his true love as a ghost.

Music in the movies

As music styles change through generations, movies begin to incorporate new soundtracks and even attempt musicals set in modern day. "High School Musical," which began on Disney Channel then moved to the big screen for its third movie, is famous for its songs depicting Troy and Gabriella's relationship through high school.

The "West Side Story," released in 1961, is similar in the terms of randomly breaking out into singing, whether at basketball practice or in the middle of fights between gang leaders.

However, the "West Side Story," famous for being a classic musical because of its originality, is an amusing romance with hints of comedy throughout the well strung out movie. Though some romance movies these days live up to the high expectations that classics have set for them, there's a long road ahead to meet the standards of being considered a classic. While some movies do meet these standards, watching oldies like "Casablanca" and "Sleepless in Seattle" can never get old.

Although the movie scene is advancing rapidly and high tech weapons of editing are able to create vicious monsters and destructive machines who can cut buildings in half, the older movies always seem to be a bit more special. Watching "Jaws" and the mechanical and deathly shark chomp at a fishing boat is always more entertaining than the slightly scary and realistic machines of "Transformers."

Classic movies will always have that touch of magic that modern movies can never match. Even the cheesy rain pour scene of "Breakfast at Tiffany's" can beat out the scenes from movies that are spilling out every other second these days. ♦

Celebrated television relation-'ships' sailing

by Jade Bisht & Amy Lin

For the fans, the best part of a TV show is when two of the characters jump that "friend zone" border, run to each other in that sappy scene where they stare into each other's eyes and realize they love each other. Predictable, maybe, but absolutely necessary.

As artificial as everyone knows the media is, we can't help feeling that without these mini, unreal romances, the shows would spiral downward and fans wouldn't have something to look forward to throughout the season. Anticipating that lovey-dovey moment in which the characters confess their love and the viewers at home squeal into pillows is what excites us most. The other plots and subplots seem like time fillers in some shows.

As soon as we start a new show, we mentally pair people together. It doesn't matter if they are completely mismatched (Penny and Leonard from "The Big Bang Theory") or if they're on the opposite sides of good and bad (Emma and Hook from "Once Upon a Time"). In our minds, as long as they are in any way compatible, they're meant to be and we watchers can't stop worrying about the show until they are "officially" together.

Some fans see their favorite pairing as their one true pairing; the pairing they will forever support, or "ship," as long

as the series goes. This fandom jargon is usually seen on Tumblr where fans of the shows bond over hilarious gifs, which are animated images, and sentimental moments.

Additionally, Tumblr is a great place for fans to meet each other. When users post pictures or entries, they can tag their posts and allow other people to find them by "tracking tags" like "Swarkles" for Barney and Robin from "How I Met Your Mother" and "Finchel" for Finn and Rachel from "Glee."

These "shipping names" are made by combining the names of both in an attempt for something that sounds absolutely fantastic. After each episode, we can find people crying about their feelings and chatting about what they

Some see their favorite pairing as a true pairing; the pairing they will forever support.

thought on these tags. Sometimes the unexpected relationships hit home and you find yourself crying as Pam hugs Michael Scott goodbye during his last episode of "The Office." As sad and occasionally shameful it is to cry during a 23-minute show, it's hard holding back the tears when those heart-crushing moments come on and you just can't change the channel.

As more TV shows come out each year, we find ourselves getting attached to the new couples, just as much as our original favorites. Even finding old TV show couples, like Ross and Rachel in "Friends" is refreshing. No matter when or what show, TV romances will always be the most interesting part for us. ♦

How to have a fun-filled Singles' Awareness Day

In almost every movie, television series and novel with a Valentine's Day special, there's always that happy couple who has a romantic evening with a candlelight dinner, and of course, the lonely, single friend, who spends his night with a movie and a box of chocolates labeled "to me, from me."

However, despite the media's attempt to downplay single's night on Valentine's Day, there is still hope to have the experience of a lifetime.

Instead of being stuck to the couch, watching a depressing chick-flick with food in hand, go out and enjoy life to its full extent. Be happy that you aren't bound by the iron shackles of a relationship and enjoy your independence.

First things first, we all know very well how cheap the candy is on Valentine's Day. Hop down over to Safeway and pick out the best deal on some delicious treats without feeling guilty that this candy is only for you. Getting a good deal is always the first step to feeling good. Now that the candy is out of the way, maybe go out for an adventure, just to add some whimsy and thrill to the day.

While other couples are on their romantic outings, take the time to explore a part of the town that has never been explored before. Find an interesting artifact at the site, such as a rock, take a long hard look at it, and pause for a moment of introspection. Examine the contours of the rock, and use your analytical skills to relate it to your life. To take a deeper look into

your soul, post the picture on Instagram using the Nashville filter and see how many likes you get.

At this moment, you are free and in complete control of your life. Also, to feel extra special, go out and buy a present for yourself, such as a lightsaber, to celebrate the achievements you've earned in your life. The members of the Jedi Council have accepted you because your powers are great in magnitude.

After the exhilarating adventure, tell mom and dad that you're going to go for an APUSH study session, but actually hang out with some other single friends and do something unconventional. Turn off the lights and put on a horror movie, such as "The Strangers," so that when

someone, scared for their life, jumps into your arms, you can feel the love that Valentine's Day is intended to express.

Once you have received that feeling of love and self-satisfaction from these intense, self-satisfying activities, your day is finally complete. Single's Day on Valentine's Day has officially been achieved, and no matter what the media portrays about being lonely and neglected on this special occasion, you are still a great person who can achieve anything in life.

In order to prepare for next year, contact the Love Guru. He'll hook you up with an individual of your preference so that Valentine's Day in 2014 will be spent more traditionally, unless, of course, unconventional is the way to go. ♦



ROHAN Hardikar YMCMB

making history

Graphic by JANE PARK

STUDENTS GET INVOLVED IN THE SCHOOL'S MANY HISTORY PROGRAMS AND START MAKING HISTORY OF THEIR OWN

Junior pursues passion for the past

by Bruce Lou

Her heart is racing, her breath is short. Months of hard work and research have culminated in this moment. Palms sweating, then eighth-grader Anushree Dugar steps up into the spotlight to speak to the judges. She knows that what she says here at the state History Day competition may be the difference between going to the national competition and falling short. She nervously opens her mouth and starts to speak ...

Flash forward three years. Now a junior, the once-timid eighth-grader is a seasoned veteran of History Day competitions. She has qualified for the national competition three times, won fourth place at nationals in her freshman year, and is president of the school's history club.

It all started three years ago, when Dugar was in eighth grade at Redwood Middle School. At that time, almost nobody from Redwood had even heard of History Day, let alone participated in it.

"I decided just to try it out," Dugar said. "My core teacher and I worked together for a really long time [to finish my project]."

Her hard work paid off: her project, a paper about the United States Constitution, made it past the county competition and qualified for the state competition.

"I was surprised that I made it to [the state competition]," Dugar said. "I had spent a lot of time working on my project, but I really did not know what to expect."

She needn't have worried. Her project was good enough to make it to the national competition at the University of Maryland.

While she wasn't able to be present at the awards ceremony, one of the judges called her and told her what he thought of her project.

"I was ecstatic [that the judge called] and told me that my project had won

in the state competition. He complimented me on many specific things on my project," Dugar said. "He said that my paper was the best paper he'd seen. He had a long career so I felt great [about his comments]."

While Dugar's project did not win any awards at the national competition, Dugar says she enjoyed the process and learned a lot.

"I learned how to conduct research from primary sources, such as newspapers and eyewitness accounts," Dugar said.

Since doing her first History Day project, Dugar has participated in the History Day competition every year.

Dugar says that there is a big difference between History Day and regular history classes.

"It's very different [from history class] — in history class you read from a textbook," Dugar said. "You read what someone else has already analyzed for you. But in History Day, you have to find and gather all the sources yourself and basically write that textbook."

Sources, says Dugar, are all-important — they can make or break a project. In the final interview portion of the competition, contestants must present to the judges their project and explain where and how they got their information. Judges often appreciate when competitors put extra effort into finding their



Photos courtesy of ANUSHREE DUGAR

Above: Dugar and Torrens in June 2011 after Dugar was presented with the Outstanding State Award at National History Day.

Left: Dugar in June 2012 outside of the Student Stamp Union at the University of Maryland where the competition took place.

sources, such as visiting a museum or an archive or conducting interviews with experts.

Dugar goes to great lengths to get sources. To research for this year's project, a paper on the 1969 Santa Barbara oil spill, she went south during the winter break to Santa Barbara for three days to gather information.

"In UC Santa Barbara, there was a huge archive of information," Dugar said. "There were huge, huge books. There were hundreds of boxes, each containing hundreds of papers, all that was saved in an archive that I could look at."

Naturally, people have praised her thoroughness and dedication.

"She's a phenomenal writer to begin with," said librarian Kevin Heyman, one of Dugar's two main mentors. "She's a good researcher on her own, too. She's a natural-born historian."

Her other main mentor, history teacher Matt Torrens, also acknowledged her

devotion to her work.

"Once she's gotten a topic [for her project], she'll get evidence [for it]," Torrens said.

Dugar is also History Club president. Around a dozen students meet in Torrens' room every Monday for her to share her passion for history with them.

"She's a great leader of the club, always," said Torrens, who is also History Club advisor. "She always makes things fun for the kids."

Dugar plans to pursue history for the rest of high school, and perhaps beyond.

"I'm not exactly sure what I want to major in college," Dugar said. "But even if I don't major in history, I'll try to do something related."

Dugar hopes others can discover history for themselves.

"History isn't all just facts and dates. A lot of it is impact — people are affected by history," Dugar said. "Everything in the past has impacted people today." ♦

Senior's dedication inspires bowl team

BY Nick Chow & Minu Palaniappan

History Bowl requires a vast knowledge and exceedingly quick thinking. Few students possess as great knowledge and love for history as senior Spencer Goldman.

Goldman has always had an affinity for all things history. As a member of the school History Bowl team, he studies historical topics ranging from American economists to Roman emperors.

"I like history because it tells you the story of man throughout its existence," Goldman said. "It tells us why we're here and what we're doing. You can learn about what other people did too."

History Bowl also fires his competitive nature.

"I love History Bowl because it's a competition, but I'm also learning [at the same time]," Goldman said. "I love learning about these subjects, and I also want to do well on a national level."

Goldman's dedication to History Bowl impresses his teammates.

"His dedication to History Bowl is so remarkable, and I think that's the quality that helps him succeed," senior Nikki Bedekar said.

Goldman is able to spend on average of two hours per day studying while balancing the homework load his senior classes assign.

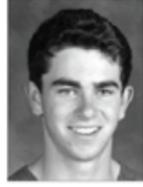
In addition, in order to efficiently study, Goldman uses a variety of methods to retain his knowledge.

"Mostly I spend my time reading on the Internet or [from] bought books. I usually

distill that information into flash cards and memorize [those]," Goldman said.

By using this method, Goldman has mastered a myriad of historical topics that most people can only marvel at.

"The statement that Spencer specializes in everything is not an exaggeration," Bedekar said. "He has mastered topics from military history to American history to economists and has even started branching out into art and the fine arts."



senior Spencer Goldman

"I like history because it tells you the story of man throughout its existence."

According to Goldman, he enjoys European history the most, but he enjoys other facets of history, such as economic and military history, as well.

Goldman's perseverance pushes the rest of the team's members to try harder.

"He's a really strong role model for all of us," senior Kabir Chandrasekhar said. "He spent the summer studying really intensely and set the bar at the beginning of the year."

The senior's long hours of hard work have certainly paid off. Last year, in the team's first year, Goldman was an integral part of the school team that advanced to national competition. After a successful tournament, the team was ranked as one of the top 50 History Bowl teams in the U.S.

In the future, Goldman hopes to parlay his knowledge of history into economics.

"I want to go into investing," Goldman said. "You're trying to make connections between people and events. It is similar [to studying history] because you're trying to learn as much about the market and companies and [trying] to make connections." ◆



Graphic by CAROLYN SUN

Participants prepare for History Day event

BY Rohan Hardikar

Juniors Andrew Chang, Alex Renda, Nikil Ramanathan and Mihir Iyer have been working for the past few weeks designing a website explaining the significance of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The group has entered the annual National History Day competition and must complete their entry in early February. Twenty-six other projects will be entered into this year's competition.

From this year's theme, Turning Points in History, contestants selected an event or topic in history using the digital resources the school has to offer to create a report that will be judged at the school level, then possibly at the state, county and national level.

"This is our first time entering the competition so we don't have high expectations, but since the theme is extremely broad, it allows us to interpret our topic in a wide spectrum of meanings, which helped a lot," Chang said.

"Our group chose to do a website because this event allows us to work more easily, and we have experience designing websites."

In order for the students to research topics, the school gave students access to a database called Newsbank, with primary source news articles, to add to the ones already available. Students are able to utilize articles that have been scanned from newspapers they were originally printed in.

"The new database allowed us to find newspaper clippings from the era about

our topic, which helped us find images that supported our analysis greatly," Chang said. "I'm pretty happy that the school used it because it saved us a lot of time."

Using the research from the databases, the contestants created an annotated bibliography with primary and secondary source documents that was due on the same day as the entries: Jan. 28.

"We have gathered a great amount of material and a ton of sources," Chang said. "We have books, newspapers, files from the National Archives, video clips and interviews with scholars."

Once the bibliographies have been completed, contestants need to put together the entries in the form of a paper, website, documentary, performance or a 6-foot-tall exhibit. These will be displayed at the open house after being judged by various teachers during the next couple of weeks.

Selected entries will move on to the county competition at Castilleja High on March 9 and possibly to the state or national levels.

In the past years, Saratoga has sent a few students to the National competition in Washington, D.C., accompanied by history teacher Matt Torrens and librarian Kevin Heyman, but for now, the open house is the main focus.

"The [open house] is a showcase for the students to show off their hard work," Torrens said. "Parents and members of the community can come and see what rockin' history students can do in Saratoga." ◆

>> falconfigures

6	Number of AP US History classes	13	Number of members of the history bowl team
12	The approximate number of members of history club	2	Number of AP European History classes

Peer pressure leads students to take APUSH

We all know that Saratoga often fosters an extremely competitive academic atmosphere, with students pointlessly comparing each other's GPAs as they vie for academic honors to increase their chances of getting into a prestigious college.

As a result, many students try to load up on a myriad of AP courses to gain the coveted grade point boost, even if they don't like the classes they are taking. This practice is most obvious with the AP U.S. History (APUSH) course.



NICK CHOW Chowderlicious

learning about U.S. history, taking these piles of notes isn't be one of the most dynamic and mind-blowingly exciting things you've ever done, but in the process, you will learn a lot in a subject area that you enjoy.

APUSH is a prime example of students attempting to grab a grade-point boost because people hold misconceptions about history classes. In freshman and sophomore year, students take World Geography and World History, two relatively easy history courses. These classes are light in homework load

and cause students to believe that the school's history classes are rather easy.

Then comes time to sign up for junior year classes, and students choose APUSH because it's an AP class and there's a grade boost. Not only that, they think it's an easy AP because their previous history classes weren't terribly difficult. When they take the class, however, they realize that the workload was much more than they were expecting.

Another problem compounding this issue is students' reluctance to drop overwhelming courses early on. Students are afraid that dropping out of a heavy-load AP course will negatively affect their image. (Most of the people won't mind that you dropped, because they will be inundated with work from the course and won't take the time to ponder about why you dropped the class.)

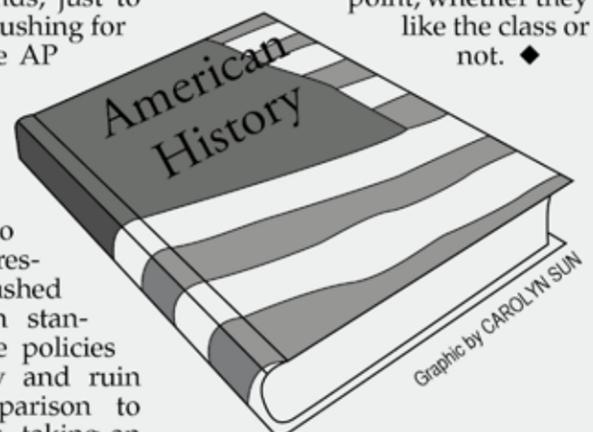
I don't really blame people who take APUSH just for the extra grade point. I understand that there are many external pressures: parents, siblings, friends, just to name a few, who are pushing for students to take those AP classes.

The fiercely competitive struggle for college admissions is not helping either. This competition to gain entrance into a prestigious college has pushed students to cheat on standardized tests, violate policies of academic integrity and ruin friendships. In comparison to these moral violations, taking an

AP course in a subject you don't like doesn't look so bad.

It's difficult to prevent students from taking AP courses for purely grade-boosting motives. Getting into college has become a sort of competition where students will put themselves under extreme stress to maintain impeccable grades.

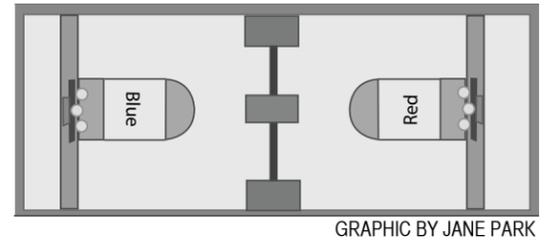
People can be hopelessly idealistic and believe that people should only take classes for their love of the class, but that is a quixotic belief. People are always going to take APUSH for the extra grade point, whether they like the class or not. ◆



Graphic by CAROLYN SUN

FROM AN IDEA

2012 FIRST Robotics Competition



GRAPHIC BY JANE PARK

Alliances of three teams compete in a 15-second autonomous period before entering a two-minute human-controlled period. Points are awarded by making baskets, with more points given the higher the basket is. At the end of the match, teams can balance their robot on the bridges for bonus points.

THE MECHANICAL SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING TEAM (M-SET) SHARES ITS 2012 BUILD SEASON EXPERIENCE

1 >>> MARKETING/FUNDRAISING

With great challenges come great costs. Before tackling any challenge posed by FIRST, an organization that runs the FIRST Robotics Challenge annually, M-SET must first raise thousands of dollars to pay for the numerous costs of sustaining the program, typically through membership fees and sponsorships.

According to junior David Sparkman, the head of marketing this year, the team usually gives a presentation to companies such as FESTO and Valin, explaining what the team has done with their money in previous seasons and how they will be using it in future seasons.

In addition, the team gives demos,

showing the capabilities of their robot.

As one example of the costs associated with robotics, the team pays an entree fee of \$5,000 for the first competition and \$4,000 for any additional ones.

In addition, the cost of parts, raw material and equipment that fuel the robot's success sum up to thousands of dollars.

The overall financial requirement is in the high thousands. In order to cover these costs, the fundraising group seeks

out sponsorships and grants. The fundraising group includes team members and parents who have contacts and connections to possible sponsors.

[The ability to build a second practice robot] really gave our team a competitive advantage ...

>> Junior David Sparkman

"There is a lot of support from many of the other [active] members, as well as parents who help us write the grants we apply for," Sparkman said.

M-SET has been funded by notable companies such as FESTO, Valin and IDT.

FESTO, in particular, has assisted the team by providing expertise in using

pneumatic pistons. These devices allow aspects of the robot to be powered via air. In return for their sponsorship, M-SET advertises the respective sponsors on their robot and T-shirts.

Usually, the team displays sponsor logos on a prominent area of the robot.

"Last year [our fundraising campaign] was successful enough to [allow the team to] compete in two different competitions and to build a second practice robot," Sparkman said. "This really gave our team a competitive advantage because it allowed us to practice driving, and make slight adjustment to hardware components and software, some of which were eventually implemented in the competition." ♦

— Minu Palaniappan

2 >>> GAME STRATEGY

The key to a successful competitive robot starts with a carefully considered strategy.

"[When we strategize] we look at the field to see how can we get our robot to fit on the field and under specific elements [given the game rules]," senior Todd Nguyen said.

In addition to analyzing how to navigate the field, team members use the dimensions of the field to incorporate precise calculations of possible angles, distances and exit velocity into their strategy to ensure the robot can success-

fully complete a task such as being able to shoot a basketball into the hoop.

M-SET collaborates with other teams from across the nation through an online forum called Chief Delphi, sharing ideas calculations and possible strategies.

Junior Ivan France also created a score calculator, which is an Excel spreadsheet that uses mathematical formulas derived from the model as the input to predict how the challenge will play out on the actual field. The calculator is important because it helps the team assess what skills will score the most points in the shortest

time. Once the team reaches a working strategy, it is always subject to change.

"It's very flexible because we don't want to make anything permanent until we know it works or know it can't be improved any further," Nguyen said. ♦

— Priya Nookala

>>> THE gameplan

What objectives are the focus?
Storing three basketballs, consistent shots at highest basket, climbing onto the bridge

What are the key attributes?
Be able to shoot from the key, machine vision to auto-target the highest hoop



GRAPHIC BY MICHELLE SHU

3 >>> BRAINSTORMING/PROTOTYPING

Brainstorming is an integral first step in the first two weeks of competition in robotics; for the M-SET team, they discuss the ways in which they come together and visualize the way they can complete their goal. The team must find the most efficient way to complete objectives using the strategies that are developed.

"First we look at our objectives from our strategy discussion and see how we can accomplish the goal," senior Stanley Yip said. "This is where all the 'what if's' are thrown into the discussion, even the most far-fetched ones."

In brainstorming, the team develops ideas of how the end goal could possibly

be met. In hindsight, the team said they could have been more ambitious in their thought process. The team has opened their minds to ideas that are out-of-the-box and have dedicated more thought in the brainstorming of their robot. ♦

— Elijah Yi

>>> THE prototypes

What are they?
Rough demonstrations of brainstorm

What is their purpose?
To see the merits and flaws of each idea

How are they built?
Using scrap material and spare parts

4 >>> DESIGN

After the robotics team members have brainstormed and progressed to prototyping, the team uses computer-assisted drafting (CAD) to finalize their ideas and work out the finer details of the design.

The team devotes around the first four weeks of the season to designing its robot using a computer program called SolidWorks, which gives the team a competitive advantage.

"Using SolidWorks allows us to see problems before we spend a bunch of time building it," Yip said. "That way we know our design is physically possible like whether or not a certain bolt is wedged in an inaccessible place."

The robot is split up into six subsys-

tems: drivetrain, ball pickup, shooter, bridge tipper, electronics and software, each of which is assigned to one subteam of five people.

"As designs are completed, we fabricate and assemble them," junior Mihir Iyer said, "so some of the subsystems may be done before week four."

Sometimes the team's designs do not work as intended. In this case, they return "back to the drawing board and redesign our mechanism," Iyer said.

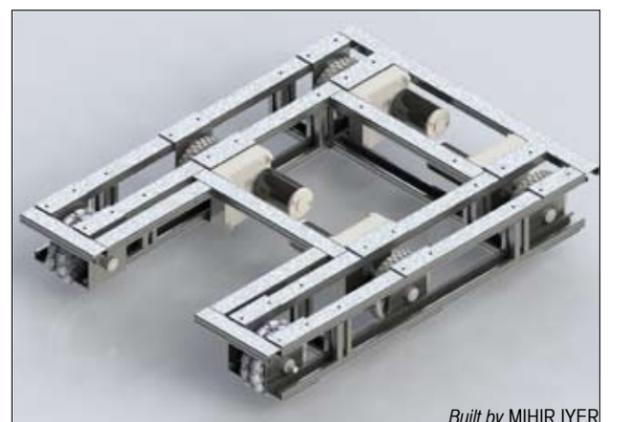
Last year during the design process, the team found it difficult to keep the big picture in mind, according to Iyer.

"For example," Iyer said, "our ball pickup mechanism was not as good as it could have been because we decided on a design and did not evaluate other possible solutions."

This year the team is working to correct this issue.

"We have been focusing on keeping our options open for a longer period of time, so others can think of ideas and expand upon previous ones," Yip said. "We don't want to lock ourselves into a single idea early on that may not be the best because it would be silly to spend so much time making a below-average design into an average one instead of an average design into a great one." ♦

— Cristina Curcelli



Built by MIHIR IYER

Did you know: The 3-D models, such as the drivetrain above, allows the team to precisely plan each and every component.

Meet the build team leaders



Stanley Yip (12)
President



Todd Nguyen (12)
Vice President



Ivan France (11)
Vice President



Mihir Iyer (11)
Vice President



Eugene Che (12)
Head of Software



David Sparkman (11)
Head of Marketing

5 >> SOFTWARE

For senior Eugene Che and junior Alex Renda, robotics season means that they have to finish their homework early.

From 6 to 9 p.m., they are using the coding program Eclipse to write software for the M-SET robot in Java.

"I like to think of robotics programming as human interfacing for the most part — i.e. making it easier for a person to interact with the robot," Che said. "When developing software for the robot, we consider how to make human input as intuitive as possible."

He said that the software team essentially "translates joystick movements into power given to motors" and "writes code to drive the robot during the autonomous period of the game."

Che said they also consider what would be difficult for a human attempt-

ing to accomplish the task the robot is designed to carry out and how they can eliminate those difficulties.

"In addition to that, there is a time restriction of six weeks for when we need to have the code finished," Che said. "This requires us to manage code on a human level, in that we have train new members, distribute coding assignments effectively and write code that we don't regret reading in the future."

Renda said that they plan to continue learning and using machine vision, which allows robots to detect potential targets, for future competitions.

"The most challenging part is by far the machine vision," Renda said. "Last year, the first year we tried to write machine vision code, our process was essentially trial and error. We tried several methods without much forethought and were ultimately disappointed in the unreliable

code we ended up with."

Renda said that the code the team writes is different every season.

"What we write differs year to year based on the challenge, but we will be focusing on writing code to allow the drivers to more efficiently control the robot," Renda said. ♦

— Sanj Nakwa



Courtesy of TODD NGUYEN

Did you know: Using an LED light ring around a camera, the team can detect the hoop and auto-aim using a PID (Proportional, Integral, Derivative) control loop. This uses the current error, past errors and predicted future errors to zero-in directly at the target.

6 >> BUILD/TEST/TWEAK

With a completed computer version of the robot, the team moves back to reality to build, test and tweak their theories.

"At this stage, we are ordering final parts and the different subsystems are starting to look like the finished one," Yip said.

Nguyen knows each step inside and out. The team begins the process with the first step, building the robot.

In order to comply with the competition rules, the team purchases parts for their robot from specific businesses that carry parts approved by FIRST.

"We order parts from places like AndyMark, which sells FIRST parts, like motor controllers, motors and other FIRST-chosen parts," Nguyen said. "We get raw materials like sheet metal, plywood, acrylic and vinyl from hardware stores."

After constructing the robot and putting the parts together, the team spends

anywhere from one week to three weeks to test the various mechanisms.

The third step in building their robot is making small changes to the robot, or tweaking, in order to create a final product that runs smoothly.

"For tweaking, in previous years we've set up our carpet and field elements, such as goals and obstacles, in the cafeteria next to the small theater, usually during the February break," Nguyen said. "February break is usually the last week of the building season, so we spend a lot of time tweaking the robot."

Tweaking largely revolves around the software of the robot rather than the physical mechanisms.

"They optimize our controls for our drivers, and also automate certain tasks so that the drivers can focus more on the game," Nguyen said. ♦

— Sophie Mattson

At this stage ... the different subsystems are starting to look like the finished one.

>> Senior Stanley Yip



Courtesy of TODD NGUYEN

Did you know: Every generation of a particular mechanism is refined based on the performance of the previous. Measurements such as ball compression, arc length and angle are taken accounted for as the basketball shooter evolved to satisfy the objectives set forth during the game strategy discussion. The fifth generation of the basketball shooter became the final version and was laser cut out of acrylic plastic to give its polished look.

7 >> SYSTEMS TEST

During the final stage of build season, the team works on perfecting the robot in its final form and testing it as a cohesive unit.

Using the smaller groups formed earlier in the season, the team members each work on a designated subsystem.

"Some group of people handle the drive train while others handle the shooter or pickup mechanism and then once they are at a degree where they should be mounted, we begin piecing them together, and that's when testing begins," Nguyen said.

At this point most of the mechanical aspects are already polished, so the team concentrates their efforts on testing and improving the software.

Programmers Che and Renda focus on making the robot reliable and easy to operate.

The designated drivers, France and Iyer practice the controls and give input on what changes can make the robot work as smoothly as possible.

By the stroke of midnight on the deadline day, the team must seal their robot in a giant plastic bag as required by FIRST to ensure equal time given to teams. ♦

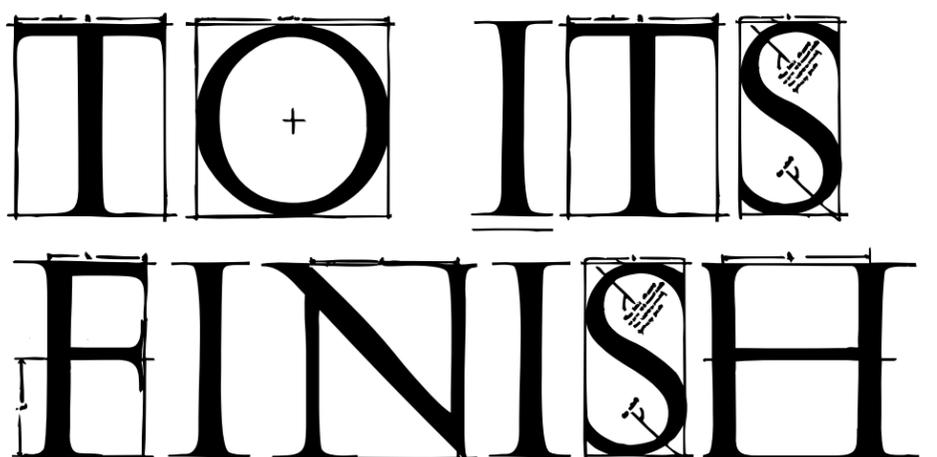
— Priya Nookala



Courtesy of TODD NGUYEN

>> falconfigures

200+	Hours spent working in the room for the build leaders	11	Motors used
3,254	Total cost, in dollars, of 2012 robot	63	Feet of structural metal used



THE DARK SIDE OF ATHLETICS

THE FALCON INVESTIGATES METHODS USED TO GAIN UNFAIR ADVANTAGES

ALL GRAPHICS BY MICHELLE SHU

Cheating lines boundaries and stacking team line-ups

Junior Kalyani Narayan remembers playing one girl who continuously cheated at a NorCal tournament. There was a referee who stood there to make sure that the calls were right, but Narayan said the girl kept making bad calls.

With the pressures of being on a high school team sport, especially in racket sports, where individual matches count, students sometimes resort to cheating in order to attain their goal.

"Cheating is inevitable, especially when so much pressure is put on the player to win," Narayan said.

When players feel their opponent is cheating, they call other players to be line judges.

"There will always be someone who cheats, who doesn't call lines or who are just on and off about it," Narayan said. "Self-calling is almost like a method for testing a person's morality and honesty."

Another way to play unfairly occurs when coaches decide to stack their lineups by putting better players in lower positions to secure wins.

"Ultimately, it's the coach's decision, so it's not very preventable," senior badminton player Lauren Chu said. "It's also hard to prove whether a school stacked or not if the differ-

ence between the players aren't that noticeable. People would use excuses that they were injured that day too, so it's hard to prevent it."

Chu said the badminton team encounters stacking mostly with Cupertino and Monta Vista. According to Chu, since most schools knew how hard it was to beat last year's No. 1 singles player Jeff Kuo, one of the best players in the nation for his age, they would give up their first position and place their best players in second.

"Cupertino stacked and put all their leftovers into doubles," senior badminton player Derek Chao said. "The game was a waste of time, and they won due to strategic placement of their teams. It's unfair, since you're taking away good games from the better players that deserve the competition."

Even though players and coaches know about the cheating in these sports, it's tough to stop it from happening. People can only trust that others will be honest.

"It sucks to lose because the other school cheated," Chu said. "It's unfair, but there's no way to completely stop it." ♦

— Amy Jan

THE bigidea

Cheating in Sports

Line Calling

In racquet sports, players are trusted to call the boundaries on the court. Players take advantage of this by purposely making faulty calls.

Team Stacking

When coaches decide to stack their lineups by putting better players in lower positions for easy wins.

Injuries of bad intentions: from flopping to aggression

Unnecessary roughness is unavoidable in any sport. However, there is a fine line between foul play and the natural spirit of the game, especially in soccer and basketball.

Soccer

"There's a difference between playing [dirty and playing aggressively]," senior soccer player Steven Ruff said. "You can foul someone intentionally and not be playing dirty because it's just part of the game."

The player's intention differentiates foul play from natural roughness. When the purpose is to hurt an opponent, it crosses the line into foul play. Playing dirty also comes in the form of lying. "Flopping" is faking or exaggerating injuries in order to foul the other team.

"[Most players] exaggerate a foul to get a foul, especially close to or in the penalty box," soccer player Sam Guy said.

In soccer most foul play involves throwing elbows or shoulders when fighting for possession of the ball. The worst forms of roughness, such as slide tackling, can result in injury.

Fouls mostly result in a free kick, but in extreme cases the referee may issue a yellow card or even a red card. Two yellows result in a red card, which ejects the player from the game.

"Nobody in our team has been red-carded but we've had a few yellow cards. Normally, a yellow card con-

sists of either a really unnecessary and rough foul or an argument with the referee," Ruff said.

When another team initiates foul play, some players will look for a foul while some opt to retaliate, whether or not it is allowed. Those who retaliate believe that the opposing player will keep fouling unless he or she is fouled back.

"If a kid fouls me, I'll go back and foul him harder," Ruff said.

Basketball

Like soccer basketball has its share of intended and unintended contact. When referees see a player making contact with another player, they often blow the whistle. After five personal fouls, the player is ejected from the game.

"There are a lot of rules in basketball about fouls and usually the refs are pretty strict about it," senior shooting guard Michelle Won said.

Each referee calls the game slightly differently. Because of this, the players need to alter their technique in order to accommodate the referee's judgment for each game.

"It sometimes isn't fair because [the other team is] pushing you a lot and pulling on your jersey and not ever getting called for it," said Won. "But you can't really do anything about it unless the refs call it or the coaches complain about it." ♦

— Lauren Louie & Sudeep Raj



Smack-talking: a part of playing sports

When football linebacker senior Henry Wei was trash-talked in his senior year for the first time, he was shocked.

"It was a game against Burlingame [last season.] I came out, saw a guy and hit him. I kept on blocking [as defense] and then after the play, he said, 'All right, b-word,'" Wei said. "I just stared at him, walked to the bench and was like 'Did anyone just hear that? He just called me the b-word.'"

But soon enough, Wei came to accept and follow this social norm as part of being an athlete rather than taking those comments personally.

Wei believes that smack-talking is done to "purposely try to aggravate your opponent and make your opponent think." He said that thinking in an instinctive sport like football will slow the player down.

"For a lot of famous athletes, they smack-talk 70 percent for them and 30 percent maybe to affect the other person, get in their head and make them play badly," Wei said. "You want to aggravate them. And sometimes, you smack-talk to just smack-talk."

In some given circumstances, smack-talking is used as a way to celebrate

and taunt the other team. According to Wei, an example of this would be after "you made a big play. You smack talk to the other person like, 'Don't even try that.'"

Soccer player junior Brandon Le admitted that he has smack-talked and more to the other team, but only when provoked.

"I usually foul them if they irritate me a lot. I usually talk back to them just to [anger them] even more and get in their heads," Le said.

Likewise, Wei responds back to those who smack-talk him, and adds that his friends "will tell you that I come up with some of the worst responses on the planet," describing his retorts as quirky and eccentric.

"I've definitely been called the b-word again and I would say, 'Dude, that's a female dog, and you know what, dogs are extremely athletic,'" Wei laughed. "I guess you're calling

me an athlete!"

However, Wei said that "the refs have definitely thrown flags for smack-talking before," for both the school and opponent football teams. Overall, he likes that the school football team plays "old-fashioned."

"Just line-up and play," Wei described the football team etiquette. "You don't talk to the other team; you talk amongst yourselves. When they trash-talk me, I reply, 'You shut up and play ball, man. If you're good, you wouldn't be talking.'"

Football coach Tim Lugo recalls one of the more memorable offenses of smack-talking in his teaching career: when Los Gatos football players took it too far in their comments on a Facebook group Saratoga football players created in hopes of generating excitement and school spirit for the highly

anticipated Saratoga-Los Gatos football game in 2010.

"It got to the point where it started off as smack-talk about them beating us and it eventually just morphed into racial comments," Lugo said. "That's when it definitely crosses the line. When you start attacking people personally, there's no place for that in sports. I'm glad our guys weren't involved."

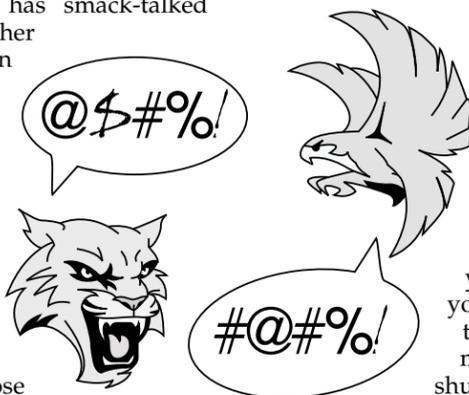
Such tension and competitiveness is found more at the varsity level rather than JV, Wei says. The JV games, he notes, are more about development.

"There is so much at stake that people are so emotionally invested in it that their emotions come out in the way they talk as well," Wei said.

Lugo understands that in the heat of the game, words can fly out of players' mouths, but still believes that smack-talking shouldn't be allowed.

"[Smack-talking] is a sportsmanship issue. As long as it's not drawing attention away from the game and it's not provoking someone, I don't think you can completely regulate it out of sports," Lugo said. ♦

— Kelly Liu



GIRLS' SOCCER

Team picks up intensity in hopes of CCS

BY Jay Mulye

After losing 2-0 against the Mountain View Spartans on Jan. 25, the 3-4-1 girls' soccer team is stuck in the middle of the league standings in the second half of the season.

Both teams were evenly matched with equal possession throughout the game. Although the Falcons moved the ball well along the defensive line, they struggled once they crossed the Spartans' half of the field. The Spartans successfully slowed down the Falcons' passing game by quickly closing in on offensive charges.

The Falcons tried to split the Spartans' defense with penetrating passes down the middle of the field; however, one mispass from the Falcons resulted in a quick break away, which led to the Spartans' first goal.

In the second half, the Falcons continued to push the ball forward towards the goal. Despite multiple shot attempts on the Spartans' goal, the Falcons could not get the ball in the back of the net. In addition, the Spartans were able to beat the

Falcons' defense with a clear off a corner kick and got another goal.

Although the Falcons continued their persistent attack and held strong defensively for the rest of the game, the team failed to catch up.

After their loss, the Falcons look to fix their mistakes for future games.

"Our solidity as a defensive unit could have been improved since [Mountain View] found the gaps in our back line and being a good team they capitalized on them very easily," junior forward Lindsay Webster said. "Offensively we should have taken more shots and finished from the really good crosses put into the box."

Prior to playing Mountain View, the Falcons had a 3-1 loss to Los Gatos and a 3-1 win over Gunn on Jan. 16 and Jan. 14 respectively. The goal scored against Los Gatos was made by Webster, while junior Taylor Moran, Webster and freshman Kimberly Chen each scored a goal against Gunn.

After their loss to Los Gatos midway through the season, coach Ben Maxwell has picked up the intensity of practices



FALCON // JADE BISHT

Senior Amanda Schwartz kicks the ball to a teammate at the game against Mountain View.

for the rest of the season in hopes of gathering wins to clinch a spot CCS.

"We are focusing on winning the games that we could have won in the first half of this season and hopefully our intense trainings will help us with that," Webster said.

With the season coming to an end,

the Falcons still think they have a shot at CCS.

"Our goal is to make it to CCS in the highest division, the one we're in, for the first time in history," Webster said.

The Falcons will take on the Los Gatos Wildcats today at home for their final game of the season. ♦

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Falcons taking lumps in tough upper league

BY Helen Wong

The girls' basketball team suffered a 57-39 defeat against Lynbrook on Jan. 23. Although the game resulted in a loss, it was a hard-fought contest.

"I think as a team, we played hard," senior forward Hannah Johnson said. "It was just an unlucky night for us offensively."

This sentiment was echoed by senior Neha Vellanki.

"We all knew it was going to be a tough game because Lynbrook was undefeated, but I still think we played really well," said Vellanki.

Still, the result did not meet the team's expectations.

"I think we could have played a lot better," said Johnson. "Lynbrook is one of the best teams in our league, if not the best, and we didn't play up to their level. Our offense could be improved on."

According to Vellanki, the game was close all the way up into the third quarter when Lynbrook pulled ahead.

In terms of improvement, Johnson said, "We should probably work together better on the court, with better com-

munication and better connection with passes, and looking to score on good shots rather than bad ones."

Johnson expressed some disappointment at how this season has gone so far, especially as a senior.

"We have struggled this year, but it hasn't gotten the morale down. If we keep supporting each other and don't get frustrated," said Johnson, "we'll have a good rest of the season."



Johnson

The next game was on Feb. 6 against Gunn. After that, there are only two games left: on Feb. 13 against Lynbrook, and on Feb. 15 against Wilcox. Then, the team will be headed to CCS on Feb. 21.

Currently, their league standing is 1-6. After completely dominating the lower echelons of the girls' basketball world, the Saratoga team is now taking on the upper levels with varying degrees of success.

This year, the team will be participating in "open division," which is inclusive only to private schools and high-level public schools. Because of that, Johnson believes that the team will have a chance at going further in CCS than last year. ♦

BOYS' SOCCER

Slipups don't preclude major playoff chances

BY Rohan Hardikar & Rohan Rajeev

After two disappointing results midseason, the 2-2-3 soccer team has to dust itself off and prepare to fight, as the next games will determine the outcome of the season.

The team lost 3-1 at home to league leaders Santa Clara on Jan. 30, with the Bruins' lone striker scoring three goals in 13 minutes. The team also dropped points against the Mountain View Spartans on Jan. 25, suffering a tough 6-0 loss on the road. The team experimented with different lineups throughout the game, switching between four and five midfielders. The Spartans found and exploited holes in the Falcon defense, an important flaw that is imperative the team fixes.

"We need to refocus and concentrate for these next games," junior center midfielder Sam Guy said. "I think we'll have a good chance at playoffs."

The Falcons had previously tied Los Altos on home turf 1-1 on Jan. 23 as senior forward Keaton Matusich equalized in the final moments of the game. Though the team was able to take one

point from the game, it was a disappointing performance.

"In the Los Altos game everyone was doing the right thing, but as a team, our touch was off," junior Andrew Firth said. "Moving forward, I think we need to build more and put passes together instead of playing kickball."

The Falcons need to win all three of the remaining games in order to safely qualify for CCS playoffs postseason. However, simply making playoffs is not enough.

Coach Adam Clarke has simply had bad luck as the team qualified for CCS three years in a row and lost each first match.

Currently, the team faces no debilitating injuries as it pushes on for a playoff berth. Firth, returning from a minor ankle injury, has rejoined the backline. Senior Fred Feyzi is recovering from a minor foot injury as well.

The team hosts Gunn on Feb. 6 and visits Los Gatos on Feb. 8 in the last game of the season. Both teams stand in lower positions than the Falcons, but wins are crucial and both games will be struggles. ♦

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BOYS' BASKETBALL

Loss to Palo Alto ends four-win streak

BY Nick Chow
& Elijah Yi

The gym was packed as fans came to see the Falcons take on league-leading Palo Alto at home on Jan. 29. But the fans knew it would be a long night: Palo Alto's Aubrey Dawkins dunked in the first quarter.

From there, the Falcons lost 59-43, dropping them to 6-2 in league and snapping a four-game winning streak. The team was outscored 21-9 in the first quarter, but made rallies in the second and fourth quarters.

"We didn't start out as well as we would have liked," senior point guard Kyle Dozier said.

In the loss, the Falcons

showed their lack of physical size as their defense was exposed by cuts to the basket, which led to alley-oop lobbs and easy lay-ups for the Vikings.

"We needed [to improve] defensively just staying in what we call the pact-line and not allowing backdoor cuts which hurt us last night," Dozier said. "The pact-line is an area a few feet from the three-point line and it is for help defense when someone is beat off the dribble."

Still, the Falcons showed toughness by keeping it close after a rough first quarter.

"We got down early, and we fought back hard, but in the end it just wasn't enough," Dozier said. "Our effort was good from

the second to fourth quarter."

However, even with the lack of size in their lineup, the team has been able to compete and win in competitive games due to their focus and work ethic.

"We are all pretty small and undersized," senior forward Stevie Berman said. "[But we're] always giving 100 percent effort and working hard for our teammates."

The team's great results can also be attributed to the coaches' preparations for the teams that they face.

"This year we really bought into the program that coach gave us and embraced the work he does for us," Berman said.

As the end of the regular sea-



Senior guard Alexander Wang dribbles past two Homestead Mustangs.

son approaches, the team has its eyes on success in CCS.

This season has been great for the Falcons. The team is scheduled to play Milpitas, Mountain View and Homestead next on Feb. 1, Feb. 5 and Feb. 12 re-

spectively. (The results were not printable in this issue because of publisher deadlines.)

"We obviously have high goals for league and then once we get to CCS we plan to win it," Berman said. ♦

WRESTLING

Falcons redeem last season's disappointing results

BY Michelle Leung
& Bruce Lou

Compared to last year's abysmal season, in which the wrestling team scored last in the Falcon's end-of-the-year power rankings and went 0-6, this year's prospects are looking up.

The 2-2 Falcons defeated Harker on Jan. 24, winning 54-0. In addition, the Falcons defeated Santa Clara 44-38 in a dual meet on Jan. 15.

"We've won a dual meet versus Santa Clara for the first time in a while," junior

Graham Grant said. "I expect us to win some more dual meets."

A dual meet is a meet in which wrestlers compete with other with wrestlers one-on-one. The winner is determined by adding all wrestlers' scores together.

This is the first time the team has won a dual meet in three years.

New staff, including coach Armando Gonzalez, new faces and experienced wrestlers have led to the team's success.

Members of the wrestling team agreed that changes in the coaching staff have been a great improvement.

"[The new coach] has been better [in] almost everything — he gets us in shape, he knows better [than the previous coach]," senior wrestler Henry Wei said.

Because of better training, the Falcons have overcome challenges such as shortages of team members. This year, the wrestling team has only 15 members.

"We've also had problems filling the lineup," assistant coach Daniel Ganez said. "The team has been responding well to us [the new coaching staff.] They have been working harder and reaching

goals."

"There are a lot more wrestlers this year, and they're better," Wei said. "Grant's really exploded this year; he's much improved this year. He's winning many tournaments."

According to Wei, younger wrestlers have also played important roles in the team's success.

Ganez said that freshmen Adam Camp and Andrew Klamecki are among new wrestlers with potential.

The team is gearing up for CCS and the League Championships on Feb. 9. ♦

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SPRING PREVIEWS

BOYS' VOLLEYBALL

“I hope this is the year that we prove Saratoga boys' volleyball isn't the joke that it was three years ago.



senior Erik Martin

Coach: Jason Cardoso
Last season's record: 10-1
Last season's recap: The team finished second place in the lower league and was one win shy of finishing at the top of the league.
Star athletes: Outside hitter Teddy Sun (12) and middle hitter Erik Martin (12), setter Elijah Yi (12)
Key addition: Opposite hitter Hareet Jhutti (11)
Key matchups: Sacred Heart Prep

GIRLS' LACROSSE

Coach: Eric Wong
Last season's record: 9-9
Last season's recap: The team was one game short of making CCS playoffs and had the most successful season in SHS girls' lacrosse history.
Star athletes: midfielder Bria Lee (12) defender Tiffany Zai (12), midfielder Jennie Werner (11)
Key additions: midfielder Christina Crolla (10), goalie Cassidy Williams (11), attack Cathy Han (12)
Key matchups: Los Gatos

“We are aiming to make it to the playoffs for the first time in school history and compete for a SCVAL league championship

>> Coach Eric Wong

BASEBALL



>> KYLE DOZIER (12)
 FALCON // BRANDON JUDOPRASETUO

Coach: Adam Varteressian
Last season's record: 9-6
Last season's recap: The team surprised the De Anza league made it as far as the quarterfinals of CCS but fell short to Mt. Pleasant.
Star athletes: Catcher/pitcher Stevie Berman (12), outfielder Davis Berryhill (11), outfielder Jacob Marr (11)
Key matchups: Palo Alto

BOYS' GOLF

Coach: David Gagnola
Last season's record: 10-2
Last season's recap: Last season went fairly well, but not as well as the team had hoped. The golf team placed second in league finals, struggled in CCS and was eliminated in the first round.
Star athletes: Robbie Parden (12)
Key additions: Lucas Peng (9), Miles Peng (9)
Key matchups: Los Gatos and Milpitas during the season; Gunn and Palo Alto at leagues.

“Last season left a bitter taste, but the goal for this season is very simple: To go undefeated, win leagues and play the best we can in CCS.

>> Senior Robbie Parden

BOYS' LACROSSE



>> PABLO PARKER (12)
 TALISMAN // KYLIE TSENG

Coach: Larry Boehm
Last season's record: 9-3 (within league), 12-6 (including games against upper-division teams)
Last season's recap: Last season was the first winning season since the team's inception in 2009.
Star athletes: “We don't have one, which is a good thing,” coach Boehm said.
Key additions: Billy Hanford (11), Ken Wu (10)
Key matchups: Sacred Heart Prep

BADMINTON

Coach: Alex Chan
Last season's record: 6-6
Last season's recap: The Falcons finished fourth in the De Anza league. At the league finals, junior Bryan Chow placed second in boys' singles and the team of senior Derek Chao and alumnus Jeffrey Kuo placed first in boys' doubles.
Star athletes: Bryan Chow (11), Derek Chao (12)
Key addition: Michael Owyang (9)
Key matchups: Cupertino, Monta Vista

“We hope to gain more new players this year to help our rebuilding process so we can dominate the next four years.



senior Derek Chao

BOYS' TENNIS



>> HANS SUN (10)
 TALISMAN // NOY SHAKED

Coach: Florin Marica
Last season's record: 15-7
Last season's recap: The team made it to the semi-finals of CCS, where they lost to Bellarmine.
Star players: No. 1 singles Neel Bedekar (10), No. 2 singles Zack Hewlin (10)
Key additions: Karthik Pamdebaman (9) Hans Sun (10)
Key matchups: Monta Vista, Menlo, Gunn

GIRLS' TRACK

“Competition will definitely be tough so hopefully this will motivate all of us to give 100 percent at practice and meets.



senior Melodie Bellegarda

Coach: Archie Ljepava
Last season's record: 2-4
Last season's recap: The team spent much of the season dealing with injuries and adjusting to the tougher competition after moving to Division A.
Star athletes: Distance runner Maya Nag (12), sprinter Melodie Bellegarda (12)
Key addition: To be determined by tryouts
Key matchups: Milpitas, Mountain View, Palo Alto

BOYS' SWIMMING

Coach: Christian Bonner
Last season's record: 3-3
Last season's recap: Alumnus Ian Burns and his brother former student Aidan Burns, now at Bellarmine, led the team to 10th in CCS.
Star athletes: Michael Lee in breaststroke (12), Cameron Borch in freestyle (11), Randy Tsai in backstroke (10)
Key addition: Bradley Newton in freestyle (9)
Key matchups: Monta Vista, Palo Alto, Gunn

“Our goal this year is to get the kids in the water, get them to train hard and have them understand what hard work can give you.

>> Coach Christian Bonner

BOYS' TRACK

“Our distance team is pretty powerful this year. Steven will be key to our success this year. He runs basically anything.



senior David Zarrin

Coach: Archie Ljepava
Last season's record: 0-6
Last season's recap: The team moved to the upper De Anza league last season where they spent much time adjusting to the tougher and faster competition in the league.
Star players: Distance runner Steven Sum (10)
Key addition: Sprinter Travis Stokes (11) and sprinter Grant Faylor (11)
Key matchups: Wilcox

SOFTBALL

Coach: Joe Medeiros
Last season's record: 5-17
Last season's recap: The team competed in the El Camino league and beat Cupertino, Lynbrook and Fremont. Frequent rain forced the team to compete in multiple additional makeup games.
Star players: Shortstop Mandy Lee (11)
Key addition: To be determined by tryouts
Key matchups: Gunn, San Lorenzo Valley Tournament

“We're more ahead where we are now compared to where we have been in previous years. If we win, we get to move up another league.

>> Sophomore Analisa Ruff

GIRLS' SWIMMING



>> MAGGY LIU (12)
 TALISMAN // KYLIE TSENG

Coach: Kristen Thomson, Christian Bonner
Last season's record: 1-5
Last season's recap: The team qualified for consolation finals in the 400 freestyle relay and 100 backstroke events.
Star Player: Stephanie Chen in freestyle (12), Yayla Sezginer in backstroke (10)
Key addition: Suzannah Osekowsky in backstroke (12)
Key matchups: Sacred Heart Prep

polaroids



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

Senior Kimberly Chou dribbles the ball down the court as the team takes on Lynbrook on Jan. 24.



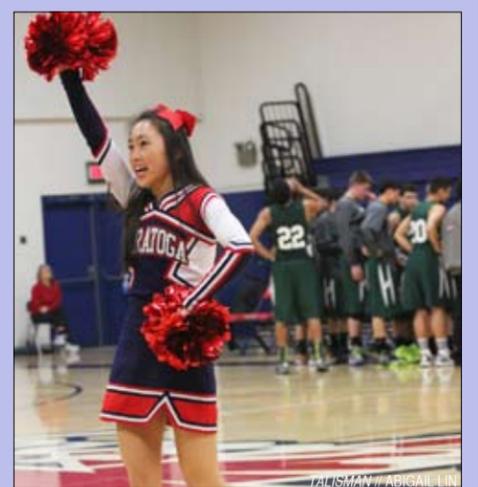
FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

Freshmen Navid Mokhelsi and Aditya Chaudhry work on their sliding mechanism on Jan. 25 during a robotics meeting.



FALCON // JADE BISHT

Junior Taylor Moran keeps the ball in play as she runs down the field against Mountain View on Jan. 25.



TALISMAN // ABIGAIL LIN

Junior Stephanie Tsang keeps the crowd's spirits up as she cheers for the boys' basketball team on Jan. 23.

buzzworthy >> Student documents when 'Saratoga Sleepz'

BY Andy Fang & McKenna Galvin

Of late, Facebook has become a vicious battleground where photos are no longer limited to selfies and prom pictures, but far-from-flattering pictures of people sleeping. The mastermind? Senior Sasan Saadat.

"I think it's a fun way to make people realize that we're all a little over-worked here at Saratoga," Saadat said of the album, which is still growing and currently features over 30 photos of peers sleeping.

Saadat originally took these photos recreationally, but when he noticed the sheer quantity of pictures he had on his phone, he knew he had to start an album. From there, the villain lurking in Saadat awakened.

"There's a look of pure defeat on their faces when they realize what has trans-

pired," Saadat said. "The cruel man in me relishes the sight of it."

Senior Allison Bruno, who was captured slack-jawed during a bus ride to a field hockey game, is among the dozens of students whose naps have received recognition in Saadat's album.

"I fall asleep a lot in public places, but that was a particularly embarrassing picture," Bruno said. "The whole idea is funny, though, so I don't mind it."

According to Saadat, senior Maggy Liu is the biggest repeat offender.

"I've stopped taking pictures of her sleeping because it's just too easy," Saadat said.

Liu concedes that she is no sleeping beauty.

"Sasan manages to get the most unflattering angles," Liu said. "Usually, my head is tilted back, so you get a nice shot up my nostrils."

However, Liu has also been caught in

a variety of other sleeping positions.

"I can also go for a more conservative look, and put my head between my arms," Liu said. "That's the look that most people go for, but I'm a rebel."

Saadat finds that lecture-heavy classes yield the most sleepers.

"If I had to pick just two top ones, Government and French have offered the biggest trove of sleep-pictures," Saadat said. "[But] any classes where the lights go off for slideshows or videos help."

Saadat has also received contributions from classmates for the album.

"I get texts from people I don't even know with pictures of sleepers attached," Saadat said.

But no one is safe. Not even Saadat himself.



Photos from Sasan Saadat's amusing album of sleeping kids.

"Even I've been bested at my own game when I was caught sleeping during French class," Saadat said.



Despite the initial embarrassment, most of Saadat's victims are good-natured.

"I thought I would have a greater legacy from Saratoga High, but I'll take what I can get," Liu said. ♦

>> togatalks

What is your idea of a perfect date?

“Something simple and low key. Preferably not in a super rowdy public setting so it's easy to talk.”



senior Meghan McGinnis

“Ice cream, laughter and food.”



senior Michelle Chan

Facebook diminishes the meaning of the word 'friend'

The word "friend" has been around since its Old English origins centuries ago. Its ancestors in Old Saxon, Old Norse, Gothic and Old High German have been around even longer than it.

Throughout most of the word's long history, its meaning has remained consistent. According to Webster's dictionary, "friend" rightfully refers to a favored companion.

It is disappointing that after centuries of use, "friend" is beginning to lose its original meaning.

Before the Industrial Revolution, it was only possible to communicate with friends through face-to-face encounters or by mail. Friendships were generally fewer but stronger, and the word "friend" had more meaning. A true friend was often associated with qualities of honesty, loyalty and trust. Friends

shared experiences and supported each other through challenges. Forming a friendship did not simply refer to clicking on an "accept" button.

In recent times, countless technological advancements and less time to spend on socializing have made it unnecessary and inconvenient to talk to people in person or to write letters the old fashioned way. The Internet allows practically anyone to correspond with any stranger halfway around the world in a matter of seconds.

On websites such as Facebook, people can have thousands of friends. Labelling anyone you associate with on Facebook a "friend" detracts from its meaning, whether or not you are truly referring to the actual definition of the word.

According to Robert Putnam, author of "Bowling Alone: The Collapse and

Revival of American Community," the time spent developing deep "friendships" with others fell from 85 minutes a day in 1965 to 57 minutes a day in 1995. In fact, Putnam also explained that the two activities that underwent the largest drop in amount of time spent were religious worship and hanging out with friends.

Many people today call any vague acquaintance a "friend." A "friend" could be someone who people met only once on the street. But the word itself no longer reflects the loyalty and trust it once represented. According to Putnam, 77 percent of the people in a study agreed that America was worse off because of the decrease in close relations with neighbors.

The word "friend" has a long, prestigious history. Its meaning should have more meaning than that of a mere acquaintance or, even worse, a Facebook "friend." ♦



MICHELLE LEUNG

Leung and Reckless

topten

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- 10 If you were a book at the library, I would check you out.
- 9 Is there an airport nearby or is that just my heart taking off?
- 8 Hi. Hello. Is it me you're looking for?
- 7 Ay girl, you fit!
- 6 Are you from Tennessee? Because you're about a six.
- 5 Are you Google? Because you have everything I'm searching for.
- 4 You are so beautiful that I forgot my pickup line.
- 3 Well, here I am. What are your other two wishes?
- 2 If I had a nickel for every-time I saw someone as beautiful as you, I'd have five cents.
- 1 Girl, the back of your head is ridiculous!

>> Nikhil Goel
Rohan Rajeev