

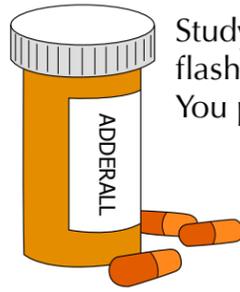


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THE saratogafalcon

Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA
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RUN, BABY, RUN!

NEW AND OLD TRADITIONS MADE SPRING FLING WEEK A SUCCESS.

BY Amy Jan, Jay Mulye & Sanj Nalwa

This year, Spring Fling week traditions and new events made the classic high school festivity more exciting than ever. But high spirits throughout the week were somewhat dampened by multiple thefts from backpacks that occurred during the Friday rally.

Club Rush on the first day of Spring Fling week was added for the first time, in addition to a different selection of themes for dress up week. Battle of the Boom, Powderpuff games, a rally and the Sadie Hawkins dance continued to make the traditions last.

>> **SPRING FLING** on pg. 6



Sophomore Anisha Nagarajan attempts to pull freshman Kylie Stokes's flag with sophomores Mikayla Davis and Sara Parden (right to left) following. Sophomores won against freshmen 7-0 on March 28 for the annual Powderpuff tournament.

FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

CLASS OF 2013

Valedictorian, salutatorian chosen

BY Sophie Mattson

Edward Dong, a poet and math and science whiz, was recently named valedictorian for the class of 2013 with an academic GPA of 4.7536 and a total GPA of 4.7271, and Nikki Bedekar, a top tennis player with an outgoing personality, received the honor of salutatorian with the second highest academic GPA of 4.6582 and a total GPA of 4.5984.

On March 14, principal Paul Robinson and assistant principal Brian Safine congratulated the pair for their accomplishments.

Dong had a feeling that he had a shot at being valedictorian, but didn't think much of it.

"My friends often told me,



Dong



Bedekar

"You're going to be valedictorian, Ed. Just wait." It was mostly out of jest, though, and frankly, I've probably said the same to a couple of classmates myself," Dong said. "I had the sense that I was somewhere in the running, but I never felt preoccupied by the

possibility."

According to Bedekar, the title of salutatorian came as a complete surprise.

"There are so many amazing people in our grade, so I never expected to be salutatorian," Bedekar said.

Dong has taken 15 AP and Honors courses during his high school career, while Bedekar has taken 16.

>> **MERIT** on pg. 6

ACCELERATED COURSES

AP gap: not worth the effort?

BY Nick Chow & Nikhil Goel

As college admissions competition increases, more students are pressured into taking extra AP courses to boost their grades. However, many students are not ready for the jump from non-AP classes in sophomore year to course loads packed with harder classes in their junior and senior years. There are students, though, who have approached this AP dilemma in different ways.

AP U.S. History (APUSH) is a common AP course taken by juniors instead of regular U.S. History (RUSH). APUSH is a difficult class that requires plenty of time and patience. However, not all students have the time to take on the workload of this rigorous class.

Junior Willie van den Hoek, for example, took APUSH first semester this year, but dropped the class second semester because of time commitments.

"I was struggling with man-

>> **AP GAP** on pg. 6

BELL SCHEDULE

Robinson proposes going to full block

BY Sabrina Chen & Maya Ravichandran

Principal Paul Robinson has proposed a new schedule that, if approved, would move the school from its current modified block to a full block schedule similar to the one at Los Gatos High School. This proposal is being debated by teachers and administrators.

Robinson's proposal consists of several major changes from the current schedule. These modifications — includ-

ing more tutorials each week, and a later starting time and no days in which homework is due in all classes — are all intended to help students, and he said it is "the most student-friendly schedule out there."

Assistant principal Brian Safine said that a big difference is the addition of another period, an eighth period. Although there is space for an additional class, students would be allowed to take a maximum of

>> **BLOCK** on pg. 6

PROPOSED BLOCK SCHEDULE

FOR TUESDAYS THROUGH FRIDAYS

RED (ODD) DAY			BLUE (EVEN) DAY		
PERIOD	BEGINS	ENDS	PERIOD	BEGINS	ENDS
1	8:00	9:30	2	8:00	9:30
TUTORIAL	9:30	10:00	TUTORIAL	9:30	10:00
NUTRITION	10:00	10:05	NUTRITION	10:00	10:05
3/ANNOUNCEMENTS	10:10	11:45	4/ANNOUNCEMENTS	10:10	11:45
LUNCH	11:45	12:20	LUNCH	11:45	12:20
5	12:25	1:55	6	12:25	1:55
7	2:00	3:30	8	2:00	3:30

PROPOSED BLOCK SCHEDULE

FOR ALL MONDAYS: RED AND BLUE ALTERNATE

RED (ODD) DAY			BLUE (EVEN) DAY		
PERIOD	BEGINS	ENDS	PERIOD	BEGINS	ENDS
1	8:55	10:20	2	8:55	10:20
3/ANNOUNCEMENTS	10:25	11:55	4/ANNOUNCEMENTS	10:25	11:55
LUNCH	11:55	12:30	LUNCH	11:55	12:30
5	12:35	2:00	6	12:35	2:00
7	2:05	3:30	8	2:05	3:30

GRAPHIC BY MICHELLE SHU

*proposed on March 20



Benefit Fashion Show to occur tomorrow

Prepare for a night of fashion and fun as approximately 117 student models prepare to dress to impress in the annual Benefit Fashion Show. The event is set to take place tomorrow at 7 p.m. in the Large Gym.

"The fashion show is a fun way to raise money for a charity," senior commissioner Haley Wong said.

All proceeds will be donated to the American Cancer Society in memory of late art teacher Stephen McCue, who died in January from a rare form of lung cancer.

In charge of this year's show are teacher Courtney Crase and seniors Megan Doles, Seralyn Fields, Nadya Shahin and Wong.

"We had started our junior year and worked all year to get all the donations, stores and models ready for the show," Wong said. "We talked to local businesses who are interested in helping out a good cause."

According to Wong, this year will feature a new run with the eighth graders from Redwood Middle School.

Tickets are \$8 for students, \$12 for adults and \$20 for VIP and will be sold during Friday tutorial today and at the door.

—Brandon Judoprasertijo

Increasing trend in AP test signups

Students enrolled in AP classes are one month away from the culmination of all their hard work. Registration for AP exams began Feb. 25 and closed March 17. The exams will take place from May 6 to May 17.

Over the two weeks, 554 students are registered to take a total of 1,186 exams. Totals are up from 2012, when 507 students registered for 1,125 exams. Registrations have shown a steady increase over the years, according to college and career coordinator Bonnie Sheikh.

U.S. History, the most popular exam, saw a drop in signups from last year. Just 183 students signed up for the U.S. History exam, fewer than the 221 signups in 2012. The administration sees this as a positive thing, Sheikh said.

"Hopefully the message is getting out there that you should take these classes if you really love the subject... rather than taking [the class] just because it's an AP," Sheikh said.

Chemistry has seen a sharp increase in registrants: 93 students compared to last year's 77.

Besides U.S. History, Statistics and English Language and Composition are the most common exams this year.

—Cristina Curcelli

Junior prom to take place at SJ City Hall

This year's junior class has decided to host the junior prom at the San Jose City Hall Rotunda on April 27 and is continuing to work with the Royal Coach Tour Buses for transportation to the venue.

Prom is unusual in that it is one of the few dances in which food is served. This year, many students are anticipating the prom meal.

"The food will be buffet style with items like bruschetta," junior class president Anup Kar said.

In order to have a successful prom without any major setbacks, the junior class officers received guidance from the senior class officers who put on the event last year.

"The senior class gave us advice on how much it cost last year, what they spent in total and the price per ticket," Kar said.

Tickets will be in the range of \$70 to \$80, which is around \$10 cheaper than last year's junior prom tickets.

"In terms of turnout, we are hoping for 250 students to come," Kar said. "The people who don't go to this event are really going to regret it once they see the pictures."

—Nikhil Goel

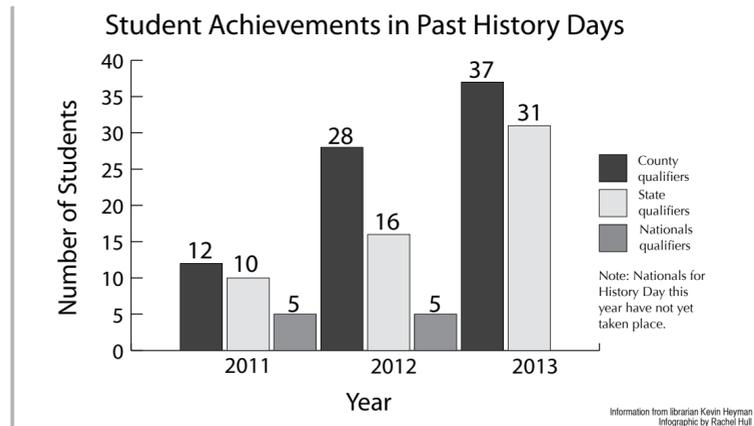
>> picturethis



CAREER DAY >> Google researcher Mike Schuster talks about his experiences working with machine learning and speech recognition in Debra Troxell's classroom, 105, on Monday, April 1. He was one of dozens of professionals, from chefs to FBI officials, who visited campus for Career Day.

ACADEMIC COMPETITION

>> falconfigures



31 students make state for History Day

By Michelle Leung

A total of 31 students will proceed to the History Day state competition at Sacramento from April 28-29. Sixteen entries will be evaluated in the individual and group categories for websites, papers, performances, exhibits or documentaries.



Dugar

The 2013 theme is "Turning Points in History: People, Ideas, and Events." History Day begins at the school level; entries then advance to county, state and finally, nationals. The competition is held annually, and students prepare as many as eight months in advance.

Librarian and History Day coordinator Kevin Heyman suggests that half as many students as in 2012 participated at the school level this year due to possible changes in certain classes' extra credit policies. Despite decreased overall participation, the number of state qualifiers almost doubled from last year, from 16 to 31.

Junior Anushree Dugar, who has qualified for nationals every year since she started in eighth grade, is genuinely interested in history.

"I really like writing historical papers," Dugar said. "It gives me an opportunity to express my own ideas about

topics that I can't express in high school classes. In college, you have to write a lot of research papers, so it's a good experience to be able to write research papers."

Junior Robert Eng, however, competed for the potential awards.

"When my brother participated in History Day, he constructed a website and won an award with attached monetary value," Eng said. "From his positive experience, I was inspired to produce a website."

For many students, the most rewarding part of the experience was the research.

"I spent three days in Santa Barbara, visiting the archives there and searching through primary sources," Dugar said.

Junior Sachi Verma focused on the Nixon-Kennedy debate, the first time television was used for politics.

"Normally people focus on wars, but I wanted to do something different," Verma said.

History Day involves incredible time and effort from students and staff involved.

"[Heyman and history teacher Matt Torrens] did a lot of extra work that inspired us to work harder, like driving to Castilleja High School in Palo Alto and giving us helpful feedback on our website," Lee said.

Torrens works to make History Day happen because it gives students opportunities to explore interests.

"History Day gets students away from studying and into learning," Torrens said.

Students and coordinators involved in History Day believe that every minute of it is worthwhile.

"I am proud of the quality of the projects that kids attempted," Torrens said. "There were unique, challenging thesis statements. They put a lot of work into the projects." ◆

>> bigidea

Qualifiers for state

Seniors
Kian Anderson, Fred Fezyi and Michal Kranz

Juniors
Andrew Chang, Jane Chang, Jennifer Chen, Stephen Cho, Aditya Choudhary, Anushree Dugar, Robert Eng, Sarah Finley, Marcin Kranz, Jason Li, Gloria Lou, Amy Han, Janey Heyman, Mihir Iyer, Vivian Li, Elise Mun, Nikil Ramanathan, Alex Renda, Mohith Subbarao, Maggie Sun, Amelia Troyer and Sachi Verma

Sophomores
Jasmine Deng, Minda Lee, Michelle Leung and Vivian Roan

Freshmen
Nina Nelson and Ashvita Ramesh

FOREIGN SCHOOLS

International students discuss experiences

By Carolyn Sun & Helen Wong

Twelve months have made a big difference in sophomore Charley Dutro's life.

Last April, he travelled from class to class in the hallways of Saratoga High. These days, he attends classes as an exchange student at Kranich Gymnasium School in Salzgitter-Lebenstedt, Germany, where he plans to stay for one year in accordance with the exchange program's time proscriptions.

"I chose to be an exchange student because I thought it would be an interesting experience, and so far it's been pretty great," Dutro said.

According to Dutro, the biggest difference between Saratoga and Kranich is the way classes are organized. At Kranich Gymnasium, students do not switch classrooms between periods until the 11th grade. Before then, students have only one classroom, much like a homeroom, and the teachers come to them.

Dutro is one of several former Saratoga High students navigating their way

through foreign schools this year.

Senior Candice Huang, who went to Saratoga her freshman year but was raised in Taiwan, is now attending Kaohsiung International School in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. She said another difference is that instead of American APs, international schools have an IB program, or International Baccalaureate.

"[It's] kind of similar to APs but a lot more intense," Huang said. "We don't have as many choices for classes, partly because of the IB program, but mainly due to the limited number of students."

The IB courses are two years long, and to obtain an IB diploma, a student must complete three college-level classes, 120 hours of community service, sports and creativity-related activity hours and a 4,000-word extended essay.

According to Huang, the students at

her Taiwanese school feel pressured to achieve high grades because of peer and parental pressure, which is similar to Saratoga's learning environment. At Kaohsiung American School, those expectations are only exacerbated by the Taiwanese school system, which ranks students.

"A lot of the parents here like to compare, especially for those of us who have been to Taiwanese local schools," Huang said. "We grew up with this kind of pressure."

In addition, extracurricular activities differ between the schools.

"We don't have marching band because we don't have enough people and it's not something popular among high schools here in Taiwan," Huang said, who played the marimba in the pit percussion section of the Saratoga marching band back then.

In addition to different extracurricular activities, the social environment at Ka-

ohsiung is also different from Saratoga's. Because the classes are small and racially diverse, there are few to no cliques.

"Since we're pretty much all Taiwanese, we don't really have 'groups' like the Indian group, Jewish, Korean or band," Huang said.

Sophomore Yvonne Ye, who attended Saratoga for her freshman year, learned to be street smart and to blend in when she switched to the Shanghai American School in China last fall. Whenever she and her family go out, they try to speak Chinese to "blend in" with the natives.

Huang and Ye both moved to another country because of family reasons such as parents working overseas.

"After my brother went to college, my mom decided to bring the rest of the family over the Pacific to help keep the family together as [much] as possible," Ye said.

Whatever their reasons for leaving Saratoga may be or may have been, it appears that attending the school has made an impact.

"I miss Saratoga," Ye said. "But China isn't all that bad either." ◆

FALCON FOCUS: DAVID ZARRIN

Two-time ISEF winner competes again for 2013

By Minu Palaniappan

It all began with designing an efficient catapult without wheels in the sixth grade for senior David Zarrin.

With a little help from parents and teachers, Zarrin took his project to the Silicon Valley Science Competition and placed first. Since then, Zarrin has annually produced science fair projects that have reached great heights, beating out competition from all around the world.

Last year, Zarrin placed second in the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF). The idea that won him grand prizes and led him to a second place standing at ISEF was a novel combustion engine with no pistons. The significance of the innovation was that it was far more efficient than current car engines. Since Zarrin's design required no pistons, its use of energy starkly decreased.

Zarrin has won multiple times at the Silicon Valley competition and the state

competition. Zarrin designed a jet engine this year and was inspired by the internal combustion engine he had designed junior year.

According to Zarrin, many of his past ideas have come from experiencing issues in his daily life or watching film on intriguing concepts.

A project that took him far in the eighth grade was a boat stabilizer that would allow a boat to stay level even in rough winds or waves.

Zarrin said he was inspired to build a

boat stabilizer for his eighth grade project after hearing that his dad threw up during his honeymoon cruise dinner.

In order to compete in the ISEF competition this year, Zarrin must qualify in both the Silicon Valley Fair (which took place March 13) and the State Fair (April 16). According to Zarrin, in order to qualify, the contestant has to win the grand prize in the field he or she applied to.

Zarrin has mostly focused on physics because of his knowledge

of mechanics. Zarrin, now having completed the Silicon Valley Competition, will be head-

ing to California's Great America in early April to find out if he earned a spot as an ISEF finalist.

The invitation to Great America, Zarrin said, reveals that he is in the running for certain awards in his chosen field.

"I felt the judges really appreciated the concept behind my project and I like to believe I'll make ISEF for my last time as a senior," said Zarrin.

Zarrin's official school mentor is chemistry teacher Jill McCrystal.

The two-time ISEF winner hopes to another success in this 2013 competition.

"You can't enter the science fair with the mindset that you want to win the science fair," Zarrin said. "You have to enter with the mindset that you want to build something awesome — winning is just a perk. You just need a stubborn passion to innovate." ◆

INTEL SCIENCE COMPETITION

Senior places into finals

By Evaline Ju

Over the week of March 10, senior Kevin Garbe traveled with 39 other students from all over the nation to Washington, D.C., the final competition in the Intel Science Talent Search.

Despite not receiving one of the top 10 awards, he returned home with \$7,500 for being among the 40 finalists.

"The experience was incredible," Garbe said. "Although technically it was a competition, it was much more of an internal competition. [For example,] can you do the best you can in describing your research and answering the questions from the judges?"

Garbe was also able to meet and shake hands with President Barack Obama and spend time with the other finalists.

"I really enjoyed meeting the other new finalists and making new friends as we were going through this experience," Garbe said.

When he and the other finalists were not competing, they presented their research at a public session on March 10,

went sightseeing and attended dinners with guest speakers.

Garbe's project was named "Patterns in the Coefficients of Powers of Polynomials over a Finite Field" and combined number theory, combinatorics, polynomials and matrix algebra. Garbe proved several theorems that improve the understanding of fractals, mathematical sets.

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

He said the hardest part of his research was the "large amount of exploration" that needed to be done within time constraints.

Yet all the work paid off as he was announced among 300 Intel semifinalists in early January, then a finalist later the same month.

For other students aspiring to research or even to participate in the Intel competition next year, Garbe said, "Learn all you can about a topic that you are really curious about and explore it from all different angles." ◆



Garbe

BOMBAY IN THE BAY

Dancers showcase Indian culture

By Jade Bisht & Amy Lin

As students get ready for a relaxing spring break, the Indian Cultural Awareness Club will put on its annual show, Bombay in the Bay on April 13.

The shows take place on April 13 at 2 p.m. and later at 6 p.m. Tickets cost \$10 for the day show and \$12 for the night show, with dinner catered from either The Mynt or Indian Cash and Carry for the later showing. Starting April 3, tickets have been sold to the general public in the Activities Office.

Although this event is nothing new to students, the traditional skit that the performance is centered on changes every year.

This year, the skit focuses on three American-born Indians who go to India for their senior trip.

"The skit is put together by the officer team," senior Shauray Agrawal said. "Any senior can take a role."

Planning for the dances began in December, but changes were finalized in January and February by the club officers once songs were chosen for each class dance.

"The best part of Bombay in the Bay is the dancing," said junior Priyanka Krishnamurthi, one of the choreographers, "especially the whole experience of performing with your class and putting on the best show that you can."

Compared to former years, the number of choreographers has gone up considerably. Because the Indian Cultural Awareness Club is the biggest club on campus, the number of participants in the show comes up to around 120.

Despite the added responsibility, however, many choreographers find the job enjoyable.

"As a choreographer, you have to make sure that you choreograph something that fits the music, come to every practice, teach it to everyone and also do other miscellaneous stuff like costumes," Krishnamurthi said.

Overall, many dancers involved in this year's show have high expectations for all the dances.

"The months of practices that we put in really show when we perform," Krishnamurthi said. "That's the most rewarding part of it all, working so much for something and seeing it pay off." ◆

>> upcomingevents

April 9 Senior Talent Show

April 13 Bombay in the Bay

April 15-19 Spring Break

FALCON FOCUS: LILLIAN CHU

Fencer wins gold in cadet sabre

By CarolynsSun & HelenWong

Sophomore Lillian Chu won the gold medal in the junior event of cadet women's sabre at the Junior Olympics in Maryland on Feb. 28, beating a field of 130 competitors.

The Junior Olympics is a nationwide tournament that covers 32 sports. Anyone who meets the standards for entry is immediately qualified to compete. Because Chu is ranked high in the U.S. rolling points, she auto-qualified.

To prepare for the tournament, Chu took extra private lessons in addition to her usual group lessons and open fencing, or practice bouts, committing many hours after school.

Although the Junior Olympics is one of the biggest competitions she has participated in, Chu treated it "just like another tournament, just harder."

"When I went in, I did not have the intention of getting first," Chu said. "I just wanted to try and do my best. I would have been happy [to be] in the top eight."

On the day of the tournament, Chu won 13 bouts without defeat, earning the gold medal. Because fencers were allowed only a half hour break dur-

ing the 4.5-hour tournament, Chu had to conserve her energy. Following her coach's advice, she also used different tactics in order to be unpredictable.

In the final bout, she defeated a tough opponent, Haley Fisher from Atlanta.

"Before the final bout, I felt really nervous," Chu said. "[My opponent had] beaten me really easily before, so I was determined."

The final score was 15-13, making the finale a close, intense match.

"I was really tired by [the final bout], but I pulled through," Chu said. "I was really happy [when I won]. Actually, my coach was happier than I was."

Chu has been fencing since sixth grade and has a record of wins in nationwide competitions, such as first place in Division II Women's Sabre at the North American Cup (NAC) last year in March, eighth place at last year's summer nationals in Ohio and fifth in another NAC last year.

To compete in these tournaments, Chu has a rigorous training schedule. Every week, she practices for 13 hours at the Cardinal Fencing Club held on the Stanford University campus.

To maintain her grades and continue to compete in fencing tournaments,



Sophomore Lillian Chu shows off her trophy with her coach, Alexander Lepeshinski.

Chu must balance school and fencing.

"I retake tests and attend tutorials," Chu said. "Before tournaments, I run around trying to get to all my teachers in time, and I do the same thing afterwards as well to make up for all the stuff I missed."

Although keeping up with both

school and fencing is "a lot of work," Chu remains determined to reach her goal: representing the U.S. fencing team in the World Fencing Championship in Europe in April 2014.

"Only the top three in the nation can go," Chu said. "I hope I'll be good enough to make it." ♦

GREEN TEAM

New hydration stations pave potential success

By AmyLin

When they glance in recycling bins and even a fair number of trash cans on campus, members of the school's Green Team student commission have often found a depressing sight: disposable plastic water bottles.

As convenient and cheap as those bottles are, they come with a stiff environmental price: They often end up polluting the world's oceans and other waterways.

To help cut down on the usage of disposable water bottles, the Green Team has recently added two hydration stations: one in the cafeteria and by the pool. The commission is also looking to introduce another by the track. Students and staff can bring reusable water bottles to refill at the station.

"We were actually thinking about adding reusable water bottles to the ASB package so that every student would have a reusable bottle and there would be no need for disposable ones," said senior Susan Sadaat, who is co-commissioner along with senior Shireen Kaul.

In addition to the "easier projects" of hydration stations, the Green Team has bigger projects that they plan to carry out before the end of the school year. These include the annual Green Team summit, a used SAT book drive, a compost heap and a garden.

Thirty-five people went to a summit meeting that took place in the library on March 6. The conference explained the effects of consumption on society and wildlife, featured a video about the life of a water bottle and talked about changing the way people live.

"We wanted to be an example of a way for individuals to make a difference," said sophomore Supriya Khandekar, a member of the Green Team.

Although most of their projects have been more low-scale, the team does not plan to work small for long. They have

already started planning for bigger endeavors.

"I think the reason we're starting little things is because these are fairly simple and they are small steps to get people thinking and to get people to see that they can take steps that do not require drastic lifestyle changes or inconveniences," Sadaat said.

A project on a bigger scale with higher standards, solar panels to help generate energy for the upper and lower fields, is already on the team's list. These will help conserve even more energy, in addition to the panels already installed to heat the pool.

"We might have a presentation for the school board about solar panels," Kaul said. "Though we know we don't have the money, we just want them to know that we still care about it."

Even though Kaul and Sadaat will most likely not see the solar panels installed this school year, they have high hopes for future Green Teams and the students.

"In the coming months and even the coming years, I hope the student body is really open-minded and receptive to new ideas even if they push people to do different things," Sadaat said. "We're taking small steps, but hopefully, we can start to make changes." ♦

>> THE bigidea

Going green

The truth about disposable bottles
They pollute the ocean and other waterways. The school now offers hydration stations to refill reusable bottles with.

What's up with solar panels
Solar panels conserve and efficiently use clean energy from the sun. The school is planning to install some.

Small steps to saving the Earth
Composting, reusing books, and planting a garden all help one to go green.

ORCHESTRA

Competition the norm for many string players

By BruceLou

An orchestra playing in perfect unison is an awe-inspiring sight. But in reality, there is a lot of competition beneath that veneer of unity.

The musicians admit that there is competition and stress in orchestra, whether they like it or not.

There are four orchestras in Saratoga: the audition-only Saratoga Strings and String Orchestra, the non-audition Philharmonic Strings and the Freshman Orchestra.

"In the higher orchestras, when there's a solo or a high-[ranking] seat, it's really competitive," sophomore violinist Christina Chin said.

Chin, one of the concertmasters of the Philharmonic Strings, said that she does not enjoy pressure very much.

"I didn't try out for the higher orchestra last year because I didn't want all that competition," Chin said.

Even freshmen, who are placed into a separate orchestra for their grade level, are not immune from the effects of pressure and competition.

"Some people think they're better than the person in front of them," freshman violinist Jonathan Fung said. "They think, 'Oh, that guy doesn't deserve his position; I deserve that spot.'"

In orchestra, all members are ranked. The better players sit in front, closer to the conductor and more on view to the audience, while the rest stay hidden.

According to Fung, playing in the back can be demoralizing.

"Basically, people in the back don't really care [about playing well]," Fung said. "They're like, 'OK, screw it since no one cares anyways.'"

According to Fung, this sort of behav-

ior is so common, it has its own name: back-row syndrome.

As if the regular orchestra pressure is not enough, auditions drive competitiveness through the roof.

Auditions usually take place in late February, but the results generally come a month later.

Audition results can produce extreme jubilation or disappointment.

"At first, I felt really sad and discouraged. It felt like all those hours practicing were wasted," said sophomore violinist Alexander Yeh, who at first, was put in the Philharmonic Orchestra because of an error. "But after seeing that I made it, I felt joyful because I hadn't wasted my time. It was also good because my friend [who made it in] couldn't rub it in my face anymore."

According to music department chair Michael Boitz, competition exists. However, he said that he dislikes it.

"If it was my choice, I would get rid of auditions and base [ensembles] off of grade level," Boitz said.

However, Boitz felt that having no auditions would be unfair.

"It'd be unfair to a student who's been working very hard [on their instrument]," Boitz said. "You wouldn't put someone with Spanish AP skills in Spanish 1, so you wouldn't put someone with many years experience in Freshman Orchestra."

Though competition may be inevitable in a highly competitive school such as Saratoga, Boitz maintained that it is not a very important issue.

"It should not matter what group they're in or what position they have," Boitz said. "For us it's about the camaraderie of the ensemble and their love of the music." ♦

ROBOTICS

M-SET competes at FRC Silicon Valley Regional

By DavidSparkman & StanleyYip

The Mechanical Science and Engineering Team (M-SET), is competing at the Silicon Valley Regional of the FIRST Robotics Competition held at San Jose State on April 5-6.

This regional is widely considered the most competitive of those in the FIRST program. Particularly in this year, many renowned regional-winning teams from Northern and Southern California and Texas are attending.

"Despite the tough competition, I'm optimistic about the regional," vice president junior Ivan France said. "We are within striking distance of some high-scoring achievements."

This year's game, Ultimate Ascent, entails playing a modified version of frisbee golf. Two alliances of three teams play two minute and 15 second matches scoring frisbees into goals at different heights for points. For the first 15 seconds of the match, the robots use pre-programmed instructions to score frisbees.

Afterwards, human players control their robots. At the end of the match, they can attempt to win bonus points if their robot climbs a large steel pyramid by the ending buzzer.

The tournament starts with each team playing qualification matches where alliances are randomly selected. By the end, teams are ranked by their performances with the top eight teams picking their alliance to

advance into eliminations.

"We have been working on improving certain aspects of our design since the last competition," said senior senior Todd Nguyen, M-SET's vice president. "Progress has been slow, but I think we will do well again."

Last month, M-SET advanced to the quarterfinals of the Central Valley Regional at Madera South High in Madera from March 2-3, placing 11th, captaining the 7th seed alliance.

"[Being an alliance captain for the second time] means [the team] is getting more consistent and the quality of our robots and level of competition is increasing," said junior Mihir Iyer, another one of M-SET's vice presidents.

M-SET ultimately allied with Edison High from Fresno and Richmond High, losing in the quarterfinals.

"[Our opponents] had a really good alliance since one of their teams is a former world champion," Iyer said. "It was a good game, but we did lose."

Due to the short six-week build season, the team opted to withhold their frisbee pickup mechanism for an extra week of testing and tweaking. Teams are allowed to build and bring an extra 30 pounds of custom parts to competition after the stop build day.

"I thought it was a pretty clear decision to [withhold the pickup]," France said. "I think it paid off pretty well." ♦

USA SPIRIT NATIONALS

Cheer ends strong

By NicholasChow & ElijahYi

The cheer team placed fourth out of 21 teams in the Cheer Show varsity division at the USA Spirit Nationals held March 15-17 in Anaheim.

The girls started out with a great performance on Friday night for the preliminary round.

"It went really well. We competed Friday night at nine o'clock at night, and then we waited for the awards at 11 [p.m.]," senior captain Haley Wong said. "[We found out that] we made it to finals this year, which was really exciting."

The girls' routine consisted of 15 girls who performed a dance, a cheer and then another dance, Wong said.

"Throughout the whole [routine], we're doing tumbling [and] stunting," Wong said. "You have to scream in the middle, which is really tiring."

The hardest yet most rewarding part of the routine, Wong said, was the stunting.

"Our first stunts and our two pyramid [are the highlights]," Wong said. "Pyramids take the whole team, so if someone doesn't pull their own weight, the pyramid's not going to go up as well."

They were part of the top seven teams that advanced to the tournament finals. In the finals, the team placed third, leading to fourth place overall.

"I think they did a good job adding in the aspect of sportsmanship [during the finals]," cheer adviser Laressa Mead said. "They performed with energy on the second day and their scores did increase."

Throughout the season, the team adapted to changes in the rules that ex-

panded their ability to perform different routines.

"There were a lot of changes and things they weren't allowed to do in the past that they were allowed to do this year," Mead said. "In stunting they were able to be a lot more creative in the skills that they did."

The addition of three gymnasts — Summer Smith, Cayla Zelanis and Brianna Roseberry — also gave a new dimension to the team that they did not have before.

"We added a lot more tumblers [this year] so we had more of it in our routines," said Mead. "It's always great to have tumblers on the team, and we will continue to implement them into our routines as long as they are still with us."

As the seniors say goodbye to their final year of cheer, they made sure to leave a lasting impact on the team for seasons to come.

"[The seniors] have done a really good job of passing down some of the knowledge and traditions that they do on the cheer team and have been able to help each class as they come in," Mead said. "I think we will have a strong senior group next year as well."

The girls think that next year's squad will also be very successful, as there will be strong underclassmen joining the varsity team.

However, the possibility of a coaching change from the current coach, Ashley Arnold, looms over the team.

"If we have a new coach, we don't really know how this is going to go next year, because we haven't even met her," said Wong.

Still, the girls enjoyed their time in Anaheim with good memories from their performances in the finals. ♦



Wong

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AP GAP >> Students suggest preliminary courses

continued from pg. 1

aging my AP's and honors [classes] and was not getting much sleep and was really stressed out," van den Hoek said. "So the office suggested that I take regular U.S. History because APUSH would not be any use to me in the future."

Because of the enormous difference between the two classes, Van den Hoek is happy with the change; he now has much more time to relax and has more time to focus on the subjects that he enjoys. "The two classes are leaps and bounds apart," van den Hoek said. "I have taken one RUSH test and it was a walk in the park compared to the APUSH tests I have taken."

Van den Hoek, who initially took the class because of the extra grade bump, felt the extra amount of the work was simply not worth the higher GPA.

This idea of entering a class for the grade bump without being ready or having time for the class is the justification and reason that teachers are instituting

readiness tests for some courses. In English classes, students fill out surveys that help them decide whether they should pursue English honors or regular.

Similarly, the Honors Chemistry Readiness Assessment Profile (HCRAP) was created to combat freshman signing up for Chemistry Honors solely for the grade boost.

A P U S H is just one example of a class on campus that does not technically have an optional preliminary class — examples of preliminary classes are Physics to AP Physics or the Introduction to Engineering to AP Computer Science.

Senior D.J. Traina took this preliminary course route by taking Physics his junior year and AP Physics his senior year because he felt a direct jump to AP Physics

"[The two classes] are worlds apart. For example, I got an A+ on the final last year and this year I am struggling to understand many of the concepts.



senior D.J. Traina

would be too great.

"I recommend taking regular before just to get a basic understanding of the concepts before launching into AP," Traina said. "They are completely different curricula; however, having a strong physics foundation is super helpful."

According to Traina, the two classes are completely different in terms of difficulty and pace.

"[The two classes] are worlds apart," Traina said. "I got an A+ on the final last year and this year I am struggling to understand many of the concepts."

Preliminary courses cannot only help prepare students for the harder AP courses, but they can also provide students who have a passion for the subject with a strong foundation instead of jumping

straight to a faster-paced course.

Junior Mostafa Rohaninejad feels that such a foundation is important, especially in tougher areas such as computer science, to mitigate the jump from little knowledge on a subject to an AP course.

"[Preliminary courses] provide a sound background in the field, serving as a buffer and transitional period between the complete lack of knowledge a normal person has coming into high school and the implicit prerequisites one needs for a class such as AP Computer Science," Rohaninejad said.

In addition, the decision to take AP and honors level courses should come down to the student's interest in the course material as well as the student's educational goals, senior Maggy Liu said.

"With the classes that you are truly interested in, you leave with much more knowledge than if you'd taken an AP class that was boring to you," Liu said.

"[AP class or not], entering the classroom with an open mind and willingness to learn is the most important thing." ♦

SCHEDULE >> Administration considers instituting full block

continued from pg. 1

seven classes.

"The idea would be that whenever possible, we would have the seventh and eighth periods unscheduled for athletes," Safine said. "So right now, a student athlete might have to be dismissed from class early to go travel. But if Friday ends in an eighth period and the student is unscheduled there, then class would end for them at 1:50 and there would be less of a likelihood that the student would have to miss class."

Safine said that another benefit for students is the addition of having tutorial every day except for Monday.

"Tutorials should be utilized by students to make up any missed work or to get caught up or ahead academically," Safine said. "So students who utilize tutorial the right way will tremendously benefit from the new schedule."

In addition to administrators and teachers, the school site council, which includes students, teachers and parents, has offered input in the proposal. Junior Jennie Werner, a member of the council, said she is in favor of the schedule.

"Underclassmen don't need tutorials four days a week, but now as a junior,

I would definitely utilize the tutorials four days a week," Werner said. "For some students it could be excessive, but for juniors it becomes really necessary."

Werner also likes the proposed changes to Mondays. "I feel like the classes [on Monday] are too short to do anything productive," Werner said. "Having a full block would allow every period to be used to its maximum potential."

Another difference is that students would lose minutes of in-class learning time. Safine calculated this difference at roughly four hours of instruction per semester — a change that has concerned some teachers.

Robinson said the process for deciding on a new schedule will go in stages, and he will seek input from students, parents and teachers. Teachers will vote on the proposal next week.

Regardless of the decision, Robinson believes that the quality of students' work and experience will not change.

"No matter what schedule we are on, we still have great students, great teachers and great parent support," Robinson said. "We are always going to be successful." ♦

SPRING FLING WEEK >> School shows more spirit than past

continued from pg. 1

Club Rush

Club Rush was an event organized by the ASB in order for clubs to get more publicity. Around 15 clubs participated in the event.

"Our goal was just to give a chance for clubs to fundraise and also make clubs more known on campus because Club Day is always a big event in the beginning of the year for schools," ASB Club Commissioner senior Tiffany Yung said.

Battle of the Boom

While Club Rush was happening, six students blasted music from their car stereos in the middle of the quad for Battle of the Boom. They competed for two categories: best looking car and the loudest car stereo.

Senior Eddie Ruppel won for best looking car with his 1925 Model TT truck and junior Tony Capek won for the loudest car stereo.

Themed dress up week

On Monday, many students wore their pajamas to kick off Spring Fling week. Tacky Tourist Tuesday had less participation, but still, people were seen in bright floral shirts. "Would you be my friend if I wore this?" Wednesday had the most outrageous outfits as some students wore onesies and dinosaur outfits. On Thursday, students came to school decked out in their class colors, suitable for the final two games of Powderpuff. Lastly, formal Friday was the most well received as students looked classy in their formal wear.

Powderpuff

Throughout Spring Fling week, the female high school athletes from each grade played flag football in Powderpuff.

The seniors faced the sophomores in a sudden death round during lunch on March 29, due to the 0-0 tie and tie in first downs in their previous game on March 28.

"They didn't just give us the title like

they normally would," senior Courtney Ruppel said. "They made us work so we earned our spot in the championship."

The seniors and juniors faced each other in the Powderpuff finals on March 28 after school. The seniors came out on top 12-0.

In addition to the Powderpuff games, the male students choreographed a cheer routine to support their female classmates.

"We've practiced our stunts out and it was kind of scary," junior Jason Li said. "But we had a lot of fun and we were high flyers, so it was a great performance."

Last rally of the year

The gym reverberated with applause as the Spring Fling rally began during tutorial on Friday, March 29. The rally included games class representatives played, Powderpuff dances for each class and the winter percussion show.

After the rally, many students were surprised to see their backpacks moved to a different location; most had left them unattended in classrooms or in front of the

ommendation for college, admires the diversity of his interests and his character.

"He definitely stands out in terms of high academic skill but also fabulous personal character," Ritchie said.

Ritchie appreciates that Dong, who will be attending Yale University next year, learns for personal gain rather than for grades, and enjoyed her time as his teacher.

"He is the epitome of what teachers want in a student because he genuinely cares about the learning and not necessarily about the grade or the result so I think it's awesome that he got that final amazing GPA," Ritchie said.

Safine said he admires Bedekar not only for her academic excellence but for her charismatic personality and how well she relates to others.

"I would describe Nikki as someone who has a vibrancy to her," Safine said. "She is not only an enthusiastic learner but also a charismatic student. She's intellectually very gifted but also a real person who has real hopes, strengths and fears like everyone else does." ♦

"I know this is very cheesy, but I always liked going to school," Bedekar said. "When I was little, I disliked vacations and summer break and instead used to look forward to school."

English 11 Honors teacher Natasha Ritchie, who wrote Dong's letter of rec-

>> English teacher Natasha Ritchie

Dong is the epitome of what teachers want in a student because he genuinely cares about the learning.

HCRAP only one part of honors-reg decision

BY Jade Bisht

To take or not to take Honors Chemistry. That is the most pondered question during the second semester of freshman year. Students can choose to enroll in one of the few honors classes offered for sophomore year or decide to take the regular alternative.

The Honors Chemistry Readiness Assessment Profile, or HCRAP, is a test freshmen must take before signing up in Honors Chemistry and is supposed to be useful for deciding whether or not it is the right class for students. This test scores students on a 1 to 3 scale; the higher the number, the more fit a student is for taking Honors Chemistry.

This test does nothing more than assess students on their knowledge of algebra while implementing word problems and other prerequisite tidbits of knowledge, therefore proving that the HCRAP is unfairly based on knowledge of courses that aren't necessarily related.

The HCRAP is fine as a factor that students take into account when choosing the course best suited for them; it's good that the school has implemented a test that may or may not, depending on the case, help students with their decision making. However, the HCRAP is just that: a test to assist for decision making, emphasis on "assist."

Freshmen shouldn't completely base their decision on a test that is incapable of measuring their amount of free time outside of sports, homework and other extracurricular activities. A better measure would be of the student themselves and at what rate they are able to complete their homework in a reasonable amount of time before the sun rises.

When biology teachers warn their students extensively of the quick-paced learning and in-depth studying required for Honors Chemistry, they are not joking.

Generally, the class is a clear do or do not: If you have time management skills and are excelling in biology, take it. Any big sign of doubt, however, is a sign to

stick to the regular chemistry class. A test like the HCRAP shouldn't have to tell students what class they should be in if they have a vague idea on which class they would better fit in.

To put just one lesson in perspective, Honors Chemistry students learn how to do a concept called significant figures in two block periods. By contrast, the regular takes two weeks to teach students the concept.

With the difficulty that some students may experience in the honors course comes the difficulty of dropping the class. With Honors Chemistry being the most popular honors course, there are a lot of students who drop the class, try to switch to the alternative but cannot due to space constraints.

The HCRAP may be one indicator of a student's chances of success in Honors Chemistry, but in the long term it only hints at the number of hours students will need pour over their notes, studying, worrying and trying to read between every single line scribbled during lectures. ♦

>> Ebigidea

The HCRAP

What it is

The "Honors Chemistry Readiness Assessment Profile" tests students on algebra skills in the context of chemistry problems, ideally serving as a measure of a student's potential success in Honors Chemistry.

The importance of choosing a class

Space in the regular chemistry classes is limited, so students who initially sign up for Honors but want to drop down to the regular alternative often cannot.

The flaws

The relatively short 20-30 minute test does not accurately portray how well a student can handle the hours of homework and studying required in the class. The best judge of a student's readiness for Honors Chemistry is often the student him or herself.

Alternative fuel vehicles key to drive down oil dependency

BY Rachel Hull

Upon hearing about the fire at the Richmond oil refinery in August 2012, there was a collective feeling of loss and grief among many Californians.

Looking beyond the damage to the refinery and the injured workers, however, they knew what was coming next: the inevitable increase in gas prices.

The prolonged closure of the refinery, which is owned by Chevron, in addition to the nearly \$1 million it was required to pay the state for safety violations, led the average gas price in California to rise 1.6 cents three nights after the fire.

Nowadays in California, the average price for one gallon of regular gas is \$4.212, according to California Energy Commission. Adjusted for inflation, these numbers stand in stark contrast to those for 1970, when the average gas price in California was \$0.342; 1980, when it was \$1.228; 1990, when it was \$1.090; and 2000, when it was \$1.663. Even in 2010, the aver-

age price for a gallon of gas in California was \$3.091, over a dollar lower than the prices today.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Association, the main reasons for the recent increase in gas prices include refinery outages and increased crude oil prices.

The less obvious cause, however, is the lack of interest among Americans in alternative sources of fuel. Instead of moaning over paying such exorbitant prices in order to drive anywhere, people should focus on making the switch from gas-guzzling beasts to cars that use different types of fuel.

Ethanol, biodiesel and propane are just a few of the possible fuels that have begun to make their way into laboratories and engines.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), these fuels are beneficial because they are all either created in the U.S. or obtained from renewable sources.

Producing fuels domesti-

cally decreases dependence on expensive oil from other countries, and all of the aforementioned fuels generate less pollutants and greenhouse gases than gas or diesel.

Not only do these fuels have a lasting impact on the environment, but owners of cars that use them receive tax credits from the government to promote going green.

Drivers of alternative fuel vehicles — along with drivers of diesels, hybrids, plug-in hybrids and electric vehicles — get these tax incentives, which can be anything from \$3,400 to \$7,500.

According to the EPA, vehicles which get 30 mpg can save up to \$938 per year, as compared to those which get only 20 mpg. These savings outweigh any concerns people might have over the high asking prices for these efficient cars.

Electric vehicles like the Nissan Leaf SV, which needs less than \$700 per year in fuel, and hybrids like the Lexus RX 450h, which gets 32 mpg, are already

PUSHING THE FIRST

STUDENT NEWSPAPER'S CONTROVERSIAL PACKAGE UNDERSCORES SPEECH RIGHTS

BY Rohan Rajew

The headline reads "sex and relationships," but this time it actually focuses a lot on the sex.

Recently, The Oracle, the student newspaper for Mountain View High School, became embroiled in controversy after publishing an explicit section on sex and relationship advice. The stories included polls describing the surprisingly large number of teens engaging in sexual activity as well as descriptions of physical feelings during sex.

The package angered many adults and parents of children at the school.

To them, the publication seemed to promote underage, unsafe sex. They claim the entire package was inappropriate and did not abide by journalism ethics.

These critics forget the entire reason for journalism in the first place. The whole point of journalism is to garner attention and stir up discussion, which is exactly what The Oracle has done.

With articles entitled "Abstinence only? Please, girl" and "What they teach you in health, and what you really need to know," it is no surprise the section has earned a lot of negative attention. There's no such thing as bad press, though.

Parents unwillingly brought a lot of attention to themselves as well as the controversial section; the San Jose Mercury News even covered the brouhaha. Journalism feeds off of attention, and The Oracle probably gained many readers with this package, further facilitating the flow of information. In the midst of the commotion, the student editors bravely welcomed the adversity, stating that they'd like to discuss the reasons for publishing the pages.

Parents do not usually expect student journalists to distribute information like this; a section with this much

explicit detail is usually censored or left out of print publication, as advisers try to refrain from drawing excessive criticism. (The photo of the baseball team shirtless and nearly pantless may have been overdoing it a bit.)

The students of The Oracle defiantly stepped out into the line of fire by publishing the section. While the staff endures the hailstorm of parental complaints and protests, they can take comfort in the fact that they proved the existence of a certain power that is retained by all student journalists. Like all journalists, we are morally obligated to spread the truth, regardless of how direct it is.

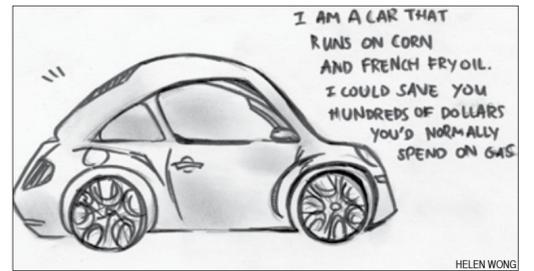
The articles mention reproductive parts and discuss sex and love as regular aspects of many teenagers' lives, which is the protesting parents' biggest complaint.

However, the stories tell much more than most health teachers feel comfortable admitting, like the fact that 50 percent of teenagers have sex before they turn 19.

The information presented represents a rawer truth than what is usually given to teenagers, making it that much more interesting to read. In health class, sex education is taught with the mindset that most teenagers will not engage in sexual activity until they are of legal age. However, many teenagers "experiment" before their 18th birthdays, and teaching them with this in mind is much more effective. While the publication doesn't necessarily teach its readership, it does present information in a more down-to-earth and easier to grasp tone.

The sign of good journalism is that it raises awareness and tells the truth. Mountain View parents may believe the students made a mistake with a scandalous package, but the Oracle's staff has exercised our very rights as student journalists. ♦

The whole point of journalism is to garner attention and stir up discussion, which is exactly what The Oracle has done.



HELEN WONG

on the rise in Saratoga. But there is always room for growth, and when looking for a new car, more people should consider these types of cars, which come with various benefits.

People sometimes smirk when they see a VW with a sticker declaring its use of french fry oil as a source of fuel, but if more people were to consider vehicles like this as real modes of transportation, gas would be rendered insignificant, and rising prices would cease to be an issue.

The EPA estimates that half

of the oil in this country is imported; reducing demand in the U.S. for oil would cause the cost of gas to decrease, so that even those few who would still rely on regular gas to get around would be satisfied.

The next time somebody grumbles about paying over \$4 for a gallon of gas, just think about this: Instead, that person could be driving a car running solely on fermented and distilled starch crops.

Who knew corn could be so much more than something good for popping? ♦

Immigration, visa reform desperately needed

IMMIGRANTS ENTITLED TO WORK IN U.S. AND NOT FEEL THREATENED BY LAW

BY Sophie Mattson

Currently an immigration reform bill is being drafted in Senate in order to help 300,000 undocumented immigrants currently living in America under Temporary Protective Status, or TPS, which gives them refuge from physical danger in their home country. The bill would offer these undocumented immigrants, 60 percent of whom are from Mexico, a faster way of gaining citizenship.

Addressing the issue of immigrants living in America under TPS is long overdue. These immigrants live in fear each day of deportation, and should be allowed to remain in America, where many of these immigrants have lived for most of their lives.

Although the issue of citizenship is a pressing matter that should be resolved, the most important change that needs to be addressed is the way that new and future immigrants from Mexico are treated today.

Rather than forcing immigrants to risk

their lives to cross the border, six-month work visas should be issued to potential immigrants so they can come to America to work every six months.

This way, workers from Mexico would have enough money to save up and sustain their families for the six months that they have returned home, and be able to travel back to America for another six months to continue their work.

The typical American has the view that migrant workers wish to come to America to live there permanently. However, when illegal immigrants come to America solely to find work, they often live in cramped, small houses with a dozen or so other immigrants, and spend each day in fear of being deported back to Mexico.

Immigrants do not like to be away from their home country and often leave their entire families behind in order to send money back home. If immigrants are able to maintain a steady work schedule without worrying about the risks of crossing the border illegally, they would relish the opportunity to spend half a year at home with their families.

A six-month work visa would also greatly benefit immigrants who pick crops in fields, as they could come to America during the harvest seasons.

Americans opposed to allowing immigrants into the country tend to do so out of fear that the immigrants would fill up jobs that otherwise could be taken by American citizens. However, most jobs filled by Mexican workers are seldom pursued by Americans themselves.

Immigrants often work in labor-intensive positions, such as field hands, janitors, gardeners, housekeepers or slaughterhouse workers.

On the other hand, when Americans lose their jobs, they tend to look for positions similar to what they did previously or train at community colleges or at workers training programs for other occupations. They rarely become strawberry pickers in the Central Valley or gutters at a meatpacking plant.

We need workers in these vital positions because they are the backbone of certain industries, and need to be filled by people who are more than willing to work in the positions.

In addition to supporting industry, the implementation of work visas might reduce the amount of money the federal government funnels into the "war on drugs."

More Mexican people would have steady employment and thus fewer would turn to drug smuggling as a means of earning a living.

Although the implementation of work visas is not guaranteed to halt the war on drugs, it would certainly free up more money for the U.S. government to go to other areas, such as education reform and health insurance.

If work visas were given to migrant workers, companies could reach out to recruit workers in Mexico in order to streamline the process in which workers are hired.

Since illegal immigration is inevitable, rather than relentlessly trying to repress it, the smoke and mirrors of immigrant employment should be removed once and for all.

This way, companies could provide immigrants' employment documents to the IRS and the federal government without risk of fraud, and illegal immigrants would be exploited to a lesser degree in the workplace because they would have a choice of where to work.

U.S. government must regulate civilian drones

BY Nick Chow & Nikhil Goel

An unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) taking pictures of a terrorist's face while flying 20,000 feet above the surface of the Earth is no longer something that only appears in animated television shows. The American military has been using UAVs, or drones, for precision aerial strikes in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia and other terrorist strongholds since 2001; more recently, though, drones have entered the domestic realm.

Civilian drones are forming a burgeoning sector of the aviation market with functions ranging from scientific research in areas where humans cannot go to commercial aerial surveillance, but do we really want drones flying over our skies? In an episode of "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart," MIT professor Mary Cummings said drones are becoming so easy to make that any ordinary citizen can create one. All that differentiates a civilian drone from a military drone is the actual hellfire missile.

Commercial and civilian drones are already being sold at a local electronics store such as Fry's or Best Buy, and it will not be long before there is even more controversy over these aerial vehicles.

As time goes on, drones and other unmanned vehicles will become ubiquitous. It is an inevitable reality that has limitless positive capabilities in the military with precision strikes, in fire departments with search and rescue, in exploration of places on Earth where humans cannot venture and in our own lives with security of our homes.

Although drones have a multitude

of positive benefits, we need to have laws that protect people from the potential misuse of drones.

It will only take one man with a twisted mind to mount a weapon on a drone and wreak havoc on the local community.

The potential danger does not even have to be one related to violence; cameras attached to drones could easily become a breach of privacy.

Laws and, unfortunately, regulatory bureaucracy must keep up with this nascent civilian technology.

In contrast with gun ownership, a different stance needs to be taken in regards to drone ownership.

Background checks will not cut it. It is going to be impossible to prevent people who are committed to obtaining a drone from getting a drone.

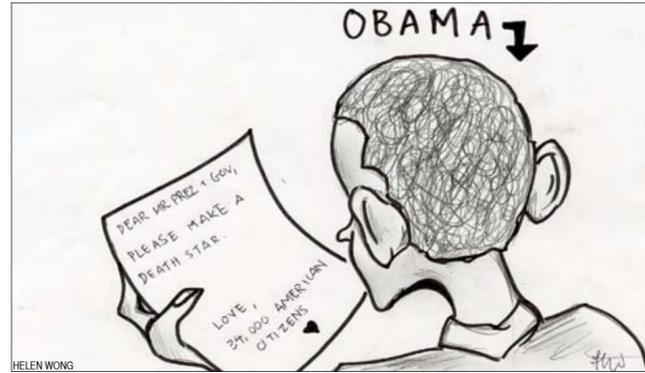
Who's to say that a mentally unstable individual wouldn't be able to get a drone from his uncle, mount a weapon on the drone and cause harm?

Instead, the construction of commercial drones should be regulated. Drones available to the public should be built so that they are not powerful enough to carry heavy objects, such as cameras or powerful guns.

These drones need to be federally regulated so as to ensure that regular citizens do not have access to such potentially dangerous and potentially harmful robots.

Policy makers need to learn from their mistakes with letting gun availability and accessibility get out of hand and control the inevitable spread of drones into civilian life.

Addressing the issue of immigrants living in America under TPS is long overdue.



Petition system essential to voice citizens' concerns

BY Helen Wong

In an attempt to "connect with the people," the U.S. government made a website, www.petitions.whitehouse.gov, earlier this year that allows the respectable, sensible and patriotic citizens of America to petition President Obama and the White House for respectable, sensible and patriotic reasons.

Despite the somewhat frivolous nature of some petitions such as the infamous Death Star petition, which advocated for an operational government replica of a "Star Wars" spaceship, the petition system itself is hardly a waste of time. Most of the petitions that make it past the 25,000-signature benchmark are important and address issues like AIDS prevention and firearm rights.

Even the Death Star petition had its uses. It did not demonstrate the inefficiency of the government, as some humanoid sour grapes have opined. Rather, it did the opposite, with the administration promptly responding with an official statement: "The Administration does not support blowing up planets."

Ultimately, this petition system provides a valuable, direct connection between the people and the government.

It allows for more openness between

the government and its citizens, and helps the administration to gauge the opinion of the people. Best of all, it helps get things done faster than the people in the House and Senate, who tend to be rather slow in making decisions ... hence the current sequestration.

For example, there was a petition on the repealing of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) that was enacted back in 1996 and defined marriage as a legal union between a man and a woman.

The petition gained enough signatures to catch the attention of the House, and was successful in quickly securing more equal rights in marriage and health care for LGBT citizens via public pressure.

Petitions express the collective opinion of a large group of people, helping further their cause. In some countries like China, petitions don't make a whit of difference to the government or the people, the latter of whom do not have rights like freedom of speech.

America is different. The petitions system expands on our First Amendment rights, and that should be something to be grateful for. After all, where else on Earth can 34,000 people ask the government to make a Death Star, and get an official response from the government?

Ultimately, this petition system provides a valuable, direct connection between the people and the government.

Facebook confession page a new form of cyberbullying

On March 26, a group of students created the Facebook page "Saratoga High Secret Love Confessions," a forum supposedly created for secret admirers to anonymously confess their crushes.

Yet this page has become a forum for anonymous cyberbullying rather than a page for sincere confessions. Emboldened by anonymity, students feel compelled to gossip about their peers in front of the entire school, whose attention has been captured by the gossip-filled Facebook page.

A large number of the posts were obviously meant to poke fun at their victims. One post was actually phrased "person X needs to stop ____." Rather than giving a confession, this post blatantly criticized a student for his or her actions. Other posts poked fun at students for the shape of their bodies. Perhaps the worst post, since deleted, was one that told a couple that they seemed "weird together."

The fault lies on the end of the page's moderators — themselves anonymous — who continue to show disturbing lapses of discretion, de-

spite saying, "We won't post anything bad!"

Blame it on immaturity or a lust for attention — the moderators of this page are essentially condoning a method of public humiliation. Don't like a person? Just send a "confession" to Saratoga High Secret Love Confessions and humiliate him or her in front of the entire school. No one will know it's you, right? Cyberbullying takes on many forms, but the kind practiced on Saratoga High Secret Love Confessions takes it to a new level. Most cyberbullies send hurtful messages in private areas of the web such as Formspring. However, cyberbullying on this Facebook page occurs in front of most of the school.

It's eerily similar to the class of 2014's sophomore quad day, when a group of students inappropriately joked about their peers in front of the entire school. However, those students at least showed their faces.

In contrast, the anonymous bullies on Saratoga High Secret Love Confessions can virtually say whatever they want.

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

Editor-in-Chief Deborah Soung

Opinion Editor Michael Lee

Reporter Samuel Liu



The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 31-0 against the use of anonymous confessions pages.

Upperclassmen should be permitted to leave campus during tutorial time

BY McKenna Galvin

Tutorial is, of course, a time for students to seek help from teachers, make up tests and do homework. But at the beginning of this 40-minute period on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, several juniors and seniors flee to the parking lot, either to retrieve items or to simply converse until the bell rings.

Unlike lunch, however, during tutorial the parking lot is not a scene of entering and exiting cars: Students are prohibited from leaving campus during tutorial.

The tutorial period is supposed to be reserved to get help from teachers or work on homework, yet if a student does not need to speak with a teacher, he or she should be able to choose how to spend his or her time. Few students actually utilize all tutorials for academic matters, with the majority of people instead choosing to simply talk with friends. Since upperclassmen are allowed to leave campus during lunch, they should be able to leave during the embedded tutorials on Monday and Friday as well.

Going home or to another location to study can be a much more efficient use of time than staying on campus, especially if students need access to a computer or textbook at home. They should be given this freedom to choose how to spend the period in a way that would be the best use of their time.

Students who do not feel the need to work with teachers or staff during tutorial are sometimes encouraged to go to the library instead. Unfortunately, the library, which contains access to computers and textbooks to do homework, is often so full with students that it can be hard to get any work done, let alone find an empty chair to work in.

By giving upperclassmen the opportunity to leave campus as they do during lunch, popular areas such as the library or Journalism Room or the band quad would be less congested, reserving the room's resources for only those students who need to get work done.

The embedded tutorial periods on Monday and Friday count toward the school's instructional minutes, but in reality most students use these min-

utes for purposes that are far from "instructional." By no longer counting tutorials as "instructional minutes" and extending class duration slightly if needed, the school would likely be able to give students more flexibility regarding how they spend this time. This issue comprises only a small part of the larger issue at hand — the degree of miscommunication of school policy. Students are not trying to break the rules; usually, they don't know that what they are doing is wrong.

The student handbook prohibits students from leaving campus "during class hours," but it never specifies whether the tutorial period or free periods are to be considered "class hours." If students are to be held accountable for rules, they deserve to be aware of them first.

Allowing students to leave during tutorial would better accommodate those who do need extra help while satisfying those who would rather have more options. Upperclassmen deserve the freedom of deciding how they wish to spend their time outside of class.

>> togetalks

Should juniors and seniors be allowed to go off campus during tutorial?

Yes, because that time can be used to get food or run other errands."



junior Ruchi Jain

Yes, because you could go home if you forgot something."



senior Doug Jones



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

ADMISSIONS 101

GRAPHIC BY MICHELLE SHU

STUDENTS AND ALUMNI REFLECT ON COLLEGE DECISIONS AND FUTURE PLANS

Guidance puts immense effort into applications

By Rohan Hardikar

Last August, senior Benedict Chiu met with his guidance counselor Monique Young to talk about college applications. What lay before him seemed like a huge and daunting task.

Now more than six months later, the process is almost at an end. Like the other 350 seniors who applied to schools, Chiu used the school's built-in resources, mainly the guidance department, to lead his way into the right college.

"The guidance department showed me how to use Naviance, compare projected college acceptance statistics and how to organize safety, target and reach schools," Chiu said. "The counselors were always free and available to answer whatever questions I had during the process."

Although some students think the college process starts in the fall of senior year, the guidance department checks in with students of all grades each year, around the time of course requests, to get an understanding of each student's academic progress.

"Really early on, we do academic

planning with students so they meet the requirements for graduation," guidance counselor Eileen Allen said.

Once the fall of senior year comes around, the guidance department takes a more active approach.

According to Frances Saiki, another counselor, guidance holds essay workshops at the end of junior year and the fall of senior year.

"We also do a private college workshop in which we talk about teacher recommendations and how to go through that process," Saiki said.

Other options are available for parents and students alike who have questions.

According to Allen, counselors hold a question and answer session, which is an opportunity for parents and students to alleviate some of the anxiety about the process.

Also, every spring and fall, guidance puts on night presentations in the McAfee Center where they go

through the timeline of the application process using a PowerPoint presentation. This presentation is geared towards the parents, but in each English class the counselors try to replicate the presentations to the students.

On a more personal level, the department offers services where they meet with students and families in order to review college lists and make sure a student's graduation status complies with the application. According to Allen, the guidance department meets with 75 percent

of families so that they understand what is required to proceed. Many families have never gone through the application process. "There are some students who are more independent, but there are some who sit down and do it with them, such as creating a Common App account and walking them through the whole process," Saiki said.

The recommendation process is

by far one of the most stressful and tedious aspects of the application for staff members.

"Another thing that is very time consuming is writing recommendations," Saiki said. "Each of our recommendations are individualized to make sure each letter is unique."

Although guidance tries its best to help all seniors with all of their questions, many students and parents still have lingering concerns.

"With all of these workshops and presentations, there are still lots of questions, so it wouldn't be unusual for a student to come in 15 times to ask about the Common Application or the UC application," Allen said.

As the fall of senior year progresses and application deadlines near, the guidance department works to assist students with whatever they need, but the counselors base a lot of their assistance on how much students need.

For Chiu, the department was able to answer all of his questions, helping him create the best application possible and making it possible for him to get into colleges like the University of Southern California. ♦

Each of our recommendations are individualized to make sure each letter is unique."



guidance counselor Frances Saiki

Daunting task of narrowing it down to a single college

The grey page opens in front of you, decorated by varying shades of burgundy, as it previews the colleges that have accepted the site. Its simple, welcoming nature makes it seem almost innocent as you create an account and enter the page. As you delve further in the process, you are haunted by the red, yellow and green completion arrows. It is the epitome of your high school career. "Welcome to the Common App!"

Although daunting and arduous, the process of applying to college is perhaps not your biggest obstacle. Following college applications, you continue to scavenge for scholarships or may be scrambling to finish the forms for financial aid. Despite all this work geared for your future college career, you continue to ignore the impending days of late March and early April. Those are the days you have been waiting for and have been dreading since you submitted your applications.

Yet, you eventually have to put some thought into ranking the schools you applied to. Everyone has three groups to organize their schools into: safeties, targets and reaches. Within those sections, you

rank the colleges further, exploring the cost of attendance, available curriculum, prestige and simply your personal preference toward the school.

Let's be honest. Almost everyone applying for college dreams to be accepted into an Ivy League school, at least here at Saratoga. With family friends and relatives all inquiring where you are attending, you want to be able to proudly state that you are attending a top-tier college. Yet, that may not always be your best choice.

Do some research and educate yourself on how fitting the schools are to your major. Although some schools may not be as widely known as the Ivies, they can provide a better education for you depending on what subject you plan to study. According to U.S. News, for instance, the University of Illinois ranks fifth in engineering while Cornell University and Princeton University falls to eighth and 10th, respectively.

Before deciding on some big-name college, talk to friends who attend those colleges or do some research to reinforce your ultimate decision.

You may also want to consider how you applied to the college. If you listed

a different major than what you are intending to pursue in the upcoming years to "make it easier to get in," as some may say, it may not be as easy to switch majors as you believe. In UC Berkeley, switching into the engineering program is incredibly difficult and you may not even be able to switch over. If you are unable to study what you want to, it will not be worthwhile to select that college based on its name.

There, however, are other factors that influence the appeal of the school. While most privates have a tuition of about \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year, the UCs cost around \$30,000 a year. Going to a private, you are provided more opportunities and the faculty is more accessible to you.

However, the education provided to each student is not necessarily better at privates. While taking in consideration of your major, you may want to check the resources provided at each school, like researching programs, varying academic courses and extracurricular activities or clubs. You may see the privates as a better opportunity to further your education, but that may not always be the case. The professors may be better at certain public schools even if the class sizes may be slightly larger. It may not be worthwhile to pay \$60,000 a year for an

education you could receive at a UC for half the price.

There also remains some simple characteristics to separate the schools that are still tied on your ranking list even after considering national rankings, quality of professors, tuition cost and class sizes. A quality that jumps out at numerous people is location.

If you are fond of the East Coast you may want to select a college in that area, but if you prefer warm weather, you may want to stay in California. Furthermore, if you are moving to a college across the country, you may want to consider how you plan on transferring your possessions over to your dormitory.

Obviously, you will have to purchase some new items that are too large to ship over, but you will be opening yourself to a whole new culture and experience. Selecting colleges by location is equivalent to determining what you want to be exposed to in the future.

As the terrifying month of May nears, you may want to begin considering what you would do in all situations, ranging from only being accepted by your safeties to being accepted by all your schools. In the end, you (and, of course, your parents) are the only one who can make your choice. ♦



MICHELLE SHU
Shu-mania

>> togatalks

What is the most important factor in deciding which college to attend?

"Whether I like the atmosphere or not when I visit."



senior Sanjna Verma

"If I get that 'ahhh' feeling at the campus."



senior Teddy Sun

"If the college has the major that I am most interested in."



senior Caroline Chou

Alumni share college experiences, tips and advice for the arduous application process

By David Sparkman

The college application process can seem long and confusing to many. However, confusion isn't the only option. Past seniors have found ways to best conquer the applications and the daunting challenge of finding a college that is the right fit for them.

Now finishing her freshman year at the University of Washington, 2012 graduate Megan Benzing said she never had a dream school or any particular plan when it came to applying for colleges.

"Personally, I just applied to schools that I knew I would enjoy going to, either for their reputation or, the main reason I chose, was their location," said Benzing.

Stepping onto a college campus on visiting day can make a monumental difference. Going to student and admissions presentations, taking tours through the dorms and meeting future fellow classmates help a student gain a better feeling for what their ideal college is.

"When you find the right school there is that moment where you just know that it is the right place for you," 2012 graduate Emily Williams said.

"When I visited Whitman, I had that moment and that's why I chose Whitman over other schools."

Besides this general "clicking" with a campus, students must also consider the academic, GPA and SAT requirements of each school before submitting an application.

The "Common App" used by most colleges consists of essay and short-answer questions, designed to paint a picture of the student. In addition, most colleges also require a supplemental application that is specific to their school.

Applications are due in October (for early decision/action) and in January, all while homework, finals and tests are in full swing.

"[The application process] was hellish and inhumane, but necessary," said 2012 graduate Christine Bancroft, now studying communication at the Annenberg School of Journalism at the University of Southern California (USC).

Bancroft started her applications to more than 20 schools during the summer when the Common Application essay prompts were released to all of the applicants.

Her advice to future seniors: "Start at the beginning of summer before senior year. Do one thing a week, if you

College is not this perfect blissful experience; it is just you living your life in a different setting.

>> graduate Emily Williams

Students factor cost into college decision making

By McKenna Galvin

As college tuition rises, the price of attending a postsecondary institution continues to be an issue of concern to students and families. With average private school tuition ranging from \$30,000 to \$45,000 a year, even in affluent communities, price is a significant factor for many in choosing the right college.

For most college-bound high school seniors, the first step in applying for financial aid involves filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, also known as FAFSA. This form can be filled out by any prospective or current college student to determine eligibility for student financial aid in the form of grants or loans.

Many colleges also require financial aid applicants to fill out the CSS Profile, an application distributed by the College Board. Upon admission to the college, applicants are notified of the financial aid packages they have been offered.

"The real defining factor will be how much financial aid I receive from each college," senior Katlyn Hirokawa said. "If I get into a school that offers me a really good financial aid package and one that doesn't give me a lot, I'm obviously going to pick the school that does."

Financial aid can also be merit-based. The University of Southern California, for example, offers half tuition to National Merit Finalists who list USC as their first choice, among several hundred other merit-based awards.

Several organizations and charities also offer a variety of scholarships, available to not only high school seniors but occasionally to lower grades as well. Students can learn about these opportunities through the guidance office website or independent research.

"I want to do as much as I can to help my parents," said senior Priscilla Chu, who is in the midst of applying for out-

side scholarships.

Scholarships are offered for nearly every interest and often require that students write essays or submit transcripts and letters of recommendation to be considered for them.

Despite still offering lower tuition for California residents, the University of California's costs of attending have risen substantially over the years.

While tuition at UC Berkeley was as low as \$700 a year in the 1970s, it's now approaching upwards of \$13,000, not to mention the close to \$20,000 price tag of housing, dining plans and other miscellaneous fees.

"I'm mainly looking at private colleges over UCs because the UCs are so overcrowded that it can be hard to get into classes or do anything," senior Nandita Sampath said. "They do offer Regents Scholarships, though, which give you priority registration and some money, so if I got one of those I'd be more willing to go to a UC."

Apart from choosing a school that offers the most financial aid, several students also plan to lessen the financial burden of college tuition by working.

"Although unfortunately pay for a teenager does not constitute a lot of income, I believe that starting to save now will be worth it in the end," senior Elyse Berlinberg said. Berlinberg works as a barista at Peet's Coffee and Tea as well as an assistant coach for younger ages at Brookside Club's swim team.

Though cost is an important factor, the final decision ultimately tends to be based on a school's overall fit.

"Any scholarships of notable quantity will certainly raise the value of a school on my list, but my personal belief is that since you are living for four years at a university, you should truly enjoy life there despite increased financial burden," Berlinberg said. "The quality of education, both inside and outside the classroom, will eventually pay off." ♦



2012 graduate Megan Benzing (right) enjoys a football game at the University of Washington.

have to. Find a date to be finished by and stick with it."

Once the college decision is made, the once-again freshmen start the transition to their new university lives. For some this can be difficult, but for many others it is a relatively easy adjustment.

"I am enjoying college — I miss my friends and family and the comforts of home, especially my dog, but Skype makes things easier," Bancroft said. "I enjoy my classes because I mostly get to choose what I focus on, and I've

made some good friends." Students must get used to doing their own laundry, meeting new people, finding their way without the guidance of teachers that knew them well and simply grow up.

"College is not this perfect blissful experience; it is just you living your life in a different setting. There will always be ups and downs, good times and bad times," Williams said. "But the most important thing is to keep an open mind because college was nothing like I expected!" ♦

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April 5, 2013

SARATOGA'S NEXT top model

REPORTERS EXPLORE MODELING WITH STUDENT EXPERTS' HELP. THE RESULT? FIERCENESS THAT WOULD MAKE TYRA PROUD.

the models



Falcon seniors Amy Jan, Kelly Liu, Rohan Rajeev and Elijah Yi became models for a day with the help of student experts. With the theme "Spring Spontaneity" in mind, everyone met at Jan's house where Kim did her magic with hair and make-up. Chu and Sadaat used their fashion expertise to help the models pick out outfits to wear.

With the help of photographer Zung, they started the day off in Jan's backyard and finished the shoot at the scenic Mountain Winery. Despite awkward beginnings, the models quickly warmed up and released their inner Tyra Banks.

Who came out on top? You decide.

the experts



¹Liu showcases the texture of her skirt amidst nature.



²Rajeev suavely laughs while leaning on a tree.



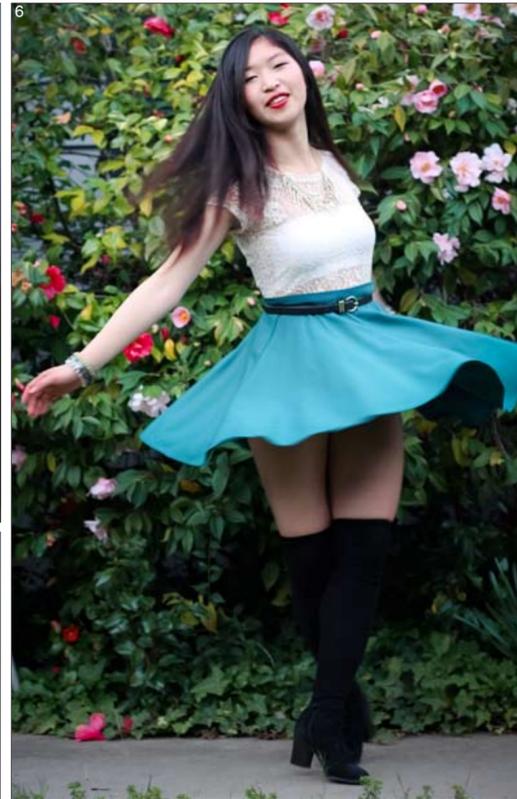
³Jan adds a splash of spring brightness to her backyard.



⁴Yi ponders life and well-being.



⁵Liu admires the city lights.



⁶Liu personifies spring playfulness in this floral setting.

⁷Road trip! The models embarked on a spontaneous search for a sweeping view.

⁸Yi delights in the quaint charm of Jan's backyard.

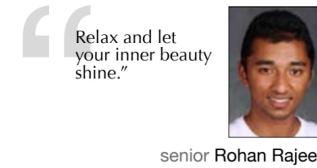
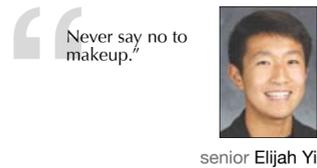
⁹Rajeev prepares for his next Louis Vuitton ad campaign.

¹⁰Jan relives childhood memories in her backyard swing.

¹¹The group solidifies its friendship while admiring a great view.

>> togatalks

What did you learn from your experience modeling?



On Rohan: Pants: Indigo Nation \$15, Shirt: Pac-sun \$5, Cardigan: American Apparel \$40, Shoes: Sperry Top-Spider \$60

“The khakis with the cardigan is clean; it's a nice tailored look. Having a print shirt underneath adds some personality to the outfit.” — Saadat



On Amy: Jacket: Zara \$60, Shoes: vintage, Pants: Amazon \$22, Shirt: Nordstrom \$15, Belt: Ella \$10, Socks: Target \$10

“2013 Spring is all about digital prints. I picked the floral bomber and interesting layering with the socks and shirt because we don't see a lot of that at school.” — Chu



On Elijah: Sweater: H&M \$10, Shoes: Sperry Top-Spider \$60, Shirt: Polo Ralph Lauren \$45, Shorts: Volcom \$20

“The blue adds cohesiveness and ties the look together, but the contrast of different patterns and shades of blue makes the outfit more aesthetically interesting.” — Saadat



On Kelly: Socks: Free People \$20, Skirt: H&M \$15, Shirt: dELiA*s \$15, Bandeau: American Apparel \$7, Belt: vintage, Shoes: vintage, Jewelry: Forever 21

“Emerald is the 2013 color of the year, and students could easily pull this ensemble together while still looking chic.” — Chu

topten

PERKS OF BEING A MODEL

- 10 More motivation to get fit.
- 9 You set the trends: Sooner or later, every guy in school will be rolling their pant legs up.
- 8 Get invited to every party ... be the biggest stud puppy in town.
- 7 You're guaranteed to get at least 20 likes on your profile picture. Just smile into the distance and slap on an inspirational quote.
- 6 Oil. Not to ingest, but to lather generously upon your sweetly-chiseled body.
- 5 You can eat all the food that you want. That is, provided that it's gluten-free, fat-free, carbs-free, cholesterol-free and especially, taste-free. Here, have some water.
- 4 The photographer compliments you over and over. "SO SEXY HONEY!"
- 3 Fame, glory, prestige ... and of course, rock solid abs.
- 2 Men are allowed to wear makeup without being judged. But they have to pretend to be unwilling to do so.
- 1 You get a lot of STDs: Super Terrific Dresses.

>> Jay Mulye and Rohan Rajeev

What's the bollywood about bollywood?

GRAPHICS BY MICHELLE SHU

WHAT EXACTLY DOES THE WORLD'S BIGGEST FILM INDUSTRY DO THAT MAKES IT SO SUCCESSFUL AND SETS IT APART?

>> falconfigures

3 billion people in the worldwide Bollywood audience

1,000+ movies made each year

~75 movies that Shah Rukh Khan has acted in since 1992

Countless dance numbers per movie

Data from Hollywood Reporter and Motion Picture Association of America — Jane Park

Plagiarism rampant in Indian cinema

Growing up in a household of both Indian and American influences, I always used to watch both Bollywood and Hollywood films. While the two were unique for me in their own ways — Bollywood with its melodramatic romantic love stories and Hollywood with its amazing special effects and stunts — I always found that Bollywood movies were much more enjoyable. Because Hollywood movies are so simple in format — usually a three-hour, song-and-dance-filled love story in which a boy meets a girl, they fall in love and the two live happily ever after — I could laugh and be amused by the Bollywood stars' silly antics on screen. But as I got older and began watching more Hollywood films, I noticed that Bollywood was trying to become Hollywood.



NIKHIL GOEL
Nigel Thornberry

Being an Indian American, I was surrounded by the two largest film industries in the world, one being the industry responsible for entertaining the world's second largest population.

Because of this unique situation, I was able to witness how Bollywood was losing its identity and slowly trying to appeal to the younger generation in India by copying Hollywood.

The first way that Bollywood started changing was with its songs and dances. Initially, the movies' songs would consist of the main actor or actress dancing with tens or hundreds of backup dancers. But at around the turn of the century, these backup dancers started becoming more and more out of place; they were no longer only Indian. That's right. Dancers in the Bollywood movies were now frequently Eastern Europeans.

While I am not saying that Eastern Europeans shouldn't be dancing in Bollywood movies, I am saying that Bollywood is losing a lot of what it used to be because the industry believes that changing certain aspects to be more American or more European will cause audiences to enjoy the movies more.

There are countless other examples of changes that Bollywood is making. However, the most outrageous and somewhat embarrassing form of copying that Bollywood has committed is simply making

movies that are nearly exact replicas of Hollywood films.

After "Hitch" was released in 2005, a Bollywood movie with the exact same plot called "Partner" was released in 2007. After "I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry" was released in 2007, an identical movie called "Dostana" was released in 2008. The list goes on for a while, but the sad part about it all is that many movies that were based on or copied directly from older Hollywood movies are some of my favorite Bollywood movies of all time.

Bollywood has a huge responsibility in entertaining over a billion people, so it is understandable that it will change to accommodate what young Indians want. Hopefully, however, the industry will continue to have those few beacons of originality that will counter any blatant plagiarism such as Karan Johar's "Kabhi Kushi Kabhi Gham" and Aamir Khan's "Three Idiots."

One thing is for certain, though: Bollywood's music will always remain true to its roots, but that's another story altogether. ♦

Alumni connect with their culture through dancing

By Jane Park & Sudeep Raj

With long sessions of studying and frequent dance practices sometimes going up to 11 hours on a school night, alumni who are now in college are able to continue to keep in touch with their Indian dancing roots.

2011 graduate Parth Dholakia, who now attends USC, is performing with the school's Zehar dance team. 2012 graduate Vishal Goel is a member of UC Berkeley's Zahanat, and fellow 2012 alumna Sneha Shivkumar is in Zamana at UC Irvine.

With a collegiate workload, the alumni see dancing as a stress reliever. "Dancing has provided me an excellent outlet for me to maintain some sanity to my life," Dholakia said. "When you're on stage, it's literally your 15 minutes of fame."

All of these alumni began performing at the school's annual Bombay in the Bay

show.

Dholakia performed in Bombay in the Bay for all four years in high school and was elected Indian club president his senior year. That year, the club hosted two shows, raising \$15,000 for the Bonnie J. Addario Lung Cancer Foundation.

However, the alumni have also noticed key differences between dancing in high school and in college. "Bollywood dancing in college takes up a lot more time," Dholakia said. "You get to know your teammates really well and you lose a lot of your other social life. [However], I like that it's much more intense and much more difficult as well."

The alumni said dance practices take up precious time and can go on for hours on end, especially before a performance. "Once we went from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m.

on a Thursday night," Goel said. "[But] it's a lot of fun."

Additionally, their college dance teams perform more than just Bollywood dancing.

Goel's team uses a fusion of dances in their performance, such as Bhangra, a North Indian dance style; Raas, a West Indian dance style; Bollywood and more. "We don't do the typical Bollywood HFD [Hindi film dance]; we spice it up with all our types of dance, and our theme is sick: It's the Joker," Goel said.

Many college dance groups add humorous elements to their performance. "Our only goal is to entertain the crowd, and I think we always accomplish that," Goel said. Shivkumar, on the other hand, has been learning Indian classical dance

When you're on stage, it's literally your 15 minutes of fame

>> Alumnus Parth Dholakia



MICHAEL LEE
Pectorales Maximus

Megastar Shah Rukh Khan's unique dance moves are often copied by college teams.

since she was 4 and has found a dance team that involves classical dance. "My favorite part is definitely the music and the intricate choreography," Shivkumar said.

College Bollywood dancing is also much more competitive. The alumni's teams have been to many competitions.

Even though there are many differences between Bollywood dancing in high school and in college, "some elements of the performance will never change," Goel said. "[Especially] the adrenaline rush of performing in front of 2,000 people." ♦

Senior crosses Hindi film dance off bucket list

By Andy Fang

As my high school career hits its twilight days, I've decided to finally attempt all the things I had been too timid or complacent for in the past. On this bucket list are formidable activities like surviving the three-day long hiking trail Skyline-to-the-Sea, reversing gender roles at a school dance and forging a friendship with Jeanine, the mysterious campus supervisor who I'm convinced has a thrilling life story.

Though not as outlandish, my bucket list also includes learning Bollywood dance, which I've come to realize (though perhaps a little too late) affords certain men at our school celebrity of lofty heights.

At our school, dancing on Bombay in the Bay is basically the social equivalent of playing football at Los Gatos High School.

Yet I've always been wary of attempting this exotic demonstration of masculinity and physical prowess simply because I have little to no experience with dance. I've been to school dances, but they don't necessarily require much hand-eye coordination, talent or self-respect.

Bollywood Beginnings

To help me accomplish my goal, I enlisted the help of senior Sanjna Verma, who serves as one of the choreographers of

Bombay in the Bay. She offered to give me a quick and dirty tutorial of this year's Bombay in the Bay senior class dance.

We agreed to meet each other outside of the Journalism Room on a Friday tutorial for the lesson. I soon realized that suggesting a public location for my lesson was incredibly foolish. With my dancing skill set, I should have suggested a windowless basement.

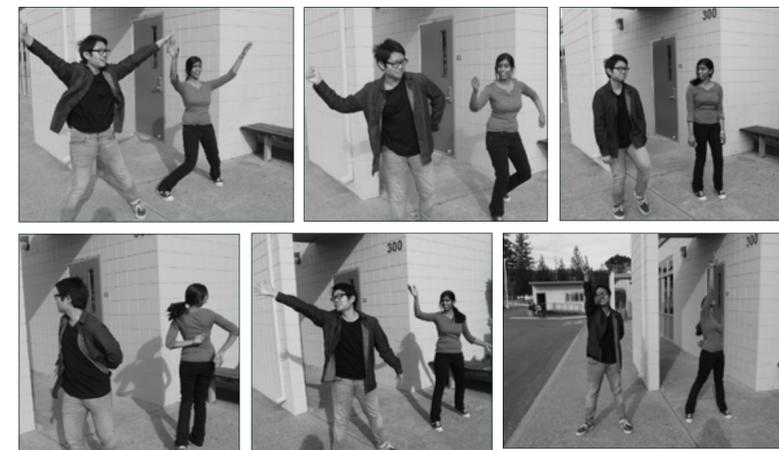
The Lesson

She began the lesson with slow run-throughs of dance moves. I internally scoffed at the simplicity of the moves when she demonstrated them to me, but when I actually attempted them myself, the moves inexplicably became physically impossible.

We shuffled laboriously through a series of moves that ranged from turning and twirling to pointing at the sky.

After 20 minutes or so, I ashamedly demanded respite. While panting, I asked her how much of the dance we had covered so far; my heart sank when she told me it was only 30 seconds.

After a couple minutes of break, I decided to give up learning new dance moves and pair the moves I had already learned to the dance number's song, "Banjaara", from the 2012 Bollywood action film, "Ek Tha Tiger". Such a step sounds pleasant in theory, but the song



FALCON // JADE BISHT

Senior Andy Fang attempts to follow with mentor senior Sanjna Verma's dance choreography to "Banjaara."

reflected the real pacing of the dance, which was sadly much faster than I was prepared for.

As I clumsily struggled to keep up with the song, I noticed that students passing by would emit understandably malicious giggles and initiate condescending eye contact. One of these unwanted bystanders, senior Christine Xue, later confided to me with barely restrained glee that I looked like Mitt Romney playing invisible volleyball.

The attention, in turn, flustered me even more and my dancing further degenerated.

This was far from what I had envisioned for my big debut. After a couple more feeble attempts to dance alongside the music, I decided I had had enough, and Verma happily obliged to end our lesson.

An Unsuccessful Endeavor

I was both physically and mentally wiped out. To add to my distress, the oddly catchy tune of Banjaara cycled through my head for the remainder of the day, reminding me repeatedly of my abject failure to dance well.

Verma told me after our lesson concluded that while my hand to leg coordination "seemed to not be there," my energy and smiles made up for it. Verma, I learned, is not only suited for dance but also politics.

Nevertheless, I'm still happy that I went outside of my comfort zone and tried something I had previously always admired from the sidelines. Though I learned dancing isn't my forte, I'm ready to move on to the next thing on my checklist. Jeanine, here I come! ♦

'3 Idiots' the smart move

I've always been a fan of Indian cuisine (I'm always down for some mo' samosas), but until just a short while ago, I would have naively dismissed the idea of watching a Bollywood movie. However, after seeing a few yearly "Bombay in the Bay" performances hosted by the school (tickets are still on sale, by the way!), I have become much more open to watching Bollywood movies.



MICHAEL LEE
Pectorales Maximus

In the winter of 2012, Christmas came a day early: after our Christmas Eve dinner, my family and I got together to watch the wonderful world of Bollywood as we watched the film "3 Idiots" together. Despite its somewhat misleading

title, "3 Idiots" is a work of cultural genius. The movie's passionate dancing and goofy yet catchy Hindi songs enhanced the important messages of the movie. The various songs — from the heart-wrenching "Jaane Nahin Denge Tujhe" to the much lighter "Aal Izz Well" — are still clear in my memory, just as fresh as the numbers of English musicals I have seen.

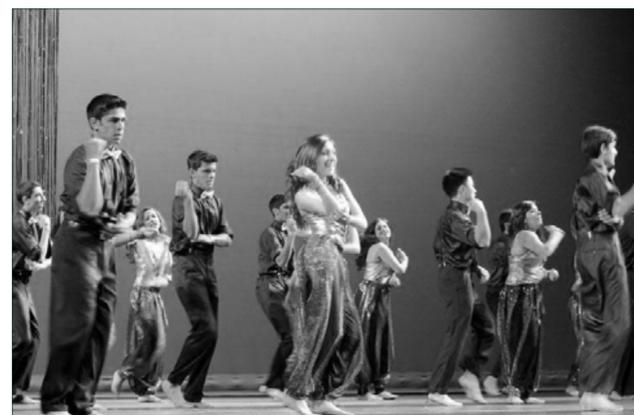
Of course, there is much more to a film like "3 Idiots" than the musical aspects. The movie chronicles the struggles of Indian engineering students against parental pressure and our first paner-infused taste of the wonderful world of Bollywood as we watched the film "3 Idiots" together. Despite its somewhat misleading

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>> picturethis



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The class of 2012 Bombay in the Bay participants perform at last year's exhibition.



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Opportunities

Languages change with student taste

by Helen Wong

The foreign language program has offered many languages since the school was founded in 1959, including Latin, German and Japanese. All three of those languages have been phased out due to lack of sign-ups.

German, which was once quite popular, was discontinued in the late '80s. The language was taught by Anita Norans from 1980 to 1987.

After it was cut, Saratoga students who wished to take German could take it at Los Gatos if needed. Norans cited a changing student mentality at the school as the reason German declined in popularity.

"German simply went out of fashion with the students," said Norans. "It happens."

In contrast, Spanish has never lost its momentum since being introduced at the opening of the school back in 1959.

Arnaldo Rodriguez, who teaches Spanish, has been at the school for 39 years, long enough to watch several lan-

guages come and go.

"We had German, Latin and Japanese go, but now, we have Chinese," said Rodriguez. "When we started Chinese, we did it to go along with the changing demographics."

Changing demographics are a key factor in determining the languages to be taught at SHS, and Chinese turned out to be one of the results of a rising Asian-American populace when it was introduced 13 years ago.

While the introduction of Chinese was controversial at first due to concerns that it would squeeze out Japanese, Chinese became a popular language fairly quickly and did indeed overtake Japanese.

"We started to get more students of Chinese descent that wanted to take the language, so we had to adjust as was proper," said Rodriguez.

The Chinese program is robust and shows no signs of failing any time soon, though there were initially a few bumps in the road.

"We had many students enter the Chi-



Left: Once a German teacher, Norans acts as a substitute teacher at the school. Right: Rodriguez has been at here for 39 years and still teaches Spanish to students today.

nese program who already had a grasp of the language," said Rodriguez. "It kind of intimidated non-Asian students, but now, we have more diversity in the program, with non-Asian students."

Peer pressure is also a factor in determining the popularity of a language. "[German, Latin, and Japanese] were great," said Rodriguez. "But, students make their own choices, and their friends often influence them."

The language department does its best to keep teaching the languages that students want to learn.

Language provides valuable opportunities for students who go out into

the working world as jobs that involve knowledge of foreign language are always in demand.

Language is also a vital tool to communicate effectively and appreciate the diversity of other cultures. Much like computer code, it is always best to know more than one version.

At Saratoga High, every teacher tries their hardest to give students the best experience when learning a new language.

"Learning another language is always good, always beneficial," Rodriguez said. "We, as the teachers, do what we can. We listen to our students." ♦

missed

REPORTERS INVESTIGATE ONCE-POPULAR CLASSES THAT HAVE SINCE BEEN CUT

Palma mourns loss of woodshop, autoshop

All photos from past Talisman editions

by Arman Vaziri

Saws buzz. Hammers thud. Engines growl. These sounds are no longer heard in the school's quiet hallways since woodshop and autoshop were placed on the cutting board.

At the beginning of the 2012-13 school year, woodshop was cut due to low enrollment. Another hands-on class, autoshop, from a slightly distant past, was also cut. Now, students no longer have the opportunity to take a class where they can use their creativity to build or fix what they desire.

"A typical day [in woodshop started with] students coming in and working on their projects which depended on the level of class and the time of year," former woodshop teacher Tony Palma said.

According to Palma, most of the students who signed up for woodshop and autoshop were new to the craft and had never learned to use most of the tools.

"A lot of the students who came into woodshop were beginners, never having used a power tool in their life so we

started off really small [with the projects]," Palma said.

In woodshop, students would have to design their projects before actually making it. Designing a project involved sketching it out and planning ahead to conserve supplies.

"Students before every project would have to design and draw it out and had to make a materials list and then take the materials list and translate it into the product," Palma said.

Projects that students would have in woodshop started small, beginning with projects such as learning how to use hand tools, making birdhouses, and building stools. Students would also have independent projects where they would have the freedom to build whatever they wanted after designing the projects.

"[What students would build] depended on the level of the class and the time of year," Palma said. "When I taught the class, there were certain projects that the students would have to do... and there were also open projects."

At the time Palma was

teaching, there were only three woodshop classes, each of which could contain no more than 30 students per class. However, Palma believes that there should have been less students because there were only a certain amount of tools in the woodshop room and when waiting for the tools, students had a tendency to goof off.

"When [students] were waiting to do something [for a project], they started doing things they shouldn't be doing," Palma said. "That's why it's important to keep enrollment low. So we would run sections of 28 to 30 [students]."

Autoshop, while still requiring hands-on knowledge, focused more around the mechanical side of things, including fixing different parts of cars.

"For a while, we were doing oil changes for teachers' cars. We also had a couple of cars in the back that we would do basic automotive repair stuff on," Palma said.

According to Palma, the problem with autoshop was a lack of facilities. They had to work either outside or in what is now the weight room. All of the old autoshop supplies are



Woodshop was offered since the school was founded until last spring.

buried underneath the current weight room, covered under the mats.

"The fact of the matter is that if you're going to do serious auto work, you're going to need the right facilities to support it," Palma said.

Though woodshop and autoshop classes are in the past now, the planning and design-

ing skills learned in these classes are invaluable and Palma still believes these classes could still be useful for future careers.

"I think there are a lot of career opportunities, in wood-working and in metal," said Palma. "People need parts, but also people need students who can think both conceptually and physically." ♦

Past graduates appreciate value of learning to sew

by Sanj Nalwa

The thread follows the needle closely as Nancy Flowers' fingers dance gracefully across the fabric. The year is 1977, and this is sewing class.

Sewing used to be offered as a class at the school, much like ceramics or art classes are offered now.

"The classes were very useful," Flowers, class of 1977, said. "At that time, clothes were expensive and it was cheaper to sew. Now, clothes are cheaper than the materials, so sewing is mostly for custom clothes."

Flowers said sewing was an outlet for her in high school and taught her life-

long skills that have made her a more whole person.

"I still use skills such as pattern/direction following, spatial relations, fine motor skills, problem solving and perseverance," Flowers said. "It was a very good form of social acceptance and self-esteem for me. I continued to sew throughout college."

Flowers took sewing all through high school and said that the class was chock-full of girls, with boys taking woodshop and autoshop.

The sewing classes were taught by Barbara Simpson, who no longer works at the school.

Flowers remarked that sewing was

not without its own set of challenges.

"I was so frustrated after repeatedly ripping out my mistakes one day that I told the teacher that the class should be called Ripping 1 and not Sewing 1," Flowers said.

Karen Werner, class of 1977 and mother of current junior Jennie Werner, also holds fond memories of the class.

"The most memorable part of the class was the teacher [Simpson]," Werner said. "I remember her as someone who was genuinely interested in me as a person, and I think she was the teacher I went to when I needed a letter of recommendation for my first after-school job."

Werner said it is doubtful whether

students today would sign up for a sewing class were it offered, marking that "there seems to be too much emphasis on taking classes that are geared for getting into college."

Flowers said that if it were offered as a class, it would endow students with skills they would use later in life.

"I think this generation needs to learn to work with their hands and have the pride and joy of accomplishing something," Flowers said. "Functional daily living skills and actually touching and completing projects with your hands is very important. But it would have to have a theme that would interest this generation of high schoolers." ♦

Teacher, alumni remember poetry class fondly

by Amy Lin

As the incoming students begin the arduous task of choosing electives for their first year of high school, some classes they could have taken five years ago are no longer an option.

Offered and supported throughout its history by the English Department, Creative Writing: Poetry, which won state and national recognition for the quality of its curriculum, was discontinued due to a lack of sign-ups in 2010. The class was taught by Judith Sutton from 1999 until 2009 when she retired to focus on her own writing and private program she teaches called Poetry Power. Poetry was then continued by English teacher Bill Peck until 2010. Despite this, many of the former students, both male and female, still look back to the class as one of the best they took.

"Poetry was a life-changing class for most of the people in it," 2012 alumna Sanjana Chetia said. "We discovered ourselves and the power of our writing under poetry's guidance."

The class consisted of two parts, writing poetry and analyzing poetry. Much of the class depended on the students' motivation to work hard and willingness to put in time and effort, said 2012 alumna Sophie Kang.

Another interesting aspect of Poetry was its Friday tutorial field trips. The students went to places like Wildwood Park, Blue Rock Shoot, Bella Saratoga and Peck Heritage Gardens to get inspired to write in their poetry journals.

"The largest commitment we had was taking field trips to various places during Friday tutorials," 2012 alumna Darisha Jhuity said. "However, they were actually the best and most re-



The poetry program, cut in 2009, was once a favorite of many students on campus.

warding part."

These trips helped the students write in a timely fashion and brought them closer together.

"Combined with the lunch period, [the trips] gave us just enough time to not only get inspired in our own poetry, but to hear poems of others and write in our poetry journals," Sutton said. "The trips also always involved a meal we shared together."

Other students agree that although the class was an effort to keep up with, they were extremely satisfied with the results. In addition to helping the students create their own poetry and studying the historical background of written poetry, the students also developed other skills, like teaching and time management. The class also emphasized speaking in front of audiences, writing in poetic form, applying poetry techniques save rhyme to improve ability to write prose and analyzing poems in an in-depth manner.

"The courses not only focused on

writing poems, but also analyzing them at a deep level, excellent preparation for college entrance and AP tests," Sutton said.

Another unique characteristic of Poetry was its guest teachers and helpers. Sutton frequently sought donations to hire poets to come teach and help the students with their own poetry. One notable assistant was Erica Goss, who is now the Poet Laureate of Los Gatos.

"Every student received a lot of attention," Sutton said, "not only from me, but the wonderful writers who worked to help the students."

Because there were three levels of Poetry, a mentoring system was established to help students at all levels. Poetry I students were mentored by Poetry II students; Poetry II students were mentored by Poetry III students, the students from the graduate division of Poetry at San Jose State University and Sutton herself through a weekly series of private evening seminars; Poetry III students were mentored mostly

by Goss and Sutton. While Sutton was teaching, Peck also worked with all levels of Poetry, coached students for their various performances and taught all poems Shakespearean in nature.

"The higher levels of Poetry arranged seminars, mentored the lower levels, and wrote and studied much more, so [we] were always busy in and out of class," Chetia said.

These unique teaching methods helped a lot though, and resulted in multiple awards and publications across the nation, Sutton said, some earned as early on as Poetry I. Standard English classes at school can also be credited for helping the Poetry students' literary works.

"[Many students] received significant literary awards in Poetry II and III from adult literary journals and organizations," Sutton said. "They all recorded them on their college applications and many college interviewers chose to discuss their work in Poetry."

The students are not the only ones who think back to the class as a busy workspace. Sutton agrees that the elective often kept her busy, and she sometimes misses the "hustle-bustle" of being a classroom teacher.

All of the former students agree that if Poetry were brought back as an elective, it would be beneficial.

"You can really learn a lot about yourself and what's important to you when going through the process of creative writing," Kang said. "A class to focus on your own personal writing is hugely important to not only becoming a better writer but also developing as a person." ♦

If you are interested in studying poetry privately, email Judith Sutton at jsutton46@comcast.net.

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STUDY SHORTCUTS CAN SOMETIMES BE MORE HARMFUL THAN HELPFUL

Experts weigh in on abusing study drugs

BY Lauren Louie

As high school progresses, so does the level of stress. Workloads increase while hours of sleep decrease, and some students start to turn to drugs for a competitive advantage. Doctors and teenagers from over 15 schools with high academic standards estimate that 15 percent to 40 percent of students use drugs for an academic advantage, according to a story in The New York Times.

In recent years, students at high pressure high schools have resorted to taking prescription drugs known as amphetamines, most commonly prescribed to patients who have ADHD. These drugs can increase stamina and concentration. They are meant to help a patient concentrate for an extended period of time.

For that very reason, these study drugs are abused to help students study and perform on tests.

While these drugs offer an easy way to balance extracurriculars and maintain high grades, those who are using them are often unaware of the undesirable consequences that they present.

The Drug Enforcement Administration lists Adderall, the most popular study drug, as a class 2 controlled substance, the same as cocaine and morphine.

Douglas Young, spokesman for the Lower Merion School District outside Philadelphia, told The Times that students are unaware of the damage they do to themselves.

"It's time for a serious wake-up call," Young said.

Side effects and consequences from prolonged use include elevated blood pressure, increased heart rate, increased respiration, suppressed appetite, sleep deprivation, feelings of hostility, paranoia, dangerously high body temperature, lethal seizures or cardiovascular failure.

The superintendent of Long Beach Public Schools, David Weiss, said. "It has not been a surface issue for us—we're much more conscious of alcohol or other drug use. We haven't had word that it's a widespread issue."

The Times article said that study drugs rank among the most addictive

substances that have medical use.

The drug itself is a prescribed medication. For that reason, lending or selling it to a friend can be prosecuted as a felony. Often, students will fake symptoms of ADHD in order to be prescribed the desired medication.

Part of the problem is the doctors themselves. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the disorder calls for symptoms such as inattentiveness and hyperactivity in at least two settings.

Part of this impairment must have been evident by the age of 7. Doctors also say that the diagnosis requires interviews with parents, teachers, and peers as confirmation. Instead of following these guidelines, doctors normally listen to the patient and prescribe the drugs.

In addition, parents are known to pressure doctors for pills, especially once they are aware of the academic benefits for their child.

Some proponents claim that some deserving students may be left behind when applying for colleges without the use of the drugs.

However, others argue that this does not take away from the fact that the substance is being misused and becomes the equivalent of cheating.

In a study conducted by Time magazine, it was predicted that students would "regard steroid use as more necessary to winning in sports than stimulant use was to academic achievement." The opposite turned out to be true.

"Straight A's and high SAT scores look great on paper, but they aren't reflective measures of a student's health and well-being," Young said. "We need to better understand the pressures and temptations, and ultimately we need to embrace new definitions of student success. For many families and communities, that's simply not happening." ♦

Adderall misused by desperate students

BY Rachel Hull & Nitya Sampath

At colleges like Columbia University, students have been selling Adderall to each other for years.

It is estimated by the New York Times that 20 percent of college students have used Adderall and other related drugs to aid them when studying.

Adderall is a medication used to treat ADHD, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, which is defined by a difficulty concentrating, as well as hyper and impulsive behavior.

It is a disorder seen more in boys than in girls, and according to Specialized Academic Instruction teacher and special education department chair Terra Vitarelli,

it is much more prominent at the school than people might think. "I couldn't give you an accurate figure, but I could say that there are students who aren't even in our program who have ADHD," Vitarelli said.

"So I think that number [of students] would probably be quite high." Vitarelli said that to an outsider, students with ADHD might simply seem overly dreamy or antsy, which is why people often underestimate its prevalence in the school and community.

"They're really fidgety, or they constantly tap their pencils on their desks or have fidget toys, something in their hand always," Vitarelli said.

Vitarelli said people often have misconceptions about ADHD, picturing students with it to have passive attitudes regarding school, with no interest in learning or obnoxious behavior.

Vitarelli said the size of the impact that ADHD has on students varies due to multitude of factors. "It depends on how severe it is for each individual and how they are able to cope with it and if they

are able to find some coping mechanisms to deal with it," Vitarelli said. "There are a lot of students who have ADHD who choose not to take medication, who are able to find other ways to channel their energy and their focus."

ADHD is commonly treated with either Ritalin, a psycho stimulant drug, or Adderall, a stimulant drug.

Vitarelli said these medications are meant to have a "calming effect" on those who require them.

"They are playing with fire. Your brain is still developing when you're a teenager," Vitarelli said, "and when you start different sorts of medications, you can essentially alter your brain functioning for the rest of your life."

Since it is illegal to possess Adderall without a prescription, sometimes students without an attention deficit disorder seek out psychiatrists who will give them the drug without much of a second thought.

ABC News stated that in 2007, 5.4 million school-aged children were diagnosed with ADHD.

According to IMS Health, the number of Adderall prescriptions increased by 13.4 percent between 2009 and 2010.

According to Contemporary Justice Review, the drug can also be easily purchased from peers for \$3-\$10 per pill or "borrowed" from family members.

The consequences for selling Adderall include up to 60 days in prison and 18 months probation.

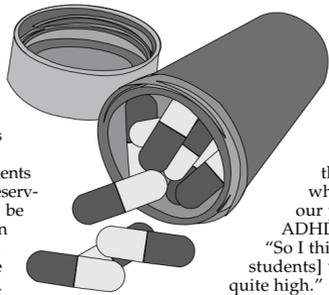
The impact of carelessly dabbling with study drugs can often be larger than a little jail time, however.

Vitarelli said the negative effects of needlessly taking ADHD drugs can be long-lasting.

"Students may see the short-term benefits of it, but in reality, is that something that you want to rely on for the rest of your life?" Vitarelli said.

Vitarelli said adderall use may lead to reliance and other issues as an adult.

"I don't think at that time in your life you would necessarily want to be popping pills to get through it," Vitarelli said. ♦



>> togatalks

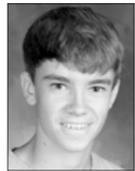
Do you think it is OK for students to use study drugs?

"I think it gives students an unfair advantage."



senior Eric Om

"I don't like it. [It is] unsafe and unnatural."



junior Drew Bryan

"It's wrong. It's never worth it to take these drugs just to try to do well on a test."



junior Eric Ringsrud

Excessive caffeine poses significant risk

BY Michelle Leung

In 2011, a 14-year-old girl bought and drank a 24 oz. can of Monster Energy Drink from a mall in Maryland. A few hours after she drank another can the following day, she went into cardiac arrest, which may have partly resulted from a heart problem, but may have been triggered by the excessive caffeine in the drink. The girl never woke up.

Common highly caffeinated beverages such as Red Bull and Rockstar often include additives such as sugar, ginseng and guarana; these additives enhance caffeine's effects, both positive and negative. Most energy drink companies do not even label their products with the amount of caffeine present.

In 2012, the Food and Drug Administration investigated another five deaths and a heart attack linked to the high caffeine content of Monster Energy Drinks. Other energy drink companies have faced similar investigations. Despite these incidents, many students continue to rely on caffeinated drinks to study.

According to the Johns Hopkins Medi-

cal Center, 90 percent of Americans consume some form of caffeine daily, and more than half consume an amount greater than the recommended maximum 300 milligrams a day.

Caffeine is not dangerously addictive. In fact, according to the National Library of Medicine, a reasonable amount of caffeine, around 100 milligrams for teens, can even provide people with certain health benefits such as increased energy.

"I don't think caffeine is dangerous in most cases," junior Natalie So said. "Only in extreme doses does it pose a danger."

However, many students have a level of dependency on caffeine that borders on addiction. Caffeine from coffee or soda stimulates the central nervous system, releasing adrenaline. The adrenaline makes users feel more alert, have more energy and concentrate better. Often, a cup of coffee is all that a student needs for the day.

"[Caffeine] helps me when I need to

study or do lots of homework," So said. "I usually get my fix from Starbucks or Red Bull. I like how energy drinks also has the sugar to keep you going, since coffee is kind of bitter."

However, when teens regularly exceed the National Library of Medicine's recommended dosage 200-300 milligrams a day, health problems such as anxiety, irritability, insomnia, headache and heart problems can result. The excess adrenaline released by caffeine makes drinkers emotional rather than logical.

The excess adrenaline released by caffeine makes drinkers emotional rather than logical.

Freshman Kelly Xiao believes that such effects of caffeine are dangerous.

"I personally don't drink those kinds of drinks because I think they're unhealthy," Xiao said. "My mom always spent a good deal of time venting about 'chemicals' and 'cancer-causers.' Apparently energy drinks were in that category."

An overdose of caffeine can actually kill a person, although an amount of caffeine equivalent to 100 cups of coffee would be

needed. A single cup of coffee usually contains 100 milligrams of caffeine. Caffeine levels in sodas vary. However, the increased consumption of energy drinks in recent years has led to unprecedented quantities of caffeine intake.

Although nothing has been confirmed, studies done by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration revealed that the number of hospital visits related to caffeine doubled to 21,000 between 2007 and 2011.

While a few cups of coffee do not contain enough caffeine to seriously affect teens, a few energy drinks pack in more than double that amount.

In other words, fuel in the form of several energy drinks for a last-minute study session can actually be dangerous.

Matthew Keefer of the Children's Hospital Los Angeles told myhealthnewsdaily.com, "If an older child has a cup of coffee or a soda every once and awhile it's not a big deal."

But Keefer said the effects of drinking caffeine-overloaded energy drinks may be too much of a risk for students. ♦

Sleep deprivation results in poor performance

BY Rachel Hull & Nitya Sampath

Eighteen to 20 hours without sleep, and one might as well be drunk. According to the periodical "Men's Fitness," being deprived of sleep for this amount of time is equivalent to having a blood alcohol level of 0.1, 0.02 above the legal limit.

During adolescence, sleep is especially important for growth and development, and the National Sleep Foundation recommends that everyone get seven to nine hours of sleep per night. Often, however, these numbers are far from reality for students who stay up to study and keep up with other activities. This late-night cramming has more negative effects than people might think.

According to the magazine New Scien-

tist, the main causes of sleep deprivation are excessive TV, Internet and cell phone use late at night. Sleep-deprived children are also twice as likely to be obese, compared to children who sleep for adequate amounts of time.

Sophomore Eunju Pak, who sometimes goes to sleep anywhere between 2 and 5 a.m. two and five, said extracurricular activities, such as track and tutoring classes, and in combination with regular schoolwork, are what keep her awake at night.

"If I have track, I'll probably be exhausted. I have chemistry class that goes from 8:30 to 10, and I get home at 10:30," Pak said. "So I usually go to sleep late on Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays because I have to finish up my homework."

Once, Pak stayed up all night to study

for finals.

"I pulled an all-nighter in finals week, but [I] never stay up [to] mess around," Pak said. "It's because I mess around during the day."

According to the book "Improving Sleep" people's memory and reaction times get worse as they sleep for decreased amounts of time. In addition, two or more nights with little sleep can cause headaches, stomach issues, sore joints and irritability.

Pak said the main effect that lack of sleep has on her is an ill temper. She believes, however, that sleep deprivation does not significantly impact her academic performance.

"It doesn't really affect my grades," Pak said, "but I get cranky. I get really cranky."

Even so, a recent study by the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) showed that the less sleep students in Los Angeles high schools got, the worse they performed on tests, quizzes or homework. The researchers emphasized the importance of finding a balanced schedule rather than staying up late to study. ♦



Students prepare for tests with different approaches

BY Sanj Nalwa & Bruce Lou

Sophomore Joy Tang felt doomed. It was the day after finals, and she didn't have any time at all that week to study for her permit test. Desperate, she tucked the driver's Handbook under her pillow, hoping it would bring her luck in the test the next day. Tang passed.

This is just one of the unusual methods students use to study.

Tang also has an unusual way of studying vocabulary words.

"I make the most ridiculous analogies for vocab words when I'm studying," Tang said. "I break words up into something completely random so I can remember them."

Tang said in order to remember words, she connects them to other words that sound similar.

"For laudable, to me it sounds kind of like laundry," Tang said. "I'm always grateful that my mom does my laundry for me, even though it is such a small task. So that's how I remember that laudable means deserving praise or commendable."

Junior Steven Cho also has his own unusual way of studying.

Cho said he listens to music when studying for math tests, assigning each step of a problem to a specific part of a

song he likes. When taking the test, he associates the parts of the song with the steps of the problem.

Junior Caitlin Hung also uses music for studying; however, she takes a more unconventional approach.

"I have to study with a lot of noise," Hung said. "Since my siblings are so noisy, I have to blast music when they're not making noise."

Hung said she plays iheartradio, a radio station, on her phone when her siblings are absent. She also said that she does not like to study in libraries because they are so quiet.

"The library is empty and it's so quiet," Tang said. "Basically, I work better when there's lots of noise."

Junior Akshay Madhani does not incorporate music into his studying, but he says timing is everything.

"I never study before the night before a test," Madhani said. "I know this sounds crazy to some, but except for midterms/finals, I don't think [studying before that is] a great idea."

Madhani said that by studying the night before, he recalls the information much better.

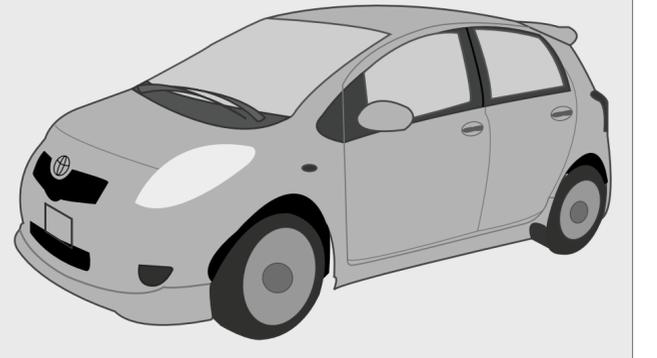
"Doing a lot of the same thing the night before makes sure the material is fresh in your mind and you are in the right gears to take the test," Madhani said. ♦

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SOFTBALL

Girls bouncing back from last season

BY Sophie Mattson

The softball team is making a comeback from its last 5-17 season and is proving to be formidable competition in the El Camino league.

The Falcons played their rival Gunn in a close game on March 27 and won 2-1. As of March 28, the team was 3-0 in the league and 12-3 overall.

"The pitcher we faced was the best one we have seen yet and probably the best in our league," Bowker said. "What helped us win was our base running."

Prior to playing Gunn, the girls won 8-5 against Scotts Valley on March 25 and 14-3 against Mountain View on March 22.

"Defense and hitting were pretty solid overall. We were also able to string hits together and didn't strand too many runners," junior third baseman Hera Tang said.

Prior to the game against Mountain View, the Falcons won 5-0 against Prospect in a non-league game on March 19.

"We came in with a negative attitude, but we got better and played good defense and did a good job," junior left fielder Tivoli Sisco said.

The team is aiming to move up from the El Camino league to the De Anza league next year; however, the team has some weaknesses to resolve.

"Sometimes we get down on ourselves if we are losing, which just makes it worse, so that's definitely a weakness," Sisco said.

Freshman shortstop Eleni Spirakus is proving to be a rising star on the team.

"She is a smart batter and has a wide fielding range at shortstop, which is really important," Bowker said. "She has also been consistent since the beginning of the season."

The main pitchers are Tang, Spirakus



Freshman Stephanie Hayes swings at bat against Scotts Valley on March 25.

and sophomore Analisa Ruff. This season, Ruff has worked hard to keep the pressure off of defense during games.

"She's been doing really well this

year. She hits her spots and rarely gives up base hits or walks so it takes a lot of pressure off of defense," Bowker said.

The team will play Fremont today. ♦

BOYS' GOLF

Parden leads undefeated 9-0 team to success

BY Priya Nookala

After winning 195-228 and 195-210 in matches against Lynbrook and Wilcox, respectively on March 25, the boys' golf team remained undefeated and in the record stands at 9-0 as of March 28.

"We were not as comfortable with the course, but we just really focused and bore down [to overcome] that," junior Christian Galvin said. "And being undefeated just shows that we are living up our own expectations."

The team also had decisive victories of 193-226 and 181-193 against Milpitas

and Los Gatos respectively on March 11 and March 12.

Senior Robbie Parden said the match against Los Gatos was the most important one of the season because winning the match essentially puts the team in the position to have a guaranteed win in league championships.

It also marked an impressive achievement for Parden who played an almost flawless nine holes, recording an eagle and two birdies. His

score of 4 under par in nine holes is one of the lowest in school history.

Galvin feels that the team's greatest asset this season has been consistency from everyone as a whole and particularly from the top three players (Parden, himself and sophomore Robbie Gragnola). He also recognizes Parden's

unique role on the team.

"As an individual he definitely sets the example of how we want to play

and as team players he and I both try to help out the other players build up their games for the end of this year and next year," Galvin said.

The team hopes to continue with the same momentum and is well on its way to the overall goal of winning leagues and giving it their best effort in CCS. But the team is focusing on the upcoming match against Santa Clara on April 8 on the home course at Saratoga Country Club.

"We know the course well, we expect to play well and we expect to win," Parden said. ♦

Being undefeated just shows that we are living up to our own expectations.

>> Junior Christian Galvin

BOYS' TENNIS

Youngsters carry team

UNDERCLASSMEN PROVE TO BE KEY AS THE NEW SEASON BRINGS CHALLENGES

BY Mini Palaniappan & Sudeep Raj

The 5-2 boys' tennis team recently defeated Cupertino 4-3 on March 28. All three doubles teams and sophomore No. 1 singles Neel Bedekar won their matches.

Prior to playing Cupertino, the team pulled out a clutch 4-3 victory over Lynbrook on March 21.

Freshman No. 4 singles player Jihau Yu broke the 3-3 tie in the final match, pulling out a close win.

Other than Yu, all of the doubles teams won their matches.

According to Maheswari, the singles squad has been struggling following the loss of junior Kial Kaiser, who consistently secured the team at least one match as No. 1 singles.

Kaiser is playing more competitive non-school tennis this year.

In addition, both junior No. 2 singles player Zack Hewlin and sophomore No. 2 doubles player Rohit Rao are out of action due to injury.

"[Our loss of players] makes a big impact on the team, because everyone has to move up one spot," sophomore dou-

bles player Vikram Ramesh said. Consequently, underclassmen have been playing a major role in this year's team. Key additions include freshman doubles player Karthik Padmanabhan and Yu to the varsity squad.

In addition, Ramesh, Rao, Bedekar and sophomore doubles player Hans Sun have been playing major roles on the team.

"It's a strong start for the team with many underclassmen. Since we're young, we have time to grow in our roles," Ramesh said.

The lack of powerhouse singles players cost the team an early 4-3 loss to Los Altos on March 14.

Although injuries have hurt the singles squad, Saratoga's doubles teams have seen great success when facing against powerhouse teams such as Monta Vista and Palo Alto.

"As a singles player, it's good to know that doubles is basically a guaranteed win," Bedekar said. "[Our doubles] is the best in our league, and maybe the best in CCS."

The Falcons will play Palo Alto again on April 9. ♦



Yu

GIRLS' TRACK

Athletes working toward achieving full potential

BY Jade Bisht & Jane Park

The girls' track team recently faced off against Milpitas in its third meet of the season on March 21. Although the team lost, senior Maya Nag placed first in both the 1600-meter and 3200-meter races with times of 5:41.09 and 12:26.71, respectively. Senior Jennifer Jin also placed first in the 100-meter hurdles with a time of 17.75.

"We competed really well," coach Archie Ljepava said. "We were overwhelmed because the other team were older and we have a younger team, but we're learning what high school track is about."

New coaching methods have been successful in yielding impressive results so far, according to Nag. The girls' long distance team has also been focusing more on well-rounded fitness by incorporating weekly weight training into practices.

"We're training our core and upper body," Nag said. "I can see my performance improving from last year. The weight lifting really helps and is a good implementation for an overall

better performance."

With approximately 80 sophomores enrolled in track this year, underclassmen have become key to the team's development.

Senior distance runner Emma Lee sees a lot of potential in the numerous runners that have joined this season.

"I feel like we have a lot of raw talent, and all the girls are working really hard and everyone has a great attitude," Lee said. "This season has been good in that everyone tries to foster team spirit and we'll definitely improve as the season progresses further."

Prior to the meet with Milpitas, the team competed in the St. Francis Invitational on March 16. During the meet, Nag placed second in both the 800-meter and 1600-meter races with times of 2:34.60 and 5:35.94.

Ljepava is aiming to improve scores and ranks.

"We try keeping a positive mindset," Ljepava said. "Although we work everybody really hard and expect a lot out of them, we try to stay positive all the while."

The team competed against Los Altos on April 4. ♦

BASEBALL

Wins add up after rocky start

BY Elijah Yi

The 4-2 boys' baseball team recently won 7-0 in a blowout contest against Fremont on March 23. The victory extended the Falcons' winning streak to four games.

However, the team's streak came to a crushing stop with a 3-1 loss to Homestead at home on March 27. They gave up three runs in the last two innings. Senior lefty Kyle Dozier pitched six innings and took the loss with only a solo home run against him.

Senior Stevie Burman, the team's ace right-handed pitcher and also catcher, attributes the team's recent success to the team's focus on and enjoyment of the game.

"We played well as a team," Burman said. "We play our best when we are having fun and while playing baseball and not worrying about anything else."

Throughout their winning streak, the Falcons got solid outings from their pitchers. Their pitching core consists of Burman, juniors Thomas Alexander and Bobby Viathanage and seniors Steven Ruff, Trevor Hanks and Kyle Dozier.

Besides the 7-0 shutout against Fremont, the team blanked Santa Clara 9-0 on March 20.

"Our pitchers have done a great job the past week," Burman said. "The starters are do-



Senior Kyle Dozier pitches in a 3-1 loss to Homestead on March 27.

ing a good job going deep into the game and our relievers are doing a great job shutting down and securing the victory."

Prior to the game against Fremont, the Falcons won 6-3 over Santa Clara on March 22. Through another well-played performance from the pitching staff and consistent hitting, the Falcons brought home a victory. Sophomore Joey Medeiros was the winning pitcher, and threw a solid five innings. The Falcons scratched across their runs with aggressive baserunning and small ball.

"We showed how dominant we were in our victory over Santa Clara," Dozier said. "They were definitely a team that we should win against and through a team effort, we were able to pull off the victory."

With a collection of wins piled up from recent games, the team aspires to beat the top teams in their division including Homestead, Wilcox and Los Altos.

"Our league is very tough and we need to continue to work on the little things such as bunting and playing catch," Burman said. "If we do these things and stay together as a team, we will be a really tough team to beat."

Last year the Falcons advanced to the second round of CCS where they fell to Mt. Pleasant. This year, with the core players still on the team, the Falcons plan to go deeper into the playoffs.

The Falcons will play Terra nova High School next on April 9 in an away game. ♦

GIRLS' SWIMMING

With fewer members, team struggles early on

BY Amy Lin

It appears the girls' swim team will be swimming uphill this spring. With only 16 varsity swimmers, the Falcons fell victims to a lopsided 128-45 loss to Gunn on March 22.

"The team is lacking, and it's definitely noticeable because the other teams have twice as many swimmers as we do," senior Stephanie Chen said.

At a meet, each swimmer can swim a maximum of four events, with at most two of the events being individual events.

The Points go to the five fastest swimmers per event, with a maximum of three swimmers scoring per team.

With fewer swimmers attending the meets the Falcons are at a disadvantage.

"They are swimming pretty well, but the team is small," coach Christian Bonner said.

The team is also having to fill holes left by graduation. The team lost key members such as Rebecca Chen, Serena Chan, Natalie Cheung and Stephanie Reyes. Because they all swam breaststroke and butterfly, those events are now lacking.

This loss makes the team record 0-2 with the loss against

Palo Alto 116-54 on March 15.

The considerably lower scores at the meet against Gunn can be attributed to key swimmers missing parts of the meet for the orchestra's California Music Education Association (CMEA) festival.

Junior Janey Heyman, who swam the 100-yard butterfly at the first meet against Palo Alto, also missed the second meet against Gunn because of a choir trip. This left a huge hole in the lineup that not many could fill.

Despite the team's recent low scores, Bonner said the

With fewer swimmers attending the meets, the Falcons are at a disadvantage.

Falcons can reverse course.

"Gunn and Palo Alto are two of the fastest teams,"

Bonner said. "People made CCS cuts at the first meet. There is only one other real high point scoring team this year."

Sophomore Yayla Sezginer made the CCS cuts for the 500-yard freestyle and the 100-yard backstroke, and Chen made the CCS cuts for the 500-yard freestyle and the 200-yard freestyle. Heyman was within tenths of a second for both the 100-yard butterfly and the 200-yard individual medley.

The next meet is against both Monta Vista and Los Altos on April 25. ♦

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BOYS' VOLLEYBALL

Players work their way up the league

By Jay Mulye & Arman Vaziri

Even though the boys' volleyball team headed into the season from a pre-season of four consecutive losses, the 3-1 Falcons are proving to be contenders in the El Camino league.

The team won 3-2 against the Fremont Firebirds on March 22. The Falcons got off to a rocky start, losing their first two sets to the Firebirds. Despite the deficit, the Falcons managed to win the third set, giving themselves the momentum to win the next two sets and the match.

"For Fremont we started really cold because we missed serves," junior opposite hitter Hareet Jhutti said. "In the third [set], we passed really well and that was our momentum starter, which carried us through the rest of the game."

Even though most of the players only have one to two years of volleyball

experience, the team has been nearing the top of the standings in the league.

Although out with an ankle injury, senior outside hitter and team co-captain Teddy Sun said he is pleased with the team's progress.

"I feel that our team this year is doing extremely well in our league for how young our team is," Sun said. "I'm really proud of how recently we beat Fremont playing away, especially since Fremont was team that beat our team last year."

So far, senior Erik Martin has been anchoring the team as a primary blocker. His quick plays and kills to the middle of the court have motivated the other players to improve.

Prior to the game against Fremont, the Falcons lost 3-0 to the Eastside College Prep Panthers on March 19.

"In the second and third [sets], we were demoralized and couldn't pass well, so we unfortunately lost in three



Senior Teddy Sun approaches to bump the ball against Wilcox on March 27 at home.

[sets]," Jhutti said.

After missing CCS by one win last year, the team is hungry for a spot.

"Our goal this year, as our coach [Jason Cardoso] has reiterated since pre-season, is to make it to CCS and become

our league's champions," Sun said. "Moreover, we are on the path to this goal and we all hope to bond as one of the largest teams in the league."

The team will play Santa Clara at home today. ♦

Courtesy of NOW AND FOREVER STUDIOS

BOYS' SWIMMING

Athletes maintain morale

By Andy Fang

The boys' swim team began the season with a rocky start with losses against Palo Alto High School, losing 108-62, and Gunn High School, falling 113-69.

The team is in a rebuilding phase this year after losing key swimmers like alumnus Ian Burns and his brother, former student Aidan Burns, who transferred to Bellarmine.

"After losing the Burns brothers, it has become tougher to keep up with the other teams in our league," said senior Michael Lee, who swims breaststroke and individual medley.

Although the team has had very fast swimmers, it has lacked the sheer quantity of high-point scorers that other teams like Monta Vista have.

Right now, the team's goal is to get as many swimmers to make CCS cuts as possible. In this aspect, the team is doing well, with Saratoga swimmers making 15 CCS cuts at the Palo Alto meet and 12 CCS cuts at the Gunn meet.

Despite the obstacles the team faces, morale remains high.

"The camaraderie we share as a team is one of my favorite aspects of the sport," Lee said. "We may not win every meet, but we don't let that discourage us from having fun and giving our all."

Freshman Bradley Newton, who swims freestyle, found the unified team atmosphere to be a welcome surprise.

"Before becoming part of the team, I visualized [the team atmosphere] as being more separated, where each of the different classes would not really interact," Newton said. "However, when I went to our first meet, I saw that all the grades interacted and being a team was an important part to our success."

Ultimately, the team looks for victories that go beyond point scores and CCS qualifications.

"As long as our swimmers give it their all and have a good time, this season will be a victory in my book," Lee said.

The Falcons will swim off against Los Gatos on April 11. ♦

BOYS' TRACK

Team improvements continue to impress

By Rohan Rajeev

The Falcons hosted a dual meet with the Milpitas Trojans on March 21. Overall, according to boys' long distance coach Dan Ambrico, the team exhibited significant improvement at the meet.

"We've improved every dual meet this year so far," Ambrico said. "At our Mountain View meet [on March 14], we ran stronger than against Palo Alto [on March 7], and at our Milpitas meet, we ran stronger than against Mountain View."

The Falcon 4x400 meter relay team won comfortably against their Trojan counterparts. The team consisted of juniors Will Guy and Travis Stokes and seniors Aasim Naqvi and David Zarrin. Sophomore Steven Sum also won the two-mile run.

Though the coach was pleased with the team, athletes agreed that the races against Milpitas were tough.

"It was pretty hard [since] they have a massive team, around 200 people," distance runner senior Sujay Khanekar said. "They basically loaded up every event so it was really hard for us."

It was a definite improvement from

the previous meet with Palo Alto.

The only notable wins in the meet with the Vikings were senior Aasim Naqvi's comfortable victory in the 800-meter and Steven Sum's in the 3200-meter.

Ambrico named specific talent that would help the team significantly in the second half of the season.

"We're strong in the 800-meter event with Aasim Naqvi, our senior," he said. "He's been excellent this year."

The team is approximately halfway through the season, and coach Ambrico has already chosen some positive highlights so far. The most significant wins during the season to him included juniors Drew Bryan's and Daniel Johnston's two-mile races at the St. Francis meet on March 14th, in which they ran personal records by 20 seconds in the low 10:30's.

It was a definite improvement from the previous meet with Palo Alto.

He also commended Sum's efforts thus far.

"In most of our meets, Steven is one of the top runners in CCS in both the mile and the two-mile," Ambrico said. "He consistently scores points for the team every meet."

He has also set important goals for the upcoming meets and CCS.

"We should continue to perform well in the dual meets and continue to get as many people qualified for the top eight meet later this year, [as well as] for CCS at the end of the year," he said.

The team met Los Altos on April 4 and will compete away from home against both Gunn on April 11 and Lynbrook on April 17 to round out the rest of the season. ♦

>> falconfigures

- 4 Number of meets that have already taken place
- 2 The number of miles sophomore Steven Sum ran against Milpitas
- 4 The number of people in a 1,600-meter relay team

BADMINTON

Girls' matches critical in determining results

By Nick Chow & Lauren Louie

Despite a lack of several members attending an all-state choir trip, the badminton team emerged victorious with a 17-13 win over the Cupertino Pioneers on March 21.

"I thought we did pretty well against Cupertino. We were short a few players, so our lineup was switched up a bit," senior captain Lauren Chu said.

Despite the lack of players, the team was able to overcome this slight disadvantage with inspired and motivated play.

The boys were able to win enough matches to push the team to the win.

"Overall, the boys, who scored majority of the points, definitely helped us win our game," junior Florence Wang said. "As a whole, we scored 17 points. 14 points from the boys and three from the girls."

The team played Monta Vista, the reigning league champions, at home and lost 19-11 on March 19.

"We actually did a lot better than I thought," coach Alex Chan said. "They have really strong girls' [players] and their boys aren't as good as ours, but they're strong overall. [Since it was a] home game, we had a lot of support [and] that helped."

One aspect that the team is trying to improve is the training of the JV members.

They are also trying to improve the team's depth.

"Some strong freshmen are coming in next year," Chan said. "We're only short one girls' doubles pair and one mixed doubles pair. [If we get] a strong [girls'] doubles pair and a strong mixed doubles pair ... we can get the league title."

Just like last season, the boys' players have been among the best in the league, racking up most of the team's victories this season.

Mixed doubles No. 1 consisting of junior Bryan Chow and senior Lauren Chu, singles No. 1 senior Derek Chao and

singles No. 2 freshman Michael Owyang have all been undefeated this season.

As a result, matches often come down to the determining scores of the girls' matches.

In the team's next match against Gunn on March 28, the girls' matches will be critical in determining the final score.

"I don't think that our boys will lose; I think our boys are strong overall," Chan said. "It's going to be how girls will do [that] makes or breaks [the match]." ♦

BOYS' LACROSSE

Team aims to come back, advance

By Michael Lee

After facing two close 5-4 and 12-11 losses to Sequoia High on March 19 and Gunn March 21, the Falcons are aiming to come back and move toward a winning season.

Because the team has only 18 players, they have struggled with limited options of substitutions they can make during games. In particular, the Falcons lost junior defender Brian Park, who transferred to Lynbrook.

"We're a very small team in numbers, so we get tired really easily," senior defender and co-captain Chance Cox said. "At the beginning of the year, it was all conditioning to get us in shape, because we knew we didn't have that many people."

However, players like senior midfielder Jimmy Speedy emphasize the strong offensive and defensive prowess of the Falcons.

"I think our offense is a big strength,

because all three of our offensive players — [senior] Pablo [Parker and juniors] Tony [Capek] and Clark [Rothenberg] — have been playing lacrosse since like sixth grade," Speedy said. "Our defense is very good, too. Chance is an awesome defender. He's a great leader. Same with [senior] Daniel Castronovo."

With a 1-5 record as of their game against Gunn, the Falcons still think they have a chance at making CCS.

"I guess right now [our goal is] just to get better every day," Speedy said. "We focus super hard, and we try to get better every day, every practice. We try to go into each game and give our best effort, to try to out-hustle the other team and hopefully come out with a win."

Despite the challenges the team has faced, both Cox and Speedy expressed their love for the sport.

"For me, personally, [my favorite aspect of lacrosse] is just being able to go out, compete and have fun with my team," Cox said. "It's a sport that I've



Senior midfielder Daniel Castronovo races across the field against Watsonville on March 27.

been playing for a long time now, and I enjoy it."

Cox added, "Come to the games. We like it when fans come."

Saratoga faced Watsonville, Palma

and Leland on March 27, March 29 and April 3. The Falcons will face Los Altos at home tonight, but the Falcon could not cover these games due to printing deadlines. ♦

GIRLS' LACROSSE

Wearing eye black and tattoos, Falcons beat LG

By Jade Bisht & Amy Jan

The girls' lacrosse team recently won 18-5 against Leland on March 26. The team is currently fourth in the league with top scorers senior attack Nessa Kim, junior midfielder Ingrid Hong and junior center Jennie Werner leading the team's offense. So far, the team has a record of 4-3 in the Santa Clara Valley league.

Prior to the game against Leland, the

Falcons had their first-ever victory at home against Los Gatos on March 21.

"The win against Los Gatos was big for the girls and the program," coach Eric Wong said.

Werner points out that the team still has work to do.

"Our team always needs to work on our stick skills," Werner said. "While we are one of the most athletic teams in our league, we often struggle with passing and catching. This year we've been a

second half team and we need to work on coming out strong."

According to Wong, the team is starting to hit its stride as they play through the league schedule and is trying to improve skills of younger players.

"There is no questioning the potential," Wong said. "The only question is how quickly we can get to where we want to be."

To get through the season, Werner believes the team needs emphasize unity.

"Before our LG game, we put on eye black and temporary tattoos," Werner said. "It was a fun way to pump up the team and ensure we came out strong."

The team will be playing Santa Catalina on April 8 at home.

"Our goal this year is to make it to leagues," Werner said. "Last year, we just barely missed the playoffs and we are determined to work hard and show everyone Saratoga is a team to be reckoned with." ♦

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polaroids



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

Senior class president Evelyn Lee sells Jamba Juice to fundraise for the senior class during Club Rush day on March 25.



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

Senior Megan Doles (right) powers down, passing sophomore Adrienne Kim (left), during Powderpuff on March 27.



AL/ISMANI // KATHERINE SUN

On March 28, seniors Pranav Prabhakar (left) and David Ball (right) flip burgers at the Powderpuff Tailgate.



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

During the Spring Fling rally on March 29, junior Sam Guy participates in a rally game and chases a ball down the court.

buzzworthy >> 4 S&D seniors make nationals

BY Rohan Hardikar & Sudeep Raj

This year's National Speech and Debate Qualifiers was the first time in the last few years that the team qualified students to nationals.

At Bellarmine College Preparatory on March 23 and 24, seniors Sujay Khandekar, Ishaan Kolluri, Aneesa Mazumdar and Venkat Munukutla each placed in the top three of their event, qualifying for the national tournament in Alabama during the first week of summer break.

Khandekar qualified in Original Oratory, Kolluri in Domestic Extemp, Mazumdar in Foreign Extemp and Munukutla in Lincoln-Douglas debate.

"It feels pretty exhilarating because in our league, this is truly the tournament

we have to work towards," Kolluri said. "Since we were able to send four people to nationals for the first time in my high school career, I think it is great for the team."

Khandekar feels the same way about the tournament.

"This is amazing for the team. It has been a long time since we have sent speech and debate students to nationals, and since we are sending four, it is incredible," Khandekar said. "It's going to be a lot of fun."

Junior Jason Li received fifth place in the qualifiers, and sophomores Deepti

Kannan and Supriya Khandekar and senior Neil Prasad were semi-finalists, but did not advance to the next stage.

The national tournament is the largest tournament in the country and draws hundreds of contestants from all over. Students have to practice and constantly improve to place at the national level.

For Sujay, making it to nationals was a long and difficult process that required an immense amount of practice and dedication.

"There were some points in the season where I didn't advance in some

tournaments, so I doubled down to improve my speech as much as I could," Sujay said. "I'm really glad my effort paid off in big events like states and national qualifiers."

During the season, the team received third place overall in the league, just behind Bellarmine and Leland High, and the accomplishments at the national qualifier tournament showed the upward trend the team has been displaying throughout.

According to Kolluri, now that this generation of the team has experienced achievements like this, more and more will work hard towards accomplishing the same feat in future years. ♦

>> THE bigidea

Speech and Debate

What was the event
National Speech and Debate Qualifiers

Who qualified for nationals
Seniors Sujay Khandekar, Ishaan Kolluri, Aneesa Mazumdar and Venkat Munkutla

Students and parents are stuck in the 2400 mentality

What's the answer to life, the universe, and everything?

According to many parents, college counselors and even my dentist's receptionist, it's the magic number 2400.

This isn't much of a shock to anyone at an academically competitive high school. I took the SAT back in October. I was happy with my score, and I thought I'd never have to take the SAT again. My friends thought likewise. So when I proudly stated my score in front of my parents and their friends, I expected them to greet the news with applause and approval. So it was to my surprise when they told me that my score was inadequate. They urged me to quickly retake the SAT until I reached an impossibly high score—ideally, 2400.

I was discouraged and disheartened by their remarks. I studied assiduously (adj: constant in application or attention; diligently) for three months for the SAT, doing so many practice tests that I ran out of them. I researched how my scores compared to others; except for a few schools such as Harvard, Yale and Princeton, my score exceeded the average score for all universities I looked up. How could this be considered an inad-

equate score?

But even if my score falls short of perfection, it's no big deal. The SAT is perhaps the most overrated test in the world: parents may use it to determine their children's worth and students use it to gauge their future options, but it's only a three-hour, 45-minute snapshot of a student's ability to answer highly frustrating and confusing multiple-choice questions. According to Matt McGann, Director of Admissions at MIT, most colleges recognize the test's shortcomings and try to weigh other factors equally or more heavily.

The point of the SAT test is to get into college, but some parents—and students—treat it as a rat race. They try to get as high a score as they can, retrying time and time again.

Very few actually achieve the holy-grail score of 2400, and countless hours are wasted trying to achieve a task that has little practical benefit or weight in the real world.

One cause of this behavior is that parents use it as a way to show off to others. By seeing that their child's SAT score is higher than some other parent's child, they feel validated and proud. Also, students often compare SAT scores with

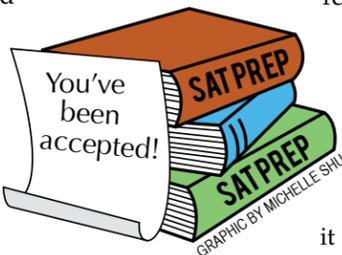
each other, further encouraging the "rat race" mentality.

Both I and most colleges think my score is good enough. Why should I put myself through the nightmare of SAT preparation again and risk getting a lower score for a mere increase of only some tens of points?

Please, parents, don't force your sons and daughters to retake the SAT if he or she is already satisfied. And students, please don't focus your life on a single test score out of 2400. There's enough stress in the world without fretting over getting a perfect score on a highly debatable test. ♦



BRUCE LOU
Bruce Almighty



GRAPHIC BY MICHELLE SHU

topten

APRIL FOOLS' PRANKS

- 10 The classic ketchup under the toilet seat. Splat.
- 9 Hook a dollar to a fishing pole and tempt people around corners.
- 8 There's a spider on you. HEHE!
- 7 Put all the trash cans on the roof and have the Green Team retrieve them.
- 6 If you are a baller, take your skills to the courts while dressed like an old man. Uncle Drew it up.
- 5 Convince a friend to take a school golf cart for a spin.
- 4 Post on Facebook that you got into Stanford and watch as your peers writhe in competitive jealousy.
- 3 Super glue a quarter to the ground and watch as the sheep try to pick it up.
- 2 Send a fake college acceptance letter to your arch-nemesis.
- 1 Walk up to a girl with flowers and a poster. Then, ask her to hold them while you ask another girl to Prom.

>> Nikhil Goel and Rohan Rajeev