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Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA

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Mapping out the hardest and easiest runs in Saratoga, through Farwell trails, up Lookout hills and around Town Loops. **pg. 20**



Down times in Downtown

BY Sabrina Chen
& Samuel Liu

Shopkeeper MaryAnn Serpa looks at her watch and sighs. It's been an hour since the last person came into Skin Prophecy, a small store situated a few skips of a stone away from Wildwood Park, and Serpa is worried.

As she flips through her records, she realizes that only 12 people have entered her shop today, and only three of those 12 have actually bought something. That's slow business — even for a small boutique located in downtown Saratoga.

Serpa is nearing retirement. Born in 1953, Serpa graduated from Saratoga High in 1971, after which she took a variety of jobs working in restaurants and hotels in the North Bay. In 2000, she decided to start a business in Saratoga, since she had always wanted to be an active part of her hometown and needed to work closer to home to take care of her aging mother.

>> Village on pg. 3

THE VILLAGE IS BEAUTIFUL. WHY IS IT FAILING?

The view from a sidewalk on Big Basin Way. Downtown struggles to bring in traffic, despite its picturesque streets and the proximity of a student market.

FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA

NEW TAIPEI CITY VISITORS**Taiwanese educators observe school****MEETING MADE IN HOPES OF FUTURE RELATIONS**

BY Devin Zhao

Taiwan's top education officials, led by Under Secretary for Education in New Taipei City Gong YaWen, visited the school and observed American education at work on Sept. 11.

Saratoga High was one of the two schools the New Taipei City delegates visited. The entire delegation toured one school on the West Coast and one school on the East Coast to

learn about Americans' teacher training and curricula. The delegates will take what they learned from America and try to incorporate it into their current and future school curriculums.

They hope that they could send Taiwanese students to American high schools to actually experience school here and welcomed American high school students to the New Taipei City high school class exchanges.

"American [high schools] are student-centered, and students can decide what they want to learn," Gong



Saratoga and Taiwanese educators met on Sept. 11 to discuss education.

YaWen said in an interview by World Journal. "[Taiwan] is also moving in this direction, but because of the examination system, there are some restrictions; however, we've been going towards diverse education development in recent years."

At 8 a.m. in the library, the delegates were greeted and the orchestras played a Taiwanese folk song called "Spring Breeze."

>> ACADEMICS on pg. 6

STANDARDIZED TESTING

SAT changes focus; ACT goes digital

BY Deepthi Kannan

Freshmen, say goodbye to obscure vocabulary words like "acrimony," "deleterious," "pugnacious" and "obfuscate." According to College Board president David Coleman, the new SAT to be unveiled in 2015 will be redesigned to "focus on the core knowledge and skills that evidence shows are most important to prepare students for the rigors of college and career."

Although the date and specifics of the new test have yet to be released, Rakhi Israni, president of Excel Test Prep, said that it will focus on more relevant vocabulary, a "less coachable essay" and multimedia representations of data, in an attempt to align with Com-

mon Core standards.

"As stated by [Coleman], the main goal of the change is to create an exam that more closely mirrors the skills necessary to excel in college and later in a career," Israni said. "However, they haven't announced any real specifics of how they plan to achieve those goals."

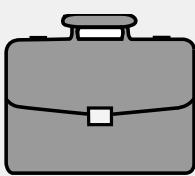
These changes will likely not affect the classes of 2014, 2015 or 2016, but this year's freshmen may have to take the new SAT their junior year, which could be released as early as spring of 2015.

Freshman Jenny Qian, who plans on taking the SAT during her junior year, said she approves of the changes to the

>> TESTING on pg. 5

"American schools are student-centered; students can decide what to learn. Despite the restrictions of our examination system, in recent years we are moving towards diverse educational development."

>> educator Gong YaWen



news >>briefs

AP Computer Science now using laptops

Instead of going to the computer lab to program, students in the AP Computer Science (APCS) classes this year are using new ThinkPad laptops funded by the district. The laptops, which cost \$19,250, allow students to stay in one room for both lectures and programming.

"Now, it's going to be more efficient because if students finish something they're working on in the classroom early, they can get a computer and start programming right away," said APCS teacher Debra Troxell.

IT Manager Julie Grenier decided that the AP Computer Science classes would have new laptops this year since the computers in room 301 were "getting old and breaking down last year a lot," according to Troxell.

Junior Robin Osekowsky, who takes APCS, likes that the new laptops allow students to move around and work with whomever they want.

"It's great that we each can have one to work on in class, and that they run better than the old computers," Osekowsky said.

—Carolyn Sun

Summer renovations improve campus

As students walk from class to class in their daily struggle of schoolwork and after-school activities, most are probably not aware of the facility renovations that took place over the summer to brighten up the school.

Assistant principal Kevin Mount said that the school hired Valley Concrete to do concrete work in five places on campus that were considered safety hazards.

Asphalt work was also done on campus during the summer, with the most notorious spot being next to the redwood trees, where the trees' roots were pushing up the asphalt.

Mount said that the ramps by the 500s and 700s wings were also repaired, and workers also painted a new walkway to the crosswalk by the sign in front of the school, and with the renovation of the turf field, the construction for the new Sports Plaza is starting up after football season ends. A room in the music quad, due to its deterioration, is scheduled to be torn down and rebuilt.

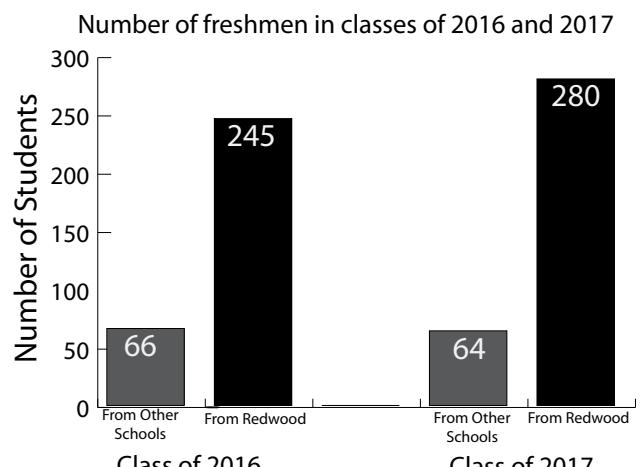
"Right now, we're waiting for [school reconstruction plans] to arrive so we can strategize what buildings need to be rebuilt and refurbished," Mount said.

—Devin Zhao

>> corrections: Sept. 13 issue

- The score of the Sept. 6 football game on p.1 was 41-20, Sacred Heart. The page had previously showed -21 as the score.
- On p.6, the cost of the entire sports renovation project is around \$6 million. The cost only for the Sports Plaza is around \$600,000. The story said that the cost of the Sports Plaza was around \$6 million.
- The Sept. 6 assembly covered on p.2 is called Teen Truth Live, not Truth Teen Live. That applies for both the title and inside the story.
- Freshman Kanika Vora, not math teacher Audrey Warmuth, was the speaker of the featured quote on p.4.
- Spanish teacher Brett Yeilding (not Yielding) was mistakenly referred to as a JV football coach on p.17. He is a varsity assistant coach.

>> falconfigures



Source: Registrar Jeanne Jamieson
—Shreya Tumu

>> picturethis



FALCON // SHAZIA GUPTA

Drama students senior Ehrland Hollingsworth and juniors Nastasya Kutuyev and Blake Propach begin the first of five improvisational Comedy Sportz shows at the Thermond Drama Center on Sept. 14.

ELECTIONS

More freshmen run for student office

BY DevinZhao

The class of 2017 now has its first group of leaders, a group that emerged from a heated election.

Serving as class president is Mitali Shanbhag, vice president Apoorv Kwatra, secretary Spring Ma, treasurer Peter Van de Vort and class representatives Ellicia Chiu and Neehar Thumathy.

The class of 2017 marked a new milestone for freshman student office, as 26 freshmen campaigned against each other for class positions, compared to the six candidates three years ago.

ASB elections last year had only one position involving more than one choice for a potential candidate.

The only other position with more than one choice was determined by disqualification according to election rules.

Senior Robert Eng, who is on the Elections Commission and also was class representative his freshman year, said that he is surprised by the number of freshmen running for office.

"I truly admire the quantity of aspiring freshmen who ran

for class office," Eng said. "It shows this class is in general motivated to become politically involved in their government affairs."

Van de Vort said that his motivation to run for treasurer came from his previous term as treasurer at Redwood Middle School.

Kwatra, on the other hand, said that his motivation was mainly wanting to be involved with the school.

"[When I ran for vice president,] I wanted to help make some decisions for the school and help organize school events," Kwatra said.

Kwatra said that he thinks many freshmen ran for class positions in order to have some control over school events.

Van de Vort's explanation was that many freshmen did it to discover what being in office felt like.

"I'm not sure [about others] because I didn't know a lot of the competitors," Van de Vort said.

"Maybe they thought, 'It's freshman year, I'll give things a try, see if I like it; if I don't then oh well.' It really sets up interests [in student government] for later years," Van de

Vort said.

Senior Jennie Werner, who was class representative her freshman year, also said that having multiple people run for a class position has its benefits.

Werner said that she had moved to Saratoga her freshman year, and it was difficult to campaign as a new student.

"I remember [three years ago] that I was new freshman year; I literally knew no one because I had not come from Redwood Middle School, and I thought, 'Oh, I came from a different middle school, why not just try?'" Werner said. "I didn't win, but I got to be [class representative]."

Werner said that the process of being elected as class representative had helped her get adjusted to her new school.

"In the process of campaigning, I got to make friends with people I didn't know before and felt appreciated by my peers," Werner said.

"I guess that it's nice for so many people to run," Werner said. "Because even if they don't win, they can support each other for events like Homecoming, and hopefully get elected next year." ♦

STUDENT GOVERNMENT

ASB plans to revise its constitution

BY MichelleLeung
& CarolynSun

This year, the ASB will make amendments to the constitution regarding officer election rules.

A constitutional convention, including all ASB members, Samuel Liu (12) and Luke Salin (10), plans to revise the ASB constitution in late September.

Written by Satomi Ishikawa, Mabel Hsu, Sophia Cooper, Lauren Kuan, Tim Rollinson and Mac Hyde in 2008, the ASB constitution states what the student body stands for, the rules for ASB meetings and how the ASB runs elections.

Last year, students were confused about the number of ASB meetings they were allowed to miss.

The constitution stated that ASB members must attend only three meetings to run for

office the next year, but according to what last year's ASB decreed, members must attend at least all but two meetings to run for office.

"[Many] people were stuck [in] weird situations, and people were [using] chats to prove

We'll endeavor to revise the elections qualifications and process, delineate some of the powers ASB has and [more].

>> Senior Robert Eng

they had gone to meetings. It was just a really inefficient method," ASB vice president senior Anup Kar said.

"People who really wanted to run weren't able to, so we're going to make the election

rules crystal clear so that it's fair to everyone," Kar said.

According to ASB treasurer senior Robert Eng, the constitutional convention may also revise other parts of the constitution.

"We'll endeavor to revise the elections qualifications and process, delineate some of the powers ASB has and some other general shuffling around of articles," Eng said.

The ASB constitution will be revised in a process similar to the American constitution. Once the convention finishes revising the document, the revised version will require a two thirds majority in the Student Council, according to Eng.

The revisions will be written by students. Although the administration will advise the ASB, students will decide most of the changes. ♦

CITY >> The decline in popularity of downtown Saratoga

continued from pg 1

Yet Serpa's business, which sells cosmetics, accessories, and clothing, has never really flourished, barely managing to stay afloat by relying on repeat customers.

"[It's difficult] not having enough foot traffic. It starts to become a Catch 22," said Serpa on being forced to cut store hours. "I can't predict when the customers are coming and how to accommodate them with hours."

Her shop sits in the middle of Saratoga downtown, a small, picturesque street lined with shops and high-class restaurants. Parking spaces are hard to find, and a journey down Big Basin Way leads past Madronia cemetery into scenic Montalvo.

Sitting right in the middle of a wealthy community, where cash is in no shortage and a market of hundreds of teens lies only a few blocks away, downtown seems to have all the elements of a successful villa: location, market, cleanliness and high-quality restaurants.

Yet for all its inviting atmosphere and clean, quiet demeanor, downtown has struggled to bring in traffic since it was first established 40 years ago.

So why, then, is downtown failing?

A clash of cultures

Residents say that downtown's problem is not one of quality. Instead, the conflict lies in two opposing cultures: the old-timers who like downtown quiet, and the newer commercial interests. While the restaurants have done well, bringing in wealthy residents who can afford to dine dishes like \$99 alligator meat at La Fondue and other such extravaganzas, businesses have failed because the lack of economic diversity fails to generate traffic.

Irene Breck, who has lived in Saratoga for 17 years, said that she likes the way downtown is right now, though she feels sorry for the struggling businesses.

"The old-timers want to keep it low-key, and it's always been like that, but it's killing the merchants," Breck said. "I personally like it [the way it is]. [It's] lovely, smaller, retains character. Hopefully, it will survive."

The dichotomy between keeping Saratoga "old" and having successful businesses has created conflict. When developers tried to start a Starbucks — a popular coffee chain that would have brought in more traffic while hurting small coffee shops — outraged residents protested against the establishment of the store. In the end, a compromise allowed Starbucks to be built on the outskirts of downtown, so that downtown



Clockwise from top left: the view of Saratoga downtown from Wildwood Market, a new grocery store established on the corner of Saratoga-Sunnyvale Road and Big Basin Way; the view from Big Basin Way—expanding downtown is difficult because of the high price of land around it; and shopkeeper MaryAnn Serpa in her store Skin Prophecy Boutique on the corner of Big Basin Way and 4th Street.

wouldn't be flooded with Starbucks customers.

Confined by the wealth around it

A car ride down Highway 9 leads into Los Gatos downtown, which is, compared to Saratoga's downtown, thriving. Here, two-story buildings and chain restaurants entice students from Los Gatos High, and many more people go there than just Los Gatos residents. Stores like Powell's candy shop and the Apple store overflow with customers.

Saratoga mayor Jill Hunter said Los Gatos has gained its popularity because it's bigger and has allowed retail stores.

"[It's] not that Saratoga doesn't allow that type of store to come in," she said. "But [retail stores] generally don't want to because of our size."

Saratoga downtown is only a four and a half block area, compared to the 30 blocks in Los Gatos. Because of the high price of land, it can be difficult for Saratoga downtown to expand. Additionally, Hunter said the lack of parking has hurt Saratoga's chances at luring retail stores, and the lack of options in Saratoga downtown in turn discourages people from parking.

"When people park their cars, they want to go to be able to go to a bunch of different places, not just one or two," Hunter said.

Saratoga resident Rishi Kumar has tried before to reinvigorate downtown's economy. Kumar is the founder and host of Saratoga's Got Talent, an open-mic event held at Blue Rock Shoot Cafe twice a month.

"With Saratoga's Got Talent, we bring in families to come out and perform or watch others perform," Kumar said. "At the same time, it's an opportunity for families to get out there and do some shopping or dine in downtown."

But, he said, downtown still cannot consistently attract Saratoga residents, who instead frequent downtown Los Gatos or Cupertino village, despite Saratoga downtown being closer.

"Saratoga downtown, at the end of the day, does not have a

wide variety of offerings," Kumar said. "There are a few excellent restaurants and some really good stores, but they are sort of overlooked, because there is nothing beyond that."

Kumar said that beyond the traffic concerns (which can only be fixed with drastic geographical changes to streets), Saratoga needs to focus on smaller tactics in order to draw people into downtown.

"What would be nice is if we could ultimately create a theme for our downtown — say, wine tasting, spa-retreat, or a chocolate candy paradise," Kumar said. "That's how we can differentiate ourselves from Palo Alto or Santana Row."

Another possibility, Kumar said, is to attract the student population, creating areas to socialize or meet for academic projects.

"If students can decide to hang out, study or eat in downtown, not only are [they] spending money and helping the economy out, but [they're] also making downtown a lot more lively," Kumar said. "And if a lot of people start doing that, the perception of downtown Saratoga really will change."

Just this year, a new grocery store aimed at the student demographic has opened. The store, Wildwood Market, is unique in Saratoga in that it sells common products — it isn't a specialty boutique that shies away from competing with the local Safeway or CVS.

"There [was] a great need for a real community grocery store to serve the the residents of Saratoga and the folks passing through to other adventures," said Frank Dutro, the owner of Wildwood Market. Dutro is a longtime resident and a father of two Saratoga High students and hopes to reinvigorate the downtown economy.

"Wildwood Market is a great first step toward rebuilding the vitality of downtown Saratoga," he said. "So, no I don't think it will help revive downtown, I KNOW it will help."

The plight of the shopkeeper

The behemoth Safeway sells every-

thing from toilet paper to jelly-filled donuts to specialized greeting cards, and at cheap prices. An individual store cannot easily compete with Safeway, and for many Saratoga businesses the only alternative is selling only a wide variety of merchandise for one niche such as cosmetics or artwork.

"We have to sell what the customer is looking for," Serpa said. "Most of my customers are looking for products you can't just find at any convenience store."

Yet customers often have such specific requests that even the most ample supplies of a boutique cannot meet, and this business strategy limits store owners, preventing them from selling items that might attract larger crowds and students.

"You can have an idea of what you want to do, but the public always determines what you're going to do," said Serpa. "I think it's really important to listen to what the public wants and make changes."

Serpa added that because rent is so expensive, most shop owners in downtown Saratoga do not hire help. She said

that in order to survive in downtown, shop owners must be able to take on a variety of different jobs.

"You're going to wash windows, you're

also going to do the ordering, and you're going to vacuum, and you're going to do whatever needs to be done. There's always something that needs to be done," she said.

Serpa does all the chores for her store — it is a one-woman operation. But for all her work, she isn't sure what the future of her business holds, though she maintains her optimism.

"The future of Saratoga always has promise because we really have a lot to offer," Serpa said. "The future I'm looking at is my fellow merchants participating and becoming successful." ♦

The old-timers want to keep it low-key, and it's always been like that, but it's killing the merchants. I personally like it [the way it is]. [It's] lovely, smaller, retains character. Hopefully, it will survive.

>> resident Irene Breck

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Sherrilyn Ling and Ariel Liu contributed reporting to this story.

>> togatalks

Why doesn't Saratoga downtown attract much traffic?

Primarily because of the lack of interesting stores or non-high end restaurants."



sophomore Spencer Yen

It attracts a small group of people... kids don't really have reasons to go there."



junior Dani Bruno

3 DAYS TO GO

HOMECOMING FESTIVITIES



FALCON // GRACE MA



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FALCON // GRACE MA

Clockwise from top: Senior Vivian Li leads the seniors' co-ed dance in preparation for their quad day performance. The seniors will perform on Friday Oct. 4.

Freshman Katrina Coglito choreographs the freshmen co-ed dance in the dance studio. The freshmen perform on Oct. 1.

Junior Joy Tang choreographs the junior girls' dance in preparation for their quad day performance on Oct. 3.

Senior Sana Ali paints mushrooms and bananas found in Mario Kart.

Sophomores practice their co-ed dance in the gym during tutorial on Sept. 20 for their quad day performance on Wednesday Oct 2.

Senior My-lan Le paints Donkey Kong from Super Mario Brothers as part of their quad day decorations.



FALCON // GRACE MA

Time crunch crushes classes

BY Shazia Gupta
& Deepthi Sampathkumar

As Homecoming nears and the reality of actually pulling together a quad day and creating a myriad of decorations arrives like thunder on a sunny day, students are scrambling to finish their various projects, the procrastination of weeks past a mere memory.

Today is Sept. 27 — T-minus three days until the beginning of annual festivities that include the football game against Mountain View, the crowning of the Homecoming court and the Homecoming dance.

Although classes are reluctant to spill all the details on their quad day planning, they have been dedicated and working hard to produce an impressive show for their peers.

While excited and optimistic, the seniors have had trouble getting class involvement.

"Homecoming preparations are lacking in participation, but the people that have come out to help with decorations have been so amazing," said senior class president Jackie Taysi.

"It's awesome when people are really enthusiastic and positive ... I just wish the majority of our class was like that."

The seniors have also been working on getting things done early to prevent last-minute stress.

"[Senior] Anup [Kar] and I have finished the script early this year and my dance has been going well," said senior class representative Jason Li. "We learned the co-ed dance in two practices, so not only are the practices fun, but they're also very productive."

This year, the juniors have a theme that almost every other class is jealous of: Pokemon.

Since Pokemon is a part of almost everyone's childhood, as well as being a prevalent card game, their Homecoming display is sure to be nostalgic.

According to junior class president Adrienne Kim, there will be some changes in the way the juniors structure their participation this year so that work will be equally distributed.

"Last year we had five people doing decorations and 50 people doing the dances, so we want to fix that," Kim said.

The juniors seem to be having trouble with having people actually show up for the quad day preparation.

"We've only had one decoration day so far, and the turnout has been pretty tiny, but we get to work with people that you usually don't talk to," junior class treasurer Josh Pi said.

Sophomore class officers say they are ecstatic about their theme, Pac Man.

The quad day preparation has been running smoothly and there does not seem to be too much pressure so far for the class of 2016, sophomore Darby Williams said.

"I think we've made good progress," said sophomore Amanda Rhee, who is helping to choreograph the class dances. "But definitely there is stress near the end to make sure everyone knows the dance."

Putting formations together for the dances seem to be a problem because the "number of girls always varies," Rhee said.

"Our rehearsals so far have gone well due to previous planning, and we taught the girls choreography in two hours, so I think they have been successful and productive," Rhee said.

The freshman class officers have also been working to put on their best show for their first Homecoming.

"I would have chosen Club Penguin if we had first pick because it's different and it's a challenge," said freshman class president Mitali Shanbhag. "Every other class basically has it made out for them."

Mitali said that the freshman class is trying to incorporate an around-the-world theme, which will include Bollywood, country and K-Pop. ♦



Taysi



Kim

TEST >> ACT and SAT change

continued from pg.1

test that are underway.

"I feel like [the new SAT] is good because it would be easier for students learning the words because they could actually use them in real life instead of memorizing really weird SAT words [that have previously been on the test]," Qian said.

Qian added that although she felt relieved that the test will no longer require blind memorization, students might have to adjust to preparing for a more concept-based test.

"[The new SAT] could be hard to prepare for because the [current] SAT is usually just a set format that is the same every year," Qian said. "I'm afraid that when they change it, it could be difficult to study for because of all the changes."

However, Israni said it is too soon to tell how students should prepare for the new exam.

"More concrete information will be necessary before we revamp [Excel's] curriculum to meet those changes or make recommendations to students preparing for the new format of the SAT," Israni said.

The ACT, another popular college-entry standardized test, also has big changes for 2015, when the test plans to go digital. The test will be available on the computer and on paper, incorporating free-response questions that require interaction with online images.

"A digital version of the ACT will be a great option for high school students, especially since anecdotal evidence shows that today's students tend to prefer technology to traditional paper-and-pencil testing," Israni said. "It will provide much more convenient scheduling options for the busy high school students of today, as well as more instant results for better planning."

However, senior Allison Chang said that the ACT's transition into the digital age might not be helpful for students,

depending on the types of questions. "I believe that the digitalization of the ACT could go either way," Chang said. "It could make the English portions substantially easier to traverse, but may make math a bit more difficult."

[The new SAT] could be hard to prepare for because the [current] SAT is usually just a set format that is the same every year.

>> freshman Jenny Qian

ing rivalry.

"The SAT, as it stands, is neither a test of intelligence nor of general aptitude. It is currently a very strategy-based exam," Israni said. "With the number of ACT test-takers recently surpassing the number of SAT test-takers nationwide, it makes sense for the SAT to change. It should be more focused on the skills necessary to do well in college." ♦

>> THEbigidea

SAT vs ACT

The differences

The ACT has a science section, while the SAT doesn't. Also, the ACT tests has more advanced math concepts like trigonometry. However, the SAT has a stronger emphasis on vocabulary. The SAT has 10 sections, while the ACT has five sections.

The changes

The new SAT will be more concept based and there will be less memorization. The new ACT will be available in a digital format.

When will these changes take place?

The new tests will be unveiled in 2015.

Who will be affected?

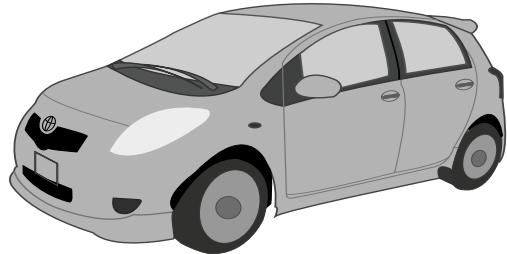
These changes may affect this year's freshmen, who will potentially take the new SAT their junior year. It will most likely not affect the classes of 2014, 2015 and 2016.

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EDUCATION

Common Core makes teachers alter curriculum

BY DevinZhao

As the school year starts, education in California and across the nation is steadily changing to adapt to Common Core, a set of standards that seeks to unify materials, philosophies and assessments for all participating states by 2015.

Previously, different states had their own educational standards. That meant states such as California and Massachusetts had high standards while other states sometimes did not, resulting in a wide variation in what students learned by the time they graduated.

As a solution to balancing the standards of all schools across the country, Common Core standards are now adopted by 45 states.

Common Core aims to prepare students for the "real" world after formal education by integrating technological skills with its academic teachings. The curriculum of one subject may have traces of other subjects in it; a Spanish language class, for example, may have to interpret graphs of the demography of Spain a few centuries ago.

Language department head Arnaldo Rodriguex said that his department is steadily moving toward Common Core, starting with concepts and textbooks.

"We have changed our textbooks for our French and Spanish classes, and they are already aligned with Common Core," Rodriguex said.

Rodriguex also said the Spanish teachers posted Common Core standards in their classrooms. Integration of other subjects have already happened, with themes of global challenges, inventions and advertising and marketing in the Spanish curriculum, just to name a few.

Meanwhile, math department head Debra Troxell said math teachers have already started integrating the Common Core standards into classes such as Algebra 2.

Troxell said that half of the curriculum changes in Algebra 2 were made in preparation for an upcoming Common

Core test.

However, according to Troxell, the calculus and statistics curriculums will not really change because calculus's main goal will still be to prepare for the AP test in May, and the probability and data gathering of Common Core are already in statistics.

Assessments will also be changing. According to assistant principal Kevin Mount, the new testing system will have all students using computers and receive multimedia input from a variety of sources. They will also be doing more writing in the new tests.

Mount said Common Core testing will ultimately replace the current STAR tests, but many of the details remain to be worked out.

After all the difficulties of the transition are settled, Rodriguex thinks that Common Core will ultimately benefit the students.

"I think that [Common Core] will connect all the classes together, and the connections will make students more well rounded," Rodriguex said.

Troxell agrees that Common Core will provide benefits, but said that the transition period will be difficult.

"My feelings are that there's a lot of good things about Common Core," Troxell said. "After we get through the transition period, it'll be good. However, it will be a rough couple of years for middle schools, high schools and everybody as we get adjusted." ♦

>> THEbigidea

Common Core

The goal

Common Core prepares students for life after school by integrating technological skills with what is taught in class. It unifies standards for the entire country.

The implementation

Common Core seeks to take effect in all participating states by 2015. Currently, the new Common Core standards have been adopted by 45 states.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Spanish 6 AP Literature: an independent course

BY AnantRajeev & JihauYu

Most students who enroll in Spanish 2 their freshman year usually end up taking Spanish 5 AP their senior year. Some students, however, make the choice to enroll in an alternative, Spanish 6 AP Literature.

This year, five seniors Nikhil Goel, Rick Roy, Ruchi Jain, Krishna Unadkat, and Mostafa Rohaninejad are enrolled in this selective course taught by language department head Arnaldo Rodriguex.

"The course is really independent and since it runs concurrently with my Spanish 5 AP class, I don't really get much time with them, which is unfortunate," Rodriguex said.

To take this class, a student must either do a Spanish course over the summer or skip one year of Spanish based on a teacher recommendation.

At the beginning of each class period, Rodriguex assigns the Spanish 6 students a reading assignment, and the students read the text, analyze and answer questions about it on their own.

The students complete their work as a group in a casual setting such as the school library, the quad or even an open

classroom.

Readings usually consists of poetry, old Spanish works and different types of literature. After reading the assignment, they study it and bring it back at the end of class, similar to an English literature course.

Jain feels that the class is challenging because it forces her to apply her Spanish knowledge to the text.

"Speaking and learning grammar techniques is one thing, but analyzing text is a whole other thing," Jain said. "We learn about rhetorical analysis because we have to learn how Spanish texts are written with different literary devices."

Like Jain, Roy was able to enroll in this course since he was in an advanced course previously. Roy took a Spanish 2 Pre-AP class, freshman year in Texas. Once he came back he was able to skip into Spanish 4 Honors.

Roy thinks the small class size helps the students form strong ties.

"I enjoy this course because our little group of five students get to work together," Roy said. "The text we read is really complex, so it's nice to have some extra support from peers. That's how an advanced class should be." ♦

ACADEMICS

DUAL STUDENTSHIP: The rise of concurrent enrollment

BY Ashley Chen
& Tiffany Zheng

Senior Casey Takahashi isn't ditching cross country. She's leaving practice 30 minutes early, but it isn't because she's a slacker. Rather, Takahashi, a team captain, is heading over to San Mateo College to take a night class — physics.

Takahashi's physics class isn't her only out-of-school class — she also takes multivariable calculus at Evergreen College on Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

Takahashi would prefer to take classes at the school; however, SHS doesn't have the classes she wants. In recent years, some students at Saratoga have petitioned for a Multivariable Calculus class, but to no avail. And while commuting to San Mateo and Evergreen is difficult, Takahashi said this was the only option that allowed her to continue with her extracurriculars and take the next-level classes in math and physics.

"I spend about six hours per week driving to my classes," Takahashi said. "It's convenient to find classes to fit my schedule, but commuting is very time-consuming."

More than 100 students each year complete course credits online and at community colleges like West Valley and De Anza.

According to West Valley College multivariable calculus teacher Professor Rebecca Warecki, the number of high school students in her classes has increased by five to seven students in the past year. In one class, almost half of her students are from high school,

Saratoga simply does not have the capabilities to offer these classes because of financial constraints, said

assistant principal Brian Safine. However, college classes present good alternatives, Safine said, whether to take a class Saratoga doesn't offer or to retake a course.

The concurrent enrollment program is open to upperclassmen or students in the summer after their sophomore year. Colleges usually allow students to take up to eight units, which translates into about two classes. The school considers them to be 4.0 classes, but most colleges view them as AP/honors.

While concurrent enrollment is a common option for students looking to branch out with different courses or who have run out of classes to take at Saratoga High, it can be a tough transition.

Community college has a different teaching style," Takahashi said. "Teachers don't pay attention to whether you do your homework or not."

Senior Akshay Madhani, who is taking multivariable calculus, said, "There's a lot more freedom. [For example], you can walk out of a class to take a call whenever you want to."

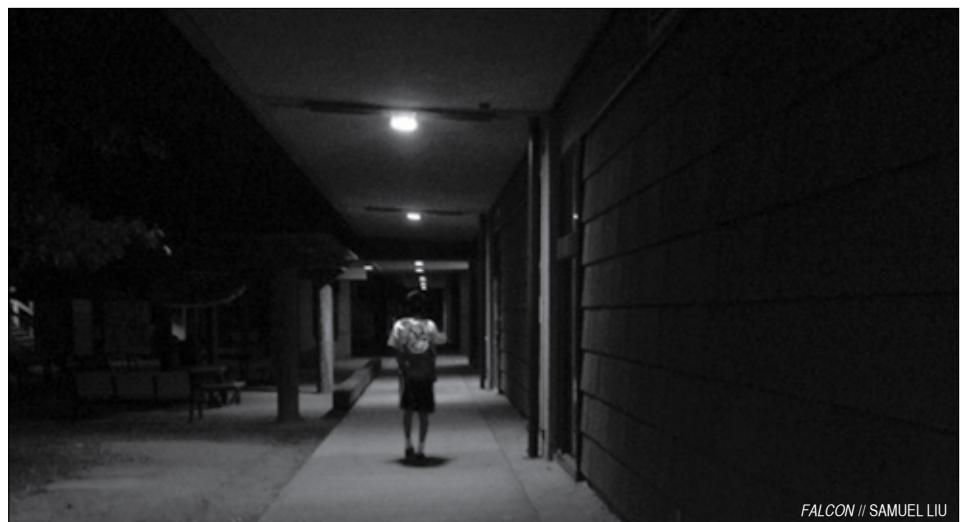
Community college presents many other challenges as well. For example, Takahashi's

schedule prevented her from enrolling in local colleges, and she now struggles with fitting in her extracurriculars between long commutes.

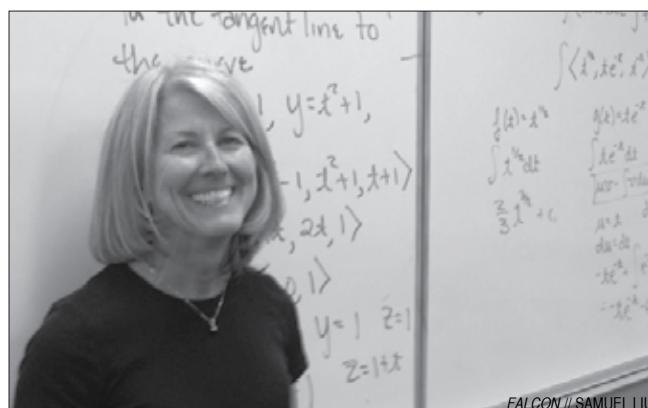
"I have Tuesday and Thursday classes, so I need to figure out how to get to [them] with cross country," Takahashi said.

In contrast, Madhani chose night classes to avoid as many conflicts with extracurricular activities as he could.

Student dynamics, pace and difficulty are other major differences be-



FALCON // SAMUEL LIU



FALCON // SAMUEL LIU

TOP: Multi-variable calculus student senior Robert Eng walks out of the classroom on a Monday night. He is taking the class because Saratoga does not offer multivariable calculus.

LEFT: West Valley College math professor Rebecca Warecki in her classroom. She also teaches a multivariable class at Lynbrook.

tween college and high school classes. Because community colleges are open to everyone over age 16, students can be of any age.

"I sit behind a 40-year-old man in class," Madhani said. "That's kind of weird."

He added that there was a greater emphasis on tests; in his multivariable calculus class, tests are worth two-thirds of his final grade.

But because of the competitiveness of his AP Calculus BC class last year, he said that so far the community college class seemed easier in comparison.

Community college classes also allow students to explore interests out-

side of school. For example, senior Rachel Perera chose to take nutrition because she hoped the class would discourage her unhealthy lunches at McDonald's and Chipotle.

"We've done nutrition diet analysis, which gives you a good idea of your health," she said. "After just a week, I can see patterns in my eating habits, and I hope it'll continue and I'll be healthier as a result of this class."

Perera added that she would definitely recommend the concurrent enrollment program to anyone looking for more credits.

"It's independent study at its finest — a really unique and effective way to study," Perera said. ♦

>> THE bigidea

Concurrent Enrollment

College credits

While Saratoga doesn't count college points as AP/Honors, some UC's and Privates will count a college course as a 5.0.

No choice

For many Saratoga students who have exhausted the higher level math and sciences, community college is the only other option.

TECHNOLOGY

SHS App Developers Club creates an online goldenrod

BY Simi Srivastava
& Minu Palaniappan

Fueled by last year's release of the SHS app, which allowed students easy access to the school websites from their phones, the SHS Application Developers' Club is working on an online goldenrod system.

The program would be a more effective way to screen damaged textbooks and novels.

The project was initially started by previous seniors Kabir Chandrasekher and Matt Yee. After two years of work, the project was handed down to current junior Aditya Agrawal.

Yee and Chandrasekher, now graduated, were pivotal in the initial design and concept of the online goldenrod form. According to Aggrawal, they provided detailed plans for the program and all Aggrawal had to do was execute.

Aggrawal said that the system is user-friendly and the goldenrod takes only minutes to fill out.

In order to check out a book, a student would need to set up an account on the goldenrod website. By simply entering his or her ID and username, the student will become a user in the school's system and can then proceed to check out his or her textbooks. ♦

To compensate for the signature fields that are commonly found on the yellow hard copy forms, Aggrawal created a "Terms and Agreement" that lists the rules the users would have to follow.

According to Aggrawal, the club is getting help from principal Paul Robinson and librarian Kevin Heyman to add student information to the database. The main roadblock in this process has been figuring out a proper way of protecting the sensitive data such as ID number, age and date of birth.

According to Aggrawal, the student data is important since it allows the administration to track lost books, new damage reports and the owners of the textbooks.

The club has been focused on creating this system for teachers to enter their student lists. Once the database is complete, it should make it easier for both students and teachers to keep track of their library books.

According to Heyman, the new Golden-rod system is a great step forward for the school since it saves paper and makes the textbook checkout process more convenient. There are legal barriers that Heyman said will be resolved at the start of second semester and will allow for the actual system to be in place early 2014. ♦

TRAVEL >> New Taipei City administration visits SHS

continued from pg. 1

-es," which was specially prepared for the occasion.

After that, the school administration and school board members Katherine Tseng and Cynthia Chang led the delegates on a campus tour. Key sites in the tour were the ceramics class, the MAP program and the band facilities, classes and rehearsals. The tour ended with a performance from the marching band.

The delegates also met with the ASB and two members of the leadership team during break and fifth period to talk about the school and Saratoga as a general community. The meeting was later featured on KTVU Channel 8 news.

"[The delegates] mainly asked the ASB about how we communicated with the student body and how we plan on using skills we gained from extracurriculars in the future," said ASB vice president Anup Kar. "Personally, they asked me about band and how I utilized the skills I learned from it, and how I would

use them in the future."

Gong YaWen and Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union School District superintendent Bob Mistele also signed a Memorandum of Understanding to further promote relations.

School board member Chang said that she thought that both sides benefited from the overall exchange.

"We really learned a lot from each other," Chang said. "A special thanks should go out to the music department for [playing a special Taiwanese song] at the welcome gathering and [performing on the field]. I hope this could really fuel our relations with schools in Taiwan."

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>> falconfigures

10

Members of the Taiwanese delegation visited the school

3

Reporters sat in on the conference between students and the educators

STANDARDIZED TESTING

"It. Sucks." "You can't trust the system." "PAINFUL."

A REVILED RITE OF PASSAGE

"SOME PEOPLE SIMPLY AREN'T GOOD TEST TAKERS, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THAT THEY AREN'T SMART."
 "Only shows who has money for SAT classes." "How do you measure an individual's worth over a single test?"

DOES STANDARDIZED TESTING REALLY PREPARE YOU FOR COLLEGE?

BY Andrew Jiang
 & Deepa Kannan

Alumnus Jackie Gu walked onto Brown University's campus for the first time during orientation on the first week of September, meeting new people from different high school backgrounds — and with different SAT scores.

Despite these differences, they all share a united passion for learning, their SAT scores simply remnants of the past as they move on to a new chapter in their life.

"The range of scores it took to get here is pretty astounding, but what's more astounding is that you really can't tell," Gu said. "There are people here with 2100s and people here with 2400s, and the difference between the two in terms of passion, intelligence, drive, is virtually nonexistent."

The SAT has long been one of the most reviled rites of passages for college-bound students — so reviled that some have chosen to take the ACT, an alternative standardized test, simply to avoid it. The question for the SAT, a major factor in college admissions, is whether it prepares prospective students for college.

Gu, who was editor-in-chief of the Falcon last year, believes that standardized testing is not an accurate predictor of college success.

"I don't feel that the SAT has prepared me for college classes," Gu said. "I don't think it's an accurate gauge of anything except how well you can memorize test-taking strategies."

The College Board, the company that makes the SAT, recently released a report on college readiness that showed that only 43 percent of SAT takers met the SAT College Readiness Benchmark score of 1550. This benchmark score indicates a 65 percent likelihood of receiving a B-average or higher during the first year of a four-year college.

The report said that success on the SAT is "closely related to the type and rigor of coursework students pursue in high school. Each section of the SAT is valid and reliable as an individual mea-

sure of the skills ... that students need for success in college."

However, some students who have taken the SAT dispute this claim. Rather, students said, the real reason only a small percentage of test takers seem ready for college is that the test itself is flawed.

"If anything, some aspects of the test can be detrimental to your development as a student," Gu said. "For instance, the essay teaches you to write very rigidly. I'm fairly certain that college professors aren't a fan of stiff, formulaic writing."

English teacher Suzanne Herzman, a former SAT instructor at University Test Prep, said that the SAT essay contradicts the analysis-based essays students write in high school.

"The SAT essay forces students to start with a hasty viewpoint and find and force evidence to support that thesis," Herzman said. "At SHS, we teach students to start with the evidence and construct a thesis after thinking carefully about the problem. How ironic that the SAT prompts begin with the instructions 'Think carefully ...'"

In addition, alumnus Sujay Khandekar, now a freshman at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, said succumbing to the paranoia of studying for standardized tests only worsens a student's college preparedness.

"A lot of the college courses require you to be disciplined, organized and alert," Khandekar said. "Absorbing the new information gained from college courses is [very] different than reviewing the same concepts over and over again for the SAT."

As a current senior, Mandy Lee added that she feels misrepresented by the SAT, especially due to the inordinate length of the test.

"I don't understand how sitting through a test proves whether or not you will succeed in college," Lee said. "How does a college know what kind of person you are, how motivated you are, your work ethic, from a score?"

Rise of the ACT

ACT Inc., College Board's competitor, also released a similar report, indicating only 69 percent of students met at least one of the ACT College Readiness benchmarks. This benchmark score indicates a 50 percent chance of obtaining a B or higher in first year credit-bearing courses.

Some students said that the ACT yielded better college-readiness results because of its more logical questions.

"The ACT is more accurate at showing one's true capabilities," senior Cameron Borch said, "but I believe they both are an insignificant way to show a student's full character and academic potential."

This sentiment may have influenced the trend of more and more students taking the ACT over the SAT. Last year, the ACT surpassed the SAT in the number of test takers nationwide for the first time.

In fact, Rakhi Israni, president of Excel Test prep, said that enrollment at Excel has increased, as more and more students in Saratoga seem to be taking both the SAT and the ACT.

"In areas like Cupertino and Saratoga, where the students are highly competitive and very driven, the percentage of students taking both exams is increasing at a much higher rate than in other areas," Israni said.

Despite complaints about the test's flaws, Israni said standardized testing is a fact of life that can actually be helpful

in admissions decisions.

"The holy grail of college admissions is predicting college success of admitted candidates," Israni said. "Studies have shown there is some correlation between SAT scores and college success. So, the SAT has some predictive value for college admissions."

Herzman added that although the competition for scores can be unhealthy, the SAT does test some knowledge students acquire in school.

"To some extent, they test skills that students have been learning in school for years: understanding vocabulary in context and grammar fundamentals," Herzman said. "Students who are lifetime readers tend to score well on the critical reading section, and students who do a lot of writing and revising tend to score well on the writing section."

Competition for scores

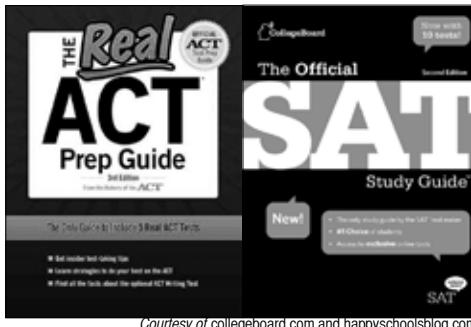
Regardless of the test's flaws and advantages, more and more students at Saratoga have followed the trend of spending exuberant costs and countless hours on prep courses. According to Eduventures Inc., 2 million students spend a total of \$2.5 billion every year on test prep and tutoring.

Senior Jennie Werner said that this relationship between family income and SAT scores no longer provides students with an equal opportunity to prove their college readiness.

"Standardized tests no longer offer a level playing field for students from all socioeconomic backgrounds, [and now are a] competition to see who can spend the most money on tutoring or take the most practice tests," Werner said.

Not only has money tipped the scale of the competition, but Herzman also said the value of learning has been lost in this endless race for the best SAT score.

"Imagine more meaningful ways to spend time wasted on SAT prep!" she said. "Read something challenging. Take a class in something that has always interested you. Or, if it has to be test prep, tutor someone who doesn't have access to prep classes." ♦



Many students use test prepbooks and prep classes for standardized tests.

ACADEMICS

History Day-like project to be mandatory for MAP freshmen

BY Nelson Wang

It is a day in history for History Day. Long thought of as a project only for those passionately in love with history, History Day — or at least a project similar to it — is now mandatory for freshmen enrolled in the Media Arts Program (MAP).

Librarian Kevin Heyman, a prominent figure in the History Day competition at SHS, said that starting this year, freshman MAP students are required to do a research assignment based on History Day in their English classes.

"Modeling the research assignment after the History Day competition will allow students to create a product in a variety of different mediums: a web site, a documentary, a performance or an ex-

hibit," said Heyman.

Just like they would for History Day, students will choose a historical topic that matches this year's theme and research it; the main difference will be that their annotated bibliography may not be on the competitive level of traditional History Day bibliographies.

"What makes English 9 MAP different [from other courses] is a project-based learning emphasis and History Day is project-based learning," said English teacher Catherine Head.

Traditionally, History Day is a competition for dedicated students who revel in the study of history; as a result, some are concerned with making an assignment based on it mandatory.

"History Day is for the passionate... and should be reserved for those who

actually try to do a good job on it," said senior MAP student Eugene Chiou, who participated in History Day last year.

Chiou points out that many juniors do History Day for extra credit, without enjoying history, and have a rough time. He believes forcing freshmen to work on a project similar to History Day is a bad idea, since many of them would not enjoy the experience the way the passionate students do.

However, other students argue that it is no different than a regular project and encourages creativity, because students can pick their own topic and medium.

Head believes that making the assignment mandatory will not affect students' enthusiasm. She said she is currently giving them additional time and assistance to work on it.

"Doing it so that it's part of the class gives them lab time and research support and people right there to answer their questions, and I hope this will help them like it," said Head.

In addition to giving them freedom, it also gives the freshmen exposure to history. In the sophomore, junior and senior MAP classes, history curriculums are integrated with the English curriculums, in addition to media. However, at the freshmen level, the class has previously consisted of just English and media.

"Incorporating History Day with English 9 MAP starts them on that integrated-discipline approach," said Head.

She said the new project will also help meet Common Core standards while allowing students to be creative in displaying their work. ♦

CALIFORNIA'S DILEMMA

Drugs and Second Chances



>> 2013 alumnus Michael Zhang

After getting caught for drug use, Zhang was sent to a therapeutic boarding school last year. There, he received counseling and eventually graduated last year. He now attends University of Illinois Urbana Champaign. "I got a second chance," he said. "I imagine that for those less fortunate, whose families were not as wealthy, the chances of even graduating high school are slim."

BY Nelson Wang

Michael Zhang, who was slated to graduate with Saratoga High's class of 2013, was a happy-go-lucky, optimistic guy while on campus — a member of the speech and debate team, a tennis player, an avid computer gamer and a National Merit semifinalist. But one day last year during the first semester, he disappeared from Saratoga High.

Friends wondered where he had gone. It turned out that Zhang had been using drugs and had been sent to Oakley School, a therapeutic boarding school in Utah, to correct his problems.

There, Zhang received intensive counseling and support. He was under constant supervision, and he received some form of therapy every weekday. Few distractions were allowed, and Zhang at first hated the strict rules.

But slowly, Zhang earned more privileges and eventually graduated from the school. He now attends the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign.

Zhang is one of the fortunate. Not everyone is wealthy enough to pay for a boarding school and get a second chance to put their life together.

California legislators are considering a bill to lower the punishments for minor drug offenses, such as possession of small amounts of drugs; rather than being charged with a felony, these offenders would be charged with misdemeanors. This is an idea for both political parties to get behind.

Currently, minor drug offenders can be charged with five to 10 years in jail, the same punishment that a major drug kingpin or a violent drug offender may be charged with.

Lower penalties would be highly beneficial because small-time drug offenders like Zhang need second chances, especially when they are in their teens and have so much of life ahead of them. Rather than wasting money on imprisoning them, money should be invested in rehabilitation. Most minor drug offenders aren't violent gang members and present less risk to society than to themselves.

Some people believe that lowered penalties will encourage drug use, but the benefits easily outweigh the

unlikely costs.

For starters, it will lower the economic burden of prisons, since a huge number of the inmates, easily numbering in the thousands, are minor drug offenders. A court order compels California to lower its number of inmates by 10,000 this year and by reducing the penalties for minor drug offenders, the number of inmates will drastically drop.

More importantly, the lowered penalty would give minor drug offenders another chance. Currently, these offenders are incarcerated without any help and upon their release, have few opportunities for jobs or education.

Zhang admits that he probably wouldn't have been able to go to college without the second chance offered by the boarding school.

"I probably wouldn't have graduated if I hadn't gotten sent away [to the boarding school]," Zhang said. "And if I did graduate, it'd be by being held back a year and finishing my senior year at West Valley."

With lowered penalties for minors, money spent on imprisoning the offenders can instead be spent on rehabilitation, which may be more effective at lowering crime rates.

"Using substances messes with you and you lose a lot of your motivation to do things," Zhang said. "You start to focus a lot on instant gratification and you become really irritable."

Zhang believes strongly in the need for giving minor drug offenders a second chance.

His case clearly points out the problem with the current justice system since many of the drug offenders may come from low-income families who cannot afford such expensive therapy. This creates a cycle of poverty — perpetuating drug use among the poor and limiting rehabilitation to those who need it most.

"In recovery, there's a concept of something called co-morbidity, which basically explains that you usually have a secondary reason for using drugs other than just getting high, like depression or anxiety or a tendency to avoid things," Zhang said. "Giving [these kids] a second chance is giving them a chance to work out those issues so that they can get their life together." ♦

Rehabilitation is far more effective at lowering crime rates than imprisonment, and it gives these minor offenders a second chance in life.



FOURTH PERIOD

STAFF POLICY

The Saratoga Falcon is published 11 times per year by the Advanced Journalism classes of Saratoga High School, 20300 Herriman Ave., Saratoga, CA 95070. Views expressed in The Saratoga Falcon are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the administration, faculty or school district.

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

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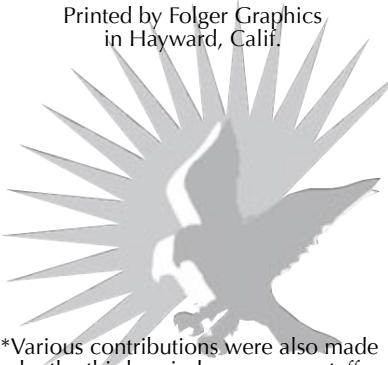
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*Various contributions were also made by the third-period newspaper staff

Pott article an eye-opener into teen culture

In the Sept. 17 issue of Rolling Stone magazine, Saratoga High once again was in the national spotlight with the publication of a story headlined "Sexting, shame, and suicide," giving a detailed account of the tragic bullying and suicide of Audrie Pott. Yet this story was different from previous ones. It examined a darker subculture that has remained hidden to many of the students here today.

Of course, the commun-

ity has had a general picture of the circumstances relating to Pott's death since late last April, but this Rolling Stone piece brought into lurid detail what she went through in the days after being sexual assaulted at a Labor Day weekend party in 2012. From the article, it's obvious how isolated and desperate she felt and how destructive her friendship group had become.

While the story focused on Audrie's bullying and

suicide (and rightly so), layered underneath her story is an eye-opening look at a culture in which some students engage in rampant drinking, sexting of salacious photos and sexual harassment. Sadly, Audrie became caught up in this group and never escaped.

This Rolling Stone piece hit upon something that has been eye-opening to everyone. However, this subculture cannot be limited to Saratoga. It is seen time and time again in communities everywhere.

Blame society's values.

financial assistance.

Some might say that the people devoted to going to a college do not care too much about financial aid, but the biggest problem is that it deters people from being devoted at all.

Imagine a kid with a 4.5 GPA and a 2400 score on his SAT, but comes from a low income family. He is aware of the fact that he could make an early decision to Dartmouth and be accepted, but he is not sure if his family can afford the tuition. This problem prevents bright, young students from applying early decision to some schools.

With college tuition reaching tens of thousands of dollars annually, early decision is clearly unfair, since people in need of financial aid are less likely to apply for it; students who need assistance have less opportunity than those who do not. The system should strive to offer equal educational opportunity to everyone, but the students who need the most help are the ones most deprived of an opportunity to succeed.

In addition, restrictive early action is a problem in the current system as well, since it limits options for students; colleges should strive to release financial aid options earlier and allow for more early action applications.

Taking these two courses of action would increase the chances of success for students planning on applying early. ♦

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

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Opinion Editor

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Reporter

Nick Chow



Restrictive early action applications unfair

Many private universities offer students two options to apply early: early action and early decision. Early decision requires students who are admitted to attend the university, while early action doesn't.

Some universities offer a different type of early action called restrictive early action. If students are admitted early, they are not required to attend; however, they are only allowed to apply to one early, thus earning the name "restrictive."

Both of these types of early applications have their pluses and minuses, but the negatives outweigh the positives.

Restrictive early action prevents students from expanding the number of universities they apply to that have early action programs and early decision presents problems financially.

Most universities that have early action allow students to apply to other schools with early action, but this restrictive program hinders the chances of students to get into a university of their choice.

Ivy League schools have this restrictive early action program. The ad-

missions process is already extremely competitive for these schools, but early action makes it even more so. A study from Parchment, an online college statistics database, stated that for the senior class in the year 2010-2011 the acceptance rate for Yale University was 7.5 percent. This is already an extremely low acceptance rate, and if a student wants to increase his chances of having multiple top universities to choose from, he should have the opportunity to apply to other schools that have early action programs.

In addition to the problems with early action, the early decision system is flawed and needs some major changes.

Early decision is binding, meaning that if one is accepted by a college through early decision, they must attend that college and reject all other college acceptances. As a result, acceptance rates tend to be higher for early-decision students.

By entering a binding agreement, they are unable to compare financial aid packets between different colleges, eliminating the possibility of negotiating with other colleges for

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The Saratoga Falcon staff voted 16-5 against restrictive early applications.



Facebook should not monetize personal data

BY Ashley Chen
& Michelle Leung

It sees you when you're sleeping. It knows when you're awake.

But that's not all Facebook can do. The social media site can also see where you are, which sites you visit and even what you look like. And it can sell that information to advertising companies.

Facebook gains its yearly profit of almost \$2 billion through advertising, according to Daily Mail. It's very easy for users to unknowingly post information online.

The problem with this information being available to Facebook, which can include a user's language, age range and sometimes even photos,

is that Facebook then claims the right to sell it. Privacy is a fundamental human right. It isn't morally or legally fair that Facebook can take advantage of all of its users' personal information. We shouldn't have to choose between connecting with friends on America's biggest social media site and protecting our private data.

The magnitude of the hold Facebook has on our daily lives means many people would find it incredibly difficult to just stop signing in. A coordinated effort to stop using Facebook in protest would be impossible because of the sheer number of users in and its convenience.

Among other intrusions, ad companies aim specific

ads at users who "like" or share certain pages. These companies can even use birth dates to send specific information and location tagging to advertise stores near users, meaning that Facebook members unknowingly release their own user information to companies.

In 2011, five Facebook users successfully filed a suit against Facebook for selling private information without informing them. They are five of an estimated 150 million users whose names and photos Facebook has used to advertise in Sponsored Stories, which targets a user's friends with advertisements based on the original user's search history, Likes and more, according to BBC

News.

Facebook's data-selling of sensitive information violates the Federal Trade Commission's laws on Fair Information Practice Principles. The code clearly states that consumers must give consent for their information to be released, which can happen through opt-in or opt-out policies. Either way, the user must have the choice to have no information made public — a choice Facebook, with its "public information" policies, doesn't offer.

Facebook is the villain here, but users can still take certain precautions to protect themselves.

Knowledge is power, but for Facebook, knowledge is money. ♦

Is pledge of allegiance really needed?

BY Ashley Chen
& Kelly Xiao

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America ... one nation, under God ... with liberty and justice for all."

You know how it goes. After all, you've been saying the words all your life, especially if you attended Redwood Middle School. But is the Pledge needed?

The truth is that it does little to encourage patriotism. It includes the controversial phrase "under God" that violates one's freedom of religion by showing a clear bias against atheists. For these reasons, the Redwood should follow Saratoga High School's example and not use class time to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

The most important issue the Pledge of Allegiance raises is the separation between church and state. It states that America is a nation "under God," which contradicts the First Amendment's establishment that religion has no effect on one's patriotism. This questionable wording disregards our nation's founding document by implying that atheists are not truly part of America because they are not "under God."

In addition, the Pledge of Allegiance,

>> candidcaricatures



when blindly recited, fails to inspire patriotism. The flag salute does not universally represent one's love for America. People attach different meanings to different objects, and for that reason the Pledge of Allegiance means nothing to bored middle school students. To those who feel they have no choice but to say it, it may, at worst, become a symbol of oppression.

Currently, Redwood's version of the Pledge of Allegiance requires students to stand and recite the words out loud. This forces students who are uncomfortable with the Pledge of Allegiance's religious implications to publicly isolate themselves from their peers, which could lead to being ostracized. Considering how much peer pressure affects a middle school student's life, it is clear that Red-

wood's routine is de facto mandatory.

Some may argue that the phrase "under God" does not discriminate against atheists. It can even be interpreted as "under no God," one such proponent claimed. In reality, Congress added the phrase during the Cold War to distinguish Americans from generally atheistic Soviets. In other words, the phrase "under God" is a clear statement that the "ideal" American is religious.

Another possible counter-argument is that recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance is mandated by the California education code. However, the exact wording of the code states that schools must conduct "appropriate patriotic exercises." There is no specific mention of the Pledge of Allegiance, giving teachers the freedom to interpret the phrase "patriotic exercises" however they want; arguably, learning American History can also fulfill this requirement.

Of course, all this fuss over the Pledge of Allegiance may seem quite silly to most Americans. In that case, if it is so trivial, then it doesn't really matter if schools stop saying the Pledge of Allegiance or not.

Either way, the Pledge doesn't impact students deeply. Schools might as well just cut it out of their daily routines. ♦

Memo to SCOTUS: Procrastination is not the way

SUPREME COURT'S DECISION NOT TO DECIDE ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION A MISTAKE

BY Sudeep Raj

On June 24, the Supreme Court decided not to give a major ruling on a Texas affirmative action case and avoided setting a precedent for the whole country. They chose instead to rule on the affirmative action policies in the University of Texas, thereby not creating a definite law for every college.

By deciding on the policies of just one college, the Supreme Court has invited multiple lawsuits against individual colleges.

It is possible that many colleges' rules will be attacked and different precedents will be set in court. Eventually the Supreme Court will have to rule on the

issue, and until then both sides will become more heated as individual courts across the country claim different laws.

The Supreme Court has waited too long with many controversial cases in the past.

For example, they could have ruled on gay marriage in Colorado in 1996 or in Texas in 2003. But instead they chose to look at the specific law for those two states. Had the Supreme Court ruled earlier on gay marriage, the court would not have faced as much criticism later.

Furthermore, delaying a decision on affirmative action leaves it for the future, when a more biased Supreme Court may rule. In the past, both political parties have tried to claim the

Supreme Court; justices sometimes attempt to retire when the current president has the same political affiliation, so the president can assign a judge partial to one side.

The current distribution of justices is neutral or very close to it. Now may be the best time to make a fair decision on affirmative action.

Finally, there is no definite law for affirmative action currently in the United States. It may be allowed, but since the Supreme Court has not made a definite ruling, the details are left unspecified.

For example, the definition of diversity in college students has never been defined. Should the number of students of a given ethnicity in a college be

compared to the total population, high school graduates or 18-year-olds?

Some may say that the specifics of affirmative action should be left to the states, but an issue as important as affirmative action should have uniform regulations throughout the country. Many people cross state borders to attend college, so more lenient rules in one state give the state's colleges an advantage.

Only a federal decision on affirmative action would set clear and specific rules.

Essentially, delaying an issue as important as affirmative action builds unnecessary confusion and conflict and will lead inevitably to another decision years from now. ♦

Google Glass sacrifices privacy

BY Minu Palaniappan

For being such a smart company, it's hard to believe Google could be so dumb. Google is looking to build computerized eyewear as its next platform product.

Termed the "Google Glass," Google's headwear is not a consumer-worthy product since its functionalities are incredibly intrusive when it comes to user privacy.

The device is similar to any other pair of glasses, except that it has a mini-projector strapped onto the top that allows users to view a virtual reality. With these glasses, users can peruse through web content with simple eye movements and voice commands.

Following disclosures that followed leaks by Edward Snowden, a former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor, consumers have now began to shy away from using data-focused web services. Consumers have realized that their personal information, interests, connections and favorite locations are consistently tracked by intelligence agencies funded by the U.S. government.

The Google Glass has many suspect features, but the one that attracts a majority of the concern is its ability to take video.

What's not to say that agencies such as

the NSA tap into a user's Google Glass and stream real time video of the user's vision.

Not only can individuals of authority gain access to citizens' glasses, but Google also hasn't taken the proper precautions to secure the device from prevalent hackers who have had a consistent history with tapping into devices.

With its intrusive camera, the glass also has the ability to easily snap pictures. With the simple blink of the eye or a tap to the left of the glasses, a user can create that snapshot and save it to their personal storage account provided by Google. This convenient feature draws privacy concerns since it doesn't stop users from snapping pictures of everyone surrounding them.

If a majority of consumers had their hands on this product, one wouldn't be able to tell if these Google Glass users were using the camera feature properly or exploiting its ability to take unwarranted pictures. Unlike taking pictures with a phone, the Google Glass snaps pictures in a less obvious way. Google Glass, in addition to its media features, has the ability to comprehend your subconscious.

According to PolicyMic, "Google Glass ... tracks your eye movements and makes data requests based on where you're look-

>> candidcaricatures



ing. This means the device collects information without active permission."

Glass is completely independent of its user and pulls data without permission. This ability makes Glass more of a hindrance than a convenience since it does not fully follow the user's decisions.

Google Glasses' ability to log and database all the data that consumers require, elevates its value to a much more personal device. The Glass records where users are, eat, work, live and chronicles the smallest portions of their life. As a result, if these glasses were to fall in the wrong hands, users could easily be tar-

geted using the Glass's vast knowledge of its user.

There's no doubt that the Google Glass could be an essential tool to users who frequently travel. Glass gives users the ability to read emails, consume web content and get virtualized map directions at any time and location. There's immense power to that functionality since it allows users to crunch data in seconds.

But when inspecting the device's features, I just see a more convenient smartphone. That reality, coupled with the privacy issues, makes the Google Glass a gimmick with a huge downside. ♦

Can you pretend to be a freshman for one day?

With my facial hair stubble, non-cracking voice and confident smile, there is no way that anybody at Saratoga could mistake me for a freshman. But even with these blatant features, I decided to try and pretend to be a new ninth grader and set out to find myself some friends.

At the beginning of lunch during the second week of school, I assumed the identity of a new, lonely freshman. I awkwardly approached one end of a table of freshman boys.

"Do you mind if I eat lunch here? I hate sitting alone all the time," I said. "Hi, my name is Jay, and I'm a new freshman here."

To my surprise, the three freshmen at the end of the table warmly welcomed me to sit down and even initiated conversation. These freshmen seemed to be more mature than I thought. After we exchanged backgrounds (I lied about moving from San Jose), I learned that these three boys' names were Brennan, Kevin and Max.

In my peripheral vision, I saw a freshman named Lucas examining me while I talked to Brandon and Kevin, and he eventually tapped my shoulder and asked if I was a senior.

"A senior?" I chuckled. "No, I am a freshman. Why would you think that I am a senior?"

"You are tall and have defined muscles," he responded.

I have been working out, I thought. It was about time someone noticed and pointed it out.

I lifted my eyes beyond the table for a mental break from all the lying, and spotted one of my friends, senior Vivian Wang, walking by with a perplexed expression on her face. I held eye contact with her for a couple seconds — big mistake. She started to walk toward our table, and I knew that my cover was about to be blown. I attempted to communicate with my eyes by repeatedly looking to the right toward the quad and

back to her while shaking my head subtly, signaling her to go away.

She just grew more curious and approached me at the table. When she opened her mouth to speak, I cut her off.

"Eww, get out of here Link Crew leader!"

Her eager face reverted back to her original perplexed expression. As I continuously cut her off with the same phrase, she gave up and walked away.

Not only did I protect my cover, but I demonstrated an act of immaturity, reinforcing my identity as a stereotypical freshman.

I was so proud of my short-term accomplishment that I zoned out for the next five minutes and re-watched the situation repeatedly in my head, appreciating the impromptu genius that had rolled off my tongue.



JAY
MULYE
Juicy Jay



FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA

Senior Jay Mulye laughs with his freshman friends during lunch Aug. 29. While the freshmen somewhat believed his cover story, he was never able to convince them completely.

At the end of lunch, I decided not to tell any of my new freshman friends that I was actually a senior so that I could break the news to them in a more jaw-dropping way.

A couple days later, I revisited the freshman table with my car key lanyard around my neck and Q-Cup chicken in my hands. I casually offered them some chicken, acted like a hot shot, and watched them devour my lunch. The questions and excitement started to fly out of them.

"Wait, you can drive? But you are a

freshman. Wait, no you must be an upperclassman, right? I knew it!"

I confirmed their theory that I was indeed a senior and explained that I was doing a newspaper story on this experience.

Even though they practically ate all my lunch, I'm glad that I had an opportunity to make some freshman friends. After disguising myself as freshman for a couple days, I realized that some freshmen are actually fun people to socialize with and not as irritating as some upperclassmen might think. ♦

Can you join the Liu family?

Pulling up to an unfamiliar curb at 11 a.m., I was tempted to call my friend sophomore Ariel Liu to confirm this was the correct house. I struggled up the driveway with my textbooks and laptop, but before I could ring the bell, Ariel threw the door open.

After ranting about my tardiness, Ariel climbed into my mom's car as I hesitantly entered her family room.

I was greeted by her mother, busily cooking in the kitchen while Ariel's two brothers slept and her father was at church.

Taking a seat at the family room table, I began working on my AP US History (APUSH) notes while listening to One Direction, and after 10 minutes of hard work, I heard a groan.

"Ariel! Close the doooor," said Samuel, Ariel's older brother and my intimidating, dictator-resembling editor-in-chief, annoyed.

In a flurry of terror, I quickly turned off the angelic sound of Harry Styles's voice and gently nudged the door shut.

Because of the hurry Ariel put me through this morning, I had skipped breakfast. Luckily, I didn't have to wait long until Ariel's mom brought me an appetizing bowl of fried rice.

It took another half hour of APUSH notes before Samuel finally walked into the room exhausted from a long night of sleep, and unsurprisingly, continued straight to his iMac desktop without noticing me. It wasn't until about 10 minutes later when Ariel's mother said my name out loud when offering me seconds on fried rice that Samuel peeled his eyes from the screen.

"Sherrilyn," he said surprised. "Hello."

Suddenly the cry of a small child rang in my ears.

"He's awake!" Ariel's mom shouted in Chinese as Samuel jumped out of his seat and rushed into the hallway, returning with possibly the cutest baby I have ever seen.

Samuel set Timothy, their one-and-a-half year old brother, down and he stumbled toward me, looking up at me with shiny eyes still wet from crying. I smiled at him and attempted to wave pleasantly, trying to remember any knowledge I might have of what babies find enticing. In return he stared at me blankly, so I decided to get back to my homework.



**SHERRILYN
LING**
\$hermoney

Before I could lift my hand he snatched my pen from it, leaving me unable to work as I had already lost points for not using blue or black ink on my APUSH notes the previous week.

Timothy walked away with the pen, so I sat there for a couple minutes before deciding to take one from Ariel's desk and continue.

After getting bored of homework, which only took about 30 minutes, I decided to explore my surroundings and wandered into Ariel's room. The scent of sweet pea air freshener was a bit too strong but the plain lavender walls were a nice contrast to my room's movie poster covered walls. On her desk was a very unnecessary basket containing enough nail polish to satisfy 11 girls for a year.

Going back into the hallways, I saw years worth of family portraits hung across the walls. As I walked, I was able to witness Samuel and Ariel throughout the years (for anyone who's curious, Samuel was surprisingly chubby and buck-toothed as a child).

I then made my way into the backyard where an adorable Australian shepherd greeted me and wouldn't let me stop petting her when I tried to walk away. Suddenly, I heard a clucking sound and walked down the steps to find the eight infamous Liu chickens scrambling around in a coup. Bewildered, my initial instinct told me to run back into the house.

Upon entering, I was baffled to find Samuel laughing as his little brother "twerked" to the tune of one of his baby toys.

As if I weren't alarmed enough, Timothy's face suddenly turned bright red as he began to make grunting noises. I wasn't sure what was happening until Samuel crinkled his nose in disgust.

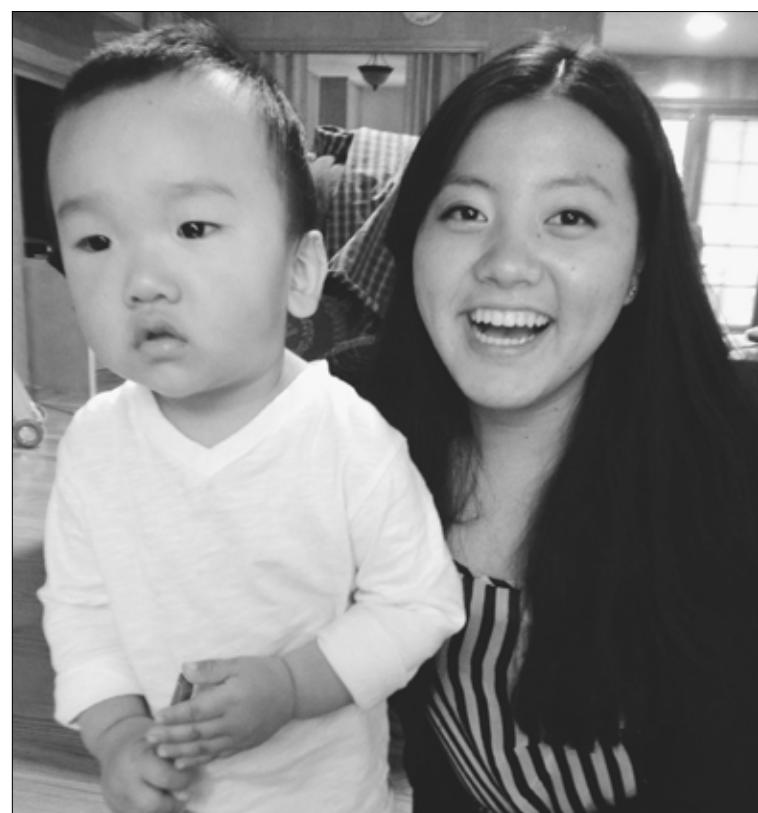
"Go away, you smell," Samuel said as he lightly shoved Timothy.

The foul odor hit me, and I instinctively buried my face in my cardigan, as Timothy continued to grunt. Thankfully, his father came and carried him away, and I could once again breathe fresh air.

Finally, Ariel returned at around 6:30 p.m., and though I had a memorable experience at the Liu home, it was nice to be back in the comfortable presence of my own mom in the familiar passenger seat of her dark grey Prius. ♦



Courtesy of LIU FAMILY



TOP: Ariel, Timothy and Samuel Liu pose for a family picture.
BOTTOM: Sherrilyn Ling takes a break from her APUSH homework and takes a selfie with the youngest member of the Liu family.

Blind date at Chipotle sparks new friendship

BY Catherine Tang

Blind dates are often random, awkward meeting of two students with nothing to talk about, no similarities, and from very different social groups. Yet sometimes these dates can have happy endings.

On Aug. 30, junior Gino Caloiaro and senior Rachel Perera met up at the school for a blind date and then went out to dinner. They have previously only talked maybe once or twice, but their friends, senior Jennifer Ho and senior Akiko Gillot, who attends Los Gatos, thought it would be a good idea to set them up.

They first went to Pinkberry, but Perera's friends, Ho and Gillot, who knew when and where the date was taking place, were waiting there for her.

"My friends happened to be at Pinkberry when we walked in so that

was awkward," Perera said.

Since Perera's friends were there, they decided to go next door to Chipotle instead.

"He got chips and I got a burrito bowl, and he told me to dip the chips in the burrito bowl," Perera said. "It was actually really good."

After their dinner, they stopped by Verde, a pearl milk tea cafe to continue talking and enjoy a refreshing drink.

"He was really nice because I didn't have enough money, but he paid for

it," Perera said.

As they headed back to school from their dinner, Perera found her car Saran-wrapped by the same friends who

had staked out Pinkberry to watch her date.

"I was really surprised to come back and find my car Saran-wrapped. It was pretty funny, though," Perera said.

Perera said she enjoyed the outing.

"He was easy to talk to and a sweet guy. There was a lot of food, so there's nothing wrong with that," Perera said.

Caloiaro agreed with Perera that the night went well and they both had fun.

"There's nothing to complain about," Caloiaro said. "She was fun to talk to, and it was nice to make a new friend."

The two agreed that they would go out again.

"At the beginning of the date, I thought it was going to be awkward because we both didn't really know each other, but it was super relaxed so it was nice," Perera said.

Perera rated the date 4.5/5 and Caloiaro rated it 5/5.

"It was a good way to spend a Friday night," Perera said. ♦



FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA

GINO CALIOARO (11) RACHEL PERERA (12)



New Year, New You!



Dating for dummies: Saratoga High School edition

BY Jay Mulvey
& Simi Srivastava

How do you keep the spice in the relationship?

It is important to change things up every once in awhile in order to keep the relationship from being too vanilla. Instead, try to add other flavors to the mix. For example, throw in a pinch of cayenne and take your boyfriend or girlfriend on a spontaneous trip. Or maybe add in some thyme and spend a few more hours together for a couple weeks (pun in-

tended). You should constantly be trying something new to avoid letting your relationship get too bland and be kicked off the menu.

How do I make the first move?

Picking up girls or guys is just like window shopping. Regardless of whether you are a guy or girl, if you see someone you're attracted to, you approach him or her. If you are a coward, then message your crush on Facebook "accidentally" about his or her favorite band such as "Did you hear the latest One Re-

public Album? Oh sorry, wrong person" and let the sparks fly. Even if you get rejected, don't take it hard; you just need to move on and.

Where are some romantic date spots in Saratoga?

A romantic setting is not something that you can simply look around for and locate. You must use your individual experiences to search the spiritual plane for auras that would entice the person in question. If you don't know much about this person, it is always safe to search for food places, such as Yogurtland, and Q-Cup. A romantic place to meet is Skyline, a hill where the stars and city lights blend into one massive amalgamation of romance, hormone-inducing dust—it's perfect for sightseeing. Avoid the smokers who frequent the area and you should be just fine.

When do I know that the relationship is not meant to be?

Usually, when a relationship is not meant to be, one of the people in the relationship will give signals that imply that they are no longer interested in the other person. For example, if you receive a text from your significant other that says "We need to talk," it is safe to assume that things aren't going to work out in your favor.

What gifts should I give?

While in a relationship, it is very important early on to give gifts that are personal and reflect your significant others' personality and passions. However, it is often difficult to get to know your girlfriend or boyfriend well enough early in the relationship to be able to give them thoughtful gifts.

One easy way to build off of an inside joke that the two of you share. For instance, if the two of you like to joke about how Justin Bieber is a girl, you can buy a Bieber doll and dress him up as a girl. Every time your boyfriend or girlfriend looks at it, he or she will chuckle and remember the good laughs he or she had with you.

How to flirt without texting?

As frightening as it seems, sometimes it is OK to talk face to face with the person you are interested in. Sometimes, talking in person can even boost your chances of a relationship. For this reason, install video chatting capabilities into your computers at godspeed.

Conclusion:

It is safe to assume that relationships are not as easy as they seem to be. They are not like math problems where the correct answer can only be attained by plugging numbers into a formula. There is no formula for success; you must experiment and keep experimenting until you find someone that makes you happy. But, worry not, for if you are unable to find your soulmate in this lifetime, there are always items to hoard and pets to own in excessive amounts. ♦



er 27, 2013

Freshmen find romance on campus

BY MilesAlbert

The transition between middle school and high school can be overwhelming, but as the class of 2017 begins to assimilate into Saratoga High School culture, they have picked up the essentials of how to survive high school.

In hopes of finding their niche in the grand scheme of things, some freshmen have decided to branch out and try new things, meet new people and test their luck in the world of high school romance.

Freshmen Aaron Vogel and Makenna Seagraves first met in 4th grade at Saratoga Elementary School, and have been dating for two months now.

"We mostly hang out over the weekends," said Vogel. "I'm usually pretty busy because of homework and football."

However, when entering high school, Vogel said that being in a relationship hasn't helped the transition.

"People make fun of us



FALCON // JADE BISH

because they think that freshmen relationships can't be serious and that we're too young to have a 'real' relationship," said Vogel.

Unlike Vogel and Seagraves, freshmen Ramesh Farrokhi and Ricky Holt carried over their relationship from middle school. They have been dating for almost eight months.

Due to their hectic schedules upon

entering high school, the two are not able to spend as much time together as they would like so they try to make the most of it. Farrokhi feels that if both people in the relationship truly like each other, those few spared moments should suffice.

"If you both really like each other it will work out," said Farrokhi.

Despite going to different schools while dating, sophomore Vinny Taylor and freshman Sophie Sellers have been together for over a year now.

They began dating when Taylor was a freshman and Sellers was an 8th grader at Redwood Middle School.

Sellers and Taylor both agree that attending the same school has a positive effect on their relationship now that they are able to spend more time together.

"It's nice seeing her everyday now that she goes to SHS," said Taylor.

Taylor said he loves spending time with her because "she's someone who is always happy."

"I don't care that I'm a grade above her," said Taylor. "It doesn't make a difference." ♦

>> topseven

WAYS TO ASK A GIRL OUT

7 Bring along a wingman. Just avoid the cliche plot where he steals your target.

6 Buy her flowers. Or a venus flytrap to represent how much of your wallet she'll eat up.

5 Write her a love letter. Pour the passion of a thousand suns into your work.

4 Sing her a song. Watch her stand there awkwardly for three minutes.

3 Use the AP Stats project as an excuse. "Would you go out with me?" Ask at least 80 girls, you're going to get a yes.

2 Save her life from a criminal syndicate. Girls dig heroes. But girls being chased by the mafia may not be for you.

1 Use a pickup line. "Did you fall from heaven? Because you landed on your face."

>> Nelson Wang

New Romance

LOVE IS IN THE AIR AS THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR STARTS

GRAPHICS BY CAROLYN SUN

Long-distance relationships worth the extra effort

BY ShreyaTumu

High school is, mostly, a time for learning. Yet one of the biggest aspects of "the high school experience" is the pursuit of romance.

However, when faced with the prospect of separation, some couples choose to break up, and high school romances become high school memories.

But other couples have maintained their bonds despite the gaps of distance and culture.

Such is the case for senior Jessica Pham, who met her boyfriend, SHS alumna Raymond Wong, in chemistry class junior year.

"When we met, I think it would be safe to say that we both had butterflies in our stomachs since we were both going to meet our crush for the first time," Pham said.

And this bond endured, despite their separation when Wong began at Indiana University this fall. Today, the two meet sparingly and keeping the relationship going requires extra effort.

"You just have to put all your trust in

it and hope for the best," Pham said.

Through social media and Skype, the Pham and Wong have maintained a daily correspondence.

"It was kind of stressful at first because it's hard to find time to talk," Pham said, "but now I just Skype with him once a day for a couple of hours."

Regardless, Pham said the relationship is going strong.

"I think that it is worth all this effort because we make each other happy even from 2,000 miles away," Pham said.

Many others like Pham and Wong are engaged in a long-distance relationship. One of these many would be senior, Kevin Chun, who is in a relationship with SHS alumna Samantha Cheng. The two met in marching band during Chun's sophomore year, and she now attends University of California at Berkeley. They plan on meeting at least once every two weeks, when Cheng comes home to visit her family.

"We just started dating long distance," Chun said. "We dated for two years prior and we really hope that it goes well."



Courtesy of JESSICA PHAM

Senior Jessica Pham with boyfriend Raymond Wong hike up Mission Peak on Aug. 13.

Both Pham and Chun agree that trust and devotion seems to play a big part in long-distance relationships. Without that, the relationship won't work.

"I do think the long distance has changed our relationship because in an ironic way it has brought us closer together," Pham said. ♦

>> togatalks

Are long-distance relationships worth it?



What's the point if you can never see the person?"



sophomore Naved Krishnamurthy



I think if you really like the person that much, it would be worth it."



junior Anshul Aggarwal



I don't think so. Relationships require face-to-face time with each other."



junior Amanda Le

Junior finds amusement without social media

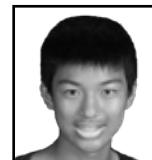
When I come home from school, my favorite pastime is to check notifications on my Facebook account while simultaneously watching new videos posted by my favorite YouTube channels.

So when I pledged to not use Facebook or YouTube for a week as a challenge for newspaper, my self-control was truly tested. To make matters worse, the week included Labor Day weekend with its three days of boredom.

I decided early on that I would allow myself to log in to Facebook once a day to receive my daily rewards for my games. I was not going to lose my Social Empires 50-consecutive day login reward just because of a challenge I made for myself. I clearly have my priorities straight.

Following the experiment, it was clear that I had relatively no trouble avoiding YouTube because before the challenge, I would only check every so often to see if my subscribed channels had uploaded new videos. But when I saw my little brother watching videos of STAR_beating up Jarma on Team Fortress 2 or laughing at the Yogscast failing at reviewing games, I could only smile back, my insides full of sorrow.

With Facebook, though, I was really in a dilemma. I could not chat with



DEVIN ZHAO

Devinately Awesome

other people or post on my class groups asking what the homework was. I also could not view, comment or "like" other people's posts, images and videos for pure entertainment. I felt deprived.

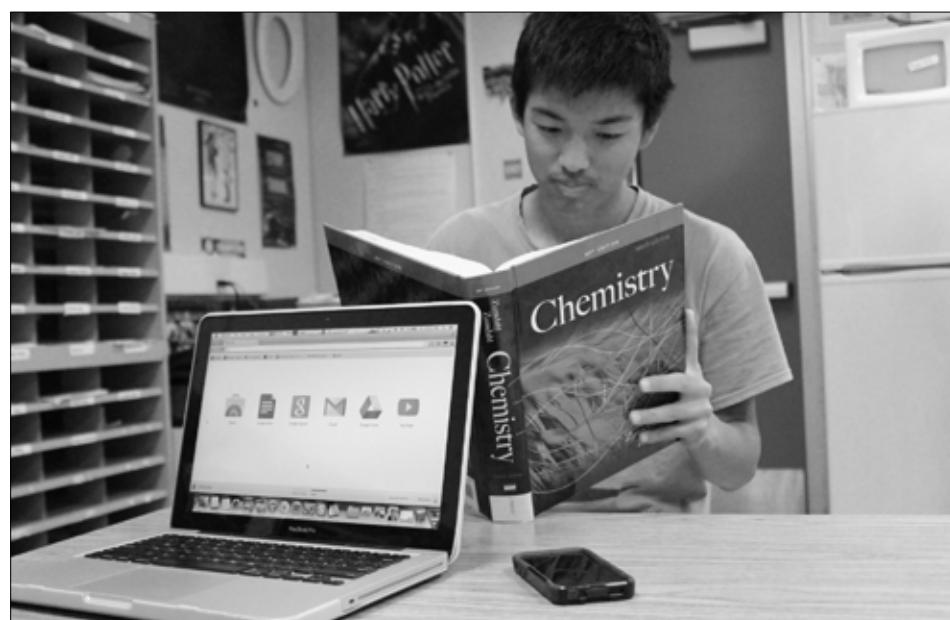
I had always depended upon Facebook and YouTube as my main sources of procrastination. With these mediums gone, a vast expanse of hours opened up to me. Ironically, I spent most of those hours thinking about what I could be doing on Facebook or YouTube instead of actually being productive.

Eventually, because I now had a plethora of free time, I began concentrating more on my studies. I had time to learn several the concepts of calculus and biology I was unfamiliar with. Because I could not check the Facebook groups for the homework, I began paying more attention in class and noting the homework on my own.

I started downloading apps, such as Angry Birds Star Wars and Enemy Strike, to play on my Galaxy S3 and fill the time that I used to spend checking Facebook.

I also found more time to practice my euphonium, and my practice sessions extended from the half an hour they used to be to one hour or more.

Some of the SAT, PSAT and ACT prep books that used to rest on my desk un-



FALCON // JADE BISH

Junior Devin Zhao studiously reads his AP Chemistry textbook, ignoring the Apple devices. touched now sat under my desk, all the practice tests taken and lessons learned.

By the end of the challenge, I found out that my homework schedule had only slightly improved; I was still procrastinating and finishing my homework by midnight.

On a positive note, I discovered new forms of entertainment, such as online games, that I only used to periodically

check.

I guess that this challenge was a good experience. I've never had over 20 notifications on Facebook at one time as when I checked Facebook for the first time in a week.

As I felt the waves of pseudo-popularity, I realized that I had discovered a new form of addiction: The social media fast. ♦

YouTubers gain popularity and diehard followers

BY Arman Vaziri

Who are JacksGap, Dicasp, and TylerOakley? They're not the most subscribed to YouTubers, but they still have found a way to gather millions of views and develop a strong fanbase by making video blogs about their lives and other entertaining skits.

Each of their channels is an example of the rising popularity of making a living through YouTube.

These performers make money on YouTube by regularly making original videos that get thousands of views, which allows them to become YouTube partners.

Once a partner, YouTubers can make money from advertisements that run

with the videos. The amount of money earned depends on the number of views of the video.

These YouTubers are beginning to become well known at SHS because of their humorous videos and how they actively connect with their fans through each of their social media accounts.

Junior Eunju Pak likes to watch the British performers because of their foreign appeal.

"Jack and Finn Harries (JacksGap)



GRAPHIC BY JANE PARK

and Caspar Lee (Dicasp) are just cute, and their British accents and being foreign are nice and just really appealing," Pak said.

Junior Sarah Liddie also enjoys watching videos by her two favorite performers, Tyler Oakley and Caspar Lee.

"I heard of these YouTubers about a year ago, and I started watching their videos," Liddie said. "Once I started watching one of them, I started watching all of the other ones,

too."

YouTubers often attend annual conventions, like Vidcon in Anaheim where the fans can meet and take pictures with the performers. For Liddie who attended in early August, this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"Meeting [Tyler Oakley] was one of my favorite moments of VidCon," Liddie said. "I was extremely excited because he is one of my favorite YouTubers, and I couldn't believe that I was finally getting to meet him in person."

Liddie believes that these performers will not be forgotten anytime soon.

"They all have cool personalities, and they'll become more popular because people are starting to hear about them and watch their videos," Liddie said. ♦

SHINee fails to shine: concert leads to disappointment

My eardrums, already protected by the makeshift ear plugs I had fashioned out of tissue paper, were throbbing. The music, emanating from every corner, made me half-deaf. The screaming of Chinese girls "singing" along to Korean music didn't help either.

Last summer, I went to the SHINee concert at Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center.

I had been there since 6 p.m., but the concert wasn't scheduled to begin until 8.

To a certain demographic (basically everyone there except me and my friends), SHINee is beauty manifested in five extremely pretty Korean men.

SHINee fans, ages ranging from 10 to 60, waved their glowsticks and fansigns around my friends and me.

We weren't big SHINee fans, but we had expensive tickets that we couldn't waste because my friend's 50-year-old aunt was a huge SHINee fan and a generous spender.

In the midst of the fangirling and excitement, I asked my friends a valid question: "Wait, what are their names again?"

Even though I posed this question in

English, I could feel the glares of hundreds of English-studying Chinese girls aimed at me.

In my defense, I had never even listened to Kpop music before last summer. How was I supposed to know the names of five grown men who sing songs with titles like "Ring Ding Dong?"

The five members of SHINee, Onew, Minho, Taemin, Key and Jonghyun, came out wearing rainbow tie-dyed three-piece suits and flipping their platinum blonde hair.

The fans immediately started screaming, and SHINee started to sing.

I made out a total of one word I understood: "Hello," which they repeated 26 times. Hellohello... I later found out that, fittingly, the song's name was indeed "Hello."

As the concert progressed, I started getting more annoyed. Since the average temperature of Taiwan during the summer is basically 100 degrees, the inside of the concert hall stank of armpit sweat.

In the middle of the concert, the announcers let the members talk and rest for a while because they too were dripping in sweat.

They played a game, and picked five raffle tickets out of a hat. If you were

picked, they would hug you, give you a signed CD and take a picture with you. It was the dream come true for all the fans there.

Because I could barely understand the Chinese they were saying and really didn't care either to listen either, I spaced out a bit.

I thought they called my number, but I wasn't sure because my ticket had about 23 numbers on it.

Confused, I asked a 12-year-old in a Hello Kitty shirt next to me, "Is it me?"

When she ignored me, I turned to the other girl next to me, a 20-something girl wearing a microscopic skirt and thigh-high boots. "Is it me?" I asked again, this time getting anxious. She just laughed.

By that time, the announcer was telling Minho to draw the next ticket.

When I finally decided that they really were calling my ticket number, Minho was waving another ticket in his hand.

I'd like to say he broke my heart, but, in reality, I really couldn't care less about a Korean man whose name I had known for about an hour and a half.

As the concert came to an end, many girls around me started to sob. "Bie ting! Don't stop!" they yelled.

The members of SHINee, with sweat dripping off their faces, looked incredibly flustered, as they couldn't understand Chinese anyway.

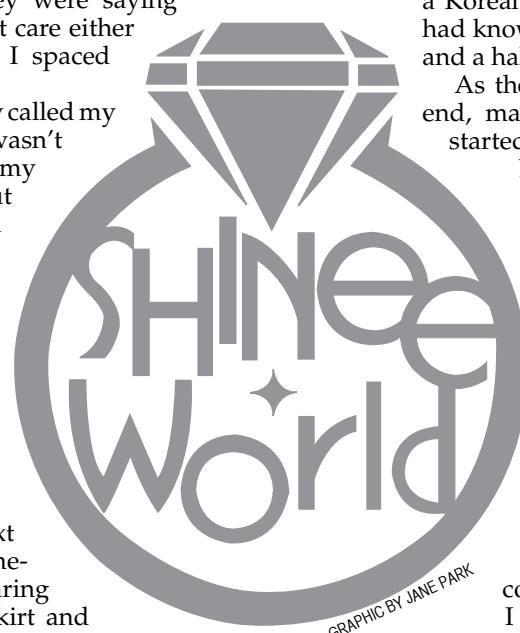
With that, they walked off the stage, the lights turned on, and the concert was over.

I tried to look sad, but I couldn't help but cheer. I knew what I would do as soon as I got home — revel in the lack of body odor, the breeze of the air conditioning and the soothing voices of One Direction. ♦



ARIEL LIU

The Little Mermaid



GRAPHIC BY JANE PARK

Sophomores disagree on quality of 'City of Bones'

BY Shreya Tumu

As the sweet and elegant music started to slowly fade away, the teenagers leaned in for a kiss and a halo of misted water showered the lovestruck couple.

How cute is that? Amazingly adorable, I say, which is probably why "City of Bones," based on the worldwide best-selling series "The Mortal Instruments" by Cassandra Clare, got nominated for MTV's movie award.

"City of Bones" is set in contemporary New York City where a seemingly ordinary girl, Clary (Lily Collins) discovers she is a descendant of a long line of Shadowhunters, a group of warriors dedicated to ridding the world of demons.

I absolutely loved the book, and the movie also met my expectations, with just the right amount of romance, fast-paced action and jaw-dropping graphics.

The movie is full of adventure, and it keeps the viewer engaged through its special effects. For example, when a dog turned into a carnivorous monster, I noticed that many audience members jumped in fear, a tribute to the movie's excellent graphics.

It could be argued that some of the animation is overdone, but only because the director wants to emphasize the point.

For example, the director wants to show the audience how much Clary and Jace (Jamie Campbell Bower) love each other, so he uses bright vibrant colors and twinkling fireflies in a greenhouse during a love scene. A true romantic would be understanding of this exaggeration of the greenhouse scene. It's the sugary clichés that make this movie's romance plot the stuff of the classics.

Clary is dangerously spontaneous and impulsive in the book, and she is equally as crazy in the movie, which is perfect.

She brings drama and excitement into the movie because she is nearly killed so many times. As a result, the audience is on the edge throughout the movie.

Just like Clary, Jace was also played brilliantly. Though I still wish that Alex Pettyfer could have played Jace (he was first cast and then declined), Bower played Jace with the right amount of humor, arrogance and love. The balance between those mercurial traits is extremely hard to capture, but Bower did a commendable job.

I squealed with glee when I saw the first glimpse of Simon (Robert Sheehan), Clary's best friend. Smart and witty with his trademark glasses, Simon is a hot nerd with a ton of personality. Without Simon, the movie wouldn't be half as funny.

I want to rewatch the movie to further absorb the subtleties of the plot. I highly recommend it not only for the fans of the book but everyone else. ♦



FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA

GRAPHIC BY JANE PARK

BY Ashley Chen

A lovestruck voice rang through the theater, crooning "Your love lifts me out of time," as glowing bubbles floated through the badly animated greenhouse. As if made by gears, pink and purple flowers spiraled open and released a flurry of glitter.

Sound like an awful scene infused with 20 clichés too many? That's because it was part of "City of Bones," which has the unfortunate distinction of being the worst movie I've ever seen. I'm being kind when I say that the movie crashed in a sizzling pile of ashes.

"City of Bones" is an adaptation of the bestselling Mortal Instruments series, in which teenage Clary (Lily Collins) discovers after her mother's disappearance that she is related to the Shadowhunters, a group of warriors whose mandate is to fight demons and protect the human world.

Let's just say I didn't like the source material that much from the start, and this was a bad makeover of a boring book. All I learned was how long I can stay awake in a dark theater with com-

fortable chairs.

Despite the fact I had already read the book, I had trouble following the lightning-paced introduction, which jumps from "I'm just a normal kid" to "I'm running for my life" in around 2 minutes.

The remainder of the movie wasn't much better. The constant references to mythology, including vampires and werewolves, meshed badly with the setting of contemporary New York. From lava monsters gliding past the Statue of Liberty to demonic little girls jumping rope next to Starbucks, the contrast left me confused about what was going on.

In addition, I found the romantic subplot between Clary and Jace totally unrealistic. In one scene, Clary barely escapes with her life after an (unnecessary) conflict with vampires, and in exhaustion just "happens" to fall on top of Jace. In another, she's stumbling down stairs when she trips and somehow finds herself in Jace's arms. Their kiss was so cheesy I couldn't even watch it without cracking up.

The character development was devoid of any depth whatsoever. Clary was the movie's worst character — without personality, without intelligence, and without fighting ability. All she did was gambol around almost getting people killed until a completely illogical, improbable plot twist would save her.

Not only that, the animation was just plain awful. I wasn't sure if they were trying to make it look realistic or make us laugh. Considering "The City of Bones" had a budget of \$60 million, that's pretty sad.

If you see this movie, don't say I didn't warn you. ♦

Juniors pick up aired TV shows to fill in summer

BY Amy Lin

All summer junior Kevin Lian had a dilemma. On the one hand, he had SAT practice books piled high on his desk and the guilty knowledge that he should study more.

On the other hand, he had three more seasons of "How I Met Your Mother" left to watch before school started and they were calling to him.

"I had extra time leftover after taking a class at West Valley," said Lian, who had started "How I Met your Mother" after finding himself with an abundance over the summer. "I've watched a few episodes before, but never got into the series until this summer."

Lian likes "How I Met your mother" because of its interesting plot twists and hilarious moments.

"Barney, a womanizer with a unique view on life, has the best catch phrases," Lian said. "He is the glue that holds the gang together."

Lian is not the only one who found himself starting an old show. Juniors Guita Vahdatinia and Josh Pi also caught up with "Skins" and "Community," respectively in their spare time this summer.



GRAPHIC BY CAROLYN SUN

"Skins" has intense teenage problems with sex, drama and drugs," Vahdatinia said of the show, which ended on its seventh season on Aug. 5. "It's fun watching how the characters deal with these issues."

"Community," a show about a group of students who end up at community college after a variety of past mistakes, has been running for four seasons.

"I like the show because it's super funny, and it has a lot of references to other shows and TV series," Pi said.

All three juniors heard about their respective shows from friends.

Vahdatinia especially wanted to watch "Skins" because of the abundant amount of gifs on Tumblr.

"It improved my summer a lot because it was super entertaining, I watched every single episode," Vahdatinia said. "It was 110 percent worth my time."

Pi agrees that watching "Community" was the right decision because it gave him something to talk to his friends about. Even though he could have used his time practicing SAT, he doesn't regret it.

"If I have time, I'll continue watching the show [during the school year]," Pi said. "Hopefully, I'll still enjoy the show in between band practice and academics." ♦



Junior Michelle Luo works on her oil pastel. Luo's art was featured on the planner.

FALCON // JADE BISHT

Dripping with talent: student portrays emotion through art

BY Becky Hoag

Excited about her new project for art class last year, junior Michelle Luo researched and brainstormed until she began to envision her next piece, a drawing of dripping water.

Immediately she got to work on it every chance she had: art classes and free time at home. Luo started by sketching an outline, then she filled it in one square inch at a time, until finally it was complete.

This year's school planner cover is stunning, sporting beautiful artwork by the school's very own students. Twenty pieces were hand-picked by the art teacher, Diana Vanry, and then four were chosen by the planner's publishing company. Luo was one of the four. Other students whose work was featured were Doris Hsu, Meeta Marathe and Luke Salin.

Luo drew the black-and-white piece entitled "Water Droplets."

"Drawing a huge water droplet is boring, so I decided to make like a time-frame thing, instead of sketching a scene," Luo said.

Luo began creating art when she was

4. She's been taking art classes both in and out of school since then. Originally her parents nudged her into art, but now she draws for her own love of it.

"While doing [art], you can express your emotion. You don't really feel stress from school work," Luo said.

She likes to sketch modeling shots, 3D works and pictures that are abstract and realistic at the same time. In addition to sketch work, Luo also does oil painting.

Mrs. Vanry said that she is proud of the work Luo does.

"She's extremely talented and she works hard in class getting her assignments done," Vanry said.

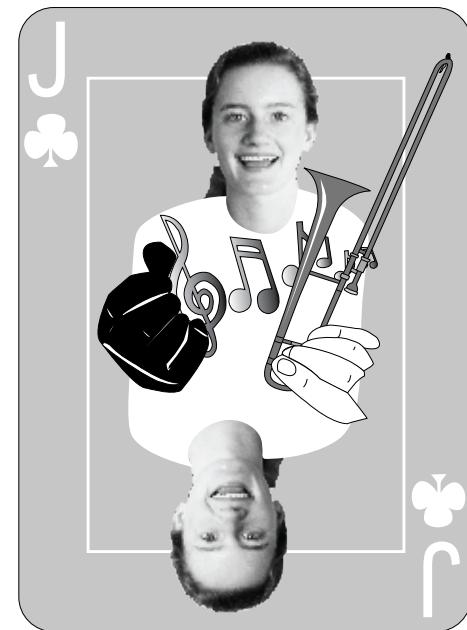
Luo decides what to draw by the emotions she wants to define. Her piece featured on the planner was inspired by sadness.

"I wasn't in a sad mood," Luo said. "I just wanted to draw something sad because I've never worked with that [emotion]."

The piece took two to three months to complete, finishing at 18" by 24".

"All the artwork I do, I expect something before and it comes out different," Luo said. "But I like it in a way." ♦

JACK OF ALL TRADES



GRAPHICS BY JANE PARK, ROTEM SHAKED, CAROLYN SUN

MASTER OF SOME

Alumna reflects on high school activities

BY Sabrina Chen

For most students, the glorious ring of the bell marking the end of seventh period signifies the end of the school day. But when Sanjna Verma, now a freshman at New York University, heard that same bell in high school, she knew that her day at school was far from over.

Throughout high school, Verma participated in a wide variety of extracurricular activities that took up the majority of her after school hours.

"I chose to participate in as many activities as I could [as a freshman] because I didn't know what I really liked," Verma said. "I wanted to know more about what I could be doing in the future, and these extracurriculars definitely helped me learn a little bit more."

Every Thursday in fall of her junior year, Verma drove to Saratoga Country Club right after school for golf practice. At the end of practice, Verma, as editor of the yearbook and captain of the speech and debate team, rushed back to school, going back and forth between journalism deadline night and speech and debate practice.

When Verma finally came home at 8:30 p.m., she still had a lot to do before

going to bed. Not only did she have to do her homework for trigonometry and AP Environmental Science, but she also had to practice singing for her upcoming Indian heritage recital and work on her History Day project. Only after completing all of this would Verma be able to get ready for bed.

Besides participating in all these activities, Verma was also part of the leadership class, Roots Club, Indian Club, science fair and National Honor Society. Verma said that she started most of these activities as a freshman and stuck with them through her senior year.

Verma said her main purpose for doing extracurriculars was not to supplement her college application, but to discover her passion.

However, Verma realized that all her activities were based upon interacting with others.

"When it comes to my future path, I still don't really know what I want to do, but I really value doing something very people-oriented," Verma said. "I like interacting with others and solving problems, so I'm sure I'll find something that [will let] me do that."

Besides helping her learn more about herself, Verma said that extracurricu-

lars also taught her to be hardworking and independent, and to manage her time wisely.

"I learned about self-motivation because all of these [activities] are really hard to continue with for four years," Verma said. "I learned to push myself and work really hard."

Although she believes her large share of extracurriculars did help her get into college, Verma said that they have really shaped who she is today.

"After getting into college and having attended college for a week now, none of my grades in high school matter; but what I learned from my activities [has] definitely influenced me more in terms of what I want in my college experience, and friend group," Verma said.

Looking back, Verma said that although trying to do everything in high school may not have been the best approach since her extracurriculars took up so much of her time.

"It was a lot of work in high school, but I think that was the best way to get involved in the school and community," Verma said. "I didn't want to go through high school and then graduate and be like 'Woah, what did I just do in four years? Nothing?' because that just

seems like a waste of time."

Verma said that high school is a great time to take the initiative and explore different activities. However, she thinks that students should only do the amount of extracurriculars they can handle with schoolwork being the priority.

"Grades and school are king, and extracurriculars are the queen," Verma said. "With that, you'll be set." ♦

>> THE schedule

Alumnus Sanjna Verma

Typical Monday Junior Year

7:50 am-3:15 pm: Classes— Spanish 4 honors, Trigonometry/Pre-calculus honors, AP Environmental Science, AP US History, Yearbook, English 11 honors

3:30-5:30 pm: Golf practice

6:30-8:30 pm: Speech and debate practice as extemporaneous speech captain

9:00 pm-12:00 am: Homework time

12:30-1:45 am: History Day project, North Indian classical singing practice

Sophomore devotes her time to music and volleyball

BY Dorothy Tang
& Tiffany Zheng

As soon as the bell rings at 9:25 a.m. for an average Friday tutorial, dozens of students rush out of their classrooms, meeting their friends to do homework together or just to hang out. Sophomore Nicole Chiou is not among them. Instead, Chiou goes directly to the music building to practice piano for her after school class.

"Additional practice makes me feel more ready for class, especially if I don't think I have prepared enough throughout the week," Chiou said.

Chiou has played piano since age 5 and cello starting in fourth grade. Chiou said that she started practicing the sport in seventh grade and training on her own.

"When I became good at it, I started

to enjoy it a lot," Chiou said.

Soon after, she joined both the school team and club volleyball.

To spend the most time possible on music and volleyball, Chiou sets a stringent schedule for herself. For example, almost every day after school, Chiou goes home and immediately starts on her homework, working nonstop for about two hours before she has to leave for evening volleyball practice.

"I spent a lot of time during the summer in open gyms, practicing volleyball with my dad," Chiou said. "I guess the work paid off."

After she comes back home from practice and has a quick 15-minute dinner, she immediately switches gears to practice her two instruments, the piano and cello, for approximately one and a

half hours each. This helps her to relax her mind from all the schoolwork that she has to handle throughout the day.

The rest of the evening is left for any remaining homework, and she usually gets to bed around 11 p.m.

On top of spending all this time on these two activities, Chiou still finds spare time to read, shop and jog.

One of her strategies for maintaining her schedule is working on her schoolwork in small chunks of time—during tutorial, break, or even in the car.

For example, Chiou is rarely seen chatting with her friends during tutorials, as she is usually working in a classroom or practicing piano in the music building.

"There's really no way to finish all my homework, attend the events for my ac-

tivities and go to sleep at a decent hour if I don't get at least part of it done at school," Chiou said.

To ensure maximum efficiency at home, Chiou often closes Facebook on her computer and leaves only some music on to fuel her mind.

"She clearly has her priorities," said sophomore Michelle Handoko, one of Chiou's close friends. "She always keeps her goals in mind and stops herself from getting distracted."

Chiou may not do every single activity offered at the school, but she drives herself to do things with passion and persistence.

"Although sometimes I feel overwhelmed, I could never see myself quitting any of these activities," Chiou said. "Keeping up all of them has helped me to have good time management and volleyball keeps me fit." ♦

Welcome to '#strugcity'

RENAISSANCE SENIOR STRUGGLES AT LIFE

BY Samuel Liu

Strug City: Land of the struggling
 City Population: One
 Demographic: One, crazy senior girl.

Senior Jennie Werner is the sole inhabitant of self-proclaimed "Strug City," so-named because she — the editor-in-chief of the Yearbook, the captain of the field hockey and lacrosse teams, WASC student representative, member of school leadership and senior class secretary — struggles at life.

Dark blonde with a streak of light-hearted crazy, Werner is often seen prancing through her various abodes on campus, noisily and noticeably. She is, however, notorious for making comedic mistakes — so frequently that last year, sophomore Talia Clement (a close friend of Werner's) started compiling a list of "#jennieproblems," documenting Werner's various mishaps in a weekly email.

Her "jennieproblems" often accompany activities in which she excels, and she has a leadership position in almost every activity on campus, whether in sports, publications or student government.

"I feel like sometimes I'm too outgoing for my own good," she said. "I'm not afraid to fail so I just go for it."

Her overabundance of energy can get her into trouble. A competitor-at-heart, Werner is known for getting into aggressive (albeit non violent) confrontations during sporting events.

"Jennieproblem" of May 4, 2012, reads: "Jennie spends more time on the ground than on her feet during lacrosse games."

Werner, who plays center on the lacrosse team, said, "I love athletic competition, but no I have never gotten in a fight."

She then proceeded to give the account of how, in a lacrosse game her sophomore year against Leland, she and another girl were running up the field when both of them "tripped." Myster-



Senior Jennie Werner poses in selfie with journalism adviser Mike Tyler at the end of yearbook distribution last spring. Werner, as a sophomore, races down the field during a lacrosse game against Notre Dame.

ously, their feet tangled and neither of the two could get off the ground — both ended up with yellow cards for bad sportsmanship.

"But then later on she got a second yellow card and was sent off for the rest of the game," Werner said. "Woot."

Werner is also somewhat of an English nerd. She is a spirited debater and loves the language, yet Werner cannot spell for the life of her.

In her English 11 Honors class last year, Werner gained a reputation for mispronunciation. "AY-Ahgo," Werner had said throughout the year, when mentioning the villain of Othello, Iago (pronounced "EE-ahgo").

"I internally cringed every time," said senior Lauren Lin, co-editor of the Yearbook. "Every time I heard 'EYE-AGO' a piece of my soul died."

While her "jennieproblems" in English might seem like they would hinder her abilities in journalism, Werner has nevertheless ascended to the highest position in yearbook, of which she is co-editor-in-chief. Her leadership style hinges on a healthy combination of rigidity and enthusiasm, and her constituents seem to adore her.

"[Of the three editors of the Yearbook] she's my favorite," senior Risha

Jennie Werner



Courtesy of JENNIE WERNER

Shah said. "She's extremely dedicated and good at what she does."

Described as a "ninja" by her victim, Werner is notorious in the journalism program as the only one who has ever acquired a "SWT," or the legendary Selfie With Tyler, named for journalism adviser Mike Tyler's camera shy nature.

"She just fools me, she's like, she gets me to do things that I don't even know I'm doing," Tyler said, in exasperated confusion. "And suddenly I'm in a selfie and being liked by 500 people on Facebook, and I didn't even know what was happening."

Later that day, Werner revisited the topic while Tyler was present.

"I really want Mr. Tyler to photobomb with me," Werner said.

"Oh I just realized I have a meeting," Tyler said. "I gotta get out of here."

Werner's obsession for yearbook often takes precedent over her other activities, including school. She spends her afternoons in the journalism room, poring over spreads and discussing ideas with her fellow editors Lin and senior Jason Li.

"YBK is life," said Werner, using her shorthand notation for Yearbook. "I love the satisfaction of creating content that's not only interesting but visually appealing. There's nothing more thrilling than

finishing a spread in the dark journalism room after four hours alone, running on a bag of stale pretzels."

"When you walk outside the lights are blinding and it kinda gives you a dizzy headache," she said as she starts pounding the table emphatically. "But it's so satisfying to know that your work is done and your spread is beautiful — there's nothing better."

This year, Werner has a multitude of plans for the the Talisman. While burdened with a staff low on returning members — 20 seniors graduated last year — Werner has several reforms for the book: an emphasis on organization and alternative coverage.

"In the past we've had traditional stories but we know most students don't read them," Werner said. "One of our goals is to make the actual text shorter and more readable — more Q&A's, flow charts and first person anecdotes."

Werner's goals for this year aim high, and if anything, she expects more late nights and dinners in the Journalism room.

"Every year Mr. Tyler [holding up that year's book] says 'This is Saratoga's best yearbook,'" Werner said. "[My goal] is to have Mr. Tyler hold up our yearbook — even years from now — and say, 'This is The Best Yearbook.'" ♦

Upperclassmen stress quality over quantity for success

BY Michelle Leung

Senior Lauren Casey-Clyde marches at the head of the sweaty, fatigued marching band during one of many rehearsals under the hot California sun. As tiring as the hard work can be, she loves the extracurricular she excels in.

Casey-Clyde would not be able to spend the extra time she does with marching band and with her own musical instruments had it not been for her decision to narrow her extracurriculars and focus on what she loves: music.

"By junior year I had figured out that robotics was not exactly my thing and neither [was] long-distance running," Casey-Clyde said. "So junior year I focused on music even more."

Casey-Clyde participates in multiple aspects of the music program: she leads band as one of four drum majors, performs in concert band and jazz band and mentors younger students through the Music Education with Saratoga High (MESH) program.

Casey-Clyde also gives private music lessons in her instrument, the euphonium, to several freshmen after school, attends several school rehearsals for band and practices her two instruments, euphonium and trombone, at home for two to three hours.

Casey-Clyde does not regret choosing music over her other activities.

"I have loved [mu-

sic] and

have found every performance, meet and practice rewarding," Casey-Clyde said. "It's pretty clear I have come to my own conclusion that music is my passion."

Although Casey-Clyde found her happiness in music, she believes that students should try different activities before settling on one or two. It isn't the time spent on an activity that is most important, Casey-Clyde believes it is the personal rewards.

"I have found [that] high school is a great time to experiment with different activities so

one can find their greatest passions," Casey-Clyde said.

Like Casey-Clyde, junior Jessica Uong also participates in fewer activities: cheer, which practices every day, and volunteering at the Children's Recovery Center in Campbell.

Uong believes that students can get a sense of teamwork when focusing on one activity that they otherwise couldn't when trying to "do it all." According to Uong, not only are the members of the cheer team teammates, but they are also friends.

"Cheer does take up a lot of time," Uong said. "[But] when I'm doing cheer, it feels good to know that I belong on a team. When you spend so much time together, you get really close."

Besides cheer, Uong is grateful for the personal rewards she gets from concentrat-

ing all her remaining time on her volunteering four hours a week at the Children's Recovery Center in Campbell.

"If I only went for an hour every couple of weeks, I wouldn't be so attached to the kids and I wouldn't be on that emotional level with them," Uong said.

Uong believes that the emo-



FALCON // GRACE MA

Leading the marching band, senior drum major Lauren Casey-Clyde salutes during the home football game against Salinas on Sept. 13.

tional connections she has with both her cheer teammates and the children at the Recovery Center are worth more than participating in a variety of extracurriculars could ever be.

"I think focusing on one or two [activities] is more beneficial than trying to do everything," Uong said.

"Sure, you can do everything, but you would never get to experience that emotional

attachment you get when you channel all your time into one thing."

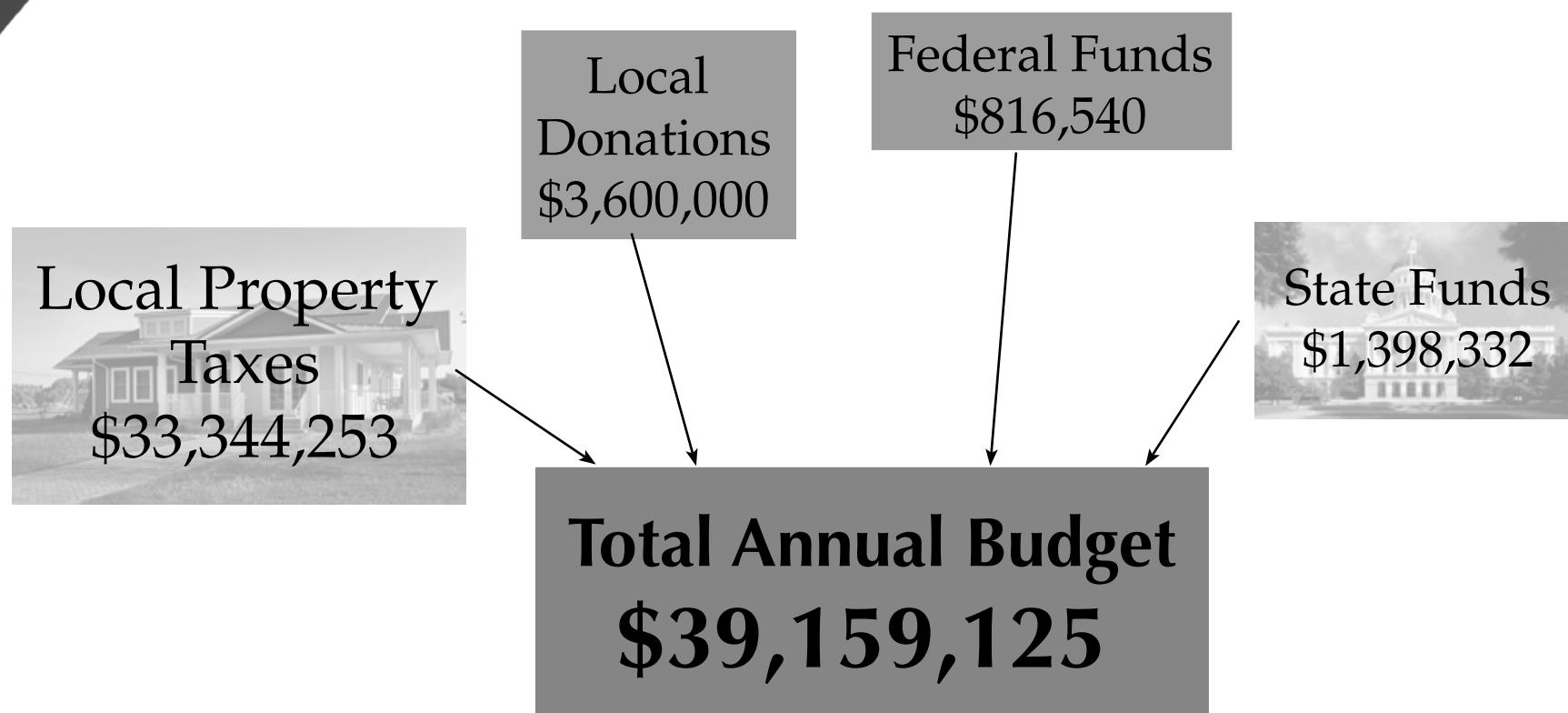
Casey-Clyde agrees that students should find interest in the activities they participate in.

"In my experience, no activity is necessarily rewarding just because you focus completely on it; rather, it's rewarding for the mere fact that you love it and have the opportunity to do it," Casey-Clyde said. ♦

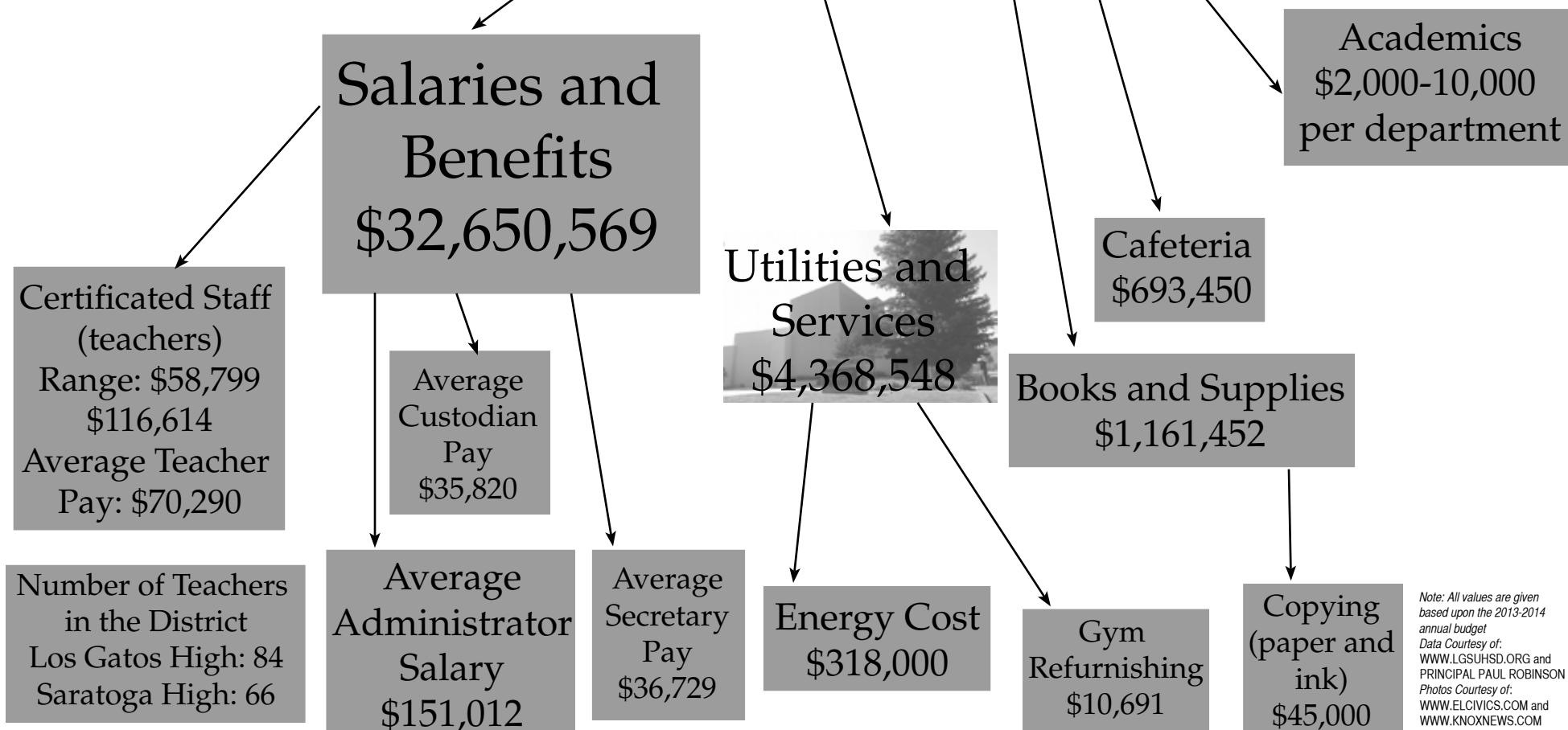


THE FALCON EXAMINES THE COSTS OF EDUCATION
IN THE LOS GATOS SARATOGA HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?



WHERE IS THE MONEY GOING?



>> falconfigures

What could you buy with the annual district budget of \$39,159,125?

4.9 million

Chipotle steak burritos

100

Lamborghinis

20

Houses in Saratoga

1/5

Of the San Jose Sharks Ice Hockey team

Sources:
www.trulia.com
www.forbes.com
www.motortrend.com

THE MONEY

Photo Courtesy of: WWWFAMILYSECURITY.ORG

Athletic director explains sources of sports budget

BY Deepi Kannan
& Amy Lin

When athletes resentfully fill out the mundane, nine-page packet of forms required for participation in sports, they often blindly write a check for \$275 without giving much thought to where that money actually goes.

According to athletic director Tim Lugo, sports receive no financial aid from the district. Rather, the sports budget, which is about \$275,000 a year, is solely based on the \$275 and above parent contributions which around 85 percent of athletes pay.

Principal Paul Robinson said that while students are not required to pay a fee in order to play a sport, this donation is essential to keep all of the school's current sports.

"Instead of saying that it is an athletic fee, we say that it is a contribution to this

goal of having everything that we want in our athletic program," Robinson said. "Many times, some people contribute more, because they know people are unable or even unwilling to."

Lugo added that these contributions help diversify Saratoga's athletic program.

"Unlike most schools, we fund all the sports. [Students who] go to Monta Vista or Lynbrook can't play lacrosse," Lugo said. "We offer everything that the CCS allows us to offer, so we give kids a lot of avenues to be a part of athletics."

However, not all sports are funded equally by the sports budget. Lugo said that football is the most expensive sport, with a budget of \$7,700, due to the high costs of safety equipment, whereas most other sports cost only between \$1500 and \$2000.

Despite these disparities, Robinson stressed that the fees all even out.

"Cross country uniforms aren't very much, but when you have 60 people on a cross country team, buses are very expensive," Robinson said. "Maybe the uniforms of softball players is more, but transportation is less expensive, and it all balances out."

Lugo added that money for sports has to be pooled together because of the shared costs that all athletes pay and benefit from, including that of the athletic trainer, strength and conditioning coach, officials and medical insurance for those who can't afford it.

"We can't really charge [a specific fee] per sport because everyone is getting back something different," Lugo said. "If you ever walk by [athletic trainer Liz Gilmore Alve's] office, you know she's worth every penny we pay her, because her room is always full. So it all plays out in the long run."

In addition to sports budgets, the Saratoga Sports Boosters, a separate



Courtesy of PAUL ROBINSON

The new sports plaza will be built where the current football ticket booth now stands. Construction for the plaza is expected to start Dec. 1 and finish in time for graduation.

nonprofit organization, also plays an important role in supporting athletics at the school.

Lugo said the Boosters are trying to supplement bigger projects like the sports complex.

Coaches from individual sports can request monetary help from the Boosters for equipment or projects outside the school budget, if necessary. The Boosters bought team uniforms in the past years as well, but the school picked up these costs because they are low on money, Lugo said.

"Now the school is actually purchasing uniforms, so our budget is starting to get [used] up a little bit more and more," Lugo added. "Originally, we had a pretty decent rollover every year because we were putting money aside to replace the turf. Now that the turf has already been replaced, we are absorbing some of that cost to help the Boosters out."

Aside from the Boosters, the Saratoga High School Foundation, also a private organization, funds most of sports facilities. The Foundation's current project is split into two phases and costs an approximate \$5 million.

Phase one of the project, which includes replacing the turf and starting construction of the sports plaza, is already in process and partially complete. Phase two includes leveling the upper field and turning it into a stadium wired with lights.

Robinson said construction for the plaza is expected to start by Dec. 1 and finish in time for graduation.

"If you look at our campus, it will be a great balance between what you have up front with the McAfee center and that beautiful sports plaza," Robinson said. "All that money is private money, and that's one of the really cool things is to see our community step up." ♦

>> falconfigures

\$275K	Annual sports budget
\$0	Financial aid from the district
\$7,700	Budget for football, the most expensive sport
\$275	Athletes' participation contribution per sport

Music department thrives on fundraisers and donations

BY Sherrilyn Ling

When students flipped on their televisions and watched in envy as their peers marched down the streets of New York in the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade last November, very few of them thought about how money had come into play. Most students are unaware that marching band is one of the most expensive activities on campus, costing roughly \$1,000 per participant each year.

"Band students give a lot more [effort] into their activity because they're on campus more than anybody else," music department chair Michael Boitz said. "They're very dedicated and it's a bigger craft, so marching band families pay a lot more to be a part of it."

Junior Sameer Iyengar said marching band was a big jump money-wise compared to cross country, the sport he did last year. However, he plans on continuing it next year because it's such a good experience.

The budget that the music department receives from the district each year

for expenditures is a meager \$2,500.

However, Boitz said after a recent major equipment malfunction, principal Paul Robinson has helped find funding to pay for repair costs that add up to around \$1,500 to \$2,000.

"When he arrived, he found out that we don't have a repair budget, so right away he helped us with it," Boitz said.

Another huge component to the music program's overall budget is the money that Saratoga Music Boosters, the organization that financially supports the music department, raises each year through fundraisers, such as selling cookie dough or holding annual events like Jazz Cabaret.

Aside from SMB fundraisers, some music students have held independent efforts such as car washes, and some have also performed gigs in the area for weddings or other events. Choir students also sell chocolate candy bars to offset their cost of participating.

"We all need to put effort into our fundraising because equipment is not cheap," sophomore Joowon Lee said.

"And as a bonus, if we all fundraise a lot collectively then that allows us to pay for trips and fund members who may be financially struggling."

Boitz said the highest percentage of the fundraising dollars goes to offset beginning band and beginning orchestra, meaning a majority of the money is sent to allow more fifth graders a chance to play or learn to play.

The next largest portion goes to program support. SMB contributes between \$5,000 to \$6,000 each year to pay for the accompanist and music for the choir.

Every year, SMB splits the amount of money they raise among the music groups according to the number of participants in each group.

"It's proportionally correct because there are about 220 kids in band and Color Guard, 70 kids in choir and 160 kids in orchestra," Boitz said. "[SMB] is usually pretty spot on about how much they're supporting each part of the program."

Boitz said that if a student decides not to join marching band because of a financial issue, they can privately speak

to him.

"If they have that problem but never say anything, then we have no way of knowing there's somebody out there who would really like to be playing in band but has a financial hardship," Boitz said. "All they have to do is confidentially say something, and we'll help them deal with it." ♦

>> falconfigures

\$1,000	Cost to participate in marching band
\$2,500	Expense money from the district
\$5,000	Annual cost for accompanist and music for choir

THE QUOTABLE**Nailed it**

"We won the match, but I broke my nail during the game so I have to go to the trainer," said sophomore Allison Lin after her match, holding up her nail victoriously.

WHO'S HOT**Queen clutch**

The girls' tennis team started the season 2-0. Against Los Gatos, the team won 4-3 with freshman Caitlin Ju's deciding match lasting three hours. **"She has a really great mentality when she plays," senior captain Karen Sung said. "She stays stable, so she's able to perform well under pressure."**

Putt to win

The girls' golf team started the season 3-2. Sophomore Carrie Chen made a 10-foot putt to win the match against Los Gatos on Sept. 16. **"I thought that I wouldn't make it, but I got kind of lucky," she said.**

Toga tops Rams

The football team won its first game of the season on Sept. 20, bringing its record to 1-2 and breaking its cold spell. The team pulled off a 15-point comeback against Willow Glen, and won 40-37. **"After a win last night, we found ourselves and hope to keep that going throughout the remainder of the season," said senior Grant Faylor the day after.**

>> The Stat**55 Miles run**

Boys' cross country star junior Stevie Sum ran 55 miles the week of Sept. 15. Sum placed first in Crystal Springs, one of the longest meets of the year. On Saturday, Sum raced in the Nike Invitational.

8 Goals scored

Senior Stephen Cho of boys' water polo scored eight goals on Sept. 17, against Cupertino. **"We have a really good team this year," Cho said, "I think the team chemistry is really pulling together."**

>> The Rankings

1 ^ Girls' Tennis (2-0)

2 ^ Boys' Water Polo (2-0)

3 ^ Girls' Volleyball (3-2)

4 = Girls' Golf (3-2)

5 v Football (1-2)

6 v Field Hockey (1-4)

7 v Girls Water Polo (1-4)

CATCHING UP WITH THE CROSS COUNTRY TEAM



1. The bridge that the cross country team runs on for the Lookout trail, a difficult run that goes up into Montalvo.

2. The uphill stretch at the end of the frequently run Farwell loop, which skirts past downtown and has a substantial amount of shade.

3. The beginning of the difficult Lookout Trail that enters into the forest.

ALL PHOTOS BY MINU PALANIAPPAN



The day I ran with cross-country

Half a mile into the run with the cross-country team, I felt my shins stinging with pain. The concrete roads were infinitely harder on my recurring shin splints than the gym floors are at volleyball practices. So why then, you might ask, is a volleyball player running with the cross country team?

Well, that's a bit of a story. Last week in newspaper, I was mapping out cross country routes for a spread and I began to wonder — how hard would these routes be for the average runner?

So I decided to try it out. I volunteered to run one of the more challenging routes called Springer, which consists of three miles of hills near downtown Saratoga.

While I hate running, I figured it couldn't be hard. I managed to convince myself that the run would be no problem since I was on the varsity track team last spring. What I left out

in this inner discourse was that my event was long jump and my daily runs were down a 70-feet runway.

I didn't want to get very sweaty from the run because I had volleyball practice afterwards and, since it was almost 91 degrees that day, I decided to make the run a little easier. One of my friends from track, who also does cross country, and I decided to run downhill and walk uphill for the second half of the run. Let's just say was not the first time we decided to slack off together in a workout.

The first part of the run was tiring, but my willpower wasn't truly tested until the last part of the run. We had to run through downtown to get back to school, and those cafes and coffee shops were practically luring me in. It was hot and I was thirsty, so an iced tea from Starbucks sounded perfect, but I did not want to be the last one back because I'm a bit competitive so my friend and I just went on with our run, enduring

the thirst, heat and pain.

The run took me about 30 minutes and when I got back, the team was stretching. The runners usually do a core workout after stretches but because they had a meet the next day, they decided to skip these.

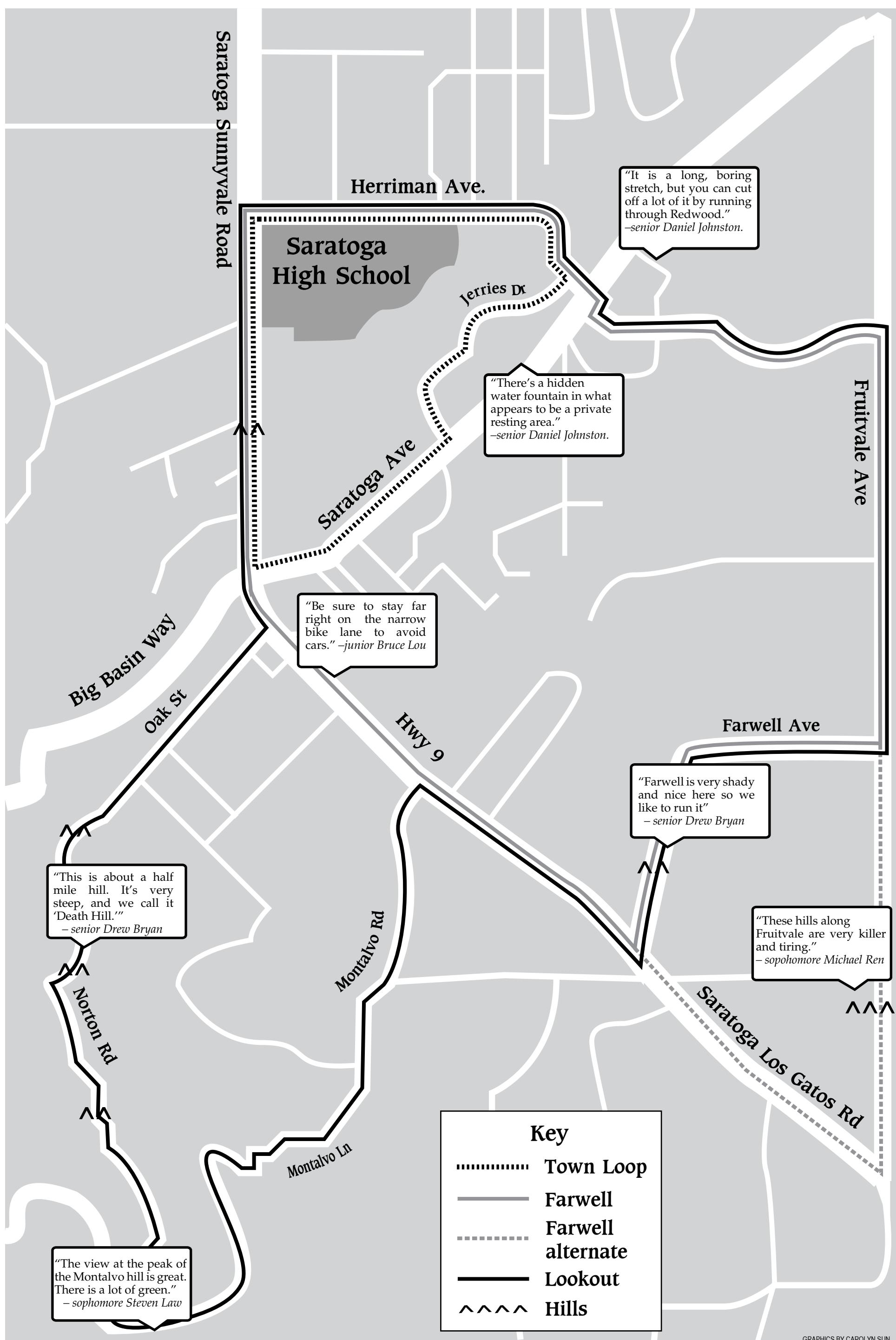
Although my shins were in pain and it was 91 degrees, the cross country run was a lot of fun. I got to spend the run talking with my friends, which is very different from other sports where coaches tend to get irritated when my friends and I talk too much at practice. Not to mention, the cross country coach, Danny Moon, was very friendly in letting me join his practice, and he even provided water for his athletes after the run.

The run was challenging and tiring, but the overall experience was enjoyable. The team was very supportive and there was a stronger sense of unity. If I weren't part of the volleyball team, I would definitely consider joining the cross country team. ♦



CATHERINE TANG

I Tango



FOOTBALL

Star QB Walters looks to repeat last year's success

BY Rohan Hardikar

This is a story that begins in the sixth grade.

Senior Jonathan Walters, then only a sub-five foot 11-year-old, was playing on the local Pop Warner team. He had been a wide receiver then — good, but only playing because Joseph Walters, his big brother, played football as well. One day after practice, Walters was throwing the football for fun when his coach spotted him and decided to make Walters the quarterback.

Walters was stunned, and for the first few games he was awful. But eventually he came to excel at the position.

In his junior year, he was made the varsity starter quarterback, and he hasn't looked back since. He won a medley of awards, including Cal-Hi co-offensive player of the year, Prep to Prep SCVAL player of the year, Most Passing Yards in CCS and was ranked as the No. 1 quarterback in the De Anza League — he's come a long way since Pop Warner, and the super-competitive league he plays in today includes powerhouse teams such

as Los Gatos, Milpitas and Palo Alto.

Yet Walters is more than a collection of awards and has assumed a leadership position on the team. His teammates speak fondly of him, both for his leadership and for his own work ethic.

"[Walters] is one of a kind. Not only is he the first one on the field and weight room, but he's also the last one out," said senior Rick Roy, an offensive guard. "His work ethic and modesty is respected by pretty much everyone on the team."

And while Walters is one of the most lauded players on the team, he retains his humble demeanor.

"I think [Walters] is one of the most talented kids I have coached, but also the most humble," coach Tim Lugo said. "He comes to practice every day and tries to get everyone around him better."

But Walters' successes last year mean little now, as he must lead his team to victory without the help of key players, Kyle Dozier and Henry Wei, who have since left for college. Walters has double the responsibility — he is both quarterback and captain, meaning he must be playmaker and enforcer of rules at prac-



FALCON // DAVID SPARKMAN

Senior quarterback Jonathan Walters throws the football to a teammate during practice.

tice.

The Falcons have already played two games this season, losing to Sacred Heart Cathedral and Salinas, 21-40 and 25-41 respectively. During these games, Walters has thrown for 551 yards and netting a completion percentage of .567 percent.

Walters' impressive performance last year has caught the eye of college recruiters. But despite being only 6 feet

tall, undersize for a Division 1 quarterback, Walters has the ability to throw accurately and make quick decision under intense pressure. However, his main focus as of right now is to perform well during this season and help the team succeed.

"It is an honor to be a leader on the football team, but most importantly, I plan to enjoy my senior year and have a great football season," Walters said. ♦

GIRLS' TENNIS

Captain aspires to lead strong team

BY Simi Srivastava

No. 1 singles player Usha Raman started playing tennis in third grade because she wanted to try out different sports such as soccer and gymnastics and see which one she liked the best out of the three.

"I like the element of strategy in tennis because every opponent is unique, and there is a lot of strategy involved in figuring out how to utilize your strengths to attack their weaknesses," Raman said.

Raman, who has been on varsity all four years, is one of the captains of the team. Raman said that she enjoys playing for the school team because of the unity that the players have.

"Tennis is generally a very individual sport, and players usually have to rely only on themselves for support," Raman said. "Team tennis gives a new perspective as the other players on the team are constantly encouraging and cheering each other on."

According to one of Raman's teammates, sophomore

Shireen Haghshenas, Raman is a key leader for the squad.

"[Raman] is really supportive and pushes everyone to go beyond their limits," Haghshenas said. "She is always trying to bring out the best players in us in order for us to become a strong, confident team."

Assistant coach Jonathan Chui said Raman makes a great team captain because of her ability to connect with the girls on the team.

"She is very approachable and with her experience she can help the rest of the team grow," Chui said.

Raman believes that with the addition of nine new players, the team has the potential to succeed as it did last year, with a 12-6 record.

"Last season we performed really well in league matches as well as CCS, and I hope we will continue to have that same success this season," Raman said. "With the addition of so many new players, I think this season will be a great opportunity for a clean start and a fresh perspective for the team." ♦

BOYS' WATER POLO

Experienced sophomore hopes to thrive during league season

BY Andrew Jiang

The score was tied 6-6. One minute and 30 seconds were left on the clock. Playing press defense against the other team, sophomore Mason Lee anticipated a shot and immediately started sprinting to the other side of the pool.

With no one within three meters of him, Lee picked up the ball and skipped it underneath the goalie's arm. With his shot, Santa Clara Valley (SCV) Water Polo Club took a 7-6 lead at the 2013 Water Polo Junior Olympics in Hawaii.

Lee is the starting utility for the boys' varsity water polo team. He started playing water polo five years ago.

"I've liked water polo since the start, and I've never thought about quitting before," Lee said. "My favorite part about water polo is the team aspect and how everyone depends on each other to do well."

According to Lee's teammate, junior James Guzzo, Lee is dedicated to the game.

"Mason is one of the hardest working guys on the team,"

Guzzo said. "I can tell he's always putting his best effort into practice and games, and I really respect that."

His parents fully support his water polo, and make sure he pushes himself to his full potential.

"My parents are really serious about me going to water polo [practice and games] because I've spent so many years playing," Lee said.

After winning six out of nine games at Junior Olympics, Lee noticed a significant improvement in his water polo skills.

"I improved my awareness, shot and defense," Lee said. "Most importantly, I feel way more confident in my game."

When the school season is over, Lee plays for SCV. SCV competes at a national level, and Lee frequently plays opponents such as Stanford's club team.

The school team practices Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings, and immediately after school until 5 p.m. every weekday. Boys' varsity water polo coach Courtney Crase said she can see the commitment

and talent of Lee.

"Mason is multifaceted in terms of water polo. He reads the opposing player, anticipates the next move, is a fast swimmer and has a great shot," Crase said. "Mason is a huge asset to the team."

Lee also likes the team's chances this year.

"We have a lot of versatile players on the team and our team chemistry is good," Lee said. "I feel very confident about making CCS this year."

Lee's long-term goal for water polo is to compete at the college level.

"I know I can be good enough," Lee said. "I just need to continue practicing hard." ♦

>> scoreboard

Sept. 17

Saratoga 18, Cupertino 4*The team worked well together and easily won the game.*

Sept. 19

Saratoga 18, Harker 6*The game was fairly one-sided, and they scored consistently.*

GIRLS' WATER POLO

Senior's tough, physical style and leadership benefit team

BY Amy Lin

It's no wonder Nikki de Roos, a senior who plays set, is a force in the water. As the only senior and a captain of the girls' water polo team this year, de Roos is the primary driving force behind the young team, aggressive and intimidating against opposing teams.

"[de Roos] probably has the most experience out of all of us, so she's a super strong leader and a fierce player," said junior Madison Gress, who is a captain along with de Roos and junior Mackenzie Rosenthal. "We can always depend

on her to give us some much needed 'tough love' or keep us focused during practice."

De Roos's main position on the team is set or set defense. According to de Roos, her 6'1 height and 170-pound frame are some of her biggest strengths in her position because they give her an advantage over smaller players.

De Roos's mother played water polo back in Holland when she was a girl, and her stories inspired de Roos to start playing too.

"I absolutely love the physicality of water polo," de Roos said. "We can

always keep a hand on our player and maneuver them if we're strong enough. I played basketball for a season after water polo freshman year, and I kept getting kicked out [of the game] for being too aggressive. Water polo is great because you can get away with anything."

For the new season, de Roos expects great things, especially because the team moved to the upper league this year. To achieve this goal, the girls are participating in additional practices and weight training.

"Our team has a tremendous amount of potential," de Roos said. "I really

want to show the other teams that we can compete on their level."

Despite a few drawbacks, like some less-experienced players and a lack of seniors, de Roos is determined that this season will be good.

While de Roos has trepidations about the upcoming season, she hopes the team will play hard and give 100 percent in every game.

"We will have a tough season as a team and we will have to play each quarter like the last," she said. "But we will get through everything, stronger than we were before." ♦

GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

Winning streak lost against Los Gatos

BY Catherine Tang

Last year, the girls' volleyball team ended its season with a tough loss against Sacred Heart Cathedral at the quarterfinal CCS game, partly due to many of the players being sick.

This year, the team came back healthier, stronger and tougher.

While all of the team's pre-season games are against upper league teams and the team is in the lower league, the girls won their first three games with ease.

The team played its first game on Sept. 5 against King's Academy and won 3-1.

The girls continued on to defeat Willow Glen High School 3-0 on Sept. 10, and Leigh High School 3-0 on Sept. 11.

The team lost its winning streak Sept. 13 against Los Gatos High School.

While they were defeated 0-3, the

team led vs. the Wildcats in both the first and third games, but was not able to pull through due to breakdowns in passing.

Still, the girls had parts of the game where they really connected as a team.

"It's about those moments when I'm having fun and when we're all playing so hard because nothing else matters but the game and your teammates around you," senior outside hitter Julia Lee said.

The team's first three straight wins of pre-season caught the attention of Cal-High Sports, a local high school sports television station, and a reporter came out Saratoga's game against Notre Dame Belmont on Sept. 17. The team, however, lost 0-3.

The girls will face many more strong, upper league teams throughout pre-season and have high hopes for the season.

"The pre-season teams are pretty good matchups and as our team continues to



FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA

Player Sara Parden prepares to bump the ball on the Sept. 17 against Notre Dame Belmont.

bond I think our playing will improve," senior defensive specialist Jennifer Ho said.

"We also want to beat Cupertino this year and we're looking forward to the Lynbrook game since they were moved back down to our league."

Last year, the team was second in the

league behind Cupertino High School.

"We're going to have a great season and even though we just lost a couple of games, we can power through and beat some great teams," said team captain Tivoli Sisco, a senior who plays libero on the team. ♦

BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY

Junior runner sprints his way from bottom to top

BY Bruce Lou
& Sanj Nalwa

Junior Rohith Krishna always dreamed of following in his father's footsteps.

His father, Krishna Narayanaswamy, has six Boston Marathon medals.

In his younger days, his father aimed to break 3 hours for a marathon — 26.2 miles. He never did, but Krishna plans to do so.

Krishna joined the cross country team as a freshman. Krishna then ran a 7:40 mile — turtle's pace by cross country

standards — and maintained a near-permanent spot in the back.

"When you're in a race and you're at the back and people are crossing you, it's demoralizing," Krishna said.

While the journey from then to today was more than a few miles long, Krishna is one of the rising leaders of the cross-country team — a far cry from the freshman who struggled with practices just a few years ago.

In the mornings, Krishna and his father got up at 7:30 a.m. and ran along Saratoga streets.

His father was influential in Krishna's

dedication to cross country.

"It has always been my belief that you have to have a good balance of academics and physical activity," Narayanaswamy said. "It was with that goal that I encouraged Rohith [Krishna] to run."

Today, Krishna runs a 5:07 mile, and is one of the fastest runners, often finishing with elite runners such as seniors Drew Bryan and Daniel Johnston.

"His freshman year I had no idea who he was," Bryan said. "He started to get really good. He's going to be a key piece on our varsity team this year."

Coach Dan Ambrico has watched

Krishna's transformation from laggard to leader.

"Rohith was one of the freshmen who barely scraped by to get in the team," Ambrico said. "He wasn't even capable of finishing a race at first, but now he's gone sub-5-minute-mile."

As he enters junior year, Krishna aims to make CCS this year by doing exactly as Ambrico instructs him. Making CCS won't be an easy feat, as the team has many excellent runners. But Krishna is not last in races any longer. He believes that achieving a personal best is a better reward than any place. ♦

GIRLS' GOLF

Player attains No. 3 spot through summer practice

BY Michelle Leung
& Kelly Xiao

Current No. 3 player sophomore Ankitha Sarvesh adjusts her grip on her club, moving it a millimeter to the right. With the minuscule adjustment, her next swing is perfect.

Like many girl golfers, Sarvesh was inspired to play golf four years ago by her father. However, she developed neither a passion nor a talent for the sport until the summer before freshman year, when she realized her potential.

"I really like golf," Sarvesh said. "It's not just a game of skill and strength, it's also a game of strategy."

According to Sarvesh, practice is the key to success in all sports. Sarvesh enjoys golf because her effort makes her good.

Senior Zabrina Chang has known Sarvesh since the summer before Sarvesh's freshman year.

"[Sarvesh] is actually quiet, but she's always really positive," Chang said. "She's definitely improved since last year. I'm sure she's practiced a lot."

Although Sarvesh is nervous about

her No. 3 position on the team, she believes that she should push herself to take on more responsibilities.

"Last year I was No. 6, so it's kind of a big leap," Sarvesh said. "But I think that I've improved since last year."

Sarvesh believes golf has helped her to rely on herself.

"When I got sixth place in freshman year, I decided I needed to take it more seriously," Sarvesh said. "In a way, [golf has] made me more confident. I underestimated myself, but now I [realize] I'm good at [golf]."

Coach David Gragnola recognized Sarvesh's extra effort this year.

"Ankitha worked hard on her games and is doing well," Gragnola said. "The top four teams make League Finals and I hope we make it this year."

Sarvesh's greatest challenge has been overcoming frustration.

"I think the [hardest part] is when you have a bad shot," Sarvesh said. "You can't be like, 'Oh my god that shot was terrible, I'll just give up this hole,' because you can still recover after a bad shot. [You] shouldn't give up; you should keep trying." ♦

>> SCOREBOARD

Sept. 10

Saratoga 195, Lynbrook 210
The team earned its first win.

Sept. 16

Saratoga 270, Los Gatos 274
No. 5 player Carrie Chen and No. 6 player Anya Prasad each made a putt to bring the Falcons under.

Sept. 18

Saratoga 234, Homestead 257
The top five players all shot within the 40-60 range.

GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

Co-captain pushes team to do better

BY Ashley Chen
& Carolyn Sun

"Keep it up! No walking!"

Junior co-captain Christine Schlossareck shouted encouragement to the girls' cross country team as the 30 girls inched up the 45-degree hill on Upper Hill Drive, tired and sweaty, on Sept. 5.

Though she is about only 5 feet tall, Schlossareck is a big presence on the team, and her cheers motivated teammates.

After running the same steep hill many times over, most girls were too tired to continue.

But even though Schlossareck was just as exhausted as others, she still had the energy to push her teammates to keep going.

Schlossareck began running cross country in sixth grade at Redwood Middle School, when she was looking for a new sport after stopping gymnastics because it was too much of a time commitment.

After suffering a knee injury last season, Schlossareck is aiming to avoid injuries and achieve a PR [Personal Re-

cord] at Crystal Springs, a dusty and hilly 2.95-mile course that is usually one of the most challenging meets. Her current PR is 20:13, which she achieved at the CCS Finals in November 2011.

"You start running down a hill [at Crystal], so you overexert yourself, but then you have to run back up it," Schlossareck said. "It's hard when you see people finishing [the race] and know you have a mile left."

Although Schlossareck sometimes feels pressured to achieve personal bests at meets, she remains positive about races despite the outcome.

"If at the end of a race I know that I'm tired and that I worked [my] hardest, then I can feel good about [the race]," junior Christine Schlossareck said.

Promoted to team co-captain last spring, Schlossareck is learning how to manage the team.

"Sometimes it's hard [being co-captain], but it's also really fun," Schlossareck said. "[Co-captains seniors Casey Takahashi and Susanna Lee and I] try and get everyone organized [into running groups], which is the hard part, and we also relay Coach [Danny Moon]'s messages to the athletes." ♦



junior Christine Schlossareck

>> snapshots



FALCON // GRACE MA



FALCON // GRACE MA



FALCON // GRACE MA



FALCON // MINU PALANIAPPAN

BRIGHT START: Sasha Samoilov (12) and Mairwen Chiu (12) draw Bowser for senior Homecoming decorations.

SCIENCE SOLUTION: Robert Eng (12) and Eric Taw (12) administer a Science Bowl intramural round and watch over the competing freshmen.

NET BENEFIT: The school completed multiple renovations. The surface of the tennis courts was redone.

GO TOGA: Cheerleaders perform their routine on Sept. 13 at the home football game against Salinas.

Speed TV: How to watch without wasting any time

Ever since I've started high school, I've considered television a big waste of time. OK, OK, I know what you're thinking right now: "She's the typical Saratoga student who spends all of her time studying and won't spend even a minute doing something that won't increase her SAT score."

To be honest, to some extent, that is a pretty good description of me. For the past two and a half years, I haven't really watched any TV at all, besides the snippets of "Good Morning America" I catch when my mom turns on the TV in the morning.

That all changed this summer. Before school got out last year, a couple of my friends urged me to start watching their favorite show, "How I Met Your Mother." They told me that it was the "funniest show in the world," and that I didn't know what I was missing.

When school ended and the monotony of an SAT-filled summer began, I found myself thinking in the middle of my 25-minute essays, "I deserve a break, would it really hurt to just watch a couple minutes of TV?" It didn't help that my mom (who had recently gotten hooked to "How I Met Your Mother") was watching the show and laughing away in the next room.

And so I began my first real TV experience since middle school. Since I had been so TV-deprived up to that point, I was a little shocked at how lewd and obscene some of the jokes were. (Might I mention that I've never watched anything more inappropriate than "Wizards of Waverly Place.")

But by the time I finished my second season, reality struck. In a couple of weeks, I would be starting school, which meant practically no time for TV. In addition, this summer was supposed to be the time I prepared for junior year — not the time I got hooked on a TV show.

I did a couple calculations and realized that it would take me about 50 hours to finish the rest of the show. That would mean 50 — pretty much wasted — hours of my summer. That's enough time to take 15 SAT practice tests, read all the English 11 Honors novels, and



The cast members of Chen's beloved comedy TV show "How I Met Your Mother."



SABRINA CHEN
Brina it on

do and redo my APUSH summer homework.

I was faced with a problem. I wanted to finish the "How I Met Your Mother" story, but I didn't want to put in the time. I found this situation strangely similar to what I face on the those long passages in the SAT — I need to get the basic gist of the piece, but I don't have time to read in detail the entire thing.

That's when the solution struck me. Whenever I see a long passage, I always just read the first and last sentences of every paragraph and then sort of skim the rest. This was the exact technique

I needed to conquer my "How I Met Your Mother" problem.

Starting from Season 3, I began watching

ing only every fourth episode of "How I Met Your Mother" and then reading the Wikipedia synopses for all the episodes I skipped.

It was a winning tactic from the start. Not only did I cut down my TV time from 50 hours to 12 hours, I no longer felt guilty about watching too much TV. Furthermore, I could no longer be considered a TV-deprived person and could even carry on discussions with other "How I Met Your Mother" fans without them figuring out that I had skipped more than a hundred episodes.

Occasionally while watching the show, I'll meet a character and have no idea where he came from, but that's what Wikipedia's for, right?

True TV watching, they say, emphasizes efficiency. ♦

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buzzworthy >> Viral fox?

BY Arman Vaziri
& Nelson Wang

"What does the fox say?" goes the new viral video "The Fox" by the comedy- and music-making duo, Ylvis. Of Norwegian heritage, brothers Bård Urheim Ylvisåker and Vegard Urheim Ylvisåker have been doing musical comedy since 2000. Ylvis uploaded a music video called "The Fox" to YouTube on Sept. 3, and since then it has amassed 38 million views.

The video is unique because of the myriad of sounds that the singers make when trying to answer the critical question, "What does the fox say?"

The singers gradually introduce more and more ridiculous sounds, creating a chaotic torrent of random noises that do not sound anything like a fox. Lyrics range from "hatee-hatee-hatee-ho" to "jacha-chacha-chacha-chow," silly but catchy sounds that stick in the listeners' brains for days on end.

And although it may seem like a lousy idea for a music video, Ylvis has somehow created what news articles are claiming to possibly be the next "Gangnam Style."

>> sophomore Ingrid Zhou

than funny.

"I don't understand why these things exist. Is this even considered music?" said sophomore Ingrid Zhou. "It doesn't deserve its viral status because compared to 'Gangnam Style,' it's dumber. Gangnam Style actually had meaning and was a real language."

Although controversy over the video still exists, many students believe that the song is very catchy and easily gets stuck in their heads. Even so, the biggest mystery that still remains after watching the video is: What does the fox really say? ♦



>> topten

WAYS TO WRITE A COLLEGE ESSAY

10 Write about unique extracurriculars. i.e. Juggling flaming swords while riding on a unicorn.

9 Write about the path to obtain the maximum GPA. And minimize your social life and sleep.

8 Walk the path of enlightenment and philosophy. What is the point of an essay? Why do we need education? What is life?

7 Discuss your experiences in leading an organization. However, the Westboro Baptist Church may not help your application.

6 Use the humble-brag. My problem is that I get first place in everything and have nothing left to accomplish in life.

5 Be yourself. The colleges want to get to know you, unless you're a convicted serial killer. Then no one wants to know you.

4 Talk about your self expression. My bad grades are a protest against the system.

3 Kiss up. Woops, I brought you a cake.

2 Write about the time you saved the life of a baby in a burning building. Videogames count right?

1 Have no shame. Accept me or I'll cry.

>> Nelson Wang