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Falcons prepare for CCS

Saratoga High School >> Saratoga, CA

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EDUCATION

Redwood math curriculum changes

Next year, the math track will adopt Common Core, causing fewer students to reach Calculus by junior year. **pg. 3**

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Former 'Niners player Coach John Faylor inspires sons to follow family legacy. **pg. 20**

HEAR THE PEOPLE SING



JUNIOR MADDI SLOAN, WHO PLAYS LITTLE COSETTE, CARESSES HER DOLL DURING HER SOLO "CASTLE ON A CLOUD" IN "LES MIS," WHICH RAN FROM APRIL 25- MAY 3.

CAST OF LES MISÉRABLES EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS WITH PERFORMANCES

BY Melissa **Magner**
& Vibha **Seshadri**

Students and teachers alike filed into the McAfee, eagerly anticipating the long-awaited "Les Misérables" performance on April 25. On May 3, the cast performed for the last time, and those who participated in "Les Mis" expressed both their pride and sorrow of making it to the finale, all the while performing flawlessly.

"I think the shows went very well, and I'm going to miss performing," junior Natalie Miller, who plays the part of Eponine, said. "The ticket sales were amazing, and having a big audience definitely encouraged the cast to have high energy while performing."

Junior Matt Nobles, who played the part of Marius Pontmercy, felt the same way as Miller, stating that the audience turnout was

>> **DRAMA** on pg. 5

Courtesy of SARATOGA THEATER ARTS

ACADEMICS

APCS class to offer partial online format

BY Dorrie **Tang**

The school is offering a blended version of the current AP Computer Science (APCS) class for next year, in which students will only be required

to attend class on designated quiz and test days.

Currently, the APCS class operates in a flipped classroom style: Students watch APCS teacher Debra Troxell's online instructional videos for

homework and complete assignments about the lessons in class.

"What we're trying is a class that will give students more flexibility," Troxell said. "So for instance, if a person com-

pletely understands a lecture that [we posted] online, then they don't necessarily have to come in to class [the next day] if we're just going to [review

>> **ACADEMICS** on pg. 5

ALUMNI

Return to the roost

YEARS LATER, GRADS RETURN TO SILICON VALLEY TO PURSUE TECH

BY Sherrilyn **Ling**

There's been a common trend for SHS students in the past decade or so: They graduate, run off to college and then return to pursue work in their original, humble abode — the bustling Silicon Valley.

"Technology in this area is off the charts. With our education backgrounds here at Saratoga, I think it's pretty natural that they end up working at places like that," history teacher Mike Davey said. "A lot of people get strong educations in Saratoga and go on to strong educational institutions

and have a tradition of working hard."

Nikhil Sheel, who graduated from the school in 2008, studied economics with minors in statistics and Spanish at UC Davis. Since 2012, he has worked with product marketing on the Google Search team, working to "drive more adoption and usage at the various access points of search."

"On a typical day [at Google], I get two or three massages, ride a rainbow colored bike around campus and play in the large ball pit,"

>> **ALUMNI** on pg. 7

HISTORY BOWL

Team wins second at nationals

BY Michelle **Leung**
& Carolyn **Sun**

When a team of six individuals first formed the History Bowl team in 2012, they never imagined the program would be so successful so soon.

In just its third year of competition, the school's varsity A team for History Bowl placed second out of 216 teams at the National History Bowl tournament on April 23-28 in Washington, D.C., and Arlington, Va. Junior Bruce Lou also won the individual U.S. History Bee championships, defeating the reigning individual and solo-team champion, senior Sameer Rai of Bellarmine.

During the tournament, all of the participating teams



Courtesy of NICK CHOW

The varsity A team poses after placing second in National History Bowl.

played 10 preliminary rounds, and then the top 32 advanced to the playoffs.

"We had a really close quarterfinal and semifinal, each resting on a single question," junior varsity A team member Ethan

Ngai said. "Although we didn't win, I think we're all proud of our performance and exceeded our expectations."

During a History Bowl com-

>> **BOWLS** on pg. 5



news >> briefs

Future WiSTEM inspired by exposition

About 150 students from Saratoga, Lynbrook and Monta Vista High Schools attended the Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (WiSTEM) exposition on April 5 at the YouTube headquarters in Mountain View.

The exposition included a poster board competition where participants presented their ideas for preventing oil spills. The competition was judged by Bay Area STEM professionals, while female guest speakers encouraged the students to pursue careers in STEM fields.

According to junior Sabrina Chen, the event gave the officers inspiration to improve the club for next year.

"Saratoga WiSTEM is a brand new club this year," Chen said. "Other, more experienced WiSTEM Clubs gave us many ideas, like publicizing long before the event." ♦

— Ariel Liu

Falcon wins Gold Crown for 2012-13

The Columbia Scholastic Press Association presented the Saratoga Falcon the "Gold Crown," a national journalism award. The CSPA receives hundreds of entries for newspapers, yearbooks and literary magazines and former journalism advisers or experienced journalists critique the entries.

The Falcon received the award for 2012-2013 in the category of High School Newspaper under the editors-in-chiefs Jackie Gu and Debbie Soung.

The judging criteria are based on aspects of value: content, design, coverage, photography, writing and editing.

Gu said that the win came as a surprise to her since the paper had the tendency to win Silver Crowns over Gold Crowns.

"Looking back, I often took the journalism program for granted [and] forgot how established it is and how lucky we are to produce such a great newspaper," Gu said. ♦

— Deepthi Sampathkumar and Tiffany Zheng

Juniors raise class funds with corsage sales

As junior prom on April 19 approached, students scrambled to find the perfect dress or to rent last-minute tuxedos. One worry made easier this year was buying corsages and boutonnieres, sold by the junior class officers.

The junior class officers ordered the corsages and boutonnieres last year from The Flower Cottage in Sunnyvale, costing \$20-\$35 depending on the type of flower.

Junior class treasurer Josh Pi got the idea of selling corsages and boutonnieres along with prom bids after attending Homestead High School's prom last year.

"Homestead's prom used these corsages and boutonnieres last year and they were decent quality and fairly cheap, so I thought it would be a good idea," Pi said.

This fundraiser raised about \$345 for the junior class through the sale of 65 pairs of corsages and boutonnieres.

"Unless there is a lot of opposition, I think this is something we will do again next year," Pi said. ♦

— Catherine Tang

>> picturethis



FALCON // JADE BISHT

BLOOD DRIVE >> Junior Mounika Narayanan holds junior Jillian Bellamy's hand as Bellamy finishes donating blood at the blood drive hosted by the Community Commission in the small gym on April 21.

EVALUATION

WASC team observes school

BY Ashley Chen

As part of a regular accreditation process, a five-person committee of educators representing the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) visited the school from April 28-30 to ensure that it is "an acceptable level of quality" and is demonstrating continual improvement.

According to committee member Michelle Seijas, principal of Woodland High School near Sacramento, the team focuses on five main areas of a school: vision and mission, instruction, curriculum, school climate and assessment.

"The goal of the team is to learn about what [the school]

is doing so we can validate the awesome things we see," she said. "If we see anything [needing improvement], we can generate ideas to take it to the next level."

Seijas is in charge of assessing the school's instruction with a focus on the English department. During her visit, she visited most of the English classrooms, including that of English 10 and 11 Honors teacher Amy Keys and her student teacher Lauren Zachmeier. She also looked in on the music department, ceramics classes and the MAP program.

Assistant principal Kevin Mount and math teacher Audrey Warmuth headed the WASC effort this year. With

help from teachers, administration, parents and a student group, Mount and Warmuth helped to compile evidence to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The process began last spring.

If the school does not pass the WASC process, Seijas said, the school will lose the ability to issue valid diplomas. This, however, is a rare occurrence because WASC committees who evaluate a school and find it unsatisfactory work with it to come up with a plan for improvement, and then come back periodically to ensure it is making process.

Saratoga is unlikely to have to undergo this. A high-performing school like SHS usually receives a full accreditation.

"Saratoga's pretty awesome," Seijas said during the first day of her visit. "I'm happy to be here." ♦

Saratoga's pretty awesome. I'm happy to be here.

>> Michelle Seijas, WASC observer

PROJECT SEED

Student grants fund physics equipment

BY Nupur Maheshwari & Anant Rajeev

"These two objects are the same size and the same weight," physics teacher Kirk Davis tells his AP physics class. "With that information, which do you think travels faster?"

He holds up two cylinders, one hollow and made of metal and the other filled and made of plastic, and rolls them under his new 16 PASCO Photogates, which monitor the motion of objects passing through their gates with infrared light.

"Clearly, the plastic cylinder travels faster," Davis said. "You can think of it as ice skating. Skaters move [faster] when they keep their arms together, which is why the filled object traveled faster."

Thanks to a \$1,200 grant from the Project SEED Foundation (Student Entrepreneurs for Educational Development), Davis has been able to buy the photogates for his AP Physics class. The new equipment al-

lows for his students to engage in rotational dynamics experiments, something students could not engage in before.

The Project SEED Foundation is a student-run business that brings in funds for the school from Salinas Tallow, an eco-friendly recycling company. SEED gives the money to school clubs, organizations and teachers, many of whom must pay for extra supplies and projects out of their pockets.

According to Nikhil Goel, president of SEED, Salinas sends checks every month to the school based on how much used cooking oil Salinas collects from restaurants with the program. In exchange, SEED puts Salinas in contact with local restaurants.

Davis is thrilled with the support that he received from the foundation, as he wouldn't have had sufficient department funds to purchase the equipment otherwise.

"There are these huge con-

cepts that are not easy to learn that we can now just show kids because of Project SEED," Davis said. "This equipment was very costly, so to get something like that is fantastic."

SEED not only granted Davis \$1,200 for new equipment but also \$100 for Physics Olympiad registration.

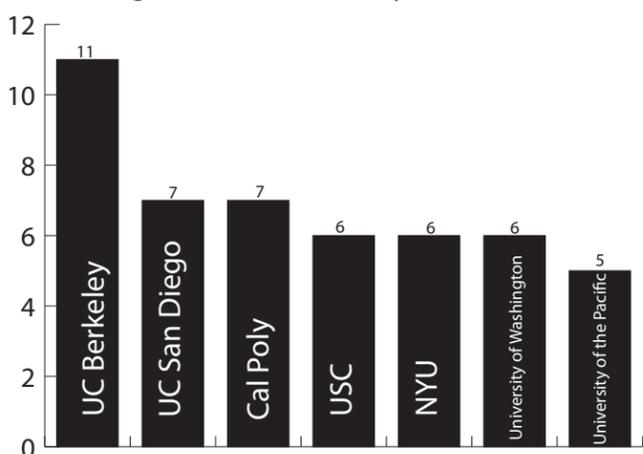
"All students would have had to pay money to participate in the Olympiad," Davis said. "And generally I used to pay for kids and collect. Since nobody would ever pay me back, [the money] ended up coming out of my pocket."

Davis urges other teachers to explore the opportunities that Project SEED presents.

"I would just encourage all the teachers that when someone gives you a grant opportunity in the beginning of the year, think about what you might need in the room," Davis said. "This is going to benefit 120 kids next year [and in subsequent years], which is a huge accomplishment." ♦

>> falconfigures

Colleges Most Attended by the Class of 2014



Source: Survey of 137 members of the class of 2014 — Devin Zhao

FIELD TRIPS

Group bikes, hikes in wild west adventure

BY Becky Hoag

Hearing the revving of the engine and feeling the breeze through his hair, junior Daniel Dols drives a jeep off-road during the week of April 7-13.

While some students chose to stay home for spring break and lounge in front of the TV with a soda in one hand and their cell phone in the other, 19 students — as well as a few parents and history teacher Matt Torrens — decided to add some excitement to their week off in a wild west adventure through Utah, where they visited Salt Lake City, Monticello and Moab.

This trip is offered every other year and is organized by Torrens.

"My favorite part of the trip was definitely the jeeping," Dols said. "It was amazing! I got to drive, and we drove off-road for a good four hours."

In addition to off-road driving, the students got to go rappelling — controlled descent down a rock face using a rope — mountain biking and hiking through some of Utah's most

popular locations.

Junior Matt Stark's favorite hiking spot was along the Colorado River.

"You would just be climbing over rocks and walking over sandy trails, but then the ground drops away in front of you and you're looking over a cliff hundreds of feet above certain death," Stark said. "And for a few minutes you feel like you're looking at a computer screen because your brain just can't take in how beautiful and immense the sight is."

The students also got to meet and befriend students from Monticello High School in Utah.

"They were really nice, so I hope that we can get them to come visit California next year so they can see Saratoga," Dols said.

Since the trip was led by the history department, the students visited many historical sites such as the crash site of a B-52, million-year-old dinosaur tracks, thousand-year-old pictographs (mechanical apparatuses that create a geometric im-



Courtesy of JESSICA UONG

Exhausted and sweaty, history students and history teacher Matt Torrens pose under the Delicate Arch in Moab, Utah, with three students from a neighboring high school whom they had met after hiking for hours.

age), 400-year-old petroglyphs (rock engravings), a Japanese Relocation Camp and a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp.

Dols said he would recom-

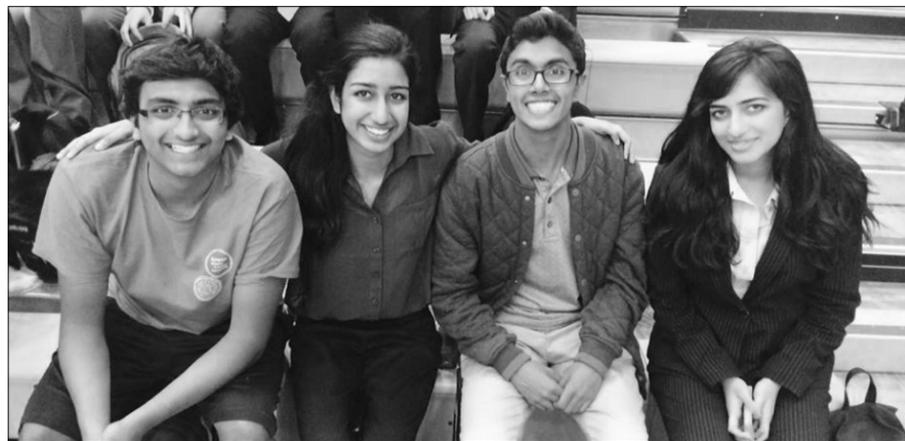
mend the Wild West trip to other students in 2016, especially if they are interested in adventuring, exploring and trying something new.

Starting from next year, Tor-

rens is planning on having the trip every year.

"The Wild West Trip was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I'm glad I didn't miss out on," Stark said. ♦

SPEECH AND DEBATE



Courtesy of ANJALI MANGHNANI

Sophomore Shrey Desai, junior Anjali Manghnani, senior Mohith Subbarao and junior Supriya Khandekar smile together at the state competition in Modesto on April 25.

Team ends season with states

BY Sudeep Raj & Oksana Trifonova

The speech and debate team ended a successful season with a bang at the state competition on April 25 at James Enochs High School in Modesto.

Junior Anjali Manghnani was a semifinalist in original oratory, junior Supriya Khandekar placed sixth in oratorical interpretation and sophomore Shrey Desai double octafinaled in Lincoln-Douglas debate, among top 32 in the state. Senior Mohith Subbarao also competed in the state competition in original oratory.

"Having four people qualify from our school is fantastic," Manghnani said. "I am beyond proud."

Desai credited coaches Erick Rector and Chris Harris for their work with team members.

For next year, the goal is to step up their game so that they can qualify for nationals.

As always, the speech and debate team in in search of new talent.

"As captain, I hope to encourage more students to join the program and to push those already in it to greater heights, because I know they are capable of accomplishing amazing things," Manghani said.

The team also put up a remarkable performance at the Santa Clara Univer-

sity Philalethic invitational on April 12-13. Sophomores Ashvita Ramesh, Vibha Seshadri and Meghan Shah advanced to elimination rounds, and freshman Mitali Shanbhag advanced all the way to finals, where she took first place out of 25 competitors.

"Our speech team always does well at tournaments," junior Jerry Yang said. "But at SCU, even our debate team succeeded."

In parliamentary debate, a team event, Yang and junior Rohan Bhardwaj and sophomores Michael Ren and Alex Guo advanced to elimination rounds. Desai continued his outstanding season by winning the tournament in Lincoln-Douglas Debate.

"[Desai] had one of the best tournaments of his debate career," Yang said. "Not only did he win the tournament, but he also didn't drop a single ballot."

Desai went 5-0 in the preliminary rounds, and all three judges voted for him in every elimination round.

As a whole, this speech and debate season was very successful, and they hope the winning ways will continue through the nationals tournament on June 16-20 in Overland Park, Kans.

Qualifying at the end of March, junior Deepti Kannan will attend nationals in Lincoln-Douglas debate and junior Jimmy Xiao in extemporaneous speech. ♦

ASB ELECTIONS

New officers discuss plans for 2014-15 year

BY Rachel Hull & Maya Ravichandran

Five new students have been voted into ASB for the 2014-15 school year and are bringing new ideas to the school.

Junior Adrienne Kim will be president, sophomore Luke Salin will be vice president, sophomore Aakash Thumaty will be treasurer, sophomore Nihar Agrawal will be secretary and junior Neel Kattumadam will be board representative. The results were announced on April 30.

"Some of the ballots were really close — [some] of the closest we've ever had," elections commission member Josh Pi said.

Kim will be the first female ASB president since Haley Zarrin in 2010. Kim said one of her main goals for the next year is to increase school spirit.

"I think the big thing will be to in-

crease school unity and spirit," Kim said. "Hopefully I can be a good example with the rest of the school's leadership positions so people want to participate, too."

Kim said that, at the moment, there are no large changes that she wants to implement, but she does hope to get more students involved in school functions down the road.

Salin said he is looking forward to his new role next year and will focus his efforts on all students rather than just his class.

He plans to create a student wellness commission to "focus on academic stress and other serious problems on campus."

"I'm pumped because I think there is a lot more that needs to be done with school spirit," Salin said. "I'm pumped; I'm excited. We're going to do lots of great changes, shake it up." ♦

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STANDARDIZED TESTING

Juniors take Smarter Balanced training tests in preparation for Common Core standards

BY Arman **Vaziri**
& Devin **Zhao**

Juniors got a sneak peek into a new era of computer-based testing that requires more advanced thinking skills when they took the Smarter Balance training tests during the week of April 21.

The tests gave students and teachers an opportunity to become familiar with the software and interface that will be used in future Common Core tests.

The first part of the test consisted of a reading and a mathematical portion.

A second mathematical portion was taken after a group lesson taught by math department chair Debra Troxell. This second math portion was made up of free-response questions.

"[I wasn't] really proctoring, but leading a half-hour lesson that [preceded a] multi-step math problem, much like free response, to explain what the problem needs to analyze," Troxell said. "The purpose of the discussion is to get everybody on same page as far as understanding and terminology. Something more tricky would require more discussion."

When comparing her experiences proctoring the STAR test with her experiences teaching the group lesson, Troxell noticed that the Smarter Balance test

requires a lot more involvement from test takers.

Troxell also said the questions required more thinking than from normal multiple-choice questions.

Assistant principal Brian Safine noted the new test requires more flexibility and more thorough answers from the students, but said the test has some unexpected problems such as timing.

Short answer questions in the morning took longer than expected while the performance-based questions in the afternoon took less time than expected, Safine said.

According to Safine, potential problems when the test is implemented include how to accommodate the increased number of test-takers and whether the computers in the library's research center would be useful because of screen placement, which forces juniors to look down.

The test received mixed reactions from juniors.

Junior Alex Yeh thought the new test was better because of the increased

amount of thinking it required.

"The test required a lot more thought than the STAR test and was more related to the material we [learned] in school, such as [supporting an] answer with text and [writing] an intro paragraph," Yeh said. "You also needed to read a lot more carefully for some of the problems, whereas on the STAR test the problems were easier and more direct."

Yet, according to Yeh, the math sections were both difficult and confusing to complete on the computer while the math problems were generally easier on the STAR.

He would have preferred to use his own scientific calculator to solve the problems.

Junior Kevin A. Lee believes the new test was better than the previous STAR test in some aspects, but feels there is still much work to be done to improve it, including separating the English and math sections and making the math lesson more useful.

"[The test] still has a whole bunch of kinks," Lee said. "The fact that they

made you write out answers and made you actually think instead of mindlessly filling out bubbles [was challenging] because it is easier to guess than to actually work through problems."

For his part, Safine thinks the test was a huge success, with no technical problems reported.

"We've been really pleased with technological interface," Safine said. "Most students begin testing within a minute of sitting down. We're pleased with bandwidth and the heights of flexibility of managing students." ♦

"The test required a lot more thought than the STAR test and was more related to the material we learned in school."

>> junior Alex Yeh

>> **bigidea**

Smarter Balance

What it is

A more challenging form of standardized testing taken on a computer

Its purpose

To more accurately test the thinking process of high school students

How it's different

It's taken on a computer, and it requires more student involvement. It had short answer questions and writing assignments as well as a multi-step math problem after a lecture.

ACADEMICS

AP tests, classes adapt to Common Core changes

BY Arjun **Ramanathan**

As the year comes to a close, the school will be adapting completely to the California State Common Core standards in order to prepare for next year's permanent curriculum change.

Along with the Common Core changes, which emphasize a curriculum that focuses on experiencing the subject rather than memorizing facts, the AP exams for various subjects will be affected by the new standards.

"It will probably take teachers a year or two to see how the nature of test questions evolves," AP Physics teacher Kirk Davis said. "They should be questions that require slightly more reasoning and explanation to get full credit and so AP scores may dip a bit for one or two years while students adapt."

Common Core will force students to explain their work in a more in-depth manner. For example, in math classes, students will need to explain their thought process in the work and problems they solve.

Sophomore Daniel Eem is in favor of the new standards explaining that it is a "good concept because it is better fitted to test intellectuals."

Though this seems like a big change, principal Paul Robinson explained that it is nothing that students haven't seen before.

"[Students in] all grades are experiencing the changes right now," Robinson said. "It's a more subtle change to the curriculum and many lessons students have already experienced have their foundation in Common Core already. Students just didn't know that they were al-

ready experiencing it."

AP Chemistry teacher Kathy Nakamatsu is one of the teachers who has been completely revising her curriculum to adapt to Common Core standards.

"I've made an effort to put more pictures and graphs into my lecture notes so the students can think more," Nakamatsu said. "I've also

tried to give students conceptual types of questions, which deal with good thought process and logic, on homework and on exams."

Nakamatsu explained some of the specifics of the changes to AP Chemistry, saying that the AP exam places more emphasis on critical thinking and conceptual problems. A typical problem on the new test may have students analyzing graphs and data and drawing conclusions from them, lowering the number of mathematically based problems on the test.

The Common Core changes and the modifications to AP tests go hand in hand.

"AP Chemistry is changing the way they test this year and AP Biology had some changes that were made last year," Robinson said. "AP Physics is next in line for changes. This is mainly because College Board is always looking to make the AP experience tougher and more refined."

Robinson is optimistic about the new landscape in education.

"With a focus on literacy and application of learning you can't go wrong," Robinson said. "Common Core is about good teaching and we have the best teachers around who are working to make this experience great for everyone." ♦



Nakamatsu



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DRAMA >> Cast pulls off ambitious show

continued from pg. 1

“empowering” and really helped to keep the energy of the actors at a maximum.

The plot of ‘Les Mis’ revolves around a man named Jean Valjean, who commits a petty crime and is imprisoned for it. Set in the early 18th century, the story follows Valjean, who serves 19 years in jail for stealing a loaf of bread.

After breaking his parole to start a new, honest life, he is relentlessly tracked down by Inspector Javert.

Along the way, Valjean encounters characters who stage a revolt at a street barricade.

Sophomore Michelle Cen, who didn’t know anything about “Les Mis” until the night she watched the performance, said she was “pleasantly surprised by how quickly [she] was immersed into the plot.”

“The singing was fantastic and the actors were spot on with their emotions,” Cen said. “It was an excellent musical and I loved every minute of it. It was definitely worth all of the applause and praise it got.”

Sophomore Sanam Mohan felt that the dedication each and every actor and



Courtesy of SARAH THERMOND

Junior Andrew York, who plays Monsieur Thénardier, chokes junior Natalie Miller, who plays Thénardier’s daughter Eponine when she screams to warn Cosette and Valjean.

actress had to their character was evident, whether he or she was a major or minor character.

Junior Jessica Uong was amazed at the talent each cast member brought to the musical. She also felt that Miller spectacularly captured the emotions of Eponine in her solo “On My Own,” Uong’s

favorite song from the show. However, there was one scene in the show that Uong found slightly odd.

“The only thing that bugged me was the death of Javert,” Uong said. “I know it’s hard to portray a suicide in the sense

of jumping off a bridge but it was kind of awkward. But other than that, I loved it.”

In order to execute such a successful show, months of hard work and coordination went into the performances, and the actors began to feel the strain on their voices after the first two shows.

Nobles found that by the third show of opening weekend, his voice was feeling the impact of the overuse.

“I woke up the morning of the third show and realized that I could hardly speak,” Nobles said. “I was able to recover throughout the day, but my voice was still pretty unstable during the show. I pretty much just had to hunker down, sing more quietly, and drink a ton of tea and honey. It was horrifying every time my voice cracked on stage.”

Director Sarah Thermond believes that the cast did an amazing job with their performance, and is sad to see the show come to a close.

“I always get sad when a show ends,” she said. “I’m going to miss a lot of the little moments and background action that we worked really hard on. I’m also going to miss the cast because of how fun they were to work with.” ♦

BOWLS >> Lou takes home History Bowl win

continued from pg. 1

petition, participants buzz in answers as quickly as possible. In contrast to jeopardy, where the questions get progressively harder, History Bowl questions are initially more difficult, in order to eliminate buzzer races.

The varsity A team, consisting of senior and captain Nick Chow, Lou, Ngai and junior Nitya Sampath, had a rough time in the preliminary matches, going into playoffs seeded seventh.

The team said that non-traditional questions during the preliminary rounds contributed to their low standings. For example, there were questions about off-beat topics such as the Beach Boys, the Dead Kennedys and isotopes.

Although the team won all 10 preliminary matches, they did not score as many points as other top teams, such as the Liberal Arts and Sciences Academy (LASA) from Austin, Texas, Dorman from Roebuck, S.C. and Bellarmine. As a result, they had to face the toughest teams during playoffs.

“During the playoff rounds

on Saturday night and Sunday afternoon, I was a nervous wreck,” Chow said. “At lunch right before the Bellarmine match, I only consumed liquids — chili and a strawberry milkshake — because I couldn’t bring myself to eat anything. But once [I] started playing in matches, the anxiety and nervousness faded away completely.”

During the semifinals, the team defeated the Bellarmine team — including the legendary Rai — 271-270.

The teams went into sudden death overtime, and then Lou beat Rai to the last question, which asked about then-Mass. governor Michael Dukakis’ iconic tank ride photograph during the 1988 presidential election.

“I felt my heart beating against me,” Lou said. “You could feel the tension. When we won, I literally leapt out of my seat and jumped in celebration.”

History Bowl depends as much on mentality during the competition as on knowledge, members said. Once a team is unnerved by losing early ques-

tions, opponents can capitalize on their momentary panic and win the match with momentum.

When the Falcon team faced LASA in the finals, however, they discovered that this school was different.

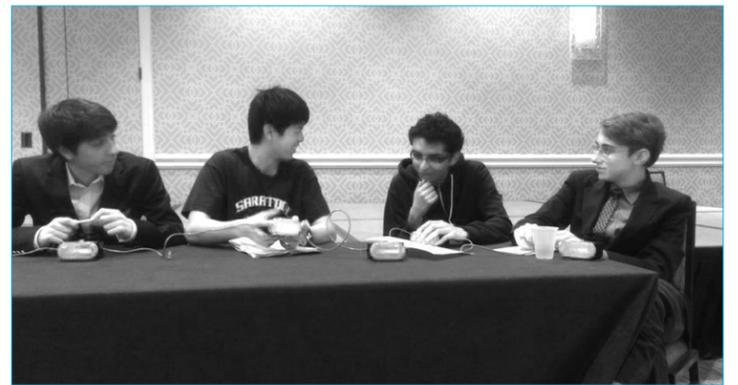
“LASA doesn’t get psyched out,” Lou said. “They have four really good people. You can’t just take out one person.”

According to Lou, most of the other top teams are “basically one person.”

For example, Bellarmine’s top player is Rai, and Dorman’s top player is Tabitha Walker. Against LASA’s four strong members in the finals, however, the team lost 380-240, landing them in second place.

Another memorable moment was Lou’s victory over Rai in the final round of the varsity individual U.S. History Bee tournament, in which 162 people competed, making him national champion.

“I remember that [Ngai] and I were extremely nervous for Bruce while he played, but then we watched in awe, slack-jawed as Bruce steam-rolled Sameer to clinch the champi-



Courtesy of NICK CHOW

Junior Bruce Lou and Bellarmine senior Sameer Rai chat at the U.S. History Bowl Semifinals in Washington D.C. on Friday, April 25.

onship,” Chow said. “On the final question, Bruce answered ‘1919’ when the question started off by asking what year the Great Boston Molasses Flood occurred, utterly shocking the audience with his speed and depth of knowledge.”

The team is proud of its finish in the tournament, but it is even more proud of its improvement. Last year, the varsity A team placed in the top 20, and in 2012, they placed in the top 100.

“I feel so lucky to have such a great team,” Lou said. “Not just

in terms of talent, but in terms of chemistry, too. We were so tight at the end, it hurt me when we played together for the last time.”

Because the varsity A team is mostly composed of juniors, the team is confident about its prospects next year. This comes in the wake of Bellarmine, LASA and Dorman losing their seniors.

“Next year, we’ll be so much better,” Lou said. “Next year, our goal is to instill fear in all the teams that we play, and then ultimately, win it all.” ♦

APCS >> Course introduces mostly online format

continued from pg. 1

This will be the first class in the school’s history to be taught mostly online — at least for some students.

Students next year who choose the new option will complete assignments at home instead of in the classroom, as long as they have parental permission, a reliable home computer and maintain an average grade of at least 85 percent in the class. Otherwise, students will attend class with the other APCS students who do not choose the new option.

Troxell said she wanted to try a “hybrid” between a traditional classroom setting and an online class so that she could adjust to “the way education is going [while still] controlling the pacing of the class and understanding of the

students.” She also said the APCS students logically seemed to be a group that would succeed in this new format.

Nevertheless, all students in the class — whether or not they choose the new approach — will proceed through class materials at the same pace. The only change is that more class materials such as worksheets and programming assignments will be available online, she said.

“[Everything else] would be the same as before — the class will go at the same rate, have the same quizzes and tests, have the same rigor and expectations and students will have the same understanding,” Troxell said.

Sophomore Alexander Li, who is taking the current version of the class, believes that the blended option will “give students more flexibility about

what they do with their time,” as they can choose between attending class and learning on their own at home individually with their computer.

“[The change] offers students more options,” Li said. “They’re not forced to go to class, but if they still choose [to attend] they can communicate their ideas and learn from the teacher and other [students there as normal].”

Li added that students who decide to choose the new option would miss out on the important experience of working with their peers in class on projects and other assignments.

“A large part of [the class] is that we are able to communicate with others [and] learn from [their] ideas,” Li said. “The change might make it so that [students] are only relying on what the es-

tablished curriculum is.”

Senior Kristie Lin, who is also currently taking APCS, said the changes might also take away the “solid understanding in the material [that] teaching in class ensures.”

“The teacher-and-student interaction makes the class more enjoyable,” Lin said.

Nevertheless, Troxell hopes the change will benefit students who are already experienced in programming or can easily figure out material on their own. Additionally, she will be able to give more attention to students who need more help on more complicated topics.

“I am the first teacher of the first class [that is going to try this new format],” Troxell said. “It’s an experiment, but I think it’s a plausible experiment.” ♦

HISTORY DAY

Five Falcons make it to national History Day

BY Michelle Leung

Sophomore Jennifer Chen stared unseeingly out the bus window at the long trip ahead of her and ran through her script quickly on April 25.

The bus hit a bump. "In 1882 — " Chen lunged forward to catch her falling papers. "In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act."

It was a bright Friday morning in Saratoga. Half munching on snacks that history teacher Kim Anzalone had brought for everyone, half singing along to Disney songs, Chen and 11 other students in the two small buses were on their way to Riverside.

It was approximately the eighth annual History Day for the Falcons, and the 12 students traveled to the state competition in a convention center on April 26-27 with librarian and History Day coordinator Kevin Heyman and Anzalone.

It was going to be a long journey.

When the team arrived six long hours later, Chen began to assemble the white framework of her backdrop for her skit, draping the red cloth over its skeleton, retaping fallen objects onto the cloth and all the while murmuring her lines to herself.

She recalled the time she spent working on History Day: a day at Angel Island, days at various other museums, dozens of hours at archives and still more hours researching online. She was the only competitor in the presentation category that the school sent to states as well as the youngest competitor.

Her project this year was more serious than the performance she did about Disney's animated film "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" last year.

"This year, [my project] is more of a political issue," Chen said. "It's more related to myself and my heritage, because I am Chinese, and learning about my ancestors makes [History Day] more meaningful."

Five students made it past the Riverside state competition, to the national competition in Washington, D.C., on June 15-19, beating 30 other teams in each of two categories. Junior Max Chang, who made a website on Miranda rights, and juniors Jasmine Deng, Minda Lee, Michelle Leung and Vivian Roan, who made a group website on the Vietnamese boat people, were state champions and qualified for nationals.

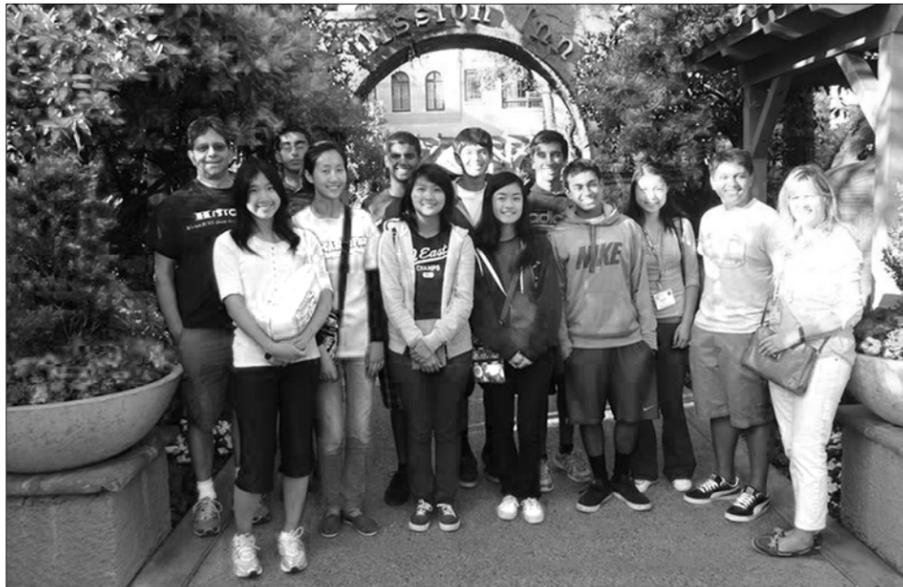
In addition to the national qualifiers, four were state finalists: juniors Nathan Fotedar, Mahir Jethanandani, Neel Kattumadan and Vivek Murthy, who worked together to create a group website about the composer Dmitri Shostakovich.

"It's cool because we got to see this really nice convention center and there are no parents," junior Minda Lee said. "We have the buses with the LGSUHSD logo and there's a really strong sense of [the Falcons] as a team."

Although Chen didn't make it to nationals, she loved going to Riverside.

"I chose to do History Day, since I enjoy researching," Chen said. "It's so fun to travel to different museums, archives — and historical sites to do research and learn about the past. Also, it's amazing to meet professors, authors and experienced people to learn about my topic."

For the History Day competition, students research a topic connected to this year's theme, Rights and Responsibilities. They then create a website, perfor-



Courtesy of KIM ANZALONE

Twelve students pose at the historical Mission Inn on their trip to the state History Day.

mance, exhibition or paper; either as an individual or as a group. During the judging process, two to three judges examine a project and interrogate the participants on their process and material.

Although more students had qualified for the states competition, conflicts with the scheduling of the National History Bowl competition, a violin competition and other commitments meant that several students could not participate in the state History Day.

History Day requires as much as 50 hours of research — and at least another 20 hours of work putting together the project. Students unanimously agreed that working on History Day, however, was worth any such difficulties.

History Day gives participants countless new experiences.

"The greatest thing about History Day is that it forces you to dig deeper and deeper into historical events," Chang said. "Every event is intricately tied with so many prior events."

Jethanandani found that participating in History Day was an experience unlike any other — creating a project focused on a topic he was particularly interested in only added to his enjoyment.

"My participation in History Day was unequivocal," said Jethanandani, who created a group website about Dmitri Shostakovich. "[Choosing a topic we were passionate about] really allowed flexibility in exploring history." ♦



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ALUMNI >> Graduated Falcons return to Silicon Valley

continued from pg. 1

Sheel kidded.

Jokes aside, Sheel explained that his work includes creating mobile banner units, producing video shorts and building and analyzing testing frameworks. He said, "It's very fulfilling and a new challenge every day."

According to Sheel, attending SHS affected his outlook on school, work and life.

"Growing up in Saratoga mainly affected my desire to succeed and excel in all endeavors," Sheel said. "I believe the saying goes, 'You are who your friends are,' and Saratoga is full of hard-working, driven individuals."

Sheel's interest in technology is a huge factor in his decision to return to the Silicon Valley.

"As a huge consumer of tech, I have a strong understanding of the current and future market pulse, and love being a part of the solution," Sheel said. "The Silicon Valley is the central hub for new technology, so it was a logical starting place."

He explained, however, that he hopes to take his experience elsewhere and "build out some of Silicon Valley's greatness in a less developed market."

Sheel's favorite aspect of his job are the people, and he describes them as hard-working and dedicated individuals.

"If you spend 50 to 60 hours a week at work and do not like the people, you will be miserable. At Google, people have a unique combination of talent, intrigue and friendliness," Sheel said.

Alumna Wendy Mu graduated from SHS in 2007 and then studied at Stanford, double majoring in mathematics and computer science for her Bachelor of Science, also receiving her Master of Sci-

ence in computer science.

Mu is now a software engineer at Facebook on the PHP Product Infrastructure team, building "efficient and robust PHP infrastructure to help engineers build new products."

On a typical day at Facebook, she writes code, does code review for team mates and sometimes attends meetings or interviews.

She communicates with her coworkers very much as they complete projects together.

Mu said that growing up in the Silicon Valley exposed her to the idea of engineering at an early age.

Also, being a part of Saratoga's math club encouraged her to pursue more math and computer science theory in college.

Although Mu didn't always know she wanted to work in the Valley, she said "the Bay Area has the most software-related jobs, so it made sense to stay here after graduation."

Mu's favorite part of her job is the impact and the responsibility.

"It's a great feeling to be able to work on important projects at such a large scale, and to be able to ship code to one billion people," she said.

Mu encourages students interested in software engineering to pursue side projects and interests outside of school to get more experience and to "work hard, but also have fun."

Similarly, Angela Chiang, a 2008



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graduate, double majored in computer science and economics at Stanford. She's working at Dropbox in San Francisco with approximately 600 employees, focusing on numerous projects including product experiments, marketing and strategic finance.

"Dropbox is very unique in that the company is small, but the product has a global impact. There is never a shortage of challenging problems and learning opportunities," Chiang said. "Dropbox has the highest concentration of smart and interesting people in any environment I've been in."

She also went on to explain that "the perks are nice," and Dropbox employees receive massages, three free meals a day from a Michelin-star trained chef and yoga and dance classes.

Just like Sheel and Mu, Chiang's experience growing up and receiving education in the Silicon Valley strongly affected her desire to go into the tech industry.

"Attending college in the Silicon Valley granted more exposure to the tech industry and allowed me to see the practical applications of an engineering

degree," Chiang said. "At career fairs at Stanford, for example, there are a wealth of tech companies and startups looking to hire people with [computer science] backgrounds."

Chiang has heard anecdotally from friends in the East Coast that their career fairs have almost no representation from technology companies, mostly from finance and consulting firms.

Chiang had no exposure to computer science until college. Her father, an engineer, was the one who encouraged her to begin taking introductory courses at Stanford.

It then became clear to her that she wanted to go into the tech industry, and she knew that the Silicon Valley was the best place to do so.

She now strongly encourages students who want to go into tech to pursue an engineering degree, even if they do not plan on being engineers themselves.

"I've found that a computer science major opens so many doors, and I'm extremely fortunate to have grown up and studied in an environment where computer science is so valued and empowering," Chiang said. ♦

SCHOOL DANCES

Junior Prom a success

BY Vibha Seshadri

Over the past year, attendance at informal dances has declined drastically, even resulting in the cancellation of the Sadie Hawkins Dance in late March. Judging by the results of Junior Prom, however, dances are in no danger of becoming extinct anytime soon.

On April 19, 280 juniors boarded five full coach buses and headed to the Bay Club in Santa Clara, where a night of memories awaited them.

As students walked in, they were greeted with a friendly ambience. Making their way through the hall, they saw a flowing river surrounded by green ferns and twinkling lights, which made it feel all the more like "paradise."

Once inside, attendees received mocktails, non-alcoholic cocktails in margarita glasses, and mingled with their friends. There was also a self serve candy bar and a chocolate fountain to enjoy to their heart's content. A photo booth with costumes was also set up so students could dress up with friends and take photos.

The photo booth was sponsored by the families of juniors Madison Gress and Jennifer McAfee, who split the total rental cost, \$496. The original price was \$995 for a 4-hour rental, but by using a LivingSocial coupon the two girls were able to lower the price by \$500.

For dinner, students enjoyed dishes such as a chicken risotto and drinks such as soda and fruit punch.

Junior class president Adrienne Kim said ASB and the class's advisers, school secretary Julia Peck and health teacher Amy Obenour, generously helped to create a beautiful venue and memorable night for the students.

However, there were some things that students wish could have been improved. Junior Rohan Bharadwaj said the dance floor was too small to accommodate everyone.

In addition, junior Shreyes Balebail, who is not a huge fan of dancing, wished that there were more activities to do during the night.

Despite these criticisms, students still found the night enjoyable.

"The venue staff was really nice and even our school's staff was super nice and they really wanted to make it as good for us as possible," Balebail said.

Just like last year's Senior Ball, an anti-freaking policy was in effect.

"I thought that the whole 'no freaking' policy was going to keep everyone from dancing, but we danced for basically the whole night," junior Annalea De Luca said.

Even English teacher Natasha Ritchie, who chaperoned at prom, noticed the positive impact the anti-freaking policy had on the night.

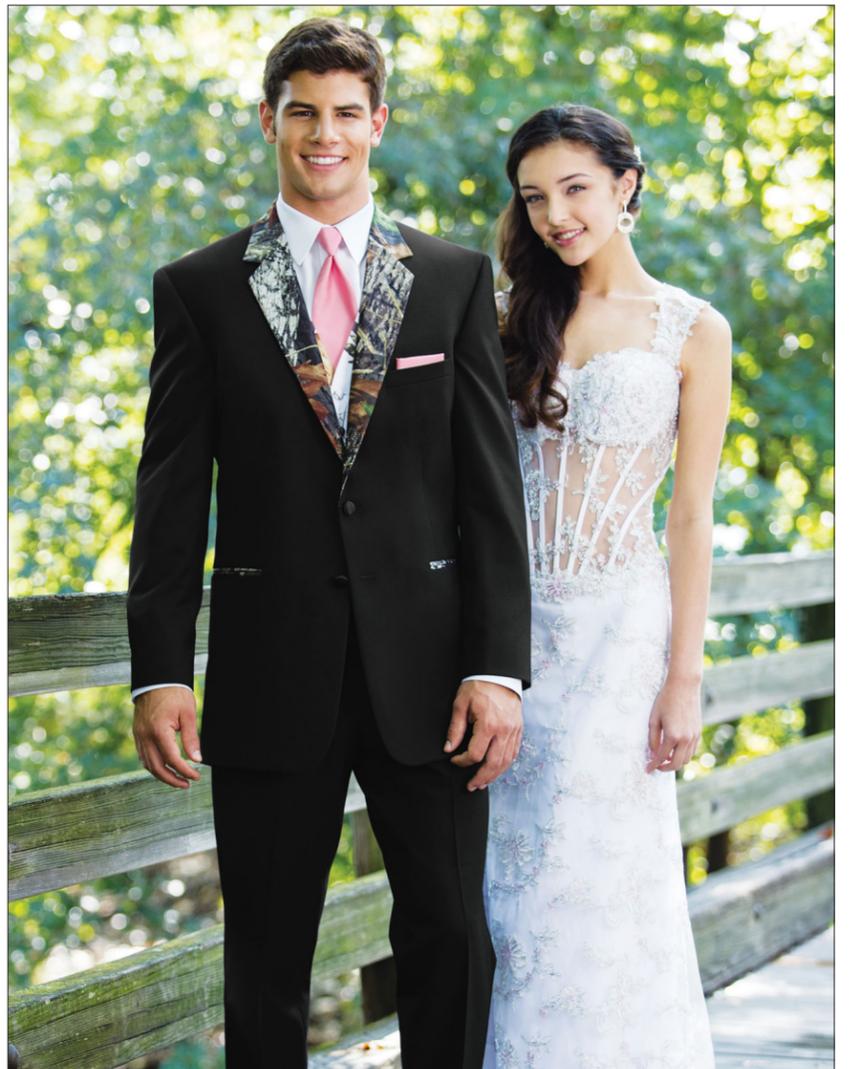
"In the past [the dancing] has been a big blob of monotonous backwards freaking dancing (if indeed you can call that dancing) regardless of the music or beat," Ritchie said. "But this year the music had pretty nice variety and I saw plenty of awesome moves on the dance floor and more people being themselves out there."

In fact, she observed almost 95 percent of the attendees were dancing consistently the entire night, compared to lower participation in previous years.

As the night closed, the juniors left with memories to last them a lifetime.

"I didn't really have a favorite part because the whole night was just really fun," Jammula said. ♦

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Future job opportunities should not be affected by standardized test scores

BY Michelle Leung & Carolyn Sun

Trapped in a classroom that feels like a jail cell for four hours, a student considers a test question. Little does the student know that bubbling a wrong answer could cost a job opportunity in the future.

Big companies such as McKinsey & Co. and Goldman Sachs ask recent college graduates and sometimes even middle-age candidates for their SAT scores during their hiring process. It is ridiculous that a test taken at least four years ago should continue to haunt an adult.

Until two years ago, to apply for a job at even Google, candidates needed to provide SAT scores on top of college records. Google HR executive Laszlo Block told the New York Times, "Google famously used to ask everyone for a transcript and college GPAs and test scores, but we don't anymore. We found that they don't predict anything."

Thankfully, Google now prioritizes interviews rather than test scores when accepting or rejecting applicants.

Many companies rationalize that SAT scores are valuable indicators of the tes-

ters' concentration and hard work; however, most jobs requires more than the ability to take tests.

While SAT scores may be valuable for employers who want to quickly filter out lower-scoring applicants, according to a report done by College Board studying classes who have graduated since 1980, the SAT is ultimately a worse predictor of workplace success than other factors such as interviews, resumes or recommendation letters.

An in-person encounter provides more information about the individual as a person, and recommendation letters prove that others have found one's work ethic and attitude valuable.

Even the College Board describes the SAT as an exam intended to predict short-term success in college rather than lifelong careers, according to The Wall Street Journal. Standardized tests like the SAT are not inquiry-based. Even the new — and hopefully improved — SAT test is nothing like real life. After all, when are you going to be asked to write an essay about whether there are true heroes in life in 25 minutes?

According to a study done by the Duke University Talent Identification Program, although the SATs may be

>> candid caricatures



HELEN WONG

helpful in predicting success early in college, they do not track success after college.

Even high school grades and specific tests like the AP tests are better indicators of workplace success than the SAT, wrote the New York Times. In addition, emphasizing SAT scores puts some groups at a disadvantage. According to McGraw-Hill Education, because of fac-

tors such as income, African Americans and Hispanics score lower on average than whites and Asians. For companies trying to increase diversity, using SAT scores would hinder their goal.

The SAT represents no more than a student's ability to either self-study or sign up for an SAT class. SAT scores don't define a student, and they especially should not define an adult. ♦

Chewing gum good for both focus and studying

BY Shreya Tumu

I sometimes find myself fidgeting and clicking my pen in class during a lecture. I can't help it; I am a teenager with all this energy pent up inside me. I have trouble sitting still and I find the only way to concentrate is by doing something constantly. The perfect solution for me and anyone else who has the same problem is to vent all that nervous anxiety by chewing gum.

Chewing gum helps students stay focused for longer tasks that require concentration and also has been proven to benefit some aspects of long-term memory.

Not only does chewing gum give students a way to spend excess energy, it also prevents them from getting bored during a lecture or a documentary. For me at least, it can be really hard to train my mind to focus on just one thing in particular.

Take the analogy of a mother and her pestering child. The child will continue to pester the mother until the child is occupied with something else. The child is like our body "pestering" our mind and in order to stop the pestering we keep our "child" side occupied by letting it chew gum.

Teachers might find gum chewing distracting, especially if the student is blowing bubbles or making popping sounds, but in reality, it takes a lot of effort to smack around the gum in order for it to be so annoyingly conspicuous. Instead, most people just quietly chew their gum, and it's hardly ever noticeable.

Some teachers also mistakenly assume that students incorrectly dispose of their gum by either throwing it on the floor or sticking it underneath desks. What they don't realize,

however, is that students too find this disgusting and will often refrain from doing that and just throw away their gum in the trash.

The problem here is that a few careless people ruin it for everyone. The fact is that some people are too lazy to move to the nearest garbage and they give the rest of us gum-chewers a bad reputation. If students show that they can dispose of gum correctly and refrain from making a distraction in class, there is no reason why teachers should prohibit gum chewing.

I checked underneath all the desks I sit in for six of my classes, and I was surprised to find no ugly sticky pieces of gum, adding support to the idea that the ban on gum chewing is an overreaction.

Gum personally increases my ability to read at a faster pace. I read with my "internal voice," known as subvocalization, which means I can read only as fast as my mouth moves to the words. It encourages my mind to read at the fastest pace possible.

During tests and stressful situations tension builds up around the jaw, and by chewing gum, I allow my jaw to exercise and release all the tension.

Chomping away boosts thinking and alertness and the ability to process information among chewers are up to 10 percent faster.

Gum also fends off hunger because you are giving your stomach fake signals that you are eating, although you actually are not. This can also help a student focus instead of daydreaming about their next meal.

So I have learned to chew gum to better focus, concentrate and be more alert. I can overcome my slow reading pace and my hunger pangs, all because of one small piece of gum. ♦

Gum personally increases my ability to read at a faster pace.

Dress code policy at SHS both pointless and useless

BY Allison Lin

If you flip through the first several pages of the student planner, you will not come across the dress code policy. Instead, you will find policies on the use of electronics, student I.D. cards and athletic eligibility.

Then, should you happen to be strangely inclined to find out the school dress code, you will have to turn on your computer, open the school website, click on the student handbook and scroll to the section under "Behavior." There, you will see it in small font.

The school's dress code is not only unknown by most students, it is also loosely enforced and followed. Since there is little effort to make it known to students and the main consequence of a dress code violation is merely changing into different clothes, many students, especially girls, generally do not heed it. Since this is true, is a dress code policy needed?

The way a student chooses their dress is not based on the regulations set by the dress code, but by their own moral standards and comfort level with wearing more revealing clothing.

Perhaps it is not important whether or not students know the dress code policy, but more so that students are taught at a young age to respect their body.

The dress code policy in the handbook states "attire that is disruptive to the teaching/learning process will not be allowed." Many students will agree that the wording in this statement is vague, and leaves a lot of room for disagreement in interpretation of the

policy.

Consequently, many students are not afraid to "push the limits" in terms of their dress, and teachers ignore the ones that seem to cross the line. For example, when a female student's shorts are questionably short, the teacher might not mention it because she does not want to start an argument.

The dress code goes on to list prohibited clothing, which includes: shirts, shorts and skirts that are not school appropriate, pants that sag below the waistline and clothing that exposes the midriff or undergarments. It doesn't take a genius to see that many of these "prohibited clothes" are worn by students on campus daily.

The portion on the school dress code in the student handbook concludes with the blatant statement, "school administration has final authority on what constitutes inappropriate dress."

While most students do not wear provocative clothing to school, this may not be the case for other high schools and

SHS is one of the few schools that is an exception where having a strict dress code policy is not critical.

There are, nevertheless, always students who challenge the dress code, either on purpose or unknowingly. Though it is not a major problem at SHS, the dress code policy is useless and ineffective.

However, assuming we have to have a dress code, the wording in it should be improved and clarified, and efforts should be made to make students aware the policy exists and that it is there for the students' benefit.

The dress code should fit SHS and its unique environment. ♦

>> THE bigidea

The SHS Dress Code

What the policy says
"Attire that is disruptive to the teaching/learning process will not be allowed."

The question
Do we really need a dress code here at SHS?

Why we don't need it
Few students at Saratoga wear inappropriate or provocative clothing

NEWEDITORS

STAFFPOLICY

The *Saratoga Falcon* is published 12 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. This issue, the "New Editor's Edition," is one of two issues produced by the sophomores and juniors on staff.

MISSIONSTATEMENT

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

LETTERS OF THE EDITOR

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

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AP Psychology: one solution to school's humanities deficit

>> candidcaricatures

One of the favorite pastimes of Saratoga students and parents is asking administrators to add or upgrade classes, especially if they can have an Honors or AP designation.

These efforts have resulted in classes like AP Government/Econ and AP European History, among others.

But other classes remain stubbornly free of an AP or Honors designation — such as psychology.

Why? Although the school offers two semester-long psychology classes, an introductory course and child psychology, many students choose not to take the subject because it has no Honors or AP options. It's sad that this causes student to miss out on a valuable class.

Not only that, AP Psychology would help balance out Saratoga's AP offerings. Currently, the school offers five humanities APs, compared to 10 math and science APs. With the addition of AP Psychology, humanities students would have more options to explore their interests.

The subject can also help with daily life. For instance, because psychology explores the effects of stress on the brain, students can learn more

about healthy ways to deal with their own emotions and motivations.

Although some people may be worried that an additional AP will put more pressure on students, AP Psychology is a relatively easy AP class. As a result, students can still take the classes they like without overloading themselves. In fact, 15 students took the AP Psychology test last year.

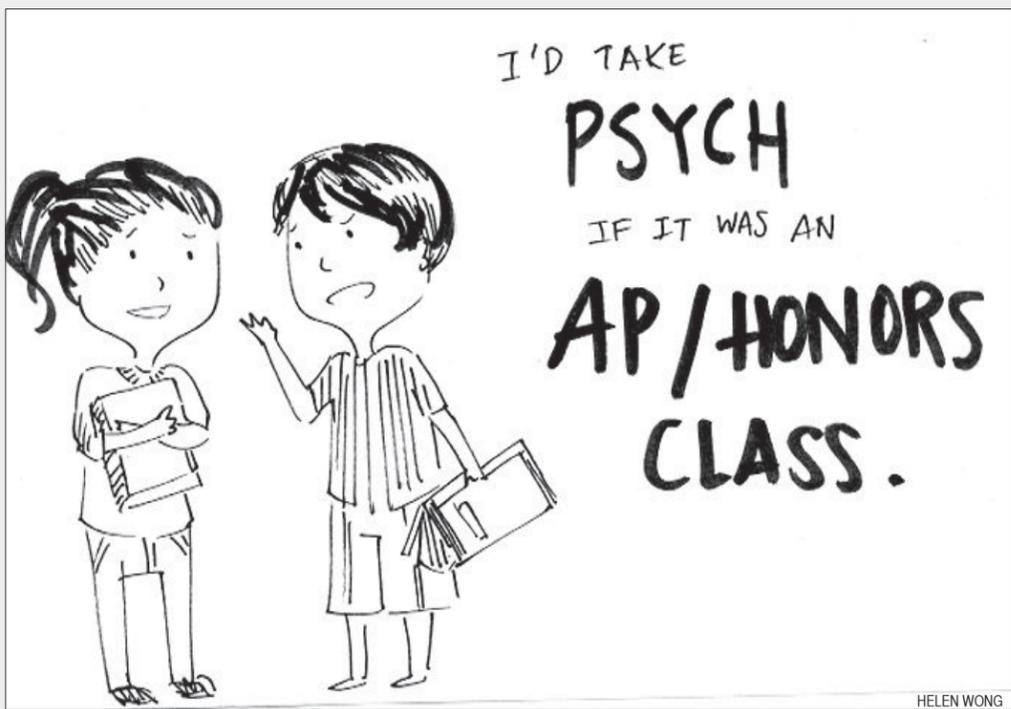
While this number might seem low, only 13 students took the AP Music Theory test, despite AP Music Theory being a class at the school. Also, the addition of the AP class is bound to

attract more test-takers.

In addition, around 100 students are in regular and child psychology, which demonstrates enough interest in the subject to create a high-level version of the class. Plus, an informal Facebook survey of 92 students showed that 59 would sign up for AP Psychology if it was offered — enough for two classes.

While some may argue that three psychology classes is too many, the AP course goes beyond the regular classes. Introductory psychology classes are often part of the core class requirements at universities, too, so taking AP Psychology is a great way for a student to earn college credit at schools like UCLA, Berkeley, Brown and more.

AP Psychology would give students a chance to take a fun AP humanities that may help them become a better person. The logical conclusion: The school should offer it. ♦



HELEN WONG

Opinion of the Falcon Editorial Board

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The *Saratoga Falcon* staff voted 25-5 in support of the editorial.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Falcon editors,

Recently an article about my family and I was published in the school newspaper [April 4 issue] to prove that the myth that all Saratoga students are rich is wrong. They had used me as an example because my family is not rich nor poor; we are in the middle class and can fully support ourselves. In response to the article there were many misunderstandings among the readers, one being that my fellow peers actually thought my family is poor and in poverty. People were literally texting my sisters about it while I was in Hawaii and needless to say that made them very upset and annoyed.

The fact that people actually thought we were poor was really frustrating to me and even to my parents. Even though I know the article had good intentions, I feel like the misunderstandings made me and my family absolutely hate it. ♦

—Sophomore Gabby Fontanilla

Editor's note: We apologize if the story caused any harm. The article said Fontanilla's family is middle class and only "comparatively poor" in both the headline and the story.

Age-restricted classes hinder upperclassmen

BY Arjun Ramanathan

Let's say you're a junior looking for elective choices in the upcoming school year. Classes such as AP European History and AP Computer Science along with Marine Biology and Anatomy and Physiology don't interest you much.

Beyond these, you may have few other choices. The problem is that too many electives target only freshmen and sophomores, and upperclassmen seeking to find a new interest find themselves with a limited range of options.

For example, a new class for the 2013-2014 school year, Intro to Engineering and Design, was restricted to solely freshmen and sophomores.

Another example is Journalism One, which is also for only freshmen and sophomores. This is mainly because juniors taking it would only have one year of newspaper or yearbook and seniors would end their experience after the starter class.

Regardless, the introductory course to journalism is still a useful tool for juniors and seniors interested in the field.

One concern is that upperclassmen

will crowd out the younger students and compete with them in these classes.

However, since the classes are only electives, freshmen and sophomores should have no problem competing with upperclassmen.

Usually with basic starter classes, upperclassmen show genuine interest in the subject and are not looking to one-up the younger students. The rules should definitely be abolished, resulting in fair choices for interested upperclassmen.

On the other hand, underclassmen who are eager to take higher level classes should, more often than not, be restricted, as they have not matured to the proper level to try and take on such classes. For example, taking a class like Calculus BC as a freshman is a stretch for all but the most gifted math students.

Clearly, there is no benefit to restricting older students from taking these classes. It only caps the number of new opportunities for juniors and seniors during their last few years of their high school careers, years that are supposed to be filled with freedom and choices. ♦

Language students need real-life practice

BY Deepti Kannan

When I traveled to Spain in sixth grade, I was mesmerized by the flamenco dancers, bull riders and the marvelous cathedrals, all part of the unique Spanish culture, tied together by a single language.

The following year I decided to take Spanish in middle school; I could not wait to immerse myself into this culture and actually interact with native speakers in California and abroad.

But it seems that the language curriculum does not align with my goals.

This is unfortunate because practically anyone can take the class with minimum effort just to get their language credits for college without learning a thing.

Sure, we have “learned” countless vocabulary words and grammar rules. But when it comes to trying to speak Spanish to a stranger in real life, the language classes at the school have failed me.

Even in my Spanish 4 honors class this year, I cannot help but notice that several classmates sometimes struggle to formulate oral sentences on the spot. Perhaps laziness is a factor, but I see a common pattern emerging: that people tend to forget what they have learned in previous classes.

The main reasons are the lack of organization and a misguided focus on rules,

syntax and vocabulary. The problem with the current curriculum is that it relies too much on memorization and not enough on usage and oral practice.

As a result, students can study the necessary information for a test and promptly forget it the next day.

Teaching a language is a difficult task, considering that most people learn languages almost instinctually as they grow up.

Trying to make students grasp grammar rules and vocabulary without too much memorization while trying to make the class entertaining seems impossible.

But there are some ways we can improve language classes at the school to make sure the material sticks.

For example, the language classes at private schools such as Bellarmine, which my brother attended, require oral assessments and emphasize impromptu speaking and writing so that students develop a more well-rounded practical usage of the language.

My brother recalls having to talk to his Spanish teacher on the phone for homework, being graded on not just his grammatical accuracy, but also on his ability to speak fluently, diction and adherence to idioms.

While this type of approach is explored in higher level language classes

>> candid caricatures



HELEN CHEN

such as Spanish honors and college level courses, students may not have cultivated the skills and necessary background in the lower levels of Spanish to be able to maximize their education in these classes.

Because students are so used to learning by rote, they struggle to apply their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar rules to real-life scenarios such as essays and in-class presentations.

Instead, language teachers should incorporate more oral practice and focus more on usage starting in Spanish 1, so

students feel confident by the time they reach honors and AP.

This way, students can explore more advanced topics such as Spanish literature or essay writing, instead of having to relearn topics that they had forgotten from previous years.

Many see language classes as meaningless or an “easy A,” and this needs to change.

I would hate to have dedicated five years of my education learning a language that I will never be able to apply after I graduate. ♦

>> togatalks

Do taking language classes prepare students for real-life applications?

“ Learning a foreign language can be really helpful, especially in business careers.”



sophomore Andrew Weng

“ Yes, because I am required to use Spanish to work with international representatives.”



junior Mahir Jethanandani

“ It depends. Spanish has much use where we live; however, French doesn't.”



senior Trishika Shetty

A fundamental right — the right to self-defense

BY Atirath Kosireddy

In 2011, a pixelated video brought attention to Australian high school student Casey Heynes who, after years of bullying, decided to fight back.

Heynes had his back against the wall and passively took and blocked Richard Gale's punches. After about 20 seconds, Heynes picked Gale up and slammed him on the ground.

Both students were suspended for four days, which I found ridiculous. Surely other schools must have reasonable rules for self-defense, I thought.

I was mistaken.

One unproductive day, I flipped open the Saratoga High student handbook. When I stumbled upon the words “all forms of fighting or conspiracies to engage in fighting are prohibited” and that any students involved would be suspended, I looked around for any mention of self-defense and found none.

Many public schools make no effort to protect a student's human right to self-defense.

At the same time, schools constantly preach that we should stop bullies by standing up to them.

The hypocrisy is astounding.

Instead, schools sometimes add insult to injury by marking on the victim's record that he is a bully himself. A bully well knows that what they do is illegal, and punishing the victim only gives the bully gratification.

If a bully does not care about the

rules and knows that they can get in trouble, why would they follow the no-hit policy?

What gives a bully confidence is that no one dares to challenge his or her authority.

However, if aggressors knew that they could legally be met with physical force, then they might reconsider their decision. Some would argue that allowing self-defense at school would give bullies an opportunity to spark a fight and claim that they had to fight back.

Their claim is that it would be too difficult for the administration to allocate the time and resources to figure out who the aggressor is.

Too often one party is truly the victim until they can't take the abuse any more.

The right to self-defense is not granted to you; it is part of what makes us civilized.

And for those who say to simply “block” their hits or, huddle into a defensive position, that is unrealistic in a self-defense situation. How long will a student be able to sustain or block so many hits before an authority figure intervenes?

Schools are supposed to prepare us for the real world. If schools teach kids that they can't exercise a basic human right, then what are they trying to teach us?

Being able to stand up to bullies — and not be punished for it — is the essence of having human rights. ♦

Movies in class enhance students' understanding

BY Sherrilyn Ling

We all love that feeling of bliss and relief we get every time a teacher announces that the entire class period will be spent watching a movie or documentary.

Some students watch eagerly while others snooze off, unnoticed by the teacher. Yes, movies are very relaxing and enjoyable for students, but contrary to popular opinion, they are not unproductive.

All right, I might be slightly biased considering that I myself am a student. But if I'm being honest, after studying loads of material in class (whether it be historical information or a book/play we're reading in English), I may have the facts memorized but I don't always fully comprehend them.

Take the American Civil War, for example. We learned about the unfair treatment of African-Americans in AP US History.

However, the harsh truth is that most of us were probably still somewhat ignorant about it.

Don't get me wrong, I know that every student acknowledges the immorality of slavery, but what I'm saying is that I'm not so sure if simply learning about it impacts us as much as it should.

It wasn't until watching Denzel Washington's whipping scene in “Glo-

ry” that I was able to visualize just how brutal situations were. I can name countless other examples — the violent attack on Pearl Harbor in “Pearl Harbor,” the extremes of nationalism in “Braveheart” and much more.

Besides history, watching video clips in English this year has also been very enriching.

I will admit, during our “Hamlet” unit I didn't always understand what was going on.

Often while reading, I imagined everyone speaking very calmly to one another since the language didn't always make sense to me.

But after watching many film adaptations of the Shakespearean tragedy for an English assignment, I was enlightened by the various ways that different actors performed their lines.

The lines I imagined being recited calmly were often actually shouted dramatically, providing me with new understandings of important scenes in the play. Learning the basic facts can provide students with a surface-level understanding, but films can take that knowledge and develop it even further than originally.

And just as a plus, after watching all those “Hamlet” films I can now recite the some of the lines almost as dramatically as the actors themselves. ♦

The lines I imagined being recited calmly were often actually shouted dramatically, providing me with new understandings of the play.

Tumbl(r)ing down to the kitchen

REPORTERS USE MICROWAVE AND MUG TO CREATE A COOKIE IN A CUP RECIPE

BY Megan MacInnes
& Helen Wong

There's this recipe that's been floating around Tumblr for a while. It's a very popular recipe, but we had our doubts about its feasibility because it seemed far too simple and convenient. According to the recipe, all you have to do is microwave cookie dough in a mug for about a minute, then bam! Fresh chocolate chip cookie in a convenient single-serving size.

We decided to try our hand at it. Megan graciously allowed her kitchen to be used as the test site for the endeavor. It must be noted that Helen was somewhat apprehensive about the whole experiment due to her record of being unable to bake edible items (see pancake story in last issue).

We collected supplies (one egg yolk, some flour, some sugar and butter — funny how when you put enough of those things together, it tastes good no matter what) and then set about mixing them in a sturdy mug. As it turns out, there's a technique to separating the yolk from the egg (you crack the egg in half and then pour the yolk from shell to shell until there's no egg white left), but it's a devilishly hard process for our first-world selves who are used to having no hard labor involved in our meal preparation.

We quickly discovered that people use mechanical mixers for a reason. It's

very difficult to get the lumps of butter and flour into a smooth consistency, especially in a mug rather than a bowl. Not to mention, it's difficult just to get said lumps off the whisk and into the mug instead of a on the counter or ourselves.

Actually, that was a pervasive problem throughout the whole experiment: actually getting the materials into the mug without spilling. When Helen put in the butter, she missed the mug the first time around and then the second time too. Plus, she's also quite sure there were some eggshell bits in the first mug.

We made four attempts total, in batches of two. Our first two turned out like cookie-dough scented charcoal. The problem was that the top stayed deceptively gooey while the bottom burned, which led to overcooking in the microwave. Also, Megan discovered that, yes, there is such a thing as too many chocolate chips. The lump of chocolate charcoal attested to that. As it turns out, burned chocolate chips are exceedingly difficult to wash out of a mug.

Our last two attempts, however, fared much better. We microwaved one for a minute and fifteen seconds, and we just ate the raw cookie dough out of the other. The one we'd "baked" turned out alright, if a bit eggy in flavor. The one we hadn't cooked was actually the best.

Next, we tried making pudding from hot chocolate mix, another relatively simple recipe from tumblr. This was a simple recipe, with just milk, eggs, corn-



FALCON // MEGAN MACINNES

Juniors Megan MacInnes and Helen Wong pour pudding mix into a bowl before baking it.

starch, vanilla extract, sugar, butter and four packets of instant hot chocolate mix. All we had to do was whisk the ingredients together over a stove, and to our pleasant surprise, we had a very decent chocolate pudding in about 20 minutes.

So, our final verdict: Both recipes are good. Both are certainly doable, although the cookie in a mug might take a few extra tries (don't cook it for lon-

ger than a minute and 15 seconds tops, don't get fooled by the gooey top, and have towels on hand, because things might get messy). The pudding should be simple enough for anyone with the ingredients to make, but that one will take longer, around 20 minutes. So, good luck — we hope you learn from our mistakes to avoid the messy cleanup we had to endure. ♦

Wingstop soars again

BY Atirath Kosireddy

Three tests in one week can make a high schooler hungry for something besides chips or cookies.

So the Friday before spring break, I decided make a stop at Wingstop on Stevens Creek Boulevard. The restaurant is similar in size to a generic Starbucks and didn't seem like much with only 10 customers inside.

But the excellent food and service more than made up for the humble surroundings.

The wait to order only lasted a few minutes, and I was able to order a family-size deal that consisted of 30 wings, large fries and three types of sauces and dips for \$26.59. There

was also the option to order a mix of boneless and traditional wings. Like any other wing place, the wings came with celery and carrots.

I chose to order 20 wings coated in the chain's original hot sauce and 10 cooked with hickory smoked barbecue sauce.

I added a soda to my purchase when I saw the Freestyle soda fountain.

I don't know about other people, but when there is a touch screen machine that offers 24 types of drinks with about five different flavors for each of those sodas (strawberry Sprite is good stuff), there's no reason not to drink some.

The service was better than average. The cashier, who was older than me, addressed me as "sir," which made Wingstop feel less like the fast-food restaurant it was.

After about 15 minutes the wings were ready, and I brought the food to the table. The tray was filled with a pile of fries and three baskets of wings with 10 in each.

The wings coated in original hot sauce had a good fieriness and pepper flavor to them.

I found myself enjoying the hickory smoked barbecue wings more because they had a thick sauce with a hint of sweetness dominated by a smoky flavor.

After about 10 wings, I was full.

I had to get two take out boxes to hold all the leftovers. If I have anything to criticize about the restaurant, it was that the sauce selection needed some expansion.

But for less than \$30, I received more food than my mom and I could eat in one night. The meal mainly consisted of wings and fries, and though the menu did not have a variety of foods.

Still, the effort that could have been used to make other types of food was put into the wings, the spotlight of the foods offered.

I can confidently say that Wingstop is going to be a hot spot for me from now on. ♦

Wingstop



(OUT OF FIVE)

Where: Stevens Creek Blvd., Cupertino

Type of Food: Chicken wings

Price range: \$20-30

Reporter's Favorite: Hickory smoked barbecue wings

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Junior prom goes without a hitch

BY Gwynevere Hunger

Glitter filled the room as rays of sunlight reflected brightly onto the multi-colored prom dresses, creating a mini-rainbow inside the room. All around, a buzz of excitement filled the air as students were greeted with non-alcoholic beverages in margarita glasses, each with their own tropical color and flavoring, to kick off the night many have been looking forward to ever since their childhoods — prom.

During prom season, students immerse themselves in preparation for the big night. But beyond the glamorous dresses and creative askings, what kind of planning, or “behind the scenes” work, must be done by the class officers for the highly anticipated event?

This past summer, the junior class officers visited multiple local venues that were within their budget. With the help of class advisers Julia Peck and Amy Obenour, they were able to narrow the choices based on the following criteria: location, price and services.

“We just picked the prom venue on what we thought people would like the most,” said junior class president Adrienne Kim. “We also looked into what would be the most amount of fun and excitement for hosting a junior prom.”

The class officers ultimately chose to host prom at the Bay Club in Santa Clara due to its architecture and landscape.

The venue offered a large amount of space for the event. This extra space could accommodate not only dancing, but also offers other activities such as gaming and a photo booth for those who seek other forms of entertainment.

After deciding on the Bay Club, the officers then worked on the smaller details, including the theme, photo backdrop, food, DJ

and decorations. Planning went into full force after they decided on the theme for the event, “Escape to Paradise.” Details such as the decorations and photo backdrop were able to be planned at a much faster and smoother rate.

In order to make things easier for the officers, Peck was in charge of the decorations, which tied into the finishing touches to the night. In coordination with the theme, the decorations were mainly colored blue and white, letting students feel as if they were truly whisked away to a real-life vacation for their prom.

Accompanying each dinner table for the night were different hues of blue mason jars with candles, along with an array of sea shells.

with candles, along with an array of sea shells and a brown mesh net. Each student also had the chance to go visit the candy table and chocolate fondue fountain located near the dance floor. This candy table — filled with a wide array of blue and white candies — was a huge hit to students.

Prom bid prices were also based on two different factors: the total cost of prom and the amount of money the junior class had fundraised throughout the year.

Also, all students are now required to go on a bus to prom. This added a significant extra cost to ticket prices.

Starting eight months ago, the officers began to plan all the details of prom, although most final decisions were made in the last few months.

All officers, teachers and administration were extremely pleased at the outcome of this year’s Junior Prom.

“I thought everything was very appropriate for the evening and went along with the theme very well. The administration agreed that it was the best prom in years,” said class adviser Peck. ♦

Accompanying each dinner table were different hues of blue mason jars with candles, along with an array of sea shells.



Juniors Celia Kohler and Anshul Aggarwal
Courtesy of LUKE SALIN



Juniors Madison Gress and Komdean Masoumi
Courtesy of MADISON GRESS

First world prom-blems

JUNIOR GIRLS REVISIT PRE-PROM MEMORIES

BY Jade Bisht

April 19 was a night to remember as the juniors danced the night away at the Bay Club during their prom. Just as Gabriella stressed over her own prom in “High School Musical 3,” girls at school struggled to sort through the numerous items necessary to make prom memorable.

Excitement for prom began with the creation of the “Junior Prom Dress” Facebook group on Feb. 28.

As prom neared, however, girls envisioned the rows of dresses available for them to try on at stores. Although seemingly fun, they found that this process was more complex than they thought it would be.

Among the first-world problems present during prom season is the fear that some girls may purchase the same dress as others. The Facebook group aimed to prevent this; dresses were posted once purchased to spread awareness of the fact that they were “off limits.”

Although the group saw more than a hundred posts, some students found its purpose to be unnecessary.

“The group wasn’t required since everyone has a different taste,” junior Anshika Maheshwari said. “I did like its existence, though, for the purpose of drooling over all the beautiful dresses.”

Dress down, shoes next. Most girls opted for heels, while some stuck to flats.

“I think shoes are more dependent on the height of the girl’s date,” junior Eunju Pak said. “If the guy is over a foot taller than the girl, then she’s more likely to have skyscraper heels. If she’s the same height or taller than them, then it’s better to don

sandals to prevent any awkward photos.”

Next, hair and makeup. This usually varies per person. Pak believes that whether girls get both done professionally or do it themselves depends on how much free time they have and how picky they are.

“I did my own makeup for prom because I don’t always trust others doing mine,” Pak said. “Some professionals will overdo it to the extent that I look like a clown. Getting my hair done was fun though and completely worth it.”

Once appointments with either salons or talented friends were made, the last thing on the agenda was the pre-party. These social gatherings proved to be very stressful, contrary to what images posted on social media look like.

Photographers usually charge between \$5 to \$10 per couple.

“I wasn’t sure how photos would work, but thankfully [sophomore] Luke Salin was willing to take pictures for us,” Maheshwari said. “We’re incredibly thankful that he was willing to do this stressful task for us because the pictures turned out beautifully.”

After pictures were taken and the pre-parties came to a close, the cars left for the high school. Once there, students rejoiced in the presence of their beautifully made-up classmates before boarding the buses and leaving the campus.

“Getting ready was half the fun,” Maheshwari said. “From putting on makeup and doing hair with just a couple of friends to taking pictures with dozens of people, it’s fantastic to be able to spend a night free of the stress pent up from junior year.” ♦

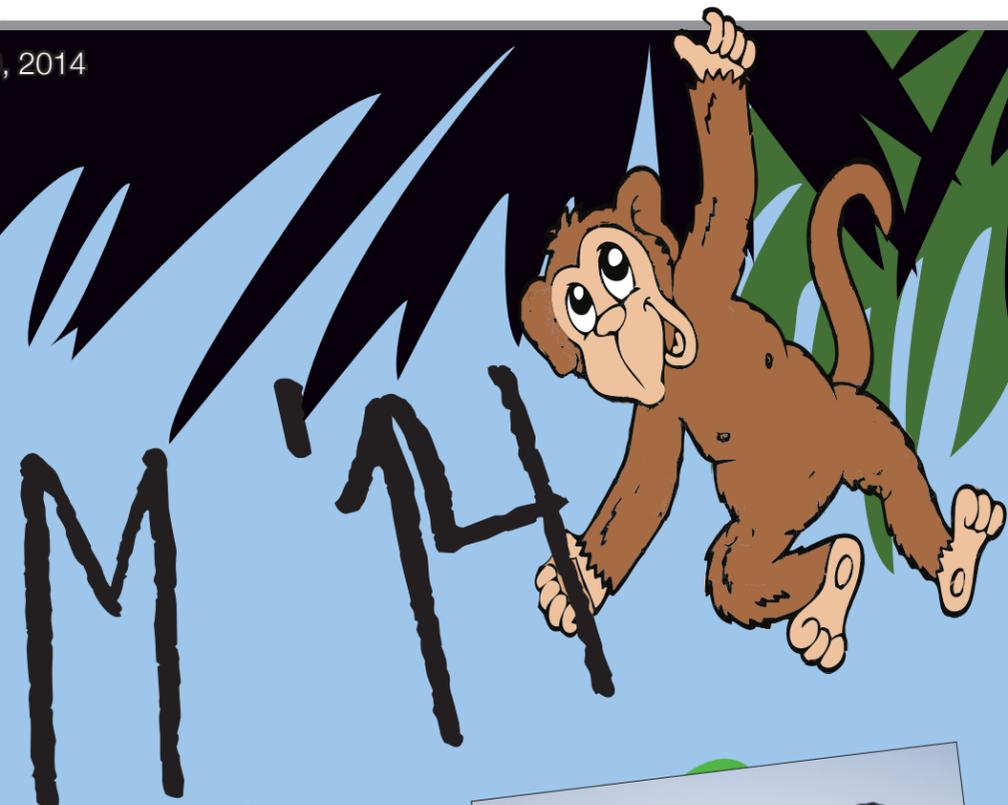


Courtesy of SABRINA CHEN



Courtesy of BRIAN CHEN

, 2014



Juniors Mounika Narayan and Rohith Krishna
Courtesy of MOUNIKA NARAYAN

Juniors Amanda Moriarty and Anish Ramanadham
Courtesy of BRIAN CHEN

ALL GRAPHICS BY HELEN CHEN AND ROTEM SHAKED

The male prom-goer

JUNIOR BOYS TELL THEIR SIDE OF THE STORY

BY Aditya Chaudry & Arjun Ramanathan

When people imagine prom, they probably think of a guy asking a girl and the terrible stress a girl has to go through to get ready for prom. From the hours spent picking out a dress to the many more pouring over their makeup, girls seem to be the most important in the prom equation.

Many claim that guys have it easy during prom. All they need to do is ask a girl and rent a tux.

While this may be the popular sentiment, gentlemen do struggle with obstacles similar to the challenges faced by their female counterparts.

Before the dress, the pictures and the dance itself, guys have to face the largest obstacle of all — asking a girl to prom.

With the difficulty of this task comes the required creativity, considering the countless cheesy, overdone options, including the old-fashioned poster and flowers combination.

“Thinking of a creative way to ask the girl is pretty difficult, because all guys want to be unique, special and non-cliche from the stereotypical askings,” junior Narain Mandyam said.

Mandyam asked junior Catroina Costello by making a video and showing it in her English class. Just as the video ended with Mandyam walking toward the class, he walked through the door with a bouquet of flowers and a sign saying “Prom?”

Not only is coming up with an original approach difficult but keeping it a surprise is tough as well. The last thing a guy

wants to do is to have his possible “date” know about his asking.

“It was tough to keep it all a secret and organizing the asking without hinting anything to the person being asked,” Shreyes Balebail said. “It was hard to keep all the friends involved and informed without many people knowing.”

If the way the guy asks is creative and the girl does not find out about the plan, then the asking can be wonderful surprise.

A great example is junior Kushol Bhattarcharjee’s asking to junior Anshika Maheshwari.

Junior Simi Srivastava and Bhattarcharjee choreographed a bhangra dance for his asking, which required him to teach his friends to dance. Juniors Jade Bisht and Naveen Kashyap convinced Maheshwari that they were just going to go on a run in the afternoon but then led her to the quad, where we performed the dance for her.

If the boy is successful in his asking, he faces yet another obstacle — matching his vest to the girl’s dress.

Although this may seem like a petty issue, it causes large problems and headaches for the guys.

“It was definitely hard to match with the girl’s dress, especially when they have a non-typical color,” Bhattarcharjee said. “The tux [store] I went to didn’t have a color vest that matched [Maheshwari’s] dress color, so I wore suspenders and a bowtie instead.”

Despite all the worry and hassle prom involves, many of those who endured the tough obstacles are glad they went and enjoyed a night with their friends. ♦

Then and now

ENGLISH TEACHERS ERICK RECTOR AND SARAH THERMOND REFLECT ON PROM EXPERIENCES

BY Gitika Nalwa & Deepthi Sampathkumar

He stepped outside, away from the crowded dance floor and felt the cool North Bay winds rush at him. He looked across the water and at the San Francisco skyline, which stretched around the bay. The year was 2000, and it was the night of English teacher Erick Rector’s senior prom.

Prom has been a part of high school life since the late 1800s. Prom has undergone a remarkable transformation over the years. Today, senior prom is a night of activities, but a few years ago, it was only a dance.

Rector remembers how his own senior prom did not have “a lot to do [besides dance]” and wishes that proms back then had been more like proms today.

This year’s senior prom, which will be at AT&T Park, will have tours of the baseball field. Rector was disappointed with the absence of such luxuries at his own prom on a boat in San Francisco, but admits that he enjoyed his prom nonetheless.

Rector went to his senior prom with his then-girlfriend. At that time, students felt no pressure to find elaborate ways of asking their peers to prom, Rector said.

Students rarely bought bouquets of flowers for their potential dates, much less designed posters.

“We didn’t have to construct a scene from ‘Glee’ to ask someone to prom,” Rector said.

The prom was also much cheaper than it is now. Bids for Rector’s senior prom costed only around \$65, as opposed to prices nowadays, which often run upwards of \$100. Rector attributes the low prices to his class’s fundraising.

“We really worked hard as a class to fundraise,” Rector said. To raise money, his class held events like car washes and lobster meals.

Like these days, many underclassmen were asked to prom.

“I got asked to prom multiple times [when I was an underclassman],” Rector recalls, “but my mom would not let me go.”

On the night of his senior prom, Rector was “decked out to the nines,” dressed in white tuxedo and a purple vest to match his date’s dress.

He and his date drove to prom, as most students did at the time, but Rector wishes that students had gone on buses, as they do now. Rector believes that buses, while expensive, are “a lot safer.”

“[Prior to my prom], there were a lot of students who were making unwise decisions,” Rector said, referring to underage drinking before driving.

Once on the boat, some students started to get seasick. They made their way to the top of the boat escorted by former assistant principal Karen Hyde.

Two floors below, students were stuffing their faces with desserts and, of course, dancing. But Rector

spent most of his time away from the dance floor, catching up with friends and socializing. Instead of dancing, Rector “was running around the dance floor and taking photos with classmates.”

“I just remember it being a blast!” Rector said.

Six years later, in 2007, drama and English teacher Sarah Thermond got ready for her own senior prom, a Parisian-themed event hosted at The Fairmont San Jose. Thermond went with her college-going boyfriend at the time, who asked her to prom with a classic bouquet of roses.

The trend of more elaborate prom askings had started when Thermond was going to prom. Classmates of Thermond opted for more detailed ways of asking their potential dates.

“I had a friend tell me that he stole his ask idea from the movie ‘10 Things I Hate About You,’ and got the band to serenade the girl,” Thermond said. “I thought [that] was pretty cool.”

Unlike Rector’s prom prices, the prices for Thermond’s prom were in today’s price range. Thermond, who got her tickets earlier than most of her classmates, paid somewhere between \$150 and \$200.

Thermond admits that her prom was not as “exciting and glamorous” as proms are nowadays.

“I feel like there wasn’t a lot to do other than eat and dance,” Thermond said. “I would say that I’m pretty jealous of current proms.”

Yet, she and her classmates did



English teacher Erick Rector

enjoy many of the same traditions as prom-goers today do, including photo shoots. Prior to prom, Thermond and her date went to a friend’s

house for a photoshoot.

“At one point, [my friend’s] dad got all of the boys into a human pyramid,” Thermond said. “That was pretty fun.”

Thermond believes that her prom preparations went smoothly.

“I did consider changing my dress at the last minute,” Thermond said. “It’s a good thing my friends talked me out of it, because my date had bought the most perfectly matching tie possible.”

The couple looked picture-perfect, ready for a photo-filled night. Even at Thermond’s prom, before the word “selfie” had edged its way across the web, teens were prone to taking numerous self-portraits, Thermond said.

Drowning out the “clicks” of these photo-snappers was music from artists like Fergie and Gnarlz Barkley.

“I think we also got the DJ to play some old Britney Spears and ‘90s boy bands like N’Sync and Backstreet Boys,” Thermond said.

All in all, Thermond said that, for the most part, her prom was very conventional.

“Aside from the drama kids swing dancing [at prom], it was what you would expect from a high school dance,” Thermond said. “Everyone was just a lot more dressed up.” ♦

2014 summer blockbuster previews

Summer season will be done and the moviegoers' choices will also be done. Here's a preview of the season's most anticipated movies, including the best-reviewed and most profitable, and the most talked-about and most talked-about.

1. THE FAULT IN OUR STARS: FILMED JUNE 6

Based on the 2012 New York Times bestseller by John Green, "The Fault in Our Stars" is a poignant and powerful story of two teenagers who meet in a cancer hospital and fall in love. The film is a beautiful and touching story of love, loss, and hope. It is a must-see for anyone who has ever loved someone who is dying.



2. 22 JUMP STREET: FILMED JUNE 10

"22 Jump Street" is a comedy film that follows two police officers who are sent back to high school to investigate a case. The film is a hilarious and entertaining look at the world of high school and the challenges of being a police officer in a high school setting.



3. THE GIVER: FILMED JULY 15

Based on the novel by Lois Lowry, "The Giver" is a dystopian science fiction film that follows a young boy who discovers the truth about his society. The film is a thought-provoking and powerful story of a world where emotions are suppressed and individuality is forbidden.

YouTube takeover

DISNEY UTILIZES UNIQUE AUDIENCE, SPENDS \$600 MILLION ON CHANNEL

By [Name] and [Name]

We've all heard of the 12-year-old who is the star of the channel on YouTube. This kid is not only a star, but a genius. He has a unique talent for creating content that is both entertaining and educational. His channel has millions of subscribers and is one of the most popular on the platform.

YouTube has been a game-changer for the entertainment industry. It has allowed creators to reach a global audience and has become a major source of revenue for many. Disney has recognized the power of YouTube and has invested heavily in the platform.

Disney has spent over \$600 million on YouTube, making it one of the most heavily invested-in channels on the platform. This investment has allowed Disney to reach a younger audience and has helped to drive the success of its content.

Disney's investment in YouTube has been a key part of its strategy to reach a younger audience. The company has created a variety of content, including animated shorts, live-action films, and original series. This content has resonated with young viewers and has helped to drive the success of Disney's content on the platform.

Disney's investment in YouTube has also helped to drive the success of its content on other platforms. The company has used the data it has gathered from YouTube to inform its marketing and content strategy on other platforms, including television and film.

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BY [Name] AND [Name]

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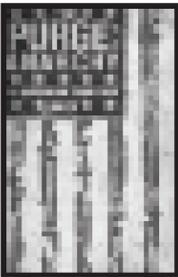
4. TRANSFORMERS: AGE OF EXTINCTION: FILMED JUNE 17

Another year, another Transformers movie. "Transformers: Age of Extinction" is a thrilling action film that follows the Autobots as they fight against a new breed of Decepticons. The film is a fast-paced and exciting look at the world of Transformers, and it is a must-see for anyone who loves the franchise.



5. THE PURGE: ANARCHY: FILMED JULY 10

"The Purge: Anarchy" is a dystopian action film that follows a group of people who are caught in the middle of a violent uprising in a city. The film is a fast-paced and intense look at a world where violence is the only way to survive. It is a must-see for anyone who loves action movies.



Flappy Bird takes flight

BY [Name] AND [Name]

Flappy Bird is a simple yet addictive mobile game that has taken the world by storm. The game is a classic side-scrolling platformer where the player controls a yellow bird that must fly between a series of pipes without touching them.



The game's simplicity is one of its strengths. It is easy to learn and play, and it is highly addictive. The game's success is a testament to the power of simple, well-designed games.

Flappy Bird's success has also led to a surge in interest in indie mobile games. The game has shown that there is a market for simple, well-designed games that are easy to play and highly addictive.

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Passionate potential in student rapper

By [Name]
[Location]

It's not every day that someone like this only in his early 20s can be this close to the top. One of those rare talents is rapper [Name], who came to the scene in 2011.

[Name] grew up in the city. "I'm from [Location], and I've been here since I was born. I love it here. It's my home."

"I started rapping when I was 15. I had a few friends who were into it, and we started writing songs. It was just a hobby at first, but it grew on me. I realized that I had a talent for it, and I wanted to pursue it."

The album that really took him to the next level was [Album Name], which was released in 2013. It was a mix of his own songs and collaborations with other artists. The album was a success, and it led to more opportunities for [Name].

[Name] is a multi-talented artist. He's not only a rapper, but also a producer, songwriter, and actor. He's always looking for new ways to express himself.

"I love creating music. It's my passion. I want to keep pushing myself and my sound. I want to be the best I can be. I want to inspire others and show them that they can do it too."

"I'm grateful for all the support I've received. I want to thank my fans, my friends, and my family. They've been my biggest supporters. I want to keep making music that they love and that I'm proud of."

"I'm excited about the future. I have a lot of projects in the works, and I can't wait to share them with the world. I want to continue to grow as an artist and as a person. I want to be a role model for others and show them that hard work and passion can lead to success."

[Name] is a true professional. He's always on time, he's always prepared, and he's always giving his best. He's a real team player, and he's always looking for ways to improve himself.

"I want to be the best. I want to be the one that everyone wants to hear. I want to be the one that everyone is talking about. I want to be the one that everyone is looking up to."

"I'm a hard worker. I don't get lazy. I always have a goal in mind, and I'm always working towards it. I want to be the best, and I'm willing to do whatever it takes to get there."

"I'm a grateful person. I know where I came from, and I know how far I've come. I want to thank everyone who has helped me along the way. I want to be a good person, and I want to be a good role model for others."

"I'm excited about the future. I have a lot of projects in the works, and I can't wait to share them with the world. I want to continue to grow as an artist and as a person. I want to be a role model for others and show them that hard work and passion can lead to success."



It's one of the things I'm most proud of. I had to work hard and overcome all the odds.

CBS's 'Elementary' proves superior to BBC's 'Sherlock'

By [Name]
[Location]

When the BBC's Sherlock first aired, it was a game-changer. It brought a new level of intelligence and wit to the genre. But CBS's Elementary is taking it to the next level.

For one thing, Elementary is a more grounded series. It's not just about solving crimes; it's about the lives of the characters. It's a more realistic and relatable take on the genre.

Another reason Elementary is superior is its pacing. It's not as fast-paced as Sherlock, which allows for more character development and a more in-depth look at the cases.

One of the most interesting aspects of Elementary is its setting. It's set in a gritty, urban environment, which adds to the realism and makes the stories more compelling. The show is a perfect blend of action and drama.

Overall, Elementary is a more well-rounded and engaging series than Sherlock. It's a more realistic and relatable take on the genre, and it's a more in-depth look at the lives of the characters. It's a more grounded and paced series that is superior to Sherlock in every way.

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2048 ways to win: Reporter tries her hand in new game

There's only one game that has taken the world by storm. It's a simple game, but it's addictive. It's the game of 2048.

I first heard about the game in 2013. I was sitting at my desk, and I saw a small advertisement for the game. I was curious, so I downloaded it and gave it a try.

I was hooked. I spent hours playing the game, and I was amazed at how addictive it was. I was able to reach the 2048 tile, which was a huge accomplishment for me.

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[Name]

SparkNotes an ethical tool for school?

BY Maya Ravichandran

As a junior, I am well aware of the large amount of homework that students receive every day. Honors English, especially, is time-consuming and involves reading 80 pages a night.

This is when websites such as SparkNotes, CliffsNotes and Shmoop tend to become as appealing as pocketing a ten-dollar bill laying unattended on the ground.

I know that 90 percent of the school population has read a book summary at least once. Since this sort of behavior is so common, it's not really seen as something that is generally looked down upon.

One of my friends, who shall remain nameless, has sworn off SparkNotes and never used it even once. To her, SparkNotes detracts from the learning experience. She believes that a big part of the reading assignment is to figure out what the main ideas are without help from an outside source.

Not surprisingly, English teachers like Amy Keys agree. "SparkNotes are insipid,

clichéd and trite," Keys said. "The 'analyses' offered on SparkNotes are usually lowest-common-denominator-type observations, weak sauce indeed, and frequently, flat-out wrong."

I definitely think this is true. Even when there is no time, reading the book quickly is more enriching than reading

The 'analyses' offered on SparkNotes are usually lowest-common-denominator-type observations, weak sauce indeed.

>> English teacher Amy Keys

summaries online.

However, this also brings up the fact that some students read summaries only because they do not understand what happened in the text. This is especially true for hard-to-grasp works like Shakespeare's plays.

My friend counters this by saying she just waits to ask the teacher to explain tough parts in class. The point she brings up is key. Most teachers do not ex-

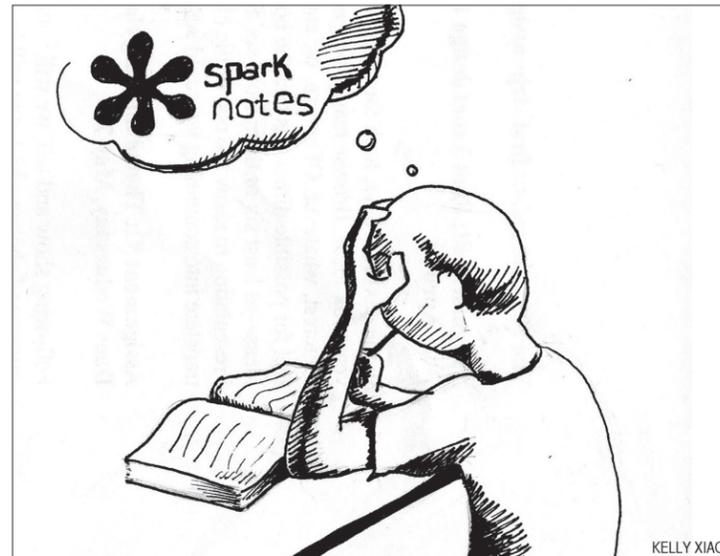
pect students to understand the language 100 percent the first time around. After having discussions in class and re-reading the sections, the meanings of difficult words and important plot points slowly becomes more obvious.

Of course, there are ways to "Spark-proof" assignments. One good way to do this is to use works that do not have analyses and summaries online. By choosing books that are not typically used in standard English curriculums, teachers are forcing the students to actually read the story themselves. It seems weird, but staying away from teaching well-known classics might be the easiest way to encourage students to actually do work.

But still, you might say, there is no time to read. The reality: Learn to make time. Reading actually furthers learning skills not just in English. It helps chemistry, biology and even math textbooks. Good reading habits lead to success in every field.

"The whole point of reading the text is to develop one's own

>> candid caricatures



reading and analytical skills, one of which is finding the main and related ideas," Keys said. "Reading SparkNotes is 'outsourcing' the analytical effort that the reader should be putting into understanding the text."

According to Keys, teachers know exactly when students have used SparkNotes in essays and journal entries.

Ultimately, the decision whether or not to use SparkNotes is up to the student. Although time management can be difficult, mastering it really is the way to ensure a healthy lifestyle and good grades. If more people were like my friend (who, by the way, aces her English essays), they'd end up much smarter and much more prepared for college. ♦



To cheat or not to cheat? Head recounts dilemma

BY Oksana Trifonova

As a Princeton college student, English teacher Catherine Head took a course called Critical Theory, taught by a professor who thought women had no place in higher education.

"He believed that he contributed toward the 'greater good' of society by self-righteously limiting women's participation in his class," said Head.

Whenever she had questions during his lecture, her professor would ignore her raised hand.

"Since I couldn't speak (in a class with 12 students), many of my questions went unanswered," Head said.

As a result, sitting through the class was more of an endurance contest than an intellectually engaging experience.

Equally frustrating, the exams in the class were little more than a game of trivia.

But after she read the question, her pulse quickened and a million thoughts

raced through her head. Head knew that the answer to the test question was sitting right in front of her among the material she used to study. No one was around to see her. She shifted her gaze between the test question and the answer.

Head was facing one of a student's most difficult ethical dilemmas: cheating.



English teacher Catherine Head

"I have to admit I have no respect for people who cheat because 'everyone's doing it.' [Not everyone is.]"

During the first half an hour, she tried to justify it.

"[I pondered] the same reasons all fundamentally honest people consider when cheating tempts

them," Head said.

She had been wronged by her professor, she thought, and felt that she owed him nothing. If she didn't pass the exam, she might fail the class: too much depended on knowing the answer. And who cared? It was a stupid test anyway.

But after thinking about loyalty to the teacher, Head had to consider loyalty to herself. The final decision was not easy.

"Do I cheat or do I take a guess that's got a 50% chance of being wrong?" Head said. She took a last look at the papers

lying in front of her and pushed them away.

As it turned out, she ended up missing the question, but she said she felt good about herself and made up for the missed points later on during class.

"This memory helps me to be more sympathetic to those who are tempted and give in, though I have to admit I have no respect for people who cheat because 'everyone's doing it.' [Not everyone] is," Head said. ♦



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Saratoga's subconscious racial divide

STUDENTS DISCUSS SELF-SEGREGATION BASED ON ETHNICITY AT SCHOOL

BY Melissa **Magner**
& Vibha **Seshadri**

During a recent lunchtime, we walked around the school and took notes on the friendship groups. Our goal: to discover the divisions among groups of students that are formed either intentionally or unintentionally.

As we walked through the back of the school, we noticed that a lot of groups in the band quad were based on interest. Tables consisting of members from the Robotics Club and tables filled with band kids were evident. As we stepped into the quad, we noticed a variety of other groups formed based on common interest.

It was also clear that groups often formed along racial lines.

Starting from the library down to the entrance of the school, there were groups of Indians, groups of Asians and groups of whites: more than one of each.

According to registrar Jeanie Jamieson, out of the 1,402 students who attend the school, the breakdown of the racial breakdown is white (568), Chinese (428), Asian Indian (250), Korean (57), Vietnamese (33), Other Asian (27), Japanese (17), Filipino (13), American Indian or Alaskan (6), Black or Afro American (2) and Laotian (1).

According to a study conducted by University of Michigan sociology researchers, Siwei Cheng and Yu Xie, if a school has a larger student population, instead of integrating within races, students will settle into groups of their same race.

Often times, for students like junior Anish Srinivasan, this is because of the many similarities they find among students of the same race.

"The people that I hang around are generally of my same race, mainly because I tend to feel more comfortable around them," Srinivasan said. "It is a matter of being able to relate to who you hang out with, and people of the same race often relate to each other better."

This could be because of similar family traditions, hobbies or an overall understanding of a certain culture.

"I think that people feel left out if there are inside jokes or specific things that they don't know about the culture," Srinivasan said. "A few of my friends have complained to me about the fact that they don't feel included and they don't feel like coming to certain parties or events because they are dominated by a certain group of friends or ethnicity."

While Srinivasan said he is "guilty of self-segregation," he does not believe it is the right thing to do since it can lead to exclusion of others. Even if unintentional, groups of people talking about one issue related to their ethnicity or culture may make another person who is of a different race feel isolated.

The school is not alone in this issue. In *The Chronicle*, Duke University's newspaper, the editorial board wrote an article on the effects of self-segregation on fraternities. According to the article, the Greek community there is largely divided by race. The author posits that students may



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GITIKA NALWA

feel more comfortable pledging for a fraternity that mirrors their cultural ideals or may not join a certain organization for fear of being socially ostracized. Often, this could be viewed as forming "cliques" or selective groups. At SHS, however, sophomore Katie McLaughlin said that, while people of a minority race at the school are not "left out of cliques," they do feel the effects of exclusion every once in a while. For example, when

McLaughlin walks up to a group of another race, she sometimes feels awkward because they are talking about something she does not understand. She also said that there is sometimes an unvoiced expectation that she should be good or bad at something just because she is white.

"When your personal interests go against the status quo of what your ethnicity is supposed to be, it sometimes feels a little weird or separated," McLaugh-

lin said. "I don't think anyone has any intentions of leaving others out, but sometimes being the odd one out creates a feeling of exclusivity in itself."

Psychology teacher Hana Chen believes that students "migrate" to those who look similar to them at first, since personality cannot be seen at first glance.

"However, if you give everyone the opportunity to get to know you, whether they look like you or not, you will greatly increase your chances of meeting wonderful people, making lifelong friends and becoming a more worldly person," she said.

Sophomore Michelle Shen has done just that. Shen's friend group is primarily Indian, and she does not see any negatives in being the minority because she is always finds herself learning new things when she is with friends.

Shen has been invited to Diwali parties and has immersed herself in Indian culture. After noticing many of her Indian friends were interested in Chinese culture and food, she hosted her own Chinese New Year party so that they could experience the same cultural exposure she had enjoyed with them.

"Exposing myself to new cultures was really interesting and I'm so glad I made the effort to do so," Shen said. "And learning that my friends also were interested in my culture was really awesome."

Shen, who participated in the Indian Cultural Awareness Club's event Bombay in the Bay, said that although she was the only Chinese-American in her class dance, she felt included throughout the process.

"I think if you express an interest in your friends' cultures, then they'll be happy to share it with you," Shen said. "You only have to ask." ♦

Grade grubbing rubs many teachers the wrong way

BY Nupur **Maheshwari**
& Sweeya **Raj**

What drives teachers insane? Students who have bad penmanship, leave class early and don't read directions on assignments. But of all the misread instructions and the scrawled handwriting upon wrinkled sheets of paper, many teachers' biggest pet peeve is grade grubbing: Students asking teachers to give them more points on an assignment or a test unnecessarily and in a pestering way.

Math teacher Lauchlin Loeffler, who teaches Algebra 2 and Trigonometry/Precalculus Honors, said that it comes off as disrespectful when students believe that they have the right to correct a teacher's decisions on a test or assignment.

"A lot of thought goes into when teachers do grading, so students should respect that," Loeffler said.

Many teachers also believe that grade grubbing is not only disrespectful, but unnecessary, because school is about so much more than grades.

"I understand that kids feel like they're under a lot pressure to perform, but I find that those situations work themselves out," English teacher Ken

Nguyen said. "[Students] should try as best as possible just to focus on whether or not they are getting as much out of the course as they should be."

Chemistry teacher Janny Cahatol thinks high school is "the time when students learn social and thinking skills" and has much more to offer than just grades.

"It's very unfortunate to see the students give themselves this little box to fit into," Cahatol said. "Saying 'I'm an A student or B student' doesn't really speak about the fullness of who you are."

Although students are constantly told their grades do not define them, it is hard for many students to accept a bad grade.

"I'm always disappointed in myself when I don't receive the grade that I would like or what I think I deserve," junior Joy Tang said. "Even though we're told that grades don't define you, when students are applying to colleges,

grades actually are a defining moment of whether someone is accepted or not."

Despite this disappointment, she tries not to be a grade grubber.

Several students interviewed said grade grubbing is pointless anyway.

"People who grade grub are kind of ridiculous," junior Meeta Marathe said. "What are you really going to do with one extra point?"

Junior Joowon Lee sees grade grubbing as basically complaining. He understands that missing points are just a consequence of his own "laziness and lack of understanding."

English teacher Michael Kim said he doesn't view all grade grubbing as negative, since he's worked at schools where fewer students care about grades.

"Hearing [grade complaints means I'm] seeing a student who invests time and energy into [academics]," he said.

Kim said that he often listens to the grade grubbing and takes the students' comments into consideration.

Math teacher PJ Yim, who previously

taught at Leigh High School, said grade grubbing isn't any worse here than anywhere else.

Sophomore Farbod Moghadam, a self-proclaimed "proud grade grubber," said it stems from the intense academic pressure students are under.

Grade grubbing has become a common occurrence in classrooms, one which Moghadam calls "an art, a skill that must be developed over time."

Sophomore Shrey Desai said that grade grubbing is an important part of high school.

"Grade grubbing is necessary, even though it has a negative connotation in the academic sphere," Desai said. "It has an important role in any institution because teachers are prone to making arbitrary decisions. To correct those mistakes, students can negotiate for a better grade."

Although grade grubbing can be a controversial issue, it's an art that many students are continuously learning to perfect.

"It has become a part of our culture that anything below a 4.0 is considered suboptimal, so whatever means necessary to achieve the A grade is justified — that includes grade grubbing," Desai said. ♦

“People who grade grub are kind of ridiculous. What are you really going to do with one extra point?”



>> junior Meeta Marathe

HE RAPED ME. HIS PUNISHMENT? NEXT TO NOTHING.

WHAT AUDRIE'S LAW AIMS TO FIX

By Ashley Chen and Kelly Xiao

ALL GRAPHICS BY SAMUEL LIU AND KELLY XIAO

Editor's note: This story deals with an account of sexual assault and contains mature and disturbing content. Judy and John are pseudonyms. This story is based on Judy's account only. At the time of the rape, summer of 2013, John was a rising junior at another local high school.

How could she know what would happen?

She just wanted a small summer party while her parents were out. But instead of the low-key hangout she envisioned, her social gathering morphs into a 15-person party — complete with drugs and alcohol.

Fast forward to a few hours later, and three people are sprawled on Judy's couch. Herself, and two friends: her future rapist, John, and the bystander. The last memory she has is of throwing up in the bathroom, drunk.

When she regains consciousness, she's in her bed. But something's wrong. Someone's on top of her.

"I was in the beginning stages of shock," she said. "I didn't know what to do or what to think, so I just [lay] there."

Another friend entered the room where they were, had the chance to intervene and did nothing after John said, "Just get out."

Judy remembers asking her assaulter what he was doing through the haze of drunkenness.

John said, "It's OK."

She loses consciousness again, knowing that she is being raped.

Aftermath

Last spring, news organizations publicized the tragic sexual assault and subsequent suicide of then-sophomore Audrie Pott as an example case of a national problem.

Although Judy's story received no publicity until now, what's most striking about her story is how similar it is to what happened to Audrie.

Both girls were assaulted at a party by boys they considered to be friends.

Both were drunk at a party their parents didn't know about. Both faced humiliation online after the assaults.

Both faced an incredible uphill battle to recovery — a journey that proved too overwhelming and awful for Audrie when she took her own life in September of 2012.

But by no means has it been it been easy for Judy.

Hours after John left, Judy's parents woke her up, furious at her for not only having a party but drinking, too.

"My head was throbbing, my parents were yelling, I just couldn't process anything at the time," Judy said.

Judy spent the next day lying in bed, too scared to face her parents or think about what had happened. When they went to sleep, she sneaked out of her room to get food and brush her teeth. She

also went on Facebook to confront John and see if he would confess. He did.

"I played dumb and acted like I didn't remember anything," Judy said. "He said [he felt] 'really bad about it' and that he was 'just being stupid.'"

At the same time, Judy juggled an overwhelming array of emotions. Guilt, because John was her friend and she feared she would ruin his life by reporting him. Confusion, because she didn't understand how something like this could have happened to her, a student from a safe community and a safe school. Shame, for having the party and drinking.

Judy is hardly alone in suffering an assault and seeing the perpetrator face few consequences.

In fact, according to One in Four USA, an organization dedicated to the prevention of rape, 97 percent of rapists never spend a day in jail. By college, one in four women report surviving rape or attempted rape.

Even worse is the reality that rapists often don't realize the severity of their crime. One in Four USA says that 8 percent of men admit to having committed rape, whereas 84 percent of rapists don't consider their actions to be rape.

Perhaps the difference between Audrie and Judy lies in what happened after. Before Audrie's death, her parents didn't know about the assault that happened to her. In contrast, Judy's parents learned about the rape soon after and reported it to law enforcement.

The law's solution to personal disaster

After contacting John, Judy called a 24-hour helpline. When the woman on the phone told her she "shouldn't feel bad at all," Judy texted a friend, who was shocked but encouraging, suggesting that Judy report the incident.

Soon after, her mom discovered the texts and "freaked out and [started] crying." That night, Judy and her family brought in the police. The first sheriff's deputy was male, but Judy had to ask for a female deputy because she was uncomfortable talking to a man about what had happened to her.

Then, she met with a district attorney. Her dad went to the authorities with the phone recording of John's confession, in addition to John's incriminating Facebook messages.

In the meantime, John called Judy in a panic, trying to guilt-trip her, she said, by mentioning that "a lot was going on"

with his grandmother.

"My dad called a lawyer, I don't know what to do," Judy remembers him saying. "You have to help me."

She said John's parents were similarly insensitive, asking her to drop the charges.

In the end, however, it didn't matter. The legal system failed Judy much as Audrie's parents and others say it failed to punish Audrie's assaulters. Current law only requires that sexual assault by young perpetrators against conscious victims be tried in adult court. Because Judy was unconscious during the rape, John went to juvenile court. According to Judy, he received little punishment as a result of his age and formerly clean record. He was forbidden to contact Judy, but did not spend time in juvenile hall.

"I don't think he viewed it as rape in that I didn't 'resist' as in yell," she said.

Judy also doesn't feel that John's parents see it as a "big deal." His parents later bought him a new car, she said.

Audrie's Law brings hope

A chance for reform lies in the recent introduction of proposed legislation known as Audrie's Law, which would allow adult charges against juveniles who sexually assault intoxicated or oth-

two just to get back on track. She stayed in the house and rarely went anywhere.

For Judy, the entire experience was a life-shattering encounter with the reality of trust. Apparently, friendship was no match for poor judgment, rape culture and alcohol. That night, someone she thought she could trust betrayed her.

"I definitely take a lot more time [than I used to] with trusting people," Judy said. "I've changed my judgment of people."

Sadly, plenty of victims have broken their silence, only to be greeted with the question "So what?"

"So what that you've been raped? It happened a month ago. And what did you expect? It's your fault."

"Your fault for getting drunk."

"Your fault for wearing all that provocative clothing."

"Your fault for flirting with him."

The shame associated with sexual assault is so prevalent that it's no wonder that only 40 percent of rapes are reported, according to the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN).

Among younger victims the statistics are even worse. Ninety-five percent of college rapes go unreported, according to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

Just as over half of rapes occur within a mile of the victim's home, her rape occurred at her home.

Just as 75 percent of men and 55 percent of women were under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the rape, John and Judy were both intoxicated at the time.

Just as most rape victims knew their rapists before the crime, Judy once was friends with John.

The plague of sexual assault on campuses is one reason the Obama administration recently brought together a team of senior officials whose aim is to "coordinate federal enforcement efforts," according to the New York Times. The committee recently released a report entitled "Rape and Sexual Assault: A Renewed Call to Action" that details the administration's past actions and future plans.

Judy was initially tempted to remain silent and let the incident fade away, but she ultimately decided to report it. She advised victims to seek help from others.

"Don't be scared about it," she said. "Just say to go out and do your best, [because] if you don't do anything about it the [people or person responsible] will just think [that they] got away with it [and] can do it again."

What causes this behavior?

One can't help think of the summer hit "Blurred Lines," which involved singer Robin Thicke declaring "I know you want it," and reduced Thicke's lover to childlike status as he called her a "good girl."

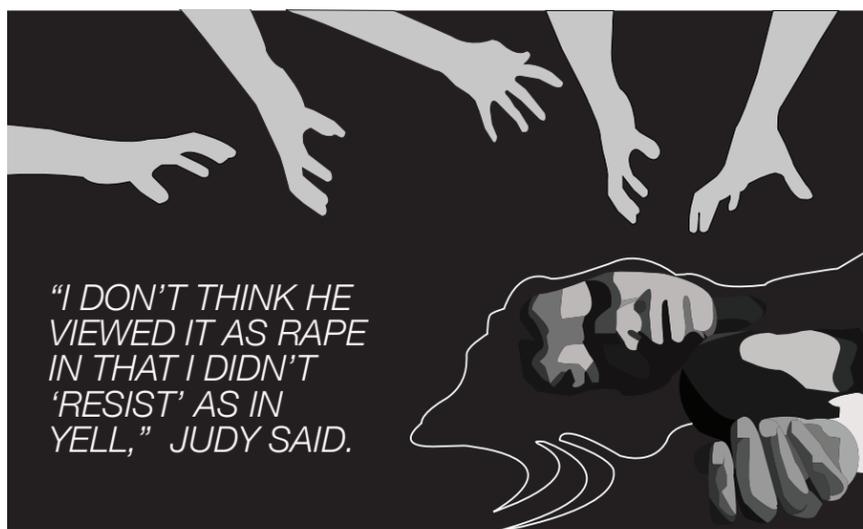
Judy, on the other hand, attributed the attack to a simple lack of morals, say-

ing that perpetrators of sexual violence are "sometimes happy they got away with it" and lack empathy for their victim.

She added that guys often misinterpret girls' actions or dress and end up thinking that "It's OK" and that "she wants it, so I won't get punished for it." Such misunderstandings, she concluded, make it difficult for girls to avoid being targeted sexually by guys.

For Judy, Audrie and many others, any changes will be too little, too late. Judy does see hope for the future, however, in Audrie's Law.

"[Audrie's Law] would raise awareness," Judy said. "No action like that should [be punished as lightly] as it is right now." ♦



"I DON'T THINK HE VIEWED IT AS RAPE IN THAT I DIDN'T 'RESIST' AS IN YELL," JUDY SAID.

erwise mentally impaired victims. Adult charges can result in publicly registering juvenile offenders as sex offenders, making consequences more severe if they commit crimes in the future.

If John had been charged under Audrie's Law, consequences may have been more severe for him.

The lack of justice in the legal system was not the only horror Judy endured. On the popular site ask.fm, anonymous posters sent Judy messages that included comments like "John is hot" "How do you feel now?" "You're so stupid, how could you be so stupid" and finally, the worst of all: "You asked for it."

She didn't tell anyone about the hurtful messages, but she deactivated her ask.fm account. It took her a month or

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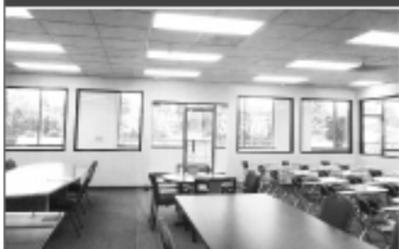
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>> TheStats

26 consecutive league wins

The boys' golf team has had another strong year. The team went undefeated in the El Camino League with a record of 14-0. On May 1, the Falcons qualified for CCS. "During practices we have competitions with our teammates and that improved our skills and improved us mentally," junior Robby Gragnola said.

52 assists made

Sophomore volleyball player Chester Leung, who recently came back from a fractured foot and ankle, contributed 52 assists in the 3-0 win against Santa Clara on April 25. "By being deceptive and setting against the flow, I can trick the other team's blockers to create more opportunities for our hitters against one or no blockers," Leung said.

WHO'S HOT

Falcons make CCS

The boys' tennis team won the De Anza league with an overall record of 18-0 and players think they can win CCS this year. "Through hard work, we have been recognized around the tennis community as one of the best teams in the state," junior Vikram Ramesh said.

WHO'S NOT

Trying not to place last in the league

The girls' swim team has been dealing with a lack of swimmers, resulting in a record of 1-6. "We have a few fast people but not a lot of depth," freshman Stefanie Ting said. "Other teams will get second and third place while we will get first place, but second and third place combined are worth more points [than first place]."

>> TheRANKINGS

- 1 = Boys' tennis (17-0)
- 2 = Boys' golf (14-0)
- 3 ^ Boys' track (6-1)
- 4 ^ Girls' lacrosse (11-4-1)
- 5 v Baseball (17-7)
- 6 = Boys' lacrosse (10-6)
- 7 ^ Boys' volleyball (18-12)
- 8 v Softball (13-9)
- 9 ^ Girls' track (2-5)
- 10 v Badminton (2-5)
- 11 = Boys' swimming (1-6)
- 12 = Girls' swimming (1-6)

Faylors follow father's footsteps

BY Miles Albert & Tiffany Zheng

What does it mean to play football all the way to the pro level?

"I have had seven knee surgeries, a shoulder surgery, degeneration and stenosis in my neck, two lower fractures in the lower spine, and have broken both hands several times in addition to fingers. I've had my front teeth busted out and received 12 stitches in my left arm from a large gash. Besides that, I feel good."

These are the words of John Faylor, currently in his seventh year as the school's varsity defense coach. He played backup defensive back for the San Francisco 49ers from 1986-1987, a dream of his since he was a child. His three sons, SHS alumnus Mitchell, senior Grant, and sophomore Vinny Faylor have all played the sport.

John Faylor, who started playing in Pop Warner tackle football, a youth football league, in 1970, went to Mitty High School and then played for Santa Clara University. John said his inspiration to play football came from his own dad, who played football at the University of Detroit and was drafted by the Houston Oilers. John recalls that his older brother, who "pounded" him constantly, helped toughen him up so he was ready when he put his uniform on.

"I enjoyed every minute of [professional football]," John said. "The pressure was not much for me, I just went out and had fun like I always did, played for the love of the game, not the money."

After playing for Santa Clara, John signed as a free agent for the 49ers, rejecting two other offers to play with the

Atlanta Falcons and Oakland Raiders.

Unfortunately, after just a year playing professionally, John was forced to stop playing football because of a severe neck injury.

"[I] still suffer every day with a bad neck in addition to many other ailments due to my football career, but I would do it all over again," John said.

Although the glamour of being a famous athlete can often be considered the highlight of one's career, John said that the best part of playing was the friendships he built with teammates, and the "comradery of the locker room."

John still keeps in touch with all of his former teammates and is still good friends with former 49ers players Dwight Clark, Ronnie Lott, Eric Wright and Brent Jones, all football legends.

Furthermore, John has been an inspiration for each of his sons, as they all play football. Vinny said having his dad as a coach helps him improve his game, both on and off the field.

"It's awesome because I get a lot more support since he's on the field," Vinny said. "[He] inspired me to play football."

Next year, he will be playing cornerback and receiver for the school's varsity team.

Vinny's brothers also carried down the



49ers defensive back John Faylor stands next to Hall of Fame quarterback Joe Montana during a game at Candlestick Park.

"[I] still suffer every day with a bad neck in addition to many other ailments due to my football career, but I would do it all over again."

>> coach John Faylor

Tracking tennis star's path to Princeton

BY Anant Rajeev & Jihau Yu

Down a set two games to three, senior Kial Kaiser focused his eyes on the ball as he prepared to serve. Time seemed to freeze as he threw the ball in the air, his eyebrows frowned in intense concentration.

He was in the deciding match in the 2013 Maze Cup, a prestigious tournament in which the best tennis players from Northern and Southern California met. NorCal had not won the Maze Cup in 30 years and Kaiser had the opportunity to knock off their longtime rivals.

Unfreeze. The ball came soaring back down and Kaiser whacked the ball with a fierce serve. Despite the strength of his opponent, Kaiser, through his fierce rallies, came back to win the match in three sets.

"It was an awesome feeling to make that comeback, especially since I was behind at first," Kaiser said.

As a tennis player, Kaiser has always been among the top tennis players in the country, and his playing ability will see him take his talents to Princeton University this fall.

His inspiration to play came from his older brother Kevin Kaiser, a SHS and established national tennis player who played for Stanford University, and from his supportive family.

"Even from when I started playing, I loved being alone on the court and being able to fight for myself," Kaiser said. "My parents saw success in my game from a young age and so it was obvious for me to continue playing."

Kaiser has improved as a player by practicing three to four hours most days. Working out and being "mentally mature" has also helped him. He said that the daily practice time has allowed him to work on all aspects of his game.

As Kaiser got better, he started to play tournaments in Northern California and then eventually moved on to play national tournaments to increase his ranking.

Ever since Kaiser was 12, he has been ranked among the top 15 tennis players in his age group in the country. Kaiser said that being among the elite players made him assume that it would play a major factor for getting into colleges because "it has so much pull."

Despite his love for team tennis, Kaiser has only played two years on the high school team to focus on individual tournaments.

"I veered away from school tennis because the level of competition was declining and the games were really time consuming," Kaiser said.

However, in his time playing for the school team, Kaiser learned the value of teamwork and cooperation that comes with the sport.

"Playing as an individual gives you a more independent feel, like you're out there on your own with no help," Kaiser said. "But being on a team really makes you feel a part of something bigger than your own success."

Originally Kaiser was going to take a year off school after graduating to play in International Tennis Federation tournaments, which are international tournaments for aspiring professionals. Howev-

er, Kaiser had a change of heart realizing he did not want to miss out on the college experience along with his peers.

Deciding not to take a year off, he contacted all the Ivy League schools and Stanford. Of the schools he contacted Princeton expressed interest in recruiting him.

After receiving many offers, Kaiser decided to only apply to Stanford and Princeton, the only Ivy League school that he was interested in.

In the meantime, Kaiser committed to Princeton University, which he called his top choice.

When Kaiser was choosing a college, he wanted to choose the best school based on the strength of its academics as well as a strong tennis program.

"I could have picked a top 15 tennis program and sacrificed academics for a better tennis program, but I realized that I wanted a good program with the most elite academics possible," Kaiser said. "Plus, Princeton, ranked [61] nationally, is moving up in rankings and the [tennis] program is really on the rise."

Kaiser was especially interested in Princeton because of the environment surrounding the tennis program.

"What differentiated them from the other top Ivies were the coaches and the team and the motives they share," Kaiser said.

Kaiser has many aspirations for his experience at Princeton this fall.

"I hope to see my ranking as high as possible and see the team in the top 20 in a couple of years while developing to my full potential," Kaiser said. "If I have a shot to be a professional, I will take it after I finish school." ♦



Kaiser

GIRLS' LACROSSE

Seeded fourth, Falcons tweak strategies

BY Jade Bisht
& Jane Park

After beating Los Gatos on May 2 with a score of 12-4, the girls' lacrosse team has secured a spot in playoffs and are currently seeded fourth in CCS.

The team beat Mountain View 14-6 on April 30, and Los Gatos away and at home on April 28 and May 2, with the scores of 20-8 and 12-4 respectively.

Success stemmed from a change in tactics, such as a man to man offensive strategy and better communication for defensive players. Senior co-captain Lena Jewler believes the team is on the right track toward success in playoffs, which begin on May 12.

"We've improved significantly since the beginning of the season," Jewler said. "Our athleticism and new techniques have made a great difference. At this point, we've become a very competitive team."

With only a few losses in the season, the girls have either had close games or have won by a significant number.

"The close games are always frustrating because we end up losing by so little," senior co-captain Jennie Werner said.

After three months of practices and games, the girls have grown as players and as a family.

The team has seen the addition of six new underclassmen players, along with two returning underclassmen. Despite the age differences, the new players feel welcome on the team.

Sophomore Maya Kumar, who played on JV last year, found the contrast between JV and varsity to be significant enough that the entire game experience is different.

"Varsity is much more intense; every drill we do has a purpose and contributes towards the quality of our playing," Kumar said. "We don't waste time on drills that aren't relevant towards defeating our next opponent."

As the league playoff games, also known as the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League or SCVAL, approaches the girls are focusing on honing down on specific



FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA

Senior Jennie Werner passes the ball to a teammate at a practice in preparation for CCS.

areas in order to benefit their overall skills.

"We're working to improve the little things that make a huge difference," Werner said. "Getting the ball off the

draw 80 percent of the time rather than 40 percent basically ensures that we will win the game, so we're trying to work on being more confident in areas like this." ♦

BOYS' GOLF

Galvin attains league title; golfers make CCS

BY Melissa Magner
& Oksana Trifonova

At the league finals on April 29 at the Santa Teresa Golf Course, senior Christian Galvin, the Falcons' No. 1 player, became league finals champion.

Saratoga placed third in the SCVAL league finals behind Palo Alto and Gunn, missing the automatic team bid to CCS by three strokes.

Luckily, the team found out on May 1 that they did make it to CCS when they successfully applied for a bid into the tournament because of their undefeated record throughout the season, continuing their winning streak for the past two years.

They were scheduled to play against other top-level teams in CCS held at Rancho Cañada Golf Course in Carmel Monterey on May 6.

Earlier, Galvin had 36 strokes in nine holes and juniors Robby Gragnola and Noah Jung had 39 at the Santa Clara Golf Course on April 23, qualifying them for the league finals.

"Winning the league championship was a great way to end my high school golf career," Galvin said. "This year has gone pretty well overall, and as of now it's time to really bear down and, for me, since I moved onto CCS individually,

keep advancing through it."

Overall, the players were happy that they advanced to CCS.

"Going into finals I was pretty confident," Shang said. "Although we didn't do as well as we had hoped, we still got into CCS as a team and I'm very happy about that." ♦

For CCS results, check saratogafalcon.org or the May 29 print issue.

BOYS' VOLLEYBALL

Team pushes forward despite early injuries

BY Trung Vandin

The boys' volleyball team has qualified for CCS, which starts on May 13, with a current league record of 5-1 and placed sixth at a tournament on April 26, which was hosted by Monta Vista.

According to coach Jason Cardoso, this is the first time that the team took first place in the El Camino League.

The team made CCS despite numerous obstacles, with freshman Joel Schneidmiller and junior Michael Cole leading the team in scoring.

The start of the season didn't seem too optimistic when the team's starting sophomore setter Chester Leung, whose position is crucial to the team's performance, fractured his foot and ankle in a game on March 5.

Yet, as the year went on, the Falcons improved their team dynamic by learning and adjusting to new positions to fill the spots of Leung and other injured players.

As a result of their endurance, they beat Cupertino on March 28, Overfelt on April 2 and Santa Clara on April 3.

Sophomore Spencer Yen worked

hard to learn the position of setter until Leung returned to the court on April 16 in a victorious 3-0 match against Los Altos.

"It was hard at first learning to be a setter, but now I've adjusted pretty well after playing a lot of games [as setter]," Yen said.

On the other hand, Leung, along with the other injured players, found it hard to readjust to playing volleyball after long periods off the court.

"The first week after I recovered, I wasn't playing at my normal level [because of how long it had been]," Leung said.

The team will play Wilcox again in a regular season game on May 9 and expects to

win.

"[The loss at Wilcox] was when we had a lot of players missing — almost the entire starting lineup was out due to injury or [academic probation]," senior middle hitter Philip Cai said. "But it was a team that we could have and should have won against."

Cardoso believes that winning in CCS will be essential to moving up a league next year.

"It [was] all a matter of winning league," Cardoso said. ♦

The first week after I recovered, I wasn't playing at my normal level.

>> sophomore Chester Leung

BASEBALL

Season heats up as Falcons compete in league playoffs

BY Allison Lin

The baseball team is picking up momentum for league playoffs and CCS. The Falcons are currently tied for fourth place with the Homestead Mustangs in the De Anza League, with a record of 15-7.

The team recently lost 3-1 in a close game against powerhouse San Benito High School.

San Benito scored back-to-back home runs and a run in the fourth inning, gaining a 3-0 lead against the Falcons. The Falcons managed to score one run in the seventh inning, but were unable to score again.

On April 23, the Falcons won a non-conference game against Washington High School, 10-6.

Junior starting pitcher Joey Medeiros had an inauspicious start to the game, surrendering four runs before regaining his form and pitching five strong innings.

The Falcons rallied in the second inning with three runs and continued to score every inning for the next five innings. Senior Eric Ferguson pitched the last two innings and shut down the opposing offense.

"[Ferguson] really came in big, throwing strikes out of the bull pen," senior pitcher Tyler Plesse said. "It is big for our team for him to be able to come in and pound the zone like that."

The team also beat Overfelt High School 9-7 in a non-league on April 22.

On April 16, the Falcons faced their biggest league rival, Los Gatos. The highly anticipated home game started off slowly, with both teams tied at 1-1 by the end of the second inning. The Wildcats scored on an error in the top of the second, but senior Davis Berryhill quickly answered with a home run in the bottom of the second. The Falcons finished the game with strong defense and consistent pitching by Medeiros and Ferguson, winning 6-1.

The teams met again at the Los Gatos field on April 18. After the opposing pitcher retired senior outfielder Jacob Marr, who was the Falcon's leadoff hitter, senior catcher Derek Sun hit a double down the left field line and scored on a base hit up the middle by senior infielder Thomas Alexander.

The Falcons continued to stay in a 2-1 lead. However, during the fifth inning, the Wildcats came back to score four runs, and won the game 5-3.

"Even though we split with Los Gatos, the team went out and played with energy at both games," junior infielder Evan Lindeman said. "We are definitely looking forward to potentially facing them again in playoffs."

The Falcons were scheduled to square off against the Wildcats again in league playoffs on May 6 and 8, and if necessary, May 9, but The Falcon was unable to cover the games in the print edition because of publishing schedules. ♦

It is big for our team for [Ferguson] to be able to come in and pound the zone like that.

>> senior Tyler Plesse

BOYS' TENNIS

Falcons prepare to compete at playoffs

BY Jihau Yu

After finishing its regular season with a record of 17-0 overall and 12-0 in the De Anza league, one of the most competitive leagues in the area, the boys' tennis team is focused on winning Division 1 CCS playoffs, which will start today.

The team has reached the semifinals for the past four years but hasn't won CCS since 2004.

To achieve this goal, the team is making a few final adjustments.

"We want to solidify our lineup and

win in any situation that our opponents could throw at us," said senior co-captain Sanjay Kaliyur, the team's No. 1 doubles player.

The team's No. 1 singles player, junior Neel Bedekar, also said the team's focus has been to continue to practice well and finalize the doubles lineup. The lineup consists of four singles and three doubles matches, and whichever team captures the best of seven wins the match.

"We're trying to develop as much chemistry between our doubles partners as possible, in addition to the singles

players improving their games," Bedekar said.

After their undefeated season in the De Anza League, the team hopes to be the No. 1 seed in the tournament.

"We should be the No. 1 seed, as we were the only team to go undefeated for the entire season by a wide margin, and we're certainly a top two seed," Bedekar said.

The hardest challenge for the team will likely occur if they match up against the defending CCS champions, Menlo School. Menlo has won the past five

CCS playoffs.

Menlo's record is 17-3 overall, but two of those losses came in the Fresno High School Tennis classic, where their top four singles players played in individual tournaments instead.

The two teams have not faced each other this season, but will likely be at opposite sides of the bracket and would be expected to meet in the finals.

"[Menlo's] team is really good as its top four singles players are all ranked in the top 100 nationally, with the top two ranked in the top 20," Bedekar said. ♦

SWIMMING

Students make cuts to compete at CCS

BY Maya Ravichandran

Several swimmers will compete in the CCS meet May 15-16 at the International Swim Center in Santa Clara as a result of recent qualifying times.

The swim team competed at their final dual meet of the season at home against Los Gatos on May 1.

Senior Alexander Samoilov qualified for CCS in the 200-yard individual medley with a time of 2:04:85. Also qualifying in the individual medley were freshman Stefanie Ting with a time of 2:16:42, freshman Jane Oberhauser with a time of 2:18:91 and senior Janey Heyman with a time of 2:19:42.

In the 100-yard freestyle, Samoilov qualified for CCS with a time of 49:99,

senior Cameron Borch qualified with a time of 48:59 and sophomore Bradley Newton qualified with a time of 50:39. Junior Winston Vo qualified for CCS in the 100-yard butterfly with a time of 55:40.

Also, freshman Gillian Grant and junior Yayla Sezginer made CCS cuts in the 500-yard freestyle with times of 5:24:77 and 5:32:56.

In the 100-yard backstroke, Ting qualified for CCS with a time of 1:03:16, Sezginer with a time of 1:04:18 and freshman Anna Zhou with a time of 1:04:65. In the 100-yard breaststroke, Vo made CCS with a time of 1:03:34.

Grant and Oberhauser also qualified for CCS in the same event with times of 1:11:57 and 1:12:14, respectively.

Although the meet ended in a loss for the Falcons, it was also the team's Senior Day.

Seniors were dressed in togas and celebrated for their commitment to the team.

"Senior Day was amazing!" senior Emily Nguyen said. "Everyone felt appreciated and special and that's what Senior Day is all about. The posters were beautiful too."

The team also swam at Homestead on April 29. On April 25, the team defeated Los Altos for their first win.

Both Borch and Newton made CCS cuts in the 200-yard freestyle (1:46:21 and 1:50:95) and the 500-yard freestyle events (4:58:76 and 5:00:97).

Heyman qualified for CCS in the 100-

yard butterfly with a time of 1:02:12. Ting got a top time of 1:06:06 in the 100-yard breaststroke event while Sezginer and Zhao both qualified for CCS in the 100-yard backstroke with times of 1:03:86 and 1:02:99.

League preliminaries was held on May 7-8, for boys and girls, respectively. Qualifying swimmers will swim during finals on May 9.

"I do know that we will have an extremely good showing at Leagues and CCS," junior Randy Tsai said. "Most of us have not started tapering [decrease in intensity of sets to allow for muscle buildup] yet, so we're still sore. Once we fit that two week taper in, I expect many of our CCS qualifiers to final [in their events]." ♦

SOFTBALL

Team focuses on key strengths before CCS

BY Gitika Nalwa & Vibha Seshadri

The softball team is currently tied for second in the De Anza league, with a league record of 5-2 and an overall record of 12-8. With CCS starting on May 21, the team has begun preparations, working specifically on its defense.

The last month has been a rocky one. The team won 10-0 against Monta Vista on April 4 and lost 5-1 against Milpitas on April 15 and 6-5 to Los Altos on April 16. More recently, the team competed in the Santa Teresa tournament during the weekend of April 26.

"The Santa Teresa tournament was an intense tournament," senior third baseman and shortstop Mandy Lee said. "All of the teams either won their league or made it far in CCS last year and were invited to play in the tournament."

The team had a mix of wins and losses at the tournament. The team lost against San Benito (9-5) and Santa Teresa (2-0). The team beat Hillsdale (1-0) and Soquel (1-0).

"I think that we learned [at the tournament] that we are good enough to compete with any team out there, but we need to score runs and play good defense in order to win," Mandy Lee said.

Mandy Lee is confident that, with this ethic, the team can go very far in CCS. She also believes that there is "a lot of talent on [the] team."

Key players on the team include Lee, sophomore shortstop Eleni Spirakis, senior pitcher Hera Tang and senior outfielders Nicole Grabar and Lois Om.

"A lot of recognition goes out to Lois

[Om] and Nicole [Grabar] for stepping and filling positions [in the game against Monta Vista]," Mandy Lee said. "They have made some really big plays when we have needed them."

According to sophomore Ellie Lee, who plays catcher, outfielder and third baseman, teamwork is a strength, as shown in its sweeping win against Monta Vista on April 4.

"As a team, we really held it together," Ellie Lee said. "We were in a good rhythm and really dialed in the game."

She also believes that the bond between the players contributes to how well the players work with one another.

"Being a freshman on varsity last year made me feel a lot younger," Ellie Lee said. "But now that I'm not, I'm starting to bond with the team much better and I don't really feel the age difference anymore."

Mandy Lee attributes the team's win against Monta Vista to good hitting, as many hits brought in runs or put batters on base. Most notable was senior outfielder Tivoli Sisco, who hit a home run.

"Everybody contributed on the offensive side of the ball and we also got things done on defense," Mandy Lee said. "We didn't make errors and we really supported the pitcher."

Soon after, the team had its losses to Milpitas and Los Altos. But according to Ellie Lee, these are just minor setbacks.

"We just need to keep our heads in it," Ellie Lee said. "I think that once we get behind, we just need to know how to rally and come back. If we are set on winning, then I don't think we have a chance of losing." ♦

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TRACK

Falcons finish strong in El Camino division

BY Gwynevere **Hunger**
& Nupur **Maheshwari**

After joining the lower El Camino Division this spring, the track team gained more success than in recent years. The boys ended with a 5-1 record, and the girls were 2-4.

"In the El Camino division, we've got competition that is better suited for our team," senior high jumper and sprinter Eric Ringsrud said. "So far, [this] season's gone a lot better than the last."

But it wasn't always easy. Because the team was required to share practice time on the field with the lacrosse team, all athletes were only allowed to train during the two hours they were allotted each day, which put even more pressure on them.

A lot of students on the team have been working really hard to make track more of a family and not just a place for sports.

>> junior Avery Gigoux

Yet, athletes in specific events were still able to show their skills during meets, especially the Monta Vista meet on April 24, where the team won all events with a clean sweep.

Key athletes who helped with the win include senior hurdler Clark Wang, junior sprinter Laura Cummins, junior jumper Puck de Roos and junior runner Steven Sum, who beat the school record for the 3200m run with a time of 9:10.

Additionally, as one of the two top teams in the league, Wilcox became the Falcons' biggest rival. Unfortunately, even the best Falcon athletes were unable to defeat the Warriors.

The Falcons were scheduled to compete at league finals during the week of May 5. ♦



FALCON // SIMI SRIVASTAVA

Junior Allison Chan leaps in the long jump against Monta Vista on April 24. Chan did not rank in the event, but also received third in the 400m event and fourth in the 200m event.

BADMINTON

Team adopts new mindset after winning fewer games

BY Lauren **Louie**

After an exhausting battle against Milpitas on April 29, the badminton team emerged victorious with a close 16-14 win. As of May 1, the Falcons have a record of 5-2 and in sixth place in the SCVAL A league.

"It was a good win because we were missing our coach," sophomore Michael Owyang said. "Three of our No. 1 seeds won, which ultimately won us the game."

Despite this win, the team is winning fewer games than in previous seasons, suffering a 18-12 loss against Gunn on April 17 and a 16-14 loss against Palo Alto on April 15.

Assistant coach Chris Do attributes these losses to the lineup rather than the players themselves and plan to adjust accordingly to ensure a successful remainder of the season.

"I think that if we had been smarter about where we placed our players

throughout the season, we would have won more of our games," Do said. "Our players are strong, but sometimes we place them in the wrong spots."

In addition, the team is taking its opponents into consideration when assigning the lineups.

"We adjust our lineups slightly to accommodate each school we play against so that allows us to best utilize our players and be able to see what we're most likely to win, most likely to lose and what we should focus on," said senior captain Allison Chang.

Strong players are becoming evident as the season approaches varsity league finals. With graduation approaching, they will be expected to continue carrying on the team.

"[Freshman] Josh Li is a very versatile player. He plays all three events and he does really well in all of them," Chang said. "I definitely see him becoming a new pillar for the team after [Owyang] leaves."

Girls doubles and singles are thriving especially with additions like freshmen Spring Ma and Megan Fung.

"[Ma] and [Fung] are really flexible players and that allows us to shift [the lineup] accordingly this year, which is really nice," Chang said.

For the remainder of the season, the team is focusing on improving their teamwork. According to Chang, the new teamwork based mindset will prove to be vital for future games.

"When we don't have as many strong individual players, [we] have to rely on strategy and brains and not just pure strength," Chang said.

Badminton is easily categorized as an individual sport, but this season the team is emphasizing the community aspect.

"A lot of players are stepping up — they help train people, drill people, help feed people birds," said senior captain Matthew Lee. "I think our team attitude and cohesiveness is a lot better." ♦



SPORTSWURLZ.COM

Senior Bryan Chow lunges to return the birdie at a game at Monta Vista on April 24.

BOYS' LACROSSE

Players lose CCS placement despite victorious season

BY Devin **Zhao**

The Falcons have improved from the previous year with a 10-6 overall record and a 6-6 record in the El Camino League, beating Leland and Carlmont but losing to Sequoia, Gunn and Los Altos.

Because only the top two teams, currently Woodside and Los Altos, will compete at CCS, the third place Falcons were unable to go, especially with a 15-4 loss against Los Altos on April 24. The team's only chance depended on a win against Gunn which the falcons lost 12-11.

"We played pretty [badly], especially our leaders, and they had the ball on our defensive end for probably three quarters of the game," senior attack Clark Rothenberg said.

Rothenberg attributed the Scotts Valley loss to missing key members and a lack of control over the flow of the ball.

"[In the Scotts Valley game], we were missing [senior midfielders Grant Faylor

and Jonathan Walters] and a few other key players," Rothenberg said. "We were tired and uninspired. We could have killed them [at] full strength."

On the contrary, a big factor contributing to the team's recent wins was a mix of inspiration to do well and cooperation

as a team, as seen in their win against Carlmont on April 22.

"[In the Carlmont game], we beat them again at home," Rothenberg said. "We played extremely well and beat them physically, and everyone had a good time."

Although initially the starting lineup was filled with seniors who were relatively new to the game, Rothenberg said that these players have improved exponentially and helped shape the team into a formidable force.

"The new players have gotten a lot better and improved a lot; the team would be absolutely nothing without them," Rothenberg said. "If our season schedule flipped around, we would be

play the sport and now that they know the simple things, we're able to really focus on the big picture and plays."

Although the team probably will not make CCS, Rothenberg doesn't regret a single moment of his final season.

"We've definitely improved a bunch [over the season]," Rothenberg said. "The new guys have come a long way. Even [Capek] and me who've played a lot improved over time. It was a fun season, and I'm not going to look back."

The Falcons were scheduled to play their final game against Leland on May 6, but cannot be covered by the Falcon due to newspaper deadlines. ♦

The new players have gotten a lot better and improved a lot; the team would be nothing without them.

>> senior Clark Rothenberg



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Take a BREAKfast: Katie McLaughlin (10) plays during Saratoga Music Boosters Pancake Breakfast on May 4.

Castle in the Quad: The "Les Miserables" cast celebrates a successful flash mob in the quad on May 2.

Jump on it: Matthew Zung (10) competes against Mountain View in the hurdle event at the team's senior day on April 24.

Build it better: The Sports Plaza is aiming to be completed by graduation on June 5, according to principal Paul Robinson.

buzzworthy >> New Snapchat features not needed

BY Aditya Chaudry & Tiffany Zheng

Snapchat recently released a new update for iOS and Android devices on May 1, adding a new feature called Chat. It enables users to video chat live and send text messages.

Snapchat was originally released as social media app that allowed users to send pictures to others that delete themselves within a few seconds. After the new update, the newly implemented features of live video chat and instant



messaging try to make the app one cohesive experience.

Although the new Chat feature has good intentions, its implementation is lacking qualities necessary to prove it's worth the update.

Chat is essentially just a less convenient form of Apple's Facetime, forcing people to hold onto the screen during the video call.

Users do not receive notifications when being called, leaving the caller to awkwardly stare at a small bubble of their face, hoping that the other will decide to call from their end as well.

"The Facetime tool seems pointless because you have to be on the chat window with the other person at the same exact time," senior Krishna Unad-

kat said. "Having to hold down on the screen in order to keep the video call going is annoying."

It is also similar to iMessenger, but with a restraint on languages and emoticons. Although iMessenger does not automatically delete messages as Snapchat does, it offers the same quick response style as Snapchat's new feature.

Snapchat also emphasizes a lack of innovation from tech companies in recent years.

Pictures, texts and videos have become increasingly widespread in the media, and many original ideas are being drained while old ideas go through a recycling process.

App creators have come off as desperate in their "new" updates that are thinly

veiled reproductions of ideas that have clearly been juiced dry. Snapchat has become one of these companies, simply copying features in an attempt to blend all of the best apps.

"Having a regular chat within the app completely defeats the purpose of the whole 'snap' thing," Unadkat said. "The whole point of the app is to be able to send pictures to the person, so giving users an option to use the app as a generic messaging app while taking away the accessibility and ease of use of the original purpose is annoying."

Snapchat started off as an innovative app to quickly send unsavable pictures to friends but has evolved into an idea that is just too complicated to identify as just a picture taking app. ♦

'HIMYM' finale disappoints viewers

Never have I felt more cheated, more taken advantage of or more scammed than I did on March 31. I prayed and hoped that it was some kind of sick, early April Fools joke — I just refused to believe that it was real. It couldn't be real.

Yes, all you "How I Met Your Mother" fans know exactly what I'm talking about. That dreadful, infamous series finale that tied everything up in pretty much the worst possible way. After following this show through nine seasons, through thick and thin, you'd think we deserve better.

Warning: There are spoilers beyond this point, so if you're like me and you always end up 12 episodes behind on your TV shows, stop reading now.

The main problem that I have with the finale is its sense of loss and reality. It almost seems as if the writers of the show took every storyline they could possibly think of and found a way to end them all with heartbreak.

I'll admit, at first I was very iffy about Barney and Robin becoming a couple. But after spending an entire 24-episode season proving just how perfect Barney and Robin were together, the writers finally persuaded me.

Similarly, when we were first introduced to the mother, I was extremely unconvinced that she was the right girl for Ted. But then we got a peek at how well they complimented each other with their geeky calligraphy sets and Renaissance Fair items, and I realized that these

two were simply meant to be.

So by the 23rd episode, I prepared myself for the perfect ending. Barney and Robin would live happily ever after; Ted would finally get married to his soulmate after desperate searching.

But then, the writers ruined everything.

They rushed through 16 years within the span of a 40-minute long episode, sprinkling dispiriting messages along the way. Within just an hour, viewers learned that relationships don't last, friendships end up drifting apart, old habits die hard and loved ones die young.



SHERRILYN LING

Shermoney

That's right, Barney and Robin divorce just three years after their wedding and what's worse — Barney returns to his old ways, sleeping around and picking up girls without even knowing their names. It was extremely disheartening to see Barney, a genuinely good guy, end the show back at rock bottom.

Marshall and Lily will always be perfect. Even the evil writers didn't dare to touch this flawless couple. They go on to have a third child, but the heartbreak for them is seeing "The Gang" fall apart. The Gang — they seemed indestructible from the start. Nothing, and I mean nothing, could ever tear the five of them apart. They were a shining beacon of hope for friendships everywhere, proof that relationships don't have to die out as we grow older. But despite Lily's pleading, the members of the Gang become preoccupied with their own lives.

And then, the worst part: The mother dies. No, I'm not joking right now. They ACTUALLY killed the mother on a TV show titled "How I Met Your Mother."

A gray-haired Ted concludes his story in the year 2030, saying, "And that, kids, is how I met your mother." His two children protest, telling him that the purpose of the story obviously wasn't to talk about their mom but about their Aunt Robin. As if this couldn't get any weirder, the daughter says, "We know you have the hots for Aunt Robin!" I was disgusted.

So his children continued to push him, arguing that their mother has already been dead for six years. Ted goes to Robin's apartment with the notorious blue french horn, which Ted stole from a restaurant for Robin in the first episode, and she smiles down at him from the window, and then it ends. Nine years of a TV show over, just like that.

As the TV faded to black, the emotions in my head were a huge, messy jumble. I wasn't sure if my tears were from sadness or frustration. At this point, I wasn't sure how I felt, but I certainly wasn't satisfied.

And sure, the writers wanted to be realistic, but is it really that unrealistic to have a group stay friends throughout the years? Personally, I believe that the right friendships can last a lifetime, and this finale is misleading to anyone who is worried about relationships falling apart.

And that, kids, is how my favorite show lost all my respect. ♦

>> topeight

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- 4 **The class of 2014 graduates.** It's a pity that none of you can beat their number of homecoming disqualifications.
- 3 **AP tests.** Advanced Placement? You mean Advanced Pain.
- 2 **Making summer plans.** Prepare yourself for a summer of SAT bootcamp, internships and volunteer work.
- 1 **Finals are approaching.** It's time to spend all your time calculating what grade you need to pass your classes.

>>Nelson Wang