

THE HOGWARTS GENERATION

growing up with Harry Potter **Entertainment, p. 13**

FIGHT THE SYSTEM

students against technology **Opinion, p. 6**



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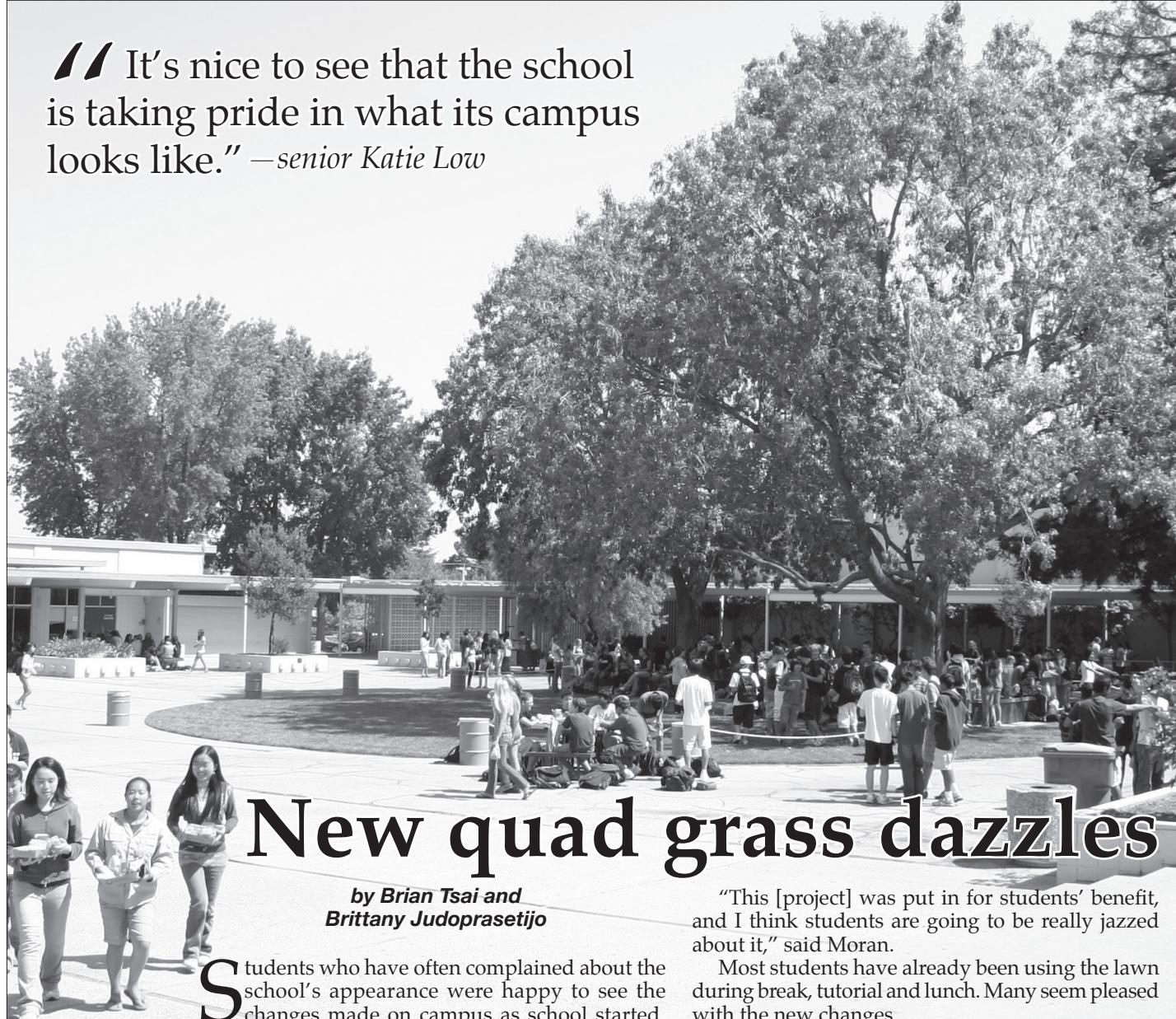
Saratoga High School | Saratoga, CA

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“It’s nice to see that the school is taking pride in what its campus looks like.” —senior Katie Low



New quad grass dazzles

by Brian Tsai and Brittany Judoprasetijo

Students who have often complained about the school’s appearance were happy to see the changes made on campus as school started. To beautify the school, the maintenance crew has replaced the dirt in the quad with two benches and a large plot of grass.

“Over the years, I’m sure people have looked at [the area] and said, ‘Why is it dirt?’” said maintenance supervisor Brian Moran. “The maintenance crew thought, ‘Hey, this looks horrible, we need to make it look better.’”

The crew started working on the new lawn and benches on June 25 and finished a few days before school. Moran hopes that students will also use it during their free time.

“This [project] was put in for students’ benefit, and I think students are going to be really jazzed about it,” said Moran.

Most students have already been using the lawn during break, tutorial and lunch. Many seem pleased with the new changes.

“I think it’s a huge improvement because last year we had the big dust pool,” said junior Melissa Lin. “Every single time people walked through it to go out to lunch, huge clouds would form and get into our eyes.”

Moran credited maintenance crew members John Berti, Bob Delfino, Richard Fernandez, Mike McQuade, Juan Morales, Ken Pearson, and Frank Stefanini for their work on the new grass and benches.

“There were many steps leading up to completion of the project,” said Moran. “As you can see, this was a real team effort.” ♦

Fewer student productions for drama

by Rahul Thakker and Holden Sparacino

New drama and English teacher Christopher Mahle met disapproval from his drama students after he established a new policy that may reduce the number of student productions.

Senior James Knight, who is currently enrolled in Drama 4 Honors, was one of many students who reacted angrily when Mahle told them the news during class.

“I was shocked,” said Knight. “I didn’t believe it.”

Normally, there are two to four full productions produced, cast and directed solely by seniors enrolled in Drama 4

Honors each year, and each student involved is given an Honors credit for doing so. However, Mahle says that because he would not be present at the majority of rehearsals, he would not be able to judge the students’ directing accurately enough to give an Honors credit.

“I find it difficult to assign a grade to something that I really wouldn’t be all that closely a part of,” said Mahle. “Full-length plays,

after [the two currently in progress], will start to become a thing that happens outside of my curriculum.”

—Drama teacher Christopher Mahle

after [the two currently in progress], will start to become a thing that happens outside of my curriculum.”

The two plays that will still be produced are “The Nerd,” directed by Melinda Amato and Trent Dozier, and “The Little Shop of Horrors,” directed

#BIGIDEA | Productions

POLICY CHANGE: Drama 4 Honors students will no longer receive honors credit for directing student productions.

CHALLENGES: Student productions must raise their own funds, find supervision and receive permission to use the Little Theatre independently.

THE ALTERNATIVE: Drama 4 will host a festival in the spring, where drama students can direct and cast a one-act play.

by Alyssa Curt and Katie Stevens.

According to Mahle, seniors who still wish to produce their own plays without receiving Honors credit will not be denied the opportunity, but they will have to get permission to use the Little Theatre, find adults to supervise them

see DRAMA, p. 4

School aims for renewed accreditation

by Marvin Shu and Jonathan Tien

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) accreditation process is to take place this year as Saratoga High’s previous six-year accreditation period comes to an end.

[The WASC accreditation] is a seal of approval that verifies that the high school diploma you get from here is legitimate and that this is a legitimate educational organization,” said principal Jeff Anderson.

The accreditation not only enforces the school’s reputation, but is also used by colleges to approve courses, such as UC class requirements.

School to assemble self-report

The process starts with a self-study of the school by five committees composed of parents, students, teachers and administrators, an immense undertaking involving over 100 members of the school community. They explore areas such as student leadership, class instruction, course curriculum, student assessment and culture, and they will eventually turn in a report this winter break that is “a window into what we think is going on at Saratoga High,” according to Anderson.

This self-report also involves assessing the impact of past changes, such as block

see WASC, p. 4

Alumnus loses struggle with brain cancer

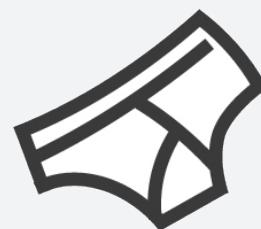
by Lyka Sethi and Neyha Bhat



A n intimate poolside memorial took place in memory of ’99 SHS alumnus and UCLA graduate Omar Malik on the evening of Sept. 8. Friends and family gathered to share special memories they had with Malik, whose life was tragically cut short on Aug. 23, 2007 after the 26-year-old’s valiant struggle with brain cancer.

Malik was diagnosed in late 2004 with an astrocytic brain tumor the size of a golf ball. After a series of chemotherapy sessions and treatments at UC San Francisco for one year, the original tumor subsided, allowing Malik to regain normalcy in his life. After going back to work at Deloitte & Touche Management Consulting in downtown Los Angeles, he relapsed again with multiple, smaller tumors in the same region in mid-2006.

see CANCER, p. 3

NEWS
BRIEFS

Athletic Hall of Fame to be initiated

With Saratoga High's competitive atmosphere and rigorous courses, any mention of the school brings images of heavy textbooks, all-nighters and group study sessions to mind.

What most people do not see are professional athletes and Olympic medalists.

The Events Commission decided to create an Athletic Hall of Fame to praise athletic alumni for their hard work and successes. The first nominees will be inducted on Oct. 6.

Former UCLA basketball player Randy Arrillaga, former Olympic wrestler Patricia Miranda and former Olympic swimmer Carrie Steinseifer will be honored. Steinseifer won two golds before her junior year of high school, while Miranda was the first woman wrestler to win a bronze medal during the Olympics in Athens.

The Hall of Fame plaque will most likely be placed in the McAfee Center.

Nominees will then be suggested every two years to honor those who excelled in athletics.

STAR test scores show slight drop

A three-point drop in the overall score for STAR test results this year caused some concern among parents about the school's academic performance. Saratoga High scored 906 the previous year but dropped to 903. However, the administration says that a three-point drop is not significant enough to warrant concern.

"We are still very much in the target zone for scores," said assistant principal Gail Wasserman. A three-point rise does not mean anything, and a three-point drop is not significant either."

The standards set by the state of California require a minimum score of 800. Most schools score over 900, performing well over proficient. The results show that teachers are giving the appropriate materials to students.

"Anything that starts with a nine is really a good score; we are very pleased with the results," said Wasserman. "It shows that our teachers are teaching and students are learning. That's what the STAR test is supposed to show."

Freshmen election results announced

The freshmen class officers this year are president David Mandell, vice president Tim Rollinson, secretary Shannon Galvin, treasurer Mikaela Burton, and class representatives Jenny Zhang, Nina Mohanty and Aditiya Dev.

"I'm hoping that if the officers work hard, the freshmen will not get last place in Homecoming, like they usually do," said Rollinson.

Homecoming themes revealed

The theme for this year's Homecoming has been decided as "Lights! Camera! Action!" Seniors have the class theme "Harry Potter"; juniors have "Indiana Jones"; sophomores have "Star Wars"; and freshmen have "Spy Kids."

The Homecoming game will be on Oct. 12, and the dance will be on Oct. 13. Classes are currently preparing Homecoming decorations.

Number of National Merit semifinalists surges

This year, 28 seniors qualified for the NMSQT (National Merit Scholarships Qualifying Test) semifinals by scoring among the top half to the top one percent of all students in California along with 16,000 other qualifiers.

The semifinalists in the 2008 Merit Scholarship Competition are seniors Randy Chang, Justin Chen, William Chen, Vijay Chetty, Angela Chiang, Peter Chien, Peter Florence, Yang Hong, Justin Huang, Nikhil Kaul, Vivian Liu, Kathryn Low, Wendy Mu, Matthew Pearce, Joseph Pei, Manoj Prabakar, Deepthi Rajendran, Sameet Ramakrishnan, Vincent Sheu, Marvin Shu, Michael Song, Ryan Stoffers, Jonathan Tien, Jennifer Wey, Michael Wu, Franklin Yao, Edmund Ye and Jessica Ye. 43 students were commended meaning that they scored in the top 5 percent of all scores nationwide.

After learning about their semifinalist candidacy, students turned in applications that included an essay and the student's top college choice. Roughly 90 percent of all semifinalists will become finalists and half of those students will receive scholarships.

According to assistant principal Gail Wasserman, this is one of the largest numbers the school has ever seen. She believes that the high number is because students have been concentrating more on test taking.

—by Ashley Chou, Sanaz Ghafouri, Annum Hassan, Mabel Hsu, Allen Liu, Robin Liu and Kavya Nagarajan

New policy cuts TA numbers

by Mabel Hsu
and Melody Zhang

Many teachers are starting to lack teaching assistants [TAs] this year because the school has dropped applied arts credit for being a TA.

"[Being a TA] doesn't fit the definition of what an applied arts class should be," said assistant principal Gail Wasserman. According to Wasserman, the school decided that it needed to become stricter on the credit guidelines.

Seniors, however, will still receive the applied arts credit because they planned for their classes before the credit was taken away.

Many students are not signing up to be a TA because they feel a study hall would benefit them more.

"[I wouldn't be a TA,] unless it was for a teacher I like or talk

to," said junior Grace Wu.

As a result, this year, only 143 students are TAs compared to last year's 212 students. The already heavy workload has increased for teachers who in the past have relied on the TAs to help out. Each teacher can now only have one TA each period due to the lack of TAs, Wasserman said.

"It's having bad effects as it's very difficult to get everything done, if not impossible," said English teacher Judith Sutton. "I used [teaching assistants] not only for clerical work but also to help students who had English as a second language, who had been absent, or who had weaker English skills. Such help was invaluable and will be sorely missed."

Besides helping students get caught up in class, the TAs would often help in the operation of the class.

"In poetry, [my TAs] taught

the basics in a one-on-one situation, critiqued poems, helped keep the three levels of the class in one period organized and informed," said Sutton.

TAs are often required to meet prerequisites to be TAs for Honors or AP classes. AP US History teacher Kim Anzalone feels that TAs deserve credit for the large amount of work done.

"I needed former AP students [who could] take the initiative," said Anzalone. "My TAs do a lot of independent work. It's a tough job."

Some teachers, however, haven't been affected as much by the shortage of TAs yet.

"I think it's a bit early in the year to be asking these questions because as students drop classes, they become good TA material," said science teacher Jenny Garcia. "I only have one TA so far but am hoping to get a couple more." ◆

New juice joint opens downtown

by Brittany Judoprasitjo
and Lyka Sethi

Planet Juice opened near Starbucks in downtown Saratoga and offers a plentiful menu of healthy beverages for \$3-\$5 for people who want an alternative to unhealthy food. Its opening on July 4 brought many eager customers as well as prospective employees.

Junior Katie Gasik was proud to announce that she was the first employee of Saratoga's Planet Juice.

"[Planet Juice] seemed like a good place for all kids to hang out," said Gasik. "I see my friends come in here all the time and it's really cool."

Gasik also stated that although the restaurant is popular among teens, many older athletes in search of a nutritious drink will also become regular customers.

Owner Tarek Eljarrari hopes his healthy approach toward his drinks will attract potential customers. The local favorite is a watermelon juice with mango and strawberry sherbet called the Kona Sunset.

"I am hoping to offer a product which is currently not offered in the village," said Eljar-



Brittany Judoprasitjo

Customers enjoy Planet Juice drinks outside of the store. The restaurant opened for business on July 4, and offers various nutritious drinks.

rari. "And [also] serve a healthy product to an increasingly demanding, health-conscious public."

Although the restaurant has had a good number of customers since its opening, it is still in its early stages.

"It's not that popular yet because it just opened," said Gasik. "People would rather go to some place that they know better. I think more people will go there once they've been there once and realize [how] amazing it is." ◆

Falcon Photo of the Week | by Brittany Judoprasitjo



Senior James Knight attracts students to the Drama Club table on Club Day, Sept. 12. More than 60 clubs tried a variety of ways to attract students like posters, music and standing above the crowd.



Jonathan Tien

Seniors Chelsey Middlebrook, Zo Shain and Hayley Sullivan show off their school spirit by cheering on fellow classmate James Yuan among a sea of red at the first rally on Sept. 7.

Year's first rally begins with Super Mario theme

by Sulmaan Hassan
and Brian Kim

With the year kicking into full gear, the first rally on Sept. 7 boosted school spirit among students. The rally commission put together quite a show based on a blast from the past: Nintendo's Super Mario.

"The rally was really cool," said sophomore Jian Lee. "I liked how they brought everything from Mario and put it into the rally."

Held on the same day as the football game against Live Oak, the rally mustered enough motivation to help Saratoga Varsity football make its first win of the season. According to JV football player Kevin Smith, the rally did a great job rejuvenating nervous freshmen, too.

"I'm always nervous before games," said Smith, "but the rally pumped me up to do well during the game."

Incorporating mini-games from the popular video game title, "Mario Party", and insane kart racing from another favor-

ite, "Mario Kart," the rally had students shimmying across the gym on wooden platforms and chasing each other around on yellow mini cars.

Though the rally amazed most students, it did lack in some areas. Some students complained winning a game was all based on luck and that the games didn't have much to do with fitness.

"I thought they could've done more sports-related things," said Lee. "The games they thought of were really creative and fun, but they weren't really interactive with the rest of the school."

Undoubtedly, most students enjoyed the rally and its many performances, especially the capturing and saving of Princess Peach, played by junior Katie Gasik, redone by the rally commission.

"The rally commission did a really good job putting together their rendition of Super Mario," said senior Edward Koai. "The rally showed me which classes had the most spirit. I don't think the juniors were very motivated at all and they need to step it up for the next rally." ♦

CANCER | Alumnus passes

continued from pg. 1

Malik was unfazed throughout the course of his ailment and kept a positive attitude throughout his treatment.

"Not once did I hear him complain," said high school best friend Jordan Jones. "He remained as active and healthy as he could be even after he was diagnosed. He even took far away trips, including a visit to Mecca, the holy city of Islam, after he was diagnosed."

During the last months of his life, Malik was bed-ridden, fed through tubes and could not communicate verbally. Despite this, he continued to courageously battle his disease for seven more months. When medicine could no longer help him, the love and prayers of his family and friends carried him gracefully to the end.

"We were praying for him and keeping him in our thoughts at all times," said Jones. At the memorial, all of Malik's achievements and qualities were highlighted. The respects offered by his friends and family showed how loved and appreciated he will forever be.

"Never before have I met someone like Omar," wrote another high school best friend Hans Ebner, whose speech was read aloud by a friend because he could not attend the memorial. "His passion for life and relentless desire for a successful

life has been one of my greatest motivations. He was always a shining example of someone who could balance everything that came across his way and truly succeed in all of it."

During his time at Saratoga High, Malik was an active member of the varsity water polo team, the swimming team, Octagon club and the newspaper staff. Both his swimming team, of which he was co-captain during his senior year, and his water polo team went to CCS. He was known as a strong forward and scored consistently.

"Omar was one of the hardest working people I knew," said water polo coach Steve Sherry. "He had no complaints about anything, and he chose to play water polo because he knew it was tough. He wanted to take the challenge, and he definitely excelled. He was an all-league player and made it to CCS his sophomore year."

Malik's remarkable achievements and shining personality will be remembered by all. Assistant principal Karen Hyde, who knew Malik well and attended the memorial on Saturday, referred to Malik as "what every parent would want their son to be."

"He was poised, intelligent, and had such a bright future ahead of him," said Hyde. ♦

Freshmen encounter new math requirement

by Alicia Lee
and Tiffany Tseng

Taking geometry before entering high school has become especially popular among freshmen and has resulted in a rise in math course levels for incoming students. Out of the 25 freshmen who took the course, 17 were able to pass the final exam.

Geometry classes taken over the summer are still allowed for class credit due to a compromise made by teachers and parents last spring. The administration has decided to enforce a final exam that students must pass with a 75 percent or higher as an evaluation of their skills before allowing them into Algebra 2 or Algebra 2 Honors.

"There is a belief among some students that if you don't get to Calculus by senior year, then you won't be able to get into a good school. This is completely false," said the mathematics department head Mike Navrides. "We have had several students who only get to Trigonometry [by senior year] and are still accepted into Ivy League schools."

The math department, administrators and counselors discourage students from going to summer school, which is why they originally wanted to stop students from skipping math courses taken over the summer, according to assistant principal Gail Wasserman.

"[The school] does not feel that summer school is the best way to develop a solid foundation in the math area," said Wasserman. "However, there are

some people in the community who feel differently, so we allowed the compromise of passing the final exam to show that students who go on to higher math levels actually have a grasp on the geometry concept."

Because the compromise was initiated last year, the rise in the number of students taking Algebra 2 as freshmen was already expected and prepared for by the administration. Students who choose to take this path, however, sometimes feel a struggle when dealing with problems involving geometry.

"We use some geometry concepts in my Algebra 2 class, which I expect [the students] to already know," said Algebra 2 Honors teacher Laressa Ridge. "There are some students who may not have a clear understanding of the concepts, and they admit to having to go back and review their geometry."

The compromise is beneficial to those who are exceptionally gifted in mathematics, and otherwise would feel bored or held back in a yearlong geometry class. This way, students who comprehend the material can move on, and those who are not as comfortable with concepts will not feel pressured, according to Navrides.

"We understand that there are some students who are able to learn quicker and at higher levels, so if a student can do it, then it's just more power to them," said Navrides. "We're just trying to prevent those who probably shouldn't take the math courses over the summer from trying to because they will eventually hit a wall." ♦

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Raspberry
Blueberry

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Non-Fat Milk
Banana
Cinnamon
Frozen Yogurt

California Cooler
Orange Juice
Banana
Strawberry
Frozen Yogurt

Mango Madness
Orange Juice
Mango
Pineapple
Coconut
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Link leaders guide freshmen into high school

by Michael Chen

While many students attempted to squeeze the most fun out of the last few days before school began, hundreds of others filled the bleachers in the small gym on Aug. 24, gathering for the annual freshman orientation. Among the freshmen were 127 upperclassmen who had spent the past two days preparing for the event.

For the fourth year, the Link Crew program helped freshmen transition from middle school with Link leaders, juniors and seniors chosen in June after a nomination and application process.

Before the orientation, the Link leaders worked in groups to prepare for the event. Link leaders and freshmen participated in bonding activities and a campus tour after a brief opening ceremony.

"The Link Crew program is designed as a way to help freshmen transition into the high school scene," said guidance counselor Alinna Satake. "It's able to utilize student leaders on campus, namely juniors and seniors, to be mentors for the freshmen, so that they don't feel as lost and to make coming to high school an easier time."

This year marked a change in the program's management, as advisers Brian Safine and Karen van Putten, who established the program, passed their duties to English teacher Erick Rector and Satake, both SHS alumni.

"[Safine and van Putten] are ready to move on to new challenges," said Satake. "They're looking for new blood and new ideas to help not just maintain the program, but to develop and promote [it]."

The Link Crew program will continue through the year with various events, and Link leaders are expected to keep in contact with their assigned freshmen. Link leaders also spend the first six Monday tutorials meeting with their freshmen.

"The Monday tutorials are another strand of the freshman transition program that we're working on building," said Satake. "The freshman transition program is run by [principal Jeff Anderson] and teachers who volunteer their time to teach mini-lessons about topics that might be important to freshmen, such as how to get connected onto the network, appropriate ways to interact with teachers and just some basic skills to help freshmen transition better."

The number of Link leaders has grown since the program's birth, and each leader is only responsible for two or three freshmen. Satake and Rector hope this ratio will make it easier for the Leaders to keep in touch with the freshmen's needs and interests regarding future events, such as a "coffee and cram" session in which leaders tutor freshmen, teaching them effective ways to study for finals.

As a freshman, Satake went through a campus tour but did not feel very connected to the school at the time. Satake has been able to use personal freshman experiences like these to help her decide how she wants the program to be run.

"Freshmen are really eager to get involved," said Satake. "They want to do well. They're excited to be in high school, but it's a difficult transition, so my heart's really [set on] thinking of ways to connect them to the community here so they don't feel so alone." ♦



Brittany Judoprasetijo

Freshman Andrew Helm leads the way through the rows of Link Crew members, who are welcoming freshmen at the orientation on Aug. 24.

FALCONFOCUS



courtesy of Paul Page

English teacher Paul Page composes music for his new album on his computer.

Page releases piano album

by Mabel Hsu
and Brian Tsai

Like many teachers, English teacher Paul Page enjoys many hobbies beyond his subject. He also composes his own music and is a talented pianist who recently completed his first commercially released album, *A Corner of My World*. The CD gives listeners a glimpse into the complexity of his life.

"*A Corner of My World*" tells people what my life's like on many different levels," said Page. "My album shows what it's like being an English teacher, a husband, a grandfather, a poet and a musician all at the same time."

Page has worked on his album since last December and released it online worldwide early August. Although the album falls under the category of contemporary classical piano, Page describes the album as a mixture of many different genres.

"By influence [the album] is primarily romantic era keyboard," said Page. "It's become part of my style, but I'm also interested in theater music, and in jazz. With the influence of listening to all that stuff plus my own classical

training, I come out with my product."

The album contains 13 tracks and lasts around 62 minutes. Although Page does not know how well sales are doing so far, his goal is to sell 1,000 copies.

Ever since the release of his album, Page has received a large amount of feedback on his compositions.

"It's a nice ego boost, when you have total strangers who write you a note and say, 'Hey, I listened to your song, it's really cool,'" said Page. "It's just amazing to have this come from people I've never met in my life."

Ever since he was a freshman in high school, Page has been writing music. Whenever Page is composing material, he feels that he has a natural ability to express his musical thoughts and ideas with ease.

"I keep thinking that I'm more of a medium through which these musical thoughts pass," said Page. "I'll write eight bars, and once that eight bars is written, it tells me what the next eight are supposed to be. It's like writing a novel when you don't know what the end is."

If students wish to purchase a copy of Page's recording, they can go onto <http://lostrecords.com> to order it online. ♦

WASC | Self study will lead to future improvements

continued from p. 1

scheduling and open access, in addition to looking at current grades, scores and trends. Each committee will then find areas of improvement for the school. The committee is currently discussing current conditions during collaboration periods and will move on to discussing future plans.

"We're going to be gathering some goals for the next six years," said teacher and coordinator Peter Jordan. "That's what gets me really excited. Although we have a great school, there are areas that can be improved upon."

March Assessment

After reading the self-report, a visitation committee composed of teachers and administrators from schools will visit Saratoga High in March to observe classes and interview the school community for four days.

"They're coming to confirm that what we say in our report is what's happening

on the grounds of SHS, so it behooves us to be honest and open and tell it like it is," said Anderson.

WASC then gives the school an accreditation of up to six years and makes recommendations for improvement. In the past, these recommendations have directly influenced the school's decision to implement block scheduling and create the Expected School-wide Learning Results (ESLRs).

"[The ESLRs] are what we hope every Saratoga graduate has," said Jordan. "It's how we're connecting what's going on in the classroom and what will be going on in your lives."

As the deadline for the completion of the self-study draws nearer, Anderson's outlook on the accreditation process remains positive.

"We have strong teachers. We have really smart students. We have great parents," said Anderson. "That collective intelligence will result in a good report and we'll be able to make some good improvements in our school." ♦

DRAMA | Full student plays to continue despite policy

continued from p. 1

during rehearsals and obtain the funds to support the play on their own.

Knight is one of few students who will still be directing a full production this year. He and fellow senior Nelson MacGowan will be co-directing "Noises Off" by Michael Frayn starting in March.

Mahle was hired over the summer to replace former drama teacher Kathleen Woods. Woods left Saratoga to teach at Palo Alto High School where she was able to teach drama full-time.

In exchange for the student productions, Mahle has provided a different opportunity for students to be involved in the process of producing their own plays.

"We are discussing the idea of making Drama 4 culminate in a one-act [play] festival where students who are interested in directing can cast one-act shows that perform during the time normally set for our spring play," said Mahle.

The entire festival will be "student-run" and will be held over the course of two weekends later in the school year. ♦

New classes widen student learning opportunities

by Tiffany Tseng
and Brandon Yang

A variety of new classes are being offered at school this year in the math, language and elective categories.

Geometry: sequential, enriched

This year, there are two new additions to the math department, enriched geometry and sequential geometry. Although both classes cover the geometry area in math, they are quite different in terms of the teaching styles used.

"The Sequential Geometry course is designed to meet the needs of the students who need to take Algebra 1 and Geometry but at a slower pace. It covers the second two-thirds of the Geometry course," said math teacher Kelly Frangieh. "Enriched Geometry is just the opposite."

The Sequential Geometry class

is meant to explore geometry in detail with hands-on activities and, while the Enriched Geometry class covers material more quickly and gives the students more time to look at geometry related ideas, according to math teacher Audrey Warmuth.

Class helps foreign students

An English Language Development course has also been introduced for students who are currently learning English as a second language. The class, which is taught by Chinese teacher Mariam Fan, helps students develop basic conversation skills in English.

"The class is designed to help students communicate with their teachers at school, and ease their transitions in other more English-orientated classes," said Fan. "It is a great way of giving students support that they need to be successful in other classes."

Learn Spanish through movies

Meanwhile, Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguex is offering a new Latin American and Spanish Cinema course for seniors who have already taken Spanish AP. Students who take this class study books in Spanish in addition to analyzing movies.

"Different historical, social, religious, psychological, and artistic aspects of Spanish and Latin American life are portrayed in films," said Rodriguex. "The films show the expression of culture there."

Business class opens up

Intro to Business, taught by Kirk Davis, is available this year as an elective for students interested in developing a keener sense of the business world.

"The class was opened in response to requests from students who wanted to get a better feel for what business is like," said

Davis. "I've worked in the business world for 30 years before making the decision to become a teacher, so I felt it was something I could contribute to."

By giving an overview of a variety of components involved in business, the class helps students build a deeper appreciation of the subject and show them how to converse in the business language. Davis hopes that students not only learn to present themselves in business environments, but also get a grasp on the aspects of personal finance.

Students join video production

Another new elective offered to students is the TV video production class, which woodshop and media arts teacher Tony Palma opened to upperclassmen who have already completed other media requirement classes such as the computer applications, animated graphics and

digital photography courses.

"The no. 1 goal is to have [students] be able to enter the TV video production industry with a skill set that would allow them to become successful," said Palma. "The students work in groups to develop public service announcements, television commercials, on campus spotlights and personal projects that reflect their interest in media."

With the new additions, there are still several more options for students to choose from if interested.

"Usually when new classes are offered, it's hard to generate interest in these classes, because people haven't taken them, since their friends haven't taken it, etc," said assistant principal Gail Wasserman. "For several new classes to get the kind of sign-ups these classes have gotten shows that there is interest." ♦

INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF FOR 07-08



Sara Tseng

Subjects: Chinese 1, 2 and 5 Honors
Degrees: BA in Labor Relations from the Chinese Culture University; MA in Education / Instruction Technology from San Jose State.

Previous Experience: Substituted in the Cupertino Union School District.

"The students are great and I've actually been having a lot of fun with my classes."



Alinna Satake

Subjects: Guidance Counselor
Degrees: BA with a double major of History and Spanish from UC Berkeley; MA from Stanford University.
Previous Experience: Taught in the San Mateo Union High School District for four years

"When I went to school here, Mrs. Wasserman was my guidance counselor. It's great to work with her now."



Meg Battey

Subjects: English 9 and 10
Degrees: BA in Literature from UC Santa Cruz.
Previous Experience: Taught English at Saratoga High for a number of years, but took last year off after having a child.

"Having been gone a year, I feel kind of like a freshman, figuring out where things are and meeting all the new people."



Kristen Hamilton

Subjects: Geometry and Algebra 2
Degrees: BS in Mechanical Engineering from UCLA, Master of Education with Distinction from National University
Previous Experience: Taught math at Live Oak High School for four years

"I'm hoping that I do a good job teaching and also that [my students] enjoy the class."



Kim Bergkamp

Subjects: French 3 and 4 Honors
Degrees: BA in French from Carleton University
Previous Experience: Taught French at Saratoga for seven years and at Los Gatos for five years.

"[My year] has been going well. I was a little worried about the block schedule because I've never had it, but [the students] seem to be used to it."

Chris Mahle

Subjects: English 9, Drama 1-4
Degrees: Double major in English and Theatre from Winona State University
Previous Experience: Substituted for Drama at Wilcox High School for one semester; professional theatre experience as actor, director and teacher.

"I'm looking forward to being able to take all of this wonderful positive energy... in this program and start laying the groundwork for... a program based on the overview of everything theatrical."



Frances Saiki

Subjects: Subject Counselor
Degrees: BS in Math with a minor in Communication from UC Davis; MA in counseling PPS with Honors from St. Mary's College.

Previous Experience: Counselor with the Pleasanton Unified School District, the Dublin School District, the Napa Valley Unified School District and the Alameda Unified School District.

"I really sense a community here, not just with the faculty members, but with the parents and students as well."



Eunsil Lee-Tapley

Subjects: Library technician
Degrees: BA in French Literature from KyungGi University in South Korea, BA in Information Technology and Communication Design from CSU Monterey Bay

Previous Experience: Librarian at Rolling Hills Middle School as well as multiple public and college libraries.

"I have never worked with high school students before but this school has a good reputation so I need to learn what to support the students and teachers."



Lisa McCahill

Subjects: Special Education
Degrees: BS in Anthropology/Zoology from University of Michigan, currently obtaining teaching credentials at SJSU
Previous Experience: Taught at Evergreen Valley High School for one year.

"I'm looking forward to just having a fun time. I know it's going to be busy but I just hope to enjoy what Saratoga High has to offer and hopefully have a good, long career here."



Kirk Davis

Subjects: Physics, Intro to Business
Degrees: BS in Chemical Engineering from Stanford, MBA from Northwestern
Previous Experience: Substituted in the Los Gatos-Saratoga District for one year.

"The reason I decided to become a teacher is because I really enjoy working with kids, so I'm hoping to get as much out of the kids as I'm looking to impart to the kids."

—by Dorey Schranz and Rahul Thakker

Additional New Staff

Cabot Weaver
special education teacher

Courtney Crase
special education teacher

Jennifer Wells
special education teacher

Facebook. Myspace. AIM. Take away any of these and the lives of teens everywhere will be over.

At least, that is what adults have come to believe.

To be known as the "Internet-dependent generation" probably won't look too good in the history books—especially when people have died from addiction to online gaming.

The Internet can be as addictive as a drug. And just like any drug, there's a likely chance of crashing and burning. Talking to friends online serve as easy distractions that are a lot more interesting than tomorrow's Spanish final.

It's time to make a change. It's time to cast away the bindings of the information superhighway. It's time to focus on homework and actually take in the knowledge it hopes to engrain in the mind. It's time to use those hours of leisure time for sleep.

Many teenagers have already started the trend, through deletion of their Facebooks, Myspaces and AIM accounts. Not only has the health of these teens benefited from these actions, but they proved to the adults that they are capable of time management and responsibility.

According to Newsweek statistics, each of the 35 million plus active users on Facebook spends an average of 20 minutes per day on the site. That may not sound like much, but it totals to an overall average of around 1,300 years worth of time logged onto Facebook in a single day. In a week, the equivalent of more than 9,300 years has been wasted. Now factor in Myspace, AIM and other villains into the equation.

If the same amount of time and energy spent online daily was spent instead on building the Empire State Building, the national landmark would have been built in 72 seconds.

Teenagers need to find more productive activities to invest their time in.

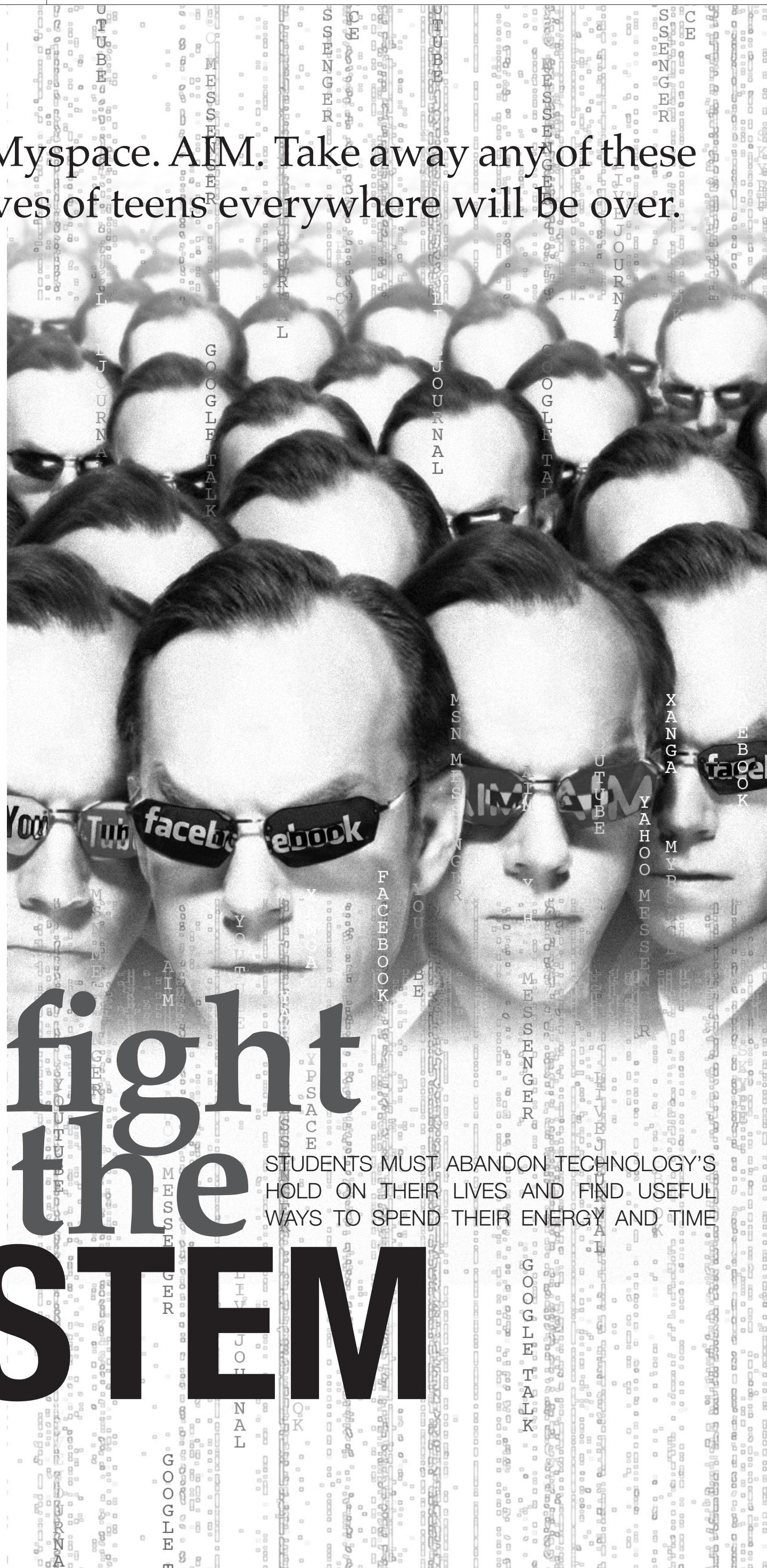
It is a sad reality, the dependency of teens on the Internet. People break down and protest in anger when their connection suddenly cuts off. It's coming to a point where there's no such thing as research without Wikipedia. Take a look at any library. All the computer seats are taken up, rather than the sofas set out for reading.

By inducing a resistance against the Internet, teens stand to gain much more. Of course, vital activities accessible only through Internet, such as e-mail, cannot be completely done away with. But by cutting down, teenagers are insured the benefits of worthy time investments. It will even teach the new generation how to live during a power outage.

It's finally time to stop wasting this valuable time online. It's time to rebel against the mold society is sculpting teens into. It's time to unplug. ♦

—by Ashley Chou and Holden Sparacino

fight the SYSTEM



STUDENTS MUST ABANDON TECHNOLOGY'S HOLD ON THEIR LIVES AND FIND USEFUL WAYS TO SPEND THEIR ENERGY AND TIME

Frosh, sophs need APs

by Kavya Nagarajan
and Tiffany Tseng

At Gunn High and Harker High, students of any grade level are allowed to take AP classes, including AP sciences, as long as they fulfill the prerequisites. Similarly, sophomores attending Lynbrook High have the opportunity of taking more challenging AP electives, such as AP Computer Science, but at Saratoga High underclassmen aren't even given the option to take most APs due to strict schedule requirements.

Compared with the number of AP and honors courses taken by underclassmen at nearby schools the corresponding number at Saratoga High pales in comparison. This is not because underclassmen have no interest in AP and honors courses, but because they have not been allowed to take them.

Most freshmen are already slotted into mandatory classes, and sophomores acquire more freedom in their class selections, but the only way for them to take an AP course is by choosing an elective such as AP Music Theory, or an extremely advanced math or foreign language class.

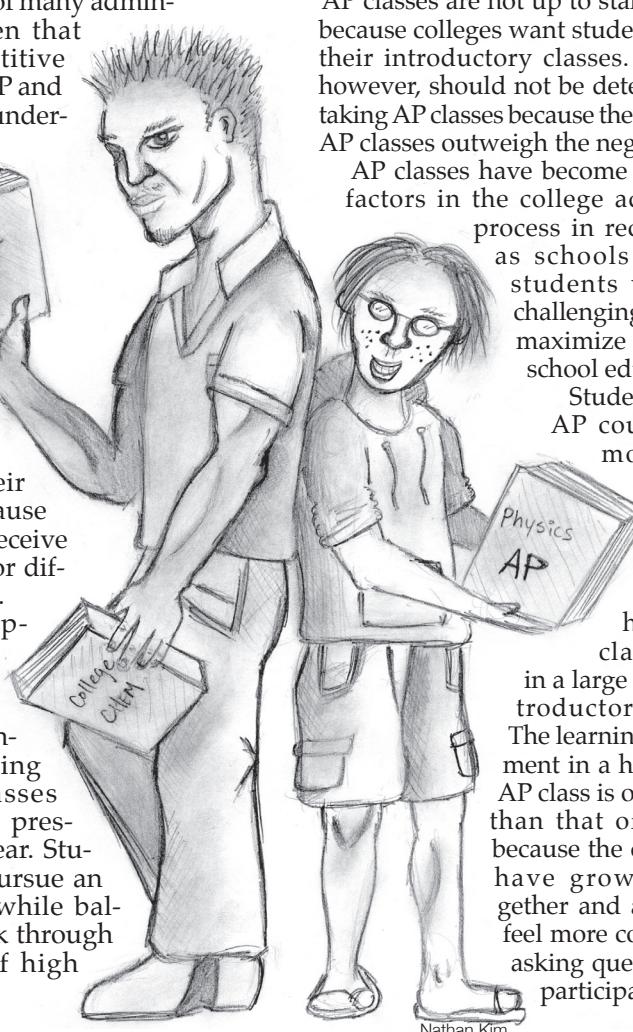
Considering the difficulties of skipping into AP and honors classes in any of those categories, it is nearly impossible to study at an advanced level as underclassmen.

If more AP and honors classes were offered to underclassmen, students could take more challenging courses in areas of interest and natural aptitude earlier in high school. This would better transition the students to the more intense rigors of junior and senior year. Also, it would allow for less

academically-intensive upperclassmen years because students would not need to take as many advanced courses to remain competitive with students from other schools.

The argument of many administrators has been that at such a competitive school, offering AP and honors classes to underclassmen would cause the freshmen and sophomores unnecessary stress. However, it would result in more stress during their junior year, because students did not receive the preparation for difficult courseloads.

Giving the option of advanced classes to underclassmen can teach them responsibility in choosing appropriate classes and help relieve pressure for junior year. Students can then pursue an area of interest while balancing their work through all four years of high school. ♦



APs benefit students

by Mabel Hsu
and Melody Zhang

Colleges are gradually accepting less AP credits from classes taken in high school, not because the AP classes are not up to standard, but because colleges want students to take their introductory classes. Students, however, should not be deterred from taking AP classes because the benefits of AP classes outweigh the negatives.

AP classes have become important factors in the college admissions process in recent years as schools look for students who take challenging classes to maximize their high school education.

Students taking AP courses will most likely receive more attention in smaller high school classes than in a large college introductory course. The learning environment in a high school AP class is often better than that of colleges because the classmates have grown up together and as a result feel more comfortable asking questions and participating.

Besides a more comfortable learning environment, APs also prepare students for the rigors of college early on, easing the transition from high school to college. Even with the open access policies in the English, social studies and science departments, which have allowed more students to take AP classes, 91 percent of the AP tests taken by students at SHS last year received a passing score of three, four or five, according to assistant principal Gail Wasserman.

In 2005, high school students took over two million AP exams—66 percent more than five years ago. With the number of AP students rising each year, it has become increasingly important for students to take AP classes in order to stand out in college admissions' applicant pools. Colleges see that the student has taken initiatives and committed to educational excellence. Students with AP experience are also often better prepared for the academic challenges of college. The dean of admissions at Harvard, William R. Fitzsimmons, told one publication, "AP [classes are] a better predictor of college grades than the SAT."

Not only does a student shine in college admissions, but also if qualified, the student may be able to skip some introductory classes. The reduced time to earn a degree can also reduce the high costs of college. With college tuition rising every year, a little money saved goes a long way.

Although AP classes require a student to study and work harder, the acceptance letter and increased knowledge makes the AP path worth the effort. ♦

Finding KEYS to club success



Dorey Schranz

Hilariously Hungarian

If you are like me and forgot to bring money for lunch on club day (or just wanted to save a few bucks), you probably signed up for about 15 clubs in order to take advantage of all the free food and now face a dilemma of slight overbooking. How do you now figure out which clubs to stay in?

One easy way is to not stay in any clubs, but then what will you do every Thursday at lunch when you aren't at the Key Club meetings, held in room 103? (I should probably disclose that I am an officer). Also, not being in any clubs creates the illusion of having no interests.

So obviously, you will want to stay in some clubs. They are a good way to meet people who share your interests, and they really help pad a college application and take some of the focus off that "semester abroad" you spent in detention.

Being that half the clubs at school seem to do some sort of community service, you may be in more than one club aimed at the same goal. Instead of being in Key Club,

Interact and the Roadside Cleanup for Your Parole Officer Club, all community service clubs, pick one, stick to it and maybe try to become an officer.

If you don't like having to choose, see if you can convince the clubs to merge and you can be in the Keys Interacting with Parolee's Club.

Also, make sure that you really like what each club does. For example, if you don't like numbers, calculators or thinking, Math Club probably isn't for you. Time commitment is another essential factor. Benefit Commission puts on a fashion show in the spring, so it's not for the over-achievers who play four sports and take night classes at West Valley second semester.

Clubs are really about trying new things, so before you decide which ones are right for you, try to make it to at least one meeting. You can discover interesting things. For example, maybe being Spanish Club's lone French speaker makes you feel unique or perhaps you should have thought about the fact that Cricket Club has more to do with wickets and paddles than Jiminy.

The most important thing is to pick the best club, or two or 20, of the ones that you are genuinely interested in and stick with it. I'll see you at the Key Club meetings. ♦

Too much for not that little

Freshmen are more mature than school gives them credit for

by Kirstie Lee
and Robin Liu

Tutorials have mostly been the same: students hanging around the quad doing homework, getting help in classrooms and a few sneaking off for quick Starbucks runs. Throw freshmen into randomly assigned classrooms to receive lectures, on the other hand, and you'll have this year's Monday tutorials.

Link Crew used to be something that only existed at freshman orientation. This year, however, in order to help freshmen become acclimated to their new school, Link Crew is expanding its duties by devoting the first couple of Monday tutorials to help further integrate the freshmen. Although implemented

with good intentions, neither the freshmen nor the Link leaders seem to appreciate it, as the school has gone to an all-time low of babying the freshmen. During orientation, link leaders interact with freshmen by playing several misguided games. When you are 14 years old, throwing around a ball and stepping on pieces of paper don't quite match the adrenaline rush that it procured when you were three years old.

When freshmen enter high school, they know they are in for something new. But after several days, most freshmen fall into a comfortable pattern. Link Crew babies them, acting as if they needed special care. Asking questions at the tutorials like "What are you thinking about? What are you scared of?" bring answers as

obvious as "food" or "nothing."

The Link tutorials could be helpful, if Link Crew changed the operation. Grouping the freshmen together with their friends creates a more comfortable environment. Spending time giving practical advice instead of muttering clichés like "Don't procrastinate" might actually achieve the goals of the Link Crew.

Freshmen are old enough to know what to do if they need help, and they don't need a Link leader to tell them so. There isn't much advice to give to freshmen because going to high school isn't the traumatic experience it is billed as. The relationship between the freshmen and their Link leaders needs aid instead of treating them as little children among their fellow students. ♦

TOP TEN

WAYS TO GET AN "A"

- 10 Get an "F" and draw a line
Now you have an A!
- 9 Find out what your teacher's favorite animal is.
Then, dress up for Halloween as teacher's pet!
- 8 Go to class.
Unless u want 2 rite liek this 4 da rest of ur life... lol pwnt.
- 7 Join a religious club.
Prayers work wonders.
- 6 Read Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* to find out how to get an A.
- 5 Legally change your name to Varun Sivaram.
- 4 Replace junior year transcripts with kindergarten ones.
School was easier then.
- 3 Tip your teacher.
Teachers deserve a price for their enrichment of young minds.
- 2 Make friends with smart people and hope it rubs off.
Just prepare for Battlestar Galactica marathons.
- 1 Transfer to LG.

—by Sulmaan Hassan and Nathan Kim

Student involvement essential to truly beautify campus

by Brittany Judoprasetijo
and Brian Tsai

As students walked to their classes on the first day of school, many were pleasantly surprised to see a brilliant shade of green in the quad overpowering the dull blue and gray from the surrounding buildings. Completed a few days before school started, a new lawn and two benches that surround redwood trees were added to the quad as part of the campus beautification plan.

The plan, headed by the maintenance crew, improves areas of campus that need renovation. Possible future projects include restoring more lawns, remodeling planter boxes and removing birds' nests in the hallways. According to maintenance supervisor Brian Moran, however, the amount of school beautification that can be done depends on money, time and resources. The school and community should lend more support to campus beautification because an attractive school creates a stronger learning environment that benefits everyone.

If more campus locations are

improved, people can use them to their advantage. For example, many students already use the newly installed lawn as an area to hang out during lunch and tutorials. The area is an ideal place to spend time because its atmosphere allows people to study, socialize and relax. Making beautifications such as adding more greenery loosens the overall intensity at school and allows students, staff and faculty to enjoy their time here.

The new grass also helps the environment. Planting more grass, bushes and trees envelops the school with fresh air and creates a healthier place to learn. Although some may complain that new grass will require more water, the

school can learn to use water wisely with drip irrigation and other measures. In addition, improving the school image removes the gloomy atmosphere associated with the school buildings. A bleak learning environment can cause stress and reduced enthusiasm for learning.

Students, too, should help campus beautification along with administrative efforts. Although changes in the quad have been a big step in improving the school's image, a lot more can be done if students are more directly involved.

Students can help through simple actions such as picking up their own or any other trash they see on the ground. They can also form organizations like the Mural Club which needs more support. If the Mural Club had gathered enough student volunteers, the school could have seen more vibrant paintings this fall instead of dim, grey buildings.

With a more attractive campus, Saratoga High may soon look less like a prison and more like a positive environment inviting students to enjoy campus life and learning. ♦

Trashing Campus Beauty | *by Nathan Kim*



Mabel Hsu

Political ignorance threatens future

Hillary Clinton, John Edwards, Rudy Giuliani, John McCain, Barack Obama, Ron Paul, Bill Richardson and Mitt Romney. Do students even know or care who these people are? One of these people could become the president of the U.S., but many students are still oblivious about them.

In November 2008 a new president will be elected. Voters will have to choose out of 17 candidates the leader of our country, but very few even bother to pay attention, let alone teens.

Voting is usually the last thing on most teenagers' minds. Some students don't even have the time for school-related activities, much less time for participation in politics. If youths are supposed to lead in the future, however, they need to participate in the events that will shape it.

STAFF EDITORIAL

Opinion of *The Falcon* editorial board

Without campaigns aimed specifically at youth, teens struggle to understand and take interest in the world of politics. In high school, the moral responsibility of taking part in the government simply isn't enough to procure involvement amidst other responsibilities.

The key to raising voter rates is improving political education at the high school level and even in middle school and elementary school.

Making decisions about political issues takes a clear understanding of the processes and ideas that embody it. Politics guide the United States' economy and laws, among other things. Without creating political experiences as students, voting as an adult becomes a trivial activity—or doesn't happen at all.

The U.S. Census Bureau reported that only 58 percent of eligible voters took part in the November Elections in 2004.

The lowest voting rate of any age group was that of 18-to-24 year-old category. At 18, teenagers become legally able and expected to vote, but only 39 percent do.

Groups such as Citizen Change, founded by hip-hop star Diddy, have attempted to reach out to youths, encouraging them to pay attention to political issues through campaigns like "Vote or Die." Also, projects have tried advertising on popular websites like MySpace and YouTube to notify teens of upcoming events. Although these are steps into the right direction, these measures have created little notable impact on voter numbers.

Schools have the first hand in emphasizing politics in the minds of students. Changing educational standards to emphasize political responsibility will have lasting positive effects. Teens need to let the world know that they will be capable of transforming the events of the nation as adults. There is no better time for schools to teach students to appreciate and be a part of the world of politics. ♦

The Saratoga Falcon

STAFF POLICY

The Saratoga Falcon is published six times per semester by the Advanced Journalism classes of Saratoga High School, 20300 Hermann 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.

MISSION STATEMENT

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 TO THE EDITOR

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

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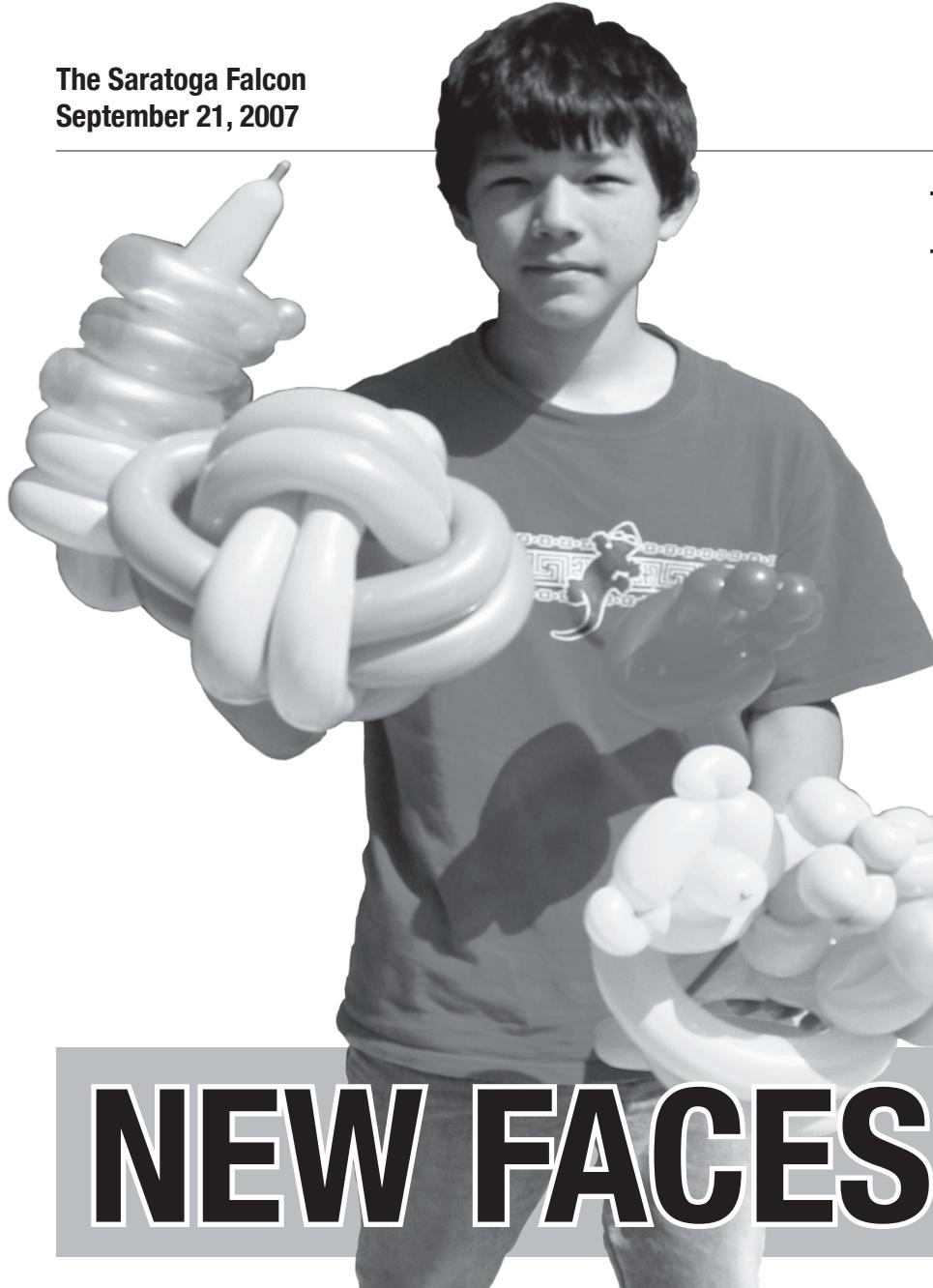
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Frosh brings fun to SHS

by Annum Hassan
and Edmund Ye

As new students met and mixed during the New Student Barbecue held on Aug. 24, one freshman boy stood out because he was knotting, twisting and tying balloons into giraffes, dogs, hats and other creative shapes. Freshman Justin Gee, who previously attended Rolling Hills Middle School in Campbell, debuted his balloon making skills at the barbecue, and has made his presence known on campus by providing students with free balloons.

Gee can make a variety of creations with balloons, ranging from the classic balloon dog to more complex things like bicycles and elaborate balloon hats. Gee has seven years of balloon making experience under his belt, and he plans to continue throughout high school.

"I saw someone at a restaurant making balloon animals when I was 7 and I thought it was really cool," said Gee. "I started to read a lot of books and taught myself how to make things, and I haven't really looked back since."

After Gee had learned the techniques, his interest grew. After meeting a clown, he joined a clown organization where he was able to strengthen his skills and gain experience.

"I like making balloon animals because it's fun and it's a lot better than doing nothing," said Gee.

Because Gee has been trained and can be officially called a clown, he is able to put his hobby to good use. He has his own business cards and receives calls a few times a month to entertain and make balloon animals at different weekend events, where he is usually paid \$50 an hour.

Although he usually works for pay, Gee makes balloons for free at school and always enjoys it.

"I think it's really cool how Justin can make so many different things. I've never met another student who was so skilled at making balloon animals," said freshman Kyle Fukui.

Although Gee said that he doesn't want to be a professional clown, he still wants to continue balloon animal making in the future. ♦

NEW FACES ON CAMPUS

Czech girl comes to CA

by Alex Sclavos
and Theresa Yeh

Imagine coming to the United States only knowing your own family and then having to start a new school with complete strangers. Adjusting to life in Saratoga can be difficult, especially when it is completely different from life back home.

This is exactly what Anna Soušková, a foreign exchange student from the Czech Republic, has had to go through.

"I came to Saratoga to live with my uncle and cousins to learn how to speak better English," said Soušková, who has studied English for eight years.

Soušková also said that living in Saratoga is very different from living in her hometown of Brandý nad Labem.

"My town and school are a lot smaller than Saratoga, so I am looking forward to the new experiences," Soušková said.

In her old high school, there are only 12 classes with 30 students each. Students there learn a variety of languages such as Czech, French and English and several branches of science.

Soušková, who will be spending her senior year at Saratoga High, is now a member of the cross-

country team and hopes to join the track team in the spring. Back in her home country, she was a track star, placing as the ninth best 400 meter hurdler with a time of 67 seconds.

Her team, Houštka, is one of many that each town has. She started hurdling last year. Previously she trained for the 200 meter sprint. She joined the team due to the encouragement of her friends and has been in it for the past five years.

After spending the school year in Saratoga, however, Soušková says she wants to return home and continue running track.

Soušková also said that living in Saratoga will be a challenge because of the language barrier and because she has not met many people.

"I am looking forward to meeting new people at school and making friends," said Soušková. "I think this year will be lots of fun." ♦



SOUSKOVA

Senior makes transition

by Tiffany Tung

Senior Tasha Simpson transferred to Saratoga High from Sir Winston Churchill High School in Calgary, Canada. After her father's company was acquired by a Silicon Valley company, the Simpson family decided to move so he could continue to work for that company.

Aside from differences in weather and public transit systems, she finds that Calgary and California are relatively similar.

Her biggest challenge is getting used to a year-round school system instead of a semester-based system, where she would have four classes every day for a semester and then four different classes every day for the next semester. Still, Simpson has found few difficulties adjusting to the class system here.

"A lot of [the classes are] the same. I'm getting used to the

classes right now, so it seems kind of hard. People here have learned some things that I haven't [learned yet]," Simpson said. "I've learned some stuff that they haven't, so I'm kind of both ahead and behind in my classes."

In Canada, her school did not hold events such as Homecoming and Prom, and Simpson is ecstatic to be able to finally be a part of it.

"I was really excited to find out that the school holds events like Homecoming and Prom—events that I've read about and seen in movies, but never actually participated in," she said.

Apart from attending a new school and living in new surroundings, she also intends on continuing her hobby of dancing hip-hop here in California.

"I'm beginning a dance class tonight," she said, "so I'll see how it goes."

"It's been difficult to adjust to the move," Simpson said, "but so far I like it here in Saratoga. The school seems like a good environment—strongly academic, but also with a real sense of school spirit. For the most part, the people here have been very welcoming. I've made quite a few friends, and I feel like I'm beginning to find my place in the school community." ♦



10 lifestyles

The Falcon staff put away its etiquette and performed three unusual trials in order to figure out

how (not) to...

...be cool

by Sanaz Ghafouri
and Emily Hsu

As exceptionally stylish people, we wanted to experience how the less fashionably gifted must feel while making public appearances. Together, we donned what we thought were huge fashion mistakes.

Emily wore leggings and shorts, while Sanaz wore jeans with a skirt layered over them. We both wore oversized hoop earrings had our hair in messy buns. We looked like the Urban Outfitters flagship store had just vomited us out.

We're not sure what attracted more strange glares from people, our terrible outfits or our embarrassed laughter every 10 minutes. Either way, the people in the mall did not appreciate our presence that day. Some of the people could not keep their eyes off of us, as if we were the most disgusting creatures roaming the mall. We've seen people dressed completely in Abercrombie and Fitch (another huge fashion mistake) who were more

sociably accepted than we were.

In addition, we took up the entire hipster lingo for that day. Our sentences began to lack all structure, and it overflowed with slang. Any time we were faced with brief human contact, even in the innocent cases of ordering food or making purchases, we were completely humiliated. The words "fetch" and "cute" came out of our mouths in messes that were impossible to understand. At the end of the day, we didn't understand why slang was considered "hip" when it just made us sound like we had speech impediments.

We realized that the few people we talked to while in our hideous clothes tried to look past it. Despite our appearances, we were actually able to carry on relatively interesting conversations with these people.

The rules that outline "coolness" (or in our case, "un-coolness") may continuously change, but what matters will always be the kind of person that you are. Sure, a stylish outfit would help, but there are always those who will accept you regardless of who you are. ♦



...ask someone out

by Neyha Bhat
and Lyka Sethi

Asking out a girl or guy can often be an embarrassing, dreadful experience. Although there are many ways to accomplish this seemingly difficult task, understanding what not to do can be just as, if not more, helpful.

The use of Instant Messaging or any other form of communication that does not involve physically being with the person can often create awkward situations. Instant Messaging is one of the least effective ways to confront someone because this method lacks sincerity and conviction.

To emphasize the inappropriateness of using IM to ask someone to hang out, we approached an anonymous female junior via IM and pretended to want to ask the person out. The conversation was logged and was traumatic for both involved.

Because the conversation took place online, the victim did not react warmly to the awkward scenario. After we called and clarified with the victim that it was just an experiment, she explained her reaction.

"It definitely reminded me of a bad movie where the nice guy turns into someone

creepy and strange," said the victim.

The biggest problem with asking someone out through AIM or even a text message immediately shows a lack of courage. First dates are usually awkward and make people nervous, but there is no point in starting a potential relationship that way too.

"Knowing that the guy cannot even talk to me in person makes me wonder how he's going to be able to talk to me on the actual date," said the victim.

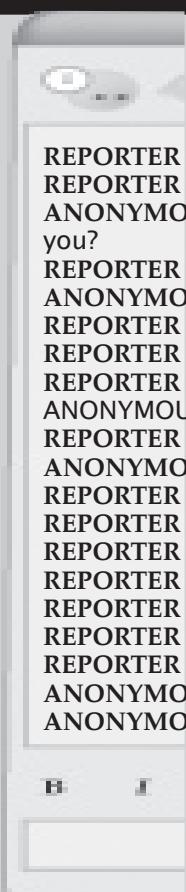
Besides asking someone out on AIM, the second worst way to ask a person out is making a friend do it for you. The same victim has experienced just that.

"A while back this guy got his best friend to ask me to Homecoming," she said.

She turned the guy down through his best friend because this form of asking someone out shows immaturity and a lack of confidence, as well.

"If you want to go out with someone, you do the asking," she said. "I was supposed to go to the dance with him, not his best friend," she said.

Asking a person out face-to-face is the best way. It shows genuine interest and confidence. If anything, at least your potential date will not sign off on you. ♦



...start a conversation

by Mabel Hsu

The girls' restroom has been notorious for its trail of girls lining outside. The long lines aren't there because girls drink or eat more and have smaller bladders. No, it's because the restroom is a common place to gossip about boys, escape a horrible date through the restroom window, or to simply have a private conversation with a close friend. So what I wanted to find out was if the restroom, and to push it further, the restroom stall, held its magical powers for deep conversations with people you didn't know.

(After school)

Me: Hey, sorry. I think my chapstick fell into your stall. Could you slide it back to me?

Student: Uh. Sure. (slides it back)

Me: Thanks so much!

Student: No problem.

Me: Ugh, I doubt these things even work. Does it really "protect and moisturize dry, windburned lips?" Even if does have Aloe and Vitamin E, I doubt it works.

(silence)

Me: What do you think?

Student: Wait, are you talking to me?

Me: There's no one else in here.

Student: Well, uh. I guess it's working just fine for

me.

Me: Yeah, I guess. I don't even like chapstick, really. It just feels like your lips are covered in wax and then you can't lick it off. Really pointless if you ask my opinion.

Student: Well, there's always flavored ones I guess.

Me: Right. Well..

(silence)

Student: Uh, I think I'm going to go now. Bye.

Me: Wait! You can't go yet!

Student: What?

Me: Sorry, but I just really need someone to talk to right now. I feel terrible and I need a person to talk to me.

Student: ...In here?

Me: Well, yeah. We're here already aren't we?

Student: I think some of my friends are waiting for me though.

Me: I just need to vent real quick though. I mean school sucks, I'm fighting with my friends, my grades are dropping, and to top it off, I lost my wallet today with my license and giftcards and all that stuff.

Student: Are you sure you didn't just misplace it?

Me: Yeah, I looked everywhere.

Student: Oh, I'm sorry. I really have to go now.

Me: Please don't go yet. You seem really nice to talk to and I'm having a really bad day.

Student: I don't know how I can help you though and I have to walk home!

Me: Me too! Now we have something in common! We can walk home together. Plus the chapstick, that's two things!

Student: Uh, yay! Well, I have to go visit a teacher first. Bye!

Me: Wait!

(She leaves)

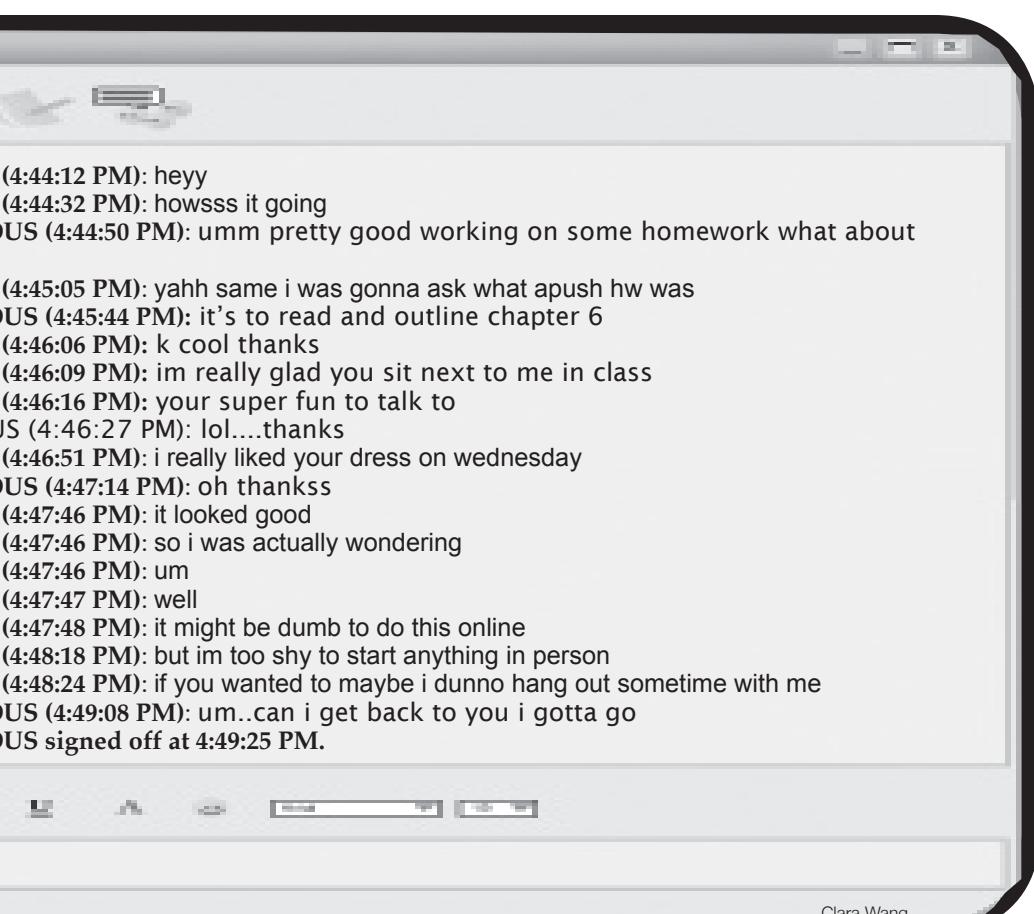
Afterward, the girl walked out quickly and I followed her out of the restroom to apologize for being so obnoxious and needy. I explained to her the reason for starting a conversation in the bathroom stall and she consented to put our conversation in the school newspaper. So to the anonymous girl, thanks for laughing it off!

Starting a conversation in a bathroom stall was much more challenging than I had ever thought. This whole "interview" was incredibly embarrassing and yet it will probably be one of the more memorable moments of my high school career. Ten years from now, I'll still be blushing when I remember what I went through to in order to get this interview.

After careful consideration, I've decided on an obvious fact: The restroom is not, and will never be, a good place to start conversations with people you have never met before. ♦



Brittany Judoprasetijo



Clara Wang

Awkward moments plague columnist



Sanaz Ghafouri

Awkward Turtle

Last December, my friends and I took a trip to the Donut Wheel for a midnight snack. Little did I know what was to become of me by the end of the night. I walked into the restroom to make a quick phone call but accidentally locked the door on myself.

Thinking one of my friends was pulling a prank, I started banging on the door and screaming, "Open up you moron, I know you are holding the door shut!"

I ranted on, enraged for several minutes until I finally realized the door had never been locked. I was too ashamed to walk outside.

Hesitating for a few minutes, I finally turned the knob. Everyone in the restaurant was standing and clapping. I walked over to where my friends were seated and took a seat without a word. None of my friends dared to look at me after my crazy episode.

The next day at school, everybody was talking about it. I was so embarrassed and humiliated. I could barely sleep that night. My face was burning, all the heat from my body rushing to my cheeks. Okay, so maybe I am slightly exaggerating the situation, but it was still very traumatic.

Somehow, I always find myself in these types of situations. It seems like awkwardness is like a curse that follows me wherever I go, and I tend to make everyone around me feel uncomfortable with my strange comments and antics. My poor friends probably think, "Wow, I can't take this girl anywhere."

Anyways, I pretty much use the word "awkward" every second of my life, and tend to make everyone around me feel uncomfortable. I just can't help it.

For example, two of my good friends are in a relationship. Let's just say for the sake of keeping their privacy, their names are Jimmy and Joanna.

One time Jimmy had his arms wrapped around Joanna's waist. So I did something funny. I put my hand on Jimmy's hand and then Jimmy caressed my hand, thinking it was Joanna's hand! Okay, I hope I did not lose you there, but it was a pretty awkward situation.

Surprisingly, I actually do not mind creating these uncomfortable moments. After I cause everyone to be silent, I always have a good laugh. It is an accomplishment to make people around me speechless by the bizarre things I say. But on top of being such an "Awkward Turtle" myself, I also run into many strange people, each with his or her own quirky idiosyncrasies.

I always find it funny when strangers try and make small talk. This one time, my friend Annum and I were going to Starbucks in the Argonaut Center for their raspberry white mocha frappuccinos. There was this young guy who working there and he turns to me and randomly says, "School's wack, huh?"

It was honestly the strangest situation. I was like, "Um, yah." Kind of awkward, no? So in addition to saying the most awkward things and doing the most awkward things, I always find myself running into awkward people.

Everyone is a little awkward at times. It is not a negative quality and I have learned over the years to just embrace it. I have learned it is best to never be afraid to show who I really am.

If I have the sudden urge to make an awkward comment, I don't hold it back. So let it out, be yourself, and have fun with it, as I do. Plus, you could meet some cute guys this way. I have.

I suppose I am just one of those very awkward individuals, but I cannot deny it. I love making people feel awkward. It's just who I am. ♦

TOPTEN | WORST ICEBREAKERS

- 1 **"I like your underwear."**
That's cool. I like the sound of a restraining order.
- 2 **"You smell good"**
If you're close enough to smell somebody, you're too close.
- 3 **"I hate my life"**
Because everyone else is enthralled with theirs, right? If you're going to start crying, do it on your own.
- 4 **"So about that Darfur awareness..."**
Unless you actually care, don't pretend like you know anything about the Darfur conflict. Also, genocide isn't really the best way to start a friendship.
- 5 **"What's up?"**
This isn't even a conversation starter anymore- it's more like a greeting. Even if something's "up", the answer is still always "nothing".
- 6 **"You have pretty eyes"**
Because ugly eyes are an epidemic sweeping our nation. This also falls under the "creepy compliment" category.
- 7 **"I wish we were closer"**
This is especially creepy if you move physically closer while you say it.
- 8 **"So what'd you get in AP Bio last year?"**
Might as well say, "I got an A and you got a C. I'm better than you. Always."
- 9 **"So this is awkward..."**
Maybe it wasn't awkward. Thanks to you, now it is.
- 10 **"I had a dream about you last night"**
That's creepy—really, really creepy.

—by Emily Hsu



Brittany Judoprasetijo

Britney puts on flabulous comeback at MTV VMAs

TOGATALKS

What did you think of Britney's comeback?

She looked like an absolute trainwreck at her performance.



Senior Ryan Stoffers

She was just nervous! I am still in love with Britney!



Senior Kevin Chen

The whole performance was well rehearsed and Britney is a great singer...NOT!



Senior Peter Florence

I thought it was really gross. She wasn't wearing enough clothes.



Freshman Kathryn Nobles

—by Sanaz Ghafouri and Emily Hsu

by Brian Tsai

Having sold over 76 million albums worldwide, superstar Britney Spears seemed unstoppable on her way to becoming one of the most successful recording artists in history. However, after a nasty divorce with back-up dancer Kevin Federline and the death of a close relative, Spears' lifestyle drastically changed for the worse.

Actions such as drug rehab, shaving her head bald and attacking paparazzi with umbrellas have often caused her to be negatively portrayed in the tabloids.

Although many were beginning to doubt Spears' return to stardom, the singer has planned her comeback with her new album, which will be released on Nov. 12.

The first single, "Gimme More," is a dance track filled with techno beats, breathy vocals and spicy lyrics that shows off Spears' new rebellious attitude. Tracks such as "Cold as Fire" and "Heaven" also add a hip, electronic feel to the album. Other confirmed tracks include "Boyfriend," "Kiss You All Over," "One of a Kind" and "Ooh Baby."

With the records that have leaked online so far, Spears has returned back to her pop and dance roots.

Although many songs are mainstream, they have an upbeat and aggressive feel that could turn them into future hit singles. Overall, the album is a compilation of A-list pop songs that shows off Spears' natural talent in the entertainment industry.

Many students are eagerly anticipating her new album and have already been enjoying some of her released tracks.



www.justjared.com

Britney Spears performs at her much anticipated VMA comeback. The performance was deemed a disappointment by the mass media and even the most devoted Britney fans.

"I love the song 'Gimme More' [because] cause it has a lot of techno and a good beat," said junior Adeeti Agarwal. "[Spears] has gotten better in my opinion and I cannot wait to get her new album."

The success of Spears' comeback depends largely on her upcoming album. However, one major hurdle Spears must face is her live performances.

At the 2007 MTV Video Music Awards, Spears opened the ceremony with a performance of "Gimme More," which was widely panned by fans and critics alike.

Many criticized her poor lip-syncing, sluggish dancing and lack of facial expression, commenting how

Spears looked as if she did not want to perform. In addition, scenes of her partying before the MTV Awards and of her appearance in unflattering attire during the performance caused many snickers and side comments from fans and artists alike.

What Spears needs to do is focus on her career with a more professional attitude. Spears must find a way to solve her personal issues and change her hectic lifestyle in order for her career to succeed.

If she can successfully deliver the signature sound and the high-energy dances that her fans love, she should be able to work her way back to her former pop-princess status. ♦

Harry casts his last spell

by Sulmaan Hassan
and Kavya Nagarajan

To many, the end of Harry Potter marked the end of an era. After 10 years of gripping action and mystery, the Harry Potter series has finally come to an end, leaving students with mixed reactions.

The highly anticipated release of *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, the final book, caused a flurry of excitement and anxiety among die-hard Harry Potter fans. Many waited in line for up to three hours to be one of the first ones to uncover the mystery.

Sophomore Kim Dimicco attended "Midnight Magic," the book release party at Borders.

Once she obtained a copy of the book, she was up all night to find out the outcome of the story.

However, there was another motive for finishing the book as quickly as possible.

Many students did not want others to ruin the ending by talking about it the next day or posting the conclusion on AIM or Facebook profiles.

"Before I even opened up my book, I saw so many spoilers in people's [AIM] profiles," said sophomore Pedram Ghaffariour.

After all the hype, many students were let down and deemed it unimpressive.

To sophomore James Kim, the ending was not as good as he anticipated.

"The book never really picked up the pace until the end, which came too sud-

denly," said Kim.

Kim, along with many other students, believed there should have been a different outcome to the story.

Numerous students judged that Rowling could have done a better job compiling the book and revealing the secrets because they were not thoroughly explained.

To sophomore Nikki Farsio, the ending to the story didn't pack the punch she was expecting (SPOILER WARNING).

"[Rowling] made a whole big story between Voldemort and Harry, but the way Voldemort died wasn't as dramatic as I expected," said Farsio.

Despite the book's many criticisms, other students, such as Ghaffariour, believed the last book was simply amazing.

"I think it was really good how everything was pieced together," said Ghaffariour. "Everything that I have wondered since I was nine was finally revealed in the ending, which was one of the best endings to any book I have ever read."

Kim, however, said that some people refuse to admit the book's flaws because they love the Harry Potter series so much.

Despite mixed reactions, it seemed that everyone had a distinct opinion.

Some loved it because it nicely summed up the story while others disliked it because of how quick all the secrets all were released and the poor explanation of what had happened. Big fans can still look forward to the movies. ♦

It was really good how everything was pieced together. Everything that I have ever wondered since I was nine was finally revealed in the ending."

—sophomore Pedram Ghaffariour

THE CRITIC
CHUCK KLOSTERMAN IV

by Emily Hsu
and Audrey Yang

Chuck Klosterman IV: *A Decade of Curious People and Dangerous Ideas* is a collection of the most amusing genre of writing: condescending articles about pop culture. However, the most striking thing about Klosterman's collection of articles is not the writing or the humor, although the book consists of a plentiful amount of both. It is Klosterman's use of pop cultural references. In addition to writing whole articles on some of the most renowned people in the music industry, such as Robert Plant of Led Zeppelin, Morrissey, and the members of the British band Radiohead, Klosterman manages to pack in punch lines that most people, not only complete music snobs, would understand.

Even for someone not as graced with complete knowledge in the world of cultural literacy, we still felt the novel proved as an excellent read.

Klosterman's writing style itself provides a third of the book's allure. The other two-thirds consists of the wide variety of subjects his essays cover and Klosterman's precise, sarcastic humor. The first is shown in the structure of the novel, as it is divided into three portions: things that are true, which includes profiles of celebrities including

Britney Spears and the White Stripes; things that might be true, and things that are not true at all. His sarcasm is sprinkled, not sparingly, throughout all three sections.

The novel does not require the reader to know of all the cultural references. It's definitely a plus to understand some of the more subtle jokes, and some sense of cultural literacy helps, but overall, Klosterman's use of humor and sarcasm can be understood universally.

A minor downside to the novel is the repetition that the not-so-literate reader may come upon after the tenth essay. It can be very hard to stay interested after reading sarcastic article after sarcastic article about pop culture icons that you can't differentiate from one another.

Overall, Klosterman's collection of essays is a relatively easy and educating 400-page read. In addition to being a book for personal enjoyment, this novel can be used to gain credit with those who dwell heavily on pop culture knowledge. Even

though a large portion of them refer to David Lee Roth, Van Halen, Sebastian Bach of Skid row, or Klosterman's personal favorite, Kiss, in some way (not the most sophisticated or difficult of musical subjects), this book still leaves the reader with the feeling that they are not completely in the dark and clueless when it comes to pop culture. And that is definitely a very, very good feeling to have. ♦



Chuck Klosterman IV

Cost: \$15

Pages: 416

Selling locations:

Borders, Barnes

and Nobles

Publish Date: July 3, 2007

growing up with Harry Potter



Shamita Jayakumar
Booyakasha!

For news stations around the world, July 21 was just the end of a children's book series, but for many avid readers around the world, the release of the last *Harry Potter* book signified the end of their childhood.

The obsession begins

I was 8 years old when I read my first *Harry Potter* book. At first, I had little interest in its contents, thinking that it was just a boring book about owls, but when my classmates named our third grade capture the flag team the "Sirius Blacks," I knew I had to check it out. Little did I know that picking up that first book would lead me to a 10-year commitment that would leave a significant impact on my childhood memories. Although at first it seemed like Harry Potter was just a book, it soon became a way of life.

I went to the midnight release for the final book, but I could not bear to think that it was the last Harry Potter release party I would ever attend. It pained me to think that while others were waiting outside their houses with cupcakes for the UPS deliveryman at 7 a.m., still oblivious to the ending, I would have already completed my 10-year Harry Potter journey. I would already know Harry's fate.

Growing up with Harry

The measure of our generation's lives from the first to last book is the perfect gauge of our childhood. We have grown up reading the books, making their impact on us far greater than their impact on adults and children.

We were growing up just as Harry was growing up. We were the same age as Harry was each time a new book came out, and the current graduating class of '08 is exactly the same age Harry is in the last installment of the book. We were experiencing our first school dance as Harry was. As the books got darker and scarier, it also symbolized the end of our innocence. As we grew older, the books became increasingly complex, which made reading them worthwhile.

We have since grown out of the neatly tied up plots found in the first three books and were instead introduced to death and destruction in the fourth book. The seventh book finally allowed us to accept Rowling's message of fate and the ability to change it. Maybe when we're 36 years old, we can re-read the

epilogue and finally understand its beauty.

The wait for each new book was also part of the magic. Years from now, kids will not be able to speculate about the ending and have to quarantine themselves in fear of someone ruining the ending in an AIM profile or a Facebook status. They can just pick up the books and read them all at once, or worse, read them out of order.

The magic is over

Being the first generation to discover the books is also a reward in itself because their will never truly be new again. The books will never be read with such anticipation and fervor as they are now. Children will not feel inclined to pull all-nighters reading the books, get to see the news outlets in a media frenzy, experience dressing up to go to the midnight premieres or have all day marathons of the movies.

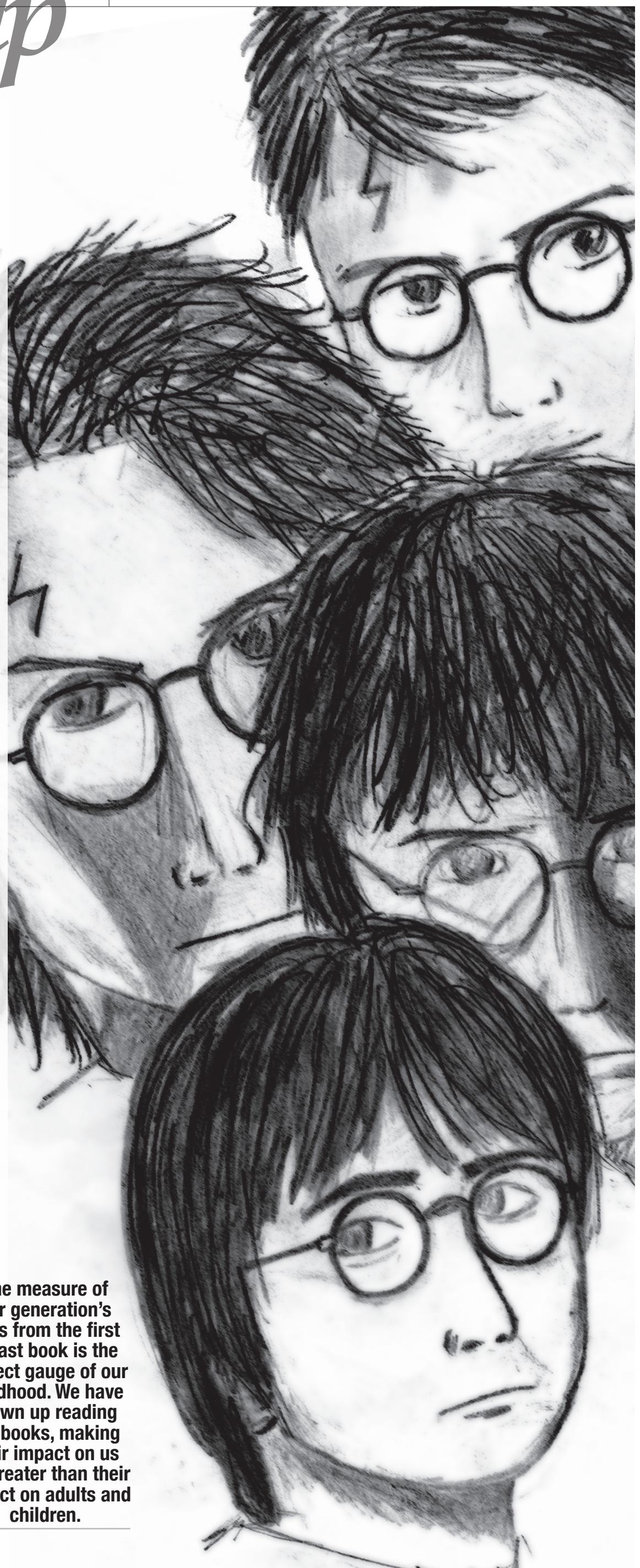
Harry Potter also reintroduced us to the splendors of reading. It seemed to be the first book that everyone in our generation voluntarily read and openly discussed. No other series within the past decade has paralleled the "Harry Potter effect." Now that we are all growing up and going to college, there is no other Harry Potter book release for us to look forward to. It means that, like Harry, we actually have to grow up and go out into the real world.

Knowing that your peers have just traveled the same emotional rollercoaster with you is part of the whole phenomenon. Author J.K. Rowling has even said herself that although it can be read by all ages, it is, after all, a book about children, for children. We are all so unsure of our futures that the unpredictability of the books became so appealing. Harry's fate was unknown until the very last chapter, and Rowling still left many questions unanswered.

At first I thought the epilogue was a horribly clichéd dream ending, but after re-reading it I realized that she gave away the perfect amount of information. Generally, people don't want to know the details of their future. They just want to know that they will be happy. Getting there is the real adventure. After experiencing this whirlwind phenomenon, I can honestly say, "I've had enough adventure for a lifetime."

At first I was dreading the release of the last book because I liked the anticipation and I didn't want the journey to end, but upon reading the epilogue a few times, I have come to accept the end of the series just as (SPOILER WARNING) Harry accepted death. I knew that once I read that final word, there would be no going back. Even though the end of Harry Potter, just like growing up, is truly bittersweet, the fans finally have closure in knowing that all is well. ♦

The measure of our generation's lives from the first to last book is the perfect gauge of our childhood. We have grown up reading the books, making their impact on us far greater than their impact on adults and children.



tips & tricks

for surviving the school year

by Brian Kim
and Kirstie Lee

Footstep after footstep, sophomore Varun Parmar's heart raced as he heard the first bell ring on that warm August morning last fall, the morning of his first day at Saratoga High.

"All that ran through my mind was that I needed to sit in the front of the classrooms, make a good impression, and bring home an A at the end of the semester," said Parmar.

Parmar, alumnus of the Dorris-Eaton School in Walnut Creek, experienced the same problem any other student would have had if they were the new kid in school: fitting in.

Having transferred from out of the school district, he lacked the groups of friends most freshman come to school with.

Luckily, Parmar discovered that the secret to surviving the rocky transition between schools was to strive to become social.

"Joining different activities was pretty good for me," said Parmar. "I got to meet upperclassmen who gave me great advice on what classes I should take as well as tips on how to handle school."

Parmar made some of his first friends through participating in school athletic and academic teams he was interested in.

"I'd been playing tennis for three

years, so I tried out for the tennis team and made JV," said Parmar. "And I knew becoming a good public speaker would help me in anything I'd do, so I joined the Speech and Debate team. I met a lot of different people working with these groups and I made a lot of friends."

Because he came from a private school with accelerated courses, Parmar received a head start in math and Spanish.

"The advanced classes definitely added to the workload, but the level of difficulty wasn't much of a difference from my old school," said Parmar.

The major benefit to his schedule was

that it allowed him to meet people he may have not met otherwise.

"I still met a lot of people in my classes, and meeting their friends helped me make some [friends] of my own," said Parmar. "I got to meet more people who helped integrate me into the Saratoga High community."

From his own personal experience, Parmar said he thinks that building a strong social foundation during freshman year can help make anyone's high school experience more enjoyable overall.

"Don't take school too seriously," said Parmar, "but all the same, work hard. Try to find a balance between a good social life and school. Classes helped [me make friends], but extracurricular activities and staying involved helped more." ♦

Freshman Follies

by Brian Kim
and Kirstie Lee

Keens trembling and hands shaking, junior Lisa Chang stepped in front of her eighth grade core class to give her History Day presentation, fearing a nervous breakdown. This scene was not new to her.

"I was so scared of public speaking," said Chang, "I'd cry sometimes when called on to speak to the class."

Chang was motivated to try something new and overcome her phobia when she entered high school, something that eventually led her to become more involved in school activities.

Chang believes sophomore year is a good time to find a niche in high school and experiment with different activities.

"You have older people to help you, and you've already tried something before, so you know generally what you're good at," said Chang. "By junior and senior year, everyone's established and you know what you're doing, but sophomore year still gives you the chance to try something new, and no one will look at you weirdly for it."

When some of her friends joined speech and debate, Chang decided to tag along and try it out.

After her first few meetings in Speech and Debate, Chang decided to get more serious. She attended a weeklong camp at Stanford College and realized her past experiences with speech and debate were only a small sample of what the activity

Sophomore Struggle

had to offer. She began to immerse herself in learning more about debate and even started a research binder.

Chang decided to try Impromptu, a type of speech where each competitor gets two minutes to prepare a 5 minute speech, along with Parliamentary Debate, a debate on a random topic given to the debaters 20 minutes prior to competition.

"I just got together with four or five or my friends and we decided to try something new. Not everyone stayed, but I liked it so I'm going to do it for the next two years," said Chang.

Over the course of her sophomore year, Chang found more reasons to be more involved in the program.

"[My sophomore] year, I started making a lot more friends at tournaments, and that made me really want to go to [more] tournaments," said Chang.

In addition to the opportunity to meet new people, Speech and Debate has also helped her overcome her fear of public speaking.

"Now I speak up in class all the time and I volunteer to read aloud," adds Chang, "And I guess I'm a really loud person."

For Chang, sophomore year was the perfect time to try new activities and actively participate in extracurricular activities. Not only was she used to high school, but it was before a time of AP classes and SATs. By taking time to discover her interests during sophomore year, she created the opportunity to pursue them as an upperclassman. ♦

Finals

Study for these, but do not get stressed out.

Lockers

Get one near the middle of the school and try not to get your head stuck in it.

Spirit

Show your spirit at rallies! Freshman power!

Football Games

Go and support the team. By the way, it's really not funny to root for LG.



Brittany Judoprasetijo

Clubs

Branch out this year. Try something new.

Sports

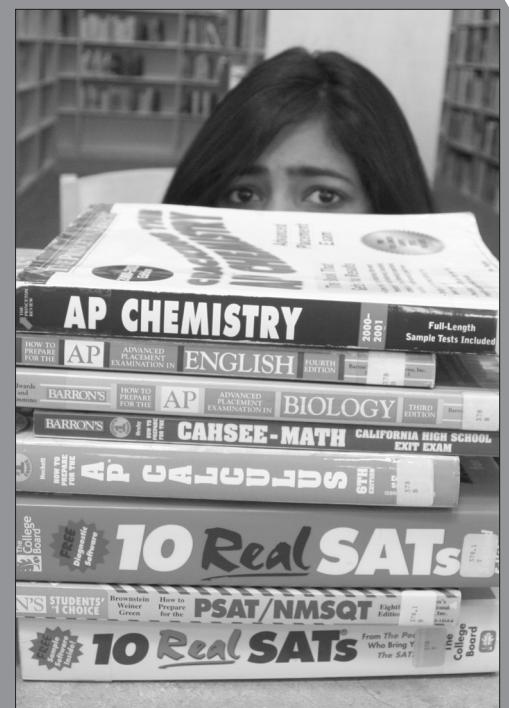
Work on team bonding, get to know the other players.

SATs

Take the PSAT to see what you need to improve on before the real test.

Enjoy

Make the most of this year. It may be your last chance to have fun, ever.



Brittany Judoprasetijo

featuring special guests...



freshman guide
Sophomore Varun Parmar

by Brittany Judoprasetijo
and Holden Sparacino

Most students associate junior year with mountains of homework and lack of sleep, but for senior Yang Hong, junior year was the best year she could recall—despite her challenging schedule.

Hong's academic workload consisted of a full schedule of seven classes, four of which were AP classes and three of which were Honors.

Hong also chose to enroll in two advanced placement science classes. She took Chemistry AP as well as Physics AP.

As if taking a full load of AP and Honors classes was not enough, Hong also participated in many extracurricular activities such as being a member of Diversity Task Force and Mandarin Club.

Clubs were not her only extracurricular activity. She also undertook the leadership positions of orchestra manager for the music department and was a student representative for Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) as well.

Although Hong's classes were rigorous, she never tired of them, thanks to a mixture of an interesting curriculum and energetic teachers who really strived to involve the students in the material.

"The teachers I had were awesome, and I actually [enjoyed] going to class,"



sophomore guide
Junior Lisa Chang

Hong said. "Usually I have one or two favorite classes, but last year I couldn't really choose. I don't remember being bored. We learned and discussed a lot more."

Although these classes were enjoyable and kept Hong interested, such rigors adversely affected her sleeping schedule.

"With my particular block schedule, on one day I would have a ridiculous homework load in comparison to the next day, when homework would take me at most 45 minutes," said Hong. "The worst part was transitioning the first few weeks into this uneven course load schedule—I'd [go to] sleep at midnight on some [nights] and 10 on others."

Hong's advice for current juniors emphasized the importance of balancing studying, participating in extra curricular activities and having fun with your friends.

"Starting now, grades actually matter, so go the extra mile," said Hong. "Don't overload yourself, but keep at least one extracurricular. [Also, try to] sleep more than you study."

Despite all the irregularities in her schedule, and the juggling of academics and extracurriculars, Hong found junior year to be rewarding.

"Overall it was definitely the best year ever," said Hong. "I went in intimidated, but it's a lot better than it sounds when you get used to it." ♦



junior guide
Senior Yang Hong

by Brittany Judoprasetijo
and Holden Sparacino

He's come, gone and then come back again. '00 alumnus Erick Rector, who now teaches freshman and senior English, has seen Saratoga High from a student's and teacher's perspective and identifies with the hardships of senior year.

"High school for me was a rougher time. I really wanted to make my senior year as happy as I could," said Rector. "I took classes that I thought would interest [me] and really make me have a well-rounded year."

Rector has carried this adventurous spirit for trying new things into his job. He now coaches badminton and speech and debate, and this year he is also a co-coordinator for the Link Crew.

"Seniors need to realize that there is a lot going on senior year [besides college applications]," said Rector. "Your responsibilities can become overwhelming."

After surviving the toils of junior year, seniors often welcome the break that comes after college acceptance.

"[Senior year's] reputation is a little more relaxed [than junior year]. Juniors are always stressed about grades; seniors are stressed about college applications," said Rector. "By the middle of second semester [senior year], the letters start coming, packets start coming, and all else becomes nonsensical."

Rector said that college applications aren't as big a deal as people make them



senior guide
Teacher/Alum Erick Rector

seem to be.
"It's just filling out applications," said Rector. "[In your applications,] be professional, be yourself, don't try to write what you think they want to hear, and don't lose sleep over it."

Rector remembers receiving the acceptance letters and the temptation to slack off that came with them.

"After I got accepted to college, there was that desire to let some things go, but the classes that I was in were so personally interesting to me that I wanted to stay in class," said Rector.

Rector said that high school is like real life in that "you will get out of life what you put into it."

Rector believes that being ready for senior year is a must.

"My seniors so far are doing great," said Rector.

Seniors may have a lot of work, but they also have a lot of power. For Rector, the best thing about being a senior was the influence he had over the younger students.

"As a senior, [the school] looks up to you and gives you a little more added respect even though you haven't necessarily earned it, and with that you can do a lot," said Rector. "[Seniors should] do things that are good for the school, be cool to the freshmen, study hard, but remember to have a good time, and cherish the friendships that you have. You want to leave with some kind of positive impact on the school." ♦

Senior Slumber

Junior Journey

Subject Tests

Get them out of the way as soon as possible.

AP Classes

Take classes that genuinely interest you and don't be afraid to ask for help if needed.

Stress

Junior year is a high-stress time; make sure you include time to relax in your schedule.

Lunch

Being an upperclassman means being able to go out to lunch. Take advantage of this perk by bringing the newspaper staff food.



Brittany Judoprasetijo

College Apps.

Do not leave them until the last minute. If you need help, see page 16.

Second Semester

Just because you got into college does not mean it's ok to fall asleep in class...every day.

Prom

Spend the night dancing with all your friends at one last party before graduation. Also, a powder blue suit is not acceptable apparel.



Brittany Judoprasetijo

College Applications FOR DUMMIES



step ONE

Start preparing for the SAT (Standardized Aptitude Test) and ACT (American College Test) along with memorizing that extensive list of vocabulary words. Prepare and take at least two Subject Tests, and pay attention to whether colleges want a specific subject score. The Math IIC, for example, is a required test for many colleges.

step TWO

Research numerous colleges and finalize your list. On average, each student should be applying to:

- 1 or 2 Reach schools
- 4 or 5 Target schools
- 1 or 2 Safe schools

Reach schools are those you feel have little chance of accepting you, but apply to anyway out of curiosity.

Safe schools are ones you know you can get in to and fall back on.



CALI

What should students take into account when applying?

"It's nice to figure out where you'd be comfortable. Would you be comfortable in a big place, would you be comfortable in a small place? You've got to look at the campus. I'd rather you feel happy and like the experience—because then you'd be more apt to do better academically—than care about the name of the college."

step THREE

If you are planning to apply to a private school, ask two teachers for a letter of recommendation, preferably at the end of junior year. Give them at least a good month to reflect and write.

step FOUR

Go to college websites and begin the application process, ideally starting the summer after junior year. Consider alternatives to regular admission:

Early Action: These applications are due about two months earlier and are a way for you to show that you have great interest in that college. They let you know early, normally mid-December, whether you have been admitted. Most early action programs allow confirmation of attending the college in May along with regular admissions, but some require a reply before regular acceptance letters arrive.

Early Decision: You may only apply to one school for early decision, and if you are accepted, you are obligated to attend that school.

Rolling Admissions: Once these schools have received your application, your letter of acceptance or omission will be received within six to eight weeks.

Mrs. Fong will assemble everything from here. Be sure to watch for the turn in deadline (Oct. 2-3 for early plans and Nov. 4-5 for regular admissions for 2007) and show Mrs. Fong immense appreciation.

step FIVE

The following documents must be brought to Mrs. Fong in the office:

- Teachers Recommendation Forms
- Secondary School Report
- Counselor/Administrator Packets

step NINE

Congratulations, you are now going to college. Keep in mind, however, to resist full blown senioritis. Maintain your GPA at your college's specified point to prevent colleges from dropping your application.



step SIX

It's time to start on those legendary essays that will get you in.

- Different schools have varying numbers of essays, so don't leave them until the last minute
- UC's now have only two prompts
- Many times, students will work with English teachers to help them edit their essays

It's never too early to start working on these essays. The summer before senior year, however, is a good time to start.

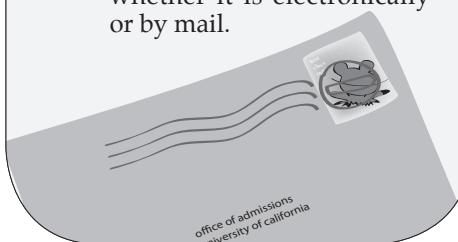
"You should always have someone that doesn't know you very well read your essay so they can give you an idea of what they think of this person they're reading. Some students actually have counselors [edit it], but I warn students that it has to be in your own words. The people that read these essays can tell when an adult has written it, so be careful. Having your own voice is the best."



CALI

Step SEVEN

Send in your college applications at least one week before the deadline to make sure nothing goes wrong, whether it is electronically or by mail.



Step EIGHT

Depending on the colleges you applied to, you should receive notifications back from each one around early March and mid-April of your senior year. With a list of acceptances, visit campuses and decide which college is right for you. Reply to one college with your "intent to register" by May 1.

step NINE



Recommendation difficulty

Detailed descriptions required in college applications prove stressful for not only teachers but students

by Allen Liu
and Tiffany Tseng

After overcoming a stressful year of studying for SATs and pulling all-nighters during AP testing week, the new seniors return to school with their minds set on enjoying a relaxing and worry-free semester. Their joyous moods, however, are ruined when they are reminded of the approaching college application deadlines, and along with it, teacher recommendation letters.

Students applying to private universities need to decide which teachers they want recommendations from, while some teachers feel the burden of writing more than 50 detailed letters a year.

One concern of students is that a teacher might not write a positive recommendation, which could jeopardize their chances of getting into their dream university. Teachers, however, try to find a way to accurately portray the specific qualities of each student and describe unique aspects of their performance.

"There are students who aren't as academic as others, but there's always some good qualities to write about individuals," said English 9 and 11 Honors teacher Kerry Mohnike, who has written more than 60 letters a year. "You just find the things that stand out about that student or do the best job you can."

Unlucky seniors may come across asking a teacher for letter of recommendations after having made a bad impression in class. Although some teachers may refuse to write the recommendation, AP US History teacher Kim Anzalone first discusses with her students some issues that might appear in the letter.

"I never tell a student that I won't write them a letter of recommendation, but I will talk to some students about the kinds of things I write in there," said Anzalone. "[For example], one student cheated on a test, so I told [the student] what I would write regarding that in their recommendation letter and asked if [the student] still wanted me to write it."

With the stress of early decision due dates, teachers can feel overwhelmed as deadlines to turn in recommendation letters get closer. English 9 and Poetry teacher Judith Sutton may not have as

many letters to write as teachers who teach more juniors, but she takes special care to make sure each one is unique.

"It takes me a really long time to write recommendations because I want to capture the student's personality," said Sutton. "Each letter takes me around two to three hours to write."

When writing recommendations, teachers must attempt to show colleges how a student has performed over an entire school year in a single letter. In her recommendations, Anzalone writes using specific examples from class activities to reflect upon students.

"I pick an assignment or a role simulation that demonstrates what kind of person the student is," said Anzalone. "I try to make the letter full of adjectives and personal detail because colleges want to know how the student performed in the class."

At times, teachers may become so swamped that they are unable to write recommendations for every one of their students applying to a private school. Although Mohnike has not yet turned down a student, she has a new policy to deal with the increasing number of juniors in need of recommendation letters.

Beginning with this year's seniors, Mohnike will have a lottery and draw 30 names of students who she will write letters for, with the exception of a few who she has nominated for awards.

"The problem [with] writing for a lot of students is after a while all the students sound the same, and you don't do students a service by having them all sound the same," said Mohnike. "Some students, the ones who speak in class regularly, are easier to write for because by hearing their opinion, I understand them better."

Teachers have to consider more than just how well students do on assignments or how well they understand the material.

"One of the things [colleges] always ask is how a student does in terms of leadership and how they respond to peer pressure," said Sutton.

Although teacher recommendations seem to worry many, there is comfort in knowing that teachers make an effort to exemplify each student's personality in ways that colleges can relate to. ♦

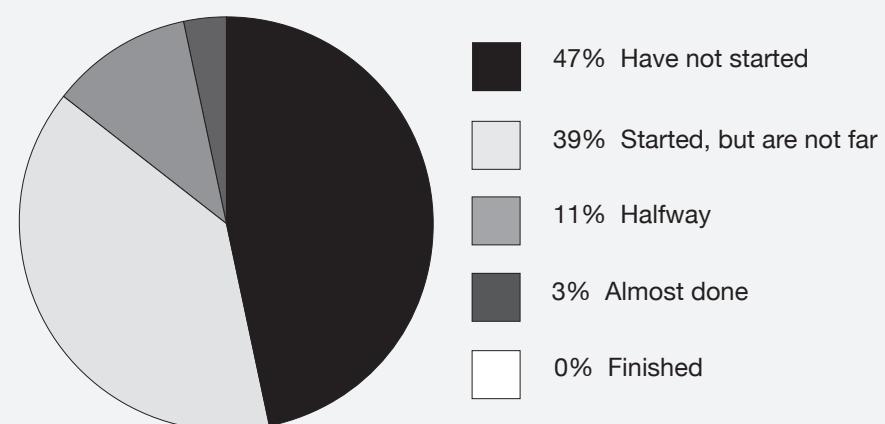
One student cheated on a test, so I told [the student] what I would write regarding that in their recommendation letter and asked if [the student] still wanted me to write it."

—AP US History teacher Kim Anzalone

FALCONPOLL | College Applications

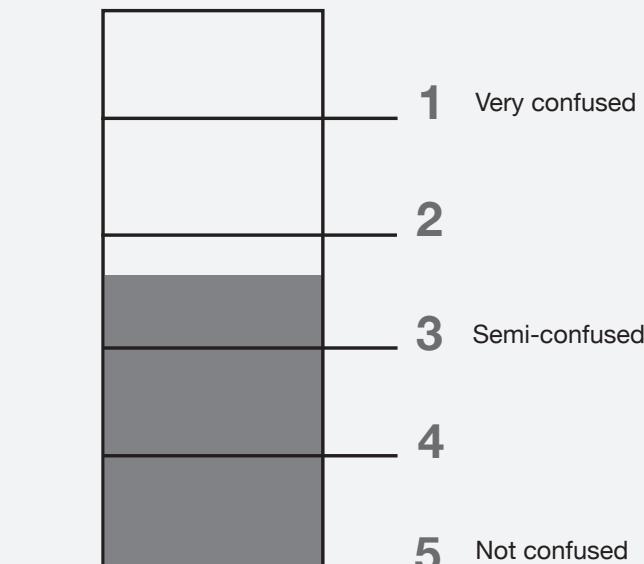
The Falcon polled over 90% of senior class during the week of Sept. 3.

How far are you on your college applications?

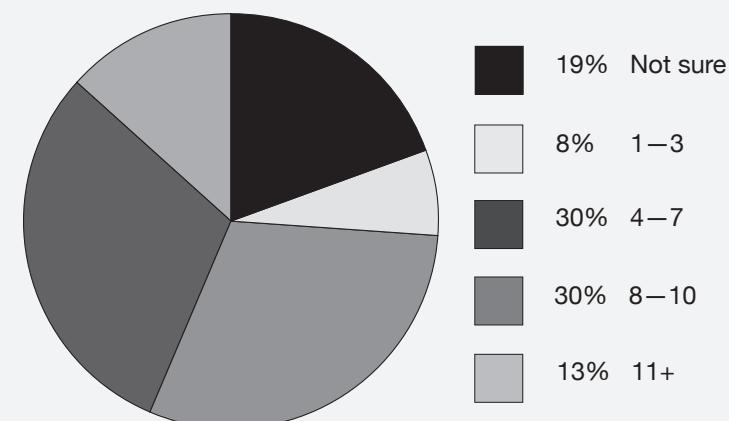


On a scale of 1 to 5, how confused are you with your college application?

On average, the senior class rated a "2.3" on their confusion level



How many schools are you applying to?



TOPTEN

THINGS NOT TO PUT ON YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATION

- | | | | |
|-----------|---|----------|--|
| 10 | My second language is Pig Latin. | 5 | I didn't see "Drug Dealing" as a major, so I just chose Plant Science. |
| 9 | Willing to pay an extra \$20 as "processing fees" *hint hint* | 4 | I have over 9000 YouTube(tm) videos watched. |
| 8 | I scored a perfect 1600 on my SAT. | 3 | Ranked 782nd in "Most likely to succeed" on Facebook(tm). |
| 7 | The essay topics were just suggestions, right? | 2 | There are a lot of colleges, but I liked yours bestest. |
| 6 | My favorite music album is "The College Dropout" by Kanye West. | 1 | Miss South Carolina Teen USA inspired me to buy a map. |

—by Allen Liu

GIRLS' WATER POLO



Courtesy of Julia Lan

Junior Casey Long looks to pass in their opener against Mountain View on Sept. 13. The team lost 5-12 but hopes to recover and be a force in the league.

BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY

Team gets new coach

by Kelly Lamble

Cross country is a tough sport. Most people groan at the thought of running a few steps, much less for several miles. New boys' cross country coach Jerry Banks was never one of those people.

"[My sophomore year of high school] I was the second worst runner on the team. Over the summer I ran 100 miles a week and almost killed myself, but I made the varsity team by my senior year," said Banks.

But he didn't make the cut on just any varsity team. Kennedy High School in Sacramento was one of the top teams in the nation, ranked third by one national magazine. More importantly, Banks discovered a lifelong passion which led him to his new coaching position after health and P.E. teacher Peter Jordan decided the combined team was too big for him to manage.

Banks brings a whole new dimension to the seemingly simple concept of running: a structured formula designed to push athletes to their potential. He hopes his combination of perseverance and analysis will spur the boys' team to new heights.

"My hope is to get all runners to perform their best by the end of the season, and stay healthy," said Banks. "[I also] want to get as many as possible to state."

So far, everything seems to be going according to plan.

"The kids seem to be buying into the program," said J. Banks. "I'm happy with what I'm seeing. I've inherited some good runners from Coach Jordan."

One of the team's runners is his own son, junior Kian Banks, who is enthusiastic about being coaching by his father and said he isn't treated differently from the other runners.

All the boys are on a four-phase 24 or 11 week program, depending on whether they started at the end of the last school year or the beginning of the current one.

Phase 1 builds a strong base of strength and endurance. The second



BANKS

The new coach hopes to instill a renewed work ethic into the team and their practice regimen to increase success.

phase is repetition work including hill repeats and track work. Speed, technique and explosiveness improve during this phase.

Phase 3 stresses the runner's VO2 max, or capacity to transport oxygen during workouts, using interval workouts like tempo runs to force them to perform better on less oxygen. The final phase focuses on keeping the runner fresh and sharp and in the best condition possible going into the end of season races.

Banks' inspiration for his highly detailed and structured program comes from intensive study of other coaches' ideas, particularly those of Jack Daniels. Daniels, who is based out of Flagstaff, Ariz., has been heralded as the cross country coach of the century and the best coach of all time.

"I read a lot of training books and communicate with a lot of coaches. We share ideas on new coaching and training techniques," said Banks.

These techniques have given the boys hope this season. Despite losing their best runner Brad Jacobs to graduation, returning individuals are determined to fill his shoes.

At the Earlybird Invitational on Sept. 8, the team placed 12th out of 42 and was led by Kian who finished the 3-mile course in 16:20 and beat his former personal record by an amazing 1:01. Following him was junior Alan Menezes in 16:41 and sophomore Nick Olsen, who also beat his personal record with 17:15.

In sports perseverance and talent can take a team a long way. Perhaps new ideas will introduce an era of cross country domination to Saratoga. ♦

FIELD HOCKEY

Girls dominate first games

by James Jiang
and Brian Kim

From the sidelines, spectators see the girls running around furiously with sticks trying to hit one little ball into an opponent's goal. However, beyond the summer training put into making a season happen, the team itself must have a bond and understanding far beyond that of normal teammate relationships.

"I think that everyone gets along really well," said senior captain Nicole Sabes. "We enjoy each other's company a lot."

Besides getting along on the field, a team must be able to share fellowship outside of school. The field hockey team has done just that.

"We are going to have a sleepover," said Sabes, "and we had a picnic the other day during lunch."

The fellowship and bonds made by the field hockey team has really shown in their plays, giving the team a 3-0-0 record, as of last Friday.

The time the girls spend together off the field seems to translate into unity on the field as well. The team won its third game Sept. 11 against Westmont 4-0 with goals from senior Nicole Sabes, juniors Claire Marsh and Katie Marsh and sophomore Paxton Barco. However, the real challenges are Mitty, St. Francis and Los Gatos who are the strongest in Division A.

They dominated the other team, keeping Westmont on their toes throughout most of the game.

"I don't think we played as well as we could have," said senior captain Rachel Sabes. "At the rate we've been playing [in our other games], the score should have been more like 10-0."

Their team's second game against Monta Vista was held at home on Sept. 10, but the girls didn't play on their typical field.

"The game was rescheduled," said sophomore Anna Schroeder. "We played on turf so the ball went really fast."

The Falcons were able to adapt to their



Courtesy of Sarah Raisan

Senior defender Rachel Sabes maneuvers the ball during the Sept. 6 match against the Del Mar Dons.

scenario quickly and won 2-0. The offense managed to keep the ball on their opponent's side of the field most of the time, giving the defense little to do.

Although they lost some of their most valuable players from last year to graduation, the Falcons are picking up nicely with some new all-stars.

"We have a lot of new players this year who came up [from JV]," said junior Kelly Darchuk. "We're still getting used to everyone, but it's going pretty well. I think we have really good team chemistry and a lot of talent."

Even with the new players, Sabes sees the team as a force to be reckoned with.

"Out of my three years of playing the game, I think this year we'll have the biggest chance to do the best, especially since we have a great offense," said Rachel.

Their unity makes this team victorious. Practice may make perfect, but team bonding brings home the wins. ♦

Teens

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GIRLS' TENNIS

Falcons struggle early, rebound for league play

by Kelly Lamble
and Annie Lee

After a disappointing quarterfinal finish at CCS last year, the girls' varsity tennis team is looking to rebound. While last year's season was plagued with injuries and absences, this year's team is healthy and poised to regain its position as a tennis heavyweight.

Junior Lindsey Marsh is returning as team captain this year after a back injury kept her from playing to her full ability. Although academic commitments kept junior Kara Wang off the courts last year, she decided that she missed tennis too much not to play and has rejoined the team. A third addition to the already formidable team is freshman Srinidhi Raghavan, who plays the No. 1 singles' position.

Raghavan has been playing tennis since she was 6 and is currently ranked in the nation's top 40 Girls' 14s division. She got her start in tennis by following the lead of her brother, '05 SHS alumnus Ravi Raghavan, who now plays for Carnegie Mellon.

Raghavan was homeschooled for the past year and a half so that she could dedicate herself almost entirely to improving her tennis skills and competing at the national level.

"You don't have to worry about tests and stuff, so you have more energy to play tennis," said Raghavan. "Most players at nationals are homeschooled."

Even with the new additions, Monta Vista will still be a tough match during the season.

Although unsure about whether she will play tennis professionally, Raghavan hopes to get a scholarship to Stanford and major in "a really good subject, like engineering."

Even with Raghavan at the helm, the Falcons placed seventh at the Wawona Peachtree Classic. This finish was largely due to the absences of sophomore Mika Padmanabhan, who was at a national tournament in Kansas, and Wang, who had not yet rejoined the team. Despite missing these two assets, the team still beat Foothill High, who had eliminated the girls from the tournament last year, 4-2.

"Our team is a lot stronger. We have new players with different experience," said team captain senior Shireen Gupta, "but even with the new additions to the team, Monta Vista will still be a tough match during the season.

At Peachtree, the girls were forced to play back-to-back matches at night because a nearby fire in the hills left the courts under a haze of smoke. Although Peachtree proved to be a disappointment, it has not deterred the team for the rest of the season.

"I don't think the tournament was an indication of the talent we have on the team, but it did show me who works well together in doubles and vice versa," said coach Tom Uyehara. "We can definitely show a little bit more team unity, especially because we have so many people on the team and we don't know each other as well." ♦

GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

Runners excel at Earlybird

by Ashley Chou
and Sophia Cooper

The distinctive ring of red cowbells echoed throughout the course as cross country teams heard the Saratoga girls' new trademark. Between their Grease-inspired "summer runnin'" shirts and signature racing ribbons, the girls found themselves with more spirit than ever before.

The Lynbrook Center Meet on Sept. 6 kicked off the season and introduced the six freshmen to the friendly atmosphere of the running world.

Sophomore Evelyn Tang led the JV team, closely followed by sophomore Kimberly Dimicco. The eight-person varsity team demonstrated to perfection the phrase, "Falcons stay together," with their pack running technique.

"What I asked them to do was kind of unusual — that is to stay together in a pack of seven people throughout the entire race," said girls' coach Peter Jordan. "It's not an easy exercise and they did a great job with it. I think that it helped them prepare for the next meet."

As planned, the 14 girls who competed on Sept. 8 excelled in their races at Toro Park, Salinas, in the prestigious Earlybird Invitational of 3.0 miles.

The sophomore team received second out of 10, with Karen Wai leading the pack with a 12th place finish.

The girls originally tied for first place with Saint Ignatius with a total of 72 points, in which the race officials then included the six-place runner's score for a tiebreaker.

"I have never seen a race like the sophomore girls' race, where three teams were separated by one point," said Jordan. "It was just phenomenal. It would have been nice to win first place, because we were so close, but I think that the fact that we were so close is going to be a motivator for us—we're all going to remember how important it is to score every single point possible in a race, because it can be the difference between the gold and silver."

This was the first time that any girls' team from Saratoga had placed in the Earlybird invitational, according to Jordan.

Junior Katie Nast placed sixth in the most competitive class race with a time of 19:33. Senior Katrin Cooper ranked 20th at 21:49, bringing the team as a whole to eighth place out of 35.

"Nearly everybody ran faster this year than they did last year at the same meet," said Jordan. "It means that people are getting stronger [and] maturing, so it's a good place to start off the season."

Nast also excelled in the varsity girls' race on Sept. 13, at the Fremont Firebird Invitational by placing first.

This weekend, Jordan's top nine girls will head down to Pepperdine University in Malibu for a three-mile course on the school's campus.

The runners include sophomores Sophia Cooper, Molly Jordan, Christine La, Lauren McInnis and Wai, juniors Ashley Chou and Nast, K. Cooper and senior Anna Souskova, an exchange student from the Czech Republic. Souskova, whose transfer papers were recently approved, is looking forward to joining her new team in their summer runnin' shirts. ♦

GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL



Melody Zhang
Senior Erica Baba sets the ball for senior Vivian Wang during their opening home match Sept. 11 against Lincoln.

Defense vital to team's success

by Neyha Bhat
and Amanda Yi

Despite the addition of new teammates, playing together will not be a problem this season for the girls' varsity volleyball team. This year, due to three weeks of practice and an overnight team trip to the beach, the girls have become closer to one another. They also participated in the Milpitas Spikefest volleyball tournament on Sept. 1.

"I like the fact that there's no cliques or fights or drama," said sophomore outside hitter Chelsea Sabella.

After losing some key seniors to graduation, however, the Falcons do not have the same strong defense as they did last year.

"We lost a lot of defense. Leah [Anthony]'s defense was amazing," said libero senior Jackie Gragnola. "If we train hard, we can make up for it, though."

Although they lost key players, the varsity team also gained two new juniors, one sophomore and a freshman. These new players add much needed offense to the team.

"We switched from a big defensive team to an offensive one," said Gragnola. "It will definitely be an advantage during games this year."

Gragnola predictions held true when the girls handily defeated Lincoln on Sept. 11 with scores of 25-11, 25-11, and 25-8.

Lincoln, two leagues below Saratoga,

proved to be no match for the girls' powerful serves and were defeated quickly.

"Lincoln didn't get a lot of the serves," said senior Erica Baba. "We had 17 aces and really consistent rallies."

Although the girls have many strengths, including their offense, speed and versatility, they also have areas in which they are working to improve.

"We have to work on talking more when we're on the court and we need to focus more on what we're doing," said outside hitter junior Kate Stewart. "But we're a very well rounded team. Everyone can play multiple positions, which is good."

These weak areas could be seen during the Sept. 6 game against Westmont, in which the girls lost with scores of 23-25, 21-25, 25-13, and a final loss during the fourth with a score of 19-25. Although they were defeated, the girls believe their team chemistry sets them up for a successful season.

"We bond well off court, but on court we need a little more work," said Baba. "The chemistry will come from our good relationships and with time."

By practicing and playing together, the girls will continue to grow closer to each other. Nonetheless, one of the most important parts of any game is to have fun and enjoy playing their sport, which is exactly what the girls are doing.

"We're just starting off right now, so hopefully we can get even better," said Sabella. ♦

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FOOTBALL

FALCONS KICK OFF SEASON WITH LEAGUE TITLE IN SIGHT

by Guy Quanrud
and Rahul Thakker

Saratoga varsity football started the season on a bad note, but things seem to be improving. The Falcons started the season with a 21-13 home loss to Menlo Atherton on Aug. 31, but evened their record by defeating the Live Oak Acorns 14-0 during an away game a week later.

The Falcons also faced the Capuchino Mustangs on Sept. 14, but due to printing deadlines *The Falcon* was unable to cover the game.

During their second game, the Falcons, supported by strong individual efforts, dominated both offensively and defensively on the way to defeating Live Oak.

Senior fullback Gabe Essner ran for both Saratoga touchdowns, and the defense, led by senior defensive end Steven Walker, completely shut down the Acorns' offense.

"We got the shutout so obviously we had a good defensive game," said senior linebacker Matt Keating. "All of our linebackers played pretty well, but Steven Walker was a big standout for that game."

The defense also forced two turnovers, recovering a dropped punt early in the game and then taking the ball from the Acorns again after junior safety Tim Yen forced a fumble later on.

Though the defense played very well, Keating also said that they "got lucky sometimes."

"We got some penalties that stopped them from scoring and then we ended up holding them," he said.

This game was a complete con-

trast to the season opener, when big mistakes cost the Falcons a victory against a tough Menlo-Atherton team.

Junior running back Mat Spencer and senior receiver Cullen Bowen both scored for the Falcons in the first half of the game, but the offense could not maintain their momentum for the rest of the game. Meanwhile, the defense gave up play after play, allowing the Bears to score touchdowns of 67, 53 and 32 yards.

The Falcons regained possession and had a chance to tie the game with just over seven minutes remaining, but the offense faltered just short of their target. Spencer and senior receiver Keon Ghafouri made critical catches to bring the Falcons a first down within 19 yards of the end zone.

But after three straight unproductive plays, the Falcons were down to possibly their last play of the game. Senior quarterback Kyle Guengerich threw a pass intended for Spencer, who was waiting in the end zone, but a Menlo-Atherton defensive back stepped in front of the ball and intercepted it, ending the Falcons' chances of winning.

"We just made too many mistakes," said Spencer. "We had too many turnovers and we missed a lot of tackles."

The loss did not bring the team down. Instead, it convinced the players to work harder to achieve their goal for the season.

"Our main goal is to win league," said senior running back Peter Florence. "Anything short of that would be a letdown, but I think we can definitely reach it." ♦



Senior cornerback Keon Ghafouri pursues the ball carrier during the Falcons' away game against the Live Oak Acorns on Sept. 7.

Hayes Hyde

BOYS' WATER POLO

Growing pains challenge young team, new coach

by Guy Quanrud
and Tim Tsai

Boys' water polo has many new faces this year, including new coach Michael Dixon, who succeeded coach Matt Shubert. Dixon, a two time All-American water polo player and UCSB graduate, hopes to bring team unity to the Falcons.

The team also must overcome the loss of several skilled players, and only three varsity players are returning this year. The Falcons hope their youth and new leadership will overcome their lack of experience and return them to the CCS

playoffs this year.

"From what I know, we had a pretty good team last year. All I can hope for is that this team can go to CCS and that everyone can progress," said Dixon.

Saratoga could not hold off the relentless attacks of the Mountain View Spartans, losing a contested match. Sloppy play from the Saratoga defense also gave Mountain View many chances to score.

"We just made too many silly mistakes on defense, and I think that if we work on them we can really be a strong team," said junior Nick Mortazavi, who led the team with five goals.

Mountain View scored early and often,

because Saratoga defenders were unable to match Mountain View's speed.

Saratoga kept the game close through the first half with the score tied 6-6 at the end of two quarters thanks largely to junior Justin Winningham's stellar play in goal. However, as the second half began, Mountain View began picking apart the Saratoga defense, scoring three unanswered goals. Junior Michael Huang's goal at the end of the third quarter kept the score close at 9-7, but the Falcons faltered in the final period, and Mountain View pulled away to a 12-9 victory.

"We are going to work a lot on defense in upcoming practices," said Mortazavi.

"We are going to come back much stronger in the next game."

On Sept. 7, the team participated in the Schmidt Tournament at Bellarmine and Cupertino. They struggled early and suffered three consecutive losses.

"It was a great learning experience," said Dixon. "We progressed, we learned a lot of things to work on and it was a useful experience."

Mortazavi, who scored 12 goals agrees with Dixon about the team's experience.

"Every game counts for something," said Mortazavi. "We lost some tough games, but we definitely improved ourselves." ♦

