



Saratoga High School | Saratoga, CA
An Independent Student Publication

School to offer European History AP

by Neyha Bhat

A new European History advanced placement course will be available to juniors and seniors as an elective for the next school year.

Principal Jeff Anderson, a former history teacher, felt this class would be an interesting addition to the school's history curriculum and proposed the idea to the history department at the beginning of the school year.

History teachers thought students with a passion for history deserve an elective that would allow them to study an interesting time period and area of the world while earning an extra AP point.

"This class offers students the chance to explore their love for history and reap the rewards for taking a challenging course," said history department head Kim Anzalone.

The curriculum will cover from the Renaissance period to the European Union. Because other schools already offer this course, College Board has a set curriculum for teachers to prepare for the AP test.

World History teacher Jerry Sheehy will teach the class.

"Mr. Sheehy is already experienced in teaching world history, which includes Europe," said Anzalone. "In addition, his teaching methods appeal to students."

Sheehy looks forward to the opportunity to teach his first AP course. He feels his experience with world history has prepared him for an in-depth course.

"It will be a great learning experience for me," said Sheehy. "I'll pick up good teaching methods for this course as it goes."

He also looks forward to studying with students who love history and choose to take the challenging course.

"The best part will definitely be teaching students who are motivated to excel in a more focused and intense part of history," said Sheehy. ♦

Code Red drill runs smoothly

by Brian Kim
and Tiffany Tseng

Students and teachers locked and barricaded their doors before being evacuated onto the track bleachers during a full Code Red drill on Nov. 20 to simulate a real invasion by an armed intruder.

"It's a drill we try to do every year so we're prepared for an emergency," said assistant principal Joe Bosco. "A lot of it is for administrative purposes to make sure we know what we're doing, but it's also helpful for students in the event of a real scenario so they know what to do and how to evacuate."

Although the administration would like to hope that such a situation will

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FOOTBALL MAKES CCS
Falcons fall short in semifinals **Sports, p. 20**

UC FUNDING NECESSARY
State considers budget cuts **Opinion, p. 7**



the saratoga falcon

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PTSA lacks membership, funding

by Alicia Lee
and Holden Sparacino

A recent drop in PTSA [Parent Teacher Student Association] membership by more than 100 families has alarmed PTSA parent representatives and concerned the group's board members.

Last year, said PTSA co-president Helen Chang, there were about 750 participating families, slightly less than 70 percent of all SHS families, but this year, only 55 percent of families have joined, giving PTSA a total budget of \$64,883. The lack of contribution has resulted in a \$6,000 deficit, raising concerns on distribution of funds among the many programs funded by PTSA.

Chang believes that a leading reason for the drop of membership was a lack of publicity at the beginning of the year.

"The PTSA membership form was buried among...the huge stack of documents parents receive in the First Day Packet," said Chang. "There are also many parents unaware that the membership drive is our only fundraising. They may still be waiting for an opportunity to contribute."

Budget cuts possible

Link Crew and the Tutorial Center receive highest priority in budgets from PTSA because they have already been promised a certain amount of money, but student activities and services, parent education, teacher grants, newsletters, *The Falcon* newspaper, staff appreciation, scholarships and other programs at least partly funded by PTSA all possibly face budget cuts because of the deficit.

"The requests [for these programs] are way over the budgeted amount," said Chang. "We really hesitate to cut them."

Parents looking to recruit

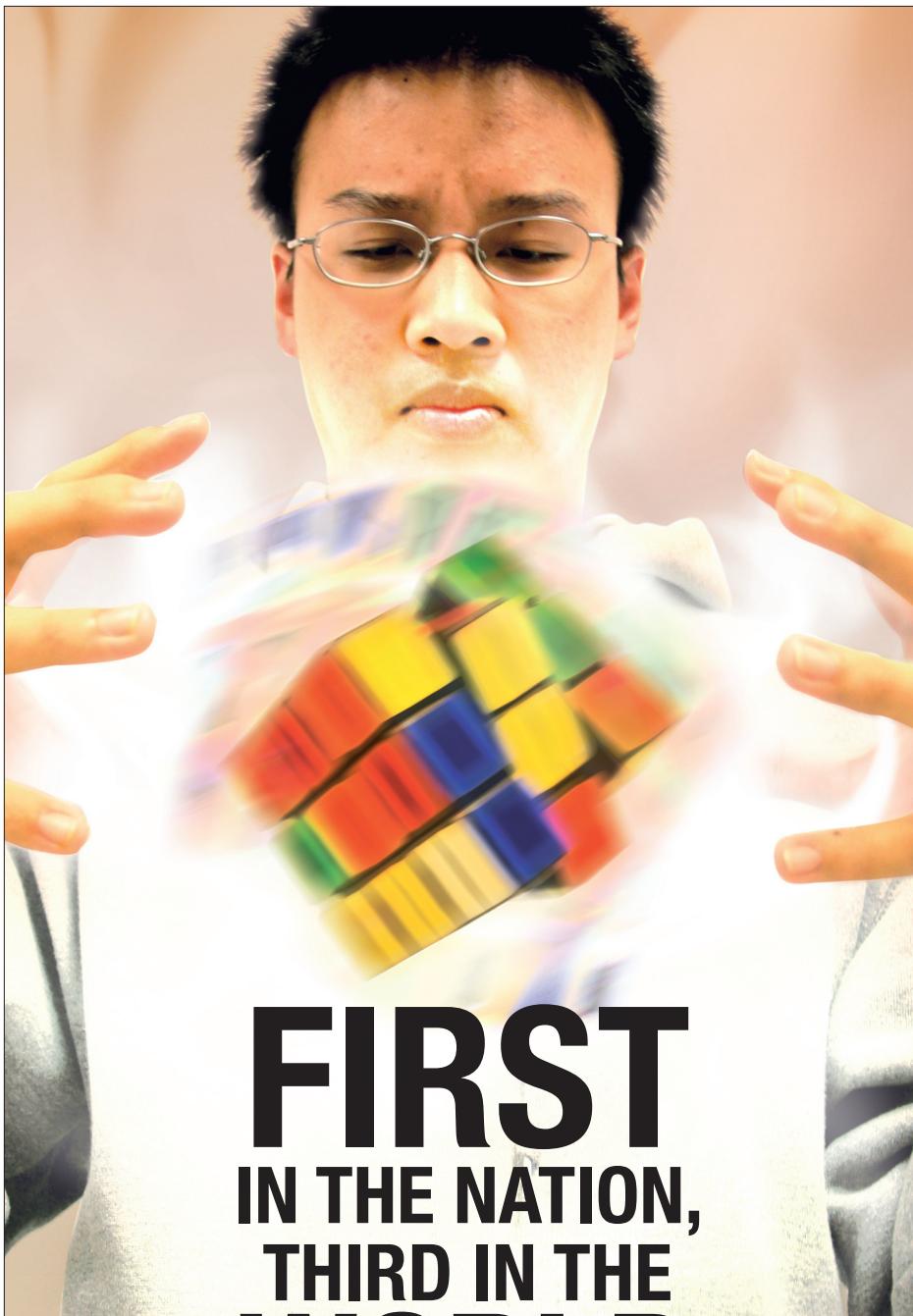
PTSA is trying to erase the deficit by recruiting new families because membership is the only means of funding for PTSA. Membership to PTSA comes in two forms: basic membership is \$45 and includes a Falcon Directory; patron membership is \$65 and includes two Falcon Directories, as well as the *The Falcon* newspaper. PTSA's tactics to raise money include membership forms mailed home to families that haven't joined yet, big banners in the front and back parking lots and a flashing message on the school marquee.

"We hope that all these efforts will make our message loud and clear that parent membership is crucial for PTSA to fund all the school programs we have been supporting," said Chang. "We are already receiving new membership since we started the e-mail message last week."

Chang has hope for higher membership, but the PTSA still must decide programs receiving budget cuts. Until further notice, many programs—possibly senior scholarships, staff hospitality and student activities—will be lesser priorities.

However, Chang knows that the PTSA will reach out as it did in previous years.

"Saratoga is a place with a very supportive parent community," said Chang. "I'm sure [parents] will respond enthusiastically." ♦



Junior Andy Tsao shatters North American Rubik's Cubing record at 12.38 seconds

by Diane Mok

Walking into the Berkeley Fall 2007 speed cubing competition on Nov. 17, junior Andy Tsao could see that the competition was going to be tough to beat. His nerves started to build as he brought his Rubik's cube up for the judges to scramble. Tsao wiped his sweaty palms in anticipation, examined the cube, and then deftly started to maneuver the colored squares.

Little did he know that two rounds later, he would break the North American record and hold the third best time in the history of Rubik's cube with an average time out of five solves of 12.38 seconds, beating the previous North American record by .67 seconds and only .62 seconds shy of the world record.

"I feel happy that I won, but I also feel that now people's expectations of me are going to be so much higher and it will be harder to do well in competition because there's more pressure," said Tsao. "I'm not sure I can meet their expectations."

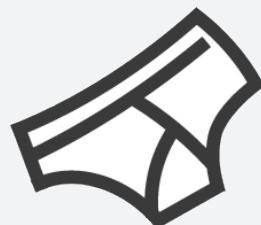
Seventy competitors from around the world attended the competition at UC Berkeley, where there

see CUBE, p. 5

FALCON FIGURES

World Rankings

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. Yu Jeong-Min | |
| Korea | |
| 11.76 seconds | |
| 2. Edouard Champon | |
| France | |
| 12.36 seconds | |
| 3. Andy Tsao | |
| USA | |
| 12.38 seconds | |
| 4. Yu Nakajima | |
| Japan | |
| 12.46 seconds | |

NEWS
BRIEFS**Alumna Vienna Teng to perform in McAfee**

Songwriter and musician alumna Vienna Teng is scheduled to perform in the McAfee Performing Arts and Lecture Center on Dec. 21, the Friday before the holiday break.

Senior Lawrence Choi, the president of Interact Club, along with Teng's sister, alumna Tiffany Shih, worked together to organize Teng's performance.

The concert will raise money for Interact to aid its attempts to help build a school in Ghana.

Regular tickets will cost around \$20 "because she's known world-wide," according to Choi, and are available now. Choi is working to provide discounts for Interact members.

Although Vienna Teng has yet to become a full-blown celebrity, a large number of her fans are among the SHS population. One fan, junior Felicia Tang, owns a signed copy of Teng's latest album, *Dreaming through the Noise*, and looks forward to attending this event.

"I really hope I can attend her concert because I love the way her lyrics go so well with her piano accompaniment," said Tang.

The concert will be open to students and the public.

"We're expecting to get a full house," said Choi.

Tickets are available in the activities office.

Holiday Dance brought back under blacklight

The first holiday dance in two years will be held in the large gym on Dec. 14 from 8-11 p.m. with the theme "A Blacklight Affair." Because many students attended the dance under the influence of alcohol in previous years, the December holiday dance was cancelled.

According to head dance commissioner junior Corey Rattau, the winter dance will feature Wild 94.9 DJ Delicious due to the success of the Wild 94.9 DJ during the Homecoming Dance.

In addition to the special black lights, there will also be snow machines at the entrance to enhance the winter theme. There will also be glow stick sales during the dance, with all proceeds benefiting "The Invisible Children," an organization that raises awareness about the child soldiers in Northern Uganda. Students are expected to dress according to the winter theme, or in white, neon and glow-in-the-dark colors to amplify the blacklight effect.

Blood Drive to be held in Small Gym on Dec. 18

The Stanford Blood Center will be hosting a blood drive in the Small Gym on Dec. 18. There will be several stations set up, and students can miss class to make their contributions. The event is organized by the Community Commission, headed by senior Deepthi Rajendran.

"We're hoping to get a lot of donations," said Rajendran. "It's for a good cause, and we aim to have about 120 people show up."

Potential donors must be at least 17 years old, weigh at least 110 pounds and be in good health. Before they go to contribute, donors should remember to eat beforehand, drink water and bring a photo ID.

Students volunteer for regional food drive

Roughly a dozen Key Club members spent part of Nov. 15 asking for food donations outside of the Los Gatos Nob Hill grocery store as part of the annual John Farley Turkey and Holiday Food Drive, which seeks to aid families in need.

John Farley, NBC 11's Chief Meteorologist, started organizing donation events with his wife four years ago. Since then, he has received help from NBC 11, as well as local chapters of Kiwanis International, an adult organization tied to Key Club International.

Members of the SHS Key Club had a chance to help their local Kiwanis members, who provide them with financial support and advice in club management throughout the year.

"We passed out fliers about donating food for needy families," said sophomore Cindy Chang, who spent three hours at the project. "Some people didn't want to donate, weren't interested in the flier, or thought we were annoying, but it was fun."

Key Clubs across the Bay Area contributed at their local Nob Hill stores, and donations were forwarded to the Second Harvest Food Bank. The drive succeeded in collecting around 200,000 pounds of food in more than 80 bags, and also promoted a year-round program, through which people can donate \$20 bags of groceries for half the price.

—by Michael Chen, Sanaz Ghafouri, Shamita Jayakumar, Kirstie Lee, Edmund Ye and Melody Zhang

**RED | Drill deemed successful**

continued from pg. 1

never occur, the school must be prepared, he said.

"It's not something that the state requires, but since Columbine and Virginia Tech, we want to have a plan, and the drill is a part of that," said Bosco. "I think it went very successfully. I appreciate the way the students handled it and the teachers were all well prepared."

Teachers were aware of the drill beforehand so they could prepare for any inconveniences, since classes were cut down to 35-minute periods. Code Red drills have involved barricades for the past two years, but never a full evacuation.

"Loss of instruction time is always going to be a problem, but I think teachers appreciate it because they'd rather be safe than sorry," said Bosco.

The drill occurred immediately after fourth period and lasted around two hours. Each class had to make a barricade using chairs and desks to block the entrances from any potential outside intruders. After the doors were locked and lights turned off,

students were told to wait quietly while hiding behind a second barricade inside the classroom.

During the drill, the administration and sheriff's deputies walked to each classroom to examine the barricades and determine whether students and staff would be safe in a real emergency.

After most of the classrooms were cleared, students were then told to evacuate to the track bleachers with their sweatshirts tucked in and hands above their heads.

Despite a minor error made in the classroom clearings, in which one class was accidentally missed, the evacuation ran smoothly.

"We just had a clerical error on our maps," said Bosco. "The sheriff said that it was something common that happened during these drills."

The deputies then spoke to the school about their appreciation for the students and faculty's cooperation during the entire event, deeming it a successful drill.

"[The drill] has to be taken very seriously because there could be somebody in our midst who is the problem

and the police have to treat everyone of us like a suspect, so students know not to goof around," said Bosco.

Because intruder alerts are different every time, Code Red is a more complicated situation than fire and earthquake emergencies, where the faculty and students know exactly how to react.

"I think the hardest thing about this is that there are a lot of unknowns," said world history teacher Jerry Sheehy. "It's different from other drills that have set parameters because if there's an intruder who is armed, people are going to have their individual reactions and there are certain decisions that people can't prepare for."

Since the last Code Red evacuation, which was held three years ago, most students still understand the importance of the experience.

"Last time we did the full drill, I was a freshman," said senior Jojo Zhao. "It's important that every student gets to experience a Code Red drill, especially since in case something happens, we'll know what to do." ♦

Students file out of classrooms as part of the forced evacuation during the Code Red drill on Nov. 20

Theresa Yeh

Chess team finishes league as king

by Brian Tsai

Although the Saratoga chess team has little prestige on campus, it accomplished what no other SHS team has ever done before: win league championships for fourth consecutive years.

"When we won, we were really excited because a lot of the hard work we did came through," said junior Alex Lun. "We really worked as a team and pulled it off."

The team ended the season with a 9-0 record in the Santa Clara Valley High School League. The team will have a chance for a fourth consecutive win at the state level as well, which will take place at San Jose on May 17-18.

For seniors Robert Chen, David Chock and Marvin Shu, securing the victory this year means that the three members have been part of the championship-winning team throughout their entire high school careers.

"It's really cool to be champions all throughout high school," said Chock. "[But] it's something that was kind of expected [this

year], since a lot of the strong players [from the other schools] graduated."

Although the team will lose Chen, Chock and Shu to graduation, it is expected to remain strong. Three promising freshmen will fill their places next year: Sankash Shankar, Brian Wai

and Evan Ye, who have helped the Redwood chess team win the junior high league championships. The new team will be put to the test to see whether it can secure the league championships for a fifth year.

"I don't think [the team] will be really weakened with the seniors leaving," said Lun. "We have some pretty good incoming talent next year, so I don't think it will be a problem."

10/30 St. Francis 7-0

The meet against St. Francis was an easy shutout, as the school had less experienced players. At the end of the season, St. Francis was one of two schools who tied for last place.

11/6 Bellarmine 5-2

Juniors Aaron Garg and Jeff Young lost. Both could have

ended up with better results, as Garg missed a quick checkmate and Young had the possibility of drawing. Young, however, went for the win but did not succeed.

11/13 Palo Alto 6.5- 0.5

All players won their matches except for junior Avinash Kumar, who ended up with a draw on the sixth board. Although Kumar had a small advantage towards the end, his opponent missed a checkmate earlier in the game.

"I was up the exchange towards the end, but I guess I am glad [my opponent] didn't see such an easy win," said Kumar.

11/27 Gunn 5-2

Although Chock, the top SHS player, was unable to attend the last match of the season due to other activities, the team managed to secure the win with only sophomore Charles Sun and Kumar losing. Both started out with better positions, but ended up losing. Kumar was under time pressure, which caused him to blunder away the game.

Nevertheless, the team secured a win to finish their season undefeated. ♦

Mission San Jose High looks at SHS schedule

by Tiffany Tseng

Mission San Jose High School [MSJHS] is currently considering the possibility of switching to a block schedule similar to that of Saratoga High. After some research, a team from MSJHS, consisting of parents, students and teachers, took a tour of Saratoga on Nov. 9 to get opinions on the effectiveness of block scheduling.

Mission San Jose found Saratoga High's name through the Stressed-Out Students (SOS) program at Stanford University that deals with stress, which both schools are involved in. Because Saratoga is the ideal school to observe the effects of switching to block scheduling, it was arranged for MSJHS to visit.

"Mission San Jose is a school that is similar to Saratoga High in many ways, and they have a very traditional schedule, the same as we had before we made our change," said assistant principal Gail Wasserman.

The MSJHS team met with SHS faculty, students and parents to answer any questions regarding the block schedule's effectiveness with relieving stress, difficulties with its implementation, and improvements that could be made.

The students who talked to Mission San Jose's team had a deeper understanding of Saratoga's switch to a block schedule because they were involved with the WASC accreditation process, which reviewed the effects of Saratoga's change.

"The adults and the teachers especially seemed very excited to learn and were interested in what we had to say,"

said senior Jennifer Coe, one of the six students who attended the meeting. "We all agreed that the block has helped in reducing stress and managing time so people taking AP classes have them spread out throughout the week."

Because block scheduling has had a positive effect on managing time and stress, Mission San Jose's team appeared eager when considering the possibility.

"The students wanted to try a new thing that would help reduce their stress because Mission San Jose is very much like Saratoga and it sounded like for them, going to bed at one or two in the morning is not an unusual thing," said Coe.

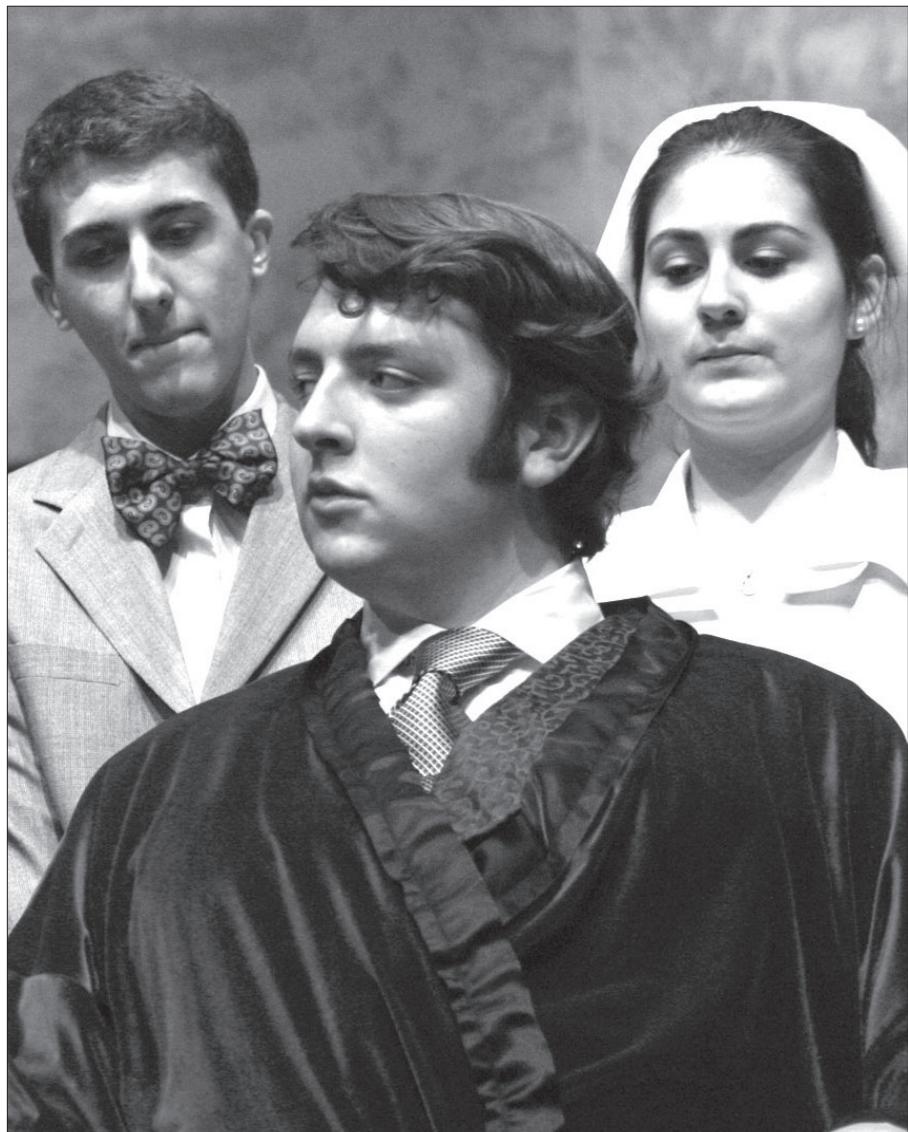
Both the administration and students feel the meeting was a success in that it provided Mission San Jose with an accurate view of the possible effects of having a block schedule.

"They said that we were helpful," said Wasserman. "And I certainly hope the information we provided them was useful."

Freshman Trisha Sen from the MSJ SOS team agreed that the meeting helped her learn about the positive affects of block scheduling on students by relieving their homework load.

"I could see from the perspectives of Saratoga's teachers, students, parents and administrators how everyone appreciated and preferred the way block scheduling had worked out," said Sen. "Right now, the MSJ SOS team is working to spread awareness around the school community about this program and our focus. In gradual steps, we'll see how many successful changes can be made." ♦

DRAMA



Julia Lan

Seniors Nelson MacGowan, James Knight and Dilara Cirit perform during a dress rehearsal for the fall play, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. The show opened on Nov. 30 in the McAfee Center and will be performing again on Dec. 7-9.

Former language teacher passes away from cancer

by Mabel Hsu

Former world language teacher Ann Haggerty passed away on Nov. 23 after a two year fight with cancer.

Haggerty first entered Saratoga as a student teacher and after several years, she became the foreign language department chair.

She had been a French and Spanish teacher for more than 30 years, according to Spanish teacher Arnaldo Rodriguez.

"She was a very committed teacher—to her profession and the rights of others," said Rodriguez. "She was a very caring person [and a] hard teacher, but very fair."

Haggerty was also a District Teacher Association president and lead negotiator, Coordinator of Educational Services and president of the San Jose Opera Guild.

As a teacher who worked for the benefit of all students, she served as a leading example for others. She won the Teacher of the Year and the PTSO service award for her outstanding qualities.

After working for 34 years, she retired in 2002. Haggerty then continued to help students by tutoring those having difficulties in foreign language.

"She had a great influence on her



HAGGERTY

Spanish and French teacher taught at SHS for more than 30 years.

students," said English 9 and Poetry teacher Judith Sutton. "She had students who maintained a strong friendship with her as adults and some who visited her at the hospital."

Even with cancer, Haggerty found the strength and time to continue tutoring students until June. Leaving the hospital after her first extended stay, she even managed to chair a meeting on Nov. 14, for the San Jose Opera Guild to continue her work to support the arts.

Haggerty was careful to not burden her friends with her own health struggles. She never complained about the painful effects of cancer treatment.

"I never heard her complain. She was unbelievable. She faced cancer with courage," said Sutton. "When I talked to her, even right after surgery, her eyes were luminous—full of life and love." ♦

No-in-and-out policy causes problem for Link

LEADERS FORBIDDEN RE-ENTRY AT LAST HOME GAME

by Holden Sparacino

During the last home football game of the year, juniors Dorey Schranz and Corey Rateau sat on the roof of a car parked just outside the field's temporary fence. Beyond the barrier, the Falcons and Gunn High School were battling it out, but the two had been denied entrance to the field.

The two Link leaders were required to attend the JV game earlier that evening. But the school's policy forbids any re-entry to school events because of the possibility that a student's safety may be compromised when a student has left the game. After failing through most of the game to gain their entrance, Rateau and Schranz decided to watch the game any way they could, even if it meant from outside of the fence.

"[I] parked my car next to the fence and [Schranz and I] sat and watched the game," said Rateau. "It was sort of a silent protest."

The night had begun with a JV football tailgate party organized by Link Crew for freshmen to enjoy the last home game of the season, but low participation from both Link leaders and freshmen plagued the event.

Because of the lack of participants, many Link leaders left during the JV game to go eat or hang out elsewhere until the varsity game. Link leaders said they were told they would be allowed to return later for the varsity game.

"If my Link kids were there, I wouldn't have left [the JV game], but none of my kids were there," said Rateau. "It was my intention to come back [after dinner] for the varsity game."

However, the students found their way blocked upon their return because of the school's no-in-and-out policy on

events. The gatekeepers had changed, and the person who told them they would be let back in was gone. The policy is based on the fear that students could return after doing "anything that could compromise their safety," said assistant principal Joe Bosco. "I tell my gate people when students are trying to leave to remind them they can't get back in."

Senior Erica Baba, Rateau, Schranz and others were not allowed to re-enter the varsity game.

"We never received any apology or reasoning other than we could have been drinking in the parking lot for two hours," said Rateau. "Why would I go to the game, leave, go drink and come back when there was nothing stopping people who drank before they came?"

Also perplexing to the three Link leaders was the fact that some Link leaders were allowed through the gates because they were not recognized as returning spectators while others were forbidden to re-enter.

For Baba, the experience was "upsetting." It was her last home football game before she graduated.

"Link [leaders] had to be there at 5; we would have to sit [through both the JV and varsity games]," said Baba. "If that's the school rule, I think they should have told the Link Crew that before we went to the game, because we didn't plan to sit there for six hours."

According to Bosco, all policies are looked at each year for changes, and this one is no exception. "I'm not sure if [the current policy] is the best plan," said Bosco. "We'll always review it and see if it's working."

Those students believe the school needs to rethink the no-in-and-out policy at events, or at least grant exceptions for those with reasonable excuses. ♦

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courtesy of Saratoga High Music Department

Members of the band stand ready to begin their performance at the Western Band Association Championships on Nov. 16-18.

Band finishes successful season

by Elizabeth Cheng,
Kirstie Lee and Dorey Schranz

Cries of happiness were heard as the band crowded around the parking lot. The setting sun glistened on faces covered in sweat and tears. This was the end. The 2007 band season was over and their show, *Boundless*, had been performed for the last time.

The band competed in the Western Band Association Championships on Nov. 16-18 in Long Beach. Their performance on Saturday earned them a qualifying score for finals on Sunday. They finished with a tie for eighth place, and a seventh place finish for both the guard and percussion.

Because Saratoga was not guaranteed a place in finals, the band treated its performance on Saturday as the last one of the season.

"The fourth movement was gorgeous," said band director John Zarco. "There were tears coming out of [freshman Max Workman's father's] eyes."

Saratoga took sixth with a score of 88.05, more than a three point improvement from their last score of 84.90.

James Logan High came in first place with a score of 95.75. Saratoga's score did earn the band a place in the finals, however.

"88 is amazing," said junior clarinet player Elizabeth Chin, "but we should have at least gotten fifth and beaten Amador Valley [High]."

On Sunday morning, the band came together to have its annual awards and senior gifts banquet. Many were on the verge of tears as it finally hit them: they would soon be performing for the last time this season. For seniors, it was their last performance ever.

The seniors were presented with gifts from their individual sections and a video made by junior drum major Mara Couch and junior clarinet player Julia Gulassi. The video had an interview with each of the seniors and a slideshow that showed pictures of the seniors from all the years they were in band.

"I was really sad," said senior flute section leader Angela Lee. "When I got my [senior] gifts, it just made me think about all the good times I've had in the past four years."

Seeing the videos and pictures of the seniors inspired younger members of

the band to think of the coming years.

"I wasn't sure if I wanted to do [marching band] all four years," said freshman Brandon Pierce, "but after the competitions this year, I for sure will continue and might even march in college."

On Sunday afternoon, the band performed for its final competition. Although their show was not error-free, the band was content.

"You want every show to get better as you go along," said Zarco. "This weekend we had our best show of the season."

Saratoga placed seventh with a score of 87.40 but did not place highly in subcategories.

Despite this disappointing final score, Zarco was pleased with Saratoga's performance. The competition marked the end of what he considered a successful year. Because it was their last time together, the band went out of their way to give the seniors a great final experience.

"Scores don't really matter," said Zarco. "We had an amazing season; the best that any Saratoga band has ever had."

School supports LG after accident

by Lyka Sethi

Saratoga students, teachers and administrators joined in mourning the loss of a Los Gatos High senior and his older brother, who passed away in a tragic car accident on Nov. 3.

The brothers, Tyler, 17, and Shane Barclay, 22, were in a car with a speeding 17-year-old driver, their cousin, when the car flipped and hit a dirt embankment on Laurel Glen Road in Soquel that Saturday afternoon.

The driver, a student at Soquel High, is in critical condition after suffering head and lung injuries, according to the San Jose Mercury News.

All three were wearing seatbelts. Drugs and alcohol were not involved.

A memorial service entitled "A Celebration of Life" was held the following week at the Redwood Estates Pavilion in Los Gatos. A fund to help the Barclay family with costs and the driver's family with medical expenses has been set up through the Bank of America.

Many Saratoga students signed a banner that was sent to Los Gatos High in memory of the brothers to offer their condolences. The administration also sent flowers.

"When we hear about something tragic that happened in a faraway school, it's not very real," said assistant principal Karen Hyde. "But when it's your next door neighbor school it's overwhelming; it's more like, 'this could happen to us.'"

Many of the students who participated in the signing of the banner didn't know the Barclays personally, but they acknowledged the importance of safe driving after hearing about the incident.

"It takes a real experience for people to realize that if you're not safe on the road, you really can suffer the consequences," said junior Kathy Koo. "Most people think that they're invincible until something actually happens to them. What happened to the kids in Los Gatos should be an eye-opener for a lot of people."

Saratoga students, parents and administration are extending their best wishes to the Barclay family.

"We really try to make an effort with flowers," said Hyde. "It's horrible when you're at a loss and you feel alone. We want them to know that we're thinking of them."

Contributions to families affected by the crash can be made at any Bank of America branch to account no. 1712703949, or sent to P.O. Box 62, Redwood Estates, CA, 95044 with checks payable to Ashlee Barclay-Soto.

Love for music prompts participation in afterschool orchestras

by Mabel Hsu
and Brittany Judoprasetijo

Sophomore Kevin Hsu heads home after a long day of school, quickly completing his homework before he begins practicing violin. Until around 11 p.m., Hsu's music reverberates throughout his home as he plays the repertoire of the school orchestra, San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra (SFSYO), and the San Francisco Conservatory Quartet, in addition to the music assigned by his private teacher.

"It's just fun to join a lot of orchestras because I get to meet new people each time and get to play an amazing repertoire at the same time," said Hsu.

Orchestra is the fastest growing music elective in the country, according to Michael Boitz, head of the performing and Visual Arts Department, and many students have joined orchestras outside of school to expand their musical experience.

Around 40 students are currently involved in outside youth orchestras.

"Orchestra is definitely a more culturally rich, historical genre that more and more people want access to," said Boitz.

Time commitment

Students involved in orchestras often find time management to be a trying issue.

Besides schoolwork, they have to squeeze in time for practice, rehearsals and long drives to the city. Senior Jennifer Wey, a violinist for SFSYO, considers her weekly rehearsals a demanding activity.

"Driving to San Francisco and rehearsing every Saturday is around a total of six hours, but it's definitely worth it," said Wey.

If students are involved in multiple orchestras, this becomes an even more difficult ordeal. Hsu rehearses four hours a week for SFSYO, two hours a week for his quartet and two hours a week for the school orchestra, totaling eight hours of rehearsals every week.

Students in multiple orchestras also have overlapping concerts and rehearsals for two different orchestras, but Boitz notes that most conflicts can be easily resolved.

"San Francisco [Symphony Youth Orchestra] tends to be really easy to deal with and very supportive of students being students," said Boitz.

Despite the time commitments and the conflicts, students still consider youth orchestras to be a valuable experience, and many continue to join.

"I appreciate being able to play in [multiple] youth orchestras now more and more," said Hsu. "The time commitment kind of sucks, but in the end, when we perform well, it's always worth it. It's really

satisfying to hear the end result of all our rehearsals and practices."

Forming new friendships

Youth orchestras also offer the opportunity to form new friendships with students from other schools. Wey, who has been playing in the SFSYO for the past six years and has been in the school orchestra since freshman year, describes orchestra not only as an opportunity to play music, but a chance to meet new people.

"I love going to San Francisco every weekend to play in Davies Symphony Hall and hanging out in the city. We are going on tour to Europe this summer, which will be fun as well," said Wey. "I meet wonderful people through music—some of my closest friends are musicians outside of school."

Soloists

Junior Angela Hwang is the piano soloist in multiple youth symphonies. On Nov. 11 at the Flint Center and Nov. 18 at the San Mateo Performing Arts Center,



After completing his homework, sophomore Kevin Hsu practices with his violin at home until around 11 p.m.

she performed with the California Youth Symphony (CYS). Then in March, she will play with the San Jose Youth Symphony as a soloist.

Junior Vivian Fu, another soloist, will perform Prokofiev Violin Concerto No. 2 with CYS in March. The soloist competition was in May of this year, and she started preparing two months beforehand.

"Competitions are good experiences because they really push you to know and understand the music so much better," said Fu. ♦

FALCONFOCUS



Melody Zhang

Alumnus Jonathan Levi's BMW sports his company's latest car modifications.

Alum's web business drives toward success

by Brittany Judoprasetijo

Supercharged 2.8L motor and a catback exhaust system. Repainted custom exterior with replacement hood and trunk. Forged wheels and Brembo racing brakes. Hand-assembled custom interior with racing seats. These modifications, and more, can all be found on '05 alumnus Jonathan Levi's light blue BMW.

These products are also sold by his thriving business.

Levi, now studying sociology in his third year at UC Berkeley, juggles his student life with his business, Jlevi StreetWerks, LLC, a company that offers car modifications.

Jlevi StreetWerks carries automotive enhancements for all European models, specializing in BMWs and Mercedes. The company buys parts from importers and suppliers around the world, stocking some to sell to customers online and drop shipping the rest, transferring customer orders and shipment details to wholesalers who then directly ship products to the customer.

"BMW components are our best-sellers, specifically lighting and small enhancements, although we sell a lot of larger aerodynamics and luxury wheels, as well," said Levi.

Levi's interest in cars began at a young age when he was captivated by their beauty.

"When I was young, I saw a Lamborghini Diablo racing down the highway, and that really set in motion my lifelong love affair with cars," said Levi.

Levi first started his business in 2004 during his junior year. He worked alone in a "one-on-one, interaction based business." Levi invested money on car parts and began selling them.

"I was 15 when I came up with the idea. I decided that there was an opening in the market for someone like me to

provide quality service and products," said Levi.

The other three members include Levi's mother, Lynn Ann, a former substitute teacher in the Saratoga Union School District who is now in charge of accounting and order processing in the company; Levi's best friend Nick Palefsky, the sales/support manager; and San Jose State student Kenny Le, the sales/support representative. Levi looks to hire again next month.

Jlevi StreetWerks serves customers in all 50 states and 48 foreign countries.

"Our company is privileged to have had immense success. This year will be our third consecutive year of doubling sales," said Levi. "This year, our annual sales well exceed seven figures. We've also opened a successful warehouse and showroom in Santa Clara."

Constant attention toward customer needs made a big impact on his success.

"I always listen to what people are asking for. This is the only way to succeed in business—understand your market and your customers, and do everything you can to offer them the things they want, in a way that nobody else can," said Levi.

Levi's products are in such high demand that he must always work, forcing him to juggle his academics and business. Levi, however, has managed to keep his grades up, while still enjoying running his business.

All Levi's hard work has paid off as he receives high praise from other industry leaders and his loyal customer base.

"We emphasize high quality products and top notch service, and that is what has put us where we are today," said Levi. ♦

For more information on Jlevi StreetWerks and to view their products, visit jlevisw.com.

CUBE | Tsao's success stems from ability to apply algorithms

continued from p. 1

was a variety of cubing events, like standard 3 by 3, one handed, blindfolded, 4 by 4, 5 by 5, and fewest moves competitions. Tsao won first at the standard Rubik's cube, second at the 4 by 4, and third at both blindfolded and one handed.

"My favorite event is the blindfold because it's more fun and challenging," said Tsao. "You need both short-term memory for remembering the pattern and long-term memory for remembering the algorithms [step-by-step procedures that involve repeated operations]."

Tsao competed in a qualifying round for each event and again in a final round.

Tsao first started cubing in eighth grade when he watched his friend solve a cube in two minutes during lunch. Later that day, he bought a Rubik's cube and went home to start tinkering with it. He used different online tutorials to learn solving methods.

"There are different cases that the cube can assume and I learned about 100 algorithms needed to solve cubes more quickly. It took a while, mostly during the free time I had during the summer of eighth grade."

Tsao's ability to work with the necessary algorithms is his secret to success. Although Tsao said he is not very fast in terms of actually turning the cube, he finds other ways to make up the time.

Speech, debate excel

Students' recent wins motivate, bring opportunity

by Ashley Chou
and Nathan Kim

The speech and debate team impressed judges two weeks ago on Nov. 17-18, with major wins in both the DeAnza and UCLA tournaments.

Senior captain Angela Chiang took first place in the speech category of Thematic Interpretation at DeAnza. Sophomore Nathan Kim and freshman Uttara Sivaram were semifinalists in Humorous Interpretation.

Further brightening the spotlight were juniors Aadrita Mukerji and Connie Shang, who went undefeated in the tournament's debate category. The win increased their expectations and prospects for the near future by giving them a wildcard that could guarantee a spot in State Qualifiers.

According to Shang, each school may only send four entries to the State Qualifiers tournament. Although they did not make it to state last year, their recent wins and new coach have motivated them to

push harder. Their main focus now is enhancing their knowledge of current events, due to Parliamentary Debate's gravitation toward policy trends.

"[Mukerji] and I are reading the news and we used to watch the Jon Stewart show before it got cancelled," said Shang. "Our coach is also upping the hours of practice and I think that kind of dedication will help."

That same day, about 350 miles away, juniors Emily Chen and Megha Raghavan won the Parliamentary Debate tournament at the UCLA Invitational.

"It was my first time being partners with [Chen] so we didn't get to practice as much," said Raghavan. "But during the tournament we worked together pretty well."

With the many recent wins, the team looks forward to going to Santa Clara University on Dec. 7, an invitation-only tournament. A win at Santa Clara would only further secure Mukerji and Shang, and Chen and Raghavan's chances of moving on to State Qualifiers. ♦



Brittany Judoprasetijo

Sophomore Sophia Cooper and juniors Christina Lauro and Holden Sparacino take part in a bonding activity as part of Mix it Up Day, hosted by Diversity Task Force on Nov. 13.

DTF hosts tolerance event

by Nathan Kim

This year, Diversity Task Force [DTF] hosted Mix It Up Day, a national holiday, during lunch on Nov. 13 to help teens promote racial tolerance in their schools. The event was established as an annual national event, challenging students to identify, question and cross social boundaries within their schools and communities.

"We found an ad for the event in the Teaching Tolerance magazine and [DTF] thought it was a good idea," said senior Gabriela Perez, co-president of the club.

DTF initiated this event by handing out a variety of colored armbands to students in the morning, before school started. At lunch, students located others with different colored armbands and got to know them.

However, there was low participation in the event due to unfortunate timing.

"It was the first Mix It Up Day that DTF has done, and the event occurred the day after a three day weekend," said Perez. "It was not as successful as we had hoped because of the time gap between announcements."

Still, club members are optimistic and may continue with similar events.

DTF is now planning a second event called Make-A-Statement Day. This time, students will be able to voice their own opinions by writing them on T-shirts provided by the club.

"The statements should represent something that the students believe in, allowing students to express their opinions," said DTF co-president senior Katie Low.

Information for the shirts will range from self-perception to worldwide poverty. DTF hopes these events will bring awareness to students about boundaries on campus. ♦

Surprisingly, there is not too much hype around Tsao and his success at such a young age.

"I guess people are used to seeing competitors get 11 or 12-second times because there are a lot of people piled at the top," said Tsao.

Now that Tsao is a junior in high school, he is more pressed for time to pursue cubing. He is unsure about improvement and continued success due to his busy schedule and lack of time to practice.

"I used to practice an hour and a half a day, but now it's 20 minutes a day," said Tsao. "I just don't have time anymore. To be honest, I'll probably get worse as I grow older." ♦

Revamped ITTC hosts year's first LAN party

by Alex Song

The house was silent, the only sound being the clicks of mice chattering across wooden tables. 12 gamers sat tensely before their computer monitors, each focused intently upon his screen, searching for a target to annihilate. Muffled gunshots sounded from headphones clasped around their heads. "BOOM! Headshot!" a voice cried out. Compliments and insults rang out as blood flashed across the screens. The counter-terrorists had defused the bomb and won another round, completely dominating the opposing team.

This was the first official LAN Party this year hosted by the Information Technology and Computing Committee (ITCC) on Nov. 23 from noon to 6 p.m., where the club members duked it out in various games. A growing trend among young PC gamers, LAN parties are marathons of multiplayer computer games, which have become commonplace in homes and conference halls across the country. Named after the process to connect computers, the Local Area Network (LAN) has become a common term among computer enthusiasts.

ITCC hosted the LAN party as part of a new campaign to promote practical computer knowledge. After becoming an inactive club in recent years, ITCC

was reformed this year by a group of sophomores.

"We wanted to pique the interest of students to join the club," said sophomore Eric Sun, the club's current president.

The party was held at the Sun residence with a turnout of 12 people and a \$5 admission fee. Attendees brought their own computers. Once the group was set up, they battled each other in popular LAN games like *Counter-Strike 1.6*, *Half-Life 2: Deathmatch* and *Halo* during the six-hour event.

"Overall I think it went very well," said Sun. "Everyone enjoyed themselves while screaming and killing each other."

However, many issues plagued the party, including a lack of preparation. Many games had to be installed on site and technical glitches slowed down the quick turnover rate.

"It was tough trying to set up all the games and to make sure everyone played the same game at the same time," said Sun.

Nevertheless, the event was considered a success, and ITCC has already started planning its next LAN party, which will be held over Christmas break.

"The parties are going to be club exclusive so we can account for the behavior and actions of each attendee," said Sun. "Now that we've had the first one, the next ones are going to be even better." ♦



Juniors Corey Rateau and Daniel Huang pour free Planet Juice smoothies for students in hopes of inspiring them to participate in Shift Club's "Teens Kick Ash Day" on Nov. 15.

SHIFT Club helps teens 'kick ash'

by Rahul Thakker

Smoking gets to you—you shouldn't let it. Who knows when you will regret it?"

Freshman Taara Rangan's winning slogan was the theme of the day on Nov. 15, when Shift Club held an event in the quad to recognize "Teens Kick Ash Day," a day celebrated throughout the nation to promote anti-tobacco behavior in schools.

Shift Club, with help from Key Club, Interact and Diversity Task Force, set up tables in the middle of the quad and hosted a variety of activities. Students signed a petition showing disapproval of the portrayal of smoking in movies, wore ribbons in memory of friends or family members affected by tobacco, filled out a survey and entered a raffle, in addition to competing to write the best anti-tobacco slogan. The event was supported by Planet Juice, who provided free smoothies for Shift Club to pass out as an incentive for students to participate.

"I would say it was a really successful event," said Shift Club president junior Paul Stavropoulos. "There were a lot of people who stopped by and they really did do the activities. We hope they

learned that people don't need [to smoke] to be popular."

Shift Club is Saratoga High's branch of the Shift Coalition, a government-sponsored organization that was founded to combat underage drinking in Saratoga, Los Gatos and Monte Sereno. The Coalition recently received a grant to fight teenage smoking and drug abuse, which led to the Shift Club event on Nov. 15.

"We are trying to promote anti-drinking [behavior] and show people the difference between perception and reality," said Stavropoulos. "Most people think everybody else drinks, but through data and surveys we have shown that people who do drink are in the minority."

Stavropoulos said the Shift Club motto is "safety and health is first," and that the club is simply trying to "get people's attention" to spread the word about the risks involved with alcohol and tobacco usage among young adults.

"We will continue doing poster campaigns and we're planning to do something similar to [the Teens Kick Ash] event during March or April," said Stavropoulos. "We are also going to try to get a guest speaker to come and talk about [anti-tobacco and anti-alcohol behavior]." ♦



Brittany Judoprasetijo
The women's choir practices a few pieces in preparation for the upcoming concerts.

Choir to carol at SF hotels

by Kavya Nagarajan
and Melody Zhang

The school's choirs will be visiting several hotels in San Francisco from Dec. 20-21, including the Marriott and the Hilton, to sing Christmas carols for breakfasting guests. This year, they will be singing songs such as "Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire" to spread the joyful spirit of Christmas.

Compared to the rest of the music department, the choir has fewer opportunities for field trips and competitions. The Christmas trip will be a chance for the various choirs to come together and bond from sightseeing and performing together.

Junior Elizabeth Shin said that although sometimes they are "ignored" while caroling, they are usually well appreciated by hotel guests.

"At some hotels, they really enjoy it, and they stand next to us," said Shin. "Last year, in one hotel, the Chamber Singers were singing by a big Christmas

tree and a whole crowd of people came and listened. It was really nice."

Besides caroling, one of the highlights of the trip includes time to explore the vast city with their own groups of friends. Also, soon after arriving, the choir will watch *The Nutcracker* at the Orpheum Theater, extending the annual tradition of seeing a movie or ballet together.

"I'm really excited!" said Shin, a veteran of the San Francisco trip since 2005. "Each year, the trip is more exciting than the previous year's trip. I look forward to being able to bond with the newer choir members."

The choir has been traveling to San Francisco annually ever since 2002, when Jim Yowell, the choir teacher, arrived at Saratoga High.

"I think they really enjoy it because they get to stay in one of the most beautiful cities in the world," said Yowell. "They also get to see a Broadway musical or play and they get to perform in three world class hotels." ♦

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WHY CUTTING STATE FUNDS
WOULD BE THE END OF UC'S

by Marvin Shu
and Melody Zhang

The University of California system has traditionally offered a great college education for relatively low tuition. Almost all SHS seniors apply to UC campuses each year, and more SHS students have attended UC Berkeley than any other university, according to Naviance, a system that tracks the school's graduation trend. However, the low tuition that has been a hallmark of the UC system may soon vanish.

The state has traditionally funded UCs in the belief that educated students would become contributing members of California, powering the Silicon Valley and other economic engines and raising state revenue. However, the state has begun cutting funding this past decade, and this year, State Treasurer Bill Lockyer has proposed a new plan, a so-called "attempt to spark ideas," for California's ongoing budget deficit. By cutting all funding for the UC system by the 2027-2028 school year, Lockyer hopes to use the saved funds to expand state prisons and ease the state's economic issues.

Lockyer's plan would undermine the public UC school system and transform it into a string of lesser institutions. Undergraduate tuitions will continue rising to the prices of private universities, and the nine campuses would separate to independently seek funding. The three top universities—Berkeley, Los Angeles and San Diego—could perhaps fare on their own, but the less prominent UCs, such as the newly started UC Merced, would face uphill battles to remain academically viable.

Even the universities that sustain adequate funding would drastically change. Less affluent students who previously depended on the affordable UC system would be forced to consider lesser colleges, and wealthy students would be drawn toward private universities with equal tuition fees, resulting in a lower applicant pool for the UC. To maintain the high student population, the UC schools would then accept less qualified students with deep pocketbooks to replace those who were discouraged by the high price tag.

The diversity in the UC system would also suffer due to a more privileged student population and fewer out-of-state students. The general quality of the UC educational environment would decline as a result of cut funding.

As a crucial pillar of California, a weak UC system would only deteriorate the state's economy. High tuitions would deny less fortunate students the opportunity to improve their situations, which will exacerbate the disparity between rich and poor. The state funding robbed from Average Joe's education would be used to fund his prison sentence.

Hopefully Lockyer will stay true to his word that this plan is only to "generate discussion," but the fact that he was even able to suggest this should frighten students and make them aware of the dire situation of California's state budget. The state should not seek to amend funding problems through cutting funds set aside for education. Doing so would only alleviate the issue temporarily rather than help the long-term situation. ♦

FALCON FIGURES

Tuition costs at major universities, 2006-2008*

\$8,384: The cost of attending UC Berkeley, as a resident of California

\$34,998: The cost of attending Harvard

\$34,986: The cost of attending MIT

\$33,000: The cost of attending Princeton

\$5.5 billion: State funding for UCs

214,298: Number of students enrolled in UCs, both graduate and undergraduate

\$34,049: Approximate cost of attending UC Berkeley without state funding

*Costs include tuition and fees for one year but do not include room or board.

courtesy of usnews.com and ucop.edu

...and now you don't

Complete block schedule would benefit all

by Michael Chen

Although the school has taken several steps to limit student stress, including recent changes made to the bell schedule, a major problem still plagues their efforts.

The current schedule, a fusion of block scheduling and traditional scheduling (in which a student attends every class every day of the week), was created in 2005 to relieve student stress. Students originally had up to seven subjects, and thus seven homework assignments each day, but now only need to worry about half their classes every weeknight.

On weekends, however, students still find themselves laboring over work from all their classes. As a result of traditional scheduling on Mondays, students must spend their weekends preparing for up to seven classes, time that should be used for leisure, relaxation

and family time.

A much better alternative to the current system would be the most common form of block scheduling. Though similar to the current SHS schedule, it eliminates traditional scheduling on Mondays. Instead, students would have a rotating block schedule on Mondays, attending either periods 1, 2, 3 and 7 or periods 4, 5 and 6. The schedule rotates each week, allowing all classes equal time over the course of the year.

The current Monday schedule is an unnecessary remnant of an obsolete scheduling system that only results in increased stress for both students and teachers. For example, teachers often find Monday to be the most convenient day for tests, which results in several

tests on the same day.

Clinging to the traditional schedule can also cause a disparity in the amount of time students have for homework.

The current Monday schedule is an unnecessary remnant of an obsolete scheduling system.

On Mondays, teachers assign the same amount of homework for all periods of a subject, even though some classes will meet the next day while others will not convene until Wednesday. Students in first, second, third or seventh periods only have one day to complete the work. Their peers in other periods, however, have twice as much time.

Problems created by Mondays do not stop with students, however. Teachers can also feel burdened by the traditional schedule. Most teachers' schedules have been arranged so that their courses are divided by

day. Social science teacher Matt Torrens, for example, teaches only AP US History classes on Wednesdays and Fridays, while his World Geography classes fall on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On Mondays, however, he must teach both subjects. This may result in confusion and stress on the weekends, as teachers find themselves with twice the classes to prepare for and twice the assignments to grade.

Despite the advantages of a full block schedule, some teachers argue that some classes benefit from meeting more often. Foreign language and music classes, for example, can find that short practice every day is more beneficial than long, infrequent meetings. This cannot be helped. The benefits of moving to a complete block schedule far outweigh this downfall.

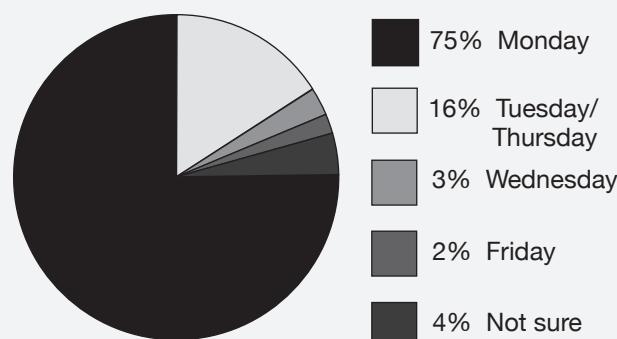
Other teachers fear that the block schedule makes cheating much easier, as tests cannot be given to all students in one day.

Students who take the test on the second day it is given, they argue, will be able to prepare by drawing on information from previous periods. Dividing classes so they meet on the same day, like Torrens' subjects, largely avoids this problem. If teachers are so concerned with cheating that they believe this is not enough, they should draw up different versions of the test rather than pushing increased stress on students, most of whom are innocent anyway.

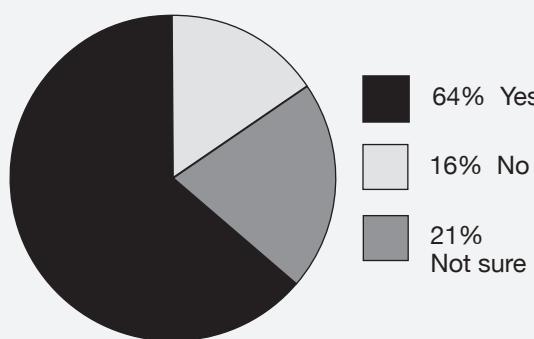
The school should not hesitate to eliminate the traditional schedule entirely. Mondays betray the purpose of the new schedule: The relief of student stress. The burden put on by six or seven classes could easily be halved if the block schedule applied to the entire week. With less material on their mind and fewer classes to prepare for, students could find relative relaxation while still learning the same amount of material. ♦

FALCONPOLL | Block Scheduling

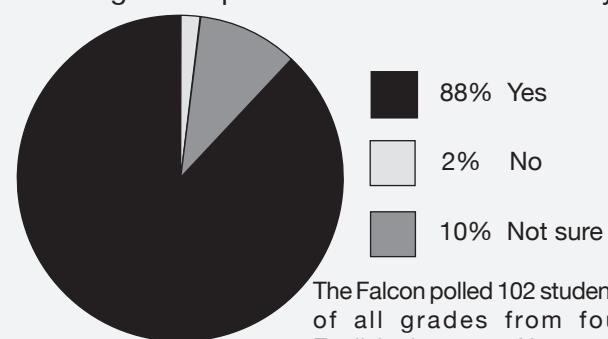
Based on the school's current schedule, which day is your least favorite?



Do you feel that the block schedule is less stressful than the traditional schedule?



Do you think students would benefit if Monday scheduling was replaced with another block day?



The Falcon polled 102 students of all grades from four English classes on Nov. 12.

—by Michael Chen

Curving creates contradictions

VARYING METHODS OF CURVING IN THE SAME COURSES CREATE AN UNFAIR ADVANTAGE FOR CERTAIN STUDENTS

by Alex Song

Suppose Student A and Student B take the same biology course and learn the same information with different teachers. If the students study equally hard to learn the same material, they should receive similar grades. Yet at the end of the semester, Student A received an A+ and Student B received a B+. The reason for this is a variety of curving methods used among teachers.

Discrepancies between teachers' curving methods strip away the balance achieved by a standardized grade scale, from As to Fs. In order for students to receive fair grades in their classes, it would be smart to create an umbrella grading system, with an emphasis on standardized curving, or at least create department standards that must be met.

The grading curve is undoubtedly

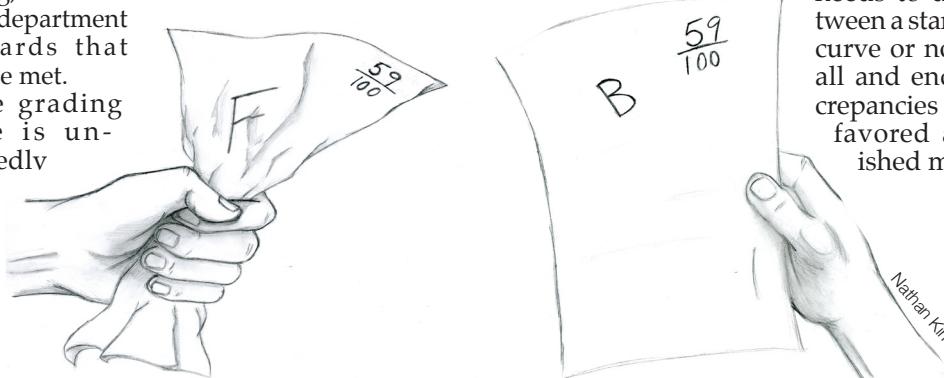
useful to students. It allows teachers to give grades that have been distributed evenly throughout the class. Teachers may choose to use a natural bell curve, basic lowered grade scale, a change in the point and percentage worth of a grade, or they may abandon curving altogether. Whatever they choose, however, must remain consistent with other teachers teaching the same subject. Inconsistency is the source of many contradictions in student's grades.

School is designed in such a way that every student can gain the same experience and the same amount of knowledge if they apply themselves. The government has even intervened many times to make sure that stu-

dent education standards are raised to similar performance throughout the country. The most influential example is the No Child Left Behind act, which attempted to equalize the quality of teachers and standardized testing.

In such a controlled setting, students are still receiving varying degrees of credit for the same amount of effort. There will always be the harder teacher and the tougher classes, but grades are supposed to be one of the standardized measures used to balance the variation of difficulty and teaching styles between classes.

The grading curve can affect a student's performance in class. It cannot merely be overlooked as a difference of opinion. The school needs to decide between a standardized curve or no curve at all and end the discrepancies that have favored and punished many. ♦



Great leap gained by native speakers

by Alicia Lee

The tall figure stands at the front of the room, looming over the class. "Who can translate this sentence?" asks the teacher. Just as the last word leaves his mouth, more than 20 students shoot their arms up into the air, eager to be called on.

This is typical in many foreign language classes where most students already have previous backgrounds in those languages. However, it is most prevalent in Chinese classes. These students benefit from deep prior experience and get a leg up on those who do not speak that particular language outside of school.

For example, students who speak Chinese have advantages over others. Any Chinese freshman who already has proficient knowledge in Chinese, such as by taking outside school classes or speaking at home, is able to enter Chinese 3 or even 4. If the same student took Spanish or French, he could only enter the language at the first or second level. By skipping introductory years of Chinese 1 and 2, the students are able to advance quickly and complete more levels during their high school career than those who start from lower levels.

By including a mandatory

introductory level class for Spanish and French in middle school, students will not be behind the standard level of Chinese and be able to learn at an equal pace with their peers. Having everyone at the same level to begin with, the school would be able to keep some courses and get rid of ones with minimal participation.

Although students in different classes are eventually handed the same opportunities, they will still be behind advanced students. Entering a second level language class as a freshman is the norm, and even though this is technically still advanced, freshmen in Chinese 3 and 4 are gradually pushing up the standards.

This issue demands attention because of the growing leap from beginning students at a lower language level to their advanced peers. Students skilled in Chinese, for example, will be able to reach an Honors or AP level, adding an extra point to their GPA and allowing them to take the language SAT II earlier than their peers.

However, if more rigorous language classes were offered earlier, students would be able to advance together at the same time. This would then raise standards of all languages on campus instead of having one course overtake the rest. ♦

Illegal downloading comes with price

Paying a few dollars for songs is nothing compared to the fines paid when caught with illegal downloading

by Tiffany Tseng

Coming home after a stressful day of school, students often feel the need to take a break to clear their mind before digging through a stack of arduous, mind-boggling assignments. While scanning through some favorite radio channels, a new song catches their interest and they automatically reach for the Limewire icon on their desktop. After a simple search and download process, they have just added another title to the hundreds of songs in their music library, many for which they have never paid a cent.

With a majority of students using illegal sites to download music, TV shows and movies, people should be aware of the consequences of illegal downloading before choosing to take that risk.

On Oct. 4, the Recording Industry Association of America sued a single mother, Jammie Thomas, with a fine of \$9,250 for each of the 24 songs she had been charged of illegally downloading. The fine totaled to \$220,000.

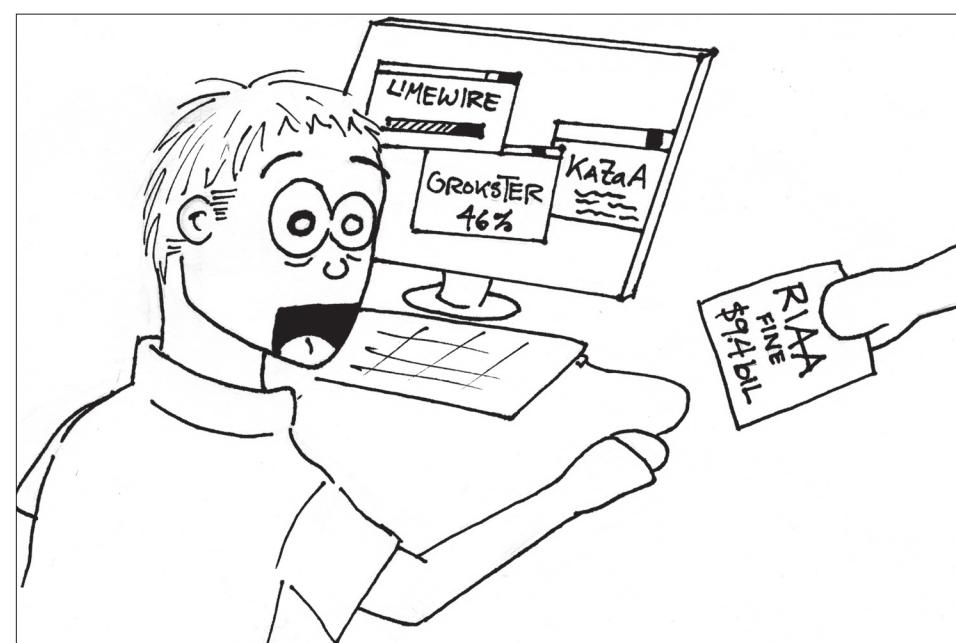
Many students have disregarded such news as a one-time case that will not affect them. People are constantly under the misconception that while others can get caught for the crime, they are the exception to the rule because the probability of being sued is so low. The truth is over 6,000 Americans get caught for illegally downloading music every year, and a student has just as great of a chance of

falling into this category as anyone else in the country.

Students making decisions to either pay for or illegally download their music, TV shows and movies are often under the influences of peer pressure. When their friends or classmates use free music-downloading software without any consequences, they are tempted to do the same because in comparison, paying for the songs seems to be a rip-off. There are ways of tracking songs through Limewire though, and if they download a song that was tracked, the fine would exceed the cost of all their songs had they chosen to buy them legally. Paying just one dollar for each song that is bought is much more reasonable than having to pay almost ten grand for each song being charged for.

A common reassurance for those questioning downloading is that programs such as Limewire and Kazaa are safe. However, by installing these programs, people are essentially allowing their files to be open to the public and shared with others. The woman who was sued, Jammie Thomas, had her songs traced through Kazaa, which exposed 1,702 of her shared files. Because the majority of music files have copyrights that are unintentionally abused, students need to be responsible for the files they download and could possibly be accused of sharing.

Besides downloading music, taking TV shows or movies online is also



Cost of 20 songs on iTunes: \$20. Cost of 20 songs on Limewire: Free. A friendly fine from the government: \$9.4 billion. Knowing it isn't that easy: priceless

Editorial Cartoon by Nathan Kim

popular. This provides an easy way to view episodes of a favorite show continuously without the frustration of constant commercial breaks. While no fines have been issued yet for downloading TV shows or movies, it will eventually become a target, and the risk of burning a whole movie carries a much steeper potential price tag than a mere song.

Illegal downloading has become so

popular that it would be unreasonable to try to prevent every student from committing this crime or to completely eliminate the trend. Yet, there is no excuse for making these bad decisions. Those who illegally download files to save time and money need to consider the consequences and decide for themselves whether the gains are worth the risks. ♦

Band here, band there...band is everywhere



Kirstie Lee

A Jar of Pickles

Band has taken over my life. No, I'm not a band kid. I don't spend every Thursday night on the football field for three and a half hours, nor do I have to spend 12 hours at school every Saturday (I think 30 plus hours of school during the weekdays is enough for me, thank you very much). I get to sleep in on Wednesday mornings instead of showing up early to march around like a penguin, and I get to go home right after school instead of, again, marching around like a little penguin. Yet oftentimes I still feel like my life revolves around band.

Every conversation at dinner is about band. With a cousin who is an ex-drum major, another who is an eighth-grader aspiring to be a band kid, and a sister currently in band, all anyone talks about are upcoming band competitions and band gossip.

In addition to my family, many of my friends are band geeks (I'm not complaining, I think they are very entertaining). Every Monday they talk about the annoying freshmen during the competition last Saturday or how they were so close to making second place. Band is the topic of the majority of the surrounding conversations. Band gossip is here, there and everywhere. With 208 band kids on campus, it's nearly impossible to avoid.

Aside from my life, band has practically taken over the school.

Think about how many hours a week band members spend on campus. They spend more time at school than most of the J-room hobos and hold more practices than the varsity football (perhaps a reason the band continues to win more often). Plus, in the summer, they have band camp practices from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. for a whole week.

Look at the Homecoming Court. Every single grade this year had a band member win in their court, with the notable exception of the seniors. Even so, drum major Lawrence Choi still managed to make court. Last year's drum major, my cousin Jon Pwu, won Homecoming King. All bragging aside, it appalls me to think a bunch of votes from the marching band outdid the star football player and the genius of the class last year.

I've been contemplating why the marching band is as big as it is when it's such a big-time commitment. It isn't an easy job, either. Try playing an instrument while standing with your back straight, intensely sprinting sideways or try memorizing 10 minutes of sheet music, where to march and how not to run into the Color Guard.

Someone told me that they were in band because of the relationships they form.

"You meet such awesome people that you wouldn't meet otherwise," he told me.

I guess I can understand that, but it's not enough to get me to join, much to my mother's chagrin. Still, I have a lot of respect for the marching band. They put in more effort than any other group at school I can think of and they get respect in competitions. So, to the Marching Band: hats off to you, or should I say shakos? I'll be watching from the sidelines. ♦

Reverse 911 benefits cities

by Robin Liu
and Tiffany Tung

A fire rages across town, destroying houses, forests and communities. The phone rings and a woman picks up, hearing a prerecorded message that warns her to pack up her belongings and evacuate as soon as possible.

Reverse 911 is a communications system that uses Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to deliver notifications during emergencies, sometimes up to thousands of calls an hour. It also reaches many standard communications devices such as cell phones, e-mail and fax. When evacuations were needed for the San Diego wildfires this fall, Reverse 911 was able to notify more than 500,000 people to evacuate.

Neighborhoods in Saratoga are generally safe, so it might be hard to approve spending thousands of dollars on a system that is seldom used. Reverse 911, however, allows residents to know what is going on and should be considered for the safety of any community.

With this efficiency that saved hundreds

of lives from the wildfires, Santa Clara County should adopt Reverse 911. Because of the many major faults located in California, the state is prone to many earthquakes. Evacuations are necessary in the event of natural disasters, and Reverse 911 could be a helpful tool in such cases.

The system does not only apply to evacuations. Reverse 911 can notify people of emergency blood donations, possible water contamination, or prisoners on the loose, warning people to take extra precautions, like locking up their houses.

Convenience is necessary during a crisis, and there have been dozens of success stories due to Reverse 911. For example, in November last year, a missing man in Fredericksburg, Virginia was located just hours after a Reverse 911 phone call was made.

All areas are prone to danger. This system is a way of helping people be safe from predators, disasters and other potential catastrophes. It's important to be prepared for anything, and it's better to be safe than sorry. In the matter of life and death, Reverse 911 can make a difference, but only if the city council approves of it. ♦

TOP TEN

Ways to Blend in

- 10 Watch Napoleon Dynamite. Get some pointers from Pedro.
- 9 Land a perfect score on your SAT. 2380 is for noobs.
- 8 Hang out with Nathan Kim. Who?
- 7 Use a spatula or hand whisk with your batter, but make sure to stir in one direction. This makes for fluffy cupcakes.
- 6 Look tough on your Cornerstone survey. Yes, you drink alcohol eight times a day and bully freshmen till they cry.
- 5 Give in to peer pressure. They always know what's best.
- 4 Buy a BMW. One month of allowance should be enough.
- 3 Wear all gray. Lay down spread eagle on the concrete.
- 2 Change your last name to Chen. Having the most popular last name at school, you won't be noticed at graduation or in the yearbook.
- 1 Wear camouflage to school. When a teacher announces a pop quiz, you won't be noticed.

—by Sulmaan Hassan and Nathan Kim



Taboo words rampant on campus

by Neyha Bhat

As students walk through the hallways, they hear various words that would be considered offensive, such as the "N word" and slurs against homosexuals. In fact, students have become desensitized to this language.

Why do students find it acceptable to use these words? Students either don't realize the magnitude of what they're saying or they just don't care.

Most who use these words are not prejudiced against African Americans or homosexuals, but have picked up the word from their peers. In fact, many are careful not to use these words in places where they may offend people, yet at school, they feel comfortable to fire at

will.

Students do not realize that just because a person may not be openly gay, they can still feel uncomfortable and offended by such words. And although there is a low percentage of blacks in the student population, the "N word" is just as offensive at school as it would be anywhere else.

The ease with which people say these words originates from the genres of music they listen to, like rap, where African American artists use the "N word" in reference to other African Americans. Because they use it with such ease, their youth audience believes they can too. Students realize they cannot use the word as freely as rappers, but do anyway because it becomes ingrained in their vocabularies after constant exposure.

Not only is the use of these words hurtful, but it can also develop into a bad habit. This can be dangerous when students step out of the "Saratoga bubble" and into the real world of college and business. A Saratoga student, previously able to get away with using certain words, will not have the same liberty elsewhere.

Students should no longer use these words. Most only use these words because their peers do as well, so if one person stops using these words, others will catch on and realize how ridiculous they sound. Until then, students will continue to undermine their upbringing and education. Ignorant students might never know how much they've hurt others with their comments and how poorly their choice of words reflects on them. ♦

Lunch line cutting aggravates students

by Brandon Yang

Rushing away from the science building, a student quickly walks toward the lunch lines. The lunch lines are already pretty long, going out from the cafeteria into the quad. The line appears to hardly be moving, but it is getting longer by the minute, thanks to the large number of people who forced their way into the line in front of him.

After waiting five more minutes, the student finally buys his lunch, walks into a crowded classroom, and takes a seat on the floor, as there are no seats left. He has missed the beginning of a club meeting because of the other students who cut in front of him.

As long as students are willing to wait and stand up to those who are not, they can help prevent others from cutting.

High school students and cutting in line seem to go hand in hand, especially during lunch hours. As a result, many rule-abiding students are late to various club events or make-up tests.

Although cutting in line may not seem like such a serious problem, it shows how disrespectful many students are, as they refuse to follow the basic rules established by the school.

As of now, the only punishment for cutting in line is being sent to the end of the line. Often, this is not enough to persuade students to follow the guidelines. More serious

consequences need to be enforced, such as an increase in the cost of food or even Saturday school, to try to show that those who cannot wait in line are not appreciated.

If such punishments are implemented, signs should be posted to make students more aware of the situation. For years, students were able to get away with few consequences for cutting in line, and they need to be notified of what is happening.

The school needs to be straightforward and tell the students that cutting in line is not in any way appreciated.

Because there are so many more students than staff members, the supervisors cannot watch and stop every single person from rudely forcing their way into the line.

Those who were already patiently waiting should also take the initiative to tell those who cut that they have no right to act so intrusively. They lose nothing by ignoring the cutters and then complaining to others about the large number of people who cut in line.

As long as students are willing to wait and stand up to those who are not, they can help prevent others from cutting. Likewise, the staff can assist the students by showing that cutting in line is just not right. ♦

Way back in the '90s when toys were real



Dorey Schranz

Hilariously Hungarian

I went shopping recently and found myself in the electronics section. There were computers and stereos and portable DVD players, nothing that would be out of the ordinary had I been at Best Buy or Circuit City, but I wasn't. I was at Toys "R" Us.

Kids these days (saying those words officially makes me old) seem to have lost touch with the classic games of yesteryear such as hopscotch, chalk drawings and good old imagination. Now they have Leapfrog learning systems, Spongebob shaped TVs and Barbie computers complete with a noise that simulates the whirr of a dial-up Internet connection.

It is great that these new games place a greater emphasis on learning—a great new alternative for parents who don't want their kids playing destructive video games. It seems like the older means of learning, which involve going outside and interacting with other humans, are taking a backseat in this technology boom.

When I was young in (gasp) the '90s, I went outside and rode around on my bike if I was bored, for hours, in circles. It was vastly entertaining. One thing's for sure: I didn't have or need an iPod, or any other technological

gizmo. My bike had a radio on it, which I liked to tune while riding—I have the bruises to prove it.

As toys get more high tech, they also get more annoying. No modern toy is complete without a bell or whistle attached. What happened to the old adage that "children should be seen and not heard"? Maybe I shouldn't go that far, but society needs to draw the line somewhere.

My babysitting jobs have evolved from putting kids to sleep and making sure the house is safe to acting as tech support, trying to fix the four year old's flux capacitor, which I broke trying to turn on. The kid stared at me, wondering which of us was the babysitter.

Instead of giving in to the child's demands to play with their new computer, next time I'll just teach them to jump rope or play cards (finally an opponent I can beat at poker) and I'll suggest all other babysitters do the same. Otherwise, this new generation will become so tech-addicted that sports teams, the theater and any other sources of entertainment that can survive a blackout will cease to exist.

As children's toys become more advanced, I fear that coming generations will miss out on the joys of playing games such as tag and cops and robbers. At least when I played those games there was no threat of lead poisoning or choking hazards. The most I got was a few broken bones. Damn radio bike. ♦

The Saratoga Falcon

STAFF POLICY

The Saratoga Falcon is published bi-monthly by the Advanced Journalism classes of Saratoga High School, 20300 Herriman Ave., Saratoga, CA 95070.

Views expressed in *The Saratoga Falcon* are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the administration, faculty or school district.

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STYLE FILES

Chris Owyang, 11



April Choi, 11



What stores do you like to shop at?

The Gap, Banana Republic, online, Haight Street in San Francisco.

Where do you get your inspiration/ideas?

I just buy what I like.

How much do you usually spend on clothes a month?

\$75.

What's your favorite piece of clothing?

Shoes, shoes, shoes.

What would you describe your style as?

Simple, I guess.

What stores do you like to shop at?

Metropark, Nordstrom and Urban Outfitters.

Where do you get your inspiration/ideas?

Magazines like Vogue, Teen Vogue and Nylon; celebrities.

How much do you usually spend on clothes a month?

\$200.

What's your favorite piece of clothing?

I'm obsessed with jeans, shoes, jackets and jewelry.

—by Neyha Bhat and Lyka Sethi

Finding zen in an otherwise hectic high school life



Matthew Pearce

Fresh off the boat

I'm starting to get tired of school. I can't remember if it was after my last calculus test or my chemistry midterm, but sometime not long ago it occurred to me that I am doing WAY too much right now. I'm used to Saratoga High, and I'm used to and accept the academically oriented environment that it offers. Yet right now, it seems like maybe there is one too many things going on.

To recount: There are the college

essays. Ten private school applications and the UC application equal roughly 20 essays. After writing them (I'm about half-way through), they then have to be edited, an equally arduous task.

Next are the SATs. I didn't take them seriously last year, and I'm paying for it now. Every month brings a new slew of tests, each time requiring studying and waking up at 7 a.m. on a Saturday.

Of course, all this takes a backseat to classes. I'm taking a hard course load, so there's never less than an hour of homework.

And let's not talk about the days when calculus and chemistry both have tests or when English has an essay and newspaper has deadline night.

Finally, there's the pressure and desire to participate more around the school during senior year.

Homecoming was fun, but after

investing hours a day, I'm glad it's over. Weekly football games, rallies and dances further add to the commitments and stresses of the year.

Yet, when it all comes together, this year offers something that I've never had before.

I feel, for the first time, that not only am I being challenged academically, but that I'm being asked to be an adult and to successfully allot time for my various commitments.

When the Los Gatos football game came the night before the SATs, no one was telling me to stay home and study or to go out and forget about the test. I knew that I wanted to be at the game, to perhaps witness what will eventually be the greatest upset ever, but I also knew that I needed to study and get rest before taking a test that would play a huge role in my college applications.

Ultimately, I went to the game and relied on prior studying to carry me during the test.

Through making tough decisions about how to spend my time, I have matured and I feel like I've gained something.

So sure, I'm ready for second semester, when I'll have one less class, when college applications will be done, and when I can relax and savor the end of high school.

But I think what I've learned so far from this year is that more so than second semester, I'm looking forward to college and the rest of my life. Stop me if I'm on the verge of saying something positive, but I think that SHS has done a really good job of preparing me for college and whatever follows. Surely not everyone is this lucky. ♦

THECRITIC
Red Robin



courtesy of Red Robin employee

Seniors Annum Hassan and Sanaz Ghafouri enjoy their meals at Red Robin on Nov. 3.

Diner flies friendly food

by Sanaz Ghafouri
and Annum Hassan

Sanaz: The morning was going by incredibly slowly. I woke up at around 6 a.m. to sharpen my No. 2 pencils, locate my student ID and eat my breakfast.

Dressed in grungy attire, I drove to Prospect High School to take my last SAT. After the exam was over, I was so hungry I could literally have eaten a cow. Instead, I chose to save my appetite to go to lunch with my best friend Annum Hassan.

After much debate over where to eat lunch, we finally decided to try Red Robin. We had seen the outside of the restaurant numerous times before, but had never actually gone inside. Our curiosity got the better of us in this situation. When we first walked into the restaurant, the waiting area seemed packed with people. The restaurant was definitely "happening," and the general atmosphere was very attractive. The decorations and the numerous tables all created for the perfect cozy, yet still attractive setting.

There was a 20 minute wait for food. Nevertheless, the lunch we shared was definitely worth the wait.

Most of the things on the menu were priced between \$8 and \$10. I ordered the Whiskey River BBQ Burger, which turned out to be everything I ever wanted in a burger and more. The burger had what appeared to be baby onion rings in it, adding to the delicious taste.

By the time Annum and I flagged down a waitress to take our picture, I only had a bite left of the burger.

Annum: When I walked into Red Robin, I was immediately pumped. Although



Red Robin

Drive from SHS: 6 mins

Location: 1306 Saratoga Ave., San Jose, CA 95129

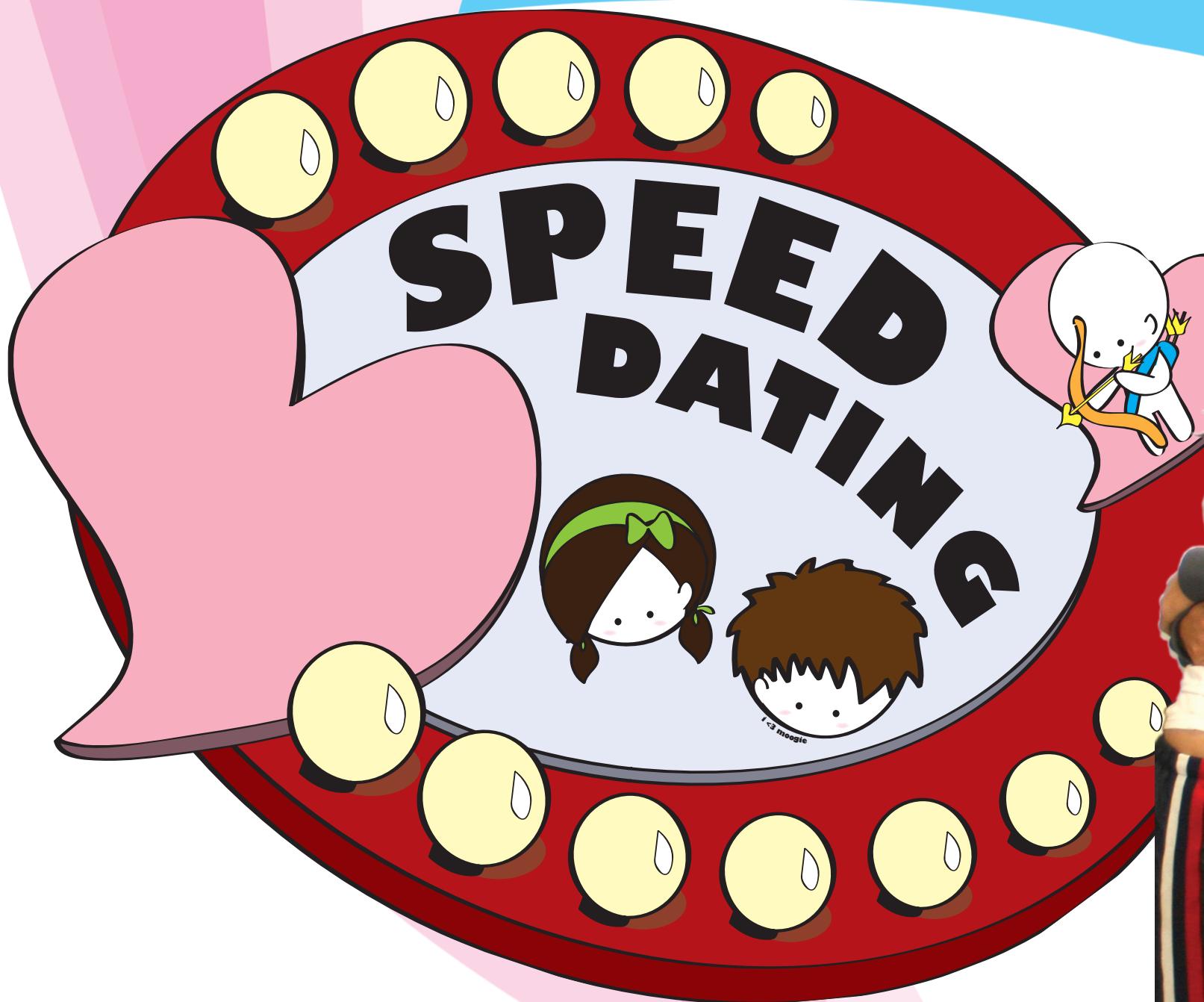
Phone: (408) 249-6020

pineapples. When I began to eat my burger, I realized that the Boca patty was definitely not the way I should have gone, because it tasted like fake meat.

However, I still enjoyed my burger, even though it tasted like a veggie burger with a few pineapples thrown in. By the end of the meal, I was stuffed and there was no need to ask for more fries or a refill of my soda.

Both: The location and general atmosphere of the restaurant were fascinating and the scrumptious food appealed to our taste buds.

So next time people are indecisive in regards to where to eat lunch, we highly recommend that they choose the restaurant Red Robin. The good price, festive atmosphere and the food left a good impression on us. ♦



Speed dating speeds up relationship process

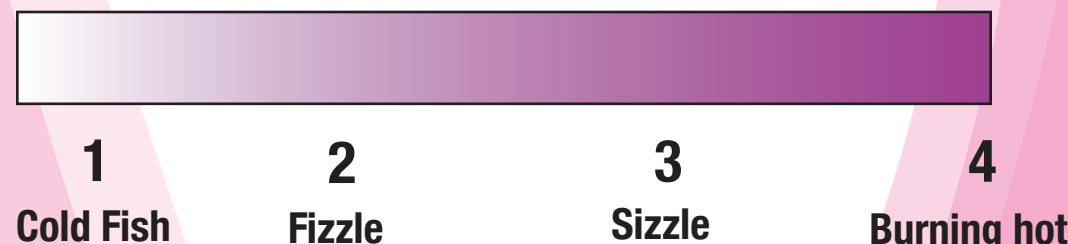
Meeting new people can be difficult, especially when the number of boys and girls seem limited within the confines of Saratoga High. To solve this problem, SHS students often find unique ways to meet new people, whether it's through friends or through outside of school activities. However, another option that exists, although not usually pursued, is speed dating.

Speed dating, a dating system that many students recognize from movies such as *Hitch* and *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, is where a group of girls and a group of boys are paired up and have to talk to each other until the organizer rings a bell or announces for the group to rotate after three to eight minutes. Then, the new pairs talk amongst themselves until the next rotation. This continues until all the pairs have had an opportunity to bond. By the end of the experience, hopefully some connections have been made.

"Only people having major trouble should speed date," said Shain. "I think it's better to go to Saratoga High social activities like dances and football games instead." ♦

"It was really fun, but three minutes

Compatibility Meter



Eight students test their luck in love with four three-minute dates

The Contestants



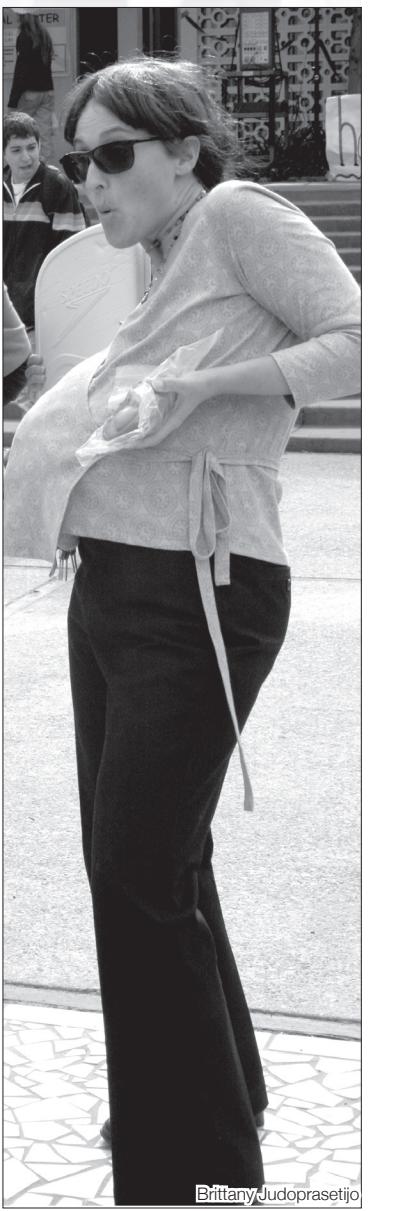
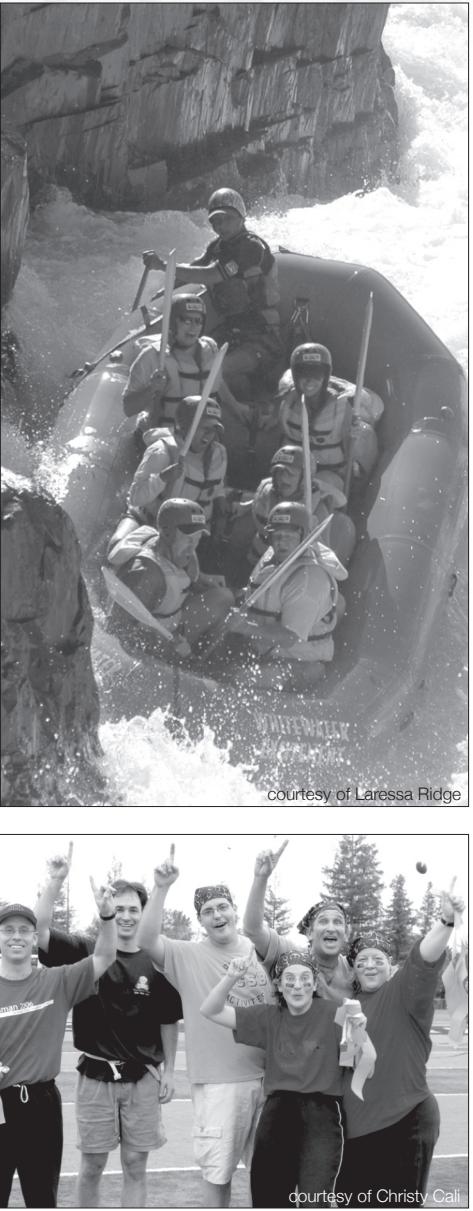
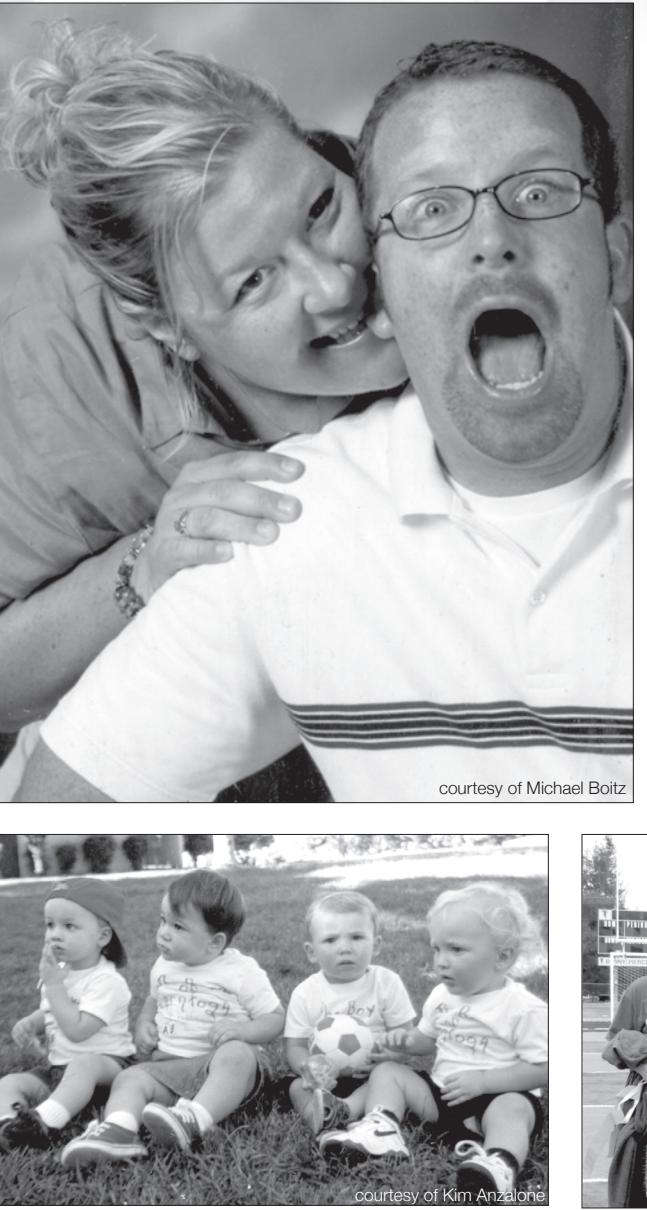
Melody Zhang

Name: Neyha Bhat Grade: 11 Age: 15 Interests: Dance, music, good food, hanging out with friends	Name: Felix Tuan Grade: 11 Age: 16 Interests: Hanging out with friends, listening to music (mostly hip-hop and trance)	Name: Anirudh Subbarao Grade: 12 Age: 17 Interests: TV, soccer, music, food, Indian dancing, ballin with homies	Name: Lyka Sethi Grade: 11 Age: 16 Interests: Music, books, art	Name: Zo Shain Grade: 12 Age: 17 Interests: Dance, student government, hanging out with friends	Name: Trevor Teerlink Grade: 10 Age: 15 Interests: Dirt biking, airsofting, hanging out with friends, football	Name: David Mandell Grade: 9 Age: 15 Interests: Band, student government, drama	Name: Vanessa Block Grade: 9 Age: 15 Interests: Field hockey and soccer
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→ girls ↓ guys	Lyka Sethi	Neyha Bhat	Vanessa Block	Zo Shain			
Anirudh Subbarao	LS: It started out a little badly because it was awkward, but by the end we found we had some common interests after all. AS: She's really nice and I liked her stories.	AS: She's really nice and I liked her stories.	NB: We had really good conversation and he's a really funny guy, but both he and I decided that we're looking for something different. AS: She was interesting, but our interests didn't match.	AS: He was really friendly and easy to talk to. We talked about Homecoming and other school activities.	VB: He was cool, but she's a freshman.	AS: She was cool, but she's a freshman.	ZS: When's the second date?
Felix Tuan	LS: He was funny but asked some random questions. I think the date went well; we actually ended up hanging out that weekend. FT: We had stuff in common but she didn't seem too enthusiastic.	NB: I had the best conversation with Felix and we had a lot in common. I definitely see him as future dating potential! FT: We had the most in common.	FT: We had the most in common.	VB: He was nice. We talked about how I like sports and how he hangs out with his friends after school. FT: We didn't really have anything in common, but she was really nice.	FT: We didn't really have anything in common, but she was really nice.	ZS: I'd love to take a ride in his car (not in a gold digger way).	AS: Zo's hella funny and really sweet. She's straight up G.
Trevor Teerlink	LS: I liked him, which is surprising because of his sophomore-ness. He told me about the sports that he plays. TT: I learned that she didn't play any sports and I'm a l i a b o u t sports.	NB: It was a little awkward at first because we didn't really know what to say. We talked about his mom because she's my coach. I see us more as friends. TT: She was more outgoing and seemed like an interesting person.	TT: She was more outgoing and seemed like an interesting person.	VB: He's nice. He seemed like he would be a fun person to hang out with. TT: She was pretty quiet. We talked about what we did on Halloween.	VB: He's nice. He seemed like he would be a fun person to hang out with. TT: She was pretty quiet. We talked about what we did on Halloween.	ZS: Here's a boy who can defend his girl with his muscles.	TT: Definitely the most outgoing. She had a fun personality. We talked about how she hurt her knee.
David Mandell	LS: This date was awkward. He had that freshman energy that took me back a couple of years. It was like a breath of fresh air! DM: I just don't think we connected as well.	NB: He was the sweetest out of all them. He showed a lot of interest in what I was saying. However, he was a little too nice and I can only see us as friends. DM: I've never met her before, but she wanted to get to know me.	DM: I've never met her before, but she wanted to get to know me.	VB: We were already friends. He was funny, nice [and] talked about band. We talked about what we did on Halloween. DM: We've known each other and we're just friends.	DM: We've known each other and we're just friends.	ZS: He can play his tuba for me any day.	DM: She was very perky. She said I was her first kiss. She told me that I kissed her on the cheek like 10 years ago.

Social Studies

teachers forge friendships at school



Sides: Science teachers Kristin Thomson and Lisa Cochrum pose in their Halloween costumes—Cochrum is dressed as Thomson. **Upper Left:** Band Director Michael Boitz and Health and Science teacher Amy Obenour show off their close friendship. **Upper Right:** The math department and Applied Arts teacher Tony Palma pictured on this river rafting trip. **Lower Right:** Teachers show off their team spirit at the annual staff football game last year. **Lower Left:** (from left to right) Spanish teacher Arnoldo Rodriguez's son Matt, assistant principal Karen Hyde's son Mac and history teacher Kim Anzalone's son Keegan all pictured at a play-date 13 years ago.

Unique vacations strengthen teacher relationships

by Brandon Yang

An epidemic spread through the science department this October. Symptoms included an increase in size of the stomach and the growth of long, dark hair. The diagnosis? It was Halloween, and some teachers had decided to dress up as fellow science teacher Kristin Thomson, who is pregnant and due to give birth this month.

For many years, science teachers have picked a theme for their Halloween. The math department, often considered the science department's "rivals," does the same.

"We've always come up with unified Halloween costumes," said science teacher Lisa Cochrum. "In years past, we've been molecules, the periodic table, different planets, different colors of the rainbow and a variety of things."

Teachers working together within

the same department share more than just an affinity for a particular subject. They often become a close-knit group that enjoys spending time together.

The science department

In addition to wearing similar costumes for Halloween, science teachers celebrate each other's birthdays by bringing in a cake to lunch.

"Most of our birthdays fall February-March or September-October, so we have a birthday cake almost every single week for four weeks in a row, and then we don't have cake for several months," said Cochrum. "When new people are hired, we kind of joke saying we need someone with a birthday in January, because we don't have any cake in January."

Also, because of the number of labs each science class performs throughout the year, science teachers often work

closely together to prepare and clean up labs.

"If one person sets them up, a different person will break them down," said Cochrum. "One person will do the shopping, and another will do the dishwashing, so that we're all not trying to do the same thing over and over."

The teachers also play pranks and harass each other, often with unexpected outcomes. Cochrum recalls visiting fellow science teacher Kellyann Nicholson's class to taunt her. Cochrum insulted and harassed Nicholson, but she did not reply, as she normally would. It wasn't until much later that she saw Kevin Skelly, the principal at the time, in the back of the room, silently laughing at Cochrum's antics.

The math department

Compared to the other departments, it seems like the teachers of the math department are the most unusual in the activities they do together.

Although the math department members have gone on many trips, a white-water rafting trip in the summer of 2006

was the most memorable. Teacher Tony Palma accompanied the math teachers on the trip.

"We pitched the tents, barbecued, ate dinner, and then, we went rafting the whole next day. We did serious white-water rapids," said math teacher Laressa Ridge.

The trip was especially memorable because of the dangers the teachers overcame together.

One of the other people on the raft had even fallen off the raft and down an eight-foot drop, according to Ridge. Although he scared the members of the tour, he was not injured and was brought back onto the raft shortly after.

Even though such experiences help unite the teachers, most bonding with coworkers takes place when working together, such as the hours spent reading a seemingly endless pile of writing assessment papers, a task which English teachers have done for the past two years. Regardless of the context, however, teachers need support from their fellow faculty members to help make the 180 days until summer go by a little faster. ♦

Brown, Ritchie form close bond

by Brian Kim

English teacher Kelly Brown counted her steps as she walked towards the coffee shop in Santa Cruz, where she was to meet the newest addition to the English department. Knowing nothing about the new teacher, except that she was short, had brown hair and looked young, Brown wondered if she was about to meet a long-lost twin, from whom she had been separated at birth.

Brown and Natasha Ritchie first met two weeks before the 2006-2007 school year, Ritchie's first year teaching at Saratoga High.

The two instantly became close friends and now regularly spend time outside of class together.

It is not a shock that both teachers enjoy literature, but even the teachers themselves were startled to discover that they have even more in common.

To our surprise, we found that we both love Sting and Dave Matthews," said Brown. "We would just jam to 'Everything She Does is Magic' or have deep and meaningful conversations about grammar. You never knew; we really liked to mix it up."

Brown related their relationship to Sammeric, the twins from the sophomore English book, *Lord of the Flies*. Like the fictional duo, it is often hard to tell them apart.

"Students always call me Mrs. Ritchie or call her Ms. Brown, but we take it as a compliment," said Brown. "Mrs. Ritchie is just a little bit cooler than I am, although we are both self-proclaimed dorks." ♦

When they go on shopping trips together, the two friends often find themselves in humorous situations.

"Last time we went to IKEA, we went the wrong way through the store and couldn't get back to where we wanted to go," said Brown. "We had to be 'escorted' back up to the rest of the store with our items by a security guard. He was nice, but it was still embarrassing. We're still going to go back there for Christmas shopping—this time with a map!"

As years passed, the other teachers left, but Obenour and Boitz remained at Saratoga High and kept up their friendship. To this day, he said he considers her a "loving sister whom he cherishes every moment with."

Despite the fact that the two work in separate departments, Obenour teaching health and Boitz heading the music department, Boitz said the two have plenty of other things in common.

When they find the time, the teachers enjoy long walks in the park, watching movies and grabbing a bite to eat. Boitz said "daytrip is the best escape for us."

Because of their busy schedules, the teachers often have trouble finding time to hang out. Obenour claimed that Boitz often overbooks his schedules, putting "fun" at the bottom of his priorities.

"We have to purposely plan fun things, or else we would get so wrapped up in working," said Obenour. "Especially for [Boitz], during band season, time is hard

A friendship forged on school, sunscreen

by Brian Kim

"Hey, lobster boy! Get over here!" health and science teacher Amy Obenour hollered from the athletic training room. Band director Michael Boitz turned around with his face glowing red under the radiant sun. "Put this on. You're getting burned." Obenour handed Boitz a jug of topical sunscreen, unaware that the two would soon become close friends.

The two teachers met in 1998, Boitz's first year at Saratoga High. During that year, a group of teachers, including Boitz and Obenour, became a close-knit group, and spent a lot of time out of school together.

Boitz happens to feel the same.

"Any time I can spend with Obenour is the best time," said Boitz. "She's really fun, chill, relaxed and real. She's not artificial; just completely honest and from the heart."

The friends spend a lot of time talking about their philosophy on education. Boitz said that Saratoga High is the cornerstone of their friendship.

"We have different ways of running our classrooms," said Boitz. "But we always talk about the many different roads to the end destination [after our teaching career]. We spend a lot of time talking about school, its vibes and how we can make it better."

After 10 years, their relationship has only grown. Like brother and sister, they are there for and depend on each other.

"[Obenour] is one of my closest friends and has always been," said Boitz. "She is the one person I would say I am closest to on campus." ♦

FALCONQUIZ | How well do teachers know each other?

To test departmental bonding, *The Falcon* gave multiple-choice quizzes to five departments, asking teachers to link facts to their colleagues.

Depending on the department's size and the specific facts teachers chose to submit, quizzes were of varying difficulty and length.

Scores were calculated as percentages by dividing number of correct answers by the total number of questions in a department.

According to the results obtained, teachers in

SCIENCE

Most missed question:

"Which teacher in the science department has a cat named 'Buster'?"

Answer:
Lisa Cochrum

MATH

Most missed question:

"What marathon did Audrey Warmuth participate in this summer?"

Answer:
The San Francisco Marathon

ENGLISH

Most missed question:

"Which of your colleagues in the English department says he or she listens to a lot of a cappella music?"

Answer:
Erick Rector

HISTORY

Most missed question:

"Which teacher in the history department said he is a fan of the 49ers and the Warriors?"

Answer:
Rick Ellis

WORLD LANGUAGE

Most missed question:

"Which teacher in the language department said her married name is Basque?"

Answer:
Laura Lizundia



—by Michael Chen and Dorey Schranz

HOLLYWOOD HIGH

HOW REALISTIC ARE MOVIES ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL?

Movies plagiarized my life



Alex Song

Hocus Pocus

I can't help but notice how many movies are trying to copy my life as a high school student. Movies like *Superbad* and *Mean Girls* have shown me too many uncomfortable glimpses into my own life as a teenager.

Part of the purpose of movies is to inspire and incite wonder in the public's lives. This quality has been lost, however, and replaced with depictions of the world I see every day.

Watching *Superbad*, I sat uncomfortably in my seat. Every conversation was just another bout of *déjà vu*. I felt like I had the same conversation with my friends 10 minutes earlier, filled with f-bombs and jabs about our mothers.

Quite frankly, I am thoroughly disappointed in this new trend in movies. Rather than thinking up brand new cinematic thrillers like dinosaurs with laser beams, or laser beams with dinosaurs on them, Hollywood makes Xerox copies of my life.

Mean Girls copied the drama that I take part in at school. As I sat in the theater, I related to having double-crossing crushes, three way calling and, yes, I've even seen a burn-book, or at least a journal of insults, once or twice.

Hollywood is already known to churn out movies like a factory, releasing sequels as fast as rabbits breed, but they have moved on to developing a whole new process of making films with as little creativity as possible—stealing my life's plot! The last time I tried to do a school assignment without creativity or originality, I received an F and a lecture about how stealing is bad.

It's almost as if movie producers recorded my conversations over the past two years and from them manufactured an exact copy of my language, my actions and even my hopes and dreams. It's a little creepy, actually, how they were able to display the world that I keep so exclusive.

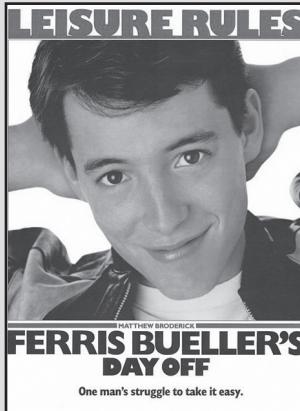
Maybe my life isn't as complicated as I make it out to be, but I feel belittled knowing that my entire world can be described in detail in under two hours. I miss the days when I could watch a movie like *The Breakfast Club* and confidently say, "I'm not just a geek, or a jock or just a popular kid. I'm a multidimensional human being."

My friends give movies like *Superbad* and *Mean Girls* great reviews because of how realistically they portray high school. These critics are frauds. Who, after all, would give a bad review of their own life?

Let it be known that I am challenging the land of producers and overage actors; try to make a movie without using my life as a template.

Heck, you can even use my dinosaur-laser-beam idea if you want. ♦

Improbable '80s Movies



imdb.com

There was "a brain, a beauty, a jock, a criminal and a basket case." That was the high school population in '80s movies. However, anyone who takes a look around campus will see that this is hardly the case.

Eighties teen movies seem to be obsessed with stereotyping people. Whether it's because of a changing of the times or the difference in maturity levels, modern teenagers are more multifaceted than what movies such as *The Breakfast Club* would lead people to believe. In some ways, modern teenagers are

not only more complex, but also more awkward. So awkward that they have no stereotype to fit into.

"Today's teenagers seem more open and comfortable with

their quirkiness than '80s movie characters ever were," said senior Hannah Chen.

Situations in '80s teen movies also seem much more choreographed. Nobody has the perfect *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, mostly because nobody would go through the trouble of planning such an extravagant ditch day. In the movie, Ferris spends his day running from his principal, crashing an expensive car and hijacking a parade float. Most students don't care if it's common knowledge that they're a troublemaker. No principal would actually endure physical injury just for the sake of hunting down a single student for cutting class.

People also don't actually expect to see huge changes in their life starting on their 16th birthday, as portrayed in *Sixteen Candles*. One hopes nobody's parents forget about their child's birthday entirely. It's especially unrealistic to have a perfectly lit romantic ending over a perfectly cylindrical birthday cake.

"Eighties movies endings are a nice thought, but they would never happen," said Chen. "I mean, there's no way I could all of a sudden transform into the prom queen after 90 minutes." ♦

—By Emily Hsu

Stereotypical '90s Movies

Imagine walking down the school corridor as a group of 12 cheerleaders walks by laughing and a pack of football players slam cans of soda into their foreheads while a girl in the corner cries because she can't get a date to the prom. This is how high school is represented in movies from the 90s.

Movies such as *10 Things I Hate About You*, *Clueless* and *She's All That* exaggerate the lives of high school students. Instead of portraying the typical life of a student, Hollywood packs the movies with power hungry principals, ridiculous bets and deadly rivaling cheerleaders.

Nineties movies have even stereotyped students to such an extent that a jock talking to a skater would cause total pandemonium in one of these teen movies. There is no focus on actual problems and pressures students face, but Hollywood centers its movies on the sole purpose to entertain rather than to portray reality.

For example, in the movie *Bring It On*, cheerleaders from one school videotaped another squad in attempt to copy and steal their moves to sabotage them. Senior Katie Lin, a member of the Song team, has never witnessed any cheating scandal gone that far.

"I've heard of coaches visiting other schools and mimicking, but nobody makes it that obvious. It wouldn't be worth it," said Lin.

In movies like *She's All That*, rather than focusing on school or grades, getting a date is the most stressful thing a person could possibly think of. In *Clueless*, a pretty and popular girl named Cher decides to give an ugly girl a makeover and she instantly becomes popular. This is a little too far fetched for real life high school.

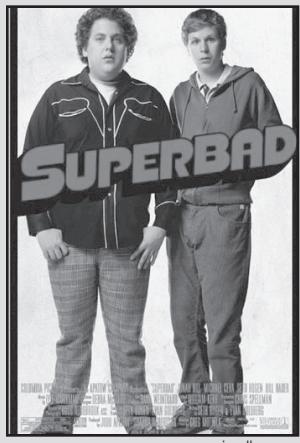
Nineties movies don't show the real concerns that should be brought up in a high school movie. Instead, they take a more stereotypical and exaggerated view towards it. If school was really like that, students would have no problem spending their eight hours a day, five days a week at school. ♦



imdb.com

—By Sulmaan Hussan

Realistic Present Day Movies



imdb.com

Present-day movies seem truer to life than movies of the past. The high school in *Mean Girls* was the first to show realistic cliques: the JV jocks, the preps, the cool Asians, the nerdy Asians, the burnouts, the desperate wannabes, sexually active band geeks and "the plastics."

While they are not as extreme as those in the movie, Saratoga High has its own share of cliques, with a grouping of people based on ethnicity, grade point averages and a variety of other classifications. Fitting in when everyone else already seems settled is one of the biggest plights of present day high school students.

The movie also includes a Halloween party that the whole school attends. Every single girl dresses provocatively to the party except for the naive main character, Cady, who dresses like a hideous zombie bride. Reality for high school teenagers is that Halloween is not a time to dress like a monster to scare other people. Many teenage girls avoid wearing sufficient clothing to cover their bodies just because it is the only time of year they can

do that and not be labeled a "slut."

The language in present day movies has gone through a realistic transformation compared to the clichéd '80s "Brat Pack" movies and the high school romantic comedies of the '90s. The reason recent high school comedy *Superbad* was so realistic was probably because writers Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg wrote the screenplay when they were 13. Even though the movie featured people getting hit by cars and drunken policemen helping a kid lose his virginity, the immaturity of the movie was what made it realistic.

Superbad also chronicled the great lengths to which teens will go in order to acquire alcohol. Just like in the movie, the kids usually don't even want the alcohol for themselves, but want to be known as the kids who supply the alcohol for the party.

But the movie wasn't all immature antics. The underlying theme was not about revenge, makeovers or prom queens, but about two best guy friends who were afraid of going off to college and leaving each other. Although most guys don't talk about their feelings, they feel the same way. This was portrayed in a very touching scene at the end of the movie when they finally exchange friendly "I love you's."

Movies about high school seem only to get more realistic as time goes on. The movie studios seem to have realized that people would rather see something they can relate to on screen, rather than a "plastic" dream world. ♦

—By Sanaz Ghafouri and Shamita Jayakumar

THE SPLIT

RACIAL DISUNITY AT SARATOGA

by Ashley Chou

Racial segregation has a mind of its own. Even in the hallways of Saratoga High, an evident division occurs between its two main ethnicities. Stick a group of 50 teenagers inside a gym and see what happens. The split between Caucasians and Asians would be clear as ice.

In schools like Saratoga, where the split between cultures is highly distinct, students find it easy to part paths once outside the classroom. And thus, controversy arises. Such separation of the races always brings to mind the touchy subject of racism.

According to Dr. Richard E. Nisbett from the University of Michigan and author of the 2003 book, *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently...and Why*, racial segregation in high schools can attribute much of its driving force toward cultural differences.

Asians and Asian Americans tend to have more complicated social lives, closer ties, and clear relation-

ship roles," said Nisbett. "For most Westerners, it's a 'who cares?' Asians are more likely to show filial piety and take into consideration their parents' wishes, versus westerners who have fewer entangling social relationships and are more free to act on their own."

Although cultural differences attribute to stereotypes, Nisbett believes that stereotypes have little to do with the actual reason for division.

"The truth is, I think when kids hit approximately junior high, they start thinking, 'What am I? Who am I? How should I behave—and shouldn't I be looking to people like me?'" said Nisbett. "And I think that's enough to produce segregation."

Nisbett, however, feels that it is merely segregation, and not racism, that takes place. It is surprising though, considering over 65 percent of the 149 students polled on Nov. 16 believed racism was apparent at Saratoga High (see page 18).

Yet, the real question is: Who cares? Who cares if there is or is not segregation? After all, studies have shown

that the interaction between white adults and Asian adults at work is completely intertwined. Maybe it is simply a phase that teenagers need to go through.

Professor Nisbett believes otherwise.

"They're going to have to work with each other eventually so why throw away the opportunity?" said Nisbett. "It's fine to be with your own group, but to do that all the time—I think it's detrimental."

Assistant principal Joe Bosco did not feel segregation was a major issue at Saratoga High. He did, however, agree that a narrow perspective could cause social troubles in the future. These include being outcast and misconceived as racist.

Although Nisbett has little idea of the extent of detriment, he too, strongly opposes the idea of total separation.

"Everybody wants to be with people that are just like them some of the time," said Nisbett "but I think you pay a price for being with them all the time." ♦

Many students perceive SHS as divided campus

by Uma Sambasivam

Although racism has taken a high road and has mostly disappeared from public view, racial divisions and tendencies still occur in everyday life—a trend that stems from the past and carries on to the present.

Ten years ago, Saratoga High was a perfect example of this. A group of students formed a tight-knit ethnic group dubbed “AP Baby.” In the senior class photos, they wore shirts to represent pride in their Asian ethnicity.

When the administration saw this photo from 1997, immediate action was taken to white out their shirts. According to world history teacher Charles Newport, the photo contained one row of students’ whose clothes spelled out: A-P B-A-Y.

“It didn’t come out until after the photo was taken what it really stood for,” said assistant principal Karen Hyde. “Most of the kids in the photo were good and involved and this was really a surprising

development.”

Although the administration originally believed “AP” stood for “Advanced Placement,” they were soon informed of the phrase’s true meaning: “Asian Pride, Baby.”

“I don’t exactly know their motivations, but I do know the school generally frowned on it because it seemed exclusionary in nature,” said journalism teacher Mike Tyler.

Saratoga High today shows few signs of blatant exclusion, however, separation of the races lies beneath the surface. According to senior Mike Vetrone, the two main races at Saratoga High are often divided.

“The diversity at our school isn’t unified,” said Vetrone. “It’s split apart into certain groups. When coming in to the gate, the right side of the parking lot is where the Asians are and the left side is where everyone else is.”

Many students feel that the past 10 years have shown a general drift toward ethnic segregation. Junior Felix Tuan and senior Katie Low believe that the cause stems from

childhood or parental influences.

“It has a lot to do with how we are raised and the dynamics of the adults in our neighborhood,” said Low. “Because of personality and where parents push you to be, they influence and direct you.”

Tuan said he grew up around Asians and thus became more accustomed toward that culture. Other factors that may cause separation of races can simply be due to different activities at school.

“Segregation may have to do with different interests,” said junior Tina Clark, “like Asians with music versus Caucasians with sports.”

Sophomore Christine Lee agrees with Clark.

“It’s not based on race at Saratoga High,” said Lee, “but what activities you do in school.”

One fact, however, remains: Most students seem to recognize that students of similar ethnic backgrounds tend to hang out and do the same activities, often leading to the perception of a divided campus. ♦

FALCONPOLL

Racism and Race Relations at Saratoga

Agree to Disagree

“There is racism wherever there is diversity”

67% AGREE **33% DISAGREE**

“At Saratoga, racism is subtle”

74% AGREE **26% DISAGREE**

“The way people view each other causes racism, and it starts with stereotypes.”

88% AGREE **12% DISAGREE**

“Saratoga isn’t forcefully segregated, but that’s how it’s been for so long, that there’s no reason to change.”

50% AGREE **50% DISAGREE**

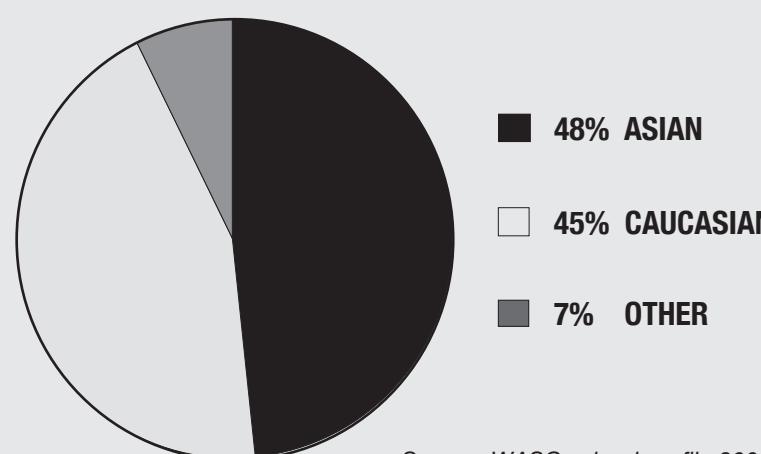
“Asians stick with Asians and whites are more comfortable with other whites.”

63% AGREE **37% DISAGREE**

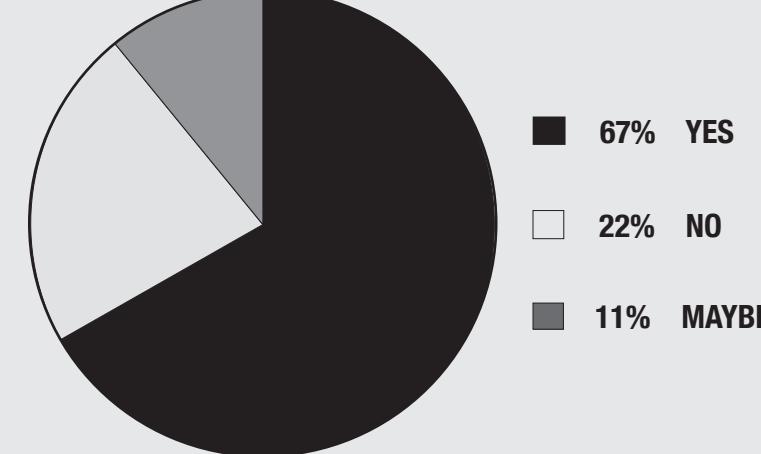
“Culturally, you’re directed to certain areas of school and aren’t able to appreciate the other areas.”

34% AGREE **66% DISAGREE**

the BREAKDOWN | Racial ethnicity



Is there racism at Saratoga High?



The Falcon polled 149 students on Nov. 16. Quotes were taken from students when asked their opinion of racism’s presence at Saratoga High.

—by Ashley Chou & Nathan Kim

CONTROVERSY ARISES OVER HIGH ASIAN POPULATIONS

by Tiffany Tseng

A sea of Asian faces fills the classroom of a rigorous AP science course, distinguishing it from some of the regular English and History classes. Some notice the significant difference, but most have become accustomed to this unequal split.

The Asian majority of tough AP classes has become typical for many of the tough electives offered at Saratoga High as well as neighboring schools, Monta Vista and Lynbrook High.

Having a different ethnic community allows students to hold unique experiences compared to a majority of the world, but also raises an issue of segregation. Although people try to avoid the topic, segregation can easily be used to divide groups or turn people against each other.

Monta Vista Controversy

Two years ago, the Wall Street Journal printed an article claiming that former co-president of Monta Vista’s Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) Cathy Gatley “dissuaded a family with a young child from moving to Cupertino because there [were] so few young white kids left in the public schools.” Many reacted to this article with shock that such a family would be unwelcome to the area.

“I can’t imagine for someone to say your student shouldn’t go to school here,” said assistant principal Gail Wasserman, who questioned the article’s validity. “Now if somebody asked if our school was competitive because of the high grades, the way I would answer that to a parent is to say our school is academically challenging, but not in a ‘you should come, you shouldn’t come’ way.”

Gatley, however, clarified that the reporter misused her words and the situation was not as implied.

Gatley was actually relating two separate stories, the first in which she recommended the Monta Vista district to a family moving in from Ohio. After living in Cupertino for only a few months, the family became aware of the high percentage of Asians residents and immediately moved out.

“He came over two months later and yelled at me for not saying there were so many Asians here,” said Gatley.

A week later, she was asked the same question by another family considering the district, and although Gatley felt the area suited her family well, she informed them of the Asian majority to avoid any misconceptions.

“I said that I love it here and my kids love it, but I mentioned that the reality is, their child might be the only white person in [his] class,” said Gatley. “It’s not necessarily a bad reality, but obviously to that previous person it was a bad thing.”

Gatley had three of her children succeed in Monta Vista High, and they view their experiences living in ethnically different area

“He came over two months later and yelled at me for not saying there were so many Asians here.”

—MV parent Cathy Gatley

as a positive.

“At any high school, whether it’s by culture or interest, there is a segregation of students, but it’s not really because of one group is white or Asian,” said Gatley. “I think people just end up being friends with people who share the same interests as them, and it doesn’t have anything to do with race.”

The Los Gatos Difference

Over the past 10 years, an increasing number of immigrants moving to Saratoga may also have caused several families to switch to schools like Los Gatos High. One hypothesis for this is that the increase of families from Asian countries brings an increase in competition, which may intimidate less academically focused families.

In fact, academic pressure has turned several students away, including juniors Kelsey Fiance and Jenni Leonardi, who are currently attending Los Gatos High.

“It was hard to try and keep up with the

majority of the student population,” said Fiance.

Leonardi, too, switched because she felt Los Gatos was “an easier school.” From this year’s experience, she noticed that AP classes seemed the same level as regular classes at Saratoga.

Other factors causing people to make switches dealt with environments that better suited their interests.

Junior Adrienne Blaine’s interest in the arts was the core of her decision to transfer because Los Gatos High had a stronger art program.

“I think Los Gatos is great for me at this point in my life, but Saratoga was obviously a big part of my life also,” said Blaine. “It’s a different learning environment because the teachers are definitely not as intense about doing homework every night.”

Along with that, all three students have noticed an impact of having smaller Asian populations on the school’s spirit and unity.

“In terms of the social aspect, it’s easier to make friends here because everyone’s a lot more welcoming,” said Fiance. “Having less of an Asian population has made a difference since it’s not as strict of an environment, and people are willing to have more of a typical high school experience while still being concerned with academics.”

The decrease of Asians on campus did not affect Blaine, but she noticed that Los Gatos had a more enthusiastic and united student body.

“Los Gatos has a lot more people, especially when I went to rallies—people had a lot more school spirit and class spirit,” said Blaine.

From the views of these students, it is a possibility that a high Asian population can create a different school environment and result in a different learning experience, but whether such a school is preferable is up to the student.

“People generally gravitate towards a school like Saratoga where they know their students could have excellent education,” said assistant principal Gail Wasserman. “But individually, people look for places where they think their student would perhaps fit in best or have the best chance of success.” ♦

FIELD HOCKEY

Falcons fall to L.G. in semi-finals



Senior Nicole Sabes looks to pass the ball upfield during a league match.

Brittany Judoprasetijo

GIRLS' TENNIS

Girls unable to defeat rival Matadors in CCS

by Kelly Lamble
and Annie Lee

Every team has its nemesis. Sometimes it's an intangible such as lack of confidence, but sometimes it takes on a very real form, such as the Monta Vista Matadors for the girls' varsity tennis team.

Due to the Falcons' No. 4 seed in CCS, the girls played the Matadors in the semifinals. In their third face-off of the season, the girls' were determined to leave a lasting impression. Although the final score was 5-2 in favor of Monta Vista, three matches went to three sets, but only two came out on top.

No. 2 singles player junior Kara Wang defeated Matador senior Courtney Chin in a three-set battle, 4-6, 7-6 (5), and 10-5 in the third-set tiebreaker. The other Falcon win went to No. 1 doubles' team junior captain Lindsey Marsh and sophomore Annie Lee. The score was 6-7(4), 6-3, 10-5.

No. 4 singles player freshman Catherine Nguyen lost a tough battle of three sets with a score of 6-4, 4-6, and 4-10 in the third-set tiebreaker against sophomore Melissa Kobayakawa.

Although the team did not prevail, they left with high spirits and celebrated their last match with good food at BJ's

restaurant.

"I thought it was disappointing, but we had a good season, so I'm happy with the team," said Marsh. "Everyone played as well as they could, so I couldn't really ask for more."

Their opponent, however, also deserves some credit because the team proved to be a consistent powerhouse.

"Monta Vista came ready to play," said Marsh. "They did well under pressure and we kind of crumbled under the pressure."

To get to the fateful match against MV, the girls first went through two other teams.

In the first round, the girls' varsity tennis team destroyed Pinewood, 7-0. Freshman Catherine Nguyen finished off her opponent in less than half an hour and the rest of the team followed within the hour.

In the second round, the quarterfinals, the girls faced off against Menlo, who had knocked them out of the tournament two years ago in the semifinals. They avenged themselves with a 6-1 victory and advanced to the semifinals.

The team has weighty expectations for next year.

"Next year we will have a strong team and I really have high hopes," said Marsh. ♦

by Brian Kim

Despite having one of the best field hockey teams in years, the Falcons could not overcome archrival Los Gatos in the CCS semi-finals on Nov. 15. Los Gatos managed to pick up all of their goals within the first 10 minutes, giving them the advantage to stall the game.

"We didn't really get the chance to play the game because Los Gatos kept on our defense," said junior Kelly Darchuk.

The team's quarterfinal match against Lynbrook on Nov. 10 was close. The girls pulled off a 2-1 victory on Nov. 10, pushing the game into double-overtime and strokes.

"We had a lot of opportunities, but we just couldn't get the ball into the goal," said Darchuk.

The game was intense, but the Falcons dominated the field with their accurate passes. Junior Stephanie Douglass stopped all of Lynbrook's shots, while Darchuk made both goals.

"We seemed nervous at first, but we grew confident as the game progressed," said junior Laura Ruddy.

On their first CCS match, the Falcons defeated Monterey 8-2 on Nov. 8. Ending halftime 1-0, the girls picked up their game in the second half. Seniors Nicole Sabes and Kelly Seago each scored two goals, and juniors Claire Marsh, Katie Marsh, Darchuk and freshman Vanessa Block each

scored one.

In the past few years, the Falcons seemed to have bad luck when it came to the first round of CCS. Despite their history, the girls gave themselves a confident outlook on the rest of the tournament.

"We scored seven goals in one half," said senior captain Nicole Sabes. "We knew we had to win in order to continue our season, so we came ready to play."

The Falcons showed their talents throughout the season by going undefeated in their preseason, winning first place in the Leigh tournament and getting fourth place in the difficult Mount Hamilton Division.

The girls made the highest overall record since winning CCS in 2004. The Falcons were also awarded with Best Sportsmanship of the entire Central Coast Section on Nov. 17.

"It was an honor to receive the award since this was the first year it was ever given," said Sabes.

As they bid farewell to this season, they say good-bye to some players as well. The seniors Kelly Seago, Julie Seago, Chelsea Farmer, Nicole Sabes, Rachel Sabes and Ava Amundsen all played their final high school field hockey game.

"It was really fun to play with the seniors this year," said Darchuk. "I'm going to miss them. It was such a good experience learning from them." ♦

—With contributions by Rachel Sabes

FOOTBALL

Team unity leads to CCS

by Rahul Thakker

Saratoga High is not known for having a good football team. Chess? Definitely. Tennis and badminton? Maybe. Academics? Is that even a question?

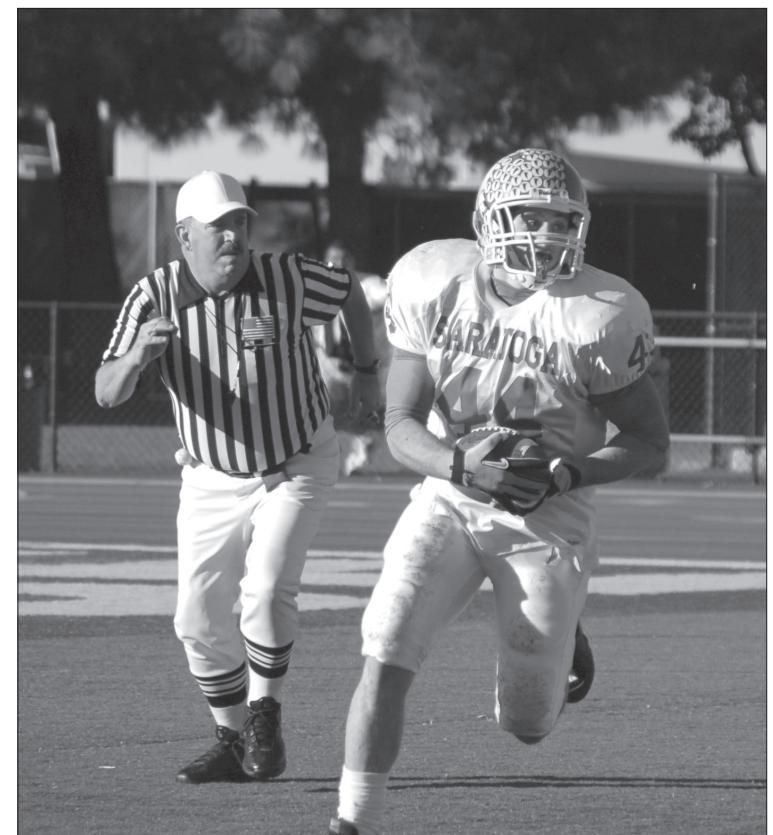
But this year, Saratoga made its best run in a decade. For the first time since 2003, the team won its league and advanced to CCS, and the Falcons' 14-7 first-round victory over Monterey High School was their first CCS win since they won the championship in 1996.

"I'm definitely proud of our season," said senior receiver Andy Copek. "Our goals for the year were to win league and make CCS. We [even] won the first game. I think we played really well."

Saratoga ended the regular season with a 7-3 record overall and a 5-1 league record. The team clinched the El Camino Division title and advanced all the way to the CCS medium school division semifinals. The sixth-ranked Falcons beat the third seed, Monterey High School, in the tournament, but they were not as fortunate the following week, losing to second-ranked Live Oak 17-14 on a field goal in the last 16 seconds of the game.

Copek said that the team's main strength was its unity. He said all his teammates were very close.

"It was a really close-knit



Senior fullback Gabe Essner runs upfield during the CCS semi-final.

team," he said. "Last year there were a few guys who really didn't get along and it kind of broke the team up, but this year everyone liked each other and there was no fighting."

While he and the rest of the Falcons expected to do well, Copek said much of the school has no confidence in its football team.

"I think it's kind of unfair that

the football team really doesn't get any respect from anybody," he said. "I mean, last year we went 8-2 and people were still saying, 'You guys aren't that good.'"

Copek said that he hopes the school will look at the football team in a better light from now on.

"It was an awesome senior year," he said. ♦

GIRLS' CROSS COUNTRY

Team takes 6th in CCS, Nast advances to state finals



Ashley Chou

Junior Katie Nast ran in CCS on Nov. 10. Nast placed sixth, and earned an invitation to Fresno's Woodward Park State Championships on Nov. 24.

by Ashley Chou
and Sophia Cooper

For the past three months, junior Katie Nast's schedule consisted of school, running and sleep. Intent upon outshining all her times from last year, she trained a strict regimen of specific workouts every day, with a minimum goal of 50 miles each week.

Her ultimate reward: state qualification.

"I tried a new approach to my training—a more structured approach—and I'm really happy with how it turned out," said Nast. "I was able to compete throughout the whole season and not burn out at the end."

She placed ninth in CCS on Nov. 10, which earned her an invitation to Fresno's Woodward Park State Championships on Nov. 24.

"The competition's the best of the best," said Nast. "There's really fast girls at that meet and there's a lot of people right about my speed, so it makes it extremely competitive."

In a pack of over 200 runners, Nast ran among the nation's toughest high school competition for the division three title. Nast ended up placing 29th, a large step up from her last year place at 52nd, with a faster time by 28 seconds.

Despite tension in the air, there was surprisingly less pressure for her.

According to Nast, the lack of stress stemmed from state championships not being a qualifier type race. For high school runners, state meets are the end of the line, where the "best of the best" come to their ultimate showdown.

"I worked really hard throughout the season and everything just came together at the right point for me this year. I hope to continue to improve and be able to run good, strong and competitive races."

—junior Katie Nast

"We weren't expecting to do as well as last year because we had lost some of our best runners," said Wai.

Despite this, all of them made the best of their season, with strong improvements by sophomore Molly Jordan and junior Ashley Chou, who attained personal records in every race.

For Nast, her regimented workouts also proved successful and have brought her to an even higher level of competition.

"I worked really hard throughout the season and everything just came together at the right point for me this year," said Nast. "I hope to continue to improve and be able to run good, strong and competitive races." ♦

BOYS' CROSS COUNTRY

Menezes falls just short of state qualification



Runners prepare to start the CCS race on Nov. 13. The team placed sixth overall, and Menezes placed 14th.

by Kelly Lamble
and Ben Clement

The thing about setting goals is that they don't guarantee results and sometimes they aren't reached. Such was the case of the boys' cross-country team, whose sixth place finish at CCS on Nov. 13 didn't grant them a trip to the state finals.

"[CCS] was kind of tough because everyone else was so much faster than me," said Fukui, "but it was a pretty good season for me because I'm a freshman and I'm already on varsity so I was pretty happy."

Heightened nerves contributed to the boys' lackluster season finish, but they vow to come back strong next year and continue to get faster and work towards their goals. In the meantime, the boys will continue running and most are looking ahead to the '08 track season. ♦

Menezes missed out on an individual state qualification by a heartbreaking one place. His time of 16:11 put him in 14th place. "I was fast enough [to make state] this year, but I just didn't have a good race," said Menezes. "I think that I have a really good chance next year because I was

close this year."

Following Menezes was junior co-captain Kian Banks and sophomore Nick Olsen in 16:36 and 16:43, respectively. Rounding out the point scorers were sophomore Kyle Borch in 16:59 and senior Will Perera in 17:11. The final two members of the varsity squad were freshmen Kyle Fukui and Pat Soung.

"[CCS] was kind of tough because everyone else was so much faster than me," said Fukui, "but it was a pretty good season for me because I'm a freshman and I'm already on varsity so I was pretty happy."

Heightened nerves contributed to the boys' lackluster season finish, but they vow to come back strong next year and continue to get faster and work towards their goals. In the meantime, the boys will continue running and most are looking ahead to the '08 track season. ♦

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GIRLS' BASKETBALL



Brittany Judoprasetijo

Senior point guard Erica Baba dribbles through the lane during their home game Nov. 29 against Del Mar.

Sclavos scores 18 points, leading Lady Falcons to victory over Del Mar

by Megan Lee
and Shannon Nguyen

This year, the girls' basketball team has new players coming from each grade level—even post Hanna Nielson from the freshman class. With such a large range of age groups comes an enormous range of talent.

Saratoga is looking forward to a promising season and is a contender to win the El Camino League this year, despite having only three returning seniors.

"We have a lot to live up to because we know we have the potential to do really well this year, but it's going to be a long

journey to get there," said senior guard Erica Baba.

The team started informal pre-season scrimmages 3-0. The first games were against Pioneer High School, James Lick High School and Wallenberg High School from San Francisco.

In their first real pre-season game, Saratoga faced off against Del Mar High School at home on Nov. 29 and won with a score of 35-21.

Defensively, there were many steals and rebounds against Del Mar's man-to-man defense. Offensively, there was a spectacular shot selection from the girls and patience with their passing. Junior power forward

Alex Sclavos was the top scorer with 18 points.

The team also stuck to tradition and started its season with a new coach, Kevin White, the fourth new coach in four years.

This constant change of coaches has been a struggle for the returning varsity players, who have to re-learn all the offensive plays as well as re-adjust their playing style to match White's expectations.

"The team as a whole is used to having to adapt to a new coach," said Baba. "There are not as many plays as last year and we're starting off on a clean slate." ♦

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BOYS' SOCCER

Obstacles, injuries complicate preseason

TEAM NEEDS TIME TOGETHER TO BOND

by James Jiang
and Rahul Thakker

Injuries. Academic ineligibility. Club teams. All of these problems have already plagued the boys' soccer team, and league play has yet to begin.

One victim of the team's misfortune is junior defender Michael Vu. During the Falcon's Nov. 24 game against Willow Glen, Vu was hit in the face by the ball, knocking him to the ground.

Vu was then rushed to the hospital where doctors discovered two tears in his retina that could only be mended through laser surgery.

He missed the next two weeks and sometimes still sees black spots in one eye, but he is currently in shape to play.

Such complications have hindered the Falcons' efforts, and up to this point, the team has had very few practices with all players present.

As a result, the Falcons have not done as well as they would have liked during the preseason.

Through the first five games, Saratoga's record was a mediocre 2-2-1. In total, the team was outscored by opponents 11-7 and was unable to score more than two goals in a single game.

The Falcons also played three other games, but due to printing deadlines *The Falcon* could not report on those results.

Varsity coach Bijan Shahmirza said that the team made too many mistakes and could have played better.

"There were a couple games that I thought we could have done better in, that I felt we kind of fell apart in," said Shahmirza. "I just thought we had some mental mistakes that we

should have improved on."

However, Shahmirza is still optimistic.

"I really like the way we play together," he said. "Sometimes we're a little loose on defense so we need to tighten that up, but overall, I'm pretty happy."

Due to outside conflicts, many starters have missed preseason games. Senior Kris Clark and sophomore Brandon Shahmirza both went to CCS with the football team, while senior Nathan Wang and junior Chris Chung had conflicting games with their respective club teams.

As a result, coach Shahmirza said the team's main problem right now is time. He said that once the team gets more opportunities

to work together, things will take a turn in the right direction.

"We just need more time to practice together, and as the season goes on we'll start getting more," he said. "We have some starting guys out with injuries and we have guys who are just joining us who haven't practiced with us yet, so it's just going to take time. They need to get used to working with everyone else [so] we can build chemistry."

Last season, the Falcons won their league and advanced all the way to CCS, and this year's team includes many returning starters. Coach Shahmirza believes the team is very talented and should do well during the season, which begins on Dec. 12 at home against Gunn, but he said the team needs to come together soon.

"Our season is looking very promising because we have a very talented team," he said, "but talent isn't all of it. You've got to play together. That's huge." ♦

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BOYS' BASKETBALL

Boys use strong defense to defy height limitations

by Edmund Ye

On paper, the Saratoga boys' basketball team does not exactly strike fear into the heart of opponents. The roster heights range from a measly 5'6" to 6'2", a behemoth by Saratoga standards, and it includes everything in between.

Contrast that with the team from Scotts Valley, which included a 6'8" player who ducked to avoid hitting his head entering the Saratoga gymnasium, and a starting lineup of all over-six footers, save the point guard. You can expect a long night for Saratoga filled with lopsided mismatches, right?

Wrong. A recurring theme in Saratoga basketball has been its undersized players, who compensate for lack of size with tenacious defense and an unrelenting heart. This year has been no different. Scotts Valley was dealt a quick thrashing, spurred by a flurry of jump shots from Saratoga, and the game's outcome was decided by halftime.

"We've come along well as a team," said coach Mike Davey. "We're pestering their guards, and preventing them from even starting a half-court offense, a perfect example of Saratoga defense."

The Falcons can expect to be outmatched in size against almost every team they play this year, but with their strong defense, they will prove to be a formidable opponent, regardless of their projected last place ranking.

"It's all going to depend on how hard we play," said Davey. "On the offensive end, we don't have that many scorers, but if we can limit their points in the paint, we can make it really tough."

Ultimately, it comes down to the things that don't show up in the box

scores that will make the Falcons contenders when league rolls around.

After a crushing 59-39 loss to Los Altos on Nov. 20 in their season opener, the Falcons came out focused and mentally prepared for their first home game against Scotts Valley on Nov. 24. The Falcons scored first in the opening minutes and never lost the lead throughout the entire game. The Falcons led 27-14 after the first quarter, and by halftime, the lead had grown to 22 points.

"We started strong, and they didn't really respond," said junior guard Ryan Pak. "Everyone was contributing, and we were making some good plays."

The Falcons pushed the ball in transition and shot a scorching field goal percentage. Scotts Valley had a hard time even getting an offense established.

In the second half, the Falcons maintained their comfortable lead by locking down even tighter on defense. Scotts Valley mounted a comeback in the fourth quarter, but the Falcons countered with a short run of its own, capped by a nifty tip-in by senior guard Edmund Ye. The final score was 81-53 in favor of the Falcons.

Top scorers were Pak with 14, guard Daniel Chou with 12, junior Chris Owyang with 11 and Ye with 10. The Falcons have a record of 3-2 and look to pick up some wins in their upcoming Prospect tournament.

The team now has a full roster, with the addition of seniors guard Keon Ghafouri, forward Andy Capek and center Steven Walker from football.

Several players, however, have suffered injuries. Capek and Pak may be sidelined indefinitely with leg injuries and junior point guard Owen Huang has a broken hand. ♦



Melody Zhang

Senior Steven Walker wins the opening tip-off to the Westmont Invitational against the Leeland Chargers on Nov. 28 where the Falcons prevailed 56-51.

GIRLS' SOCCER

Goalie key to early wins

by Kelly Lamble
and Amanda Yi

A team is only as good as its goalie. Luckily for the girls' varsity soccer team, they have sophomore Jan Iyer.

"She is an incredible goalie and without her on the team, we would let in a lot more goals," said junior wing Claire Marsh.

The team started out the preseason strong against Gunn on Nov. 19 and Lincoln on Nov. 26. Toga beat Gunn 1-0, with the lone goal scored by senior forward Nicole Sabes, and defeated Lincoln 2-1, with goals by Sabes and junior forward Kelly Darchuk.

The wins showed how the team has improved and gave hope that last year's dismal performance, a winless regular season, will not be repeated.

In addition, the girls have moved to the lower division of the De Anza League where they believe they will have more success.

"I think we will do pretty well [this season] because we've gotten a lot better and we are more experienced," said Marsh. "If we win a lot of games in the preseason we will build our confidence and be able to have more heart in playing [regular season games]."

The preseason outlook was dampened by a loss to Branham High School on Nov. 29. In their first home game, the girls fell short to the Cupertino district school, losing 0-2.

This game counts as a preseason match, where Saratoga plays schools outside of their De Anza League. It brings the team's preseason record to 2-1.

"I think we played well, but we just made a few mistakes here and there that we could have avoided," said sophomore

center midfielder Erika Ho.

Although they hung tough, Branham capitalized on the occasional errors, causing numerous breakaways. However, the Falcons didn't stop trying and learned that communication was going to be key for the season ahead.

"We were crowded and we didn't have very good communication," said Ho. "I guess we played pretty hard, and we definitely didn't give up, so that was a good thing."

Injuries also caused problems for the team. Players have had to play different positions than they normally play. Two key defenders, sophomores stopper Samantha Lee and sweeper Sarah Guy both suffered back injuries. Lee was hurt during the game and Guy hurt her back previously, prompting senior Rachael Sabes to move back from midfield to defense.

Iyer played very well and saved many shots that could have potentially been goals.

"[Iyer] was amazing. She stayed really composed even on breakaways and one-on-ones," said Ho. "She's really experienced and knows what to do."

Also, the two freshmen on the varsity team, forward Ren Norris and defender Annaliese Parker, have been making contributions. Both have had a lot of experience from playing on prestigious club teams.

As a result of the loss, the girls are looking for ways to improve.

"I think we can work on a lot more on talking and spreading out while we're playing," said Ho, "but everyone played really well during the game."

Although there are a few more pre-season games, the girls are beginning to prepare and focus on the impending regular season starting Dec. 12. ♦

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The Saratoga Falcon
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Courtesy of Pro Image Studios



Brittany Judoprasetijo



Courtesy of Pro Image Studios

no
games
just
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Seniors Kyle Guengerich, Zack Kowitz, Steven Walker, Pete Florence and Cullen Bowen go out for the opening coin toss during their CCS semifinal game against Live Oak at San Jose City College on Nov. 23.

Hayes Hyde



Courtesy of Pro Image Studios



Courtesy of Pro Image Studios



Melody Zhang

Clockwise, from top left:
Junior Takafumi Nakata
prepares to shoot.

Senior Hayes Hyde scans
the water to find an open
teammate.

Sophomore Nick Olsen sepa-
rates himself from the pack as
he runs to a first place finish
during a home cross country
meet.

Junior tailback Mat Spencer
breaks a tackle during a
home game against Cuper-
tino as senior fullback Gabe
Essner looks on.



Brittany Judoprasetijo