

LGHS' API scores drop

by **Avi Salem**
People Editor

Known for impressive academics and sports programs, LGHS is one of the best schools in Northern California. Students, parents, and teachers all strive to make LGHS a school that goes above and beyond any expectations set.

Beginning in 1999, California's legislature put the Academic Performance Index, or API into effect for the Public Schools Academic Act (PSAA). Since then, schools across California are required to take a number of tests per year to determine their API score, a number ranging anywhere from 200 to 1000 points. The state of California advises schools to reach at least 800 points, and so far LGHS has surpassed that measurement, however our scores the past two years have begun worrying educators in the district and country.

Some confuse the API scoring system with a test, such as the STAR test or High School Exit Exam. However, according to greatschools.net, the 2008 API score consists of the results from the California Standards Test (CST), California Achievement Test (CAT), California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA), and the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). Combined, these standardized test scores compare with other schools and show both parents and the school district whether the school has improved or worsened. When scores decline significantly, the state of California

may intervene.

Over the past two years, LGHS scores have dropped due to a decline in attendance. California's state law requires at least 95 percent of all of a school's students to partake in testing, but during the 2007-2008 school year, only 92 percent took the tests on the day it was first given.

In addition, the Base API for LGHS was 866 in 2006, but dropped 16 points to 850 in 2007. In 2008 the score dropped another 8 points to 842. Coupled with the test attendance rate, the school has been placed on a temporary "program improvement" course for the next two years.

LGHS Vice Principal **Markus Autrey** said the school will be trying to improve "the structure of the test, and the time the test will be given" and that the lowered API scores are "based on attendance, not academics."

Autrey also said LGHS will begin informing parents and students alike of the importance of standardized testing so LGHS can get back on a positive track.

For students, this change should not come as a worry. The school's program improvement will try to boost both attendance and academic success, but it is not yet clear how this will affect students. It is predicted that school will go on normally with just a few changes to testing methods and testing times. Hopefully LGHS can get back on the right course and excel in the next two years.

(Sources: CA Dept. of Education, LA Times, GreatSchools.net)

Saratoga street dance altered

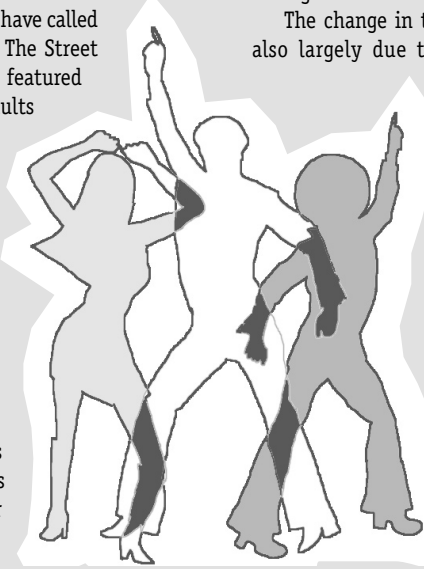
by **Caroline Ardizzone**
Sports Editor

The "Celebrate Saratoga!" event popularly known as the "Saratoga Street Dance" has officially been transformed into an event called "A Taste of Saratoga," and city officials have called off the entire dance portion. The Street Dance in downtown Saratoga featured rock and jazz music for the adults and a DJ for teens in previous years, along with a chance to hang around friends and relax. Some other aspects of the festival were the great selection of food catered by local restaurants, and the party-like atmosphere that the event offered.

In past years, the hours of the event went from 5:30 PM to 10:30 PM; however, this year the event on Sept. 20 was drastically revamped to cater more to adults rather than teens. According to the San Jose Mercury News, officials were concerned that the Celebrate Saratoga! events in past years had not focused enough on making local businesses grow and flourish. This year, the Chamber reorganized the event to make it more of an art and wine festival instead of the previous street-dance style of past years. Instead of providing a blocked-off section of the street for teens to talk and dance as they had

for the last 19 celebrations, the Chamber decided to open the festival to the greater community, not just local residents. Because of this, the teens' section was removed and transformed into a beer and beverage-selling area.

The change in the organization of the event was also largely due to teen activity during the past years. Because the street dance embodied a nightlife atmosphere, teens chose to come hang out at night, resulting in up to 10,000 teens at the event. Chamber of commerce member Van Nelson explained that, "The major problem was that teenagers were showing up drunk or with liquor already in hand." This posed several problems for both the community members and officials. Many teens last year got in trouble with the police for underage drinking, but the festival staff had no means of controlling all of the teens due to their excessive numbers. Nelson also mentioned that the city wanted to take in more money instead of just providing a dance "in the middle of the night," and so directed the festival toward residents "with more disposable income." This year the festival featured wines, art, jazz and various restaurants in the middle of the day, making more money for the town than "Celebrate Saratoga" had done in past years.



M. Beach

Coronation is coming up!

by **Bryn Taylor**
News Editor

The coronation dance will be held in the Large Gym on Oct. 11 from eight to 11 PM, and all are welcome. The dance is the Saturday after the first league home football game against Milpitas on Friday, Oct. 10, where the king and queen candidates will be recognized during halftime. Guest passes are available in the office if students are interested in bringing dates from other schools.

The dance is formal; dresses and suits or tuxes are preferred. The theme this year is Arabian Nights, so prepare for a memorable evening. Tickets will be sold on the front steps in the weeks preceding the dance. Ticket prices will increase the week before Oct. 11, and students with ASB stickers will receive a discount. A breathalyzer will be present at the door.



M. Beach

New Late start Mondays

by **Kelsey Appleton**
People Editor

Late-start Mondays have been a refreshing change for those of us who struggle to squeeze in those recommended eight hours of sleep each night. However, the new schedule is more than just an opportunity to extend that much-desired beauty rest.

Administrators established late-start Mondays, which began on Sept. 8, in order to prepare for next year's block schedule. Instead of taking a half-day once per month to collaborate, teachers are now able to do so on a weekly basis. According to Vice Principal **Markus Autrey**, the new developmental program was created so that teachers can "collaborate with each other and develop new lesson plans. Most importantly, they also have the chance to work inter-departmentally." In addition, late-start Mondays mirror Fisher Middle School, so that students with younger siblings can coordinate their schedules.



M. Beach

Former coach attempts arson

by **Catherine Soulé**
News Editor

"Los Gatos just doesn't hire wackos," said former Bay Area journalist and current Stanford University Sports Information Director Dave Kiefer. However, on September 8 this statement was disproven by the ludicrous crime committed by Los Gatos' own former frosh-soph football coach Brian Butcher.

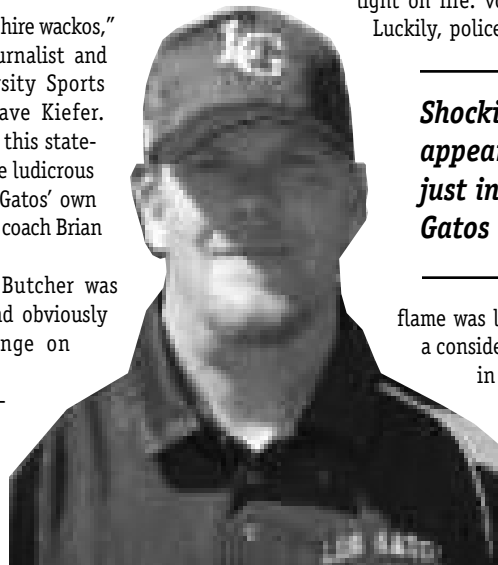
Thirty-four-year-old Butcher was fired this past spring, and obviously felt the need for revenge on LGHS.

At 1:00 am on September 8, he drove his car onto the front lawn and broke into the athletic storage shed near the field, then used a shot put to break a window and enter Helm Gym.

After gaining access, he proceeded to make a pile

of things in the center of the gym that he planned to light on fire: volleyball nets, wrestling pads, etc. Luckily, police were alerted via alarm before the

Shockingly, Butcher did not appear to be intoxicated, just incredibly angry that Los Gatos let him go.



Courtesy LGHSfootball.com

flame was lit but Butcher was reprimanded with a considerable amount of "flammable material" in his car as well.

Shockingly, Butcher did not appear to be intoxicated, just incredibly angry that Los Gatos let him go.

He is now being held in Santa Clara County Jail under charges of burglary, vandalism, and attempted arson with a \$ 30,000 bond. (Source: Mercury News)

LGHS to adopt new schedule

by **Jenny Heath**
News Editor

The rumors are true. Next year LGHS will have a block schedule. Though it may seem sudden, the school's administration has, in fact, been planning a block schedule since the fall of 2007. They started planning even before Saratoga did, which has had a block schedule for 3 years. A scheduling committee was formed around Thanksgiving last year, and meets every three weeks to plan the school's transition to this major change. The type of block schedule is still undecided. The committee's goal is to reach a final decision before Thanksgiving.

Because the decision to change the schedule has been in the works for so long, the school has had plenty of time to evaluate their plan. The administration has been evaluating data such as STAR test scores, grades, and AP test scores. They look at gauges of students' academic success, and make correlations between the statistics. Based on this information, they have concluded that block scheduling is the right path for the school to follow. The switch to the new type of scheduling is supported by the administration and the majority of the staff, who have already voted on it.

Naturally, there will be plenty of questions about the new schedule. Meetings will be held for parents who want to know more about block scheduling. These meetings will talk about the benefits, drawbacks, and details of the new schedule. There will also be opportunities for student input. Surveys will be created and sent out via SurveyMonkey to students to gather their opinion and preferences regarding the schedule. The administration wants to focus on the concerns of parents and students leading up to implementation. Their main goal is to help students and make life easier for them, and they believe

block scheduling is the best way to do this.

Assistant Principal **Marcus Autrey** who is in charge of curriculum, guidance, and testing, said that there are many benefits of moving to a block schedule. "It's easier to organize yourself," he said, "There is more time to go deeper into the material and really process the information and engage in the material." In addition, the slower pace of the day results in less pressure, so that students are not as stressed out. It allows for more time to do homework and meet with teachers, and is also a lot more like a college schedule. According to Autrey, it is a "more realistic view of learning." Apparently, students at schools with block scheduling truly like it. They wouldn't go back [to a regular schedule], Autrey said of Saratoga High School.

Though there will be benefits, there are also some potential drawbacks to block scheduling. "Of course, with any major change, there will need to be a period of time for adjustment," Autrey said. Teaching methods will probably change. A transformation in the way a teacher delivers the material could end up being positive or negative. Teachers will have to adjust to the new periods and reconfigure their lesson plans to fit the schedule. Part of this change could include what is often considered a problem at Saratoga. Teachers end up giving all tests on Monday because it is the only day that includes all seven periods. This ensures that there is less cheating than there would be if students had an entire day to exchange information about the exam. Another disadvantage of block scheduling for some students could be that it is hard to concentrate for a prolonged period of time.

Overall, the purpose of the block schedule is to improve the future of the school as a whole. Autrey said that, "it will benefit parents, students, and staff." We certainly hope so.