

The Mosaic

SAN JOSE URBAN JOURNALISM WORKSHOP

EDUCATION

◆ Students bemoan dedicating themselves to becoming the high school valedictorian. **Page 3.**

ENTERTAINMENT

◆ 'All That' and a bag of chips — well, more like food and music reviews. **Pages 6-7.**

Friday, July 14, 2000

Teens face tough time in Valley

New worries: Local teens feel restrictions — like curfews and Proposition 21 — smother their liberties

By Lee Blalck
MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

While teens still have to worry about crime and violence, they now have to fear the police too. A flurry of local and state laws enacted vigorously in the last decade makes them just as likely to be picked up for staying out late as for robbing a liquor store.

The spring passage of California's Proposition

21, which makes youths as accountable as adults in crime, joins curfew laws and new driving restrictions in a nationwide effort that some say are aimed at restricting the civil liberties of teens.

And yet there remains a great deal of controversy among adults and teens as to whether these laws are necessary or effective. While some kids and officials agree that these laws protect youth, others say they simply trample constitutional rights.

"It is the government's responsibility to make things as safe as possible, but not to the point where it infringes on people's rights," said Oyang Teng, a 17-year-old Milpitas resident. By making restrictive laws, the government is "depriving kids of being free in an important time in their life," he said.

"There has been a move in the past decade to marginalize and criminalize youth," said Elaine Elinson, spokeswoman for the San Francisco chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union. "Youth itself has become a suspect class."

◆ See **LIVING**, Page 4

CRAZY COST OF LIVING DOESN'T JUST AFFECT ADULTS

By Erik Lacayo
MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

It's no big secret that the cost of living in Silicon Valley is among the highest in the country.

And for those who are reaping the rewards of technological wealth, dropping \$40 at the movies or pumping \$25 into the gas tank is no big deal.

But for teens in this valley, a night out with friends costs enough to swallow a week's

worth of wages. After all, a minimum-wage job earns the same paycheck in cities like San Jose and Palo Alto as it does in cities like Fresno or Sacramento, where the cost of living is significantly lower.

"Things are too expensive," said Josh Gardner, 14, who is working part-time at Subway Sandwiches to earn money for the expensive basketball shoes he wants. "I never have enough (money)."

◆ See **COST**, Page 4

Suicide rate on the rise among local teens

GROUPS PUSH FOR OPEN DISCUSSIONS ABOUT DEPRESSION

By Janet Pak
MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

On the outside, Saratoga High School senior Lancy Chiu had it all. She was smart, friendly and outgoing. According to friends, Chiu was an eloquent speaker and debater, a beautiful singer and an academically well-rounded student. But underneath that facade was a troubled teen.

Chiu's friends, who declined to speak on the record, described her as bearing a striking resemblance to Sailor Mars — with long, jet-black hair down to her waist, deep brown eyes and a slender figure. She appeared to be charming, affable and lovable. Inside, however, she was a completely different person — dark, dramatically poetic and enigmatic. Her alias online and to friends was Sailor Mars.

An attempt to interview her parents was made, but they declined to comment, still distraught over the loss of their daughter.

Interviews with friends, family members and grief counselors revealed that on the morning of May 7 — one day before her 18th birthday — Chiu brought her school books and a picnic to West Valley College and overdosed on sleeping pills. Her final goodbye to friends came in the form of a four-line e-mail poem, which she timed to arrive just as she died.

Teenage suicide rates locally have risen over the past few years, according to the Santa Clara County Health Department. Suicide attempts also have increased every year since 1997.

Shelia Everett, a grief counselor for the Center for Living with Dying, provided counseling at Saratoga High School after Chiu's suicide.

"There is a great deal of pressure to achieve academic excellence, especially in Silicon Valley," she said. "Lots of listening is very important to help prevent teen suicide."

Enormous pressure on teens, the desire to "fit in" and the need to succeed by attending a prestigious college are some of the reasons teens consider committing suicide, Everett said.

Asian and Hispanic youth in Santa Clara County think about suicide more than young people nationwide, according to Dr. David Amendolillo, director of children and family services at Eastfield Ming Quong, which operates family counseling centers in Santa Clara County.

◆ See **SUICIDE**, Page 2

It's not just the shoes

Seven-foot three-inch St. Mary's basketball giant looks to the future after draft-day disappointment

On a recent afternoon, 23-year-old Brad Millard pulled up to his Walnut Creek apartment in a dark blue Chevy Tahoe. The SUV, complete with lift modifications, was a fitting ride for the man inside.

The driver's side door swung open. What appeared next has come to epitomize this 7'3" giant from Seattle: His size 23 feet.

They called him the "Big Continent" at St. Mary's College in Moraga, where in his '96-'97 sophomore year, Millard posted an impressive season which culminated in his NCAA tournament match-up with the then most dominant player in college ball: Tim Duncan of Wake Forest.

Throughout that year, Millard averaged 12.4 points per game and accumulated 92 blocked shots. Millard led St. Mary's to take the West Coast Conference title. He also garnered

Story by David Lee
MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

Photos by Michael Grenz
MOSAIC PHOTOGRAPHER

two tournament MVP awards, and was WCC First Team All-League. "Going up against Duncan, the best college player at the time, it was a great challenge," Millard said.

"Granted he had more points and rebounds in general as far as seeing what level I was at."

In that game, Millard scored 16 points, blocked two shots and grabbed six rebounds, a performance which earned him high praise from Duncan, the man who would lead the San Antonio Spurs to a NBA title two years later.

"I remember him telling me after the game, 'You're gonna be a great one,'" said Millard with a smile, displaying a framed picture of himself dunking on Duncan.

◆ See **SHOES**, Page 2

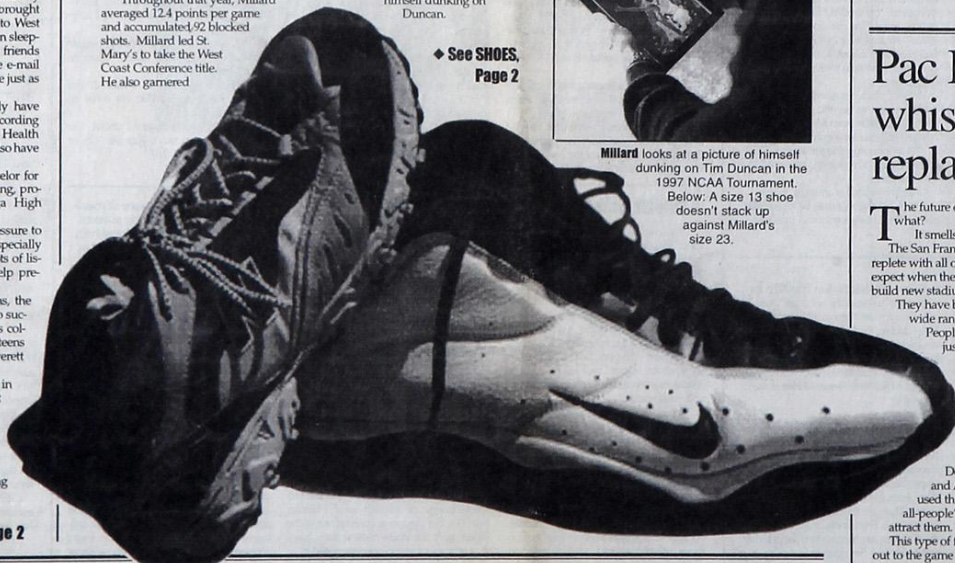


Brad Millard suffered a series of foot injuries that sidelined him for the last 17 games of the 1999-2000 season.



Millard looks at a picture of himself dunking on Tim Duncan in the 1997 NCAA Tournament.

Below: A size 13 shoe doesn't stack up against Millard's size 23.



Call them what you want: Raves still exist

ALL-NIGHT PARTIES LOOK FOR NEW VENUES AFTER COUNTY CRACKDOWN

By Reinalyn Ramos
MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

On a Saturday night in July at the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds, more than 4,500 young adults jerked and gyrated to pounding house music while technicolor flashing lights and lasers swept the room.

The glow sticks in their hands made amazing light patterns while dancers flung their arms about. At one point, a group of teen girls walked by and flashed fluorescent smiles created by the miniature glow sticks in their mouths.

This is the rave scene. And while it might seem like a typical teen party, there are dangers lurking all around. Drugs are one of those dangers.

Because of the recent spate of drug overdoses, fights and stabbings at raves all around the county, the all-night dance parties have received a lot of negative attention. Many "ravers" think it's an unfair characterization, but some communities are determined to stop the parties from happening on publicly-owned property.

◆ See **RAVES**, Page 4

Pac Bells and whistles won't replace winning

The future of baseball is upon us, and you know what?

It smells like sushi. The San Francisco Giants have built a ballpark replete with all of the bells and whistles that teams expect when they hold their cities ransom for money to build new stadiums.

They have brought out the family of four with a wide range of activities other than the ballpark. People want sushi and garlic fries instead of just hot dogs and hamburgers, and the Giants have accommodated them.

Every game has been sold out this season, and attendance is almost double from what it was during the 1999 season, the team's last at Candlestick Park. It is a new audience that baseball owners seek, and, recently Seattle, Detroit, Houston and Arizona, have used this "all-things-to-all-people" approach to attract them.

This type of fan is coming out to the game in droves, but is it a good thing?

NO!!! I would shout it out from the rooftops if I could. Pacific Bell Park is selling out tickets now, but what happens when the novelty of the Coke-bottle slide in left field wears off? What happens when the Giants start losing? What will all the casual fans do then?

They'll go home. They have been trained by these new ballparks not to care about the product on the field.

These so-called "fans" (or, for you and me, rich dot-commers with money to blow) come out for these games and don't even know, much less care, who Barry Bonds and Jeff Kent are. They don't know the difference between a home run and a "Chicken Run." Pacific Bell Park is sold out, but Giants owner Peter Magowan doesn't realize that the real Giants fans are at home or stuck in the bleachers.

◆ See **BASEBALL**, Page 2



James Nowbura
Mosaic columnist

Music moneymakers battle free-music controversy

RECORD EXECUTIVES SQUARE OFF WITH NAPSTER

By Jennifer Su
MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

Emily Shine doesn't consider herself a music thief.

Sure, the 15-year-old spends hours on the Internet searching for punk rock, gothic and '80s songs to download to her hard drive. But she's also buying the CDs recorded by the music artists she's "discovered" on the Web.

Still, a lawsuit filed by the Recording Industry Association of America considers the trading and downloading of music to be

a violation of copyright laws. And a court ruling could forever change the way computer users like Shine find and play new music.

"It's really stupid," she said. "Stupid or not, the controversy is being taken seriously by the courts. Record executives are arguing, on behalf of artists such as Metallica and Dr. Dre, that Napster is encouraging grand-scale music piracy on the Internet by providing Web surfers a forum to freely trade copyright-protected music."

◆ See **NAPSTER**, Page 5

HISTORY OF THE MP3

The MP3 file, as a means of storing digital music, was born as a space saver about five years ago, when bulky .wav files were being used.

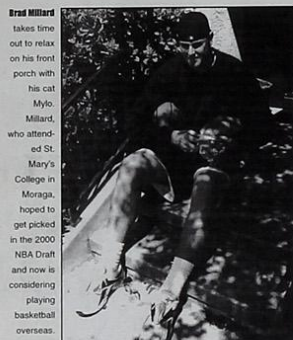
MP3s are compressed .wav files. The process involves shrinking the file by eliminating no-sound bytes with only a slight compromise in the digital quality.

An average song as a .wav file, for example, eats 50 megabytes — compared to less than 4 megabytes for the same song compressed into the MP3 format, allowing for easier transfer over the Internet.

Special search engines provide a method for Web surfers to find MP3s and upload them.

Napster was a unique type of search engine when it debuted because it allowed users online at the same time to share MP3 files in real time.

Shortly after Napster's debut, the Recording Industry Association of America, representing various artists and labels, filed suit against Napster, citing copyright violations. The matter will be heard in U.S. District Court in San Francisco later this month.



◆ SHOES, from Page 1

Few could have predicted the dismal turn of events in the wake of that breakthrough by the former soccer star. Millard's first injury came late in 1997, when he broke the fifth toe while attending St. Mary's College in Moraga, hoped to get picked in the 2000 NBA Draft and now is playing basketball overseas.

After some rest this spring, he appeared fully recuperated, and became a member of a last-minute trade for the 2000 NBA draft lottery in June. Then, a week before draft day, further CAT scans performed by physicians with the Portland Timbers — a team that was considering Millard as a replacement for a last-minute trade — revealed that July earlier, severe arthritis in his right foot, which had been treated for the last 12 games of the season.

When he was a freshman, Millard had trouble handling the pressure and expectations that were put on him as a top player. But despite naysayers about whether Millard should ever have been offered a scholarship at St. Mary's, the end of the first season, he had decided the attention of NBA scouts at his draft hopes was worth the risk.

◆ BASEBALL, from Page 1

What we have today is a different form of apathy, but these teams and owners are too greedy to realize it. After the 1994 baseball strike, fan attendance dropped significantly. The owners then left very little room for bargaining. This new era of apathy started when teams built their new ballparks to increase revenues, but financially, fans aren't buying 38 seats a game they never really wanted.

What about fans who are unhappy with the way they're spending all this money on a sport that isn't even their favorite? It's not that owners think that support for the team is subsidizing business. It's that the people spending money think "the fan" who buys the stadium never gets any of the money. They're taking it away from the fan at the first sign of a problem.

Area teens fight back against dating violence

MTV-STYLE VIDEO AIMS TO EDUCATE THOSE AT RISK

By Wendy Leo
MUSIC STAFF WRITER

It started out as a typical dating relationship. After a while, he dictated what clothes she wore. He controlled when she left the house and which friends she hung out with. Then the violence began. He beat her and shoved her in front of her children. Eventually, he chased after her with knives and threatened her with knives.

Eight years after the violence began, the former dating violence victim — who asked not to be named — still remembers it as if it were yesterday. "It's hard to get on with your life. It's impossible," said the victim, now 29. "You can forgive but you never forget to forget. I will always stay with you."

Like her, many adults in abusive relationships were victims of love dating violence. When she was 15, she was involved with someone who abused her. When she was 17, she was involved with the man who would beat her for nearly eight years.

As known as "dating violence," and many teens who are in these relationships are unaware that this is a physical, sexual and emotional abuse. The video is not to solve the problem, but to raise awareness.

The video is planned to be produced in the next few weeks. It will feature interviews with teens who have been victims of dating violence. The video is planned to be produced in the next few weeks.

Experts in domestic violence prevention support the video as an effective way to reach young people. "At some point, people get tired of doing it on their own," said Kirt Kumbh, head of the juvenile division of the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office. "I

◆ SUICIDE, from Page 1

According to a recent study in Santa Clara County, 22.6 percent of Hispanic and 20.6 percent of Asian high school students have thoughts about committing suicide. Statistics show that over 90 percent of Santa Clara County high school students have attempted suicide at least once in their lives.

Experts say some adolescents choose to die because of feelings of self-hatred because of the pain it will cause their loved ones. "Suicidal thoughts and discussing suicide may be no indication that young people feel unable to make it out on their own."

In "some religions or cultures, there is a stigma about suicide because it is a reflection on past sins in the household," said Arredondo. "Many gay and lesbian teens feel a stigma because they are struggling with their identity and are being teased or bullied. They are dropping out last fall just one year after graduating."

SIGNS OF ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

1. Do you have to be careful to control your behavior to avoid his anger?
2. Do you feel pressure by him when it comes to sex?
3. Does he criticize you, or humiliate you in front of other people?
4. Does he repeatedly and wrongly accuse you of seeing other guys?
5. Does he make you feel like you are wrong, stupid, or inadequate?
6. Do you feel that, with him, nothing you do is ever good enough?

If you know someone that is in an abusive relationship, here are some tips:

1. Approach her about the subject in a sensitive manner.
2. Believe what she tells you and take the abuse seriously.

asked not to be named said growing up with an abusive father made an impact on her and her brothers. "That's all that we see, that's all I've seen. It messes up our lives," she said. "My brother is scared to go with girls because my father might come out in them. It is in our blood."

Hyman agrees that more education is needed in the area of dating violence, which can range from emotional abuse to putting someone down to threats and physical abuse. "This is the issue everyone knows, but no one talks," said News lead project manager of domestic violence at SCLC. "The most important thing is to start as early as kindergarten. He's not alone. Last year, a bill requiring more information about dating violence-related curriculum in grades 11 and 12 passed the state assembly and Senate. But it was vetoed by Gov. Gray Davis."

Hyman said that the teen and young people that are in these relationships are often young people who are being pulled in two directions. "Students involved in making the video say they have already gained insight through the project about dating violence," 17-year-old student Kieu Nguyen, from San Jose, said. "I definitely wouldn't say I don't know anything."

It's only a drop of water in the ocean, "said the video's producers. "But we have to start somewhere. If we can make better choices about relationships, then we can make better choices about ourselves."

For more information about the video project, contact Jennifer Co at (408) 975-2720, Ext. 107.

HELP AND AWARENESS

- There are some ways to recognize if you or a friend might be depressed or suicidal.
- Change in sleeping patterns.
- Spending more time with unusual people or situations.
- Loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities.
- Increase in suicidal thoughts.
- Thoughts of self-harm.
- Feelings of worthlessness, self-reproach or guilt.
- Decreased ability to think or concentrate.
- Obsessive thinking or indecisiveness.
- Thoughts of death, or wishes to be dead.

Students peeved at new state test

EXIT EXAM WILL BE REQUIRED FOR 2004 GRADUATION

By Rachel Gallegos
MUSIC STAFF WRITER

Students entering high school this year will have to do something that no other graduating class in California has done before — they will have to pass a test to graduate.

The students in the Class of 2004 will be the first required to pass the High School Exit Examination (HSEE), part of an effort to ensure they are prepared for college work. If students don't pass one or more of the reading, writing or mathematics tests, they will not receive their high school diploma.

Even though they'll be the first to take it, some returning freshmen aren't sure it will make them better students. Rebecca Garner, 14, who will be a student at Silver Creek High School this fall, said that passing the exam would not make her feel more confident about being successful in college work. "I've been successful for the grades they're getting in my class."

Cindy Lally, who also will be going to Silver Creek, said she thinks the exam is not a requirement for high school. "I was established in 1999 as part of Gov. Gray Davis' push to improve California's public schools."

Students will have several chances to pass the test during high school. The students in the class of 2004 may begin taking the test during the ninth grade, and then during tenth grade. If they have not passed by the end of their senior year, they will have one more chance to take the exam after taking summer classes.

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Pressure grows to be tops in school

SOME REGRET MAKING VALEDICTORIAN TITLE THEIR TOP PRIORITY

By Wendy Leo
MUSIC STAFF WRITER

Collette Parrish looks across Townsend Field at Bacher Middle School in Santa Clara. After graduation there with her Santa Clara High school classmates in 1999, Parrish now views the field with fresh eyes. "I was so driven to do well," said Parrish, who is now a sophomore at the University of California, Berkeley. "I really made it. That was everything. I did it all, but that was No. 1."

Others feel differently. Another Santa Clara High graduate who asked not to be named said, "There were a lot of people going to places that it was important to make your mark and go to a great college. End of senior year you were identified as the person who was going to be the valedictorian of her class."

It was not just pressure from the peers that was focused on her senior year. "I was so driven to do well," said Parrish, who is now a sophomore at the University of California, Berkeley. "I really made it. That was everything. I did it all, but that was No. 1."

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Tom Peters, 6, stayed up late to wait in line at the Barnes and Noble bookstore in the Pruneyard Shopping Center (above). Brother and sister Robert Norman, 9, and Olivia, 6, (below) patiently wait in line for the new Harry Potter book.



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Selectivity by colleges keeps teens on their toes

BY IAN HERNANDEZ

Justin Hernandez worked hard in high school. He had a cumulative grade point average served on San Jose's youth basketball team. He was selected by the coach to play on the varsity team. He was selected by the coach to play on the varsity team.

Colleges still strive game when she and Sergio were out of town. He was drunk, and demanded to drive her car home. "That was the mistake that he did. I can't care about his safety or her safety."

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ENTERTAINMENT

CONCERT REVIEW

America Festival welcomes Smash Mouth

By Erik Lacayo MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

Homegrown band Smash Mouth took the stage for a benefit concert in downtown San Jose earlier this month, but it wasn't the usual arena-style event you might expect from a group that has built a national following.

The setting for this show was Discovery Meadow Park, which provided a family-friendly environment. The concert was part of the San Jose America Festival, a celebration of the Independence Day holiday, making it more laid-back than a regular concert. Some people settled down with lawn chairs and blankets to enjoy the music. Others meandered through the park, checking out the crafts booths, lingering in the micro-brew tent or laughing with their children at a clown show.

The show also was unusual because it was a benefit for the Emergency Housing Consortium, an organization that aids the homeless in Santa Clara County. It was the first time Smash Mouth had been approached about doing a charity show in its hometown.

Manny Kendall, communications manager for the non-profit housing consortium, met with the group's manager before booking the act and learned that the band members sometimes feel more welcome in cities away from home. The invitation to perform in San Jose was refreshing, the manager told Kendall.

At the July 3 show, San Jose fans gave the band an overwhelming welcome. Just before Smash Mouth took the stage, a sea of people gathered. When the band took the stage, the scene looked more like a typical rock concert than a family festival. When a mosh pit formed, parents headed away from the stage, keeping their children away from the excited fans in the pit.

With a beer in hand, lead singer Steve Harwell thanked the crowd for coming out and took a moment to blast critics who said the band would never make it. Halfway through the set, Harwell started to lose his voice but kept the concert moving by getting the crowd to sing along with top hits "Walking on the Sun" and "All Star."

One of the best parts of the show came when Smash Mouth played a cover of House of Pain's "Jump Around," which really got the crowd hyped up. The concert went on past 10 p.m. and ended with an awesome performance of two Van Halen classics "I Don't Talk" "Bout Love" and "Runnin' with the Devil."

"This is a great event because the kids get to see a great show in a safe environment," said fan Lex Van Den Bergh of Santa Cruz. "Every band should be doing it. Bands get so much. They should give back all the good stuff they are getting themselves. Smash Mouth realizes that they should give back to the community."

Three other groups opened the show, priming music fans for the main event. Dana Jensen with acoustic guitar riffs, Fuse; and Los Cochinos with its harder brand of rock.

"Overall it was a great show. People got to see a good Smash Mouth performance while giving to a good cause at the same time."

"Even if we just break even, the publicity [for the housing consortium] is worth it," Kendall said.



Sammie, a 13-year-old singer from Atlanta, reaches toward the crowd while performing at Nickelodeon's All That and More Festival in Concord.

'All That' wows crowd

The Nickelodeon "All That and More" music festival held recently at the Concord Pavilion, showcased younger artists just starting to make their way into the music scene. But when Angela Via arrived, 11-year-old she was, "I'd heard her on the Pokemon soundtrack but listening to her perform live was a complete change."

The Irish pop group B'Witched has made the biggest improvements since last year's tour. Chiefly, the band has learned to control its music.

"We've grown up quite a bit since our first album. With our recent split from our management, we have more say in our music and we are able to take our music to the next level," said two of the group's members, Pyrotechnics and fireworks were incorporated into their performance as well, making it exciting to see as well as hear. Old hits like "C'est La Vie" were nice flashbacks to the band's earlier days.

A recent addition to the tour was the remarkable Mya. The R&B singer really made viewers of the show feel like a part of her performance. She did several songs from her new album, "Fear of Flying," including "Best of Me." The amazing part of her performance was her ability to improvise. She did a little impromptu tap dance routine and closed her performance with "Take Me There," the theme song from the "Rugrats" soundtrack.

Major headliner LFO finally arrived on stage with their catchy new single "West Side Story." The three-member band sent fans skyrocketing up and down for more energy and ying for a spot on the stage.

Security guards were added in the front to keep fans from mobbing the group. It was an amazing, fun-filled show that really presented this group differently than other "boy bands." The mix of rap, hip hop and R&B added to the excitement. There was no time to rest; the band kept singing and dancing along with the crowd, which was breathless and screaming until the end of the night. LFO performed "Gill on TV," a song that was inspired by actor Jennifer Love Hewitt.

The band ended the night with "Summer Girls," thanking the audience for their support.

This concert was a huge improvement over the previous year. There were no repetitive sets or redundant routines. Many of the artists, including Angela Via, have made significant improvements in their voices. It was a concert that everyone could enjoy, regardless of age.

oneselves. There was a personal feeling no matter what seats you had.

I was worried I wouldn't recognize many of the smaller artists that were performing. But when Angela Via arrived, I knew who she was. I'd heard her on the Pokemon soundtrack but listening to her perform live was a complete change.

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A recent addition to the tour was the remarkable Mya. The R&B singer really made viewers of the show feel like a part of her performance. She did several songs from her new album, "Fear of Flying," including "Best of Me." The amazing part of her performance was her ability to improvise. She did a little impromptu tap dance routine and closed her performance with "Take Me There," the theme song from the "Rugrats" soundtrack.

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Security guards were added in the front to keep fans from mobbing the group. It was an amazing, fun-filled show that really presented this group differently than other "boy bands." The mix of rap, hip hop and R&B added to the excitement. There was no time to rest; the band kept singing and dancing along with the crowd, which was breathless and screaming until the end of the night. LFO performed "Gill on TV," a song that was inspired by actor Jennifer Love Hewitt.

The band ended the night with "Summer Girls," thanking the audience for their support.

This concert was a huge improvement over the previous year. There were no repetitive sets or redundant routines. Many of the artists, including Angela Via, have made significant improvements in their voices. It was a concert that everyone could enjoy, regardless of age.



Dara Uina, 23, the newest member of the Lyte Funky Ones, waves to fans.

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Review by Janet Pak MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

Photos by Ryan Balbuena MOSAIC STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Mariachi beat shakes through San Jose

By Rachel Gallegos MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

The music starts and feet begin to move. Singers sing about things festive, romantic and sometimes heart-wrenching. Whether the feet belong to people in the audience tapping their feet or dancers spinning the music affects everyone. The music coming from an ensemble of violins, trumpets, guitars, vihuelas (high-pitched, round-backed guitars) guitarrones (bass guitar-like basses) and an occasional harp make people want to sing, dance, laugh or cry.

This is mariachi music. This music and spirit is alive in San Jose. Earlier this month, the Mexican Heritage Corporation presented the Ninth Annual San Jose International Mariachi Festival and Conference. This four-day event included workshops, concerts, a Mariachi Mass and an outdoor festival.

The Mariachi Festival and Conference is one of the most popular in the country because people can learn, perform or listen to many forms of mariachi music. At the mariachi and folklorico workshops at the Civic Center San Jose Center for the Performing Arts and

Montgomery Theater, about 300 students, ranging from children to adults, learned music and folklorico dance that covered rhythms and styles from many regions of Mexico.

At the trumpet workshops in one of the upstairs rooms of the Civic Center, Rudy Vasquez, a middle school teacher from San Fernando, gave one-on-one lessons to Enrique Murillo, 14, of Lincoln High School. They worked hard together to make sharp and clear sounds that would be perfected for the concert.

This is Vasquez's favorite conference, he said, because this conference "keeps the tradition going." The crisp, clear notes could be heard from the street below.

At a folklorico dance workshop, Manuel Vasquez, 12, of Saint Patrick's School, said he's been dancing for five years and loves it because it shows how much the culture has grown and how it is loved. Dancers in workout clothing moved across the floor, stepping to the beat of the music. Their feet moved constantly. At times, Rafael Zamarrapa switched off the music and dancers moved to the beat of his drum.

Carlos Gaytan, the main dancer at the concert, said that the music and dancing represents identity, passion and compromise and a love for the country.

Mariachi Colore, founded in 1971 in Tucson, Ariz., are "ambassadors for the whole world," said Jessica Aguirre, an emcee at the Mariachi concert.

Aida Cuevas, known as "The Voice of Mexico" to her fans, has made 25 records in her 25 years in music. Aguirre said Cuevas has "the song in her veins." Her face, body and voice captured the happiness or sadness in a song. She encouraged the audience to sing along at several points, yet when she sang, a capella everyone was silent. Cuevas received more standing ovations than any other performer on that Saturday night.

The next day, a Mariachi Mass, which was a traditional Catholic Mass with mariachi music, was held at the Civic Center. Later, the procession moved to the free outdoor festival at Guadalupe River Park, with three stages of music and food.

Louise Cota, of Santa Barbara, who has come to the concert and festival three times, said "The showing of the culture, the accomplishments, was so proud of my heritage."

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ANA PINEDA, 7, one of the youngest performers at the ninth annual San Jose International Mariachi Festival, sings her rendition of the Mexican classic, 'Pajarillo Pajarillo.'

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Shoulder, family part of band's sacrifices

By Natalia Torres MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

Rubbing his shoulder, Brian Hart sat outside a Fenwick Starbucks waiting for his friends, the guys he practices music with in someone's garage. They share the dream of joining the ranks of their favorite bands - Black Label Society, Dream Theater, Alice In Chains and Zakk Wylde, to name a few.

"I had therapy earlier today," Hart explains as he continues to rub gently. "I injured my shoulder a few weeks ago." Despite the still-severe, extreme-baking injury and the tiny metal pins implanted in his shoulder, Hart still makes it to the group's three weekly rehearsals.

Hart is the bassist for Blacklatk, a rock band from Oxnard City with high expectations, strong dedication and a fierce love for music.

Along with Hart, Blacklatk is made up of John Kibildis, whose vocals and guitar deliver the band's harder sound; Simon Kennedy, who gave up gymnastics to play a guitar like he's giving a piece of his soul; and Chris Paxton, the drummer who drives a song to such an extreme he has to stop nearby naked after practicing to cool down.

The band has competed in several contests and played in several clubs, trying to learn how to do what they do. The schedule leaves little time for personal lives or anything else.

Kennedy is trying to juggle his family - who completely support his music career - his girlfriend and the band. It's not easy. "I try to do it equally," he says with an embarrassed smile as he looks down at the floor.

Kibildis agrees. "My parents fully back me up. They don't agree with the type of music, though," he says as he shifts his body and explains that his parents are more accustomed to their own generation's music than his.

The road for Blacklatk started when Kibildis and Kennedy started playing tunes together as freshmen at James Logan High School "just for the hell of it," Kibildis says. Kennedy quickly adds, "I'd just got my guitar. I knew it was what I wanted to do."

The original lineup for Blacklatk included a guy named Chad Stender who provided vocals. "Chad would come over and mess around before it got serious," said Kibildis. Stender later dropped out.

In 1997, Blacklatk - originally called Minds Eye

but remained after another band had already claimed it - started gearing towards becoming a full-time band.

With only two guitarists, Blacklatk needed a bassist and percussionist. After hearing about Paxton through a mutual friend, Kibildis decided to give him a shot, in spite of Paxton's relatively young age. Liking what he heard, Kibildis decided to let him then 13-year-old Paxton into the band. "I thought it was funny. I didn't know it," a thought that still makes the now 16-year-old Paxton laugh.

After Paxton, the search for a bassist started and Blacklatk eventually located Hart, whose rhythmic and smooth fingers completed their sound. Claiming that he knew how to play a little in the beginning, Hart joined the rest of the band when they finally practiced together. "He sounded like he had been playing for five years," exclaimed Kibildis as Hart listened and laughed.

Once Blacklatk's lineup had been finalized, the next goal was to find a place to perform.

They practiced a lot, wrote original songs and arranged a repertoire. Blacklatk performed for the first time in public during a 1998 Battle of the Bands contest held at Logan High. The band took first place.

That performance led to others at San Jose's Cactus Club and more Battle of the Bands contests. Blacklatk won third place in a battle at Livingston High School.

Blacklatk's fan base is increasing, thanks to flyers and word-of-mouth. When Blacklatk performed the second time at the Cactus Club, the audience had grown from a small group of invited friends to a crowd of 70 or more.

Now that the band has played four shows at the Cactus Club, Kibildis hopes for more exposure. "You gotta be playing shows," says Kibildis, although he admits that performing is taxing. "You have to be dedicating your time," Kennedy concurs, adding that a musician should practice consistently in order to provide his best sound.

"If you think about it, we'll be doing four shows a night," comments Kibildis as he watches a man walk past him with a guitar slung over his shoulder, subconsciously refusing to let any part of music pass him. For more information, visit www.blacklatk.homestead.com or www.cactusclub.com.

Members of Blacklatk know that they need to keep moving forward or they will risk losing their



RYAN BALBUENA MOSAIC PHOTO Blacklatk, a Union City rock band, discuss the sacrifices of being an unknown group. Left to right: Simon Kennedy, Chris Paxton and Brian Hart.

spot in the constantly changing world of music. "All your cards on the table are representing all of you," Kennedy says. Being in a band, he says, is all about taking chances.

"You gotta relate to people," says Kennedy who reveals that there have been times when he thought Blacklatk might not work out because many of the band members have other responsibilities to their families and school. The pace can be a little tight for practice.

While all this time is now devoted to the band, gigs and practicing, change is coming. Kibildis and Paxton will start college in the fall while Hart will take a break from school to work, leaving Kennedy behind to attend his junior year in high school.

No matter what happens to Blacklatk, all four band members say there's music in their futures. Kennedy hopes to be in music production, while Paxton wishes to be a music engineer. Hart and Kibildis are undecided.

For now, Blacklatk will continue to play at clubs and competitions, striving to complete a demo CD by August and get more performance dates at the Cactus Club in late July and early August.

"We are each individually strong," says Kibildis. "But we're stronger all together." Blacklatk performs July 20 at the Cactus Club in San Jose. For more information, visit www.blacklatk.homestead.com or www.cactusclub.com.

Our choices included ice cream, a banana split and the two that we decided on, the capriccio moose cake (\$2.25) and a spring drop (\$1.50). Expecting a blended fruity drink, the spring drop took us by surprise. It was a tropical-flavored beverage (\$2.75) with a piece of gelatin inside. With a straw provided, we made fists of ourselves, trying then chewing, sipping, then chewing.

Our waiter was quite the comedian, joking about the price of our meal and the ingredients in the dishes we had ordered. He was friendly, fun and, although a language barrier between us and our server made ordering a bit of a challenge, we highly recommend the food.

White Lotus Vegetarian Restaurant: 80 North Market St., San Jose. Hours: Monday-Friday, 11:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m. and 5:30-9 p.m.; Saturday, 11:00 a.m.-9 p.m.; closed Sundays. For information, call: (408) 977-0540

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Media fuels Rocker's belligerent comments

John Rocker is an unpopular guy who said some very stupid things - and thanks to the news media, his opinions were spread to a national audience.

Personally, I can't stand the Atlanta Braves pitcher. I can't stand seeing this guy's mug every time I turn on the television or open a sports magazine.

It may seem over-the-top and hypocritical that this is another Rocker piece but the point of this story is not to talk about how big of an idiot he is. That has already been established. What's ridiculous is the fiasco itself and how the media wasted its time and energy covering this man's words instead of his athletic abilities.

It's true that Rocker opened this can of worms himself when he voiced his views about the city of New York to a Sports Illustrated reporter for a December 1999 article.

He compared riding a subway train to the ballpark

to being in Beirut. The passengers on a New York train, he said, range from "some queer with AIDS" to "some dude who just got out of jail for the fourth time" to "some 20-year-old mom with four kids."

"It's depressing," he said. "The biggest thing I don't like about New York are the foreigners."

Sure, Rocker's comments were stupid and totally unacceptable in today's society. But I'm tired of the media analyzing his every move and giving him a forum.

There are millions of people who have unpopular and politically incorrect things to say and the public couldn't care less. Yet, out of all the bigots in the world, why is there such an uproar surrounding Rocker?

"I'm only a baseball player," he told a group of reporters before his first post-article game at Shea Stadium during the last week of June. It's the only smart thing I've heard come out of Rocker's mouth. He is ONLY a baseball player, just a dumb jock who can throw a baseball at 90 mph.

Making such a huge uproar about him gives him too much credit. He's not a school teacher, someone who has direct influence on kids. If he were the President of the United States, then his comments would give people reason to worry. The President makes decisions that affect lives.

Rocker's biggest decision is whether to throw a curve ball or a slider on a 3-2 count.

It's ridiculous that this thing became so big that during his return to New York, about 600 police officers were assigned to Shea Stadium to protect him. I wonder how far those city dollars spent on extra security would have gone toward helping the homeless or reducing crime.

ESPN.com's Rob Neyer said it best when he wrote that Rocker is a physical danger only to a batter crowding the plate.

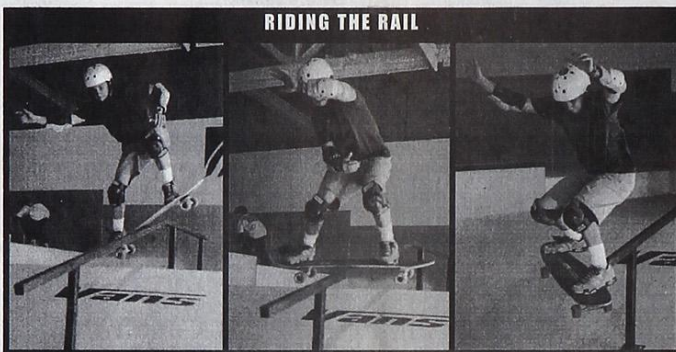
People aren't afraid of Rocker, Neyer wrote. They're afraid of his words.

"And if it's the words that are dangerous, should we be angry at Rocker or with the news organizations that so happily disseminated those words?" Neyer asked.

As a sports fan, I find it more disturbing that during the media circus, Rocker somehow became more important than the games being played. The Mets and Braves were in an important four-game series with the National League Eastern division lead at stake. Sadly, the only thing that people could focus on was Rocker and his opinion - as if HIS opinion really mattered.



Erik Lacayo
Mosaic columnist



Rogger Milhako slides down a grind pole.

Spirit of skate

Rollerbladers and skateboarders flock to local park

Story and photos by Michael Grenz
MOSAIC STAFF WRITER AND PHOTOGRAPHER

The new Vans Skate Park in Milpitas is 60,000 square feet of striking vertical ramps, staggering launch ramps and gnarly grind poles.

Skateboarders and rollerbladers travel from all around the Bay Area to skate this cutting-edge park, which opened June 23. It's visited daily by more than 300 skaters and spectators who watch in awe as skaters majestically pose mid-air for them.

As people show their spirit for skateboarding, they also show off their brand-name fashions - such as Hurley, Boss, Santa Cruz and, of course, Vans. Skateboarders and rollerbladers dress in a variety of styles, from baggy jeans to fatigues, tank tops to long-sleeve shirts.

"Bladers don't wear Vans, they just skate," said 11-year-old Eric Schmidt, a skateboarder from Milpitas, explaining that rollerbladers aren't drawn to the park by the brand names or fashions, but to experience skating on an 18-foot vertical ramp.

Schmidt said he doesn't think that there should be a shared skate session for the inline skaters and the skateboarders.

Pat Lesko, an employee who works on the course at the park, said that park management is thinking about adding an extreme bike riding track, and other sessions exclusively for the extreme riders.

Experts say it is safer for extreme bike riders not to ride at the same time as skaters.

Because the park is located in the Great Mall of the Bay Area, parents can shop while their kids skate, or they can rest on a plush purple velvet psychédelic couch.

Children can play in the park's arcade, or log onto computers that are connected to the Internet (but only to the Vans site and selected links).

The park is frequented by skating pros Tony Alba, Steve Caballero and Willie Santos, who sometimes offer words of encouragement to amateur skaters. The employees often can be seen helping fallen skaters to their feet - which helps puts parents at ease, since they aren't allowed on the course and must watch from behind the gates.

When Dwayne Johnson, known as "The Rock," laid the "smackdown" on opponent Chris Benoit after the main event at the Arena, Danny Giddings,



Rogger Milhako, 18, slides on a grind pole (above) at the Vans Skate Park in Milpitas. Conner McGrath, 7, watches a stunt in awe (below).



VANS SKATE PARK

Hours: 10 a.m. to 11 p.m., every day.
Address: 1150 Great Mall Dr. in Milpitas
Phone: (408) 262-0703

Allowed to skate: Skaters under 18 must have a waiver signed by their parents.
Cost: Skaters can buy a membership for \$50 a year, which reduces the \$11 to \$14 per-session fees to \$7 to \$9. Each session lasts two hours, and there are six sessions in a day.

X-Games roll back into Bay Area

Second year: San Francisco hosts ESPN event again; promoters hope for attendance boost

By Jennifer Su
MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

Jonny Manak recalls a recent incident when he and some friends went skateboarding in an industrial parking lot. A few years ago, they might have been hassled. But this time, when they yelled "We're training for the X-Games!" they were taken seriously and allowed to stay.

"I think the X-Games have brought it to people's attention that skating exists," said Manak, the 22-year-old manager of Circle-A Skateboard Shop in San Jose and a self-described "core skater."

"It's rad because you turn the TV on, and you see skating," he said. "The X-Games have done good in helping to establish skateboarding as a sport."

ESPN's X-Games are returning to San Francisco again next month, bringing more than 350 of the world's best alternative athletes to compete in events such as Aggressive In-Line Skating, Bicycle Stunt and Skateboarding.

Last year's games brought 270,000 spectators to San Francisco, breaking the previous four X-Games attendance records.

"The second year (in a city) seems a little easier to plan," said X-Games spokeswoman Katie Moses. "We hope to increase the crowd count this year, and I think we will. San Francisco is definitely the biggest metropolitan city we've been to for the X-Games."

And it's been a positive presence for skaters and other extreme athletes in the Bay Area.

Josh Clary of San Jose, and Brett Reid of Scotts Valley, aspiring X-Games athletes, spent a recent summer day skating in Plaza de Cesar Chavez in downtown San Jose.

Clary, 16, said he's grateful that he has the games to relate to.

"I'm glad the X-Games were pushed back to a later date this year, so viewers can choose whether they want to watch the Olympics or the X-Games," he said.

His friend, Emmanuel Acosta, 15, said he doesn't feel much of a connection to the X-Games - and was upset that he broke two skateboards - his and Clary's - while practicing tricks.

"I enjoy skateboarding a lot, but just as a hobby," he said. "I would do it even without the X-Games' exposure to the sport."

But Reid, who attended last year's games in San Francisco, can't deny that the X-Games has created a new pool of role models.

"Andrew Reynolds is awesome," he said of his new idol, a professional skateboarder.

Manak, the manager of the skateboard shop, said he sees the benefit in the X-Games, but also feels the games may have been established for the wrong reasons. Before the X-Games, no one cared about skateboarders, he said.

"They didn't (care) about us when we were trying to establish ourselves. They gave us no support," he said. "Now they see skateboarding as a market to target young kids, so they're doing this."

Teens, however, do take the sport seriously and consider it to be a big part of their lives, he said. They're willing to do whatever it takes to practice when and where they can.

"They don't let us skate downtown, but we take the risk anyway," Clary said.

Acosta said he thinks the city should build a skate park that's "free, downtown, and where all the main skaters are."

Justin Ryan Imamura, 17, is excited about the upcoming X-Games and will work full-time as an Xcel volunteer at the event.

"It's crazy to see what you can do with a skateboard or a bike," said Imamura, a former skateboarder and current bike stunt rider. "I can't even imagine all the things the athletes can do. It's a thrill to see danger. Just to be there - it's an incredible feeling to watch it firsthand."

SUMMER X-GAMES VI
When: Aug. 17-22
Where: San Francisco's Piers 30 and 32.
For more information: Visit espn.com/extreme/000627xgames.html
All events are free and open to the public.

Teens flocking to 'violent soap opera'

BY WWF'S POPULARITY CONTINUES TO GROW AMONG KIDS

By James Newbury
MOSAIC STAFF REPORTER

For all the attention surrounding sporting events, movies, MTV, and pop music, one of the most popular shows among kids features portrayals of pimps, racial stereotypes and violence against women.

On June 10, hordes of kids, many with their parents, cheered as "The Godfather" pummeled his enemies while keeping his women, or "hos," as he calls them, in line.

No, this wasn't the latest episode of "NYPD Blue," it

was professional wrestling at San Jose Arena. The phenomenon of World Wrestling Federation (WWF) and other wrestling organizations has taken these shows to new heights which can be seen in venues across the country and on television sets around the world.

One group enjoying this in-your-face entertainment the most happens to be youth, according to ratings experts and promoters who are banking on this large audience.

When Dwayne Johnson, known as "The Rock," laid the "smackdown" on opponent Chris Benoit after the main event at the Arena, Danny Giddings,

13, and his friend Stacey Boitano, 14, were ecstatic.

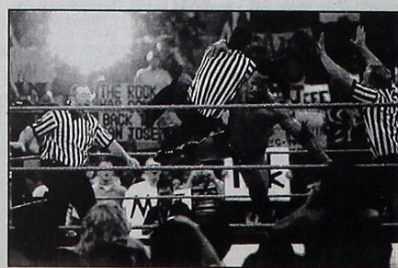
"You don't know what's going to happen next," said Giddings, with his eyes glued to the ring.

His chaperone, a friend's grandfather, Lou Boitano, quickly interjected.

"I think it's a farce," the 63-year-old said about organized wrestling.

When the comment earned the elder Boitano stars from his grandson, he quickly added that he thinks "there are a lot of other things for families to do." Just then he turned to see his grandson and his friend mimicking the various poses of the newly-victorious "Rock."

See WRESTLING, Page 11



The Rock slams a referee at a WWF Raw show at San Jose Arena. The Rock lost after Shane McMahon dressed up like a referee, and cost him the match.

RYAN BALBUENA - MOSAIC PHOTO