

THE MOSAIC

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Social networking helps fuel Iranian election protests

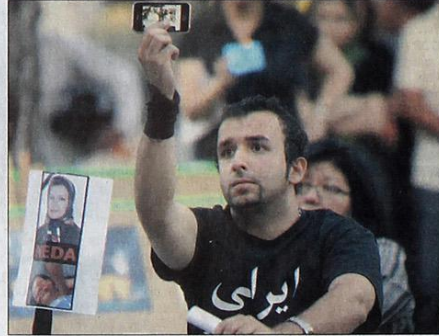
BY NNEKA IDIKA // MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

Clutching candles and chanting in Farsi, more than 100 Iranians and supporters descended on downtown San Jose's Plaza de Cesar Chavez. As night fell, a number of people in the crowd could be seen holding up their iPhones and taking photographs and recording video footage.

Half way around the world in Tehran, Iran, a less peaceful, but similar, scene was taking place.

The public outrage stems from the June 13 re-election of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Those who supported challenger Mir-Hossein Mousavi, have taken to the streets in what is being referred to as one of the biggest political crises in Iran since the 1979 revolution.

What followed the election was a global backlash from students, teens and activists who used social networking sites including Facebook, MySpace, Twitter and YouTube to rally and organize support. Many are spreading the word about upcoming rallies in an effort spearheaded by buzz generated from these social networking sites. Experts are predicting



that technology's role in these protests will only grow. Iran's Supreme ruler Ayatollah Ali Khamenei not only took notice but branded Twitter as the "number one threat to the regime." "Who would have thought that Facebook and Twitter would play such an important role in all of this," said Neil Perry, 29, who lives in the

Ryan Keivi, 23, of San Jose, uses his cell phone to record the vigil held at San Jose's Plaza de Cesar Chavez in memory of Neda Agha-Soltan. // JERRY TING // MOSAIC STAFF

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Protests in San Jose attract the young. PAGE 9

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SIKHS HOPE U.S. ARMY CASE SETS PRECEDENT



Baldev Singh sits meditatively on a bench outside the Sikh Gurdwara Sahib-San Jose. // TERESA MATHEW // MOSAIC STAFF

Religious sect wants to keep turbans, beards during active duty

BY SARGUNJOT KAUR // MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

Two U.S. Army doctors are fighting to start active duty without having to shed the turbans and beards of their Sikh faith. Jaskirat Singh ran into the same roadblock when he tried to join the Milpitas Police Department's Explorer program.

Singh, 17, grew up watching "COPS" on TV and hearing stories

from his neighbor, a retired California Highway Patrol officer. The Explorer program, which gives young people hands-on experience in law enforcement, appealed to him.

"I cannot imagine myself doing anything else than helping others and keeping my community safe," he said.

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"I cannot imagine myself doing anything else than helping others and keeping my community safe." - JASKIRAT SINGH, 17, A MEMBER OF MILPITAS POLICE EXPLORER PROGRAM

COMMUNITY ADVOCATE

Silicon Valley De-Bug founder: 'I'm a believer in people'

BY AUDREY FREY // MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

Silicon Valley De-Bug has been called everything from a graffiti crew to a political party. But to really understand what the multi-faceted Bay Area organization does, you first have to meet Raj Jayadev, the man behind the organization.

Soft-spoken, charismatic, and exceedingly modest, Jayadev, a 34-year-old UCLA graduate who also attended De Anza College in Cupertino, will identify himself as executive director of De-Bug only when pressed.

"In here, we're all equal," Jayadev said. Clean-shaven with a goatee, dressed in khakis, a blue sweater, and comfortable walking shoes, Jayadev exudes a deep sense of self-confidence and purpose.

"People know us through different lenses," Jayadev explains. "Some people see us only as a graffiti crew, or an arts group, or a media group. We never considered ourselves exclusively police accountability workers."

Nevertheless, Jayadev has received the most publicity for his role as a police reformer and community advocate. After speaking out about racial profiling at a San Jose City Council meeting in May, he was criticized in a YouTube video posted by the San Jose Police Officers Association.

In the YouTube video, a clip of Jayadev speaking at the meeting is overlaid with mocking subtitles that criticize his word choice and even clothing. It is implied that Jayadev is an angry radical whose call for a street response "sounds like a threat."

Because of controversy over the video, San Jose City Council members Sam Liccardo and Ash Kalra published a letter June 8 condemning the SJPOA for

JAYADEV >> PAGE 8



ROLL MODELS

Barb Odanaka, 46, from Laguna Beach and founder of Skateboard Moms, skates in one of the pipes at Lake Cunningham Regional Skate Park in San Jose. // NATALIE RICH // MOSAIC STAFF

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City salutes Olympian's home as historical landmark

BY SAMVED SANGAMESWARA // MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

When Brian Boguess bought a small yellow home on North 11th Street, he had no idea he had purchased a large piece of San Jose history.

The tiny structure just west of San Jose State University once was the home of controversial Olympian Tommie Smith, whose Black Power salute at the Mexico City Games in 1968 is one of the most indelible moments in Olympic history.

For decades, Smith hadn't expected to be honored by San Jose because of the racially charged treatment he received when returning from the Olympics 41 years ago.

But in May the city declared Smith's former home at 55 N. 11th St. — a home where he once received death threats — a historical landmark.

"It's pride and joy," Smith said of the Historical Landmark Committee's decision. "It's a social pride that the city has

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ALISHA LYNN AZEVEDO // Alisha Lynn Azevedo is the busy bee at Presentation High School. She's vice president of Speech Debate...

MARIANA BARRERA // When Mariana Barrera pronounced her name, she calls her "Pi's". Born in Acambaro, Mexico...

CHRISTINE CHANG // "I describe myself as clumsy." Monta Vista High School senior Christine Chang will not change her mind about the word that best describes her...

CHRIS CHAU // Chris Chau, born Dec. 14, 1991, is an inquisitive student at Bellarmine College Preparatory School...

YESENIA FRIAZ // James Lick High School junior Yesenia Friaz is more than meets the eye. She enjoys shopping, reading, and watching TV junkie...

LEAH GONZALEZ // Whenever she gets a chance, dance lover Leah Gonzalez will participate in a writing club, helps out with the group Californians for Justice...

TERESA MATHW // This fall, Teresa Mathw will be a junior at Presentation High, a Catholic, all-girls private school...

NICKY LINDLEY // Nicky Lindley is a junior at Mountain View High School, where he is the People section editor for The Oracle...



BOTTOM ROW: (From Left to Right): Pranaya Venkatapuram, Shrin Ghatfary, Audrey Frey, Denise Davali, Yesenia Friaz, Rebekah Valencia, Alisha Azevedo, Mariana Barrera...

The story behind MOSAIC

BY AUDREY FREY AND PRANAYA VENKATAPURAM // MOSAIC STAFF WRITERS

"Hello, I am a student reporter with the Mosaic journalism workshop run by the San Jose Mercury News..."

The greeters was a magic password that opened doors and opened conversation, aiding the budding journalists in their quest for information, contacts, and good quotes as they pieced together their stories...

"I was waiting to see how every-thing would unfold," said Matt Wu of Lymbrok High School. For the first two days, the music campers had their own desks...

"The magic opened. Suddenly, the ice began to thaw. Maybe it was the all-nighters and the mini dance parties, or maybe it was the coffee that followed these late-night activities...

"Staying up late was really fun because there are a lot of interesting people here, and you want to get to know them all. But it was hardcore, having to be awake and then come to work, because there's a lot of stuff to do..."

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TERESA MATHW // This fall, Teresa Mathw will be a junior at Presentation High, a Catholic, all-girls private school...

NATALIE RICH // Natalie Rich is an incoming senior at Mountain View High and Freethy Academy, where she takes English, design, and film classes...

TERESA MATHW // This fall, Teresa Mathw will be a junior at Presentation High, a Catholic, all-girls private school...

JUSTINE K. TAI // Justine K. Tai was born and raised in San Jose. She goes to Presentation High School, where she is editor of The Justice. Justin loves music, reading, making beads, and art...

JERRY TING // Fremont native Jerry Ting, 17, grew fond of journalism after joining Mission San Jose High School's newspaper, "The Smoke Signal." Ting, a senior, has since developed his skills as a photographer...

MATTIE TSAI // When 17-year-old Mattie Tsai walked into her first "Musical Matt" on the first night of Mosaic, she wasn't expecting a multi-talented singer who plays guitar...

REBEKAH VALENCIA // Rebekah Valencia always seems to be on the go. Valencia, 16, is a Glen Park High School senior and the best part of her school year...

PRANAYA VENKATAPURAM // Lymbrok High School senior Pranaya Venkatapuram is no pop star, but with 14 years of classical Indian dance training...

LAKE CUNNINGHAM REGIONAL SKATE PARK

MAMA'S RAMP 'T UP

San Jose hosts event for moms to show off their moves



ABOVE: From left, Skateboard Moms Gale Hart, Ji Hongy and Barb Odanaka, take a break in San Jose during a trip around the state to visit skate parks. RIGHT: Odanaka drops into a pipe at Lake Cunningham. // NATALIE RICH // MOSAIC STAFF PHOTOGRAPHS

or women who are not moms but want an active role in the group. My kid and his daughter were among many skateboarding fans who came to see them...

Skateboarding with her dad, Tom Max, at Lake Cunningham Regional Skate Park is not out of the ordinary for 15-year-old Frankie Max. But last Friday was an extraordinary day...

On June 20, eight members of the group began a trip across California, stopping at one or two skate parks a day. They came here because San Jose happens to have the largest skatepark in all of the state...

cent increase in owner suicides," said Bridget Watson, supervisor of the Santa Clara County Senior County Animal Shelter in San Marin...

"I've had him for six months and he's already cost us \$1,500 for everything," Yrigoyen said. He also had to get his puppy dewormed and treated for other medical problems...

"I was driving, and I saw a car drop a dog off and get drive away from the Alamo Road Transit Center," said Asha, a VTA bus driver. He said it wasn't the first time he had picked up a stray...



ABOVE: From left, Skateboard Moms Gale Hart, Ji Hongy and Barb Odanaka, take a break in San Jose during a trip around the state to visit skate parks. RIGHT: Odanaka drops into a pipe at Lake Cunningham. // NATALIE RICH // MOSAIC STAFF PHOTOGRAPHS

Women come from all over who receives a skateboard for his birthday and finds out his mom is a champion skateboarder. "We come from here today because Skate Like a Girl and Skateboard Moms are here, and it's really important to us to be with the globe..."

It's an all-inclusive girl skate community," said Erica Harris, the chapter's program coordinator. For the moms, it's a chance to be girls. "We feel like kids again. It's really free and exhilarating," said Claudia Hoag...

It's a tough situation. The rise in euthanized animals at the San Jose Animal Care Center last year was linked to the high number of strays. Many are unspayed, feral or behaviorally unsound animals were brought in...

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Family pets falling victim to household budget cuts

BY AUDREY FREY // MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

On a recent Saturday morning, Jose Figueroa approached the double doors of San Jose Animal Care Center's main entrance, walking past the metal dog and cat status that flank the building's walkway before sharply turning left toward a single side door marked "Pet Surrender."

"I've had him for six months and he's already cost us \$1,500 for everything," Yrigoyen said. He also had to get his puppy dewormed and treated for other medical problems. St. Gregory can only speculate as to why the San Jose center has seen more strays while owner surrenders remained stable...

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A young boy holds two pets that must be surrendered because of a household budget cut. // NATALIE RICH // MOSAIC STAFF PHOTOGRAPHS

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Rally supports police critic

Protesters say police unfairly pulled them 'Thugs'

BY NICKY LINDLEY AND BRIAN KIM // MOSAIC STAFF WRITERS

A spat that has been simmering for weeks between outspoken police critic Raj Jayadev and the powerful union that represents the San Jose Police Department splashed across a public stage this week, when dozens of community leaders gathered at San Jose City Hall Plaza to throw their support behind Jayadev and call an end to the discord.

Jayadev, executive director of De-Bug, a Silicon Valley bilingual magazine, has repeatedly lashed out at policing practices of SJPD, denouncing the disproportionate number of minority arrests and alleging excessive use of force. Those practices, he has said, have resulted in deaths of community members in past years.

The rally was a response to a YouTube video posted early in June on the San Jose Police Officers' Association blog, protestansjose.com, which ridiculed a public statement made by Jayadev at a previous City Council meeting. The video accused Jayadev of threatening City Council members.

In a statement posted on the SJOA website on June 1, George Beattie, second chair of the organization, labeled Jayadev and his supporters "thugs who attempt to get their way by threatening anyone who opposes them."

At the rally, representatives from organizations ranging from the NAACP to the San Jose Peace and Justice Center spoke out against the "chasm" between



Community supporters of SJPD critic Raj Jayadev gather at a city hall rally. // TERESA MATTHEW // MOSAIC STAFF PHOTOGRAPHS

the SJOA and residents of San José, particularly minorities. Jayadev and fellow activists extended an invitation to the City Council and citizens to unite for better trust and communication in the community.

Speakers rallied for the defense of free speech and the power of community action, drawing a chorus of cheers from the crowd. "What you are looking at right now, in the brothers and sisters around you, is a time-honored tradition," Jayadev said. "You are looking at a street response."

"The police have this idea that this issue is 'us versus them,'" said Marc Peterson Perez, one of the protesters. "I

can't agree with that. We pay taxes that support their salaries. We have a right to express ourselves."

Some people at the rally held signs that read, "We will not be intimidated!" and, "The suppression of ideas never can make them go away."

Most demonstrators wore T-shirts bearing the word "THUG," an acronym for "Trust Builder, Healer, Uniter and Generator of Solutions." The T-shirts are a tongue-in-cheek response to Beattie's statement of June 1.

Speakers called for mutual cooperation between the police and the community. They called for the formation of a citizen review board, which would assess and moderate the actions of the police officers' labor union has taken under his guidance. Lopez has

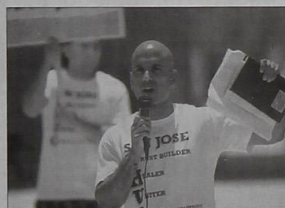
JAYADEV // DE-BUG FOUNDER

// FROM PAGE 1

its mischaracterization of Jayadev and the incident displayed in the video.

In reaction to the SJOA video, Jayadev and De-Bug supporters organized a peaceful "street response" June 30 in front of the San Jose City Hall with the goal of building trust between law enforcement officials and the community.

In spite of perhaps because of his role as a prominent community advocate, Jayadev's philosophy on life seems deeply grounded in his belief in the natural capabilities of man. Perhaps this is why he is able to look at his community, identify some areas that need improvement, work toward reforming them, and even in the face of adversity continue in his pursuit of justice.



Raj Jayadev, a critic of San Jose police, speaks during a community rally at city hall.

people and minority groups not represented by traditional media sources.

At first, Jayadev says his instinct was to move more toward advocacy. Then De-Bug was approached out of the blue by Sandy Close.

Silicon Valley De-Bug is much more than simply a community center or local bilingual magazine. Depending on the day or time, or even the room, the De-Bug headquarters serves many different functions.

In a relatively small space consisting of the bottom two levels of a former apartment building — Jayadev himself still resides on the third floor — Silicon Valley De-Bug has built a home for a photography department, a local music coop, a graphic design studio, a silk-screening T-shirt production center, a video production group, and a community organizing group, to name a few.

De-Bug was launched in 1999 when Jayadev and a few friends realized there was a lack of Silicon Valley composed mostly of young

oneselves with the people who thought were inspirational." Jayadev explained as he pointed toward a mural of Noreen Salinas painted by local community muralist Frank Torres. Salinas' father died after being shocked with Tazers by San Jose police in May 2007 while he lay unarmed and naked in his hotel room.

The incident transformed Salinas, a San Jose resident, into an activist. She is now the leader of a campaign to ban Tazers and has called for independent reviews in cases where police are involved in non-shooting related deaths.

At the bottom of the stairs, De-Bug constructed a small room to give family members privacy during criminal justice and community advocacy project meetings. In stark contrast to the red walls of the tiny room, six smaller, poignant portraits done mostly in black and white surround a couple chairs and a small, circular coffee table draped with a red Persian rug that was once used for meditation.

Jayadev retells the tragic stories of the people in the portraits with a captivating frankness, recounting in each case how De-Bug was able to help them through their difficult times by doing advocacy work or simply being there for them.

Besides a shelf with a few binders on it, these are the room's only furnishings. All that De-Bug has is the help of dedicated community members.

Although De-Bug's efforts may seem ambitious, Jayadev is certain that more progress can be made in the help of dedicated community members.

"I didn't make De-Bug, De-Bug made it," Jayadev said. "Whoever comes into this space creates it."

white, and yellow spars an office door and part of the surrounding wall.

The outlines of two Koti fish from the sides of an elaborate, rainbow-colored, flower-like pattern that emanates outward from a grinning skull painted with a bright metallic silver. The pale gray wall it covers is streaked with multicolored paint that dried as it dripped down to the floor. In front of this grand mural sits a humble couch covered with many pillows.

The entire De-Bug headquarters is a work.

The basement floor is strewn with a variety of eclectic objects that include old bicycles, Apple computer boxes, neatly stacked paint cans, and the random spray bottle. All of these objects are remnants of some project, past or present.

Innumerable other items also add to the mix. One standout is the huge silk-screening machine referred to its simply "the copier." It is impossible not to notice it standing in the corner, screens full of the most recent batches of printed T-shirts still attached to its multiple arms.

From racial profiling to street violence, there are a multitude of issues affecting Silicon Valley residents as a way to obtain more information about the heavily disputed election.

Sotani's death has also given a strong voice to the opposition. As a result, the streets of Iran have erupted in violence as quickly as the tweets have flashed across phones and computer screens.

Shereen Rastgar, 22, who recently graduated from San Francisco State University, is a member of the group. She and Zozsi, 24, both learned about the downtown San Jose rally. The group was not directly involved in the protests but instead focused on helping spread the message and inform people of times and location.

De-Bug headquarters in San Jose, during a moment of silence at the protest vigil.

Protests have a very limited life," said Karim, a member of the Association of Iranian-American Writers. "I'm trying to get writers to keep Iran on the minds of people and keep international attention."

But for now, Iranians here and abroad find encouragement in the attention and zeal of their youth.

"It has given us a lot of hope," Pournaband said.

Karim shared the sentiment. "It's very exciting because it's different from any kind of engagement in political mobilization anywhere," she said.

Protests in Tehran inspire young Iranian-Americans to take to the streets

BY MATTHEW TSAI // MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

On two recent summer nights in San Jose, hundreds marched along the perimeter of the Plaza de Cesar Chavez, shouting English and Persian variations of "Free Iran!"

Several Iranian-American young people led the shouting, cupping posters around their mouths to amplify their voices, while others held signs under a banner of Article 21 of the Constitution that read, "No Islamic Republic" and "Government Thugs Brutalize People."

This was the scene for successive nights as emotional and energized crowds of Iranian-Americans held candlelight vigils to honor 26-year-old Neda Agha-Sotani, who was slain June 20 in Iran. They also gathered to protest what they called election fraud during the June 12 presidential election.

Although the event attracted protesters of all ages, it highlighted the rising influence of the young as they become increasingly involved in Iranian politics. Perhaps the greatest symbol of their mobilization was the reaction after the death of Agha-Sotani. The overwhelming response from student protesters from Tehran to the Bay Area was revealed an unprecedented awakening in Iranian politics.

The vigils in San Jose saw rare combinations of different generations congregating for a unified cause. Father and son, uncle and nephew, grandparent and grandchild, and ultimately young and old, mourned the passing of one woman.

"I'm really worried," Pournaband said of the events occurring in Iran. "No matter what, people have the right to demonstrate without fear of dying."

The youth movement in the Bay Area is not surprising considering that much of the disenfranchisement in Iran has come from college students. In a country where nearly three-quarters of the population is younger than 30, the uprising has caught the attention of the older generation. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei described the youth's spirit as "confused."

"It makes sense that young people are leading the way," said Perse Karim, a San Jose State professor who writes regularly about social issues in Iran. It is their "future that is at stake and it is exciting for them to be a part of an image of themselves."

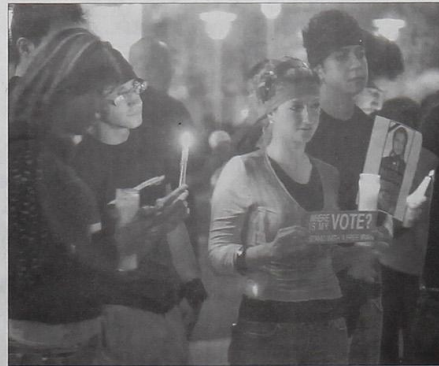
But what about the Iranian-American youth protesting in San Jose?

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A candlelight vigil in memory of dead Iranians at Plaza de Cesar Chavez in San Jose. // NATALIE RICH // MOSAIC STAFF PHOTOGRAPHS

usually people label each other with different philosophies," said Namiar, who declined to give his last name. "But here we have people of all ages."

It has taken the courageous spirit of Iran's young population to bring the country into focus for Iranian-American teens, according to those interviewed at the vigil.

Keyvan Navid, a 20-year-old junior at San Jose State University, has noticed. "Navid, an Iranian-American, was inspired to speak out against 'rigged politics and rigged elections.'"

"A lot of the youth" in the Bay Area "are disconnected from Iran," said Navid, who attended the vigil. "Although the American-born student does not feel a strong connection to his family's country, getting involved was 'a good way to branch out.'"

"We are in touch with them and tell them to make announcements," said Arzhang Kabbal, 40, a Bay Area resident who helped organize the gatherings.

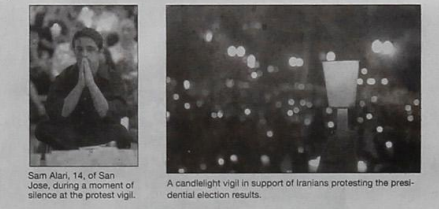
Foreign coverage is heavily restricted, so that night's rally from e-mails and Facebook. A simple Facebook status update like "going to rally downtown" is effective in getting the word out, Zozsi said.

"The major media outlets realize that if something gains a lot of steam in the internet community, there must be concrete substance to it," wrote Steven Nam, a graduate of Columbia University, in a Facebook message. Nam is one of four administrators of a Facebook group that's continuing to organize events similar to June 22's rally in cities throughout the United States.

Despite the Iranian government's countless attempts to keep footage of protests from leaving the country, numerous videos continue to be uploaded to YouTube. "The



A candlelight vigil in support of Iranians protesting the presidential election results.



A candlelight vigil in support of Iranians protesting the presidential election results.

TECH // BAY AREA MOBILIZES TO SUPPORT IRANIAN

// FROM PAGE 1

Bay Area. He and his wife, Rouge, who is Iranian, were at the June 22 downtown protest.

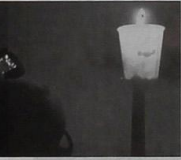
The downtown gathering was rushed but, word spread quickly, and many people attended the event.

What also drew protesters was the death of 26-year-old Neda Agha Sotani, reportedly slain by Basij militia during a June 20 protest in Tehran. Disturbing images of Sotani's death were broadcast on YouTube and eventually were picked up by major news outlets. The images joined activists and social justice movements rallying their own in high numbers to bring the Iranian death and across the country.

As the Iranian government put more restrictions on foreign news coverage of events in the country, many turned to social networking as a way to obtain more information about the heavily disputed election.

Sotani's death has also given a strong voice to the opposition. As a result, the streets of Iran have erupted in violence as quickly as the tweets have flashed across phones and computer screens.

Shereen Rastgar, 22, who recently graduated from San Francisco State University, is a member of the group. She and Zozsi, 24, both learned about the downtown San Jose rally. The group was not directly involved in the protests but instead focused on helping spread the message and inform people of times and location.



Protesters at a candlelight vigil in downtown San Jose used text messaging and social media to mobilize.

Huffington Post, YouTube has taken steps to prevent the identification of protesters by blocking out their faces, in effort to deter aggressive Iranian officials seeking to learn and investigate protesters.

Many protesters in San Jose were reluctant to share their names, worried that the Iranian government officials may be monitoring the rally.

"I can tell you why I cannot share my name," one man said. "They can come pretending to be with us but really they are against us [...] we are trying to protect our families."

America and the rest of the world will continue to witness a trend toward this type of civil participation as technology becomes more efficient and widespread, said Dr. Melinda Jackson, assistant professor of political science at San Jose State University.

"Barack Obama was probably the most effective at using social networking in the political arena," said Jackson, who has been following the Iran elections and protests.

"Two-thirds of Iran's population is younger than 25, she said, and for this reason demographics are likely to play a large role in the behavior of the country as a whole.

"They're very frustrated with the regime," she said. "Even if they [the Iranian government] succeed in their tactical thing that Iranian people will still resist repression. Twitter is winning."

The shooting death of a young Iranian woman, captured on video and posted on YouTube drew hundreds of local Iranians and supporters to a downtown San Jose rally.

HELLYER PARK VELODROME

NIGHT AT THE RACES

BY SAMVED SANGAMESWARA // MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

Those anticipating Lance Armstrong's return to the Tour de France to witness world-class cycling missed an opportunity last weekend at the Hellyer Park Velodrome in San Jose.

The American Velodrome Challenge brought a different breed of cyclists to San Jose, that houses one of just 23 tracks in the nation. The two-day event attracted elite cyclists from around the world to Hellyer County Park to participate in this unusual sport.

Track cycling is a quicker, faster-paced version of cycling, as opposed to long stage races such as the Tour de France that begins Saturday in Monaco.

Track cycling is more like NASCAR than road racing. Competitors race around an oval with banked turns — 23 degrees at the Hellyer velodrome. The cyclists ride specially designed aerodynamic bicycles with a disk wheel instead of the standard one with spokes.

On a night so hot that Watsonville cyclist Ben Jacques-Mayne said it "felt like a hot blow dryer on my face," the fans hung out around the rim of the track, barbecuing and blasting music.

But on the track the racing was fast and furious. There were 15 major events for men and women, boys and girls. The competition was a tune-up for this week's U.S. championships at Carson.

Although the sport is not nearly as popular as road racing, propo-



International track cyclists visit San Jose to compete in obscure sport

nents of the discipline find it more engaging. Morgan Hill's Daniel Holloway, who took first place in the men's elite scratch race, says the element of strategy entices him.

"It's much more tactical," Holloway said. "You have to think much more."

While track racing wallows in relative obscurity, the tight-knit community of competitors hope for a spike in popularity. Jacques-Mayne, also a well-known road racer, said that he hopes for more nights like Saturday that attracted a couple hundred to the velodrome.

"You bring the fans out and get them cheering and the racers are going to do a whole lot better," he said.

Current U.S. national champion Kelyn Akuna, 26, shakes hands with Daniel Walker after their two-man sprint at the American Velodrome Challenge.



ABOVE: Daniel Holloway, 22, crosses the finish line first in a scratch race at Hellyer Park Velodrome in San Jose. // NATALIE RICH // MOSAIC STAFF PHOTOGRAPHS



Current U.S. national champion Kelyn Akuna hangs out in the infield before his race.



ABOVE: Spectators watch cyclists race at Hellyer Park Velodrome. RIGHT: The obscure sport of track racing was on display in San Jose.



A cyclist sports tape on his legs at Hellyer Park Velodrome.

"You bring the fans out and get them cheering and the racers are going to do a whole lot better."

- BEN JACQUES-MAYNE, CYCLIST, WATSONVILLE



LEFT: Desiree Martinez, 29, and Christina Monsrais, 34, talk to a reporter during a casting call for The Biggest Loser.

RIGHT: Participants in a casting call for The Biggest Loser wait outside 24 Hour Fitness in San Jose.



Hopefuls weigh in

Hollywood casting call attracts people who have a lot to lose

BY MARIANA BARRERA // MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

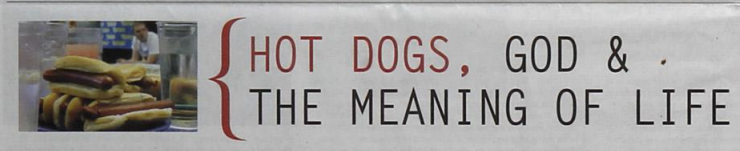
Christina Monsrais has experienced some rough moments—a unplanned pregnancy, a battle with cancer... while dealing with her obesity problem.

now going for its eighth season in September. In the beginning, every contestant is weighed. Each week, they are weighed again to determine which team has lost the most weight that week.

weight when a member of their family is doing the same thing. "Some had interesting stories. I couldn't have treatment because I was pregnant," Monsrais said.

one Monsrais was pregnant, she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. "I couldn't have treatment because I was pregnant," Monsrais said.

out the show's help, she said. Jeanne De Martini, 43, led her excessive weight, has had people to judge her character unfairly. She said she thinks that because she's fat, she is dumb.



BY NICKY LINDLEY AND ALISHA AZEVEDO // MOSAIC STAFF WRITERS

Known as the "Gurgulators," eight men and two women line up behind a long table in the San Jose State University Dining Commons.



The "gurgulators" eye their hot dogs before the start of Nathan's Famous Hot Dog Eating Contest at San Jose State University. // TERESA MATHEW // MOSAIC STAFF PHOTOGRAPHS

as the announcer begins the final countdown. In the final moments, some of the contestants begin to resemble chipmunks. Others wear expressions of pained desperation.

but attended the San Jose regional contest to offer most support. "Nerz, an experienced eater with a flair for showmanship, surprised upon competing eating unexpectedly. He became an

has compiled his adventures in a work titled "Eat This Book," which was featured in the Daily Show with Jon Stewart in 2006. Throughout his experience, Nerz has watched the steady evolution of the sport.

When he began "it was just a bunch of fat guys who could eat a lot," he explains, "but now with money on the line, we get these very young, fit guys."

Like Hal "Hoover" — think of the vacuum — Hunt, a spectator at Saturday's event. The slim, athletic structural engineer is an experienced fighter in competitive eating. He is ranked 7th in the world in his sport. Like Nerz, he fell into it unwittingly. His college roommate signed him up as a joke.

announcer after receiving a job offer with a reporting assignment for the "Village Voice."

BOY FIAT BUT PAPER PERFECTS HIS CRAFT

Military vet finds niche market and finds himself a sought after artist

BY SARGUNJOT KAUR // MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

Just a few years ago, Larry Clark was handed a book titled "Parades for Dummies."

By SARGUNJOT KAUR // MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

Clark, president of the Alameda Business Association at once found his solution to generating business in the local area.

Clark had hoped to re-create the Rose Parade that used to occur in the late 1800s and early 1900s in San Jose into a community Independence Day parade.

Clark's patriotic streak goes further back. He won the Silver Star, one of the most prestigious military awards, for "gallantry in action" in the Vietnam War.

The San Jose resident and father of five started a series of small businesses, including a pinball company, and made real estate investments until landing the title of a float builder.

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BY DENISE DOVALI // MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

When he's on the field, sweat running down his cheeks, Sean Mawald seems like just another football player.

Sean, 15, is one of the students in the Santa Clara County Office of Education and Hearing Program located at Leigh High.

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Clark with a staple gun to build a float. // JERRY TING // MOSAIC STAFF

"It's a gift. I am always looking at the background of the stage props on movie sets," he said. "I like looking at little things in a big way. Even if I'm looking at a little toy robot, in my head I'm thinking what it would look like eight feet high."

Clark said that the float building is an art form. "We create the innovation behind float building, not follow it," Thomas said.

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MAGAZINE START-UP GIVES TEENS A VOICE

BY BRIAN KIM // MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

As high-schoolers dressed in T-shirts, board shorts and tank tops took seats around a table lined with bags of potato chips and a pitcher of iced tea,

But after 15 minutes, Tu, founder and editor-in-chief of BAY Magazine, settled his staff down. It was time to plan the fall issue of his pioneering, teen-driven publication. It wasn't easy for the incoming UC-Berkeley freshman from Saratoga High to create the free, seasonal 32-page magazine from scratch.

Tu, who plans to study business at Berkeley, is inspired by "The Wave," "Metro" and "94.4." He strives to make BAY just as presentable.

But the publication didn't reach its fourth edition without running into the same financial problems that are plaguing print journalism everywhere.

"As you can see around, there aren't many teen magazines that are independently run," Tu said. "With its latest issue, Summer '09, the publication has grown from a 13-person staff with little previous experience to more than 30 student journalists from around the South Bay area."

Tu said his parents' support was a big factor. "I wanted to show the Bay Area that teens have a voice," Tu said. "You either get the money or you don't."

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newspapers and yearbooks, BAY gives a voice that isn't as widely heard. Tu emphasizes presentation and design in order to forthly the message that he has a professional publication.

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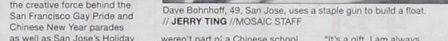
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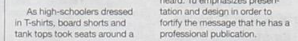
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Jerry Ting, author of the article.



Brian Kim, author of the article.

DEAF FOOTBALL PLAYER FITS IN

BY DENISE DOVALI // MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

When he's on the field, sweat running down his cheeks, Sean Mawald seems like just another football player.

Sean, 15, is one of the students in the Santa Clara County Office of Education and Hearing Program located at Leigh High.

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Sean Mawald, 15, gets a lot of support from his mother, Virginia Frazier-Mawald, 47. // JERRY TING // MOSAIC STAFF

Sean, 15, is one of the students in the Santa Clara County Office of Education and Hearing Program located at Leigh High.

Sean, 15, is one of the students in the Santa Clara County Office of Education and Hearing Program located at Leigh High.

"We're very close because we're both deaf," Meghan told her school's sports information office last year. "We can share our struggles and the things we go through. Our bond is really strong."

Although born deaf, Meghan's condition wasn't diagnosed until age 3. The Mavericks had Sean tested shortly after birth, and it turned out she also suffered from permanent hearing loss.

The family enrolled Sean in the Santa Clara County Office of Education Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program as a baby. They moved from Gilroy to San Jose so his children could benefit from the program.

Sean started using sign language at eight months and mastered it by the time he was 1 1/2 years old.

other kid dreaming the halways at lunch.

His mother, Virginia Frazier-Mawald, has tried to bridge the gap between the hearing and hearing impaired.

"I would love for people to include them, not to hesitate and for people to realize that they have unique gifts and enriching things to offer to society," she said.

"Sean is a unique individual," assistant track coach Anita Bolton said. "He is always ready to go out there and compete. He asks a lot of questions and pushes himself."

Eyes of the Tiger."

"It's one of the few songs I can understand," he said. Sean can't relate with it comes to teens' love affair with music and headphones.

"His hands are very important," his mom said. "They are the absolute necessity in his life because without them it would be hard for him to communicate."

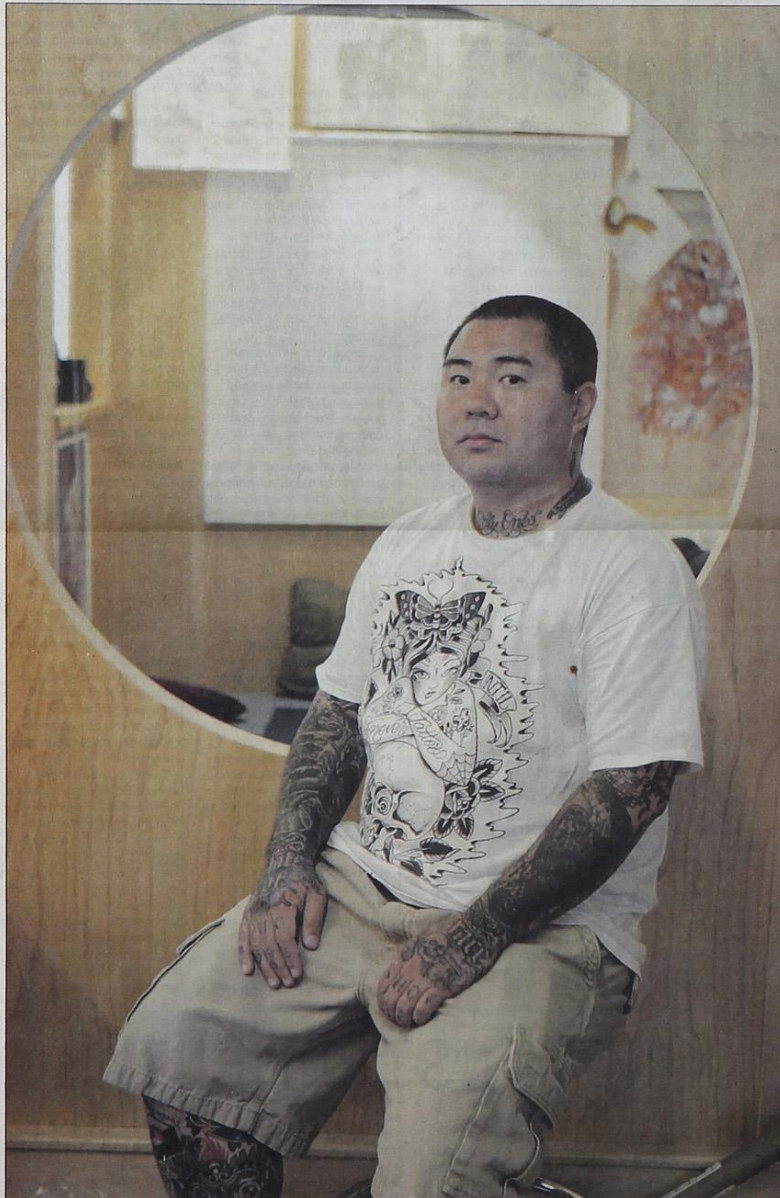
Sean is able to recognize sounds through the use of hearing aids but cannot make out the words of today's fast-paced world of music. That hasn't kept him from having a favorite song. "The

TATTOO'S NO LONGER TABOO



RIGHT: The hands of tattoo artist "Horitaka" Takahiro Kitamura, 35.

Body art goes mainstream, but artists remain ambivalent over popularity



Tattoo artist "Horitaka" Takahiro Kitamura, 35, in his studio. // TERESA MATHEW AND JERRY TING // MOSAIC STAFF PHOTOGRAPHS

BY JUSTINE TAI //
MOSAIC STAFF WRITER

Even at first glance, the question that often comes to mind is: Did it hurt?

To the average person, tattoos are merely a painful body embellishment. It has a bad reputation, associated with convicts and gangsters.

But many serious tattoo artists view their work as a way of life and say they are ambivalent about its growing popularity. It is glamorously depicted in pop culture and reality television. Many novice artists or "scratchers," as professional tattooists call them, have opened shop in the industry.

"Tattooing isn't just a way of making money. I'm doing what I want to do," says Abraham Ortega, co-owner of Death Before Dishonor, a tattoo parlor in San Jose. "I don't know what else I'd be doing. Probably in construction or jail even."

Ortega, 35, began tattooing at age 14 with his own homemade machines, tattooing kids in the neighborhood. "My family members were all artists in their own way," he said, "It ran in the family and I was always drawing."

Co-owner Paco Excel, 35, started out as an airbrush artist until he saw how busy the tattoo artists were.

"I like to be busy as an artist. I like doing Japanese back pieces, you know, bigger work," Excel says, "I have fun doing the back piece designs because it's like painting a big canvas."

Inspired by punk rock, skateboarding, and many things rebellious, iconic tattoo artist and entrepreneur Takahiro Kitamura, whose artist name is "Horitaka," developed an interest in tattoos because they were different.

Ten years ago he was the apprentice of tattoo master Horiyoshi III of Yokohama, and when he first started out, he was also taught by Paco Excel.

"I saw this Japanese program. It was one of those shambhala styles where the guy ripped part of his kimono off and you could see the cherry blossoms on him," says Horitaka, "I had an affinity for it [tattoos]."

"Now tattoo shops are more played out," Excel said. "They're coming out like hair salons, and there are shops within a five-mile radius of each other. It's good that tattoos are more accepted, but I hope it keeps growing in the right direction and never gets diluted."

In Japan, some link tattoos with the Yakuza, a gangster group. But Horitaka, one of the professionals who helped bring Japanese-style tattoos to the West, has worked passionately to establish tattooing as a legitimate art.

He has helped to reveal real talent in the tattoo community as the director of the annual San Jose Tattoo Convention, which has been held for five years. To ensure quality, Horitaka allows only seven or eight vendors into the convention. The rest are tattoo artists.

The San Jose Tattoo Convention has brought together many tattoo artists with distinct reputations, and Horitaka has promoted the group of exceptional tattoo artists in the industry. Working hard in tattooing is "not about the fame," he said. The convention is about "having a good time".

As tattoos become more mainstream, professional artists have tried to keep the market as undiluted as possible. By executing quality artwork and keeping good ethics, Horitaka has tried to stay true to his name.

Seven years ago, Horitaka opened State of Grace tattoo parlor with "Kazuaki Kitamura" (Horitomo) and "Jill Bonny" (Horiyuki).

"I can't control the actions of what other people do, but I can control what I put out there," he said. "We have an image and a mission statement, and we don't want to lose our identity."

"Some of the power of tattoos is lost," Horitaka said. "Nothing is shocking anymore. Before tattoos were a rare thing. People had them, and they were different. Now it seems like people are getting them to belong."

Among teens today, tattoos have become "the thing to do," "cool", and "not taboo anymore."

But not to Horitaka. "We're not just working. This is our lives," he says. "I'm devoted to this."



Tattoo artist "Horitomo", Kazuaki Kitamura, 37, tattoos a tiger on a customer at State of Grace in San Jose's Japantown.



Tattoo artist "Horitomo", Kazuaki Kitamura, 37, tattoos a tiger on a Dan Beuschlein, 29, at State of Grace in San Jose's Japantown.