

# Committee agrees upon new bell schedule with a later start

by **Danika Lyle**

*Humor Editor*

Paint your nails, work out, or do some extra homework. These are just a couple of things that you can do with the extra 15 minutes before school that will be added to the 2016 Bell Schedule.

After months of meetings, public surveys, focus groups, and research, the district's Schedule Advisory Committee reached consensus on a schedule that will attempt to reduce stress levels and optimize student learning. Both Saratoga and Los Gatos will have an altered but similar class setups if the schedule recommendation passes.

The proposed schedule at Los Gatos will have classes begin at 8:15 am. In addition, the length of each class period will change from 95 minutes to 90. Tutorial will also be extended 10 minutes. The school day will be pushed out five minutes, making the release time 2:10 pm, but with a 15 minute later start, this additional 5 minutes has so far met little resistance.

On Jan. 12, the School Board held a meeting in the LGHS library in which the Schedule Advisory Committee presented the proposal, and board and community members were allowed to comment. The majority of teachers and parents of Los Gatos High School approved of the new schedule, but Saratoga parents were not as convinced. The meeting, which was set



to end at 8:30, ended up going an hour and a half overtime to accommodate public comments. More discussion will be necessary before the schedule can be fully approved.

Many have asked the question, "why change the schedule at all?" Although some argue that the schedule is barely facing any alterations, others find it tedious that the school would adjust such a familiar, well-functioning agenda. One reason for the revision is the need for a later start. The Los Gatos Saratoga District felt that it was necessary for the schools to start later than 8 o'clock.

Another reason for the change is to correspond the sister schools' schedules in order to allow for teacher sharing between sites. In addition, many students and staff have expressed that the new 95 minute period length has been quite excessive, and would benefit from a cutback.

Since September, a committee of teachers, parents, and students from each school has been meeting to decide on the best possible schedule for the institutions. Voting was reached on consensus rather than majority, meaning that the entire team gave a pass to the schedule rather than just more than half.

Although change never comes easy for schools, a majority of the school believes that the newly proposed schedule will have a positive effect on the students of LGHS.



LATER START: Teacher **Steve Hammack** speaks before the Schedule Advisory Committee.

## Methane leaks in LA suburb

by **Olivia Hill**

*Humor Editor*

A methane gas leak in Southern California is said to be the largest environmental disaster since the BP oil spill off the Gulf Coast in 2010. The leak was discovered on Oct. 23 by the Southern California Gas Company in one of its ruptured underground containment systems, though the cause of the leak is still unknown. The system lies 25 miles northwest of Los Angeles in the suburb of Porter Ranch.

Southern California Utility officials predict that the leak will not be repaired for at least another two months. The utility company has already begun drilling relief wells that would repair the rupture by sealing it with cement; however, the underground drilling is a long process so as not to hit contiguous pipes.

At the height of the leak in late November, gas was escaping into the California air at a rate of 100,000 lbs per hour, and as much as 66,000 lbs are still escaping every hour. The rupture became the largest single source of methane emissions in California overnight. Methane is a potent gas that absorbs and emits infrared radiation, otherwise

known as a greenhouse gas. According to a study conducted by environmentalists at The Washington Post, the impact of the greenhouse gases released since the leak is equal to those of the emissions of 7 million cars when projected over 20 years.

The leak has caused more than 1,700 homes to be evacuated in nearby neighborhoods and the closing of two schools. Residents have reported complaints of nausea, dizziness, vomiting, shortness of breath, and headaches, but the Department of Energy stated, "As far as scientists know, methane is not a long-term health hazard; however, more research is probably needed to completely understand the long-term effects of methane exposure."

The media and California government have received backlash for their inadequate handling of the rupture. Environmental advocates have complained about the lack of attention the disaster has received from news outlets, and Gov. Jerry Brown has come under fire for declaring a state of emergency 12 weeks after the leak was discovered. The pipe is expected to be repaired sometime in March, but the effects will continue for decades to come.

(Sources: The Fiscal Times, CNN)



ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER: The repercussions of the methane leak are not evident yet, but many fear the effects will worsen in the future.

## Santa Clara Soccer sues NFL

by **Hyuntae Byun**

*Editor-in-Chief*

San Francisco and other local governments expect to spend several million dollars hosting the Super Bowl 50, which analysts predict will bring in several hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue to local businesses. Of course, the event has had its opponents; San Francisco supervisor Jane Kim on Thurs., Jan 7, stated that taxpayer money shouldn't go towards hosting the sporting event, and various other officials and citizens have decried the impacts that the event will have on transportation and the Bay Area economy.

Recently, the National Football League found itself embroiled in a litigation battle against a new adversary: the Santa Clara Youth Soccer League. In preparation for the Super Bowl, the NFL brokered an agreement with the city of Santa Clara to borrow the nearby Santa Clara Youth Soccer Park. The Santa Clara Youth Soccer League's lawsuit alleges that this deal is invalid, as the city failed to follow the process for changing the conditional use permit of the park.



SOCCER FIASCO: The Santa Clara Youth Soccer League sued the NFL.

The original suit sought a temporary restraining order to block the NFL's transformation of the park and only targeted the city, but the Youth Soccer League later expanded the suit to include the NFL.

Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge Joseph H. Huber initially reviewed the case and rejected the soccer league's request for a temporary restraining order, at the same time asking the NFL not to make drastic changes to the soccer

fields until the issue could be heard in court. The NFL and city moved forward with construction despite the judge's recommendation, resulting in an emergency hearing of the case on Tues., Jan. 5.



FOOTBALL FEUD: This year's Super Bowl will be at Levi's Stadium.

The Youth Soccer League is suing in part on behalf of around 1,500 displaced youth athletes, but also claims to represent Santa Clara citizens in general. Steve Robertson, Vice President of the Santa Clara Youth Soccer League, says that though soccer groups knew since 2013 that the park would be used for the Super Bowl, both the NFL and city neglected to mention the exact usage of the park.

So far, the NFL has removed sprinkler heads and has dug holes in the fields and transformed the park into a site for media trailers and a center for security operations. The area will host nearly 6,000 journalists and broadcasters.

To resolve the conflict, the NFL promised to repair damage to the fields but never specified a deadline. While the city initially offered the use of two fields at Twin Creeks to the league, the NFL is working to negotiate the use of the Avaya professional soccer field as a demonstration of good faith.

(Sources: SJ Mercury News, Sporting News, ESPN, USA Today, SF Examiner)

## El Niño snowfall improves skiing conditions in Tahoe

by **Elizabeth Monsef**

*Sports Editor*

Winter Wonderland is not just a fantasy for Lake Tahoe; now it's real. Coming off of two of the worst skiing and snowboarding seasons the Lake Tahoe area has experienced in years, each flake of snow this year brings hope for a stellar season. Ski enthusiasts are eager to "shred the pow."

At nearly every resort around the lake, conditions are favorable for new skiers and experts alike. With snow depth already reaching over 100 to 200 inches this season with a current coverage of almost 60 inches at the top of most resorts, locals and visitors are excited to see what this season will have to offer. Nearly every mountain is 100 percent open with almost every lift running. With the way things are running as of right now, Tahoe is in for an economically beneficial season after the disappointing 2014 and early 2015 seasons.

Sledding is an option at almost every park and street corner, with snow coverage perfect for snowballs and snowmen too. Icicles are visible from the cabins, and the trees feature a beautiful dusting of white. Ice skating, snowmobiling, and snowshoeing are all options available as a substitute to skiing and snowboarding and made possible by Mother Nature herself.

In an exclusive El Gato interview, Homewood Ski Resort Supervisor of Guest Services, Elizabeth "Red" Paul shares her excitement

for the 2016 ski season and the current state of cheer present in Lake Tahoe. She explains that everyone is happy, even when certain events do not go as planned. Paul recalls the unexpected power



SNOWY SLOPES: El Niño is gracing Tahoe's slopes with heavy snowfall this year.

outage on Jan. 1 as a perfect example of the maintained positive spirits in the community, even though the resort was forced to close down for the day. When asked what the highlight of the season has been so far, Paul responds, "The disposition of everybody and the weather. The last few seasons really bonded us together as a community. Everyone is so happy to see Homewood with this amount of snow again." Paul also explained that without a strong winter, the summers in Tahoe perish. As a resident on the lake, she knows that heavier snow seasons will cause less hesitation when it comes to boating or spending time on the lake in the summer months. With increased tourism and business, Homewood is also currently holding live concerts and other events.

Not only is the snow beneficial for tourism, ski schools, resorts, locals shops, and restaurants, but the snow is also relieving the ever-deepening California drought. With the considerable amount of snowfall expected this season, the runoff should make a small dent in the lack of water in the lake. Whether the conditions are due to the constantly-discussed El Niño or simply a favorable year, Lake Tahoe residents and visitors are thrilled. Keep updated with your favorite resorts to see how the weather plays out. In the meantime, get out there and enjoy the snow before it's gone.

(Sources: Homewood Ski Resort, Kirkwood Ski Resort, Diamond Peak, Northstar Ski Resort)