

# Keeping the decibels down: Impossible?

## Students continue to ignore librarians by talking loudly

by **Christine Chang**

There seems to be an intellectual crisis at MVHS. Or perhaps it's a plague of short-term memory loss. We can't seem to comprehend the very elementary idea that the library is a place for reading, for studying, for being quiet. Each time we are told, "shh! This is a library...please keep it down," we seem to do the exact opposite, pushing the noise notch another decibel up.

Every day, hundreds of students stampede through the doors of the library. They raid the textbook cart, grease the keyboards with sticky fingers, and transform the quiet study area into something like a mess hall. For library managers Megan Birdsong and Jody Mitchell, it's rarely an easy task trying to maintain the calm and cultivating effect libraries are reputed to have.

Strangely, the students who can whiz through instructions for complex chemistry labs and analyze literature down to every trifling root of a word, are often the same students who blabber away on cell phones despite a bright red sign demanding "Off/Away" taped at eye level, who sneak entire lunches

into their mouths from beneath the tables, who consider the library a convenient locale for social powwows. But are library rules really that much more complicated than the heavy academic work we tolerate every day?

Common sense would agree that it does not make sense for a place often synonymous with "sanctuary" and "paradise" to be degraded by unsophisticated etiquette exhibited by MV students. As outstandingly excellent our academic programs might be, failing to grasp the concept of peace and quiet in a library is undeniably a shameful blotch on MVHS students' well-known record of intelligence and maturity.

In fact, much of the problem comes in the irony that MVHS students seem to bear a twisted connotation of "library"—an indoor area with comfy chairs and free Internet access where people hold club meetings, out-chant each other in SAT words, or make out behind bookshelves. More often than not, Birdsong and Mitchell have had to ask entire tables of students to leave due to their disruptive demeanor. Especially during common unscheduled periods such as

seventh, the growing bubble of noise becomes stubbornly difficult to deflate. As a result, Birdsong, as well as other teachers who work or hold class sessions in the library at that time find it increasingly difficult to give verbal instructions to their students.

"There's a certain level of conversation that is okay, but beyond that there is a limit," Birdsong said. "We've been trying to communicate our expectations for a while, but if it doesn't seem to be getting across, it really comes down to closing the library when classes are in here to work."

On the part of the student body, it is only fair that we cooperate with the standards set to create a truly effective library atmosphere. The librarians work hard to preserve the quality of our library, and especially with so many restless high school students who barge in and out each day, it is not a hassle-free job. Having a school library is a privilege to respect, a privilege that requires good manners and civilized behavior.

Unless, of course, you don't mind taking those dandy SAT flash cards out to the rally court.