

The Holy Optimist

VOL. 1

JOHN H. FRANCIS POLYTECHNIC HIGH SCHOOL

JANUARY 2007

Putting The \$K in Christmas

A toy story with a happy ending.

By Michelle Gonzalez & Meri Sarkisyan
Optimist Staff Writers

You might say Poly really put the "\$K" in Christmas for 2006. After seven months of fundraising, Poly's Leadership collected a record \$34,041 for the yearly toy drive. \$20K of that was raised in 10 days. In three years, the Poly community has given \$100,000 worth of toys to the Los Angeles Fire Department's "Spark of Love" program.

"I was amazed," said Principal Jan Fries-Martinez. "What the Leadership class does with the whole school is outstanding. But after all, we all know Poly is the school with a heart."

"The hard work of the kids is the key," added Leadership co-sponsor Brian Le Clair.

But Leadership also did some new things this year.

"What we really did differently for 2006 was start a lot earlier," LeClair said. "We started right after graduation, last June."

They also wrote a lot of letters to businesses in the community, organized car washes in their neighborhoods and sold 'Who's House? P-House' t-shirts.

"It was hard for the kids, talking to business owners who might be in their 50s or 60s," LeClair said. "It is really intimidating to a sixteen year old, but they were successful in doing that."

Most Leadership students said playing Santa Claus was a satisfying experience.

"I just felt really good because that's money that is going to go to the kids and it's going to put smiles on their faces," Leadership president Eric Molina said.

For 2007, Leadership is going to try to raise at least \$30,000 again.

"If we go beyond that, it would be good for us" said Le Clair. "I would like to see us raise \$4-\$5,000 before June. If we could, it would help us for next December."

Le Clair stressed that every-

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Photo By Erick Robles

MEN OF STEEL: Workers confer while framing Gymnasium.

Building Byrd

By Jennifer Rivera
Optimist Staff Writer

Using both the latest concepts in school design and advanced technology, the new \$86 million Richard E. Byrd Middle School, presently under construction across the street from Poly, promises to offer its 1,680 students an exceptional learning experience.

Byrd is expected to be completed by June of 2008.

"In terms of construction, we are on schedule," said Rimas Tumas, Owner Authorized Representative (O.A.R.) consultant for the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Originally planned as a new high school site to relieve overcrowding at Poly, the project will now provide a new campus for Byrd Middle School. The existing Byrd Middle school will be reconfigured as a new high school

organized around small learning communities.

"When the project was changed to a middle school, the only real changes made were for height requirements," said Tumas. "Middle school kids are smaller."

The site previously belonged to The Department of Water and Power (DWP). They discovered mold in the building and it was torn down to make way for the new school.

The design is centered around three small learning communities, each located in a separate building.

The nine-building complex will also include two administration buildings, one with a library, a gymnasium, locker rooms, a kitchen and a multi-purpose room with stage.

Administrative offices in-

[See Byrd Page 3]



Photo By Erick Robles

EAT LIKE A BYRD: Construction continues on cafeteria.

Aca Deca Aims High

This year's smarts squad won't be content with winning locally.

By Aldo Mendez
Optimist Staff Writer

Poly's Academic Decathlon team has high hopes for their performance this year. The team has never gotten past the city competition, but this time could be different.

"I really think this year's team has an incredible chance to go to state," captain and senior Crystal Sicairos said.

"Our score from last year, in 10 other states, would've gotten us to nationals," she noted. "Every winner of nationals has been from Los Angeles."

"If we can make it out of here," Sicairos said, "then we're good."

Junior captain Michelle Aguila agreed.

"We have a good team and a good chance of making it," Aguila said. "I hope we make it to state this year."

The Academic Decathlon students put their intellectual abilities to the test in ten different events: mathematics, language, literature, science, social sciences, music, art, speech interview, economics and essay. An active decathlon team consists of nine players, three with GPAs 3.75 and above, three who have GPAs between 3.0 and 3.75 and three who have GPAs below 3.0. Poly's team currently has 12 members.

This year the competition concentrates on China and its culture, including art and music.

"Learning about China and its culture, being able to go into depth, like its history and its past, it influences you and allows you to become more intellectual and cultural," said Aguila.

Some team members had to give up other activities to be on the team.

"I knew studying ten subjects in 5 months was going to be challenging," said team member Betty Suravech. "I had to give up band in order to be here."

Others found time for more activities. Junior Miguel Ma-

cias, one of the team's top scorers, participates in cross-country and track and field.

"Everyday, although we're doing a lot of work, it's pretty fun. We eat and joke around while we're competing with other schools," Macias said.



Photo By Erick Robles

STATUARY BACK: John H. Francis found on floor.

Burgled Bronze Bust Back

Mysterious disappearance ends with mysterious return.

By Aries Vega
Optimistjvvhvj Staff Writer

The bust of John H. Francis, which disappeared from its perch in the foyer of the auditorium sometime after 1 p.m. on Friday, December 22, 2006, has been returned. The statuery was discovered around 7 a.m. Wednesday morning, January 4, by Assistant Principal Lourdes De Santiago.

"When I opened the auditorium door to let the intersession kids in, there it was, on the floor by the pedestal," said De Santiago.

The bronze statue of Francis, the first principal of Polytechnic High School and an important figure in Los Angeles Unified School District history, has been a fixture in the auditorium for years.

The theft was first discovered by English teacher Keri Teeter, whose classes meet in

[See Bust Page 3]

Warman Workshop

Learn how to apply for free federal money for college.

By Andrew Padilla
Optimist Staff Writer

The College Office will offer FAFSA workshops in the library on January 22, 24 and 25. The workshops, presented by Leona Warman, are open to all seniors. The workshop will last approximately 90 minutes.

Parents are invited to a second workshop scheduled for January 30. Interested students can sign up for this FAFSA workshop at the college office. A presentation for Spanish speakers will be held in the cafetorium in addition to the program in the library in English.

The FAFSA application gives college-bound students access to a wide variety of federal funds to use for college tuition, books and other education expenses. Applications are due online or by mail by March 2.

The amount of money each student receives depends on the student's financial status. FAFSA aid is grant money that does not need to be paid back.

THE POLY OPTIMIST

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LETTERS

Letters to the Editor are accepted and encouraged for topics relevant to our readers. Submitted letters must be typed or neatly printed in ink and must have the signature of the writer. Editors reserve the right to determine which issue the letter will be published in, and the right to edit the letter for grammar, length, and structure.

Corrections published in the following issue of the newspaper.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Poly Optimist adheres to the responsibility of a Free Student Press. It serves as a voice for the student body and the community. This newspaper accepts all the responsibilities inherent in being a free press. The Optimist staff strives to follow the Code of Ethics for the Society of Professional Journalists. Editorials are the opinion of individual staff writers, and not presented as news facts.

See All That You Can Be, Take the ASVAB

A test students can really use.

By Jose Peralta
Optimist Staff Writer

If you are not sure what you want to do after high school, Poly counselor Steve Thatt may just have what you are looking for. It is called the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test and it measures things you might be good at.

"While most of the tests that students take are strictly academic, this is vocational" said Thatt. "It covers categories that you wouldn't see on the regular academic exams. Some students have a lot of mechanical intelligence that is not going to come out if they take the SAT or the CAHSEE exam."

The ASVAB was originally designed to predict future academic and occupational success in military occupations, according to the program's website. Since its introduction in 1968, the ASVAB has been the subject of extensive research. Numerous validation studies indicate the ASVAB assesses academic ability and predicts success in a wide variety of occupations.

"It is useful for students who want to pursue vocational careers," Thatt said, "and those who are going to the military. The test will show what their strengths and weaknesses are so they can take remedial steps to improve in those areas."

ASVAB is open to all 11th and 12th graders, particularly those who are interested in either military service or pursuing vocational occupations. The test will be administered

on Wednesday, January 24th from 7:30 to 10:45 in the cafetorium.

The test is 2 ½ hours and covers science, arithmetic reasoning, word knowledge, paragraph comprehension, mathematics knowledge, electronics information, auto and shop information, and mechanical comprehension. Test format is multiple-choice, scored from 0-99.

Results are due February 8. Students who took the test can attend an assembly where test results will be explained and where they can get a paper copy of their results.

"If you want to pursue a vocational career," Thatt said, "the test will indicate what your aptitude is. So it's something that would be beneficial to any student, especially those with mechanical abilities or vocational abilities."

"I always recommend students take whatever aptitude test they can," Thatt said, "so they get those test taking experiences that are important for the SAT or whatever else."

Interested students should see Thatt in the counseling office by January 23. Review books for the test are available in the library.

Those who intend to enter the armed forces must take the ASVAB test. The Army, the National Guard and the Marines require a minimum score of 31. The other services have slightly higher eligibility scores.

"Poly had a student who scored in the 90s and was able to get into the Navy's Nuclear Technician program," Thatt said. "It is a very extensive training program and an opportunity to acquire high paying civilian jobs."

Poly's Faculty: Getting To Know You

By Patricia Garcia
Optimist Staff Writer

Fifteen new teachers joined the Poly faculty in July of 2006. The Optimist introduces four of them below.



ESL teacher **Aleen Maadani**, who attended UCLA and CSUN, says the wide variety of students at Poly makes the teaching experience even more enjoyable.

In her spare time, Maadani enjoys visiting the Griffith Observatory.

"There's something romantic about looking up at the stars," she said.



Computer Science teacher **Javier Rios**, currently attending UCLA, is a Poly alumnus who has worked on campus as a security guard, a teacher's assistant and a computer technician. Rios spent 2006 in Iraq before starting to teach.

"I love Poly. It's a great place to work," Rios said.



English teacher **Jeff Herrold**, a graduate of Hamilton University in upstate New York, enjoys playing with his newborn son of seven weeks and the video game "World of Warcraft."

Herrold just finished *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury. He liked how well it predicted the economy 50 years on.



Special Education teacher **Rose Marie Wolford**, who went to Cal State Los Angeles, says her favorite place to go is the 99-cent store, where "there is something for everyone."

When not teaching, she enjoys playing the guitar and writing. Wolford finds the courage of Gandhi, Evel Knievel and Jesus inspiring.

Upward Bound Program Offers Fun, Help With College

By Jennifer Miranda
Optimist Staff Writer

Not many academic programs promise fun with their learning. But Upward Bound is different. Students can attend cultural events and plays, tour college campuses and even take fieldtrips to amusement parks.

Not to mention a six-week summer program where students can sleep in college dorms and get to experience the life of a college student. The summer program offers classes to students who have F's or D's and choose to re-take the course.

Poly senior Wendy Montel-

lano has been involved with Upward Bound for 4 years and has experienced many exciting activities.

"In November, we went up north to San Francisco and toured many universities," said Montellano. "I am very happy with the program because it's helped me a lot through school and I've made many friends."

Montellano says the program has also helped her improve her GPA.

Sponsored by the Department of Education, Upward Bound prepares students for college. The goal of the program is to increase the rate at

which high school students attend 4-year colleges.

"We can't hold your hand but we can guide you in the right direction," said Educational Advisor O'Mari Lockhart.

Lockhart is in charge of the Upward Bound program at Poly, Sun Valley Middle School and North Hollywood High School. He is on campus every Thursday in the College Office.

The program recruits students from grades 8-10 who have a 2.3 to 3.0 GPA. Upward Bound serves high school students from low-income families and those in

which neither parent holds a bachelor's degree, according to their website.

Poly has been associated with Upward Bound for eight years. 14 Poly students are currently involved with the program, which is offered to A track students.

Upward Bound provides students with tutoring, counseling, mentoring, cultural enrichment, and work-study programs. The program also provides academic instruction in Mathematics, Laboratory Sciences, Composition, Literature, and Foreign Languages.

Decaf With Your Decath?

Long hours, deep thought, extra effort as Decathlon team prepares to compete.

By Aldo Mendez & Jennifer Rivera
Optimist Staff Writers

The Optimist sat down recently with independent studies teacher Brian Block to learn everything we could about the Academic Decathlon, from topics to scoring, requirements to venues. Here is what he told us.

Q. What is the Academic Decathlon about?

A. The academic decathlon is ten events designed to show a student's academic skill in a variety of courses and disciplines. The ten events are mathematics, language, literature, science (climatology), social sciences (China), music, art, speech interview, economics and essay.

Q. How many students are there on the current decathlon team?

A. An active decathlon team consists of nine players, 3 of GPA 3.75 and above, 3 who have a GPA between 3.0 and



Photo By Jennifer Rivera

BRAINTRUST: Top row: German Polanco, Brian Block, Miguel Macias, Michelle Aguila, Juan Fuentes, Eric Mendez, Crystal Sicairos, Rochelle Kronstadt, Jennifer Zaragoza; Bottom: Eva Chacon, Tania Ayala, Paula Quiroz, Rimmy Kaur, Betty Suravech.

3.75, and 3 who have GPA's below 3.0. In addition to the nine players, we also have other people who, if they don't make the team this year, will make the team next year, so currently we have around 12 to 15 students in the classroom.

Q. Are there certain requirements to be on the team? How exactly do you qualify?

A. The one requirement is that you're willing to put in the extra hours. In my opin-

ion it is not genius but effort that shows off great work and if you're willing to put in the time after school and in January to really try and go over the materials, you will be successful.

Q. How do you recruit?

A. Students are recruited in many ways. One way is from other members on the team finding their friends who want to join. We did have several meetings to find and get stu-

dents to join earlier in the year, and we announced it in the bulletin. Additionally, this year we tried to target a few people based on their GPA's and tried to see if they would be interested as well. We also used teacher recommendations to try and find students.

Q. How is the scoring done?

A. Each event counts for a 1,000 points and they add up to a total of 10,000 points.

Q. What are the different categories in the competition?

A. The overall theme this year is China. Climatology is connected to China because of the effect their pollution has had on the atmosphere. Additionally, the music, art, social science, history and economics are based on China.

Q. When and where are your competitions?

A. City competition will be held at UCLA as well as the Bravo Magnet High School. The state competition will be held in Los Angeles, at the Hilton by the Airport. The LAU competition is actually harder than the state competition. Usually LA Unified sends

10 teams of the 50 teams that make it to the state finals and very rarely has LA Unified not been the team representing California in the nationals. This year's nationals will be held in Honolulu, Hawaii.

Q. How many hours does the team study for the competitions?

A. As many as we can make them. It's very hard to say. Obviously, we have class. We try to stay after school everyday for that, although AP classes cut into our hours this year. We are right now trying to figure out how much of January and the winter break we will spend studying. We are fortunate that many of the students happen to be A track and have time off then. It would be nice if we could use much of that time off to focus in on the academic decathlon competition. It's our hope to essentially use January as almost an academic decathlon class, to use a full school day time to focus in on the 10 events we have.

Q. Has Poly won any titles or past competitions?

A. So far we have not won any titles, although individuals have won medals.

Cohen's Success "Very Nice"

Offensive to some, hilarious to others, Borat is Sacha Cohen's most controversial persona.

By Karen Aguilar
Optimist Staff Writer

Sacha Baron Cohen, first known as Ali G, has gained rising popularity as a comedian for his starring role in "Borat," but has also been accused of racial bigotry. Ironically, Cohen is a Jew himself. He keeps the Jewish dietary laws called kashrut and speaks Hebrew fluently.

Yet his mockumentary, "Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan," is loaded with prejudiced comments about Jews, homosexuals, and gypsies. Cohen says Borat's character is a "dramatic demonstration of how racism feeds on dumb conformity as much as rabid bigotry."

"Borat' essentially works as a tool," Cohen said. "By being anti-Semitic, he lets people lower their guard and expose their own prejudice."

Cohen aimed to "unmask" the prejudices people hide while attempting to be politi-

cally correct and proper citizens.

In addition to the accusations of bigotry, Cohen and the film makers have been sued by some of the people in the film.

The college students who appear in the bus scene claimed that they had been given drinks before signing a legal agreement giving consent to appear in the film. Two residents of Glod, Romania, where "Borat" was filmed, sued the film makers for \$30 million. They claimed that they had been misrepresented and that the low-income villagers were made to look like "savages." So far, all of the lawsuits against the film have been dismissed.

Cohen, who recently received a Golden Globe award for best comedic actor in "Borat," mentioned his legal problems in his acceptance speech.

"Thank you to every American who has not sued me so far," he said.

The actor's first popular comedic character was Alistair Leslie Graham, "Ali G," a gangster who lives with his grandmother and claims to be black and of Jamaican descent. Ali G was introduced in the Da Ali G Show and the movie Ali G Indahouse.



AWARD WINNER: The man from Kazakhstan.

Francis Home

[Bust story from Page 1]

the auditorium. She reported the theft to Assistant Principal Janet Kiddoo.

"I was shocked when I learned that the bust of John H. Francis was stolen," Fries Martinez said. "But from the beginning we said if the statue was returned, there would be no questions asked. And we're very thankful that it was returned."

Band teacher Steve Isaacs, who also had some students in the auditorium that afternoon, informed physical plant associate Steve Mares.

The person or persons responsible for the theft, and the location of the bust during its 13-day absence, are unknown.

Schoolwide Effort

[Toy Drive from Page 1]

one had something to do with how much money Leadership raised last year.

"It was a school-wide effort; everyone was involved," LeClair said. "The counselors, the administrators, the custodians, I mean everybody gets into the toy drive. For example, Steve, one of the plant managers, showed up to help buy toys, and he challenged every teacher to donate \$20. It was a huge challenge and a lot of the faculty stepped up and ac-

cepted it, so it's more than just us doing it. One of the things I liked is Steve took it upon himself to say 'ok everybody let's do this,' and that's fine with me. You know - the more the merrier. The more people that participate the better."

"The Los Angeles Fire Department is so grateful," said LeClair. "We really don't know what the need is out there but they know and they saw what we were able to do. It was a joy because it was just a pure expression of gratitude."

Byrd Has Radiant Heat

[Byrd From Page 1]

clude a parent center, career center, on campus police office, health office and four counseling offices.

One innovative feature of the new school is the radiant heating & cooling system. Room temperature in the buildings will be controlled by heating or cooling water-filled panels in the ceiling. The central plant has a "chiller" and heater that will adjust room temperatures as needed. The system uses a thermal energy storage tank to maintain a stable water temperature throughout the complex. The TES tank was

formerly used by the DWP building.

In Southern California only one other school has a radiant heating & cooling system.

"This is a new technology for southern California, but is more common back east," said Tumas.

The 161,000 square foot complex will have 60 classrooms. The typical classroom will contain 950 square feet.

The steel, stucco and glass Byrd complex was designed by Blurock Architects of Costa Mesa. The general contractor is Turner Construction of Los Angeles.

Parrots Set Their Sights on Sunset Six Title

Off to a sizzling 14-4 start, Poly leads the league.

By Daniel Jimenez
Optimist Staff Writer

If Poly's 10-4 preseason record is any indication, the Parrots should be very competitive in upcoming league play. Head Coach Brad Katz believes his guys can rise to the occasion.

"I think we're good enough to dominate the Sunset Six," said Katz. "We're a very cohesive and experienced squad."

Poly is 8-4 on the road so

far, including upsets over highly regarded Compton of Dominguez and Chatsworth by identical 63-60 scores and Leuzinger of Lawndale by 70-66.

Poly, an underdog in each of those games, was not intimidated.

"We've been doing it all season," Katz said, "so we weren't really surprised. We are proud. We won those games with hard work, dedication, and good defense."

Highly regarded veteran point guard D. J. Gay leads Katz's starting five. Shooting guard Andy Guerra, center

Santiago Moreno, small forward Mauricio "Mo" Gonzalez and power forward Mike Rojas, all seniors, are the other starters.

"Our biggest advantage is our experience. We've been together for a long time and I think our chemistry shows on the court," said Katz.

Nine of the eleven Poly Varsity players are returning seniors who have been playing together for years.

"We're an up tempo team that likes to press and get up and down the court quickly," said Katz.

The Parrots' pressing de-

fense was out in force in league games hosting Canoga Park and Van Nuys. Poly forced 41 turnovers and averaged 16 fast break points per game.

Much of the Parrots' success so far is thanks to the dominating play of point guard DJ Gay. Gay is averaging 30 points, 5 rebounds, 5 assists, and 3 steals per game this season.

Gay had two of his best games on back-to-back nights.

Against Van Nuys, he scored a school record 56 points, hit a 3 for the tie in regulation and led the Parrots to an 75-72 overtime victory, their first OT

of the year.

24 hours later, Gay put up 39 points at the San Fernando Invitational at Pierce College as the Parrots shredded the Spartans from Sylmar 70-51.

It was Poly's sixth consecutive win and their 13th of the year. The Parrots are 2-0 in league play with the wins over Canoga Park and Van Nuys.

The basketball court isn't the only place where Katz's players shine. The team has a 3.56 cumulative GPA, and four players have straight A's.

"We want our players to not only succeed as athletes, but as students as well," said Katz.

One Bad Game Doesn't Spoil the Whole Bunch

Varsity Girls basketball team shakes off shaky start, wins trophy.

By Daniel Jimenez
Optimist Staff Writer

The Lady Parrots varsity squad, led by senior guard Ashley Burch, captured the consolation championship in the recent Fairfax Tournament, defeating Carson 60-48.

An earlier first round loss to Marshall took them out of contention for the championship.

Despite that defeat, Coach Tremeka Batiste was pleased that her team exceeded expectations.

"We were 5-5 going into the tournament," Batiste said. "No one expected much from us this year. We have not done well in a tournament since 1994, so who would expect anything different this year?"

Batiste said the loss to Marshall was the result of Marshall's strength and Poly's poor shooting.

"They were ranked #7 in the city and we were #32," Batiste said. "However, we put up a good fight. We had the score within 3 points in the 3rd quarter, but we could not capitalize enough on their mistakes. And we shot in the 20th percentile, which does not win games."

But the Parrots still had a shot at the consolation championship. They thrashed Bell High School 57-27. Senior point guard Ashley Burch led the way with 12 points, 8 steals, 5 blocked shots and 4 assists. Burch added 28 in a 58-36 victory over San Fernando. Senior post Stephanie Silva added 6 points, 8 rebounds, 4 steals and 4 blocked shots.

Next up was Carson, ranked #21.



Photo By Tremeka Batiste

GIRL SQUAD: From left to right, Valerie Escobar, Ashley Burch, Coach Tremeka Batiste, Flora Gabrielyan, Stephanie Silva, and Grace Cadalzo.

"When people found out who we were playing, they just shook their heads and said good luck," Batiste said.

"We put a lot of defensive pressure on Carson from the beginning and led by 7 at halftime, 30-23," said Batiste. "They gave us a scare in the 3rd with a little run, but we regrouped and came back harder. The key to this victory was running Carson the entire game. We pushed the ball down the court fast and often. By the 4th quarter, Carson had run out of steam. We won 60-48 and took the consolation championship. It was our first trophy in 12 years."

Burch had 21 points, 6 rebounds, 6 assists, 5 blocked shots and 4 steals, a pretty complete game. Silva added 7 points, 9 rebounds and 6 blocked shots. Nine out of 11 Poly players scored in the Carson contest. The Lady Parrots are now 9-7 after a road win at Van Nuys with eight games remaining.

Batiste came to Poly in 2000 and started coaching two years later as the frosh/soph girls' basketball coach. Both teams were league champions

that year.

In her third year as the varsity coach, Batiste took her team to the Invitational Quarterfinals in 2005, where they lost to Manuel Arts by a two-point buzzer beater. Manual Arts went on to win the Invitational Championship.

"I knew whoever won the game between us would win the championship," Batiste said. "I still feel the pain from that loss."

Last season, Batiste started with only two returnees.

"It was a roller coaster ride," Batiste said. "We still tied for second in league and should have gone to playoffs, but our league representative neglected to put our name on the board at the seeding committee."

Overall, the varsity coach has a 32-27 win/loss record at Poly. The season before, the team's record was 2-11.

"Play hard from beginning to end or don't cry about it afterwards" is Batiste's guiding philosophy.

"The girls know that I expect 100% from them at every practice and game," Batiste explained. "It has taken time

for some of them to realize that they have to try their best all the time. They thought talent was something they could turn on whenever they wanted. Now they know the truth, and their game is improving. They also know that I am always right."

"My players know school comes first," said Batiste, who teaches 9th grade English on A-track. "I am proud to say that nine out of the eleven girls on varsity are honor students."

"This is a sentimental year for me," said Batiste, "because I have seniors on my team who have played all four years for me. This group is very special. I don't know if I will ever have the opportunity to work with a group of girls from 9th - 12th grade again, so I'm cherishing the time I have left with them. I don't think they know how truly proud I am of the women they have become or of how much they have affected my life. I'm going to be a mess at graduation."

Starting Five

- Senior point guard Ashley Burch, 7th in the city for points with 209; 3rd for assists and steals; 4th for blocked shots; 9th for 3 pointers; Sunset Six Co-MVP last season and being scouted by several colleges.

- Senior guard Flora Gabrielyan, 16th in the LA City Section for 3 pointers.

- Senior guard Valerie Escobar who was named to the Sunset Six League 2nd Team last season.

- Senior center Stephanie Silva, 3rd in the city for blocked shots; 11th for rebounds; 25th for steals.

- Junior post player Jennifer Hagan.

- Guards Grace Cadalzo, a senior and Alex Gallardo, a junior, are key bench players. Cadalzo has the highest shot percentage on the team.



Photo By Erick Robles

IN PLAY: Napoleon Guerrero kicks a field goal.

New Style, Same Goal

Coach Keller is a man with a plan.

By Daniel Jimenez
Optimist Staff Writer

Soccer coach Michael Keller has his hands full this season. He is leading his varsity boys soccer team to a 6-2-1 record, while at the same time trying to implement a new style of play.

"We're trying something new," Keller said, "We're slowing the game down and playing more of a position game."

"This style of soccer is working," said Keller. "It's the way I played when I was younger."

"The team's been learning quickly," Keller said, "but it's always difficult to change."

The Parrots played a great first half against Canoga and were only down by one. But the Hunters then scored four goals and beat the Parrots 6-1.

"Canoga is a very good team," Keller said, "but we have the talent to play with them."

"There is no reason for us to not be #2 behind Canoga," he believes.