

# The Holy Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

VOL. IV

12431 ROSCOE BLVD. SUN VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, 91352

APRIL 2007

## Renowned Laser Weapon Specialist Visits Poly

“Work hard now, or work hard later.” Dr. Jeffrey Hunt encourages students to aim high.

By Camille Ocampo  
Staff Writer

Laser Weapon Specialist, Dr. Jeffrey Hunt, of Boeing Corp., spoke with Mr. Gomez’s AP Chemistry students to motivate them to apply to top ranked colleges, such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), of which he is an alumni.

Hunt said, “My job, as far as I’m concerned, is to help



Photo By Camille Ocampo

**APPRECIATION IN THE SHAPE OF A STAR:** Dr. Jeffrey Hunt with his plaque of appreciation.

students get in.”

Dr. Hunt has inspired many Poly students to meet the high admission standards at MIT and other top colleges in the country. Hunt stressed the importance of students to work hard the whole semester and do extra activities during the breaks, such as extra college classes or even an internship. “Always keep yourself busy, do things to challenge yourself and make yourself look interesting to the institute because it is a competition to get into college,” said Hunt.

As for being admitted to MIT, Hunt said, “They really look hard at the socially, economically disadvantaged high schools and student population coming out of them. They are looking for students who prove to the institute that they are serious about wanting to do well when they get there. There is no reason why anyone can’t get in.”

Dr. Hunt explains that no matter what college you get

into, it will always be a lot of hard work and studying. His motto is, “You work hard now, or you work hard later.”

MIT is not only for those majoring in mathematics and engineering. It is for everyone. Other majors they offer include careers in architecture and biological sciences. MIT does not have a medical program, but they do partner up with Harvard University to give those majoring in the medical field the opportunity to attend MIT.

“MIT could also be a choice for graduate school because it is not impossible to transfer over,” Hunt said. MIT also has more sports programs than any other college in the US.

Hunt said, “There is no reason why everyone should not try to get into MIT, and if you don’t get in, then so what, you learn something valuable along the process anyway.” Students like Ryan Barnoya and Smbat Defterderian, both juniors getting ready to apply for college, were inspired by his words, and are now considering applying to MIT as one of their options.

Mrs. Couchois, the Magnet Coordinator, presented Hunt with a plaque expressing the gratitude that Poly students and staff have for the motivation and time he gives each year to students about colleges and in particular, MIT.

“During the past 6 admission cycles, John H. Francis Polytechnic has had 7 students admitted to MIT. There are not more than a handful of high schools in the San Fernando Valley region, public or private, which have consistently had this many students admitted to The Institute. In fact, since the vast majority of regional high schools do not have any MIT applicants, it is particularly impressive that Poly, whose students with socio-economic backgrounds well below the state means, continues to send its graduates to one of the most selective Universities in the country,” said Hunt.

As a final message, Dr. Hunt said, “If you are motivated, that is all you need to succeed.”

## FIRST WILLIAM HUNG, NOW CHELS FOSTER

### Final Curtain Call for Poly Idol Contestants.

By Eric Bejarano & Vilma Diego  
Staff Writers

The winner of this year’s Poly Idol was Chels Foster who sang “Bring Me Life” by Evanescence.

The judges Ms. Gabriel, Ms. Helbron, Ms. Showalter and Mr. Stuckey rated the contestants based on the song choice and how well the contestants sang the piece.

Ms. Gabriel complimented Foster by saying, “Your voice came out right over the band.”

Choir teacher Kevin Patterson, Drummer Luis Perez, Base guitar player John Viranda, and Lead Guitar player Raul Esquivel, accompanied the singers. Senior Jason Lopez hosted the show.

The five contestants that passed through the semi-finals



Photo By Tatiana Tejadwa

**SINGING TO SUCCESS:** Chels Foster surprised the crowd when she sang her heart out to many students at Poly Idol.

on March the 16th sang their hearts out one last time. Foster received 32% of the votes. The runner-ups were Roxana Reyes, Maria Arroyo in third, Lisa Ortega in fourth, and Carolina Esparza finishing in fifth place.

Master of Ceremonies, Jason Lopez provided relief for nervous contestants while providing a professional and entertaining performance himself. The surprise singer

was Mr. Anthony Hopkins, B track History Teacher, whose rendition of “Over the Rainbow” brought the audience to their feet.

Foster received an I-pod and had a chance to sing to the whole student body during Poly’s annual Arts Showcase. Ms. Showalter said to Foster, “You should definitely try out for American Idol,” to which Foster replied “I’m only 15.”

## P.E. With Children: A Unique Experience

Hector Colon’s surprise, future P.E. teachers in the making.

By Mildred Fuentes & Jennifer Rivera  
Staff Writers

Hector Colon’s “P.E. with Children” unfolded in the Fall of 1999 and by all accounts has been a great success.

Colon a horticulture teacher, first proposed this program as an internship for his Multilingual Teacher Career Academy students.

The class was offered during B-Track’s vacation in the fall and spring. Poly students

learn how to teach a physical education class to elementary students at Stonehurst and Saticoy Elementary school. The class is six weeks long, five days a week, four hours a day.

“I enjoy seeing the elementary students get a quality P.E. program. They are always so eager to see the Poly students come to their school and sad to see them leave,” says Colon about his class.

Colon explains a day at the elementary school for Poly

students as teachers, “A routine day for the class is one hour of writing lessons plans, another hour playing outdoors, another hour teaching and the last hour is spent writing in a journal, reflecting on the students teaching experiences.”

Some of the lessons planned for the students include dance and rhythm, integrated games, gymnastics, lead up games and sports.

The Poly students say they gain experience working with children.

“When I have my own kids, you can have flashbacks and know what it was like,” says Coco Chanel, a junior currently taking the class.

Many of Mr. Colon’s students prefer taking the “P.E. with Children” class, rather than a normal P.E. class at Poly.

“This class is fun and we teach the younger students. They are cool to spend time with,” says David Solano, a 9th grader.

The students aren’t the only



Photo By Jose Peralta

**SIX PACK ABS:** Poly parrots burn calories at Colon’s pace.

[See Colon Page 3]

# Running for the Money

10th Grade Center's Jog-a-thon Helps Out a Women's Shelter.

By Vilma Diego  
Staff Writer

Jog-a-thon runners raise money for charity. B Tracker's Yuritza Mendoza, Adriana Andrade, and 10th Grade Council, organized a Jog-a-thon in February to help raise money for Haven Hills, a battered women's shelter, in Canoga Park. "It nearly killed me," said Ari Bennett, 10th Grade Coordinator, after running 10 laps around the Poly track. Bennett and Chante Calzada, 10th Grade History teacher, helped the girls organize the jog-a-thon. The total amount collected was \$1,032.53. The 2 runners who raised the most money will each receive a \$20 gift card from Staples.

The Jog-a-thon was open to all students including the Cross Country and Track & Field teams. Students ran for various amounts of money depending on their sponsors' commitments. Track & Field's



Photo By Eric Bejarano

**MONEY TALKS:** Runners' hard work brings a helpful \$1,471.33 check to Sarah J. Berdine of the Haven Hills Center.

Angel Aguilar, Ivan Mendez, and Jonathan Mendoza ran 15 laps each. Emanuel Estrada, a B track sophomore, ran 16 laps. Elidia Vasquez, Title 1 coordinator, ran 7 laps raising \$147. Bennett ran 10 laps raising \$550. Chante Calzada, Social Studies teacher made sure everyone got lunch and water. Poly Leadership provided music.

Bennett, Calzada, Andrade, and Mendoza delivered the check to Haven Hills' executive director, Sara J. Berdine, on March 29th. Founded in 1977, Haven Hills has been around for 30 years. The shelter helps battered women who are victims of domestic violence. The shelter's address and the identities of its residents remain completely confidential in order to keep their staff and residents safe. The

shelter consists of a 30-day program, which gives women time to learn working skills to be self-supporting, and an 18-month program, for those who need more time. The shelter is a non-profit corporation that has been maintained because of donations like Poly's.

The shelter has developed a teen program designed specifically to help teens who have experienced domestic violence, have witnessed it themselves or know someone experiencing it. "We want to see domestic violence go away," said Berdine. Berdine wants people to know that "domestic violence is not a private situation, police are often involved, and so are we."

"Events like this one help students be leaders and teaches them to give back to their community," said Bennett.

## Seniors Search for Right College

By Eric Bejarano & Vilma Diego  
Staff Writers

Choosing a college can be a difficult process for a senior. Certain factors may keep them away from the college of their dreams.

Factors include family issues. There are those parents who just don't want to let their kids go on to college, because they are afraid of losing their children. Crystal Sicairos' main issue when choosing a college was her family. She

said, "I'm still deciding on what to do." Sicairos was accepted to Dartmouth. Kristal Pacheco, also a senior, was accepted to UC Davis, UC Santa Barbara, UC Riverside, and UC Merced, but an opportunity for a full 4-year scholarship is what is driving her towards UC Merced.

Sicairos said, "Money is never the issue. There are many ways to get money." There are loans, scholarships as well as part time jobs.



## One Through Nine: Sudoku Time!

By Joseph Garcia  
Staff Writer

Just as crossword puzzles became popular in the 1920s and the Rubik's Cube achieved its step on the ladder in the 1980s, Sudoku is becoming a wildly popular game loved by many who play it. Popular with "math-smart" people, Sudoku is a number puzzle which consists of a 9x9-square grid subdivided into nine 3x3 boxes, some of which already contain numbers to get the puzzle-solver started. The object of the game is to fill in the remaining squares so that every row, column and 3x3 box

contains each of the numbers 1-9 exactly once. The Math Department Chair, Sergio Lopez, said, "I have used them in the past as warm-ups, after my students finish their tests- as an extra credit assignment."

Representing the best in the intercontinental cross-culture, Sudoku has become popular from Japan to America to Europe. The name "Sudoku" is the Japanese abbreviation of a longer phrase, "sūji wa dokushin ni kagiru," meaning "the digits must occur only once." It is a trademark of the puzzle publisher Nikoli Co. Ltd. in Japan.

			4	8				2
	5					8	6	
			5			4		
						9		
7	1				3		4	
8			2		9	5		7
		6	8	2				
	7	8		3	5			1
					7			4

## Mother Nature is Just Warming Up: The Worst is Yet to Come

By Mildred Fuentes & Jennifer Rivera  
Staff Writers

The human race is killing Mother Nature. We have abused our stay here on earth. Factories around the world are destroying the earth's atmosphere. Fossil fuels continue to deplete our ozone layer. People have ignored the signs of global warming and now they are starting to worry. The effects can't be ignored any longer.

Former Vice President Al Gore's documentary "The Inconvenient Truth" shows how we are affecting our atmosphere. This documentary explains how our weather gets colder in the winter and hotter in the summer. We have thickened our atmosphere thus causing the sun's heat to stay trapped within the earth.

The sun's effect on the earth is causing the polar ice caps to melt. It is expected the earth's sea will grow 20 feet, eventually taking out the coast of Malibu, California. Wild fires will continue to increase, hurricanes will also increase in number and velocity, and

heat waves are expected to kill 300,000 people in the course of 25 years. These people will die because these same heat waves will cause a drought leaving many without water. Drought has already begun in the United States.

Cases of malaria have risen in countries like Columbia as a cause of rising temperatures. About 279 species of animals are migrating towards the "poles" because of the heat. Unfortunately some species aren't able to migrate and can't adapt to the changes and because of this will become extinct. The same thing will happen to the human race. We are not going to be able to adapt to the changes of the world and we will slowly but surely become extinct.

The earth, our home, keeps us alive with oxygen and natural resources. Modern society has not learned the lessons from those who lived before us and believed in harmony and were supportive of nature like The Indians, Aztecs and Mayans.

Global warming is a threat the world has to face together.

### THE POLY OPTIMIST

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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.

# Watching Out for Parrots

“Improve Something In Your Life” – Glen Lamos

By Eric Bejarano, Vilma Diego & Stephanie Sepulveda  
Staff Writers

“Good Morning, I’m glad you came to school today,” said Glen Lamos, as he greets Poly’s students entering Poly’s front gate. It’s hard not to notice Lamos, he’s one of the tallest, happiest teachers on Poly’s campus and he’s everywhere! Lamos is the B track Woodshop teacher who helps in the Dean’s office and with security.

During lunch he can be found on the Polygon and is constantly looking out for the safety of Parrots. When the final bell rings at the end of the day Lamos will be there letting kids out and making sure that they get onto the bus safely.

Lamos was born in Santa Monica, California and lived in Wiesbaden, West Germany for the first five years of his life, where his father worked for the U.S government as an Intelligence Agency Engineer. He moved back to California

when he was five. Lamos graduated from Chatsworth High School in 1985. He earned his degree in Geography from CSUN.



Photo By Tatiana Tejada

**MORNING GREETING:**  
*Mr. Lamos starts students day off the right way.*

Lamos has worked at many jobs. At the age of 14 he began working with his uncle in construction. After Hurricane Andrew hit Florida Lamos was hired to help rebuild homes that had been de-

stroyed. Lamos decided to become a teacher while working at a woodshop in Northridge. There he worked with many kids who came straight out of prison. He is proud to say that not one of them was imprisoned again. Lamos was as much of an inspiration to these kids as they were to him. This experience had a profound impact on Lamos’ life. One thing that Lamos learned from this experience was that, “Everyone has a history and a chance to succeed.”

The greatest obstacle Lamos had to overcome was a learning disability discovered in the 11th grade by his high school Chemistry teacher. Overcoming this obstacle made him realize that there is nothing too hard to overcome. Lamos says, “Each day try to improve something in your life, don’t settle for keeping things the same, and never stop trying to educate yourselves.” Lamos is very proud of Poly Students because of their will to succeed against all odds. He is always here for students at Poly.

# Prepare for Glory



Warner Bro. Pictures

By Eric Bejarano  
Staff Writer

“Glory, War, Mystical beast what more can you want? Warner Brothers Pictures presents an epic movie in which 300 of the best Spartans soldiers battle against millions of Persian soldiers. Producer Zack Snyder has given us other suspense and bloody movies, such as “Dawn of the Dead”. The film “300” is based on the graphic novel named “300” written by Frank Miller and is based on the battle of Thermopylae.

For those violence lovers, the film has constant war, bloodshed and body parts going left and right. The plot is simple: The film takes place in the time of ancient Greece in which the Barbaric Spartans and the intellectual Athenians will set aside their differences

and fight together against the evil, self-proclaimed Persian God Xerxes (Rodrigo Santoro). The king of Sparta, Leonidas (Gerard Butler) leads his fellow comrades into the war. Not just does the film have war but, also romance between Leonidas and his wife. “300” comes with computer-generated beast, settings, soldiers and is filled with extraordinary visual effects. The film is rated R for graphic battle sequences and some nudity.

Leonidas and his small army leave Sparta in order to defend their laws of Glory, freedom and never turning back. The film is mostly about Leonidas and his comrades holding back many of Xerxes foot soldiers, beast, and archers. “300” is based on a magnificent battle that makes you appreciate ancient history.

# Results Are In For AcaDeca ‘07

Poly Wins Record Number Medals First Time.



Photo provided by Brian Block

**BRAIN POWER:** *Aca Deca contributes teamwork to their success*

By Evelyn Lemus  
Staff Writer

The Poly AcaDeca team won 8 medals in this year’s decathlon, with 31,000 points, a 4,000- point increase from last year, becoming the highest scoring decathlon team in Poly history.

Brian Block, the Academic Decathlon team’s coach said, “Much of the success was owed to Rochelle Kronstadt, the AP Coordinator and former Academic Decathlon coach at Reseda High School.” Kronstadt advised Block to allow his students the opportunity to work together to develop

and share techniques that help them prepare for the competitions, allowing them to study at their own paces and make their own decisions. “She has been vital to team success,” says Block. “She has made me a better teacher.”

The subjects for the tournament included Language, Economics, Mathematics, Super Quiz (on China), Science (pertaining to global warming), Art Music, Speech, Interview, and one for Super Quiz.

The Team established a new record by earning four metals for Speech, three for Interview and one for Super Quiz.

The Decathlon team’s success came after months of studying

and preparation in order to be fully ready for the competition. “What is most amazing to me is that the students that have a GPA between 3.0 and 3.75 won three medals and the students with a 3.0 and less won two medals, so the A+ students are not actually the ones that are winning all the time” said Block.

Medal winners for 2007 are as follows: Betty Suravech-Gold -Super Quiz Relay; Bronze for Speech; Crystal Sicairos -Gold for Interview (perfect score platinum) Bronze - speech, and a certificate for Social Science. Miguel Macias - Silver medal for Interview and a Certificate for Essay. Omar Plascencia - Silver - Interview and a Bronze for Speech. Michelle Aguila also took the Bronze medal for Speech.

Block reminds students that the Academic Decathlon team requires students of all GPA levels. Students that are dedicated and willing are welcome to join the team. Block said, “Even though the season is over, the new year will begin at the end of April, and we’re looking for a few good men and women.” If you are up to the challenge see Mr. Block in room 405.

# Colon Teaches Fitness

[Colon from Page 1]

ones who like this program. The elementary students also think the same, Tanya, a 3rd grader thought so. She would rather have a Poly student teacher than a professional teacher.

This Service Learning project fits in perfectly with this class. Since there is no longer a Teaching Academy, the class is offered to anyone at Poly. It is an alternative to taking a regular P.E. class. The class also offers an opportunity to complete the high school requirement of a Service Learning Project which is now required for all seniors to graduate.

“It was a natural fit. El-

ementary students are not getting a good P.E. program and high school students can provide that service while learning about more physical education, its importance at the elementary level and about the teaching profession,” says Colon.

The “P.E. for Children” class has been going on for years and Colon strongly wants to keep the class going.

“I would like to see it being offered on all tracks and to include more elementary schools,” says Colon. As for what he wants his students and take with them, “My hope is that they get an appreciation for teaching,” says Colon.

**“Please accept the congratulations of everyone here at Polytechnic High School on your accomplishments in Academic Decathlon. The eight medals you won in the different events was the highest number of medals ever won by Poly students. You and your coaches are an inspiration to all of us.”**

-Dr. Janis Fries-Martinez, Principal

# Total Domination

Girls Softball dominating the field this season.

By Eric Bejarano  
Staff Writer

Poly's Girl Softball Varsity team dominated the game against the Van Nuys Wolves, starting with a seven run first inning. Poly went on to score seven more in the third, and four in the fourth to win convincingly 18-1.

Jessica Trinidad pitched a one run complete game, struck out four and walked only one. Aside from dominating the opposition, Trinidad hit 2-3, with 4 RBI's, three of those coming from a base clearing triple.

The 17-point margin of victory is the largest for the Lady Parrots this season, and the



Photo By Marlene Mendoza

**CATCH IT IF YOU CAN:** Kristine Bautista defends home.

largest since the 40-7 slaughter of the Hollywood Sheiks last season.

First Baseman Samantha Scott batted 2-3, with 3 RBI's.

The game was another victory for the Lady Parrots who are (team's record) the City Invitational defending champions.

## A New, Younger Look

Christian Jimenez and Cesar Amador just two of the new players making a big contribution to Schwal's varsity team.

By Daniel Jimenez  
Staff Writer

After an incident involving three varsity baseball players that led to their suspension from the team, coach Chuck Schwal was forced to bring up five players from his "farm system" or JV, Freshman Christian Jimenez 1B, and Sophomores Thomas Cruz 2B, Cesar Amador 3B, Frank Yanez OF, and Marco Manriquez 2B.

"The players were released for conduct detrimental to



Photo By Erick Robles

**UPS AND DOWNS:** Varsity Boys Baseball suit up and show up for daily practice to be in perfect form.

the team and themselves," said Schwal about the lineup changes. "The matter will stay in the clubhouse and it is just disappointing and upsetting that this happened."

Schwal said his new players have stepped up to the plate and held their own in the varsity squad.

"They're all playing great, they haven't backed down," said Schwal. "The coaching staff is excited for these young guys. They've been playing hard and we believe in them. They just have to believe in themselves too."

The Parrots showed off their new look at Verdugo, splitting a two game series. The Dons took the first game, scoring their eight runs in the first three innings. Poly was close to making a comeback after putting up five runs in the 5th and one in the 7th but fell

short 8-7.

Schwal and company got their revenge Thursday, however, as they coasted at home 8-2.

Sophomore Carlos Lopez pitched four innings, struck out five, and allowed two runs. The Parrots scored six runs in the bottom of the 6th inning and senior Julio Rodriguez, who entered in the top of the 5th, got the win.

After an 8-4 loss to Cleveland (Reseda) on Saturday, Canoga on the road was an easy task for the Parrots. Rodriguez pitched another gem, allowing just two hits and one run in five innings and Poly won 11-1. The Parrots are 2-2 since the addition of the new players.

Poly is now 8-9 on the season and 5-1 in league play, ranking second in the Sunset Six league behind Verdugo Hills 6-1 record.



Photo By Efrain Rodriguez

**PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT:** Poly parrot launches outstanding throw to get the out.

## SHOOTING FOR THE STARS

Ashley Burch, Senior All-Star Varsity Basketball Player

Marlene Mendoza  
Staff Writer

Ashley Burch finishes her senior year as an All-Star athlete, moving on to the California State University Northridge "Battle of the Valley," for the All-Star basketball tournament April 21, 2007. Burch also made it to the Los Angeles City Girls Basketball Team where all coaches from the LA City Staff chose the best players. Reflecting on her season Burch said, "It's a good feeling, I worked really hard for it. I am surprised someone noticed how well I could play."

Burch has been on Poly's basketball team for four years, and now as a senior is the league's leading scorer. She started playing basketball after a few of her friends decided to play in a league at Ritchie Valance Park. After that she fell in love with the game. "I like to block and score, and also the compliments I get from people," she said.

She started playing as a forward in 9th and 10th grade then moved on to shooting guard in her junior year. For her senior



Photo By Efrain Rodriguez

**ALL-STAR PLAYER:** Ashley Burch chosen for League Allstar team.

year she played point guard, but she said, "I liked playing shooting guard because it was easier. Someone else brings the ball down and all you have to do is shoot."

After playing all four years at Poly, Burch is averaging 14.2 points a game, she is quick aggressive, and very hard to guard. She maintained a 3.7 grade point average and plans to play basketball at College of the Canyons next year.

## Parrots Defeat Wolves

Tatiana Tejada  
Staff Writer

Poly's very own Boy's Varsity Volleyball team brought home a glorious victory, when they defeated the Van Nuys Wolves on April 9, 2007. Poly lost the first game with a score of 25 to 21, but that didn't stop star player Erin Sanchez from making an extraordinary comeback. With excellent passes and amazing sets, the team was able to turn the tables on the Wolves with an ending score of 25 to 23. With great strides and consistent teamwork, the Poly team won the last two games, both with the same score of 25 to 17.



Photo By Erick Robles

**SPIKED:** Parrots defend net.

## All Stars Award Night

Coaches congratulate hard-working athletes.

By Jennifer Rivera  
Staff Writer

Boys and Girls Basketball teams went out in style Friday night. Their annual banquet was held at the Odyssey Restaurant in Granada Hills Friday April 13th.

Special guest speaker at the banquet was Councilman Tony Cardenas. Cardenas spoke to

the students about the importance of teamwork and to never give up on their dreams.

After Cardenas spoke, Coach Batiste handed her JV and Varsity team awards. At the end of their presentation, the Varsity girls gave their Coach gifts and thanked her for her motivation and care.

Coach Katz showed a video made by one of his Varsity players and presented awards and jerseys to his team.