

The Holy Optimist

John H. Francis Holytechnic High School

VOL. II

12431 ROSCOE BLVD. SUN VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, 91352

AUGUST 2007

A new era in Poly history begins as Joe is “hatched” to eggstatic applause during Polygon ceremony.

JOE 2.0



Photo by Tatiana Tejada



Photo by Bryce Pemble

Birth of a Bird

11:25 a.m. Shrek, Sparrow, Simpsons join the festivities.

11:32 a.m. Spirit Squad/ Cheerleaders excite the crowd.

11:33 a.m. Students sing Poly theme song.

11:34 a.m. Eggstasy- Joe is “unhatched.”

THE ARMANI OF MASCOTS: Joe, funded by the class of 2007, was student-designed, professionally manufactured and is air-cooled.



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez



Students Sound Off On Poly, Politics

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Geology Teacher South of the Border

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UCSB Location Location Location

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GUEST EDITORIALS

Hillary Knows

In the 2008 election, I want a girl president for once to be in charge of the United States.

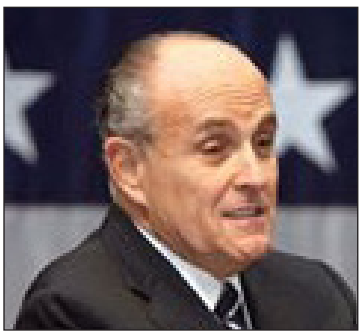
The candidate for this 2008 election is Hillary Clinton. I think that Hillary will do wise choices for this country and not doom us and we don't have to suffer for other people's choices.

In this '08 election Hillary should not have a rough time winning unless people are being sexist and not vote for her because she is a woman. But she has lots of knowledge

how everything works and how everything should be handled.

She will try to make everything better than it was with President Bush because Bush let many things happen to innocent people for example the terrorist attack. People say when is this going to stop and why is Bush not doing anything. He is just fishing in his dumb ranch.

Humberto Briones
Junior



Not Paying Attention to '08

We as high school students can relate to the 2008 presidential elections because maybe you are old enough to vote. If you are old enough, you can vote for the next person you want to be the next president for the next four years.

Besides not being interested, I am uninformed about the following elections. I have not been paying attention to what is going on or who is running for president.

Miguel Alvarez
Junior

CORRECTION:

The Cosmos mural story mistakenly identified Jack Kirby as the creator of Superman and Spiderman. Kirby created X-Men and the Fantastic Four. The OPTIMIST regrets the error and apologizes to all comics fans.

THE OPTIMIST

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EDITORIAL POLICY

The Optimist is the voice of the Poly community and accepts the responsibilities of a free press. The Optimist follows the Code of Ethics for the Society of Professional Journalists. Editorials are the opinions of the staff writers.

LETTERS

Letters to the Editor must be typed or neatly printed in ink and include the writer's signature. The Optimist reserves the right to edit submissions. Send letters to Rm.11 or Mr. Blau's box.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Re: JULY

Likes Music

I like that the Optimist has a variety of material and different stories, but I'm very interested in music. Not just what's in style and what's on the radio, but musical classes, like how to tune your voice and produce your own songs.

Ana Raya
Junior

Playing Rough

Icebox is cool because she is the only girl that is on the football and could play rough and she goes practice with the other guys and they don't discriminate her because she is a girl.

Humberto Briones
Junior

The "Icebox"

I liked what you did with the iPhone. It was pretty well written. Also, I like the part you mention the Icebox because not a lot of girls play football.

Jesus Aguirre
Junior

Movies, Music

I think the Poly Optimist is good, but so it could be more interesting they should write about movies or music.

I will like if they wrote about Harry Potter movies/books.

Marisol Pena
Junior

Well Organized

The Poly school paper is a well-organized paper that talks about the ups and downs of the school providing the students with matters going on at school.

Edgar Tamayo
Junior

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT POLY

Lifelong Friendships In Sports

Some students love Poly, some hate it.

Poly's campus is pretty clean. During lunch though, it can get dirty.

Poly can fun for you if you are in a sport. Some students in sports will meet lifelong friendships in there, and I think the important thing is to have fun when playing in a sport.

Something that definitely needs to be better is the food at lunch. Since I'm a vegetarian, I don't really get much to choose from. I would love love love if they would add some vegetarian meals because this school does have vegetarian students.

Beatrice Chaidez
Junior

Teachers Make You Want To Keep Learning

The best about Poly I would have to say are the teachers. I mean there is always that one teacher that makes you want to keep learning. In this school you can find that teacher.

What makes the teachers here so special is that they always have a story to tell that is relevant to what they are teaching. Many students seem to like that because teachers aren't just reading straight from a textbook.

It's a good thing that teachers are able to teach the way they want to. Students now seem to develop a special relationship with their teachers. Teachers always seem to inspire students and give them special advice. They make you feel like you can accomplish anything.

All students should know that they can.

Linda Fuentes
Junior

A Diversity of Friends

Poly is an excellent school with different people, activities and experiences going on. The atmosphere of Poly is loud and interesting.

Kids from Poly come from different parts of the world with different religions, languages and cultures which makes Poly a good place for making friends. Hey, and the girls are great too.

Edgar Tamayo
Junior

Spicy Wings & Sofas

What I like about Poly is the drawings are very pretty.

If there were anything I will like for Poly to change is for the classrooms to have a single couch for every person.

I will also want the food to change like for example give spicy wings the ones from Domino's and some pizza loca because that is the only way I will ever eat in a school.

Judith Cabrera
Junior

Comforting

What I like about Poly is the school campus is spacious and comforting.

Cindy Chavarria
Junior

Helpful Students

Many students go through the same crisis. For example, family problems, gangs, violence, drugs, etc. Many students will not hate you or discriminate you. But they will help you.

What I like best about Poly is the teachers. They know what you been through. Poly rocks.

Gabriel Aleman
Junior



Photo by Joey Lemus

DECISION MAKERS: Leadership sponsors Kitt Heilbron and Brian Le Clair had to make a tough call on Homecoming.

Dinner, Comedy To Replace Dance

By Perla Gonzalez
Optimist Staff Writer

They called it Winterball, but things were anything but frosty during last year's senior dance. Some said they were downright steamy.

When a female police officer complained to Poly officials at the dance about the sexually provocative dance moves she had witnessed inside, Poly's leadership sponsors knew something had to be done.

"That really sort of brought to our attention the fact that we weren't the only ones who thought the dancing wasn't appropriate," said Social Studies teacher and Leadership sponsor Kitt Heilbron. "We asked parents if they approved of this behavior and they said no."

"Kids dance in a variety of ways," added co-sponsor Brian Le Clair, "but reggaeton and hip-hop are simply not proper, not appropriate for a high school environment."

Shortly after Winterball, Heilbron, Le Clair and a few other faculty members had a meeting with Poly Principal Jan Fries-Martinez and stated their concerns.

"We concluded that there was no way we could control the way kids were going to dance," Le Clair said. "We have kids dancing in ways that we feel parents would not approve of. Having no way to control that, we felt it was best to just rescind the activity."

The end-of-the-year school dance for 2006/7 was called off, as was this year's Homecoming dance.

"We wanted to get a message out," Heilbron said.

"We are not the first school to go without school dances. Students are going to be disappointed. We know it is going to cause a little bit of backlash. But we don't want to advocate behavior that is sexually provocative. Our parents wouldn't approve it. We don't approve it."

"I know dancing is whatever is in. Kids say 'Ms. H, they all do that' and I'm like 'I know that and they all dance too provocatively.' So we are going to say dance more properly. We don't want anything that looks like sexual conduct on the dance floor."

Heilbron added that finding enough chaperones to meet District requirements is always difficult. Poly is responsible for students until they reach home after a school event such as Homecoming or Winterball, Heilbron said.

"Hopefully we will have dances in the future," Heilbron said, "and they will be based on appropriate dancing. But if it doesn't work, we'll cancel them again."

Instead of the dance, Homecoming will feature dinner and a comedy show this year, according to Heilbron.

"We're still looking for a location where we could host the dinner and have some sort of stage for the comedy show," Heilbron said.

As for the steamy moves, Le Clair had some simple advice.

"Students have to take responsibility for their actions," he said, "and understand that we are not putting on events so that they can act rebellious or simulate sexual acts when they dance. It is just not proper and we are not going to tolerate that."

The Treasure of El Rosario

Geologist Johannsen journeys to Mexico in search of gold.

By Beni Hernandez
Optimist Staff Writer

Ever wonder what teachers do during vacation? Are their vacations exciting or boring? Well, this summer Geology teacher Peter Johannsen traveled to Rosario, Mexico, not to relax, but to work.

"Rosario is an old town, founded in 1650, and it's very fun and interesting," Johannsen said. "It is situated 50 miles south of Mazatlan."

Johannsen was offered a job with Orogold de Mexico, a Canadian-based firm specializing in gold exploration in Latin America.

"Orogold is a small exploration company that buys the right to properties," Johannsen explained. "They look for gold, and if they find a lot of it, they will sell the property to a big company who would then build a mine."



Photo by Michael Jones

"INDIANA JOHANNSEN":
Globe-hopping geologist.

Having worked on similar projects in countries as diverse as Russia, Brazil, Niger, Venezuela and the Ivory Coast, Johannsen had plenty of experience on jobs like this one.

"I got the job," he said, "because I had already worked with many of the geologists who were working on this project."

Brought on to make hiring recommendations, outfit the offices and put together the logistics for the mining operation, Johannsen spent little time in the field.

"I was the manager and people reported to me," Johannsen said. "About 20



Photo courtesy of e-local

CHURCH OF OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY: With its altar bathed in gold in the churrigueresco style of the 17th century, the baroque church is a popular tourist site.

people worked on this project. My job description was 'International Logistics Coordination.'"

An early visit to the mining camp, left there by a previous gold exploration company, convinced Johannsen it was in need of a full restoration. The camp had been abandoned in the '90s when falling gold prices made working the mine unprofitable. Locals had long ago stripped the camp of everything from wiring to toilets. When gold rebounded to nearly \$700 an ounce, Orogold decided to reopen the mine.

Long work days were typical, but Johannsen said he found time to relax and enjoy himself once in a while.

"I usually read books to pass the time," he said, "or went to the paletteria for ice cream. My favorite flavor was mango."

Rosario has a restaurant named Taqueria Dwight that was a Johannsen favorite.

"I liked the tacos and the quesadillas," he said. "They were the best quesadillas I've ever tasted. Rosario was the only town that made them that way."



Photo courtesy of travelamap

SINALOA: Rosario, a farming town of about 40,000, lies 50 miles south of Mazatlan, off the coast of Mar de Cortes.

Eggman Talks

By Karen Vazquez
Optimist Staff Writer

The Optimist recently sat down with the man behind the egg, Barry Stockhamer, to get the facts on Joe.

Q. Why create a new Joe Parrot?

A. It was really a decision of a lot of students that wanted something a little more up-to-date and to better reflect the high school and the kids of today. They wanted to keep the tradition but at the same time they wanted something a little more suitable for high school.

Q. Compare the new Joe to the old Joe.

A. The old one looks more like an elementary school mascot; that is what many said. It was good but it looked like something - young face, young look - like something that belongs to middle school more than to high school. Poly is in league with lions and bears and powerful mascot images that the other high schools have, so to compete, it is good to have a powerful strong image representing our school.

Q. Was there ever any consideration of a new mascot, like a wolf or an eagle, rather than a parrot?

A. No. I think most people involved thought it was important that the Parrot has been part of the school for so long so that it would be a good idea to keep the same tradition.

Q. Where did the name "Joe" come from?

A. Joe has been around for more than fifty years. There have been changes to Joe through the years. This is the 8th or 9th time that Joe has had a little change.

Q. Who created the original Joe?

A. The original Joe went back to Disney people and they helped create a certain kind of image in the early fifties. He doesn't look anything like the one right now.

Q. How long did it take to finish Joe?



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

KEEP IT FLYING: Poly's new spirit flag will fly every time Parrots celebrate an academic achievement or a sports victory. ROTC is in charge of the flag.

A. The students came with their ideas. Then they had to vote on it, and that took a little bit of time. Then the professionals made the costume. That took about six weeks. So overall, it has probably been about a two and a half-month process.

Q. Who made the costume?

A. The people who built him specialize in mascots. They make costumes for the NFL, for football, for baseball, for basketball, and for soccer. They do a lot of professional work for some high schools. They are good. They have a long history in making high schools' mascot costumes.

Q. How much did this whole process cost?

A. Well the kids' ideas are priceless, you can't put a price on that. The costume itself runs hundreds of dollars, but there is a guarantee that comes with it because we are going with a really good company. And then we needed an artist to clean up the image because when we put it on t-shirts and caps we need really good original artwork. So I think it is probably a

thousands dollars.

Q. How many days did the voting to choose the new Parrot image last?

A. It overlapped too different periods of times so that all tracks had the chance to vote. I think it was a two-week period.

Q. How many students voted? Were all tracks included?

A. A lot, because every class was sent applications and we got responses back from every class on campus. I would say most of the kids in each class voted. Most of the campus got involved in it somehow. We probably had 60 design entries or so.

Q. Students voted on three finalists to choose the new Joe - Is that correct?

A. Yes. We took the two most popular designs and merged them into one Joe.

Q. How are we going to say "goodbye" to the old Joe?

A. We don't say goodbye to the old Joe. He just becomes part of our history. It is like teachers that retire, you know. The new Joe is really just a

new improved Joe. It is as if Joe went to a workout place and got a new body shape so this is really the old Joe but a healthier Joe.

Q. Will the new Joe only appear at sporting events, or will he be involved in other activities, like fundraisings, back to school night, senior prom, etc?

A. Yes, I think you'll see more of the new Joe. He should be involved in more things like school rallies, special events, anything going around the school, not just athletic events.

Q. What about Joe for the HABIT, FAME and EHS SLCs?

A. There'll be a different Joe for each small learning community, so each group will have their own version of Joe Parrot.

Q. Have you done any focus group testing on the new Joe with students?

A. Yes, we have shown Joe to a lot of students to get their early reaction. They all seem to like the fact that he is stronger and more powerful. Their reaction has been good.

Q. How will you know the new Joe is a success?

A. The kids that saw some of the early versions all say he looks good and I think he will be accepted by the students. You'll see him around campus. He is part of the family.

Q. What about companionship for Joe?

A. There is going to be a female mascot named Josie. The students voted the name. She'll be here in October and she will have her own special moment. So there'll be two: Joe and Josie.

Let me add that even with the new, improved Joe, there is tradition with this parrot. The "P" that the old parrot had will still be on the new parrot.

Joe is a continuation of the Parrot tradition because his is a unique history. Poly has a unique history. A hundred year-old school has a lot of tradition. This is just continuing the tradition.

OCEAN VIEW AT UCSB

Parrots visit the school by the sea.

By Joey Lemus
Optimist Staff Writer

Educational Talent Search (ETS) is a new program on campus for students interested in getting an edge on other college applicants.

ETS has been at Poly since April and is funded by CSUN. Joel Monroy, who has been an ETS representative for four years, is in charge of the program at Poly.

ETS tells high school students what classes to take and how to do college applications and apply for scholarships. The program also teaches students study skills.

Recently, Monroy took students on a fieldtrip to the University of California at Santa Barbara (UCSB).

UCSB occupies 989 acres of land next to the Pacific Ocean. Bikes are a major source of transportation on campus. The school even has a lagoon in the middle of campus.

Stroke Tower is a major landmark with a traditional bell and its own campus radio station.

The college library has over 2.8 million books, journals, and an extensive collection of maps.

Applicants must have a 3.97 average GPA and 1845 SAT average to get accepted.

Students are guaranteed admission if they transfer from any community college in California with 3.0 GPA or higher. First year housing is also guaranteed.



Internet Photo

THE BELLS OF UCSB

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Polyhigh.
org
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OPTIMIST

The Play's the Thing

Students write, direct and stage "The Power of Caring" as final.

By Perla Gonzalez
& Karen Vazquez
Staff Writers

Not every class at Poly has a multiple-choice, fill-in-the-bubbles, or short answer final. Students from Social Studies teacher Rudy Cuevas' World of Education class were given the opportunity to do a play for their final grade.

"We talked a lot about how students take ownership of their curriculum," Cuevas said. "In any class, but especially in an elective class, learning becomes more powerful if students can decide and be involved."

Cuevas encourages his students to participate in the decision-making in every class and explore alternative ways of learning. He believes plays, music and art are just as effective for learning as testing, class assignments and writing.

His students, wanting to try something new, decided to write and perform a play to show how a more caring environment in school will help students feel more involved with their school. They wanted to encourage teachers to be closer to their students and support them a little more.

The play, called "The Power of Caring," shows the differences between private schools and public schools and the relationships between student

and teacher.

Thirty-seven students participated in staging the play. Amanda Gaxisla and Chris Reynaga directed, while Stephen Victoria, Kim Avalos, Vanessa Hernandez, and Chris Reynaga produced. Scriptwriters included Priscilla Duarte, Adrian Cota-Reyes and Karla Salazar.

Kim Avalos, Priscilla Duarte, Chris Reynaga, Dalia Sandoval, and Stephen Victoria performed the work.

The students got their inspiration from Paolo Freire, Jean Anyon, Barbara Rogoff and other education specialists.

Paolo Freire is a Brazilian educator who is known for his informal style, emphasis on dialogue and concern for the oppressed.

Jean Anyon is an internationally acclaimed critical theorist and researcher in education. She uses political economy to show the impact of public policy on urban neighborhoods and schools. Her focus has been on race, social class, and policy.

Barbara Rogoff conducts research on the ways children learn through everyday activities with their family and friends. She specializes in the cultural aspects of child development and variation in the roles of adults as guides or instructors in shared problem solving.

Playing Doctor For a Day

Kaiser program offers hands-on experience.

By Marlene Mendoza
Staff Writer

For any student who has been wondering what a job in health care may be like, Kaiser-Permanente has an answer. Medical Explorers offers students the opportunity to learn how to pursue a medical career.

"The program gives some insight into medical careers many students didn't know existed," said instructor Karen Ruballo.

Through the program, which is open to anyone, students can see first-hand what happens in various fields of medicine and enhance their knowledge of different medical professions.

Ruballo is a technologist in diagnostic imaging and is responsible for the Medical Explorers program.

"Every session has a lecture, a hands-on demonstration and an audio-visual component or a tour," she explained. "The program provides speakers, meeting locations, snacks and supplies."

Eric Mendoza is a former Poly student and Medical Explorers member for the last three years.

"When I entered the program," he said, "I didn't know what to expect besides lectures and diagrams, but they show you some real stuff in the meetings."

"One of the most memorable meetings was when a doctor specializing in physical injuries, such as fixing a broken leg, taught us how to put casts on one another. It wasn't just like a watch-and-learn lesson. We actually got equipment to put on one another," Mendoza said.

"There is always something new to learn."

Medical Explorers is an annual program and meets monthly.



Photo by Michelle Gonzalez

FASHION PLATES: These sophisticated ladies should have no trouble landing executive positions in the corporate world, thanks to wardrobe selections sure to crack the glass ceiling.

Look Sharp, Get Work

Campos, Calzada ask students to leave jeans home on Wednesdays.

By Michelle Gonzalez
& Meri Sarkisyan
Optimist Staff Writers

If it's Wednesday, keep your eyes peeled. You just might see a few seriously well-dressed Parrots amongst the sea of blue jeans, black t-shirts and ragged backpacks.

The sponsor for this new campus beautification project is Social Studies teacher Juan Campos.

"I was a long term sub at Reseda High School," said Campos. "The whole school had 'Dress for Success' on Wednesdays. That's where I got my idea."

Campos has offered extra credit points to any of his students who dress up professionally on Wednesday. He wants his students to feel comfortable when they dress businesslike.

"They will be out in the real world in less than a year, and they need to get used to being professionally dressed," said Campos. "Hopefully, they'll have a professional job when they get out of here."

Social Studies teacher Chante Calzada also offers extra credit for that job interview look.

Both teachers expect guys to wear slacks and tucked-in shirts. Girls should wear a nice blouse, pants, skirt or dress and dress shoes.

"My only requirement is they can't wear jeans," said Campos.

But are there any side effects to dressing up?

"It makes me feel more sophisticated," Cindy Alegria said.

"If you look good," classmate Michelle Nolasco said, "you feel good."

Dressing up does present some problems, of course, like deciding what to wear in the morning?

"I change my mind three times in the last minute," reported junior Faby Estrada.

Lupe Hernandez' parents

were a little suspicious when she started looking so nice on Wednesdays.

"I told them that it was for school, but my mom didn't believe me," Hernandez said.

And Calzada and Campos may have unwittingly helped out the retail cloth trade. Cindy Alegria made a new purchase just to wear on Wednesdays.

"I bought a white collared shirt," Alegria said, "Because it's worth double extra credit."

Giselle Linares just switches clothes with a classmate for different looks.

"I switch with Marina, my friend," she said. "We've changed blouses and jackets."

Nolasco, who also likes to switch clothes with friends to expand her wardrobe, said she likes her new look.

"I'm going to keep doing it on Wednesdays," Nolasco said, "because it's a nice excuse to look nice and you also get extra credit."

Estrada even said she'll start dressing up for other occasions.

"Especially going to church," she said.

What about the other kids at Poly?

"I think everyone at Poly has his or her own style," said Nolasco. "Even if they were to dress up, they would add their own little twist to it."

Hernandez said she knows why many Poly kids dress the way they do.

"They don't want to feel like they're grown up," she said.

Bigger, Longer and Almost As Funny

By Jason Castro
Staff Writer

After 20 years and 400 TV episodes, the Simpsons' creators finally decided to make a movie. But why? The Simpson family is funny on the little screen. On the big screen, they're just larger. The movie, while often hilarious, doesn't seem to utilize the bigger format to any large extent. What makes the film successful could have easily been accomplished on television.

The movie does have its moments. There's Bart skating naked through Springfield on a dare from his dad, and Homer's "Spiderman"

knockoff called "Spider Pig," which he sings while his pig walks on the ceiling and California's Governor "Ah-nuld" as President, plus the usual injuries cartoon characters survive that would kill any real human being.

And there's plenty of familial, political, religious and just plain toilet humor here, and a storyline that leaves you saying "only Homer Simpson is that dumb." But fans have seen it all before, just smaller.

When Homer causes pollution in Lake Springfield, the Environmental Protection Agency puts Springfield in a bubble, quarantined from the world. Homer, meanwhile, hears only the wind-up,

cymbal-smashing monkey in his head as he runs from an angry mob of Springfield residents, including his dad.

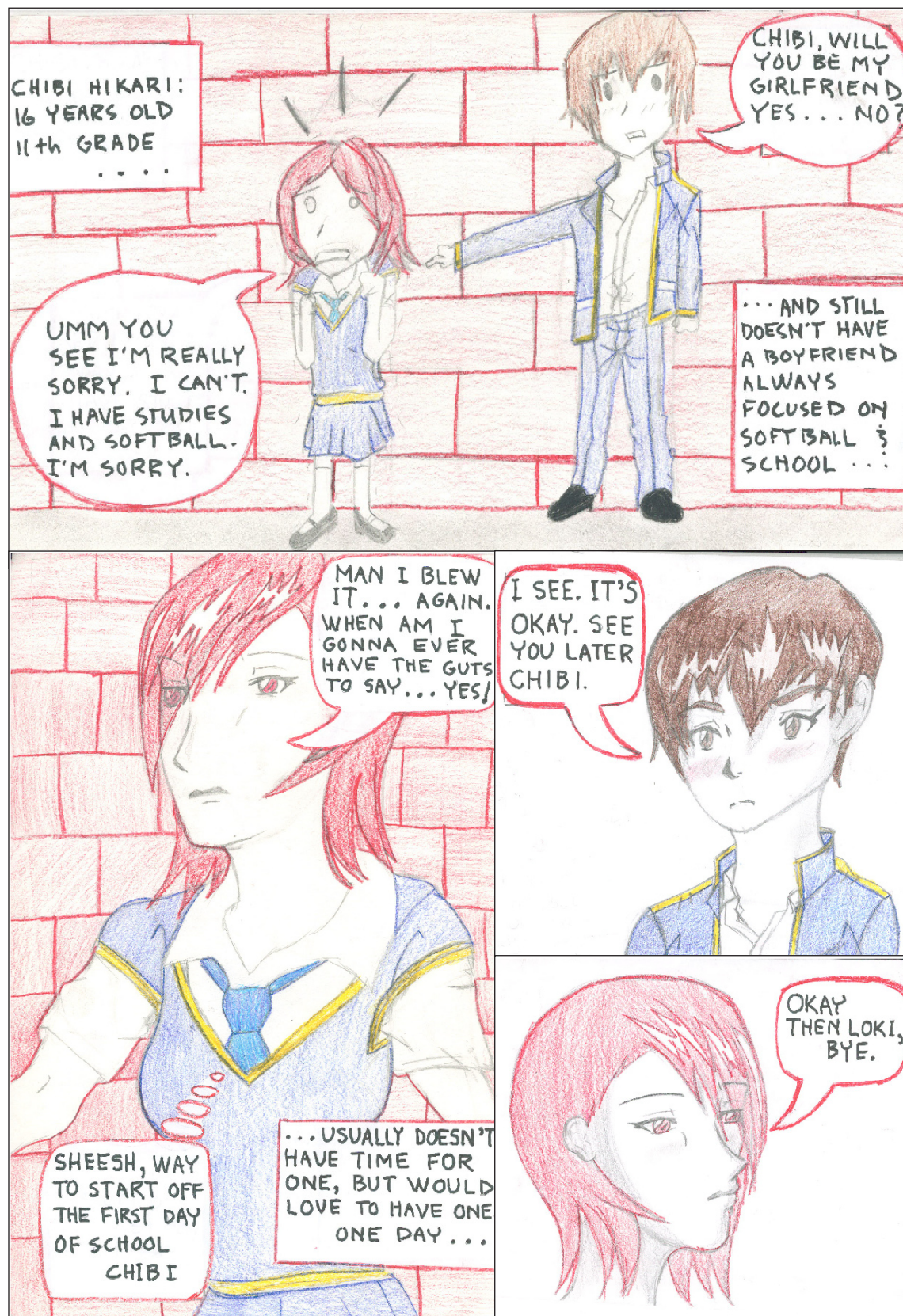
The family flees through a sinkhole in the backyard. Homer hopes to move the family to Alaska to start a new life. Only after Marge leaves him a goodbye message taped over their wedding video does Homer come to his senses and returns to save Springfield from impending doom.

Director David Silverman's and creator Matt Groening's latest effort will probably please its fan base and should get a few laughs from everyone else. But for the Simpson family, the smaller screen may be a better fit.



Internet Photo

CHIBI 16 by Sylvette Rodriguez



Getting In

By Belle Tadena
Staff Writer

Poly students got some good advice from University of California at San Diego (UCSD) representative Victoria Lee-Jerems at a seminar offered by the College Office in August.

"Take what you can handle," Lee-Jerems advised. "The more you do, the better your transition will be to a UC."

UCSD recommends taking preparatory classes during high school, such as AP's and classes from community colleges. Lee-Jerems added that low AP Test results will not affect students' chance for admissions.

"No UC is going to penalize students—in terms of admission—for not passing an AP Exam," she said.

UCSD first looks at a student's sophomore and junior grades.

On the other hand, failing classes during senior year can create problems. Admission is cancelled if a "D" is found on a student's senior grades.

"Don't wait until the last minute, until your admission gets cancelled, because you got a 'D', especially if you were good enough to be admitted," Lee-Jerems said. Instead, inform the admissions office right away.

Students are required to take the SAT Reasoning or ACT Plus Writing and two SAT Subject Tests, which

are available in October, November and December.

"Don't test in January. January is too late. UCSD is already reading applications," said Lee-Jerems. "Choose your strength when taking an SAT Subject Test."

Test results can be forwarded to UCSD and they will automatically choose the higher of the SAT or ACT.

"If you're a junior, you can take the SAT and ACT now if you want to," said Leona Warman, College Counselor. "I suggest you wait until spring when you can learn more English and Math and you'll do better on the test,"

Fee waivers are available to students who receive free lunch tickets.

Community college students and incoming undergraduate freshmen are the UCSD's first priority compared to Cal State transfers.

"Do not go to a Cal State if you want to go to transfer to a UC," Lee-Jerems said.

75% of the admission process is from the academic criteria, GPA, high-level courses and test scores.

The other 25% is everything that affects students' lives outside of school.

UCSD is interested in students with extra curricular activities.

"The more responsibilities you handle, the more that you are leaders to your schools, the more special you will be to us," said Lee-Jerems.