

The Holy Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

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A Y P = A O K

Poly achieves AYP status but misses API by 4.

By Perla Gonzalez, Karen Vasquez
and Alexander Rodriguez
Staff Writers

After six years of falling just short, Poly this year has met all requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status, the critical score in the state's high-stakes testing mandate.

"The scores show that right now, as a whole, the school is improving significantly," Interim Principal Gerardo Loera said. "For example, the number of our 9th grade students who are proficient or better in Algebra I is twice the District average and higher than all of Los Angeles County."

Poly's scores were released in late August as part of the 2007 Accountability Progress Report from the California Department of Education.

Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), all schools accepting Title I funds must make "adequate yearly progress" in several areas, based on performance and participation. Additional factors for the AYP include Academic Performance Index (API) scores and graduation rates.

"Everyone in the Poly administration was very excited about our scores," Loera said. "We went through line by line and realized there were many gains across the board."

30.8% of Poly students tested proficient or above in English and 41.5% tested proficient or above in math. All subgroups met their Annual Measurable Objectives.

Participation rates for the school as a whole and in all subgroups were 95%, meeting the AYP requirement. Poly's graduation rate of 74.2% also met the AYP requirement.

"The local district was also excited," Loera continued, "and called the principal to offer congratulations. The Superintendent also came out to the school and recognized the staff for all the gains that have taken place here."

This was Poly's fifth year as a Program Improvement (PI) school. If Poly meets its AYP again next year, the school will be free of its PI status.

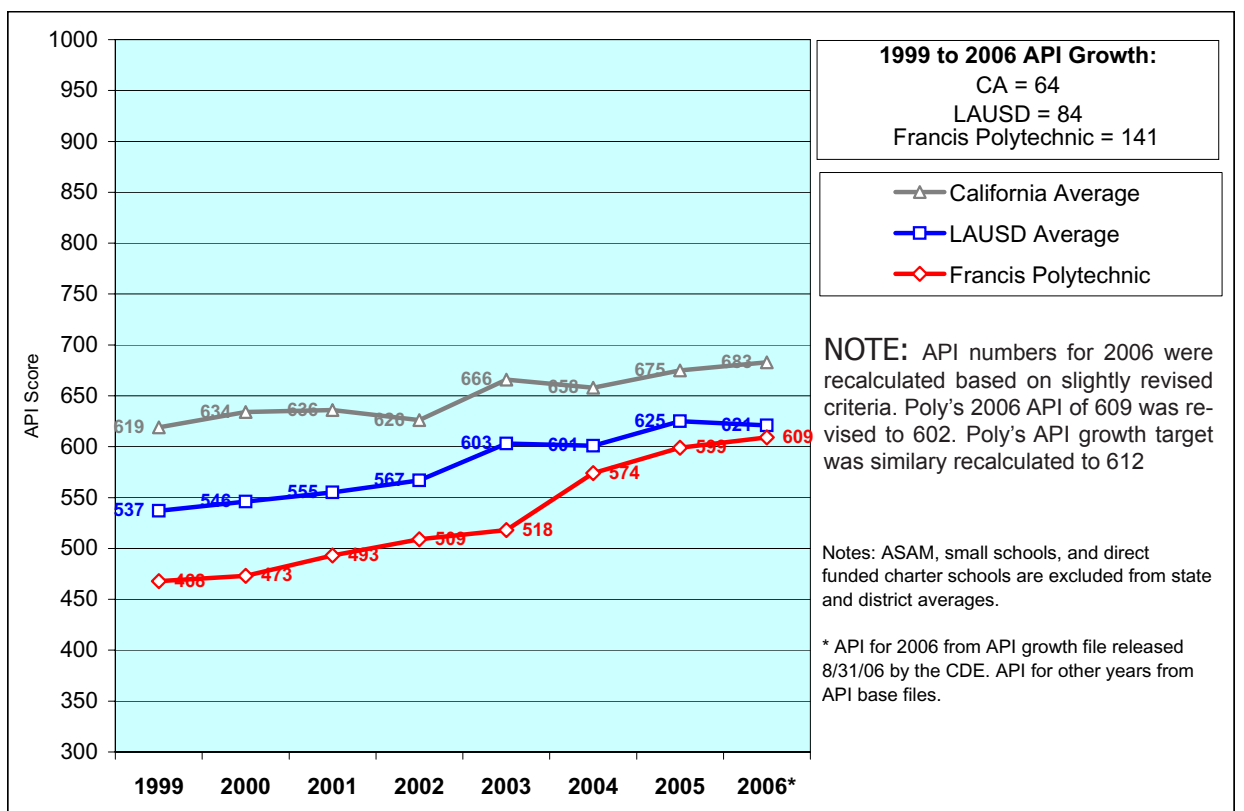
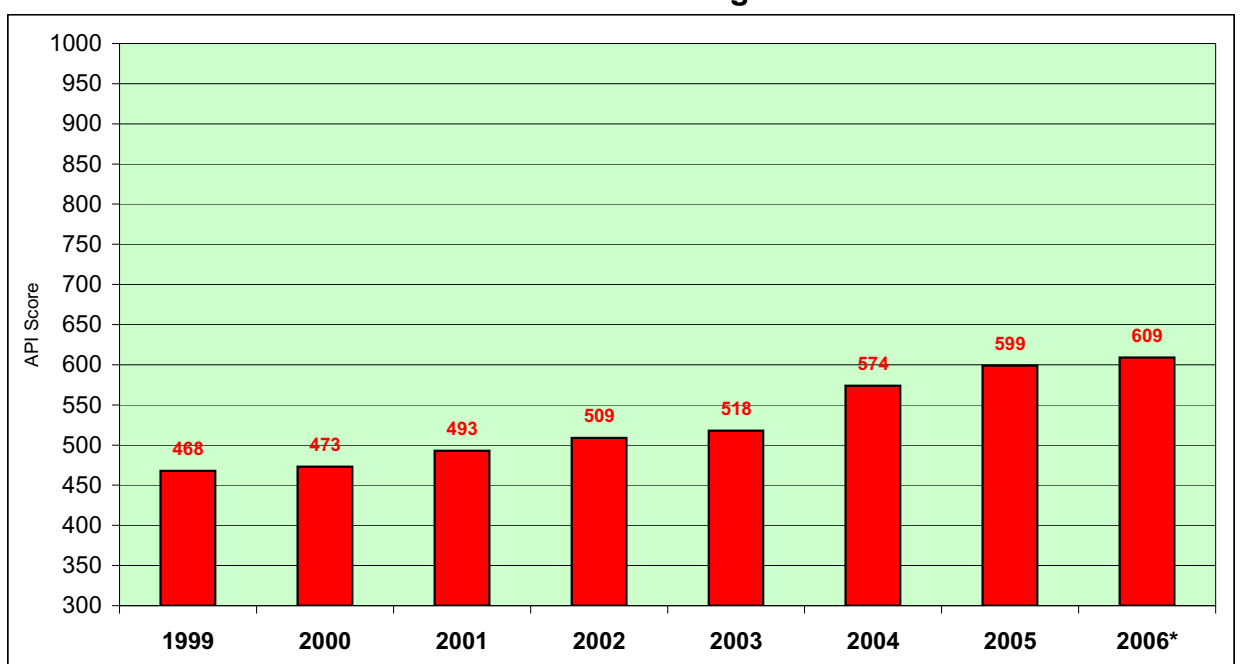
At 608, Poly missed its 2007 API target of 612 by 4 points. Poly's target was 10 points above last year's 602.

"A lot of that has to do with the fact that the state has changed the rules in the way that the AYP is calculated," Loera explained, "so there's nothing we can do about that, other than try to continue to work within those rules. Bottom line is that we will continue to make gains, because we have made gains continuously for the last six years."

Los Angeles Unified School District

Francis Polytechnic

Academic Performance Index Change from 1999 to 2006*



Planning, Assessment and Research

From 1999 to 2006, Poly's API growth has been a striking 141 points, while LAUSD during the same period gained only 84 points, and the state moved up only 64 points.

Special Ed had the largest gain this year of any category in the state requirements. They exceeded

their target by 50%. Targeted at 20, they hit 29, the only subgroup to meet their API growth target, having moved from 395 to 424.

"If Poly was a company," Loera said, "and I was an investor, I would be investing in this company right now, because of the promising future Poly has."



Skool Day Troubles Continue For Chibi

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Hit The Street With 'Sk8board' Pro P-nut

See Sports | Page 6



Feathers Fly In Season Opener

See Sports | Page 8

GUEST EDITORIALS

Getting Involved

The 2008 presidential election is an important thing to know about.

To be honest I'm a little uninterested and uninformed. The people around me never talk about politics so that's why it's never on my mind.

When teachers teach about politics, and I can understand I start to get more involved.

I also can't vote; that's another reason I don't worry

about the election, but when I'm old enough to vote I'll be a lot more involved.

I do think it's important to have some knowledge about the election while your growing up if you want to vote because then you'll know what

your doing. I also think its important to vote when you're old enough. Not a lot of people vote, but if more people voted we think that it might be fairer.

My mom and dad have never voted because they aren't from here so because that I just never am hearing about that stuff.

I also remember hearing we don't pick the president that there are people who do it for us, they just look at the vote so it seems not that important.

I just hope people start taking the elections more seriously.

-Robert Galan
Junior

"I just hope people start taking the elections more seriously."

-Robert Galan

Anarchy in the USA

What would it mean to society to have a woman or an African American President? This might cause anarchy in the United States. It might also start problems within the system itself.

What I think might happen after the president election is that there will be sexism, racial problems, and possibly an assassination to either president. This might start a problem nation wide. Another problem

that we might face will be how the people react to the election. If the male president wins we face racism, if the woman wins we face sexism.

As I close this up I hope that Hilary Clinton wins just to see how America would react. I just hope that she doesn't screw America over.

-Andy Paniadgwa
Junior

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.

A Letter To Poly From Interim Principal Gerardo Loera

"Our school principal, Dr. Janis Fries-Martinez, an influential leader in LAUSD with over 34 years of service in education will be on a medical leave due to a serious illness. Her determination and hardworking personality undoubtedly will contribute to her full recovery.

Her health is improving rapidly and she is very

optimistic for the future. At this time it is unknown exactly how long she will need to return to Polytechnic High School. Our main office staff is forwarding "get well" messages for those interested.

The LAUSD has appointed Gerardo Loera as Interim Principal until Dr. Fries-Martinez returns.

- Gerardo Loera, Acting Principal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



CELL PHONE BAN LEGISLATION

Can teens learn from their mistakes?

I would oppose a law banning a use of cell phone while driving because I think that if you do ban it you're only making teens want to do it because since they know they shouldn't do it they do it because they don't care.

Well also because they will also do it whether they make it a law or not because they will still talk on the phone and chat and then when they see a cop they will hide it and continue using it.

I think teens should learn from their mistakes because if

they get into an accident they should learn that the next time they talk they shouldn't be talking on the cell phone.

I also think that if you do ban it; why only for teens. I mean grown ups get in car crashes and for the same reason and only because they are grown up doesn't mean anything.

Another reason I think they shouldn't is because if it's an important phone call then what are they supposed to do. Are they just supposed to ignore and continue driving or what?

I speak for students when I

say to forget about this law. I mean sure they can try it out. If they are going to ban it then they should know what's coming to them and then hopefully they'll understand that it's a good idea to ban cell phone usage while driving.

So fellow students try to ban together and make them not ban cell phones while driving a vehicle.

-Danny Martinez
Junior

'Most teens don't have common sense'

I personally support the law banning cell phone usage while driving because most teens don't really care what might happen or its just maybe that they don't think anything can actually happen to them.

Many accident involve teens, some of the accidents can actually be fatal.

What teens don't also see is

that they don't only endanger themselves but they endanger a lot of other innocent people as well. It's not that the government is only targeting teens in this situation, its just that they are aware that most teens don't have common sense.

So many accidents are caused everyday because there are so many ignorant people

out there risking their lives instead of preventing something from happening.

So yeah, I do agree with the law on banning cell phone usage while driving.

-Rosa Arcila
Junior

'You gain experience after you need it'

Banning any type of cell phone from a teen while driving is not acceptable.

Outside in the driving industry there are many people of all ages that make calls at the same time they are driving.

Most of the teens are known for irresponsible and immature behavior, but they still have necessities.

Teens should be allowed to use an earpiece like everyone else. You never know when there could be an emergency

they'll be required to use the phone while driving.

Teens' reputation as drivers is really low in the eyes of society.

It's not that teens are dangerous, is just that they are in the process of learning and they don't take precautions.

They don't measure the magnitude of the consequences.

How it's said is "you gain experience after you need it." Therefore, teens learn after experiencing any type of situ-

ation.

Well, prohibiting cell phones to teens during driving is not a solution to the problem.

If they are concerned, they shouldn't only blame on teens. Other civilians should be blamed.

Therefore, I oppose to the new law, anyway everyone can suffer a car accident.

-Alejandra Arreola
Junior

Superintendent, District 2 Offer Congrats

The OPTIMIST recently spoke with Interim Principal Gerardo Loera about Poly's test score results.

Q. What do you think contributed to the increase on the AYP/API scores?

A. I think the staff, working together, has made an impact on making our AYP. CAHSEE preparation in the 10th grade has contributed significantly, because that's where the biggest gains have been and that's where the biggest requirements have also been on the guidelines.

Our graduation numbers are going up as a result of all the hard work of all our staff and the 4 by 4 block schedule. I think also recognition in making sure that enough students take the exams for the testing to be valid and for us to get a real score.

Q. How do the scores affect Poly students?

A. In many ways. First, if we meet the AYP for two consecutive years, we are removed from what's called Program Improvement status. That allows the school more autonomy in its decisions-making.



Photo by Tatiana Tejada

DATA MAN: Gerardo Loera.

Meeting all the requirements of both federal and state governments removes all the negative labels that can be associated with the school and helps with the overall reputation of the school and the community and so students as well.

The scores also create better recognition by the public of our students' achievements. We as school administrators know that we have the best students in the district and that we love our kids. Their test scores are really starting to

"Meeting all the requirements of both federal and state governments removes all the negative labels . . ."

-Gerardo Loera, Interim Principal

show that. For a long time we have felt that the testing has really shown the intelligence of our students. Now we are trying to see that our students get recognized as they should

Q. What do the scores show about Poly?

A. The biggest thing that the scores show right now as a whole is that the school is improving significantly. In the 9th grade, we had almost twice as many students that are proficient in Algebra II as the district and we are at a higher percentage than the whole Los

Angeles County average.

Q. What was your reaction when you received the scores?

A. Well, as an administrator I was very anxious about the scores, probably more so than the students. Once we saw the scores, we were really excited and as we went through line by line and looked at the different disciplines, whether social studies, math, science or English, there were many gains across the board, so we were very excited.

The local district also was excited and called the principal to offer congratulations. The Superintendent came out to the school a couple of weeks ago and recognized Poly staff for the gains that have taken place. We recognize the areas that we still need to improve on and continue to study that.

Q. What would have happened if we hadn't met the AYP/API scores?

A. If we had not met AYP, we would continue to be a

Program Improvement School and we would face further sanctions by the federal government or the state, depending on who is in charge of that and we would continue to just have that label of low performance school, which nobody wants to have, not the students, nor the staff nor the teachers or administrators.

Q. How will Poly help increase the scores next year?

A. Regarding the CAHSEE, for example, there's going to be a preparation class like we had last year for the 10th grade in math.

The seniors will be working through Beyond the Bell on Saturdays and during the day, whenever we can make it work. We will continue to do that for the 11th grade also, that's for the CAHSEE in math.

The English department is integrating the CAHSEE standards a little tighter into the 10th grade curriculum so the students are given a higher quality of CAHSEE prep.

A Few Good Teachers

For Poly counselor Steve Thatt, training with the Marines is all in a day's work.

By Beni Gonzalez & Joey Lemus
Staff Writers

Having the chance to train and hang out with Marines at their base is a dream many people wish would come true.

Parrot counselor Steve Thatt actually got to experience that feeling. Thatt was one of forty educators from California and Nevada who participated in the five-day U.S. Marine Corps' Annual Orientation workshop program. They went down to Camp Pendleton in San Diego and trained like a new Marine recruit would.

"Basically you get an idea of what recruits can expect from the first day when the sergeant told us to get off the bus to all the orders and the barbershop and how they are processed," Thatt said.

"On the second day we were there, they took us to an M16 rifle range and basically what we did was learn to shoot the weapon but one of the officers told me I was hitting other people's targets which was



Courtesy of Marine Corps.

HANDS ON: For Poly counselor Steve Thatt, training with an M-16 was just one part of a weeklong workshop offered by the Marines. Leadership skills were also part of the course.

kind of funny but was kind of interesting," said Thatt.

Thatt visited one of the barracks and saw how little privacy a Marine would have. Thatt said life at a base for a

new recruit would come as a shock to them from the first moment they set foot on the base. Recruits would no longer be able to do what they wanted but would have to obey orders

all the time.

Part of the training was assuming the role of a marine in the streets of Baghdad.

"They had a video simulator pistol range where you

watched a video of Baghdad streets with a pistol and had to make split second decisions on whether people were a terrorist threat or not," Thatt said.

The week's events also included obstacle courses, weapons training and leadership-building skills. Thatt was the leader of his group for the obstacle course.

"I was proud that none of my guys got wiped out because it was my responsibility that none of them get hurt."

"The Marines are not for everybody," Thatt said. Marine recruits must be physically and mentally strong and prepared because they will be tested up to their limits at boot camp.

"They work more closely together" said Thatt. "In the Marines, loving and taking care of each other as a family is the main goal."

The experience was beneficial for Thatt. With the information he gained, he can better explain to students what it means to be a Marine.



Internet Photo

Expanded ‘Warcraft’

By Jason Castro
Staff Writer

Life for *World of Warcraft* (WoW) addicts just got better. The series’ creator, Blizzard Entertainment, has another expansion pack on the way titled “Wrath of the Lich King.”

The expansion will include features such as the level capital raised to 80, a new continent and the introduction of a “hero” class character, the “Death Knight.” Hero classes will consist of previous classes from the *WoW* series that were too powerful to play from level 1.

Basic gameplay features players questing to become

level 70, which is the highest level in the game.

The 2004 release of *WoW* brought new meaning to massive multiplayer online role-playing games.

WoW quickly became a part of the gamer culture. A South Park episode that mixed the usual animated mayhem with Warcraft video shots won an Emmy.

In its first year, *WoW* won countless awards, including Game of the Year. Compared to other online games, “Warcraft” revolutionized the way online games are played together.

Massive in size, the game

has thousands of quests and millions of players communicating from all over the world. At some points, players can’t operate alone. In raids or dungeons, for example, the gamer needs a group tagging along to come out victorious.

The first expansion, *The Burning Crusades*, sold more than 2.7 million copies on its release date. “Crusades” added even more adventures, characters, and tasks to the already gigantic game.

Hardcore gamers should find that the new dungeons and bosses, such as Arthas Menethil, will need a determined effort to slay them.

ANIME FOR DUMMIES

By Karen Aguilar
Staff Writer

For those of you who don’t know the difference between anime and regular cartoons, or even worse, don’t know what anime or manga are, here’s what you need to know.

ber of different styles, including the shojo and shonen for teenage girls and boys respectively. Most bookstores, such as Barnes & Noble, sell Manga, but the best place to shop for them is Little Tokyo, which offers a greater variety in manga, anime and other products.

Anime (tv)

Anime is Japanese animation on TV. Anime was being produced as early as 1903. Anime is different from American cartoons in that the plots and stories are more complex and better developed. The art used in Anime features characters with big expressive eyes, exaggerated body types and extreme hairstyles and colors. Naruto, Sailor Moon, Bleach, and Dragon Ball are popular examples of anime. Many anime episodes are available on DVD and on websites.

Manga (book)

Manga is the graphic novel version of anime. Manga also originated in Japan in the late 18th century. Manga are written from top to bottom, right to left, like the traditional pattern for Japanese writing.

Manga is available in a num-

M.A.G. (club)

The Manga, Anime, and Games club (MAG) was founded by Poly seniors Erwin Tinoco, Joseph Sosa, and Karen Aguilar last year. M.A.G.’s purpose is to let members share their opinions on anime and manga art as well as its story.

Science teacher and current club sponsor Hannah Gabriel has been an anime fan since high school. She joined the Poly faculty in 2005 as a first time teacher.

Math teacher Cesar Felix and computer tech teacher Javier Rios are past sponsors of the club and are big fans of anime, manga, and video game technology

Anime Expo 2008

The Anime Expo in Los Angeles is a four-day celebration of manga and anime, the nation’s largest.

CHIBI 16 by Sylvette Rodriguez



Hitchhiker Blues by Raymond Carrillo



SPORTS
ROUND UP

VARSITY FOOTBALL
Dons Defeat Poly 42-28

After four outings, Poly’s offense is averaging four touchdowns a game while the defense is giving up five. Friday night’s 42-28 loss to the Dons was no exception. The Parrots never scored after halftime, but Verdugo Hills got a touchdown in each remaining quarter.

Poly had the edge in rushing yardage, 214-162. But the Dons were 14-22 from the air for 126 yards, while Parrot quarterback Marco Manriquez made only 2 of 9 for 80 yards.

The loss was Poly’s first in Sunset Six League play and third in a row.

Comeback Attempt Comes Up
Short At Marshall

Taking a play from the San Fernando playbook, Poly’s Marco Manriquez tried a game-winning end zone pass in the final seconds against Marshall Friday. But his throw was deflected and the Parrots lost their second in a row, 40-35.

The Barristers grabbed a quick 27 points against a hapless Poly defense and had a comfortable 40-8 lead by the third quarter.

Poly then turned up the heat, running off 27 consecutive points. With five minutes remaining, Simon Ziehler put Poly right back in the match with a 7-yard touchdown run to make it 40-35.

In the final two minutes, the Parrots regained possession and moved to the Marshall 37-yard line. Manriquez, who made 12 of 19 passes on the night for 226 yards, took the snap with three seconds left for the game’s final play.

Running back Ivan Banuelos gained 105 yards on 23 carries. Tight end David Lopez caught seven passes for 174 yards and a touchdown and intercepted a pass.

The nonleague contest put the Parrots at 1-2 while boosting Marshall’s record to 2-1.

FRESHMAN
BASKETBALL
Parrots Outlast Lancers in
85-81 Triple-OT win

Poly needed three overtimes to secure their first league game of the season, an 85-81 win over host Grant. Guard Reno Villanueva led all scorers with 30 points.

In preseason play, the frosh, under new head coach Jay Werner, dominated Huntington Park 44-23 before getting a drubbing from Cleveland 70-34.

SOPHOMORE
BASKETBALL
Garcia Gives Grant Grief
In Season Opener

Parrot guard Isaac Garcia’s buzzer-beating three put Grant on the wrong side of a 51-49 final score for Poly’s first league win. Parrot forward Joe Martinez led the team with 16 points. Losses to Huntington Park 41-30 and Cleveland 47-45 marred the preseason.

VOLLEYBALL
Lancers Jab Lady Parrots 3-0

The Lady Parrots lost to Grant 3-0 in league play.

Gracia on her 15th

More than a birthday celebration, Quinceanera is a rite-of-passage event.

By Linda Orozco
Staff Writer

Gracia Arechiga wore a red and white gown Sunday to St. Mary’s Catholic Church. She walked down the aisle of the church with her parents beside her. Father McGuire, the parish priest, welcomed the guests and asked everyone to take a seat. The church was filled with Gracia’s friends and family. They were there to celebrate her “15.”

Father McGuire spoke for over an hour. He spoke on several topics. Gracia, he said, would now have to decide whether she wanted to grow up the right way with God, or if she just wanted to be like most of the rest of the teens. He said that teenagers are easily convinced to be bad. He said temptation for teenagers includes drugs, sex and alcohol. He said Church was a responsibility, not a choice, and that people always claimed their rights but forgot about their responsibilities. Then the priest asked everyone to kneel and confess themselves as sinners to God. Gracia was given roses by her cousin, which she placed in front of the image of La Virgin de Guadalupe.

When the religious ceremony was over, Gracia, accompanied by her chambalanes and some friends, headed to the San Fernando Mission Park in a Hummer limousine. There, photographers captured the moment as Arechiga posed by herself and with friends,



Photo by Linda Orozco

A YOUNG GIRLS JOURNEY: *Sophomore Gracia Arechiga celebrates her quinceañera with family, friends and food.*

family and the chambelanes. When the photo session was over, Gracia and her friends were back in the limo to cruise around. Inside, laughter and loud music filled the air for over an hour.

Then the limousine arrived at an auto body shop, where the party took place. The tables were covered in red or white sheets. On each table was a box full of Canelas bubble gum and a Barbie wearing a dress like a quinceanera. Two ladies served rice, beans and birria.

At 8:00 p.m., the dancing began. Gracia danced the choreographed waltz with every one of her chambalanes.

Then came the toast. Gracia’s godparents said a few words. Right before she burst into tears, her godmother told Gracia how much she loved her. Gracia then thanked everyone for coming to her quinceanera.

“I love you guys,” Gracia told her parents as she hugged them. She said the celebration was possible mainly because of them.

After the toast came the “surprise” dance. The audience clapped with enthusiasm to the music. Each chambelan took a partner out on the dance floor. Everyone danced the night away.



New Season, New Players, New Coach

Dave Bonino takes the reins as the new varsity basketball coach for the 2007-2008 season.

By Osvin Gonzalez
Staff Writer

Dave Bonino, former assistant varsity basketball coach, has assumed the head coaching position at Poly for the 2007-2008 basketball season.

Former head coach Brad Katz, after eight years as Poly varsity basketball coach and winner of three Sunset League championships, has taken an

assistant coaching position at Pierce College. Katz will remain at Poly as a Social Studies teacher.

Bonino previously handled the coaching duties for frosh, soph and junior varsity for the last eight years and was Katz' assistant for seven years.

"I learned from Katz so we share the same style and strategies," Bonino explained.

Most of the team has worked with Bonino in past seasons and won't have to adjust to a new coaching style.

"They have improved on learning how to play as a team," said Bonino.

This season's varsity has a number of first year players, most of them from the frosh/soph squad. The only two

returnees from last season are Razi Haq and Dominique Duke

"There aren't any key players yet," Bonino said. "I'm waiting to see which players emerge to be stars."

The varsity has two new transfers: seniors Anthony Carreno from Grant High School and Manbir Sumra from North Hollywood.

Bonino's expectations for his team are also similar to his old boss's.

"This season I'm expecting the team to play hard as a team and I always expect them to win a league championship," said Bonino.

Bonino played guard at Birmingham High School and at Valley College.



Photo by Jose Perez

BONINO BALL: Expect to see the same Katz style and strategies under new head basketball coach Dave Bonino.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE



STEP 1: You need speed and a comfortable position to pop and flick

By Robert Galan
Staff Writer

Skating is all about falling and getting back up. A lot like life.

There are two types of skateboarding: vert and street. Vert uses ramps and half pipes, but street uses obstacles like stairs, rails, gaps and ledges, or just flat.

Rodney Mullen changed skateboarding by making up a lot of the street skating tricks like the ollie, the kickflip, the 360 flip and more.

Many skaters favor schools for street tricks.

"People skate schools because they have the perfect obstacles," said

longtime skater Joe.

Joe says he's never gotten a ticket but he has run from the cops for trespassing.

Why not skate parks?

"Because I don't like to pay and I don't think sponsors like the obstacles that skate parks have," Joe said. "Skaters skate where ever there are good spots for the tricks they want to do and they are willing to risk getting arrested just for a trick. If there were more skate parks that are not expensive, then skating on school property might be lower."

Sylmar, Hollywood High and LA High are good spots to skate. Redondo too.

Photos by Jose Perez

Skater Robert Galan (a.k.a P-nut) performs a frontside 180 kick flip.



STEP 6: Land as straight as you can and then just roll away.



STEP 2: Pop and flick on the left corner. Swing your arms and rotate.



STEP 3: Spread your legs and let the board flip.



STEP 4: Catch the board halfway if you can then finish the turn.



STEP 5: look at where you want to land. Try to complete the 180.



All Together Now

Clockwise from above:
Tuba Player Ruth Reyes;
Senior Juan Rivera; Poly
Drill Team; Parrot Cheer-
leaders.

Photos
By
Efrain Rodriguez



Parrots Pluck Falcons

Led by tailback Terell Cable's 273 yards rushing and three touchdowns, Poly surprises bigger, taller Santee 31-29.

By Daniel Jimenez
Sports Editor

Poly's running game was unstoppable Friday night, good enough for a narrow two-point season-opening win over taller, faster Santee of Los Angeles and a gritty debut for new Parrot head coach Scott Faer. But it wasn't easy.

Terell Cable gave Poly an early lead with his first touchdown, a five-yard run to cap off a fifty yard, 10-play drive.

Santee came right back with a touchdown run of their own in the first quarter, and then another in the second. A field goal gave the Falcons a 16-7 lead heading into the half.

Coach Faer's halftime speech must have been inspiring. Poly stuck with the running game in the second half and turned the game around.

"We made the adjustments we needed to make at the half," said Faer, "and they paid off."

Play after play, Quarterback Marco Manriquez handed the ball to number five, Cable, who effortlessly ran it up the middle, to his right, to his left, and eventually to the end zone, for an 11-yard touchdown.

"We're a running team, we're gonna run it at them," Faer said.

After a two-point conversion, Santee's lead was cut to one. But another Falcon TD late in the third quarter put the Falcons up by eight.

Poly wasn't finished, however. As efficient on offense and as tough on defense as the Parrots were throughout the first three quarters, they were even better in the fourth.

First Cable earned his hat trick with a 10-yard touchdown. Another two-point conversion tied the game at 23.

Then with two minutes left, the Parrots took the lead back, this time with a 15-yard pass from Manriquez to wide receiver Daniel Lopez.

Faer gambled with another two-point conversion and won, giving Poly a 31-23 lead with the clock running out.

"Our kicker was struggling. It was his first game ever," said Faer. "But going for two turned out to be good for us."

But Santee fought back, drove the length of the field and scored on a completed pass to the corner of the end zone as time expired. Poly clung to a narrow 31-29 lead, their storybook ending now in doubt.

With no time left on the clock, Santee had to go for the two-point conversion. But



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

RUNNING TO PASS: Parrot QB Marco Manriquez eludes Falcon foe in Poly's 31-29 win.

Poly was not to be denied. An alert Parrot defense batted down the pass that would've tied the game, and the home team escaped in a squeaker.

Parrot fans breathed a collective sigh of relief when it was all over. Coach Faer took the nail-biter in stride.

"You can't go undefeated

unless you win the first one," he explained.

Maybe that's what he told the team at halftime.

Commentary

AND YOU THOUGHT IT WAS A ROCK ACT

Coach Faer's 'Smash Mouth' Offense Could Be Missing a Key Ingredient: The Pass

By Daniel Jimenez
Sports Editor

Some would say change can be a good thing. Obviously the Poly sports program thought so.

Scott Faer was hired as the Poly football coach in March of 07, and right away he started making an impact.

The former high school and college linebacker, former head coach, and current deputy probation officer brought with him many things, among them a style of offense a bit controversial.

He's a smash mouth coach. And smash mouth coaches like

to run the ball. A lot.

The running game is one of the most important, if not the most important, parts of a football team. The run sets up the pass. The run controls the pace of the game.

But a team shouldn't be limited to the run. A team should be ready and able to turn to the air at any point during a drive, a game and a season.

Faer and the Parrots proved they could do that in their season opener versus the Santee Falcons.

The Poly backfield, led by Terell Cable, ran the ball 48 times for over 400 yards in that game.



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez
NEW ARRIVAL: Poly coach Scott Faer gives Parrot talk.

This is where it gets interesting.

QB Marco Manriquez dropped back to throw only seven times, and his only completion came late in the fourth quarter, a touchdown pass to Daniel Lopez to give Poly a

31-23 lead. Santee would score a buzzer-beating touchdown to make things 31-29, but would fail to score the 2-point conversion.

Poly went on to win the season opener for the fourth year in a row.

Sounds good. Big win, big crowd, big flags running down the sideline after Poly scores.

The real story here is Scott Faer's reluctance to throw the ball. Sure, the running game worked Friday night versus Santee.

But what will happen when Poly faces a tougher defensive team, with a bigger, stronger defensive line?

Happened at San Fernando the following week.

Santee's defense was weak

compared to the Mighty Tigers of San Fernando. A bruised abdomen meant Cable, the Parrots feature back, was unavailable to carry the ball for Faer, and the home team pounded the Parrots 36-13.

Even if Cable was available for every game, will 30+ carries a game start to wear him down, or even worse, result in an injury that takes him out of the game? Happened at the Santee game last week, when Cable carried the ball 32 times. A better balance on offense of run and pass will keep the opponent's defense on its toes. A seven to one run-to-pass ratio won't do it. Not in the long run.

Next time: the Parrots' defensive troubles.