

# The Holy Optimist

John A. Francis Polytechnic High School

VOL. IV

12431 ROSCOE BLVD. SUN VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, 91352

OCTOBER 2007

# SPIRIT WEEK



## Five Days

of fun and games on Poly's campus, where prizes were awarded, voices rang out in song, bands marched, big birds fell in love, a new queen and king were named, floats were paraded and a football game was played.

Parrots found the spirit in Spirit Week.



All photos by Efrain Rodriguez

## J.K. ROWLING EXCLUSIVE INSIDE

## Dodgers Honor Academic Excellence

The Dodger organization donated 50 pairs of tickets to Poly students who showed the most improvement in their CAHSEE scores. In addition, essay winner Erika Torres took the field with her favorite player before the Dodgers' game against Colorado. Below is her essay.

# Essay Winner Meets Dodgers' Juan Pierre

Taking the field with the Dodgers is something that I've wanted to do since I began playing softball. I'm a big fan of the Dodgers. I love the game, which is why I play it.

Some people may have jackets, sweaters and jerseys that say Dodgers and may call themselves fans, without even knowing anything about the game.

I don't own any Dodger shirts or jerseys, but I do know what goes on in every game. I don't need a shirt or jersey to consider myself a true Dodger fan.

I'm not fortunate enough to live with my parents to ask them for money to go see the Dodger game. I live with my sister and her three sons. She tries hard to get me tickets but she never can. We even barely have cable to watch the game.

All kidding aside, I love the Dodgers, whether they lose a game or not. That is why I consider myself a true Dodger fan. When I see the games on TV, I sometimes yell at the screen as if I was there.

I have many favorites on the team, but my two top favorites have to be Juan Pierre (9) and James Loney (7). They both come to the games always with a

positive attitude to try to win a game.

Meeting these two great players and the rest of the team will make my dearest wish come true.

I think this essay shows how much I care about the Dodgers.

-Erika Lopez Torres

*"I don't own any Dodger shirts or jerseys, but I do know what goes on in every game. I don't need a shirt or jersey to consider myself a true Dodger fan."*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



## CAMPUS CONCERNS

### Too Frozen, Too Fat

What type of entrees should be served at school? They should be fresh and non-frozen. For example, meat freshly cut and prepared from the deli so someone at school can cook it and make something delicious. Freshly made bread could be used to make a healthy non-frozen sandwich. Eating better will get you healthier therefore, healthier food would be better for students.

Lunch is the meal the most students eat to get energy for school. Most students can not eat a good breakfast because they have to be at school early. I sometimes do not have time

to eat because I live further than most students attending Poly. I do try to wake up early so that I am prepared for school. Other students do not eat breakfast because they have working parents with no time to prepare a healthy breakfast.

How will it improve students' health? The student would have a healthier metabolism, which means you have a healthier body. Freshly made food has more nutrients like calcium, zinc, potassium, etc. Not all foods have what the body needs and students need to limit those types of food.

For example chips, candy and other "junk" food.

Now that you have been exposed to the reality, you should consider that Poly should provide better entrees because the students will be healthier and more students would eat school lunches. The students would be more satisfied and there would be less obesity. The government would be happier if this is not a problem any longer. So either the government provides better non-frozen entrees or the problem of obesity will get worse.

Monica Sagastume  
Freshman

### Sleep Later, Get Smarter

How do you feel when waking up in the early morning? Probably you and I have the same answer for this question. Waking up too early can affect students' grades and their health. Because of these effects, I think that the school should be changed to having classes start at 8:00 a.m. and go until 3:30 p.m.

It's very difficult for many students to wake up early in the morning because not everybody goes to sleep early and that is not because we don't want to.

On the contrary, at night we still have to do things such as homework. Additionally, many students work or there might be family emergencies

etc.

Every morning we feel very tired. We don't feel like going to school, but we do because it's our responsibility.

If students don't rest well enough they can fall asleep in class and their academic achievement goes from good to bad. Fewer students will graduate in the year that they are supposed to.

Some sources report that up to 30% of students drop their first and second period classes to stay home to sleep a little more.

Many students that live far away from this area have to wake up at 5:00 to begin to get ready for school. When they do not get enough sleep they

get headaches and cannot concentrate in their classes. Also, they lose weight because they don't have time to eat properly, not even a snack, before class. The students cannot put their attention to the teacher because there is thinking about food.

If the school day begins at 8:00, the students will have more time to rest and they would be less likely to come late to class. Their grades would improve and they would be able to pay attention in class and their academic achievement would go up. Poly's academic performance would therefore rise.

Blanca Sierra  
Senior

### What a Concept

Stay on track. We Polytechnic High School students have many things that we want to be changed. One of the changes that calls my attention is if they change the school's schedule and make the school traditional. I am going to give you three reasons why we should stay on tracks.

One of my main reasons why we should stay on tracks is because it would affect the students. It would affect me personally as a student because if I fail a class I can make it up during vacation and still

have time to enjoy some vacation. Also some of us students might be changed to a different school because the school might not have enough room for all the students, and I don't think a lot of students won't like to be changed to another school.

My second reason is that it can affect the school. The school would need to hire more teachers, buy more desks and make the school bigger. It would cost a lot of money and the school district might not give the school the money

they need. So we might need to fundraise some money.

My third reason is it will affect the community. The school will probably need money from the school district and the school district will get money from the city and the city will get money from the community by charging them tax money. So the community might not have enough money for their own because their taxes might be high.

Candice Valenzuela  
Sophomore

### THE OPTIMIST

JOHN H. FRANCIS POLYTECHNIC HIGH SCHOOL  
12431 ROSCOE BLVD. SUN VALLEY, CA, 91352

**Editor-In-Chief**  
Fernando Marquez

**Assistant Editor**  
Jason Castro

**Sports Editor**  
Daniel Jimenez

**Photo Editors**  
Efrain Rodriguez  
Tatiana Tejada

#### Writers:

Karen Aguilar, Beni Gonzalez, Michelle Gonzales, Osvin Gonzales, Perla Gonzalez, Juan Herrera, Joey Lemus, Alexander Rodriguez, Meri Sarkisyan, Karen Vazquez

**Optimist Adviser**  
John Blau

### 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.

# Exclusive: Rowling in America

J.K. Rowling launched her 3-city Open Book Tour in Los Angeles at the Kodak Theatre on Monday with a 20-minute news conference, the only media she'll do in the U.S. The OPTIMIST was the only student publication at the conference.

Rowling answered questions on a variety of topics:

## What's next:

"I've done my fantasy. I've lived in Harry's world for 17 years. Fantasywise, I'm probably done.

I will always write. I wrote a lot of rubbish before Harry Potter.

I don't think in genres. It's a case of what comes to me.

I want to fall in love with

something before I write again, like I fell in love with Harry. It has to be something I really adore.

I haven't started writing the encyclopedia yet. When I do, it will be for charity.

For the first time in ten years, I don't have a deadline.

The bit I really enjoy is the book signing."

## On money and fame and hard times:

"Harry was bringing in no money from the first book or the second. I had to work to make ends meet.

I never in a million years dreamed I would have photographers taking pictures of me.

Life isn't neat. You will make mistakes. But there is



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

**KODAK MOMENT:** J.K. Rowling spoke to the print and broadcast media on Monday. It was her first visit to the U.S. since 2000.

almost always a way back. I never felt like a loser. I have a fantastic daughter. She gave me a sense of self-worth."

## On religion:

"Like Graham Greene, my faith is that my faith will return.

I believe in life after death, but I wrestle with it a lot."

## On Deathly Hallow:

"Dobby's death woke Harry up. Dobby was someone entirely guiltless. His death was senseless and particularly chilling.

I don't kill people for pleasure. You can't show evil unless you kill someone the readers are fond of. Dobby's was a death that took some by sur-

prise.

I love Dumbledore for his frailties. For Harry, it was important to realize even Dumbledore was vulnerable."

## Personally speaking:

"I thought 'why would anyone want to do anything but be a writer.'

Hermione is me when I was younger. Dumbledore was based on a real person and he's barely exaggerated.

There are obvious themes of bigotry and the need for tolerance. Again, it goes through filters of my personal experience. You don't know where ideas come from.

I had some really great English teachers."

# Building Good Citizens, One At a Time

Poly's ROTC program serves many functions on and off campus.

By Alex Rodriguez  
Staff Writer

From the beginning, the purpose of Poly's Air Force Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (AFJROTC) program has been to create better citizens for America. AFJROTC does not train young people for military service and there is no commitment to serve in the armed forces after graduation.

"I want to teach you to be a good citizen," said AFJROTC instructor Lt. Colonel Jim Robilotta, "and I say citizen with a capital C, a citizen who participates and understands what's going on in the community."

"It has nothing to do with training you to be a good officer or good sergeant or good soldier or pilot," Robilotta said. "That's not what we do."

Robilotta, who has been teaching at Poly for two years, and fellow AFJROTC instructor Senior Master Sergeant Billie Smith are both career Air Force members ready to pass their experience and skills on to their cadets.

Poly's AFJROTC program is organized as a Cadet Group composed of three squadrons: Operations, Mission Support and Logistics.

The Operations Squadron takes care of drilling, special teams and events and is supervised by Commander C/2 Lt Manuel Nuñez. Mission Support, under Commander C/2Lt Monique Ascencio, handles personnel and promotions.



Photo by SM Sgt. Billie Smith

**DRESS BLUES:** Parrot cadets learn citizenship as part of their AFJROTC training program.

Logistics, managed by commander C/2Lt Alex Rodriguez, deals with uniforms, textbooks and equipment.

AFJROTC's Group Commander is C/Maj Perla Hernandez. Deputy Cadet Group Commander C/Capt Rene Escobar and a Cadet Command Master Sergeant C/CMSgt Collen Tomsik round out the "Top Three."

Academic studies in AFJROTC include aviation history, aeronautical science, cultural studies, astronomy, exploration of space and leadership along with marching and drilling.

Poly's five special AFJROTC teams, Color Guard, Drill

Team, Drum Corp, Rifle Team and Honor Guard, go to competitions where they compete against other schools and colleges. They also participate in school events such as pep rallies, assemblies, homecomings, football games and graduation. They also perform in ceremonies outside Poly and travel to different cities.

"Drill team goes anywhere from Vegas to southern California to perform routines and compete," said Hernandez. "It's really fun, because you get to see how strong a person you are with someone screaming at you. You also get to learn how much you learn because throughout the years you get

better and it's noticeable when they grade you."

AFJROTC field trips include visits to Air Force bases and international guard bases and airplane rides with the Air Force. Cadets have been to Edward Air Force base, the Planes of Fame museum, March Air Force base and Point Mugu International Guard Base. On "Fun Day," cadets meet, play games, eat and have fun.

Thursday is uniform day. Cadets take care of the uniforms, which are provided by the Air Force, and return them when they leave the program.

Male cadets wear a blue shirt, blue pants, blue jacket, black shoes, flight cap, coat,

black socks, blue belt and tie. Female cadets wear a blue shirt, blue pants or blue skirts, blue jacket, black socks, black pants, neck tab, belt, flight cap, black shoes or high heels, and a coat.

Cadets can receive many benefits from the AFJROTC program after they graduate or leave the program. A student who joins the military after two years in AFJROTC is eligible to earn one stripe automatically and will receive more money. Three years in the program provides eligibility for two stripes and more money.

"But the number one reward is a sense of accomplishment," said Robilotta. "I don't know of any other high school program that is run so completely by the cadets. What the cadets choose to do is run by them, they do their command structure, they get to learn how to be a leader, how to be in charge of a group of people, be responsible for a project. It happens in a few other organizations on campus, but not to the level or degree that it happens in ROTC."

"Come by and check us out," Smith said. "Grab some of the cadets. They'll be the best to tell you about ROTC."

Poly's program dates to 1993. The first Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program in a public high school was begun by Army Lieutenant Edgar R. Steevers in 1911 in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

# Parrot Kasusky Meets J.K. Rowling

Parrot sophomore Hazel Kasusky participated in the Q. & A. session with J. K. Rowling, author of the best-selling Harry Potter series. The OPTIMIST asked Kasusky about the experience. Below are her comments.

**Q. How old were you when you read your first Harry Potter book?**

A. I started reading the Harry Potter books when I was 10 years old. My 5th grade teacher read *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* to my class and it persuaded me to read the series. It took me about five days to read the book in bits. I didn't want the story to end.

**Q. Rate yourself as a Harry Potter fan.**

A. I do know some trivia. I also keep articles relating to Harry Potter. Collectibles, like the time turner, are displayed in my room. I also know the names of the actors in the movies. I also have the Harry Potter soundtrack. Okay, I guess I am humongous Harry Potter fan.

**Q. Have you read other fantasy novels? What other kinds of fiction do you read?**

A. I have definitely read other fantasy novels. My favorite ones would be *Inkheart* and the sequel *Inkspell* by Cornelia Funke. I also admire Neil Gaiman, author of *Stardust* and *Coraline*.

I love to read science fiction for its cool twists, and historical fiction, for "traveling back in time."

**Q. What was the topic of your essay for the contest? How long did it take to write? When did you learn you had won? Were your friends jealous that you were going to see J.K. Rowling? How about your parents? What do they think of Harry Potter?**

A. The topic I chose for my Harry Potter essay was "How did the series change your way of reading?" I did not keep track of the amount of words I wrote. All I focused on was the clarity and purpose for the essay. It took me about half an hour to write, probably because I *really* wanted to meet Mrs. Rowling and because it was due that very day.

I am amazed, because I always thought that I sucked at writing. Then I discovered that I only had to focus on my goal to write well.

I found out that I was chosen to meet her the day after I turned in the essay and my acquaintances were jealous and upset because they had forgotten to turn in the essay. Lucky me. My parents were surprised and the rest of my family still doesn't know because they are Christian. It won't be secret for long because they are bound to find out what with all that was publicized.

**Q. How were you chosen to ask a question after the reading?**

A. Some people from either Scholastic or LAUSD read all the questions and picked the best 12.

I chose my question off the top of my head - "Is your life reflected in the plot and characters of the series?"

She answered that she sees herself as Hermione Granger. She also based Gildroy Lockhart on a



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

**FAN OF POTTER:** Poly sophomore Hazel Kasusky was one of 12 LAUSD students chosen by U.S publisher Scholastic for the Q. and A. session at the Kodak Theatre with world-renowned author J. K. Rowling.



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

**SIGNED:** Kasusky holds her autographed copy of "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince."

person she knew. The various people she met were integrated into the books, but just pieces of them.

**Q. What did you know about Rowling before you met her?**

A. I knew a couple of things about her. I knew that she was British, worked in the Harry Potter movies, drank wine when she wrote the books, and that she had already written the last chapter of the last book when she was about to have the antepenultimate book released.

**Q. How would you describe Rowling, now that you have seen her and talked to her? What was it like to personally ask her a question and have her respond just to you? Did it seem like**

**something out of a Harry Potter book?**

A. I expected an annoyed and impatient hag, but you never really know a person until you've met him or her. Rowling was a very friendly, calm, and eloquent lady. She seemed in control during the preparation for the show.

Personally asking her a question was a great opportunity because I rarely get to meet celebrities. The cool thing about it was that everyone was there when I asked the question and I felt that the question was not only coming from me, but from the audience. It was magical.

**Q. Tell us some of the questions the TV newspeople asked you. Did you see yourself on TV that night. Are you now the celebrity in the family?**

A. They asked me how I felt about meeting a "world famous author" and what I liked about the books. I responded that I felt really lucky and grateful for meeting a creator of a whole different world. I also answered that the books had very descriptive elements that made something you know is fake into reality. That is what made them so interesting.

The question about religion kept popping up. "How do you feel that Christians look down upon the Harry Potter books?" I simply responded with the truth. Because anybody who restricts something, like these books, from anyone, especially children, these "anyones" will want to do it even more.

I did see myself on TV and I had a moment of fame. It feels like looking into a mirror on a bad hair day. My 5 year old sister also likes Harry Potter and was excited that I was going to meet the author.

**Q. Were you a "reader" before the Potter books?**

A. This series was a turning point in my literacy journey. Some people read the Potter series because it is a fad. I believe these books have a certain curiously humane quality when describing the settings and emotions of characters.

# Rowling Reading Delights Potter Fans

Hundreds of screaming, adoring fans came to Hollywood to get a glimpse of their idol. Was it Lindsay Lohan? Avril Levigne? Nope. Try J. K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter series.

By Michelle Gonzalez and  
Meri Sarkisyan  
Staff Writers

Fourteen Parrots were among 1600 LAUSD elementary, middle and high school students from 40 schools that came to the Kodak Theatre to hear world-renowned author J. K. Rowling read an excerpt from the seventh and final Harry Potter book, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*.

*Deathly Hallows* sold 11 million copies in the UK and the U.S. during the first 24 hours of its release, breaking the record of 9 million held by the sixth book. In the U.S., 8.3 million hardcovers were sold during the first 24 hours, breaking the record of 6.9 million also set by the sixth book.

The Kodak reading is the first of a three-city Rowling book tour coordinated by her publisher, Scholastic.

The Kodak, home of the Academy Awards, is an elegant venue with a five-story lobby with a spiral staircase. It's like a place right out of a movie where they go to see a play. There were ushers to help people to their seats.

After a video of her accomplishments as an author, Rowling was introduced to the audience, who screamed and yelled when she appeared. She looked graceful in a floral patterned dress.

Some students may have expected Rowling to be the kind of person who keeps her ideas and thoughts to herself. But when they met and heard her, Rowling seemed funny and outgoing.

She read 12 pages from *Deathly Hallows*, the entire third chapter, explaining she didn't want to read anything later in the book in case someone hadn't gotten that far yet. She was seated in a golden throne with red cushions fit for a queen.

Rowling was a great reader who made her listeners feel like they were part of the story. She used different tones in her voice to act out the dialogue of the different characters in the chapter as she read.

After the reading, Rowling answered questions from students. She got emotional when she was questioned about the death of some of the characters in her books.

Rowling was enthusiastic and conversed with the stu-



Photo by Efrain Rofriguez

**140 MILLION COPIES:** J. K. Rowling's seven Harry Potter novels have sold over 140 million copies in the United States.

dents asking her questions. She didn't hold back anything and let the students know how she really felt.

One student asked Rowling if she had to choose between

writing more Harry Potter books or being the Queen of England, which would she choose? Rowling immediately answered that she would keep writing Harry Potter books.

Then Rowling autographed copies of *Deathly Hallows* for the students, some of whom were nervous because they were going to be really close to her.

Rowling made an effort to greet each student as she signed his or her book, despite being in the middle of the chaos around her.

# All the right moves

By Michelle Gonzales  
and Mary Sarkisyan  
*Staff Writers*

Most kids can't wait to go to lunch when the bell rings. Chess club members can't wait to play chess.

"They love to play," said math teacher and club sponsor Jeff Berkeley. "They can't wait until the lunch bell rings."

In December, club members will play against each other to determine who will compete in the city tournament against other schools.

"The tournament we go to now is called the Oakwood invitational," Berkeley said. "I will take the six best kids."

The most successful year for the Chess Club was two years ago.

"We won a third place tro-

phy," said Berkeley. "Last year we finished tied for fourth place with many other schools."

Berkeley, who has been playing chess for 46 years, started at age six.

"I was my school champion many times," said Berkeley.

Berkeley has played in many tournaments, from the U.S. National Open to European tournaments, city tournaments, and academic tournaments.

"In 1998, I competed in the U.S. Open," Berkeley said. "I was in the middle of the field. I guess there were 200 people there. Many of them were masters and experts."

Berkeley says his rating is around 1700.

"To be considered a master, you have to have a rating

of about 2000," Berkeley said, "and to be an expert, your ratings have to be around 2200."

Berkeley stopped playing chess competitively in 1999.

"I don't have time," he said.

Berkeley teaches club members that chess is a game of strategy.

"Grand masters say they can see eight to 12 moves in advance," Berkeley said. "Most mortals, we're thinking three to four moves ahead."

But what about computers that can consider millions of possible move at once?

"Nowadays, the best computer programs can beat the best humans," Berkeley said, "but ex-world champion Garry Kasparov played the best computer and won in 1996."



Photo by Fernando Marquez

CONTEMPLATING: Chess Club member Edwin Carmona.

# Choir, Marching Band, Drill Team at Arts Showcase

By Karen Aguilar  
*Staff Writer*

Poly's choir added some visual performance touches to their usual display of vocal skills, acting out lyrics for favorites such as "The Great Pretender" and Eric Clapton's "Change the World" at Thursday's Art Showcase in the auditorium.

The marching band was also on hand to lend some instrumental firepower to the festivities.

The Drill Team and Color Guard both drew applause with their precision maneuvers to driving dance numbers.

Poly Idol winner Chelsee Foster sang the national anthem and soloed on "Change the World." She later joined Lourie Aldana and Crystal Chavarin in the choir's Trio to sing "I Wanna Be Loved By You" and Dusty Springfield's "I Only Want To Be With You."

The choir's male quartet, featuring Joey Lemus, John Ramirez, Manual Lico and Jose Diaz, did doo-wop favorite "See You In September," a 1966 hit for the Happenings.

The marching band closed the concert.

The program was hosted by drama teacher Amy Showalter. Steve Isaacs led the band, while Kevin Patterson was responsible for the choir's various performances.



All photos by Efrain Rodriguez

EMOTING: Singers Joey Lemus and Chelsee Foster gave heartfelt performances at the Arts Showcase on Thursday of Spirit Week. Drill Team (bottom left) displayed a new routine and drum major Delfred Gamboa (bottom right) directed the band.



## Horoscopia

By Claudia Figueroa  
Staff Writer

### Aries (Mar 21-Apr 19):

*You're sassier than ever, but that could lead to trouble. Show everyone you're just having fun.*

### Taurus (Apr 20-May 20):

*Something is bugging you. Take a deep breath and let it all out.*

### Gemini (May 21-Jun 21):

*You're all business now. People may not understand how you can keep up. Just keep moving and having fun.*

### Cancer (Jun 22-Jul 22):

*All the little details matter. You might feel overwhelmed now, but everything will work out.*

### Leo (Jul 23-Aug 22):

*It's time to try something new. Expect a hot idea to shine a new light on an old problem.*

### Virgo (Aug 23-Sep 22):

*Emailing and texting may be a bad idea. You might be misunderstood. Go face to face; explain yourself.*

### Libra (Sep 23-Oct 22):

*Getting the urge to try out a few ideas or clubs? Show people you totally have what it takes.*

### Scorpio (Oct 23-Nov 21):

*You and your friend think up a great idea. You know that it's the right thing to do, so convince him to follow your lead.*

### Sagittarius (Nov 22-Dec 21):

*Life got much more interesting, even though not a lot has changed. It's more about your attitude and energy, so go with it and see what you could make happen.*

### Capricorn (Dec 22-Jan 19):

*You are starting to see what's really going on in the world. It's a great time to change plans to match your new perspective.*

### Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb 18):

*Let your energetic spirit out today. One way or another, you'll find an appreciative audience.*

### Pisces (Feb 19-Mar 20):

*Don't forget to give yourself a break and call that special someone.*

# The Attraction of Anime and Manga

Science teacher Hannah Gabriel, a UCLA grad with a penchant for piano, believes in the power of graphic novels and comic books to improve literacy. Gabriel, who spent the first half of her life in the Philippines, is herself a fan of anime and manga, the Japanese animation art forms that have attracted a large following in the United States. As sponsor for Poly's Manga, Anime and Games (MAG) Club, Gabriel spends a lot of time with the subject. Recently, the OPTIMIST asked Gabriel to help our readers better understand anime and manga and describe her own experience with the storytelling form. Below is her response.

The attraction of anime and manga (A & M) is multi-tiered. On a fundamental level, they present a colorful, ornate, and whimsical type of art. The women are always beautiful, sexy, and youthful, while men are drawn to be handsome and clear-faced.

The character's facial features are large, especially the eyes, and detailed to denote age and whether the character is protagonist or antagonist by using detailed costumes to match the character's personality.

While the comic book sector (Marvel, DC and others) employs extreme variations on their artwork, from life-like to plain-faced to gothic to modern stick-like figures, A&M have been more or less rigid on their general style. Because many of the art elements do not change over the years, A&M has a following of people who know exactly what they will see as soon as they open a graphic novel.

A person can literally grow up with A&M, changing their choices of specific series as they mature. For example, one could have watched "Pokemon" when he was a kid, then moved on to "Tenchimuyo" or "Oh! My Goddess" in his teen years and graduated to "Cowboy Beebop" as an adult.

The plots are usually not commonplace or everyday problems with life. The imagi-



Internet Photo

**HALL OF FAME:** Familiar faces Inuyasha, Naruto, Gaara and Ichigo have similar features.



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

**SPONSOR:** Hannah Gabriel

nation of the creators is not bound by science, logic, space, or time. This boldness appeals especially to young people because they are immediately transported to a different place and time away from the grind. The more eccentric and fantastical the plot, the better.

Much of the Japanese culture's rituals, legends, and beliefs are densely incorporated into the stories. Kids love to be spectators of something completely different from what they know. The costumes, the houses, the way they eat, the foods they eat, and the characters portrayed all harken back to Japan, especially old Japan.

A&M is the only way some kids acquire history (such as the samurai and ninjas) of another place. If we're lucky, they might be inquisitive enough to actually read about it on the internet, or – gasp – at

the library. It's really funny in a way. A&M reflects a lot of the Japanese fascination with Western culture, and yet Americans are fascinated by all the Japanese elements they see in A&M. We're looking straight at each other through a double-sided mirror.

Stereotypes about the kinds of kids that consume A&M don't work. I used to think A & M was a smart, Asian kid thing until I sponsored the A & M Club (MAG) at Poly. We have all ethnicities represented, each with their own repertoire of A&M: Latinos, Armenians, Asians, African-Americans and Caucasians, and from all income levels. Basically, it's for anybody at any age who wishes to indulge the child in them.

A&M was first made to be a rebellious, indulgent, and "guilty pleasure" genre that the Japanese government did not approve of. Thus, it's called a "subculture" and was not meant to be mainstreamed, but rather to thrive underground.

Much of my knowledge of anime and manga was derived from my ex-fiancé. He introduced me to "Oh My Goddess," an animated series about a regular boy, Keiichi, who "accidentally" dialed the helper goddess hotline trying to get pizza delivery. Bell-dandy, Goddess of the present, came into his room through a looking glass and into his life

during a time he needed help the most, though he didn't know he needed it.

I was 16 when I first started watching the series and the coming-of-age story for both characters was poignant for me. It had those funny awkward moments, cruel moments, and epiphanies all woven into both their journeys trying to find their niche.

I also loved that this anime took old legends and myth, put their own spin on them and made them applicable to the modern day while still retaining the futuristic, fanciful and magical elements that appeal to young people. "Oh! My Goddess," for example, took its story from the Nordic myth of the three Fates, Verthandi, Urd and Skuld.

Bell-dandy's character is domesticated in the old crafts of knitting, cooking, housekeeping, yet she displays a quiet strength as a young woman of the modern world. I love those traditional crafts which ladies were once required to know yet are lost in our generation. I still believe that women truly are the tenders of the hearth & home and should be, for lack of a better word, "well-domesticated," just as strongly as I believe we are deserving of the freedoms and power women did not have back in the olden times.

# SPORTS ROUND UP

## VARSITY FOOTBALL

### Huskies Bite Parrots 28-14

Head Coach Scott Faer, quoted on the Boosters' website as saying that Poly will be hard to beat if they can eliminate penalties, may have been a bit too hopeful, as top-ranked North Hollywood (5-3, 4-0) handed the Parrots their fifth loss in their last six games, 28-14, Friday night at home.

Poly, tied for fourth place in the Sunset Six League after Friday's loss, will play the bottom of the league for its last three games of the regular season, beginning with Canoga Park (1-6, 1-2) on October 26.

### Lancers Too Sharp For Poly Parrot defense a washout as Grant spoils Homecoming.

Poly's defense mostly watched as Grant tight end Armando Orozco raced 65 yards down the sideline for a score and a quick 7-0 Lancer lead with only six minutes gone in the first quarter. Numerous missed tackles and misread offenses later, the Lancers completed a 40-22 snubbing of the Parrots' lackluster defense and sputter-and-start offense.

Orozco continued to rain on Poly's parade, throwing an 18-yard pass to Oscar Lugo for Grant's second TD in the second quarter and then running two yards for his second score in the third quarter as Grant tallied up 21 unanswered points. Parrot running back Terell Cable finally put Poly on the scoreboard with a 24-yard run to end the third quarter.

Cable had his usual busy night with 171 yards on 26 carries, while Grant running back Edward Shakhbazyan owned the fourth quarter, picking up 188 yards on 15 carries and scoring three touchdowns. Two of those were on runs of 54 yards each as he slipped easily through Poly defenders.

Parrot quarterback Marco Manriquez tacked on Poly's last score with a 50-yard scramble late in the 4th.

The Lancers, 3-0 in Sunset Six League play, are 3-4 on the season. Poly has yet to get a league win (0-3) and is 2-4 overall.

## CROSS COUNTRY

### Park Helps Poly Past Hunters Eight-time league champ is finally getting up to speed, Rivera says.

Poly's cross country team is halfway to winning their ninth league title after a 19-36 victory over Canoga Park by the boys' varsity on Thursday at Pierce College.

"The team has won eight league championships in a row," said head coach Mario Rivera. "I'm thinking this year we will be defending against Birmingham or Monroe. It's not going to be easy. It's going to be very challenging."

The win over the Hunters was Poly's second with two meets remaining.

"Canoga was an easy school to beat," said Rivera.

Poly junior Michael Park ran the three-mile course in 17:58, good enough for first place.

"The meets are always painful and never easy," said Park.

## FILM REVIEW

# Look Who's Kicking Butt

Superbabe Jovovich is back for third 'Resident Evil' flick, "Extinction."

By Juan Herrera  
Staff Writer

Sexy, good-looking women who kick butt are replacing these days. Angelina Jolie kicked butt in "Tomb Raider." Jennifer Garner did it in "Elektra." Uma Thurman ("Kill Bill"), Kate Beckinsale ("Underworld") and Charlize Theron ("Aeon Flux") did it too.

But nobody does it better than Milla Jovovich in

the latest installment of the "Resident Evil" series, "Resident Evil: Extinction." Based on Capcom's popular video games, "Resident Evil: Extinction" follows the 2004 sequel "Resident Evil: Apocalypse," itself a sequel to the outbreak that started all the mayhem in 2002's "Resident Evil."

"Resident Evil" fans were drawn to the movies not just for the zombies, the action, the blood, the gruesome killings and the guns, but more so for high-cheeked super-model Milla Jovovich, who knows how to fight.

No surprise here that the R-rated "Extinction" drew

a crowd that was 65% male and 55% under age 25. With Milla, Grammy Award winner Ashanti and "Heroes" Ali Larter in the movie, who can blame them.

Sexy babes are not all "Extinction" has to offer, however. There is Las Vegas buried in sand, zombies sliced and diced, dark, creepy hotel rooms and millions of crows lit on fire in the sky.

The action is cool, the killings are nasty, the zombies are ugly and the setting is the city where the party never ends.

But nothing's better than watching macho Milla doing her martial arts thing.

## CHIBI 16 by Sylvette Rodriguez



## Hitchhiker Blues by Raymond Carrillo

