

# The Holy Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

VOL. V

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NOVEMBER 2007

## Poly's Protest Prevails

By Christian Banuelos  
Staff Writer

Poly is no longer on Brewer's "High Priority" List. Only days after successfully meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements, Poly found itself on a "failing schools list" compiled by Los Angeles Unified School District Superintendent David L. Brewer III. Then, almost as quickly as Poly was informed it was removed from the list.

Brewer made a list of 44 needy schools to which he would offer extra help.

Poly was on that list until it was removed mid-October.

Larry Carstens and Jin Lee, Poly's UTLA union representatives wrote a petition for students, staff, and parents to sign. Poly's parents submitted the petitions to the Board. However it is not clear how much this contributed to Poly being removed from the list. Putting together a petition to remove Poly from the "High Priority" list and the amount of signatures it garnered from Poly students, staff and parents reflected our community's belief that Poly did not belong on such a list. The petition read: THIS IS A PETITION FOR WHAT WE DO NOT NEED: high priority status for a district designed to separate us from our local community, our feeder schools, and our positive progress."

Initially schools on that list would be included in a new smaller and separate district. Brewer believed that making this "special district" would help needy schools improve academically.

According to Gerardo Loera, Poly's Interim Principal, in the current plan the remaining schools will no longer be part of a separate district. Schools will now stay within their local district structure.

Loera said Brewer came up with the idea of a "special district" as part of a larger plan to assist schools in need, or they could be taken over by the state.

**[Brewer's List continued on Page 2]**

## Rage Against The Machine

By Bereniz Aguilar  
& Erika Solorzano  
Staff Writers

"... Your child has missed one or more periods today..." Has Phonemaster taken over your attendance?

Phonemaster is an automated machine that informs parents when a student is absent.

It has been around for years but it was recently updated and activated at Poly. It uses several languages including English, Spanish, Armenian, Punjabi, etc.

Isela Guerra operates Phonemaster and thinks it has improved attendance, but it's just in the beginning stages.

Phonemaster calls your house three or four times, or until someone responds to the message.

Many students have been getting phone calls from school saying they were absent for 1 or more periods, even though they were in class.

We asked, "What happens when a teacher makes a mis-



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

**PHONE MASTER:** Isela Guerra, Zobeida Montes and the Phonemaster system.

take and marks a student absent"

"Phone master only affects those who are absent," Isela Guerra replied.

When a teacher marks a student absent the call still goes out.

When a student thinks their

absence was reported in error, they should ask their teacher to write them a note saying it was a mistake. The absence should be cleared with a teacher's note.

"There are teachers who forget to turn in their attendance, but if they don't then

it's their fault. We just try to encourage them to turn it in." Guerra says.

Field trips do not count as absences, but the supervising teacher has to turn in a memo saying who the students  
**[Phonemaster continued on Page 2]**

## Fresh Face at Freshmen Center

By Jennifer Miranda  
Staff Writer

Fun and friendly Jay Kirschner, joined Poly in July 2007 as Assistant Principal of the Freshmen Center.

Kirschner works with the staff, parents, and students. Kirschner is the former assistant principal of Cleveland High. He worked there as an AP for six years. Before becoming Assistant Principal, Kirschner taught math and English, and was a counselor

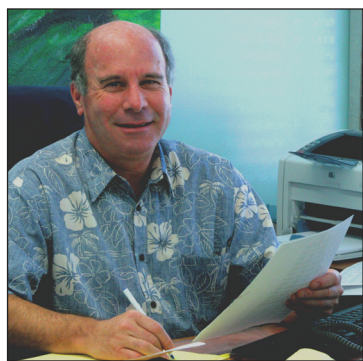


Photo by Efrain Rodriguez  
**ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL:** Jay Kirschner.

## Ask Louie in the Attendance Office

By Bereniz Aguilar  
& Erika Solorzano  
Staff Writer

Louie Olvera seems to be the one consistent staff member at Poly who knows how everything works. When a teacher, student or a faculty member needs information they all go to Louie in the attendance office first.

Olvera started working in the attendance office because he said,

"It was the only position available".

Olvera has been working at Poly for the past nine years. His job consists of helping

parents register their kids, transferring students to other schools, updating addresses and maintaining school records including attendance.

Olvera was born and raised in the San Fernando Valley. He is one of five siblings; he has three older brothers and one younger sister. Olvera worked at a K-mart store for 13 years as a manager, before he came to Poly.

"The best advice I've received was from Randy Pelling, the principal of North Hollywood who told me to go back to school." Said Olvera.

**[Louie continued on Page 2]**



Photo by Michael Obando

**PEOPLE PERSON:** Louie Olvera deals with parents and students in the attendance office and coaches little league.

for 9 years.

"I am proud to be a Poly Parrot because the school is filled with great students, teachers, and innovative programs," said Kirschner.

He enjoys working at the Freshmen Center because he believes that 9th grade is the most important year of high school because it begins the journey for a student to set him or herself on the right track to success.

"I care about each and every student," said Kirschner, "My door is always open! We are all here to help and support the 9th graders and make sure they have a productive year."

Just like everyone else, Kirschner has dealt with embarrassing moments. One of them occurred when Kirschner was 19, he fell off a cliff, and hit his head on the pavement. Kirschner lost conscience and had amnesia for hours. A

passing truck stopped to help Kirschner. "All I could say was, 'My name is Jay, and I'm a nice guy.' I repeated that over and over, that was all I could think of," said Kirschner.

"I have all sorts of embarrassing moments, they're just too embarrassing to share," Kirschner said. Like the time Kirschner was going to fly to

**[Kirschner continued on Page 4]**





# Crunch Time

By Fernando Marquez  
Editor in Chief

It's crunch time. College applications are right around the corner and there's nothing more worrisome to a high school senior than college application deadlines.

Seniors and stress. Stress and seniors.

It seems that these two words seem to fit perfectly in the same sentence.

Although I should be happy that these applications mark the beginning of a whole new life experience, I can't help but feel a bit apprehensive about the whole ordeal.

One small decision can make one huge difference when it comes to choosing a college. Attention to detail needs to be placed on location, majors, costs and such. Nonetheless it's one of the experiences every single high school student has to go through. You can even call it essential.

College applications are a hassle for some students. For a

busy student it might be managing college applications, essays, interviews, and campus visits along with regular coursework and extracurricular activities that makes the whole process a burden. For another student it might be

*"One small decision can make one huge difference when it comes to choosing a college."*

lack of information on how to get to or future career options they may have. In either case dealing with the concept of attending an institution of higher education can be very intimidating.

Not all students will end up attending a college or university. Some will go to a vocational school, others may or may not go directly into the working world depending on their particular situation.

Knowing I took advantage of these opportunities helps relieve some stress during this hectic period of time.

The best advice I can give is to take a big breath, deal with the process one step at a time, and not to procrastinate.

## OCTOBER CORRECTIONS:

The Optimist misspelled Avril Lavigne as "Levigne."

In the chess story, paragraph 12, the words "master" and "expert" are reversed. "To be an expert, you have to have a rating of 2000; to be a master, your ratings have to be around 2200." is correct

## A Special Need

I am a student at Polytechnic Senior High School and I have noticed an educational need on campus. From what I have observed, student of special needs learn better with the aid of a peer mentor than with the aid of an adult.

I have witnessed first hand with my special needs brother that he learned much better with my assistance than with the assistance of a teacher school. This experience helped me appreciate the unique qualities of persons with special needs.

If we as a school are to be: critical thinkers, conscientious members of society, effective communicators, and life long learners, then we must also include special needs students in a general education art class. With a little help from their fellow Polytechnic students perhaps these students 'talents can be unlocked and we can leave behind old stereotypes. I have made friends this mester and they have a friend and advocate in me. What about you?

Yours truly,  
Steven Babcock

[Phonemaster continued from Page 1]

are and where they're going. School activities are not considered an absence.

Absences reported in error affect many students, but especially the seniors. Seniors can not have more than 16 absences or they lose their chance to graduate on stage.

If you have your own "phone master story" send it to The Optimist in room 11 or put it in Mrs. Matlen's box in the main office.

## Making a Difference

By Jennifer Miranda  
Staff Writer

Droughts, earthquakes, flooding, hurricanes, tsunamis, volcanoes, and wildfires, are natural disasters that no one in the world can prevent, but we should be prepared, and help others who are in need. It might be easier to sit and watch the television and view all those poor homeless people whose home were destroyed in the fires, or the people who have to sleep on floors while there homes are underwater due to flooding, than actually doing something to help them out.

Every little bit counts. Become a volunteer at the Red Cross.

Visit the Red Cross web site [www.american.redcross.org](http://www.american.redcross.org) or call the Red Cross at 1(800) HELP-NOW (1-800-435-7669).

[Brewer's List continued from Page 1]

The primary criteria used to place a high school on the "high Priority" list is an API score of under 600 and a Program Improvement 5+ status. (PI 5+)

Poly currently has an API score of 608 and its Program Improvement is on hold because it has met its AYP.

Being on Brewer's new District would result is lower morale for students and teachers. District Officials will monitor schools that remain on this "High Priority" District more closely.

Brewer's list was well intentioned, however, he has been criticized for the way he is rolling it out. It has not gained support from Board members including Julie Korenstein and UTLA teachers. Carstens, Poly's UTLA representative said, "It's a bad way to go about it. It's like in a classroom - It's bad for a teacher to help a kid, and tell everybody this kid has special needs".

Loera said, "Every single time we have a district meeting, Brewer compliments us".

"I like to think that he [Brewer] is looking at a school like Poly and saying, 'Okay you're doing good work, how else can I help you?' ", said Loera on why Poly was initially placed on the high priority list.

Initially, Poly along with 43 other schools including Arleta, Panorama, Reseda, and Monroe were placed on the original list. After revising the list, there are only 34 schools, with Sylmar High as the only Valley school left.

[Louie continued from Page 1]

Olvera recently graduated from the University of Phoenix. He is the first one in his family to graduate from college. He graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Science of Human Services. With this degree he plans to become a counselor.

Olvera does not only work in the attendance office, but also runs and coaches a little league team. He also enjoys the game of golf.

Olvera loves spending time with his family, and being outdoors. He says,

"I love the sound of crickets but I hate seeing them."

He says he loves old cars. Olvera's dream car is a 1947 Boxford car but he wants it already fixed up. Olvera points out that the Boxford car was one of the first cars invented by Ford.

"If I had a million dollars I would spend it paying off bills; I would buy a house and spend the rest of my money on my family," Olvera said.

Olvera is diabetic and hopes doctors will be able to find a cure for illnesses.

"In the next five years everything is going to be computerized and less paper work, hopefully doctors can also find a cure for many illnesses."

Olvera has one son who also attends Poly.

Reflecting on Poly's current student population, Olvera says,

"Today's kids are more outspoken and outgoing."

Olvera likes comedians and anyone who can see the glass half full rather than half empty.

## 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 Ms. Matlen's box.

## Definitely Not Absent





# TALKING TEXT

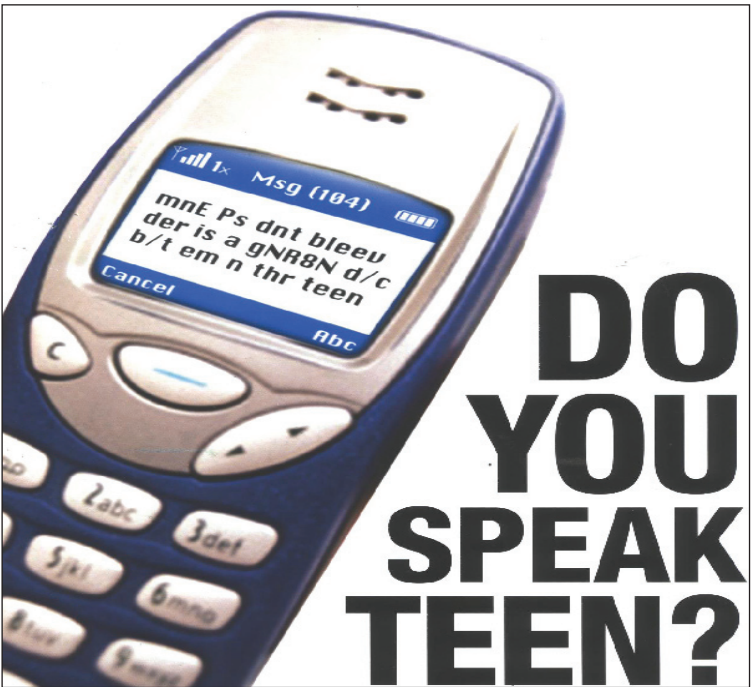
Evr 1drd wht the kid w/the 4hed stuck 2 the table in the back of the clss was doin?

By Adrian Rayos  
& Hazel Kasusky  
*Staff Writers*

If they’re not sleeping, chances are they’re texting. Yes, texting, thumbing away at that small phone keypad and entering a quick message to be sent only to get an immediate response back. It is a convenient way of communicating in today’s quick paced society. Sure you can still talk on the phone, or send an e-mail, but texting has gained a stronghold with today’s teens. Send-and-receive messages can be done anywhere and everywhere. That is if you have reception.

While the cost of texting may vary according to the plan you have with your cellular service provider, that doesn’t stop most kids from stuffing their inbox with messages. The rate of duration a conversation lasts isn’t really measured in time, it’s measured by how many texts have been sent and received. At times a texter can have a conversation of over 40 text messages with a single person. Or it can just be a simple conversation only needing one message sent, and one response as in “where you at?”, “I’m outside” .

As we’ve seen, most of the students here at Poly play cat and mouse with the teachers when it comes to actual texting,



# DO YOU SPEAK TEEN?

talking about the texting culture, students are more at ease with the venacular.

As it turns out, a whole lingo of acronyms and abbreviations have sprung up amongst this up and coming texting generation, known as the Millennials. And if you aren’t up to date you’ll get lost fast. There are miscellaneous adaptations of characters. At times it can be like deciphering a code. But if you’re a texter, it’s just normal reading.

### Single letters can replace words.

- *see* becomes *c*
- *are* becomes *r*
- *you* becomes *u*
- *why* becomes *y*
- *in* becomes *n*
- *be* becomes *b*

### Single digits can replace words or syllables.

- *skater* becomes *sk8r/sk8a*
- *ate* becomes *8*  
*activate* becomes *activ8*
- *great* becomes *GR8*
- *mate* becomes *m8*
- *later* becomes *l8r/l8a*
- *for* becomes *4*
- *to* or *too* becomes *2*

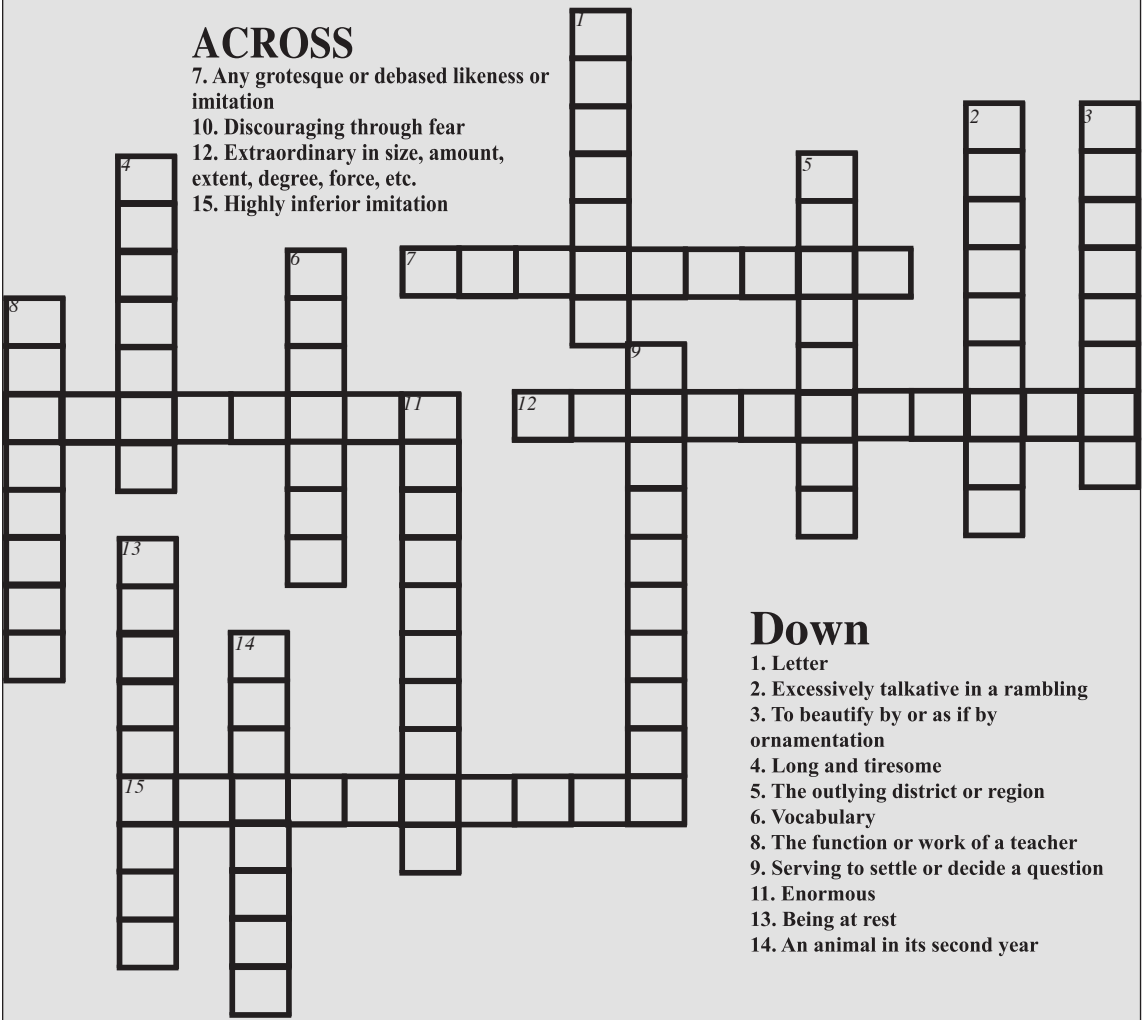
### Here are some acronyms that u may not know but might enjoy

ADIH-“another day in hell”  
AEAP-“as early as possible”  
AFK-“away from keyboard”  
BDBI5M-“busy daydreamin back in five minutes”  
BHG-“big hearted girl” or “big hearted guy”  
BNDN- “been nowhere done nothing”  
CD9-“code 9” means parents are around  
CICYH- “can I copy your homework”

# Amass Your Ivy League Vocab

## ACROSS

7. Any grotesque or debased likeness or imitation  
10. Discouraging through fear  
12. Extraordinary in size, amount, extent, degree, force, etc.  
15. Highly inferior imitation



## Down

1. Letter  
2. Excessively talkative in a rambling  
3. To beautify by or as if by ornamentation  
4. Long and tiresome  
5. The outlying district or region  
6. Vocabulary  
8. The function or work of a teacher  
9. Serving to settle or decide a question  
11. Enormous  
13. Being at rest  
14. An animal in its second year

# Deadlines Galore

By Michelle Gonzalez  
& Meri Sarkisyan  
*Staff Writers*

Leona Warman was an ESL (English as a second language) teacher before she became Polytechnic’s college counselor.

“I was a teacher for 25 years,” said Warman. “I taught in Reseda High School for 18 years and I taught in Canada for 7 years.”

“I grew up in Montreal, Canada,” said Warman.

Warman is bilingual, speaking both English and French. Warman graduated from McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, Canada with a major in biology.

For the past four years Warman has been working in the college office. During that period she had many temporary assistants and recently Linda Gordon has become our new college counselor.

“Now we have another college counselor to help me with 1000 seniors and 4500 students,” said Warman. “We share the work equally.”

Poly’s administration including Warman would like every Poly student to have



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

### COLLEGE BUFF: Warman.

the opportunity of going to a university.

“The goal for Poly and the college office is to encourage students to go to college. Last year about 70% went to college, 50% went to community college, and 25% went to a 4-year university. And we want to increase that number,” said Warman.

In order to achieve this goal Warman gives tips to the seniors.

“The most important thing for seniors to do right now is to keep up with school work, not fall behind, listen to the PA announcements, and read the daily bulletin everyday because if you miss a deadline that’s it,” said Warman.

# College Office Gets Help

By Michelle Gonzales  
& Meri Sarkisyan  
*Staff Writers*

The College office has added a new counselor, Linda Gordon, who is also the head of the East Valley area chairperson for United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA).

Gordon began counseling at Poly in July of 2007,

“I like to see kids have access and let them see the variety of options that they have. I like kids who actually make wide choices,” said Gordon.

Gordon believes Poly students are more polite than any other she has worked with.

“My first week here I actually asked somebody in the district ‘would it be unfair to say that I find the kids at Polytechnic High School politer than I’ve seen at other schools?’ As a whole I think it’s a more polite school,” said Gordon.

As well as being a college counselor, Gordon is currently the head chair for the East Valley Area, United Teachers Los Angeles Union.

“I spend a lot of time solving problems, filing



Photo by Michael Obando

### HELPING HAND: Linda Gordon at college office.

disputes, helping teachers who are treated unfairly, and on the positive side we developed a program that helped the teachers, students and administrators,” said Gordon.

Even though Gordon has two jobs she wouldn’t like to be a college counselor without also being a UTLA member.

“I don’t like the one without the other, because I found that adepts can bring you out more and working for kids and helping them provides such a benefit they can’t be compared,” said Gordon.



# Football Season Draws to a Close

Poly football sees it's fair share of ups and downs for the 2007-2008 season.

By Osvin Gonzalez  
& Demetrious Burnett  
*Staff Writers*

Under new head coach Scott Faer the varsity football team ended their season with a league record of 1-5 and an overall record of 3-7.

"It wasn't hard getting use to the new coach's program, I think most of the team just didn't like it," said Parrot guard Carlos Curiel.

The Parrots won their first game by two points, with the clock on zero, thanks to a pass to the end zone.

The team lost every game, except for the game against Salesian and the forfeit victory over Van Nuys.

"I think we the team needed more formations," said Curiel.

The varsity football team played their last game of the season against the Mustangs of Arleta. The Parrots lost 14-0. Senior starting running back Terrel Cable had 62 rushing yards.

Terrel Cable ended his senior season with 169 carries, 1193 rushing yard, and 8 touchdowns.

Junior Starting quarter back Marco Manriquez ended the season with three touchdowns, 389 passing yards, 31 carries, and 247 rushing yards.

The Parrots would have played Van Nuys for the season closer. However, the Van Nuys varsity team was suspended for hazing their junior varsity team. Due to this incident Van Nuys was forced to forfeit the game.

"This season could have gone better, there was a lot more potential in the team," said assistant coach Ziehler. "Our record is not a reflection on our talent."

It was typical for the team to have some resistance to a new program from a new coach. It was very hard for the team to adjust to the new coaching system. The Parrots had little time to adjust because of the hiring of Faer in the late season.

"Our goal next season is to improve and win," said Ziehler.



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

**GRADUATED GUARD:** DJ Gay and Pierce Coach Brad Katz attended the alumni game

## Dynamic Duo Returns

By Osvin Gonzalez  
*Sports Editor*

Poly added a postscript to the phenomenal basketball career of 2007 grad DJ Gay and retired the guard's jersey number three, Friday night during a halftime ceremony at the annual varsity alumni game.

In Gay's three varsity years at Poly High School he scored 1947 points.40% of them were three pointers. Gay led the

Parrots to three league titles in a row.

In his senior year, he was eighth in the nation in points with 881. His 112 three point shots ranked him twelfth in the nation.

"DJ represents Poly's best athletically and academically," said Gay's former twelfth grade English teacher Ethel Matlen.

Gay is the first player to have his jersey number retired

since the Parrot alumni Gail Goodrich had his number 12 jersey retired in 1961. The Los Angeles Lakers then drafted Goodrich after graduating from UCLA.

Gay received a full ride scholarship to San Diego State University. He is now a freshman guard starting for the varsity team at San Diego State.

The alumni defeated this years varsity team 80-64.

*[Kirschner continued from Page 1]*

Paris, and when he arrived at the airport, he noticed he had forgotten his passport.

During Kirschner free time, he enjoys traveling the world accompanied by his daughter and his wife of 32 years. His favorite cities are Paris, and New York, but that doesn't compare to Kirschner favorite place on earth, the beach.

"It's the open air, the beauty, and the freedom. Its just such a peaceful place, It's like a fairy tale," said Kirschner.

Kirschner also enjoys spending time with Elvis, his dog, and Kitty Cat, his Siamese cat. "My cat is humungous! And he loves to walk with Elvis and I, every night around the block," said Kirschner.

One of Kirschner favorite hobbies is buying and selling

old record albums and books. Kirschner really loves reading and writing, creative writing that is. Kirschner wrote a novel entitled, "Mad River" which will be published soon.

The future holds much more for Kirschner, soon he will become AP for the entire school. As for now, Jay Kirschner, is proud to hold the title of Assistant Principal of the 9th Grade Center.

# Watson Sprints to the Top

By Demetrious Burnett  
& Osvin Gonzalez  
*Staff Writers*

Senior Stallone Watson became a Poly track and field star his first year in California after moving from Florida. Watson was born and raised in Jamaica and moved to the United States six years ago.

In his first track and field season in 2007 Stallone Watson made it to city finals for the long jump. His best long jump was 21 feet and 7 inches.

He clocked in 15.6 seconds for the 110-meter hurdles and 41.14 seconds for the 300-meter hurdles. Those times placed him number one in the league for those events.

He went to The 41<sup>st</sup> USA Track and Field National Junior Olympics Championships, at Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut, California placing in the top 20 for the long jump.

Watson played junior varsity basketball his first year at Poly. Originally Watson decided to run track and field to get physically prepared for basketball.

"Track and field never crossed my mind," said Watson.

"Ms. Jesse a P.E. teacher and Sylvia Albondiga a former Poly track and field star encouraged me to run track," said Watson.

"Once I made it to city finals I decided to quit basketball and further my track career," said Watson.

"For my senior season I am more physically and mentally prepared. I am planning to break four Poly records and win a City and State title," said Watson.

Watson is planning to continue his track and field after high school.

Watson said his biggest inspirations are his dad, his team, his coaches, and his family in Jamaica.



Photo by Osvin Gonzales

**LEAPS AND BOUNDS:** Stallone Watson has had many athletic achievements during his high school years.