

# The Holy Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

VOL. VII

12431 ROSCOE BLVD. SUN VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, 91352

JANUARY 2008

## Vote '08

## Getting To Know Them

By Priscilla Duarte  
Staff Writer

In 2008 we elect a new president.

The *OPTIMIST* will feature a column in this space each month on the election process.

For January, we profile the three top contenders in each of the two parties.

## DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES



### BARACK OBAMA

"I'm asking you to believe. Not just in my ability to bring about real change in Washington; I'm asking you to believe in yours."

----Barack Obama

Family: Wife: Michelle; two children: Malia, Sasha.  
Birth date: 08/04/1961  
Birthplace: Honolulu, HI  
Home City: Chicago, IL  
Religion:  
United Church of Christ  
Education:  
Harvard Law School, 1991  
Columbia University, 1983  
Political Experience:  
Senator, United States Senate, 2005-present  
Keynote Speaker, 2004 Democratic National Convention  
Senator, Illinois State Senate,

[ continued on pg. 3]



Photo by Christian Banuelos

**STACKED UP:** English Teacher Lisa Blackwell stocks shelves with new library books.

## MEN AT WORK

By Karinina Cruz  
Staff Writer

Poly's campus, 50 years old and counting, is getting a number of renovations, funded by bond measures passed in 2000.

Approximately \$27.7M in bonds was earmarked by Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) for Poly's campus. Projects totaling \$5.4M are currently underway, with \$8.5M more in the planning stages.

Major projects include the installation of a heating and air conditioning system for the auditorium as well as a new sound system, a fire alarm system for the school and sidewalk construction for wheelchair access that will bring Poly in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Pulsar Construction was the original contractor for the auditorium's heating and air conditioning. The company walked away from the project after completing approximately \$1M of the work. LAUSD's facilities department will complete the job.

Installation of the new sound system is scheduled for completion by the end of Feb-

ruary.

The new \$2.8M fire alarm system for the campus is also on schedule.

Another on-going project is the removal of asbestos from several rooms and buildings at Poly.

"Public schools have high standards for safety," acting principal Gerardo Loera said. "Since a lot of materials used at Poly had asbestos, workers are coming in to minimize the risks. The work is done by companies that specialize in asbestos removal."

A bus turnout off Roscoe Blvd is currently under construction in preparation for the opening of Byrd Middle School across the street from Poly.



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

**UP ON THE ROOF:** Workers apply sealant to portico

## Turning Up the Volumes

By Bayzig Manougian  
Staff Writer

Books on apples, books on farms, books on bridges, trees and charms. The library is full of new books

The books are courtesy of English department chair Lisa Blackwell, who organized and oversaw the library reorganization.

"I didn't anticipate that new books would have such a great visual impact to the library," Blackwell said.

Thanks to a \$100,000 grant, Poly's library received a number of shipments of new books during the latter half of 2007. The books sat in storage for months because the library had no shelf space.

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) recommends that libraries have books no more than 7 years old. On average, Poly's books were 25 years old. The number of volumes in the library was unknown and many weren't even in the computerized catalog.

Blackwell removed old books and replaced them with new ones. She also added all the new books to the catalog.

Poly now has 16,408 books cataloged and on shelves. Approximately 4,000 are new books never before available to students. Six thousand more new books remain unshelved and will be added after more shelves are purchased.

Blackwell said the library has room for approximately 24,344 more books, based on 22 books per linear feet and approximately 1,150 linear feet of space available.

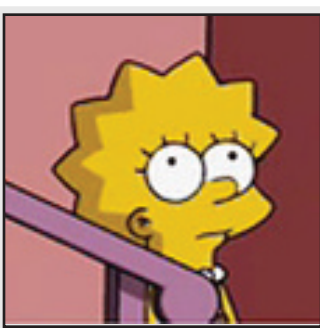
Los Angeles Unified School District recommends that each high school library have 18

[ continued on pg. 4]



## Parrots, Firemen Bring Joy To Kids

See Campus | Page 4



## Mario Picks Box Office Hits

See Entertain | Page 6



## On The Beat With Jimenez

See Sports | Page 8



## EDITORIAL

## KEEPING IT CLEAN

Most of the time we take for granted the way the school looks. I decided to walk around the campus, empty of students and faculty, to see the school from a different perspective.

It was Saturday morning, no one in sight. I wanted to check out the Polygon first since a lot of kids hang out there.

Everywhere I looked, I saw trash, candy wrappers and food discarded by students.

"Why is it so hard for students to throw away their unwanted trash," I wondered.

I saw a half-empty trashcan with trash right nearby, as if students said that it was too much work to walk that extra inch.

It isn't ok to leave trash on the ground and justify it as providing work for the janitors. Teaching students the importance of cleanliness should be a priority.

Poly isn't a restaurant where you can just leave your left over meal for a waitress to clean up. We all have to take the responsibility and walk a couple of steps to properly dispose of our trash.

Instead of leaving your plates at lunch tables, try taking them to the nearest trash bin. Clean your area where you chill during lunch. You'll feel better because your place doesn't look as bad as the next group beside you.

The school looks the way it does because of what the students do to it. We're the ones who are responsible. Ask yourself, am I part of the problem, or part of the solution. Next time you see trash on the campus, pick it up with Poly pride and throw it away.

-Gilbert Vargas

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Reactions to Graffiti Editorial

Dear Editor,

I don't think they should take off the writing. People have a hard time understanding art, what it is and the meaning of it. It is to express beauty in life, nature, words, and everything else. These people that took the painting off truly don't understand art and are making the artist's talent look as if it was a bad thing. Everyone is good at something. Who's to say that their talent is not acceptable?

-Alfredo Meza  
11th grade

Dear Editor

I think the mural shouldn't be removed because who ever did it wasn't doing it to make it look like graffiti. Everyone has their own way of showing art. If this person had the idea of portraying art like that, then I guess it's right and it shouldn't offend anyone because it doesn't say anything bad, and if they approved the mural in the first place, it was

because they don't think it affects anyone, and because it's not graffiti.

-Patricia Ascendio  
11th grade

Dear Editor,

In my opinion I think that the mural should stay. Not many people understand art and may be confused by seeing something that they think is offensive, but in reality, it is all just art. I'm sure it did not say anything offensive so why would they have to do the mural all over again?

In my opinion, graffiti is just a way of writing, just like any language has their way of writing. To me, graffiti is the urban way of writing and nobody should judge the writing on the way it looks. I guess people don't understand art, but they don't need to understand anything to see real art.

-Joseph G.  
12th grade



## Feedback.

Dear Editor,

In your December 2007 issue of the Poly Optimist, the two articles on college issues, "Seniors Catch Sickness" by Jose Perez, and "Work Now, Play Later" by Jennifer Miranda were outstanding and timely articles. Jennifer writes with sincerity and maturity. Her article is a reminder to all students that we start preparing for college as early as the ninth grade, not as seniors. Jose's article was well researched and it is a reminder to seniors that the finish line is June 30 and not earlier. Good luck to all.

-Leona Warman  
College Counselor



## THE OPTIMIST

JOHN H. FRANCIS POLYTECHNIC HIGH SCHOOL  
12431 ROSCOE BLVD. SUN VALLEY, CA, 91352  
URL: [HTTP://WWW.POLYHIGH.ORG/OPT.JSP?RN=8388297](http://www.polyhigh.org/opt.jsp?rn=8388297)

**Editor-In-Chief**  
Jason Castro

**Sports Editor**  
Daniel Jimenez

**Page Editor**  
Jason Castro

**Photo Editors**  
Efrain Rodriguez  
Stephanie Tejada

**Writers:**  
Karen Aguilar, Christian Banuelos, Karina Cruz, Priscilla Duarte, Margarita Fernandez Michelle Gonzalez, Juan Herrera, Su Kang, Bayzig Manougian, Meri Sakisyan, Mario Solano, Gilberto Vargas

**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 Ms. Matlen's box.

## New Years Resolutions

By Su Kang  
Staff Writer

The OPTIMIST interviewed teachers, counselors and approximately 200 students about their new year's resolutions. Here's what they told us.

"My new year's resolution is to be good to myself to others to the earth in that order, and laugh daily," said counselor Maria Padua

"First, continue to grow in the way that I represent God. Second, to grow in my relationship. Third, to become ridiculously super fit. And fourth is to get more forward with my personal investments," said track and field coach Rudy Cuevas.

"I don't have a new year's resolution, but I have desires for the year. I make a desire list every year, and my last year resolution was 'be true to myself.' Still keeping it through-

out this year," said History teacher Kitt Heilbron

"My last year's resolution was to go sleep early. I was going to sleep at 12 or 1. But I tried to go to sleep at 10. I kept it for 2 month, but I was off and on. But overall, I slept more," said math teacher Sergio Lopez.

"I have a plan to go to the gym. I have a membership. I just need to use it," said history teacher Brad Katz.

"My new year's resolution is to be a better person, better coach, and better teacher, because I think that we are here on this planet for a reason. Some people ask 'why do you work hard, we are going to die anyway.' But I want to be a good example to the next generation. If I change, you change, they change, we can make better planet," said JV soccer coach Mario Jose Rivera.

Thirty percent of the 12th

graders had graduating from high school as their number one resolution. 14% said getting into college and 11% said getting good grades and doing better in class was their number one resolution.

For 30.9% of 11th graders, studying more and getting better grades was their number one resolution. 21.7% said exercise and lose weight and 10% said getting a job.

Twenty-one percent of the 10th graders had doing better in school, 17% said exercise and 13% said they hoped to pass the CAHSEE.

Twenty-nine percent of the 9th graders had better in school, 25% said good grades and 11% said lose weight.

Other answers included "stay cute," "be a better listener," "stop procrastinating," "no dramas," "meet new people," and "do extra curricular activities."



# CANDIDATE SNAPSHOTS

[ continued from pg. 1 ]



**John Edwards**

“The cause of my life is fighting for working people and the middle class who are being held back by powerful entrenched interests,”  
----John Edwards

Family: Wife: Elizabeth; four children: Cate, Emma Claire, Jack, Wade (deceased).  
Birth date: 06/10/1953  
Birthplace: Seneca, SC  
Home City: Raleigh, NC  
Religion: Methodist  
Education:  
JD, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, 1977  
BS, North Carolina State University, 1974.  
Political Experience:  
Candidate, United States President, 2004, 2008  
Candidate, United States Vice President, 2004  
Senator, United States Senate, 1998-2004.



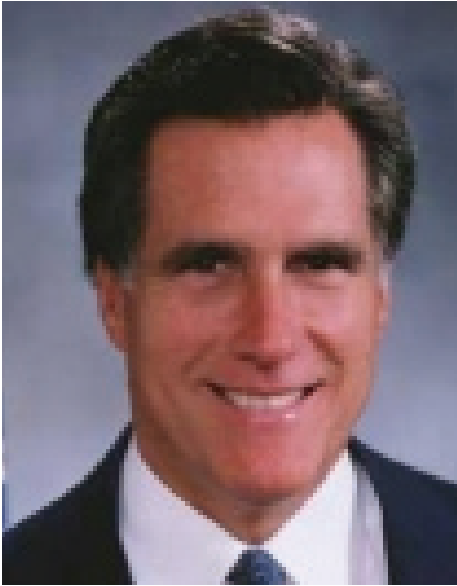
**Hillary Clinton**

“In this troubled economy, how can so many millions of people simply not be heard? If I’m your president, I will bring your voice to the White House.”  
----Hilary Clinton

Family: Husband: William; one child: Chelsea.

Birth date: 10/26/1947  
Birthplace: Chicago, IL  
Home City: Chappaqua, NY  
Religion: Methodist  
Education:  
JD, Yale University, 1973  
BA, Wellesley College, 1969.  
Political Experience:  
Senator, United States Senate, 2000-

## REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES



**Mitt Romney**  
“We must strengthen our military by increasing the size of our military by 100,000 troops and dedicating at least four percent of our gross domestic product to defense.”  
----Mitt Romney

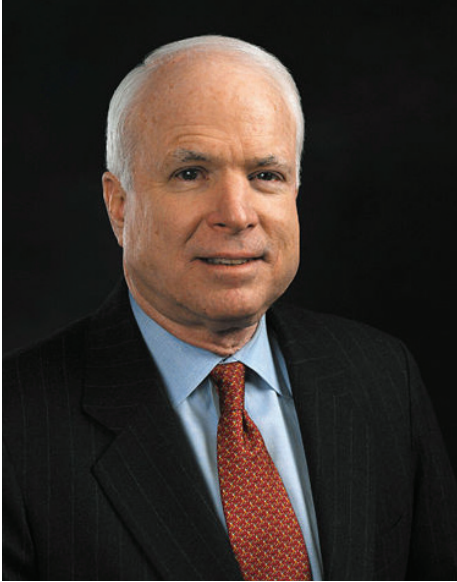
Family: Wife: Ann; five Children: Tagg, Matt, Josh, Ben, Craig.  
Birth date: 03/12/1947  
Birthplace: Detroit, MI  
Home City: Belmont, MA  
Education:  
MBA, Harvard Business School, 1975  
JD, Harvard Law School, 1975  
BA, Brigham Young University, 1971.  
Political Experience: Governor of Massachusetts, 2002-2006



**Mike Huckabee**  
“I believe that every child should have the opportunity

for a quality education that teaches the fundamental skills needed to compete in a global economy.”  
----Mike Huckabee

Family: Wife: Janet McCain; three children: John Mark, David, Sarah.  
Birth date: 08/24/1955  
Birthplace: Hope, AR  
Home City: North Little Rock, AR  
Religion: Baptist  
Education:  
Attended, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1976-1977  
BA, Ouachita Baptist University, 1976.  
Political Experience:  
Governor, State of Arkansas, 1996-2007  
Lieutenant Governor, State of Arkansas, 1993-1996. Governor of Massachusetts, 2002-2006  
Governor of Massachusetts, 2002-2006



**John McCain**  
“The next president will have to take on the special interests that thrive in the health care system”  
----John McCain

Family: Wife: Cindy Lou Hensley; seven children: Doug, Sidney, Andy, Meghan, Jack, Jimmy, Bridget.  
Birth date: 08/29/1936  
Birthplace: Panama Canal Zone, Panama  
Home City: Phoenix, AZ  
Religion: Episcopal  
Education:  
National War College, 1974  
U.S. Naval Academy, 1958.  
Political Experience:  
Senator, United States Senate, Arizona, 1987-present  
Primary Candidate, United States President, 2000  
National Security Adviser, Dole/Kemp Presidential Campaign, 1996  
Representative, United States House of Representatives, 1982-1986.

# On The College Track

By Karen Aguilar  
Staff Writer

As a service to our readers, the OPTIMIST asked one Poly senior to tell us about her final months before graduation and heading off to college. Below is the first installment of her story.

As a sophomore, I thought that applying to college would be a breeze. The next year I learned that I had three dreadful standardized tests to take, two long college applications to submit and two ambiguous financial aid applications to file.

Luckily, I am done with applications to UCs (University of California) schools, which are public. These schools require an essay on their given topic and an application that is relatively easy to fill out. You fill it out once and send it to all the UC schools you are applying to. I started the app the first day it came out (October 1st) and submitted it four days before the deadline (November 30th). That says something about preparation.

Colleges and universities confirm that they have received your application and other materials in January. I make sure all my information is correct and that letters of recommendation, transcripts, and payment fee waivers have been received. It is a relief to know the schools got your stuff and that you will have more time to go out with your friends.

Interviews with private schools should be done between late December and February. Interviews are usually not mandatory but they could help you stand out from the pool. I recently had an interview with a Wellesley College representative. The interview mainly consists of talking about yourself and why you want to attend that specific college (programs, majors, internships). An interview can only hurt your chances of getting in if you panic and let the whole conversation go to waste.

I am currently working on what I believe is the most tedious part of the application process, the FAFSA financial aid packet and the CSS Profile. Both applications ask for similar information about you and your parents. Most questions involve income, investments and assets. You will need to sit down with your parents to get all the numbers down.

If you are a senior and are not done with apps (to private school by this time of the year), deadlines are around the corner. Sophomores and juniors should prepare to take the SAT and the ACT and start their college search.



# Toy Drives 'R' Us

The annual Christmas fundraiser has become a Poly tradition

## Leadership's Brian Le Clair talks to the OPTIMIST

By Michelle Gonzale  
& Meri Sakisyan  
Staff Writers

**Q. How do you feel about doing a toy drive every year? Does it take a lot of patience?**

"I'm exhausted. It wears me out physically. I feel very inspired by how hard the kids work I mean there's so much that goes behind every single thing that we do to make the toy drive happen. Keep in mind we started last July, not just two weeks before the toy shopping. The kids always have this in the back of their minds while concurrently worrying about homecoming and pep rallies and things like that. They are always juggling two things at once."

**Q. Talk about Poly's leadership members. Is it because of them that the toy drive has been so successful?**

"I think they are very gifted and very talented and they can make miracles happen and what impresses me about them is that they don't have any small plans. Their plans are never small, they're always big. And small plans are kind of boring anyway. But they're able to make things happen and they love details. So I feel very fortunate to be able to help with this."

Really, the community believes in what we are doing, which means the teacher believes in it, which means the students believe in it. Now I understand that not every kid donates and then when the envelope gets passed around some kids just ignore it. Well that's ok. Maybe they can't help and that's all right."

"But I think the reason it's successful is because there is a team effort and no one really feels like they're alone doing this."

**Q. How many toys did we buy?**

"Most of the toys are distributed either that night or the night after. We know that they had a request for 75,000 toys and we supplied about 3,000 to them. I don't know if they were actually able to make all 75,000 toy requests possible."

"Some of the toys are also



Photo courtesy of Leadership

**SPREADING GOOD CHEER:** L.A. firemen and Leadership students with Xmas toys for tots.

boxed up and saved for the following year because some religious holidays happen way before Christmas, such as Hanukkah, and so they keep some toys on hand because typically, that's the toy donation season."

**Q. For you, what is the most exciting part of the toy drive? The craziest?**

"Most exciting: seeing them pick up the toys cause they just go crazy. It's fun to watch them just shop and shop and shop. It's not really shopping. It's more like grab everything you can see and just walking it up to the register."

"The craziest: Anything to do with Mr. Katz. Anything involving Mr. Katz is the craziest part. Well, because he always thinks he's going to beat me and he never does and he always accuses me of cheating which I never do. 'Just get ready for next year coach'"

**Q. What do you think is the most stressful?**

"All the details. There are so many little details that need to be taken into account for everything that we do. That's stressful. We usually have two or three things at the same time."

**Q. Why is the toy drive a success for Poly?**

"I think because a lot of our students know what it means to not have and to go without. And I think some of our students have actually been those



Photo courtesy of Leadership

**LOADED:** Lots of toys for girls and boys from Poly's kids.

kids who have seen the holidays come and go and their families weren't in a financial position where they could afford it. Some of our kids have felt what we are trying to prevent."

**Q. What do you think makes this fundraiser so successful?**

"I think the kids just don't give up. Like they're personal theme this year was 'Strive.' And I really believe they did everything they could to strive every single day. I mean they were exhausted by the end of the toy drive, they were physically wiped out. You can see it by looking at them, they were exhausted. I think that has a lot to do with it."

When kids start to see what is possible, they start to make it possible. When they start to believe in what they are doing, then they really make miracles happen and every year it just seems to get better and better. Kids are starting to believe in their abilities."

**Q. How much has Poly raised for the toy drive in the last four years?**

Over \$113,000; 22K; \$34K; \$30K; \$27K

**Q. This year wasn't a record-**

**breaker. Why?**

"I don't think the kids worked any less hard. I think there are outside variables that will affect how well we do. We had a number of funerals also in the months of October and November and that I think also had an impact on how much we were able to donate. But I can't say that I'm sad about the money that we raised. We raised about \$22,000. That's more than Mervyns donates, that's more than Ralph's donates, than Sav-on donates. What they do is they write a check for \$10,000 and they get their logos on the fire department banners that they put around the city. That's why they do what they do. But we do twice what they do."

**Q. As the years progress, do you think it is going to become easier or harder to fundraise for the toy drive?**

"This work is never easy. I've already started thinking about next year. One kid said 'oh, being able to buy the toys is a once in a life time opportunity.' I've never really thought about that, but it's true. I can't think of another high school where kids do what we do. And so being able to go to the toy shop and pull the toys off the shelf, that's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Although I hope it isn't. I hope that these kids will take this to whatever community they are living in when they grow up and repeat it. Because there will always be need, wherever we go."

## LIBRARY CATALOG IS NOW ONLINE

[ continued from pg. 1 ]

books per student. Poly has about 25% of the recommended total.

In addition to the new books, the library is now open before and after school and at lunch. Previously, the library was only open when A-track was in session.

Blackwell, who completed her library credential at California State University at Long Beach last year, is overseeing other changes at the library in

addition to the catalog expansion.

A new website, <http://ibistro.lausd.net>, allows students to find a book from the library online. Click on "Polytechnic high school" to find the book.

"This is like a library without walls," said Blackwell. "Students can now use the library independently."

Blackwell plans to introduce the program to Poly's staff in the future so teachers can show students how to find reference books online.



POLY

TECH

# Memo To Apple: i Kill iPhones

By Jason Castro  
Staff Writer

With the release of the LG Voyager last year, the iPhone is not the only touch screen mega phone on the market.

The newly arrived “iPhone Killer” has many comparisons to the iPhone. Both feature touch screen technology, music compatibility, internet browser, instant messaging, and a 2.0 mega pixel camera.

But there are differences as well. The iPhone does not have navigational GPS or video recording and the Voyager does not have an external memory hard drive.

Major pros on the Voyager include two screens, QWER-



Internet Photo

**Sleek:** Verizon’s message to Apple: you are not alone.

TY keyboard, swappable battery, and mobile T.V. Verizon also reigns as the supreme competitor thanks to its highly reliable network.

Pros on the iPhone include a larger screen, interactive navigation and YouTube videos.

Both phones have different call plans, but similar prices. AT&T and Verizon both feature unlimited data for \$59.99. But Verizon allows unlimited texting to people who have their network, while AT & T only allows 200 texts on any network.

For conversing, the Voyager offers crisp sound while iPhone owners report low volume and strange buzzing.

# Modern Media Players

By Christian Banuelos  
Staff Writer

Looking to buy a new Portable Media Player (PMP)? Can’t decide which is best for you?

The leading players are Apple’s Ipod Touch and Microsoft’s new Zune. If you’re looking to play mostly music and maybe a couple videos on your PMP, then the Zune is right for you. But those who want to browse the internet, watch YouTube videos and download songs from iTunes, you’ll have to buy an iPod Touch.



Internet Photo

**MUSIC IN A BOX:** The Zune, Microsoft’s little jukebox

which allows users to send full-length songs to friends that have Zunes. Unfortunately, the songs can only be played three times.

Zune allows users to sync wirelessly through Wi-Fi, although the device does not

have web browsing. A new Zune feature is its zune-pad, a small touch-pad which is easier to use. Zune now has podcasts, a feature iPods have had for over a year.

The iPod Touch’s 16 GB flash drive holds approximately 3,500 songs, or 20,000 iPod-viewable pictures, or 20 hours of video. It has a 3.5” touchscreen and can access the internet via wi-fi. Users can watch YouTube, but not videos uploaded on other sites.

The iPod Touch has the fastest Internet on a mobile device. The Safari Internet browser can get to any website, including websites optimized for the iPhone and iPod Touch.

At \$249.99, the Zune is a really good mp3 player with video. The Touch’s additional features will cost a little more at \$399.99.

# Sports GIRLS MAKING STATEMENTS

[ continued from pg. 8 ]

games.

**Q. The last three games were all blowouts. Were they similar in terms of how your team played and why they seemed to dominate? What are you doing well and consistently?**

A. We’ve been able to dominate the last three games because of our fast offense and aggressive defense. When we become lax in either area, we don’t do as well.

The difference between now and earlier in the season is the girls’ understanding of their roles. More than half the team is playing varsity basketball for first time this season. It has been and continues to be a learning experience.

**Q. If you had played the Grant game after these three lopsided wins, do you think you may have beaten Grant too?**

A. It’s hard to say if we would have beaten Grant had we played them after our last wins. We are improving with each game, but so is Grant. I’m kind of glad we played Grant first because it let me know what we really had to work on, and that’s just what we’ve been doing in both games and practice. Grant has a player averaging 18.8 points per game and another player averaging 17.4 points per game. Combined, they make over half the team’s points. We will have to shut them both down in order to beat Grant. If we do win, we will be tied with Grant for first place in Sunset Six.

**Q. Your go-to players are usually Sara, Crystal, Jennie, Alejandra and Christine. Explain how they complement each other and their individual skills.**

A. Sara has an incredible spin move and she does these amazing behind-the-back passes. Jennifer Hagan can hit multiple 3 pointers in a row, and she plays great defense. Fabiola pulls rebounds and hits key baskets. Alejandra Gallardo and Crystal Cristales are constantly fast breaking. Christine Hernandez has taken more charges than anyone in the City Section. She also leads the league in rebounding.

**Q. Are any of these girls planning on playing college ball.**

A. Sara and Crystal have both expressed interest in playing college ball. They have the potential to move up, as long as they continue to work on their game. Sara is the epitome of a scholar athlete. She leads the team in points, steals and assists, while maintaining the highest grade point average on the team as well with a 4.37 gpa.

**Q. As a coach, tell us what areas and accomplishments you are most satisfied about so far this season. How have you improved as a coach?**

A. I love that my team has scored 70+ points in three games and we’re only half way through our season. In my four years of coaching, I’ve only had one other team, my first team, score 74 points. And that was only one time. I’m such an advocate for girls basketball, but it’s hard to sell the game when teams only score 30 or 40 points. Spectators want to see speed and excitement, and this year’s team is delivering.

After every game, I evaluate my own performance as well as my team’s. This has helped me avoid some situations this season by learning from mistakes I made in past seasons.

# Pencil Head in “The Deadline” by Ricky De Guzman





## AT THE MOVIES

## WITH 6 THUMBS UP

By Mario Solano  
Staff Writer

In the beginning of the year my friends and I made a list of movies to see for the new year. “Why have a list, it’s only a movie,” people ask.

Not for us. Thirty years ago, “Star Wars” moviegoers became a part of history. “Just another movie” many said, but eventually director George’s Lucas’ epic trilogy became a global phenomenon. People who saw the film on opening day were part of history. So my friends and I did just that in 2007.

First, we did our homework. Thanks to previews and the Internet, making a list was easy. We decided to see the movie on the day it’s released or on a special day and see it at City Walk. City Walk has stuff to do or see after a good flick. We’ll go to Game Stop to play some demos or watch someone on stage, or go and see what they have at “Hot Topic.”

When we go to the movies, we’re usually as obnoxious as we can be. You know those people that get you so annoyed during the movies? Well that’s us. If there is a lame movie with a terrible storyline, we boo and hiss. When we saw the preview for “One Missed Call,” my friend Estaban said, “You die when you answer the phone? That’s stupid. Hey! just don’t answer the phone.” I said, “First the internet, now cell phones, what’s next text messages.”

We always stay after the credits to see if there is any extra footage because not many people know what “really” happened to Professor Xavier in X-3, or nobody heard Maggie’s first word in “The Simpsons Movie.” And we keep our movie tickets as souvenirs.

This whole started with “Transformers.” After the movie, the six of us decided to call ourselves “Six Pack.” More friends or less, “Six Pack” sticks together.

We saw a bunch of 2007’s box office biggies. We saw the Autobots transform in “Transformers,” the Spartans



tear the Persians apart in “300,” the black suit in “Spider-Man 3,” and, after a 20-years wait, America’s most disoriented family, “The Simpsons Movie.” Twenty years from now, when we see these movies on TV and in their special anniversary releases, we can say we saw them first.

“Transformers” was great because we got to relive our childhood by watching our favorite Transformers transform on the big screen. The movie used the original voice for Optimus Prime, giving me and Estaban goose bumps. The CGI made the Transformers look more realistic than we could have ever imagined. This one got “6 thumbs up.”

“Spider-Man 3” sold records amounts of popcorn, but we thought it was a lot of hype. Venom, Sandman,

and the New Goblin were great villains, but only for the few goofy fight scenes. Topher Grace was “too skinny and stupid” to play Venom.” This sequel flopped, “Six-Pack” agreed.

Frank Miller’s “300” was our number one film of 2007. “300” was the “Gears of War” of movies, a two-hour blood bath with fight scenes that left us on the edge of our seats. I remember

saying to myself, “Holy crap, that’s brutal.” No question, the best movie of a Miller graphic. “6 thumbs up” for sure.

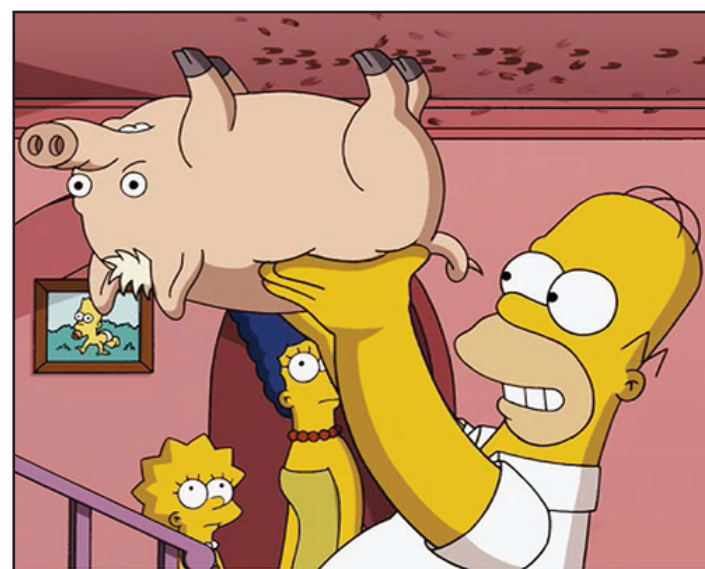
We bought the DVD the day it came out.

We couldn’t wait to see “The Simpsons Movie.” I remember when we used to say, “Man, when are they going to make a “Simpsons” movie.” We heard Pemble had the trailer and we rushed to his class to see it. As soon as 7-Eleven had the Buzz Cola and Duff energy drinks, we all bought a six-pack. Simpsons doughnuts and Squishee drinks too.

The movie had comedy, action, a love story and a song that we

all sang, “Spider-Pig.” After a 20-year wait, we finally got our “Simpsons Movie.” Hey, what can we say? Another “6” up.

Call it a ritual, or call it a way to spend a Friday night but to “Six Pack” we call it “Good old-fashioned fun.” As long as Hollywood keeps up the good work, “Six Pack” will be there.





# Bonino Ball: A Pressing Issue

By Daniel Jimenez  
Staff Writer

## Poly coach talks strategy with the OPTIMIST

**Q. Your preseason record was 6-11 but in those 17 games you were only outscored by a total of 46 points. How do you see your team during those 17 games - were you unable to win the close games or did you have a good chance to win most of those games?**

“We couldn’t win the close game because they don’t have a lot of experience.”

**Q. Did the team meet your expectations for the preseason, or are there things you feel still need work?**

Oh, yeah, definitely, they gave effort every game but unfortunately we weren’t able to close out games but they play hard.

**Q. The team won four of its last six games after six losses in a row. Were there areas in which the team improved that led to the wins?**

They’ve got to be more unselfish on offense and on defense. They have to share the ball and help their teammate out.

They got a little more confident. They got a little confidence from playing all of those games.

**Q. Talk about one or two players that had strong preseason play. What are they doing right?**

We’ve got all new varsity and only one returner from last year’s team. Senior Alex Gonzalez has been playing really good defense, and has been contributing offensively, and junior Albert Aranda has been playing vary well offensively. Point guard Tommy Cruz Jr. has been playing really well as far as running the offense.

**Q. Tell us about your assistant coaches. What do they do for the team? How long have they been with Poly’s varsity basketball team? Did they work for Katz?**

I have one assistance coach, Greg Mack. He coaches JV and helps me out with the var-



Photo by Stephanie Tejada

**STRATEGY:** New head coach Dave Bonino instructs his team on how to win the close games.

sity. He works hard and he knows the game. He has good relationships with the players. He has been here four years and worked for Katz.

**Q. You were Katz’s assistant for how many years? What did you learn about coaching from that experience that you’re using now?**

I learned that you have to be prepared for each game, making adjustments at half time. The whole key is getting the players to play hard from beginning to end.

**Q. You lost all your starters, particularly DJ. What have you done so far in the way of rebuilding the team from scratch?**

Instead of relying on just one person, we have thirteen guys and I try to play all of them. I am substituting just about every 2 or 3 minutes, so every body gets to play.

**Q. Tell us a little bit about each of your starting five - their basketball experience, their offensive skills, their strengths.**

Tommy Cruz Jr. starting point guard - he is quick, so I am helping him make good decisions on the court. Albert Aranda, he’s got a great shot, it’s just a matter of finding good places to shoot. He is probably best shooter on the team. Anthony Carreno - he is quick, fast, plays good defense. James Reed - another

senior, he is probably our most aggressive player as far as offense, defense. Alex Gonzalez - he’s not a big guy, he’s probably about 5’11, he is good passer and good shooter. And the starting five changes game to game. Like I said, I go five in, five out. It’s pretty much a constant rotation.

**Q. Talk a little bit about what kind of game you’ll play this year - run-and-gun, offense off of defense, half court set game, emphasis on rebounding, etc.**

It’s run and gun, and we’re gonna be pressing, trapping, pushing the ball. It should be pretty fun and exciting. Constant pressure the whole game.

**Q. What does the team do best right now?**

They play with a lot of passion and they play hard.

**Q. What area needs the most improvement?**

We need to take care of the ball, cut down on turnovers, and be unselfish.

**Q. Who’s the team to beat in the Sunset Six league this year? What do they do well?**

North Hollywood, North Hollywood is definitely the best team.

I think they have ten seniors. They have two all-league returners that are on their varsity

team, so they have an advantage over everybody else. And they have ten seniors on their team, so they have more experience. They have those two returners that are gonna be difficult to match up with.

**Q. Tell us what to expect in tonight’s game against Verdugo Hills? Are you going to have a tough night, is it a good matchup or it up for grabs?**

We’re gonna be pressing the whole entire court. We’ll press full court, we’ll press at the half court. When we get the turn over or a steal, we’ll be aggressively going to the basket. When we make the basket, we’ll be pressing. We’ll be putting pressure on Verdugo all 32 minutes.

**Q. The schedule has you with five home games followed by five on the road. Is that a favorable schedule for you and why?**

For a young team, it’s good to be home all five games, but then again if we don’t win any the five games, it’s not very good, because then we’ve got to go on the road. I prefer to be on the road early and then home late so then the guys can get some confidence. And we lost yesterday, so that’s probably not very good.

**Q. What can we reasonably expect to see the team do this year? How many wins? Post season play? Strictly a rebuilding year?**

It’s not rebuilding. I mean, our goal every year is to win league. This year may be difficult to win league, but I think we can contend for a playoff spot. I’m not sure. We can easily go 8-2 or 2-8. There’s really no difference, depending on how we did yesterday - it was tied up and then we lost at the very end.

**Q. Tell us about your experiences as a player.**

I just played at Birmingham and we didn’t do very well and then I played a little JC ball. I always try to let the players on our team know that you need to play hard, you need to play with passion, and you need to be smart on the court. I was a skinny white boy that was smart and tall.

**Q. Do you call most of the plays from the bench or do you let the team improvise a lot?**

I let them call the plays and then they just adjust to the defense. I try not to call too many plays because it’s loud, they can barely hear me. Part of being a point guard, part of being a team, is you should know the plays, then you just adjust to the defense.

**Q. Coaching is a pretty high stress job. What made you get into coaching, how much more pressure will be on you this year as head coach, and what do you do to beat the stress?**

Well, I love basketball and I love to teach, so it’s just kind of a good marriage there. I don’t think there’s any pressure this year. No one expects us to do anything. The pressure on myself is to get the players buying into the system I want to put in. I run on the weekends, I run after practice, by myself, up in the Burbank hills.

**Q. What we can expect to see from the varsity this year.**

This year is a transition year. We’re still going to be exciting and push the ball up. We may not have all the offensive weapons that we’ve had in the past, but we are an exciting team, and it’s fun to come out and watch us play. You’ll see hustle, you’ll see guys diving on the floor, you’ll see three pointers, you’ll see pressing, trapping.





Photo by Stephanie Tejada

**PULLING THE TRIGGER:** Poly forward Alberto Aranda, took the shot that won the game against Verdugo.

# SCORING MACHINE

Head coach Tremeka Batiste’s team is putting excitement into girls’ basketball.

By Christian Banuelos  
Staff Writer

**Q. You had four players in double figures and 48 rebounds against Canoga Park, along with a 26-2 3rd quarter. Talk to us a little bit about that game.**

A. I believe we started the game a little overconfident because we played Canoga in a fall league and killed them. I don’t think the girls had the same fire they’ve had against other teams. Shooting 27% in the first half didn’t help matters either. Canoga, on the other hand, came out blazing. They played with a confidence that elevated their game. We also let them get way too many rebounds.

The game changed in the 3rd quarter when Sara Villanueva, who plays a pivotal role as the point guard, stepped up the game’s tempo. Our run-and-gun game started, and we had fast break after fast break. Fabiola Romero, who had a quiet 1st half, woke up in the 3rd quarter as well, making three of four shots. The team’s defense intensified, holding Canoga to one basket. After increasing a 13-point half-time

lead to 37 points by the end of the 3rd quarter, the more inexperienced players had a chance to show their stuff. They took fewer shots and played with more caution than their teammates, but they did their job by maintaining the lead.

**Q. Is it hard to keep your team’s head in the game during a blowout?**

A. Some of the players lost focus when we were beating Verdugo. But once I pointed out the bench and reminded them of our goal to beat Grant, they were able to regain their focus. Now they enjoy scoring as much as possible.

Girl teams have generally not scored as much as boy teams. But times are changing, and girls are beginning to make statements on the court. The top ten girl teams in the Los Angeles City Section are only averaging 10 points fewer per game than the top ten boy teams, 54-64 according to Max Preps. Poly is averaging 56.1 points per game, scoring over 60 points in six of our last eleven games. We hit the 70+ mark in three of those six

[ continued on pg. 5 ]

By Daniel Jimenez  
Staff Writer

It was a classic case of “heart” versus x’s and o’s Friday night when Poly played the Dons of Verdugo Hills.

Verdugo gave the ball to the shooters and played a textbook zone on the defensive end. Poly pressed and scrambled for loose balls. Dug out tough and threw up prayers, some that fell, some that didn’t.

The styles couldn’t have been more different, the outcome always in doubt. But in the end, it was Poly’s willingness to do the dirty work on defense that made the difference.

Parrot forward Alberto Aranda scored the last points of the game when he swished a floater from about eight feet out. Verdugo had plenty of time and shots but couldn’t convert and the clock ran out, sealing the Parrots’ first league victory of the season, 59-58.

The game was close throughout. The biggest lead belonged to the Dons, who led 14-5 halfway through the first quarter, before Poly went on a

10-2 run.

Turnovers that head coach David Bonino described as, “us trying to give the game away,” led to numerous fast break opportunities for the Dons point guard Bobby Blake, who leads his team in points and assists.

“In our type of press, we’re trying to trap the sidelines, and we kept getting beat up on those sidelines tonight,” said Bonino.

Verdugo stayed in the game by taking advantage of Parrot turnovers and beating the press.

“We were fine on the press,” said Verdugo coach Gregory Gibson. “We prepared for it and we did fine. We were just not patient enough on offense. Poly was and we weren’t.”

Poly had to be patient on offense, as Verdugo’s solid 2-3 zone made things difficult for the Parrots all night.

The battle for this game was fought in the inside though, and the home team won it, making just enough outside shots to keep the Dons’ D honest and more vulnerable to penetration.

The Parrots had a slight

rebounding edge (28-25) and usually got the ones that counted. They outthustled the taller Dons and shot 69% from the line to Verdugo’s 65%.

“We’ve got a pretty resilient bunch,” Bonino said of his Parrot squad. “Every game’s been like this. We’ve had to play real tough to win.”

Ten Parrots got in the scoring column on a night when everybody helped out. Aranda had 15, junior Alex Gonzales had 11 and Devin Keyes had eight for Poly. The Parrots made good on only 38% of their shots but had 56 attempts. The Dons shot the ball 47 times and made 20 for 43%. Poly had one more made basket – the winning margin.

Verdugo center Oscar Martinez used a six-inch height advantage and a soft turn-around jumper to light up Poly for 21 points and 15 rebounds. Forward Aragad Abramian added 18 points and Blake contributed 13 points for the Dons. The three accounted for all but two of Verdugo’s points.

The game evened Poly’s league record at 1-1.

## COMMENTARY

# LOOK WHO’S LOOKING GOOD

Bonino ball – it’s making believers out of Poly fans.

By Daniel Jimenez  
Staff Writer

Yeah, DJ’s gone. Aren’t all of last year’s players gone? Yeah. Heard Katz is gone too. Who’s coaching then? Forget that, who’s playing! What are they gonna do this year?

Well, they’re going to play ball. They’re going to play tough. And darn it you better watch.

Led by former assistant and now head coach David Bonino, this young Parrot squad is staying alive and playing exciting Sunset Six league basketball. It is an all-new team, with only one returning player from last



year, junior Razi Haq.

With a 2-2 league record that could easily be 4-0,

Bonino’s Parrots are looking surprisingly good.

They’ve won the games they were supposed to, and came aching close to beating favorites North Hollywood and Grant at home. It won’t be the 9-1 record of last year, (could still be 8-2) but don’t quit on them yet, ‘cuz they’re putting on a show.

A different kind of show, led not by one individual, but by a group of tough guys running

up and down the court, making plays on both sides of the ball and playing together.

“We believe in each other more,” said senior shooting guard Alex Gonzalez following a 25-point outing against Canoga Park. “This isn’t park league basketball. We’ve improved on a lot of things and we’re playing well as a team.”

Gonzalez leads the team in scoring with 10.5 points per game. Not the 30 points a game last year’s leader was putting up, (you might’ve heard of him- DJ Gay?) but with five other guys averaging between 5 and 9 points per game, the Parrots are getting the job done so far.