

# The Holy Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

VOL. VIII

12431 ROSCOE BLVD. SUN VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, 91352

FEBRUARY 2008

Vote '08

## On The Issues

In 2008 we elect a new president.

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

For February, we outline the candidates' positions on a key election issue: the war in Iraq

### The War In Iraq



Hillary Clinton, Democrat

Voted in 2002 to authorize invasion, now opposed; opposed troop increase; start phased withdrawal within 60 days of taking office, with the goal to have most troops out by the end of 2013.

- **The Invasion:** voted yes in 2002, now opposed

"If I had been President in October of 2002, I would have never asked for authority to divert our attention from Afghanistan to Iraq, and I certainly would never have started this war."

— On the Senate Floor Feb. 7, 2007

- **The Surge:** opposed troop increase

"The surge, which is ongoing, and obviously if we're going to do it we hope it is more successful than perhaps I think it could be. I'm going to root for it if it has any chance of success, but I think it's more likely that the anti-American violence and sectarian violence just moves from place

[ continued on pg. 3 ]



Photo by Micheal Obando

RELATIVE: Anthony Chavez talks about his grandfather.

## Keeping The Legacy Alive

By Bayzig Manougian  
Staff Writer

Bringing the message of Latino labor activist Cesar Chavez to others is grandson Anthony's calling these days. In the auditorium on Tuesday, the grandson spoke to students from the 10th grade center about his grandfather.

"Cesar never looked at himself as a hero," Anthony Chavez said. "He would just say he was helping ordinary people do extraordinary things."

Chavez's dream was to have a better world, Anthony explained, to show people that they have the ability to give to a cause greater than themselves and to make a difference in the world.

"To be a man is to suffer for others," Anthony quoted his grandfather. "God help us to be men."

Chavez spoke to people with no money, no power and

no education, Anthony said, and told them that their voices could be heard and that they could make a difference.

Cesar Chavez gained fame first when he and a group of National Farm Workers Association members embarked on a 250-mile march from Delano to Sacramento in 1966 to draw national attention to the plight of farm workers and again in 1968 when he began a 25-day fast to rededicate his movement to non-violence. (Vida en El Valle)

Senator Robert Kennedy, who joined 8,000 farm workers and strikers at a Mass during the fast, called Chavez "one of the heroic figures of our time."

"Cesar Chavez was like a Martin Luther King Jr. for Latinos," Anthony said.

Anthony learned important lessons while growing up around his "Papa," like what it

[ continued on pg. 5 ]

## CAHSEE Munchies

Administration hopes full stomachs will mean higher test scores.

By Mario Solano  
Staff Writer

How do you feed a hungry CAHSEE Crowd? First get 600 lbs of bananas, 600 granola bars, 25 dozen muffins, 600 strands of string cheese, 600 boxes of juice and a bunch of student volunteers. Then find willing Parrots to hand the stuff out. Serve over a CAHSEE bubble sheet of multiple choice math questions. And you've got a party.

"Many students come to school without eating breakfast," said 10th Grade Center AP Vicky Damonte, "so I thought this would help their test scores."

Funds for the food came from the Teachers' Karaoke, which made about \$1200.

Tenth Grade Center students and last-minute volunteers Sergio Huizar, Diana Avalos, Adriana Avalos, Carlos Rodriguez, and Carolina Martinez from Leadership arrived at Poly at 6:00 am to prepare the food for distribution.

"By 6:45 everything was done," said Damonte.

The food was delivered to all CAHSEE testing areas, including the library, the cafeteria, the Gold gym and various classrooms.

"It was pretty easy," said

[ continued on pg. 5 ]



Photo By Stephanie Tejada

PICK ONE: Presidential candidates in AP mock election.

## Choosing a Candidate

While Hillary and Barack battle it out for votes, another election is taking place at Poly.

By Karinina Cruz  
Staff Writer

Poly senior Veronica Rodriguez is running for president in 2008.

Sort of.

Actually, she's one of six candidates running for president in AP Government teacher Rudy Cuevas' "mock election" project.

Cuevas's objectives for the mock election are to have students learn firsthand how America's presidential election process works, to get them excited about this year's election and to help them believe in themselves.

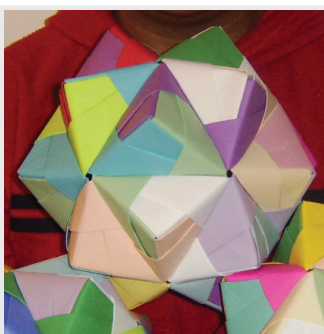
"I want the students to believe they have enough talent and ability to be someone as accomplished as a president," said Cuevas, "to be whatever they want in life without

[ Continued on pg. 5 ]



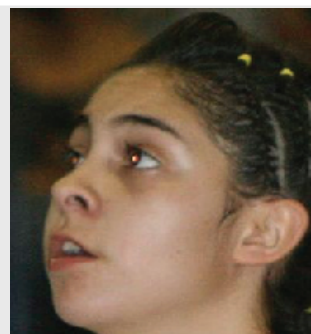
Aging Action Hero Back

See *Entertain.* | Page 4



Origami Club Folds Paper

See *Campus* | Page 5



Lady Parrots Make the Playoffs

See *Sports* | Page 8

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Politics

Dear Editor,

I enjoyed reading the "Getting to Know Them" section about the election candidates from each of the parties. I also found it ironic that the two top candidates are a woman and a Black male running for office at the same time.

Stallon Metsen  
12th grade

## Hillary

Dear Editor,

I personally really do think that America is ready to have a woman stand for president. Especially that for this manner that woman is Hillary Clinton. Bill Clinton is Hillary Clinton's husband. Bill was also a former president a loyal one also. Hillary becoming our president means great leadership especially that Bill Clinton is her husband and will help her out. America needs leadership not sexism.

Vagan Vaganian  
9th grade

Be An  
**OPTIMIST**

### Skeptical

Dear Editor,

In my opinion I don't believe in the candidates. I am not saying that they are the same but most never keep their word. Everyone running for president wants to get votes, so they say good things that they will do to the country. I believe that they are willing to lie or do lie about those things. Then when they get chosen, they forget about what they promised. And for these reasons, I don't believe in presidents and all of what they promised.

Carolina Salas  
11h grade

## Soccer Fan

Dear Editor,

Daniel Jimenez is nice that you let us know that Poly's basketball won their first game. I was wondering when are you guys gonna write about boy's soccer team. This year's season is going pretty good. They are fighting for first place and they beat Canoga after 4 years. It would be nice if you guys wrote about boy's soccer.

Jose Duran  
11th grade

# UTLA's Duffy Vows To Stop Teacher Pay Cut

## Duffy says politicians in Sacramento want to cut teachers' pay by 10%.

By Christian Banuelos  
Staff Writer

The OPTIMIST recently spoke with Poly's Union rep, Larry Carstens, about UTLA President A. J. Duffy's visit to Poly. The following is that interview.

**Q. Who is A.J. Duffy and what can he do for Parrots?**

He is the president of UTLA, the union which almost all teachers belong to in LAUSD.

It's a really big union, a powerful union. It has a big effect on schools and communities.

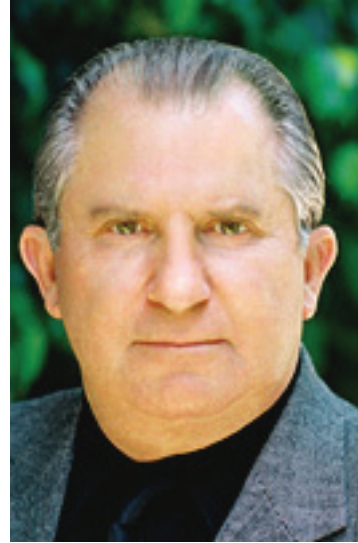
Students are very much affected by what happens in the teachers' union, whether they realize it or not.

The best way to measure the impact of the union on the quality of education that students receive is to look at places where there is little or no teachers' union. A friend of my mine in Arizona worked as a teacher. She was teaching during the day and tending bars at night just to make ends meet. She left the profession a year ago.

Without a strong teachers' union, the good teachers will leave to find better-paying work elsewhere. With a strong teachers' union, the quality of people attracted to (and retained by) the teaching profession goes up, because pay and benefits are better and more competitive.

What Duffy (or any leader of UTLA) can do for students is protect and improve the quality of education students receive, by protecting and improving the quality of the teaching profession.

Any student who is grateful for an outstanding teacher he or she has had has UTLA to thank, whether they realize it or not.



Internet Photo

**PREZ: UTLA's Duffy**

**Q. Why did Duffy come to Poly?**

He came because I invited him to speak to the teachers because he is up for re-election. I wanted teachers to be able to ask him questions before they voted.

The reason he came, however, was to speak about what's going on in the union. When he came, he explained to me that he's not supposed to come for a political cause. He told me he was just going to give a "state of the teachers' union" talk.

**Q. What were the three main issues Duffy talked about?**

The ongoing payroll crisis, the \$14B budget shortfall in Sacramento and the fight to prevent a 10% teachers' pay cut just because politicians in Sacramento spent money they didn't have.

**Q. What about the payroll crisis?**

Some people are blaming him for the payroll fiasco, asking how come he didn't react more strongly. He said that the members told him they didn't want to do an illegal walk out.

He said the payroll problem was already in place before he came into office. I guess the payroll problem was started by Wilmer, who is no longer there. Duffy said he inherited the payroll crisis. It

didn't happen on his watch.

Duffy added that the union succeeded in stopping the bad schools list (Brewers list). Poly had been briefly on the list.

**Q. What did he say about problems with LAUSD?**

He said that Superintendent Brewer claims to really understand teachers even though Brewer's never been a teacher. Duffy said Brewer's not a bad guy but he doesn't really understand teachers.

Duffy said that in order to really understand what teachers go through, you should be teaching, or should have taught. Duffy made a joke about his own marriage; saying that even though you've been married to someone for a long time, it doesn't mean you fully understand everything they go through.

Duffy personally spoke to Brewer when a couple of LAUSD payroll employees were being rude to teachers who came downtown to get their paychecks fixed. Duffy got the rude employees removed from their positions. There was a lady who was treating teachers really badly and Duffy went right into Brewer's office and told Brewer "you need to take care of this lady." Brewer took her out of her position and put her somewhere else.

**Q. What did he say about Charter schools?**

He would prefer that the union develop its own form of agreement with the district that's sort of like charter schools. Because charter schools, in Duffy's view, take the schools out of the union. LAUSD teachers have all the protection in the union, but Charter school teachers don't have it. That's why he's saying some of the reforms of charter schools are good but they should be done in a way that keeps the teacher in the union.

### 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.

# CANDIDATES ON IRAQ

[ continued from pg. 1 ]

to place to place like the old Whac a Mole."

— *In an interview, March 15, 2007*

- **The Withdrawal:** phased withdrawal with most troops out by 2013

Leave a residual force in Iraq to fight terrorist groups, deter Iranian aggression, protect the Kurds and possibly support the Iraqi military.

"Trying to withdraw is not something you snap your fingers and tell people, do it tomorrow. It has to be done in a thoughtful, orderly, careful way that defends our troops on these routes they're going to have to take to get men and equipment out of Iraq."

— *In an interview with the New York*



**Barack Obama, Democrat**

*Times, March 15, 2007*

Opposed invasion from the beginning; opposed troop increase; withdraw one or two brigades a month to finish within 16 months.

- **The Invasion:** Opposed from the beginning

"I know that invasion of Iraq without a clear rationale and without strong international support will only fan the flames of the Middle East and encourage the worst rather than best impulses in the Arab world and strengthen the recruitment arm of al Qaeda. I am not opposed to all wars, I am opposed to dumb wars."

— *Speech to Illinois state legislature, Oct. 2002*

"We continue to be in a war that should never have been authorized," Obama told an audience in Iowa. Two days later, at a Texas rally, he said, "I am proud of the fact that way back in 2002, I said that this war was a mistake."

Among the differences in the plans offered by Obama and Hillary Clinton is that she does not propose setting a deadline for American troops to be withdrawn.

— *New York Times article, Feb. 26, 2007*

- **The Surge:** Opposed troop increase

"Too many lives have been lost and too many billions have been spent for us to trust the President on another tried and failed policy opposed by generals and experts, Democrats and Republicans, Americans and even the Iraqis themselves. It is time for us to fundamentally change our policy."

— *On the Senate Floor, Jan. 30,*

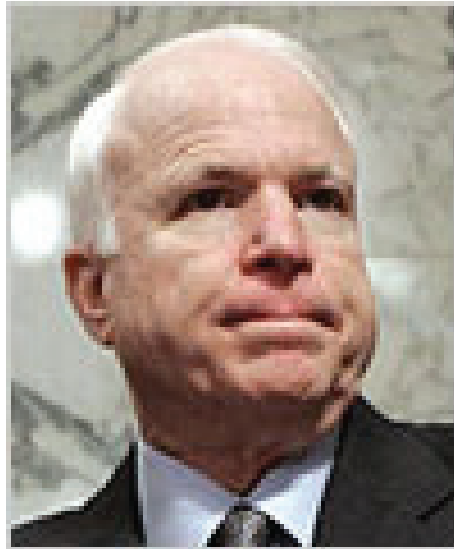
2007

- **The Withdrawal** - Withdraw continuously over 16 months

Leave limited forces to combat terrorism; forces would not be involved in deterring Iranian involvement. Troops would train Iraqi forces only if there was political reconciliation. Redeploy some troops to Afghanistan.

"I put forward a plan in January that says there's no military solution to this. We've got to have a political solution, begin a phased withdrawal, and make certain that we've got benchmarks in place so that the Iraqi people can make a determination about how they want to move forward."

— *Democratic debate, April 26,*



**John McCain, Republican**

2007

Voted in 2002 to authorize invasion, still supportive; in favor of troop increase; against a timetable for troop withdrawal.

- **The Invasion:** Voted yes in 2002, still supportive

"I agreed with the President's difficult decision to go to war in Iraq. I remain fully supportive of his determination not to leave Iraq until the freely elected government of that country and its armed forces are able to defend their country from foreign and domestic enemies."

— *In a Statement, Aug. 25, 2006*

- **The Surge:** in favor of troop increase

"I've been a bit surprised at the amount of progress that they've achieved with only two, and now three, of the five brigades. I've also been not surprised but sorry that some of this activity has gone outside of Baghdad."

— *In an interview with the New York Times, April 14, 2007*

- **The Withdrawal:** against a timetable for troop withdrawal

Says political settlement can be achieved only after violence is contained. Says that the United States is now succeeding in Iraq, but that there is still "a long way to go."

— *In an interview with the New York Times, April 14, 2007*

McCain said that if the Bush administration's plan had not produced progress by the time a McCain presidency began, he might be forced to end American involvement in Iraq.

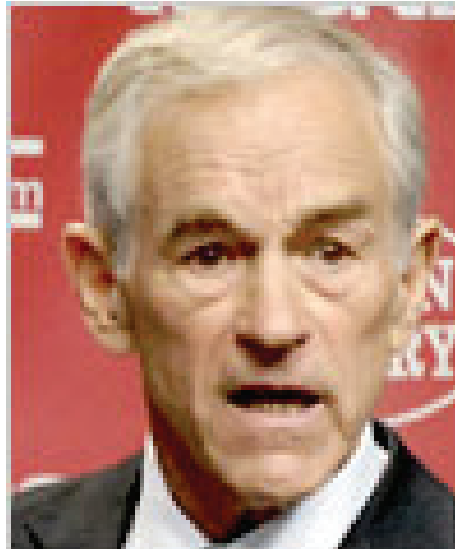
"History shows us Americans will not continue to support an overseas en-

agement involving the loss of American lives for an unlimited period of time," he added. "When they run out of patience, they will demand that we get out."

Partitioning Iraq into Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish enclaves, as some experts have proposed, was "totally unrealistic," McCain argued, because the Iraqis are opposed to measures that would lead to the further dislocation of the population and even divide families.

McCain said setting deadlines for withdrawing troops would backfire, hamstringing commanders and giving opponents a way to wait out the Americans.

— *In an interview with the New York Times, April 13, 2007*



**Ron Paul, Republican**

Voted in 2002 against authorizing invasion, still opposed; opposed troop increase; withdraw all troops immediately.

- **The Invasion:** Voted no in 2002, still opposed

"Many of the same voices who then demanded that the Clinton Administration attack Iraq are now demanding that the Bush Administration attack Iraq. Despite all of the information to which I have access, I remain very skeptical that the nation of Iraq poses a serious and immanent terrorist threat to the United States."

— *On the floor of the U.S. House, Oct. 8, 2002*

- **The Surge:** Opposed troop increase

"A military victory in Iraq is unattainable, just as it was in Vietnam. As conditions deteriorate in Iraq, the American people are told more blood must be spilled. Though we've been in Iraq nearly four years, the meager goal today simply is to secure Baghdad. This hardly shows that the mission is even partly accomplished."

— *On the floor of the U.S. House, Jan. 11, 2007*

- **The Withdrawal:** withdraw all troops immediately

Says that there is "no good reason to stay there" and that "it was never in our national security interest to go over there."

"I think we should come home as quickly as possible. There was a lot of false information on the reasons we went in there, and there's no good reason to stay right now."

— *On CNN, Feb. 26, 2007*

Source: *New York Times*

## THE ART OF THE INTERVIEW

By Karen Aguilar  
Staff Writer

It is time for interviews with private schools. So far I've talked to people from Wellesley College in Massachusetts and Dartmouth in Vermont.

I was nervous and excited before the Wellesley interview. I started out speaking too quickly about my clubs and activities.

I felt much more relaxed during my interview with Dartmouth. I was better prepared because I knew what questions to expect. A representative usually wants to know more about what you do outside of school than your grades and test scores. If you are in as many clubs and programs as I am, an interview should be your time to shine. I focused on describing my roles as president of two clubs and captain of the girl's tennis team.

You should also have questions to ask the representative about that specific college. It is recommended (I should say expected) that you send a thank-you e-mail to the representative who interviewed you.

There are other important tasks in February too. You should be in the process of submitting your FAFSA, Cal Grant and CSS Profile (private schools only). After submitting your FAFSA, you will receive your EFC (expected family contribution), the amount of money your parents are expected to contribute towards your college education. The rest of the money you can earn through grants (i.e. Cal Grant), scholarships awarded by the colleges you applied to or private organizations.

The CSS Profile is required by private colleges and is more detailed than the FAFSA. The College Board charges \$16 for every school that receives your Profile whereas the FAFSA is free. If you did not apply to any private schools, you should only worry about submitting the FAFSA and Cal Grant. If you think you won't have enough money you should look for scholarships.

Like most seniors, I am still waiting for responses from the colleges and universities I applied to. The letters will start arriving in March. I am hoping to receive a couple of fat envelopes - acceptances have all the paperwork, rejections just have a letter.

For the most part, I am anxious and excited to find out what college I will attend in the fall. I still have to pay my senior dues and send my transcripts to the universities.

As for high school life, it's not as exciting as it used to be, now that I'm a senior. So I guess that means I'm ready to move on. Which I suppose is how I should be feeling. Only four more months to go. Meanwhile, Prom is coming up in May and Grad Night and graduation in late June. Maybe I can still have a little fun.

## AT THE MOVIES

## RAMBO RUMBLE

By Mario Solano  
Staff Writer

Sylvester Stallone may be pushing sixty, but that doesn't mean he's lost that killer instinct. "Rambo," the newest installment in a franchise back after some twenty years in cold storage, has 236 kills. That's 2.59 kills per screen minute, the most kills in the series so far.

An older Rambo now lives in a village in Thailand, where he works as a snake catcher and hires out his boat. When a civil war breaks out in nearby Burma, local missionary Sarah wants Rambo to take her there to help out with food and medicine.

Sarah and her fellow mis-

sionaries are attacked and captured by the Burmese army, so Rambo goes back to save them. "Live for nothing or die for something," after all, is the bumper sticker code of honor he lives by.

With a bow and arrow, a machete, Green-Beret fury and later, a high-powered machine gun, Rambo goes to work. The body count soars and when the smoke clears, Rambo is the last man standing.

Six-Pack loved the blood and guts all over the place, the body parts getting sliced up or blown away, the throats being ripped apart. "Rambo" is the antidote to "27 Dresses." Truly 2008's best action flick.

Will Rambo ever retire? We hope not.



Internet Photo

**FIREPOWER:** Action hero Sylvester Stallone goes ballistic in Burma in latest "Rambo" pic.



Internet Photo

**MONSTER MASH:** Beast on the loose in post-9/11 Manhattan rattle natives of the Big Apple.

## Cloverfield

This is something for all monster fans out there. After millions of hits on "YouTube," "Cloverfield" finally made it to the big screen. The hype was great. The image of the Statue of Liberty's head being ripped off and thrown into the city streets had everyone that saw the trailer asking "what the hell was that?" No film title was given, only a date of 1/18/08. Six-Pack was counting the days.

"Cloverfield" was filmed from the actors' point of view, giving the audience the feeling that they were part of the film. Rob, on his way to Japan to work, stops off first at his going-away party. Suddenly, the whole room begins to shake. Everyone panics and moves up

to the roof. Then BOOM!!!! There is a loud roar, with fireballs bursting through the air, destroying everything it touches. People panic and head downstairs to the street.

Part of the fun in "Cloverfield" is picking out the visual tricks. For example, the monster's face and body in the news clip are different from the monster that killed Rob's friend.

"Cloverfield" was not just another monster film. Great special effects turned New York into a destructive wasteland. CGI made the monster look more terrifying than we could ever imagine. Sorry Godzilla.

## Calderon Wins Two Gold Medals

Poly's Academic Decathlon team scores nearly 30,000 points.

By Michelle Gonzalez and  
Meri Sarkisyan  
Staff Writer

Parrot Decathlon team member Jonas Calderon won two gold medals with scores of 1000 in both his interview and speech in the 2007 Academic Decathlon. Calderon also received an honorable mention certificate in his essay with a score of 910.

"We won more gold medals this year than last year," said

Decathlon coach Brian Block. "In the last four years, only one Poly Decathlon member scored an 800 essay or better until this year."

Poly's Michelle Aguila won a silver medal for her interview and received a score of 795 in her essay.

The team placed in the middle of the LA division.

The winners were announced at the awards banquet dinner at the Los Angeles Convention Center on Tues-

day night.

"The dinner was wonderful," said Block. "It's a wonderful award banquet where you get to sit with about 600 of the smartest students of the entire district and see awards go."

Edwin Diaz, German Polanco, Jennifer Zaragoza, Jonas Calderon, Juan Fuentes, Michelle Aguila, Oscar Flores, and Tam Luu were this year's team.

Last year Poly's Decathlon team won eight medals and finished with 31 thousand points. This year's overall points were just under 30,000.

"Last year's team was able to meet after school five times a week. This year's group studied half the time of my other groups," said Block, who has coached the Decathlon team for the last four years.

Six of this year's eight Decathlon students lived outside of the Poly area and had a long commute. Most had 5th period or intersession classes.

"Even though they only had half as much time to study," Block pointed out, "they almost scored the same overall number of points as last year's team."

The decathlon is broken

down into ten categories: art, economics, essay, interview, language and literature, mathematics, music, science, social science, and speech.

Every year the decathlon focuses on one particular subject.

This year's major topic was the Civil War. Every category was based on this defining American conflict.

"Bottom line of the decathlon is not really about brilliance," Block said. "It's about being able to take all other factors in life and just find the time to study and study."

# Mock Election Real Issues

[ continued from pg. 1 ]

thinking about it twice.”

They seem to be getting the message.

“I learned a lot about myself,” said candidate Rodriguez. “I realized that I could do a speech in front of a huge audience. Also, if we have problems, it is up to us to do something about it, no one is going to do it for us.

“Everybody’s opinion matters in the end,” said candidate Maryuri Perez, “for what happens in the future.

“I learned that politics is not about the issues, it’s about selling yourself,” senior Jonathan Linares, another candidate, said.

Candidates Lee Castañeda, Susana Nuñez and Karen Vega all had similar thoughts. And they all said doing this mock election motivated them to watch the real one.

“I observe and learn from their speeches,” Linares.

“I’m paying attention to the real election because it is important and I’ll be voting in November,” said Perez. “Also it helps my campaign.”

The candidates listed the war in Iraq, health care, immigration and the economy as national issues they thought were important. And all said

they would vote for a Democrat in November.

The six candidates will campaign in 50 different classrooms, with each classroom representing one of the 50 states.

Their first presidential debate took place February 1st with Glen Lamos as the moderator.

Each candidate gave a two-minute introduction outlining his or her objectives if elected. Candidate Castañeda wants to bring back after-school programs and sports no longer offered at Poly, while Linares would like to start a financial aid club for students who cannot afford to go to college.

A recycling system at Poly would be great, Nunez said, and Perez wants to plant more trees. Trees would improve Poly’s physical look, she said, and bring students together.

Rodriguez wants to extend the “LA’s Best” program to middle schools and Vega wants more funds for sports and other extra curricular activities. She also wants to sanitize the bathrooms to prevent germs that give students colds and the flu.

“The candidates are going to campaign in February,” said Cuevas, “with the election in March.”

## Legend Lives On



Photo by Michael Obando

**GRANDSON:** Anthony Chavez spoke to Parrots.

[ continued from pg. 1 ]

meant to be a man.

“Being a man isn’t bossing around your family or friends,” Cesar Chavez said. “It’s not about fighting back when a fight comes. Being a man is learning to respect teachers, friends, and family.”

Getting Chavez’s message out, Anthony encouraged students to stand up for their rights and work for justice even when fear holds them back.

“Students must take initiative,” Anthony quoted his grandfather. “They should not

be mere imitators. They must learn to think and act for themselves and be free.”

“Cesar believed we should harvest our powers as constructive rather than destructive,” said Anthony. “Genuine justice only can be done by non-violence.”

Born in Bakersfield, Anthony grew up in nearby Keene, California and attended public school a few miles away in Tehachapi. He played baseball for Tehachapi High School for three years.

Anthony, who has been with the Cesar Chavez Foundation since high school, received his degree in religious studies in 2007 from California State University at Bakersfield.

Following in his grandfather’s foot steps, Anthony urged Poly students to “win against the great odds by accomplishing your duty in life.”

“My grandfather didn’t know that he would be the one to change everything,” Anthony told his Parrot audience, “but he had the courage to step forward and do it.”



Photo By Margarita Fernandez

**PAPER ART:** Members of Poly’s new Origami club, sponsored by Math teacher Jenny Pacho.

## Making Paper Come Alive

By Juan Herrera and Margarita Fernandez  
Staff Writer

Poly math teacher Jenny Pacho was at Ground Zero in New York a month after 9/11. Along with the more typical flowers, photos and other personal and homemade tributes to the victims, Pacho saw thousands of origami cranes hanging on various fences.

“People were using the crane to ask for peace for the victims of 9/11,” said Pacho.

Origami is the Japanese art of paper folding and dates back to the 6th century. For centuries, the Japanese have believed that the origami crane can bring good health and good luck.

Today, Pacho’s association with origami is a happier one.

She is the sponsor for Poly’s new Origami Club. But the club wasn’t her idea.

“I visited Ms. Pacho one day,” said senior Maila Peralta, “and I saw her teaching students how to make origami crafts and I decided to join them.

“I saw that the students there seem to be very interested in learning and I suggested to Pacho that she start the Origami club. She agreed and now we are official.”

Now a month old, the Origami club teaches students how to make three-dimensional objects, like flowers and frogs, out of paper.

“You don’t just learn how to make beautiful crafts out of paper,” Peralta said, “you also learn about the Japanese culture. Students in this club have something fun to do that can

be done as long as you have paper and skill.”

Most people can’t even pronounce the origami figure Peralta likes best.

“My favorite is the stellated truncated icosahedron,” Peralta said. “It takes more than 200 pieces of paper but once you get to finish it, it looks awesome.”

Pacho sponsored her first origami club at Van Nuys High School, where she taught for 22 years. She introduced origami to her math class ten years ago when a Korean student taught her how to use origami as a parallelogram.

Pacho came to Poly as a math coach in 2005 and now teaches math.

The Origami Club meets every Friday during lunch in room 57.

## EATING AND TESTING

[ continued from pg. 1 ]



Photo by Micheal Obando

**TEST PREP:** AP Vicky Damonte and Coordinator Lori Combs with granola bars.

Diana Avalos.

“It was a cool thing to do,”

said Sergio Huizar, “I like waking up at 6:00 a.m.”

Damonte and 10th Grade Coordinator Lori Combs called absent students, asking them to come to school to take the test.

“We wanted 95% attendance,” said Damonte.

“The vibe was amazing,” Combs said. “Everyone knows how important this test is.”

The 10th Grade Center wanted a breakfast menu of healthy food, with protein and fruit. Trader Joe’s donated granola bars. The rest of the food was bought with money from the Teachers’ Karaoke.

“I really enjoyed the food,” said senior Grace Mayorga, munching on a muffin. “Just what I needed before taking

the test.”

“We’re the 10th Grade Center, a small community,” said Damonte, “and so we want to just let them know that we are working for them.”



Photo by Micheal Obando

**UNPACKING:** Volunteer prepares CAHSEE breakfast.

# He Goes Way Back

Tornado survivor and computer whiz Roger Radcliffe was a Parrot, Class of '60.

By Karinina Cruz & Melissa Ikbala  
Staff Writer

Those who think Math teacher Roger Radcliffe, who joined the Poly faculty in 2000, is pretty new to Poly couldn't be more wrong.

"I was a student here in 1957," Radcliffe recently told the OPTIMIST, "which is the first year it opened."

Naturally, things were a little different in those days.

"We had no 9th graders," Radcliffe said. "In fact, my first year here, we had no seniors. It was just 10th and 11th grade because it was a new school. 12th graders were allowed to finish in their original high school."

On the other hand, they did have lockers.

"You had the lockers to store your books and materials and you could go to your locker between periods and pick up your books for the next class," Radcliffe explained.

And getting lunch was easier too.

"We had less than 800 students when I was here," Radcliffe said. "That's a big difference. You could actually get something at the cafeteria and still have time to eat it back then."

Of course, Poly was still a neighborhood school. But the neighborhood was different.

"When I was here it was mostly working class," Radcliffe said. "Most of the Hispanic residents lived in San Fernando and their kids went to San Fernando High School. We didn't have many here, maybe 15 or 20 percent of the student population."

The basketball team was pretty good too, and Radcliffe was a member.

"We had a very good basketball team," he said. "My last year, we went to the quarter finals. We lost to the eventual winner, Fremont, one of the top teams in the country that year. The next year they won the city championship."

There were no sports for girls, however, except softball and there was no Magnet.

"Students who were going to college and were committed to college were in sort of a separate group," said Radcliffe. "And the rest were either in



Photo by Michael Obando

**AN ORIGINAL:** Math teacher Rodger Radcliffe was a sophomore at Poly when the school opened in 1957.

shop classes or in secretarial classes or cooking classes."

"So a math class, a Geometry class, wouldn't have a lot of girls. We had several but not a lot. It wouldn't be 50/50," said Radcliffe. "Now we tend to have more females than males. It's more open now. You can go into any program, in any class you want to take."

Today's Parrots will be glad to know learning methods have changed too.

"In those days, teachers taught entirely by lecture," said Radcliffe. "And then you had to read the book on your own. And we used to have more books. And the books had fewer pictures and less white space and so you had to really read the content."

"Today, it's more group activity, more cooperative learning and some of the other techniques, Cornell notes, reciprocal teaching, anticipatory activities; those weren't used very much when I was in school."

As Radcliffe remembers it, student behavior has changed a little bit too.

"We were more oriented towards becoming adults and getting involved in adult world," he said. "Today, a lot of our students don't want to grow up. So

that causes a problem, particularly in the 9th grade."

"There weren't as many colleges around then. Getting into college was very tough and very competitive. So you really did your work and tried to get good grades, because you knew it was your avenue to success."

"Some students today don't see education as an avenue to success. They're just passing the time with their friends."

Like many students today, Radcliffe lived close by and walked to school.

"I grew up in California, first in Hollywood, then later in a house just a mile and a quarter from Poly," he said. "But I was born in Akron, Ohio."

Radcliffe's parents moved the family to California when he was a toddler.

"I was caught in a tornado there (Akron) as a young child and went through a plate glass window," he said. "I have a big scar on my head from that. That sort of convinced my parents it was time to leave Ohio. It was during the war, World War II, and we drove out to California."

Now Radcliffe has come back to Poly and his original plan.

"When I went to college, I was go-

ing to become a math teacher," he said. "But I got diverted into economics. And from there I went into finance.

After I got out of college, I was Director of Marketing for Wells Fargo Bank for ten-twelve years.

Then I was recruited to go back to Minnesota for a company called the First Bank System as their Director of Marketing, I left them in the late 70's.

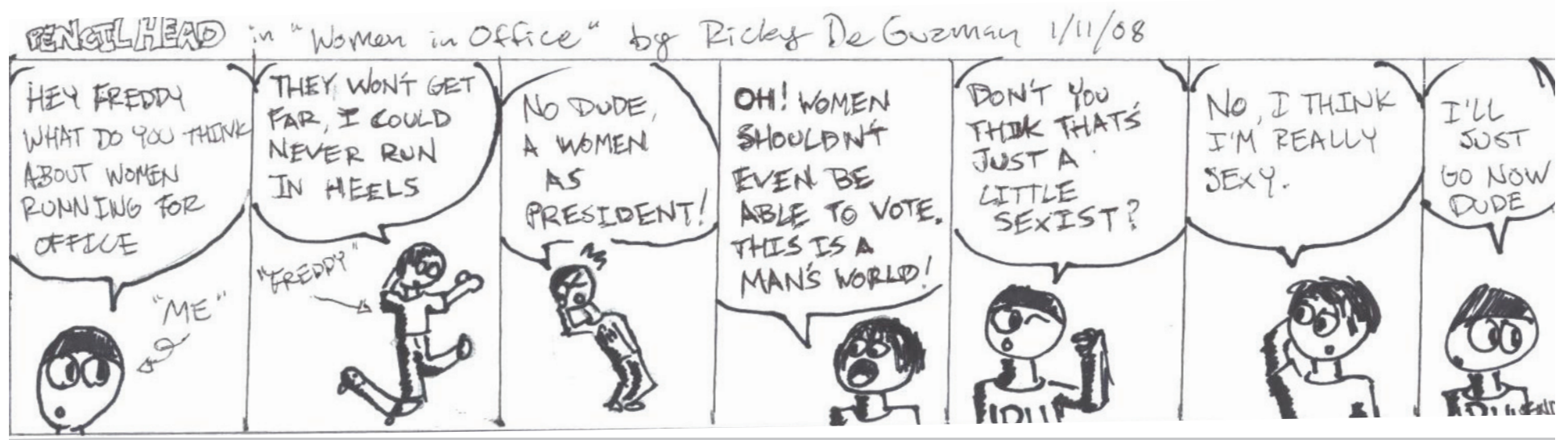
I was sort of semi-retired until I came back to teaching. While I was semi-retired I worked as a stockbroker. I passed the Certified Public Accountant's Exam so I could work as an accountant. And I did a lot of independent consulting for small businesses.

I was an expert in computer. I built computers, fixed them and did programming."

Radcliffe may know more about Poly's early days than anyone on campus, but as a teacher he likes what most teachers do.

"I enjoy when I get a student who wants to learn and will concentrate and actually make some progress," he said. "That's the success all teachers look for. And we get that a little bit every day."

Spoken like a true old-timer.



# Team Player

Gifted guard Sara Villanueva has all the moves to make her team look good.

By Optimist Staff

**Q. What makes a good basketball player?**

A good basketball player is a team player.

**Q. Who taught you how to play basketball? Who was your first coach?**

My dad was the first one to have an impact on me. Once I learned all his moves I began to watch Kobe and Jordan in particular. My first coach was a girl by the name of Edith.

**Q. How long have you been playing varsity?**

Since my freshman year at Chatsworth High School.

**Q. What do you do physically to warm up before a game? What do you do mentally?**

I used to listen to music to get me pumped but now I just crack jokes with close friends because laughing gets me in a good mood. I like to have fun before a game and even in the actual game.

**Q. Do you do anything special to stay in shape – run, lift weights, footwork drills, etc.?**

All I really do is play a lot of sports with my brothers. I even skate sometimes with them.

**Q. How much of your game is physical and how much is mental?**

I think my game is fifty-fifty when it comes to physical and mental game. I love competition and it pushes me even more to top them.

**Q. Does coach Batiste's coaching style fit your way of playing or have you had to make adjustments?**

Actually her coaching fits my style because in my previous school I wasn't allowed to do any of the moves I do now and I couldn't play my game. Batiste has allowed me to be the real me and try new moves that eventually work and look nice.

**Q. Did coach Batiste give you a role on the team or did she let you find your own? Do you consider yourself the team's leader?**

I think she let me find an important role on the team myself. But she would also push me to take the bigger role because she said I had it in me.

**Q. As the team's leader, what do you expect of yourself? What does coach expect of you?**

I really don't see myself any different from my teammates, but I think I should be the one to get everyone involved, including the crowd. The coach expects a lot from me and sometimes I feel like I can't fill the shoes she expects me to.

**Q. Is there more pressure on you as the team's record improves?**

I really don't feel pressured at all. I'm just out to have some fun with my teammates.

**Q. Would you rather rebound, steal the ball, make a pass or shoot the ball?**

I love to make crazy passes that no one expects. I like to see my teammates score.

**Q. If you're having a bad game, what do you do to turn it around?**

I start to pass more and drive to get the foul.



Photo by Stephanie Tejada

**PLAYMAKER:** Junior guard Sara Villanueva averaged 17 points per game and shot 58%.

**Q. How much do you replay the game in your mind after it's over?**

I replay some of the stuff that I know I could have done and I keep it in mind for the next game.

**Q. What makes you angry or frustrated? What do you do when an opponent tries to pick a fight, or get in your head? Do you ever play mind games with opponents?**

I get frustrated when refs seem to be making the wrong calls the whole game. But I usually let it go. I don't like to play mind games but if someone picks a fight with me I don't back down because it is a sign of weakness.

**Q. Does the crowd affect your game?**

The crowd gets me pumped. If they're against me I like to silence the crowd. But most of the time I win the crowd over with the moves and passes I

do.

**Q. You've beaten a lot of opponents pretty badly this year. How do you stay motivated?**

I always tell the girls to go out there and have some fun together. When we have fun and try new things we really play good together.

**Q. How do you describe yourself?**

I'm very competitive and always ready for a challenge. I love to make people laugh and put a smile on their face, but at times I'm shy.

**Q. Do you compare yourself to other players? Are you critical of your performance when the game is over, or do you just move on?**

I do compare myself to other players but at the end of a game I like to move on and not let it effect me in any other way.

**Q. Are you comfortable with compliments? Would you prefer that people look at the whole team and not just you?**

I like to receive compliments because it helps me to push myself and stand out. I really don't like being like everyone else. I want to be different. I would also like people to look at the whole team as well.

**Q. Do you keep track of Poly's league standings and your stats compared to other players?**

That is something that I should keep track of but I don't because I usually don't have the time to.

**Q. How much basketball do you play away from Poly? Do you have a hoop at home?**

I really don't play that much away from Poly but if there is a pick up game going on I'll play. A lot of people tend to look down on me because I'm a girl and I prove them wrong.

## LADY PARROT BASKETBALL



Photo by Staff

**IN THE PLAYOFFS:** (From left) Alejandra Gallardo, Christine Hernandez, Fabiola Romero, Crystal Cristales, Jennifer Hagan, Sara Villanueva, Miranda Acosta, Tiffany Mejia and Priscilla Moro-Alvarez.

# TEAMWORK, COACHING PUT POLY IN PLAYOFFS

Led by brilliant playmaker Sara Villanueva, the Lady Parrots finish tied for first in the Sunset Six League.

By Stephanie Tejada  
Staff Writer

With quiet confidence, a wealth of athletic ability and too many weapons to display on any given night, junior guard Sara Villanueva has shot, stolen, passed and rebounded her team into the LA City Invitational playoffs.

Ably assisted by senior Jenny Hagan and

three-point sharpshooter Crystal Cristales, the Lady Parrots have overwhelmed opponents, getting baskets in bunches, con-

testing every shot and tying up the ball with anyone who makes the mistake of dribbling inside.



Photo by Staff

**COACH:** Tremeka Batiste.

Head coach Tremeka Batiste has turned nine basketball-smart and skilled young women into a deadly efficient and methodically effective scoring machine. The girls get lots of points and make few mistakes.

The combination has left the other side wondering how they got so far behind so fast. In their last regular season game, the Lady Parrots had 47 points at the half and 77 at the buzzer. The game was the Lady Parrots ninth win in a row, 13th win in the last 14 games and the sixth time this season they scored 70 or more points in a game.

## The Lady Parrot 07-08 Basketball Season Sunset Six League

| Date    | Opponent          | Result |
|---------|-------------------|--------|
| 1/9/08  | @ Grant           | 61-63  |
| 1/11/08 | @ Verdugo Hills   | 73-42  |
| 1/16/08 | @ North Hollywood | 54-33  |
| 1/18/08 | @ Canoga Park     | 68-33  |
| 1/23/08 | @ Van Nuys        | 61-44  |
| 1/25/08 | Grant             | 61-53  |
| 1/30/08 | Verdugo Hills     | 62-33  |
| 2/1/08  | North Hollywood   | 70-47  |
| 2/6/08  | Canoga Park       | 64-53  |
| 2/8/08  | Van Nuys          | 77-34  |

## The Lady Parrot 07-08 Basketball Season Season Stats

| Scoring/Shooting                       | 2FGM       | 2FG%      | 3FGM      | 3FGA       | 3FG%      | FG%       | FT%       | Points      | PPG         |
|--|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| <a href="#">Sara Villanueva</a>        | 118        | 58        | 6         | 16         | 38        | 57        | 84        | 356         | 17.0        |
| <a href="#">Crystal Cristales</a>      | 58         | 48        | 20        | 67         | 30        | 42        | 66        | 209         | 10.0        |
| <a href="#">Jennifer Hagan</a>         | 42         | 42        | 25        | 64         | 39        | 41        | 65        | 191         | 10.1        |
| <a href="#">Christine Hernandez</a>    | 71         | 52        | 2         | 5          | 40        | 52        | 57        | 177         | 8.4         |
| <a href="#">Alejandra Gallardo</a>     | 44         | 52        | 8         | 15         | 53        | 52        | 46        | 123         | 6.2         |
| <a href="#">Fabiola Romero</a>         | 31         | 45        | 0         | 3          | 0         | 43        | 50        | 68          | 3.2         |
| <a href="#">Miranda Acosta</a>         | 16         | 52        | 5         | 7          | 71        | 55        | 0         | 47          | 2.2         |
| <a href="#">Priscilla Moro-alvarez</a> | 17         | 39        |           |            |           |           | 29        | 38          | 1.9         |
| <a href="#">Tiffany Mejia</a>          | 8          | 57        | 4         | 9          | 44        | 52        | 0         | 28          | 1.8         |
| <b>Team Season Totals:</b>             | <b>405</b> | <b>50</b> | <b>70</b> | <b>186</b> | <b>38</b> | <b>48</b> | <b>66</b> | <b>1237</b> | <b>58.9</b> |