

The Holy Optimist

John H. Francis Holytechnic High School

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MARCH 2008

Vote '08

Candidates Court Latinos

By Jocelyn Portales
Staff Writer

More than 400,000 Latinos in the U.S are turning 18 each year, according to the Hispanic Center, and more than 5 million Latinos were in the 18-29 age group as of September 2007.

Not surprisingly, the 2008 presidential candidates are attempting to garner the Hispanic vote often addressing "pocketbook" issues such as education, jobs, immigration, and the economy, according to the Pew Hispanic Center. "Hispanics loom as a potential "swing vote" in next year's presidential race," said the Pew.

Pollster John Zogby, in a February 8 San Jose Mercury article said Hispanic voters came out in force on Super Tuesday and he believes they will in November.

"The issue of illegal immigration is really energizing Latino voters," said Zogby.

Based on Super Tuesday's results, Zogby expects Latino voters to make up nearly 11 percent of the total electorate in November, up from 8.5 percent in 2004, and 6 percent in the 2000 elections.

Online websites such as "Respect the Vote" are urging young Latinos to vote, using celebrities such as Wilmer Valderamma from "That 70's Show," actress Rosario Dawson and Tony Plana of "Ugly Betty" to get their attention.

But Edwin Quintana, vice president of the Latin/African-American Chaplains Association, cautioned that the candidates shouldn't expect

[continued on pg. 2]



I WANT
YOUR VOTE!
YO QUIERO
SU VOTO!

Byrd Ready To Fly

BYRD SET FOR
SEPTEMBER OPENING

By Karinina Cruz
Staff Writer

The new Richard E. Byrd Middle School in Sun Valley, part of the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) massive school construction program, will open on September 8. Construction of the 1,620 seat, 60 classroom school began on June of 2006.

"Byrd is more than 98% complete for what is on-site," said LAUSD Owner Authorized Representative Rimas Tumas. "Minor changes and corrections will be completed in 30 days."

The new school is located directly across the street from John H. Francis High School and increased traffic is expected from buses and parents dropping students off daily.

"LAUSD is preparing to regulate the traffic flow," said Poly interim principal Gerardo Loera.

In an effort to lessen traffic congestion, Byrd, which will be on a traditional school year, will open a day after



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

GATES WIDE OPEN: Byrd Middle School is almost completed, gates opening in September.

Poly begins its fall mester for A-track.

The close proximity of the two schools is expected to provide benefits for both schools.

"Opportunities will be opened for increased articulation between the middle school students and the high school students," said Loera, "and to make use of the close proximity at the curriculum level or

even share some facilities."

The school will feature three small learning communities, each with its own separate two-story building.

The science building has lecture rooms and a lab equipped with hi-tech resources, including a radiation evaporator. The gymnasium can be divided into two basketball courts and also has team locker rooms.

The school's digital library features an automated book inventory and a learning center for computer research.

On the campus is a kitchen, a multi-purpose room and a soccer field.

"Byrd will provide each student with a quality education," said Tumas, "help that has been long needed by the community."

Fast Tracking Freshmen

By Karinina Cruz
Staff Writer

When Freshman Claudia Arrevalo graduates from Poly in 2011, she'll have finished two years of college as well as completed her A-G graduation requirements, thanks to the Freshman Center's Advantage Plus Program.

"The goal of this accelerated program is to motivate students to take college courses," said Freshman Center Coordinator Isaac Alatorre. "They will be done with their general education requirements for college by the time they graduate high school."

Participants to the program must have completed Algebra I in eighth grade and scored proficient in either English or Math in the California Standardized Test (CST) other motivated students can join the Advantage Plus program based on their performance. At the beginning of the year, students take a math assessment



Photo by Jason Castro

UP TO THE PLATE: Freshmen step up to the challenge.

to determine if they are ready for Geometry or Algebra II.

"The program really helped me get ahead of my peers," said freshman student Christian Torres, who is taking Algebra II.

Although finishing Algebra II this mester might sound overwhelming to ninth graders, most of the students are doing well above average.

"80% of my ninth graders

who took Algebra II with me got A's and B's," said math teacher Cesar Felix. "I never had a class of freshmen taking Algebra II before, and I can say that they're the strongest group I've had."

Free college courses are also offered to Poly's Advantage Plus students, including English 21, 28, 33 and 101, Sociology 1, Speech 101, and Chicano Studies 8.

"I took Speech 101 and it was pretty easy," said freshman Jessica Garcia.

The Freshman center has received funding from Project Steps, a federal program, as well as from students fundraisers, donations from Poly teachers and Title I funding. Project Steps was created to increase the number of students from low income families attending a college or university.

"We have a lot of kids who are part of Project Steps," said Alatorre, "and you'll see in our newsletters that they have a lot to offer."

Poly's Advantage Plus Program currently has 214 students, many more than the 20 to 30 students Alatorre expected would qualify for the program.

"We were shocked that there were more than a 100 ninth graders who were willing to undertake an accelerated program like this one," said Alatorre.

[Freshmen continued on Pg. 3]

"Welcome to the struggle"

By Fernando Marquez
Editor in Chief

The United Teachers Los Angeles union met in the library on March 6, 2008 to discuss topics surrounding teacher payroll issues and future state budget cuts.

David Goldberg, UTLA treasurer, briefed faculty on the union's position on contract negotiations and proposed budget cuts.

UTLA's goals are to fight for teacher's rights and to keep budget cuts away from classrooms.

Goldberg highlighted topics such as vulnerability of new teachers at the hands of the emerging struggle for teachers' rights in the Los Angeles Unified School District and how education is put at the frontlines when it comes to cutting down state budget.

"The challenge is that there is one issue affecting several people," said Goldberg.

California is one of the five most populous states and 29th in education spending. It is below the national average in state spending per student. According to Goldberg, 12-16% of California's budget goes to education spending in Los Angeles. The cuts will however, continue.

Governor Schwarzeneg-

ger recently announced an estimated 5 billion dollars in education cuts to help stabilize the economy in California. Economic shockwaves are not only being felt here in the state, but also across the nation, in federal funded programs such as housing, education and healthcare.

To save money in education spending, Goldberg predicts that LAUSD will seek to increase classroom sizes in order to decrease the amount of teachers needed. This goes for all teachers in LAUSD and doesn't mean Poly's teachers are excluded from being laid off. Closing down entire schools has also been considered and implemented in several school districts.

On Monday, March 17, 2008 over 20,000 of statewide district employees received early termination notices. Placentia Yorba-Linda Unified even offered a \$1,000 bonus to employees who resign or retire by April 1.

Not all teachers are at risk though. The majority of permanent teachers will remain as well as teachers in hard to staff subjects like math and science.

Teachers with credentials
[UTLA cont. on pg. 3]

"Closing down entire schools has also been considered and implemented in several school districts."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"Excellent job on the february edition of the newspaper. I really enjoyed their writings, comments, and photos. Please give the staff a big round of applause from me. Thanks so much. Keep up the good work. Si se puede."

-Anthony Chavez

POLY STUDENTS VOICE OPINIONS

"... It's important to Vote."

- Liliana Tinajero

"We as the people of America are joined as one to preach what we can do for the economic system. We live in a place where anything is possible."

- Yanina Linares

"He (Obama) is truly in it to help the people who need it the most. He feels that immigration is just a scapegoat covering up more vital issues like the war in Iraq and getting our troops back home."

- Juan Delgado

"... either way, one of them (democratic candidates) is going to make history by being the first African American or the first Female President."

- Edgar Guitierrez

"Clinton has more experience in politics. She will be a better president for the United States."

- Hakop Libaryan

"There are so many people who complain about things are run and the issues in our society but they've never attempted to vote. Not because they are unable to. Just because they don't feel their votes count."

-Elaine Duke

"...the fact that we are able to vote should give people inspiration that we have certain rights that other people don't."

- Adriana Avelar

"I like the fact that Anthony Chavez came to the Valley to speak to us. Other activist don't take the time to

hear the people that are in need."

- Diana Jaurequi

"I admire you guys for the time and effort you have to make the Poly students enjoy reading The Poly Optimist. Keep up the hard work Poly Staff."

- Guadalupe Romero

Editor's note:

More editorials the april edition.

Latino Vote

[continued from pg. 1]

Latinos to vote as a block.

"The Hispanic vote is not homogeneous and it's still evolving," Quintana said.

Kevin Kowalski, a History teacher from Poly expressed his perspective on the impact Hispanics can make. Kowalski said, "Unlike many Presidential elections of the past, it appears that in this year's election, if Latinos vote a bloc then they could have a huge impact on choosing our next president. Many assume that all Hispanic voters are homogeneous, however, Kowalski said, "There is differing opinions within the Hispanic community."

Some young Hispanic voters, however, got the message long before this year's efforts from the candidates and the media.

"Growing up, you hear how important it is to vote," said Poly alumnus Juan Delgado. "Hopefully, it will make you be heard."

Dear Editor,

I think voting is the most important right given to any American citizen because the decision is in their hands. People need to realize that not every country gives the people the right to vote, the fact that we are allowed to vote should give people inspiration that we have certain rights that other people don't.

People need to vote especially is you're the type of person who is always complaining about schools, and work because if it's so bad then make a point and vote.

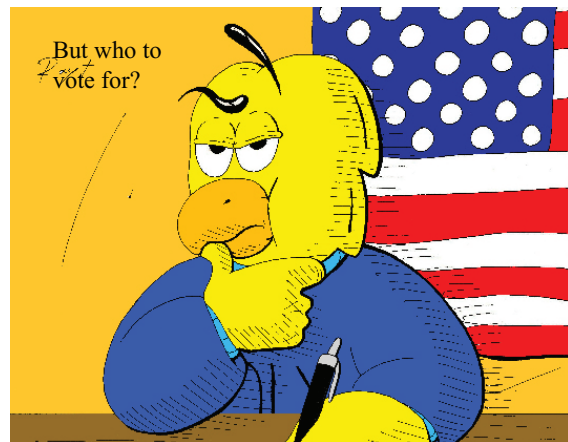
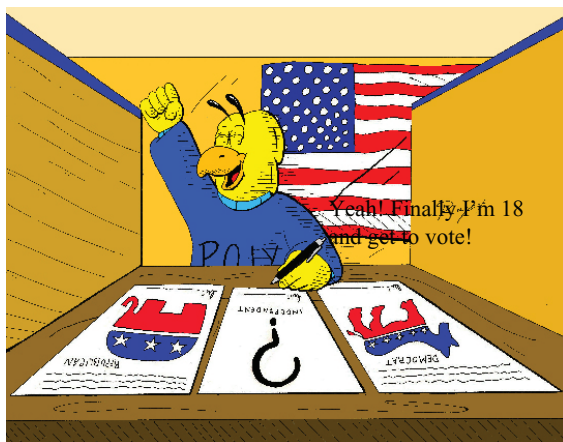
-Guadalupe Romero
11th grade

Dear Editor,

In these next presidential primaries I would like to say that I support both Democratic candidates, Senator Barack Obama, as well as senator Hillary Clinton. I support these two because they both have similar ideas but different goals. For example, Hillary Clinton has a lot of experience on the other hand, Obama does not. Obama is young and I believe we need a president with fresh blood and new ideas.

-Daniel Chavez
12th grade

Presidente? by Raymond Carillo



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
Fernando Marquez

Layout Editor
Jason Castro

Sports Editor
Erika Munoz

Photo Editors
Efrain Rodriguez
Micheal Obando

Writers:

Christian Banuelos,
Karinina Cruz, Su
Kang, Erika Munoz
Jocelyn Portales,
Kevin Portillo Julie
Umemoto, Gilberto
Vargas

Optimist Adviser
Ethel Matlen

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.

Sudoku!

8			9	3				2
		9					4	
7		2	1			9	6	
2							9	
	6						7	
	7				6			5
	2	7			8	4		6
	3					5		
5				6	2			8

Sudoku Instrutions

Complete the grid so each row, column, and 3x3 box contains every digit 1 to 9, Good luck solving this month’s puzzle!

SEMI-PRO

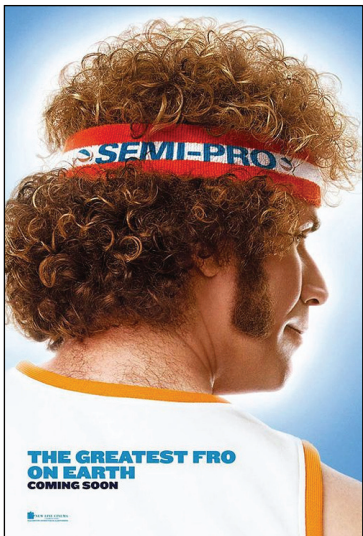
By Julie Umemoto
Staff Writer

The outstanding Will Ferrell plays Jackie Moon, a watered-down Disco Star who made his ultimate dream come true: owning his own basketball team. But Moon’s franchise is the worst team in the American Basketball Association (ABA). If that isn’t enough, he makes himself coach, power forward and Chief Promoter. Jackie Moon gathers his troops to make their NBA dreams come to pass.

Before Moon was in the league, he had a one hit song: “Love me sexy” that began his start in basketball. Jackie Moon rallies his teammates to make their NBA dreams come to pass.

One of the scenes that all moviegoers should look out for is the cage match with Jackie Moon and the BEAR. If that doesn’t immediately make to laugh, then you have no sense of humor.

The film is based on the year



Internet Photo

PRO: Will Ferrell at his best. of 1976 where that the people would dress up in colorful clothes and with afro hair do’s. If you’re into colors, wacky lingo and classic music, this movie is right up your ally.

This film could be for the people that like comedy and sports. There’s a lot of laughter with one of the funniest comedian.

Semi-pro has 15.3 million at the box-office, with a four stars rating.

Education Faces Uncertain Future

[UTLA from pg. 3]

and over two years at their position will be spared according to Linda Gordon, who is the UTLA chair for the greater East San Fernando Valley.

Gordon believes that budget cuts should begin downtown with unnecessary office positions which are becoming common in an ever growing bureaucracy.

Gordon said, “There is no way UTLA will accept pay cuts. Pay cuts at Poly are un-

acceptable. Teachers at Poly and other schools in LAUSD are some of the lowest paid in the country.”

UTLA had a recent victory in the payroll system with LAUSD which has until now either overpaid or underpaid many of the districts teachers creating chaos across the board.

Struggles in the educational system can be dated back to Brown v. the Board of education. “Welcome to the struggle,” said Goldberg.

From Russia With Love

By Kevin Portillo
& Gilbert Vargas
Staff Writers

Students may not be aware of the many faces of faculty and staff they see on a daily basis around campus. One man on Poly’s campus whose face may be familiar, but his story is unknown is Levon Yeganyan.

Yeganyan, 46, is the Technical Coordinator and an Poly educator.

Yeganyan was born the oldest child in a family of six in Baky, Azerbaijan. Due to the crumbling of the Soviet Union, Yeganyan moved to Moscow, Russia in 1989.

“I grew up fairly happy, education and health care were free,” said Yeganyan.

Yeganyan became intrigued with life in America after an American exhibition in Russia. The American Exhibition showed modern life in America, real estate and the education it has to offer. Yeganyan came to the United States alone in 1991. His family followed a few years later.

While living in Hollywood, Yeganyan found it hard to adapt in America only knowing about 15 English words. He learned English at



Photo by Fernando Marquez

FUN TECH: Yeganyan, computer expert and Wii player.

Evans Adult School in a VISA program, which he completed in1993.

“There was a former Linguistic Professor at UCSB that I found inspiring. His name was Armando Grant. He was American, but he was born in Mexico. He showed us that there are many sides to everything and life has many angles. He was very inspirational,” said Yeganyan.

Yeganyan earned his Bachelors in Chemistry at Azerbaijan University. Yeganyan received his Masters in Education in the field of computers and technology,

his 2nd Masters in Education in School Administration, and Teaching credentials in Physical Science, Math, and Computer Application at Cal State L.A.

Yeganyan taught at Audubon Middle School in Los Angeles and Hollywood High. Yeganyan chose Poly because “it’s a better place and he loves the kids.”

Yeganyan is married with two kids Stephanie,10, and Alexander, 6. He loves to play tennis, bowling, golf and even plays Nintendo Wii with his children. He always tries to teach his kids something new.

Coffee With the Principal

By Erika Munoz
Staff Writer

“Coffee with the principal” are regularly scheduled meetings held the first week of every month in the parent center, room 72. The principal or a designated assistant principal attends these meetings to discuss plans and concerns parents may have with the school community.

This month, Ari Bennett, AP, met with concerned parents to talk about plans Poly has for its growing number of Parrots.

Bennett said Poly’s goal

was first “to have all students pass the California exit exam (CAHSEE), and second to know that Poly did everything in the world possible to help them pass.”

Working with parents is a crucial part of Poly’s strategy to increase the number of students passing the CASHEE. Bennett stressed that parent’s participation and understanding of this goal was critical to Poly’s success.

Bennett presented the most recent data. Poly is currently at a 608 in the academic performance index (API). The goal

for the next accreditation in six years is to have Poly at an 800 API.

“I don’t believe Poly is a 600 API school, I believe, I know Poly is an 800 API school”, Bennett said.

Poly wants to increase its student scores 3-5% each year in basic, proficient and advanced in both English and math. This goal would decrease by 3-5% the number of students scoring basic, below basic, and far below basic.

Bennett said, “We know it’s an ambitious goal, however I know Poly can do it.”



Photo by Erika Munoz

CUPS OF JAVA: Parents share coffee with AP Ari Bennet.

Fresh Advantage

[Freshmen from Page 1]

The program is also designed to keep track of the students throughout their high school years.

“As of right now, we have a schedule set for 9th and 10th grade,” said Alatorre. “We’re also working to follow the students through their 11th and 12th grade.”



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

STIFF COMPETITION: *Sophomore Karina Garcia faces off with Fairfax runner in the 4x1 relay for girls.*

Parrots Dominate Lions at Meet

Poly vs. Fairfax Boys

The Poly Varsity Boys won 13 of the 15 events against Fairfax. The highlights were Stallone Watson’s 23 foot jump in the Long Jump. This is the city leading jump and will allow Watson’s entry into the Premier Invitational in April. Victor Gamboa took 1st in both the 110HH and 300HH. Michael Parks led both relays to impressive wins and he also won The Individual 400m Dash.

Girls

The Varsity Girls pulled out a close victory against Fairfax. The distance and field events were the difference for Poly. Freshman Diana Barba and Senior Alejandra Gallardo led the way with impressive performances.

Poly vs. Marshall Boys

The Poly varsity took their record to 2 wins 0 losses. The highlights were Victor Gamboa’s sweep of both the 300 hurdles and the 110 hurdles races. Stallone Watson’s sweep of the 400, 100, and 200 meter dash. Michael Parks great performance as the anchor in the 4x4. It was a massive team effort to hold off Marshall’s 138 athletes with just 35 Poly athletes.

Girls

The girls competed valiantly and showed their strong team work but lost to Marshall. The girls record is now 1win 1 loss. However, we can expect many great things from our lady parrots later in the season.

Pushing His Limits

By Kevin Portillo
Staff Writer

For over 23 years the Los Angeles Marathon has been one of the most grueling tests of endurance. For one Poly student, Brian Mayorga, this was just another test to prove to himself that he could do it. Mayorga trained from September through March. Mayorga, 15, ran a daunting 26.2 miles. The route started at Universal Studios, went past the Hollywood Bowl, through Boyle Heights on to downtown Los Angeles. Mayorga described the marathon as “A whole different feeling” and “extremely tiring” especially when he hit “The Wall”, the point of a runners ultimate exhaustion. Mayorga hit his wall around the 20th mile. Pushing his limits, Mayorga overcame his doubts with a time of 5:23 beating his previous time of 8:47. After passing the finish line, Mayorga’s first thought was “I’m starving” he said. To celebrate, Mayorga headed straight to Carl’s and bought a well-deserved \$6 dollar burger.



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

HARD-EARNED: *Mayorga*

Kennedy Edges out Parrots

Boy Parrots have 3 wins and 4 losses this far in the season.

By Michael Obando
Staff Writer

Poly’s varsity baseball team suffered a loss on March 11th to Kennedy high school with a final score of 3-2. Gustavo Garcia pitched for the entire game and struck out 2 players. Garcia also made 7 hits,

3 walks and 2 for 4 on the 8th inning. Tomas Cruz hit 2 for 4 with a double. Boys varsity currently has 3 wins and 4 losses and getting ready to play other schools including Grant, Cleveland, Verdugo and Chatsworth. The parrots will participate in a tournament in Vegas this spring break .



Photo by Michael Obando

ON THE MOUND: Gustavo Garcia pitches for varsity baseball. Parrots lost to Kennedy 3-2.