

The Poly Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

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JULY 2008

Vote '08

Candidates Court Latinos

By Esther Avalon
Staff Writer

An estimated 18 million Latinos are eligible to vote and as many as nine million might cast ballots in November. As a result, both Barack Obama and John McCain have been courting Latino voters during this year's presidential election.

Both presidential campaigns are emphasizing education, health care and housing as much as immigration and related border issues.

But the candidates' positions on the issues and their tone, however, are "markedly different," according to a New York Times article.

Obama's theme has been social justice and he said he supported legislation that would allow high school students who are illegal immigrants to go to college.

McCain appeals to Hispanics' "deep religiosity, strong and extended family ties and patriotism," the Times story said. He supports more free trade with Latin America and help for Latino small businesses.

Both candidates say they favor comprehensive change in immigration policy, but "there are differences in tone," according to the Times.

Obama wants to bring America's 12 million undocumented immigrants "in from the shadows." But McCain cautions that "there are two million criminals among that group."

"California is in the Obama column," the Times said. "Only Florida is regarded as up for grabs."

That means Latinos in small or medium-sized states like Colorado, Nevada and New Mexico could cast the deciding ballots.

Majestic Memories



Photo by Michael Obando

ALL SMILES NOW: Proud grads Karen Vega and Edsel Velasco with their Parrot diplomas.

Class of 2008 prepares to face the world

By Adriana Amaya
Staff Writer

With thousands of parents, family and friend cheering them on, approximately 860 Parrots received diplomas in an afternoon ceremony held on Poly's football field June 25.

"You see lots of kids at football games and other activities," said Poly interim principal Gerardo Loera, "but nothing is as satisfying or rewarding as seeing them in graduation. It's an extremely proud moment to see the students all there and excited, with their family and friends sitting in the bleachers."

Among the dignitaries who attended were former Sun Valley Middle School principal Jeff Davis, District 6 councilmember Tony Cardenas, LAUSD District 2 Superintendent Alma Sanchez and District 7 councilmember Richard Alarcon.

"Dr. Davis was proud to be here and watch his former Sun Valley Middle School

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SHADE AND SEATS

IT TAKES GREEN TO GET GREEN AND BLUE AND GOLD TOO.

By Belle Tadena & Karinina Cruz
Staff Writers

Trees aren't cheap and bleachers cost a bundle, but Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) has allocated a total of \$787,000 for campus landscaping and gymnasium renovations at Poly. Work is currently in progress and is slated for completion in August.

The greening project is budgeted at \$355,000 and the gym remodel and upgrade at \$432,000.

"The money came from a Measure R Bond and through a grant awarded to Poly by the

district," said Poly Technology Coordinator Levon Yeganyan.

The courtyard by the Administration office, the grassy area in front of the library and the area that runs along Peoria Street are undergoing environmental alterations. The areas are currently surrounded by chain link fence and green mesh screens to contain dust and noise

"Like the murals, the landscaping part of the beautification project will be more accommodating to the students," said Assistant Principal Cheryl Cohen-Thompson.

Workers from American Gardens Inc. will plant a total of 36 trees, 120 shrubs and

2,500 square feet of grass in the three areas.

"They are using native plants that don't need much water so we can beautify the

[continued on pg. 4]

Technology and the Tardy Sweep

By Hazel Kasusky
Staff Writer

Whether you're a student with a serious tardy history or one who's only been caught once or twice, you better get an alarm clock.

As of July 1, Poly's new

automated tardy sweep will tabulate and display each student's tardy history, notify parents by phone after the third tardy and speed up processing time.

The new program automat-

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Parrots Visit Dodger Stadium

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EDITORIAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

IT ALL STARTS WITH PRIDE

Parrots everywhere are making Poly a better place.

Over the years, Poly has seen much adversity. Low test scores. High absentee rates. Low graduation rates. Weekend tagging. Dangers on the streets. Stories we are very familiar with that make us think of Poly as a “ghetto” school.

But recently Poly has made a 180 degree turn in some important areas. We are fast becoming one of the best schools in the Valley and the District. Poly Parrots, we should be proud of the accomplishments and efforts we all put into the school.

This year the WASC people said we had improved so much that they gave us a six-year approval – the best you can get. We met our Annual Yearly Progress score and our API rose to 608, taking us out of the PI (program improvement) category. Last year we graduated more seniors than ever and absentee rates have been going down every year.

The campus has been undergoing a variety of facility upgrades and landscaping ad-

ditions that have and will improve our school’s appearance. We’re getting a bigger textbook room, brand new bleachers in the auditorium and new trees and shrubs around the campus. The football field has grass. We’ve even got a new mascot and the big guy has a girlfriend too.

Our sports program last year was great. The track team was undefeated, girls softball went 9-1 and the boys tennis team nearly made the playoffs. The varsity basketball team made a strong statement in a rebuilding year following three years of Poly domination of the Sunset League during the DJ era.

Most importantly, we have a caring staff and administration and a large group of spirited students that cooperate.

The old days are over and it’s time for all of us to take pride in our accomplishments. We’ve come a long way over the last six years or so and there’s nothing wrong with standing a little taller and smiling a little bigger.

Poly Pride thrives in the Valley.

“Poly Pride thrives in the Valley.”

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.

Dear Mr. Loera, Staff, and Parents,

Please accept my congratulations to the entire staff, students and parents whose hard work contributed to your six-year accreditation. This is a wonderful accomplishment.

If there is anything I can do to assist your school, please let me know.

Sincerely,
Julie Korenstein,
School Board Member

Parrot Comments On June Edition

I really liked the senior edition and wouldn’t change anything about it, just add more to it. The editor should consider putting horoscopes in the edition and adding more pictures. It’s not that the articles are not interesting they are but pictures attract more attention and overall stop being racist against cheer and put them in the Optimist.

Natalie Granado
Grade 12

I think that the senior edition is great. The Optimist has always been a great newspaper for our school. I don’t believe that the Optimist should change anything at all.

Dawna Cruz
Grade 11

The Optimist always has great news and pictures, but one thing that I would like to see more is football pictures. Game picture, practice pictures, and interviews with the players, before and after the games. I know this will be great because several players had said that it will be a little bit better with that included.

Freddy Jiles
Grade: 11

I liked the senior edition. I felt like it was really involved with everything that was most important to the seniors. And that is what it’s supposed to be about. I loved the page that was full of pictures because they get to take with them some memories. Everything

What I liked about the senior edition was all the pictures. They really bring back great memories and remind us of all the fun times we had. Another feature that I enjoyed in the senior edition was the senior map, telling what schools accepted our fellow classmates. It’s a real honor to see our school getting accepted into Ivy League schools. The top ranked schools in the nation.

What I would like to see in our senior edition is something similar to this one. I would say more sports pictures and a few more interviews on seniors and how they feel about their past years.

Sara Villanueva
Grade 12



I would like to see more information about college and jobs. We need this information to start getting ready for graduation, especially how our senior year is the most expensive. I would also like to see all the events that are coming up for senior year and how much its gonna cost and where we can get the tickets or more information about it.

Manuel Rosales
Grade 12

The paper is good. Paper feels like newspaper. Everything’s informative and interesting.

Jesus Duarte
Grade 12

in this issue interested me. I really enjoyed it.

Brenda Romero
Grade 12

I would like to see more things about the students and less about the teachers because most students read this and only a few teachers do so it’s better to have more exciting stories or more real and shocking news like the Chimpo story. Oh, and I loved the Prom pictures.

Cynthia Lemus
Grade 12

I enjoy reading The Optimist because it always keeps me updated on what goes on in Polywood and in our community. The senior edition was a nice ending to the senior fairytale. Even though it was good, I would like to see more personality and flavor for our year. It would be more of an honor to recognize more students for good grades, best GPA’s and more sports recognitions.

Kimberly Avalos
Grade 12

Poly's award-winning student newspaper featured on local TV network.



Photo by Michael Obando

INTERVIEWED: KWHY Channel 22 reporter Diana Alvarado talks to staff member Esther Avelar in the OPTIMIST newsroom about Avelar's story on the upcoming presidential election.

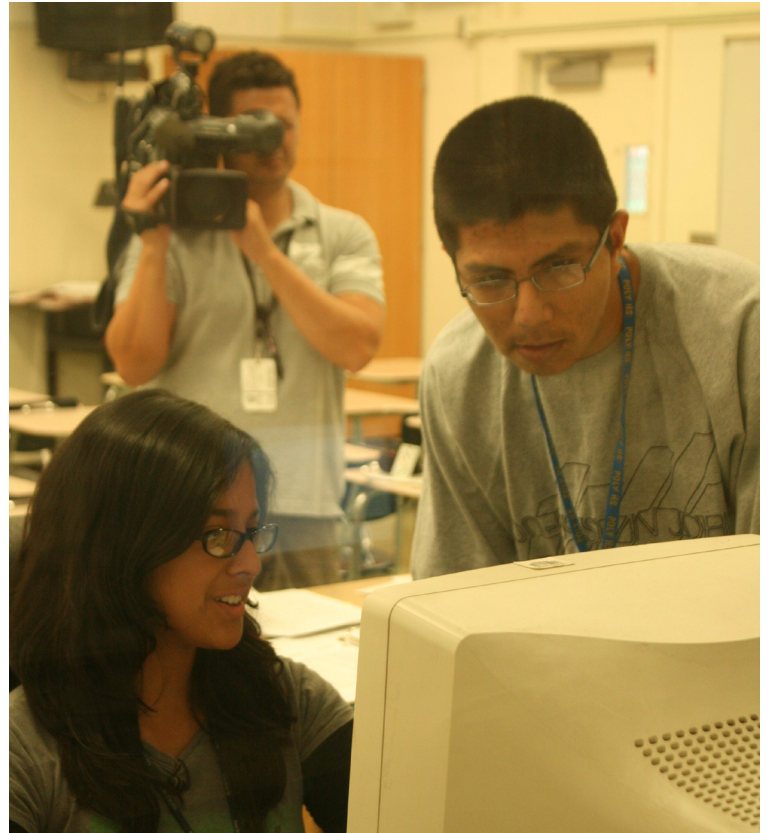


Photo by Michael Obando

FILMING STUDENTS: OPTIMIST reporters Esther Avelar and Angel Silva discuss a story while cameraperson Cesar Victoria films the pair for a KWHY segment.

OPTIMIST Makes News

By Adriana Amaya
Staff Writer

Cable personality Diana Alvarado of Spanish KWHY Channel 22 interviewed two members of Poly's OPTIMIST

staff last Tuesday for a feature on the student newspaper and its first place American Scholastic Press Association awards.

"The program, 'Miercoles De Exitos,' is a special segment

that airs every Wednesday," said Alvarado. "We recognize the efforts of students in Los Angeles."

The station interviewed OPTIMIST journalists Esther Avelar and Angel Silva about the award and their work as reporters.

"They were interested in our award and what we did to deserve it," said Silva. "I told them that it was an honor to receive such prestigious recognition."

"We also talked about what we did on the OPTIMIST," added Avelar, "like what happens in the class. We discussed the writing, the photography, the subjects, the stories we do."

Poly's journalists were excited about appearing on television.

"It was pretty cool getting to be on air and seeing that the work we do here for the OPTIMIST is being recognized outside the Poly community," said Silva. "It makes us glad to see that we do make a difference."

The KWHY crew filmed the OPTIMIST staff working on the July issue. The program aired Wednesday, July 16 on channel 22 at 10 p.m.



Photo by Michael Obando

ANCHOR: KWHY reporter Diana Alvarado and her news crew came to Poly to do a story on the OPTIMIST and its recent first place journalism award from the American Scholastic Newspaper Association. The TV interview ran Wednesday, June 16.

Get Your Game On

Poly math teacher Cesar Felix has a club for videogamers.

By Angel Silva
Staff Writer

His passion for videogames began with an Atari and continued throughout college. Now, 9th grade math teacher Cesar Felix sponsors a videogame club after school, where he shares his enthusiasm for gaming with others at Poly.

"It's like an after-school program to keep kids doing something productive instead of hanging out in the streets," said Felix. "It should be pretty cool."

Students will learn about colleges that offer videogame careers, like the DigiPen Institute of Technology, which is in partnership with Nintendo of America Inc., and USC, which has a new gaming program. Felix hopes the club will also inform and excite students about careers in the videogame industry.

"My hope is that the students will have fun playing games, while at the same time

have something productive to do after school," Felix said.

He first offered the course during the '05-'06 school year.

"Some of those kids that had this class are in college now getting degrees in the videogame field," said Felix.

Students in the class also talk about game design and learn how to work on programming games.

"The second semester, students can mess around with level editors, or learn to test and give feedback," Felix said.

Besides playing and designing videogames, students will learn what makes a game good or bad.

A bad game, for example, would be one with "broken gameplay," not allowing the player to do something the game is supposed to do.

A good game, on the other hand, is one that's fun. A game that a player can pick up and learn right away, a game with a good storyline and one takes a long time to beat are characteristics of good games.

Felix, who came to Poly in 2002, says he's still got the Atari.

Dramatic Career for Drama Teacher

By Angel Silva
& Cristian Vergara
Staff Writers

The OPTIMIST asked new drama teacher Katrina Kalatzis to talk about herself and her class. Here's what she said about herself.

"I've always been a little dramatic. I was in ballet. I've been dancing since I was four or five. I've been in 'The Nutcracker' three or four times."

I've been interested in the theatre since the fourth grade, when I was the hare in the production of "The Tortoise and the Hare", which I performed fabulously. And then I learned more in Hamilton High School, which had a large performing arts Magnet. My mother was in charge of the dance program, so I was always there with her, learning about the stage, and we'd always go see the productions that they put on."

I was pretty involved in drama in junior high and high school, and I decided to pursue it further in college.

My major at NYU was

educational theatre drama, so most of my background is drama. When I got out of college I did a lot of technical stuff in things such as the reality TV show 'The Contender' and intern work in '6 Feet Under' and 'The Legend of Zorro.'

I worked in the theatre as a set dresser. Most of what I did was moving furniture on a stage, sometimes choosing the things that would go on the stage."

"For 'The Contender' I was part of the art department that designed the challenges. We had to make the challenges happen. Most of the time was spent researching, staying up all night for a 6 a.m. shoot. For a while we were working 7 days a week."

"When I was working for 'Six Feet Under,' I was kind of like a shopper, so the prop master would send me with lists of things for the scenes. We got a lot of the stuff from eBay."

"'Zorro' was neat. I had to do a lot of research on slingshots. We needed to look for what a slingshot in the 1800's looked like. We got the information from the world's largest slingshot collector."

"I worked with a lighting company in Hollywood. From there I worked for a Catholic high school in lighting and for



Photo by Michael Obando

UNDER SIX FEET: Poly drama teacher Katrina Kalatzis worked in television and film before joining the Poly faculty.

stage crew."

"I've done some theater in L.A., mostly smaller stuff."

"The last thing I did was a couple of weeks on 'Flavor of Love,' shopping, dressing for that show."

"The show that made me leave the entertainment industry was 'Entourage.'"

"My parents have always been supportive in pretty much everything I've tried to do. But I'd say that my parents were more nervous about me

becoming a teacher than they were about me working in the entertainment industry."

"In the last real show I acted in, I played an old Chinese man. The play was called 'Dragonwings.' The director chose to have a non-traditional cast, except I was the only one non-traditional."

"It was definitely a challenge. There even was a picture of me in a Korean newspaper."

Here's what she said about her class.

What will a student learn in a drama class?

Fundamentals of theatre, how to feel comfortable on stage, various parts and types of stages

Is drama an elective? Taught on all three tracks?

Yes, it's requirement F - performance arts. There are performance art classes on all tracks but not necessarily drama.

What textbook do you use?

The textbook is called "Everything About Theatre" and covers things like the history of theatre, technical parts of the stage

Can anybody get an "A" or does a student have to have a natural ability? Is your grading objective or subjective?

I grade by seeing if everyone works to the best of their ability, participates, and turns in some writing assignments. I try to balance the objective and subjective in my grading although I make my class more academic than it should be.

Auto Sweep

[continued from pg. 1]

ically records each unexcused tardy, keeps track of all previous tardies and automatically calls the student's parents with the third offense. Principal Gerardo Loera, Science teachers Jin Ho Lee and Hannah Gabriel, English teacher James Deschenes and Attendance Dean Hardip Singh developed the program, which has been in place since May.

The program uses computer technology to replace the time-consuming paperwork process. Tardy students now are processed quicker and sent to class sooner. Under the old system, students would stand in a long line during class time, waiting to be processed.

The process begins when a student's ID barcode is scanned. The student's photo and tardy history appear on

BLEACHERS FOR POLY SAY "POLY"



Photo by Michael Obando

PLEASE BE SEATED: Plastic, individual-seat bleachers by Hussey Seating spell "POLY."

[continued from pg. 1]

school without spending too much money," said Cohen-Thompson.

The bleachers in the Blue Gym have been replaced with individual hard plastic seating.

"The old bleachers in the gym were 30% broken," said interim principal Gerardo Leora. "There wasn't much to dismantle."

Hussey Seating Company, who specializes in top quality seating, supplied the blue and yellow plastic bleachers. The yellow portion of the seats will spell "POLY."

"The district periodically does project like this," said assistant principal David Sanchez, "and it is our turn."

the computer screen. The Attendance Dean then prints a receipt which serves as a pass to allow the student in to class. This takes approximately one to two minutes.

The program also tabulates statistical data and graphs the

average number of tardies in a given time period. The data collected so far show that most students are tardy for first and aren't during 2nd or 3rd.

Singh advised teachers to close their doors and not allow students to enter without the

appropriate pass.

The success of the automated tardy sweep program depends on how it is used, however.

"I make the tools," said Lee. "Singh is the artist."

Graphic Illustrator
Wanted!
See Mr. Blau in Rm. 11

A Yen for China

Poly's Darcey Whitmore ate healthy and made friends while teaching English in China.

By Juan Aragon
& Sergio Partida
Staff Writers

Q: How did you get your job in China?

A: "Well I knew some friends from the states who worked there with a non-profit organization that helps people. I wanted to go to China to teach English, so I asked them to help me find a job there. So they went around to the universities and the private schools and they found a private school where they really wanted an English teacher."

Q: Where did you live and where did you teach?

A: Kuan Ming. The name of the school is Odies Language School

Q: How did you get to work?

A: "Actually I rode my bike a lot and I also took the bus."

Q. Do you speak Chinese?

"A little bit, I had this private tutor for a few months before I got there, and then I would ask friends to help me with vocabulary and practice with them. I didn't get to a very high level, probably mostly because I was teaching and I didn't have that much time and energy to be a student, but I tried to just learn the basics so I could communicate and get out."

Q. How many people in China speak English?

"It depends on their level of education and where they live. If you go to a place like Beijing and Shanghai, many people are going to speak English. My city, it was not the norm to speak English. A lot of the college students spoke English because they were in a generation where it is important to speak English for jobs and so forth. But the average person did not know English."

Q. Did you teach in English?

"Yes, they wanted me to speak all English. So even if they were beginners, I would speak all English and use a lot of strategies to help them figure out what I was saying like act things out."

Q. Compare education in China to the U.S.

"There is a lot of emphasis on memorizing facts and information. I think here there's more emphasis on thinking creatively and expressing yourself."

Q. Compare life in China to America?



Photo courtesy of Darcey Whitmore

IT'S A SMALL WORLD: Parrot faculty member Darcey Whitmore's Chinese students pose for a class photo. Whitmore taught English for two years in Hunning, known as the "Spring City" because it's supposedly spring all year long.

"In America we are definitely taught from when we are children that we have a lot of rights, and we have freedom of speech, so we can be encouraged to think independently. We are encouraged to say what we think, to speak out for ourselves."

In China, there is more emphasis on being loyal to the government. It's a communist system still, so you are not supposed to disagree or speak out against the government. I think that the people that I was friends with tended to keep those thoughts to themselves if they had things they didn't agree with in terms of the government's decisions of the way society is run. They tended to talk about personal things, their families, and their jobs. The atmosphere is a little bit different because here, not only we are allowed to speak out and say we disagree about things, but we are encouraged."

Q. Did you eat all Chinese food?

"I ate a lot of Chinese food. The Chinese food there is different, a lot of vegetables and rice and a little bit of meat. It was very good and really healthy and whenever I was at home I cooked American food."

Q. Was it difficult to adjust to China and then readjust to the States?

"Umm, actually I liked the life style because I got a lot of exercise. I walked and rode my bike almost everywhere, so it was more active. For me living in LA, I find myself driving everywhere. It's hard to find time for exercise, but it's just life here. The diet, the people eat a lot less and eat a lot of healthy stuff, so

its just a lot easier to eat healthy. Here it's 'oh I forgot to exercise' or 'ugh, I'm eating fast food again.'

I enjoyed the life style. They're not as busy. It's more relaxed. It's the kind of culture, umm where they're not as focused on time like here, things just take as long as they take. Like if you are with a friend you just stay until you're finished talking. Here it might be like I have to leave by 8 o'clock because at 8 o'clock I have something else. There, it's more flexible in time. Lunch hours are two hours long. It's important to them that people have enough time to rest."

Q. What did you do on weekends?

"I think the main things we did is go eat. There are a lot of good restaurants and shopping. Things are very cheap because you can barter; you never pay the price they ask. So you can go around and find the best bargain and argue. I would go to my friend's house and watch DVDs. All the DVDs there were pirated. Movies you could get for about 70 cents, movies that just came out and you know it's illegal. On the other hand it's actually pretty hard to find legal DVDs. I'm sure that most of what I bought was probably illegal."

Q. What was the weather like?

"There's a big difference depending on where you live, I was lucky because the city I lived in is called the Spring City. It's a special city; it's kind of a tourist area, and people like it because it's supposedly spring all year long. It was up in the mountains. It was up in a plateau. The weather was really cold in the winter, but compared to other parts

of China it was very mild."

Q. Describe your living quarters?

"Ok, I lived in a couple places. The apartments were pretty nice and like pretty small and simple, like hardwood floors, a basic kitchen, they didn't usually have ovens. They have a stove top with a gas burner and have like a refrigerator and a sink. They don't really bake so there's no need for one. Bathrooms, the modern apartments have western toilets like here, the older ones have squatty-potties, it's like a hole on the floor with porcelain around it and you have to squat over it. So for the foreign teachers, the school made sure we got the kind of toilets we were used to. So for the shower there's a showerhead, but no shower, so the water gets all over the bathroom and you have to mop up afterwards. The whole bathroom was the shower."

Q. Did anyone come to visit?

"Yes, I had a couple of friends who just wanted to see China and be like tourists, so they came and visited me and then my dad actually came. He's been wanting to see China, so we went around to some sites like the Great Wall."

Q. Your most memorable experience in China was . . .

"You know, I have a lot of memories of eating Hot Pot with friends and Hot Pot is when you go to a restaurant and there is a hot boiling pot with fire under it and you just choose the vegetables, the noodles, and the meat that you want and it's really fun because all of your friends are eating out of the pot for hours, talking."

GRADUATION '08

"You cannot uneducate the person who has learned to read."

-Cesar Chavez



Photo by Michael Obando

WHEW: Confetti flies and caps dot the sky as Parrots celebrate their last day at Poly.

"Here at Poly you acquired many tools and skills that will help you become successful. These hard earned tools and skills will be a great asset in your potential endeavors. However, I sincerely hope that all of you will not pass up the opportunity to further your own education by attending a post-secondary institution."

-Gerardo Loera

75% of Poly graduates will pursue higher degrees.

Over 300 will attend Mission, Valley and Pierce Colleges.

Over 300 will attend Cal State universities like Northridge, Cal State LA and Dominguez Hills.

Almost 200 will attend UCLA, UC Berkeley, UC Irvine, UC San Diego and other UCs.



Photo by Michael Obando

THE LOOK: Sunglasses were the order of the day for this group of graduating Parrot seniors.



Photo by Michael Obando

WHEN DOVES FLY: Poly's Thursday afternoon graduation ceremony included the traditional release of the doves.



Photo by Michael Obando

GUEST OF HONOR: Interim Principal Gerardo Loera and former Sun Valley Middle School Principal Jeff Davis at Poly's 2008 commencement exercise.

Sport Profile

KATZ LEADS TWO LIVES

By Brianda Lopez
Staff Writer

Poly History teacher Brad Katz, who won 59 games coaching the DJ Gay-led varsity basketball team at Poly, is now associate head coach at Pierce College in Woodland Hills. The OPTIMIST sat down with Katz recently to see how he is doing in his new position.

Q: You had a great run at Poly. How big was that in getting the position at Pierce?

It helped. The facts are the last 3 years we had very good team players which allowed me as a coach to be seen by many other coaches."

Q: Did you pursue the Pierce position or did they come to you?

Two and one-half years ago they asked if I was interested, I said no, because I had a team and wanted to stay with the seniors. Told them that if they were still interested to come back and talk in March of 07. they came back in March of 07 and I started coaching at pierce in April of 07."

Q: After all of your success at Poly, why leave?

I believe when you have a dream you should pursue it. I have always wanted to be a college coach and Pierce gave me the chance to do it. I know that if I want to go back to high school one day I have the ability to do so. I do not want to coach only at Pierce I would like to coach one day at the University level.

Q: How many players went to Pierce with you from the 2007 team and who are they?

There are three players from 07- Santiago Moreno [55], Mike Rojas [33] and Justin Cubias[44]. One player from 06- Ever Lopez [21].

Q: How are they doing at Pierce?

All are doing well. Ever is one of top point guards in the state. Mike and Justin are all top prospects in southern California.

Q: How big was the step up to college coaching for you? What new challenges did you face?

The change wasn't very much. Only thing is that the athletes are bigger, stronger, and faster players. The biggest challenge is to get the players to do extra work outside of basketball like fundraising and making sure they get to class on a regular basis."

Q: How many players on the Pierce team? Who's good? How did the Poly players fit in? How many Poly players on the varsity squad?

The team will have 12 players, and three or four redshirting. The Poly players fit in well, they work hard, play hard, are well accepted, know what I expect from them, so it was an easy transition."

Q: How did your first season go?

First season didn't go as planned. Before season started, we had a couple of guys injured that didn't get to play. We also had transfer students that couldn't get to play either. Two guys' grades weren't good enough, so they couldn't play either. We also didn't win as many games as we hoped to, but were able to develop a lot of the young players for this coming season.

Q: What coaches do you work with at Pierce? You came over as assistant coach is that right? How supportive has the school been?

Coach Babayan and Coach Edwardson. I came over as assistant coach and then got promoted to associate head coach. The school has been very supportive of me and the basketball team.

Q: Tell us a little bit about the basketball program at Pierce. How successful have they been?

The program was restarted about six years ago. It's a program to be competitive within conference as well as state. Haven't been measured in win or losses but how many players we have gotten scholarships to play at the next level.

Q: What are your expectations for this season?



Photo by Michael Obando

KUNG FU TEACHING: Parrot teacher Brad Katz splits his time between teaching at Poly and coaching at Pierce.

Win 18-20 games and make the playoffs. Official practice starts Oct. 15, but we'll practice during the summer. All four Poly players are playing on the team.

Q: Most coaches say defense wins games. What are your thoughts on the subject?

I believe defense wins games, championships, and is the key

to basketball success. Defense creates offense, therefore we stress defense in practice the majority of the time.

Q: What do you enjoy about coaching basketball?

The competition, challenge to inspire young adults to reach new goals and challenge themselves to be something they didn't think they could be.

Q: Can halftime talks make a difference?

Yes. At half-time we talk about the first half and how we can fix what didn't go right. This is done through a variety of techniques, some mellow done by talking and some not so mellow done by yelling.

Q: Some coaches save timeouts. What is your strategy on timeouts?

I use them when necessary. Sometimes use them one minute into the game and save some for end of game.

Q: Who was your role model when you were a kid?

My mom because she has been in a wheelchair for 22 year but she always found a way to provide my brother and me with necessities, even when times were tough. Also my grandfather who passed away when I was 16, because he did the most he could to make everyone around him happy.

COMMENCEMENT

[continued from pg. 1]

student's graduate from Poly" said Loera. "He also gave recognition to Byrd and Dr. Gerald Horowitz (current Byrd principal), who was there as well. It was a very proud moment for him to be here too. It was an exciting and satisfying moment for them to be here and see the ceremony."

The air was filled with graduation speeches, the traditional release of white doves and a number of beach balls. The speeches were short but the reading of names was lengthy. Loera looked on the bright side.

"You want these kinds of challenges," he said, "of reading names and handing out diplomas. It's all organized for parents and family members to hear their kid's voice said out loud and to see them graduate in a big celebration."

If the next graduating class is larger, Loera said, Poly may have to find another location to seat all the guests.

Senior dues and LAUSD funds paid for the Thursday afternoon ceremony, according to assistant principal Jose Loza, who coordinated this year's event. And some TLC was used to get green grass on the field, a rarity at Poly.

"Yes, we actually had real grass on the field for the ceremony," said assistant principal Ari Bennett. "It took about a month to grow."

Four policemen and 12 staff members helped with tickets and security, according to Loza.

"The graduating class of 08' achieved some very remarkable things this year," Loera said, "and I'm confident they will do well in their universities, colleges, or whatever else they are doing. Students are getting better and better every year. They should all be proud of themselves."

Poly Sports in Review

Sport - Softball

Coach - Manny Peralta

Season - 9-1 league 12 -10 season

Veteran softball coach Manny Peralta, who completed his 8th season at Poly, said this year's team had a fairly successful year.

"I wouldn't say the squad improved. But we've maintained the quality of our play. Our goals are always to win as many games as possible and take the league title."

Senior Carol Hernandez was a key player all year, Peralta said.

"Players like her, you can see their love for the sport."

Peralta, who also coached football, said his style has melted over the years

"I came from a football background, beginning in '86. I came in to softball with a dictatorship style, but now instead of imposing ideas on people, I listen more. The players have gotten some ownership."

His philosophy has changed too.

I used to be a 'winning is everything' coach, but now that I'm older, I realize winning isn't everything."

"I do hate losing," Peralta quickly added.

Peralta said he wishes for what most coaches do.

"Every coach wants more talent. More time to work with my athletes. And more competitive athletes."

He'd also like a little more support from Parrots.

"My biggest problem, we don't get as much acknowledgment as basketball, football, etc. But we play for ourselves, and the love of the game."

Poly's softball team will have seven returners for next year's team.

"We are a team that's going try to win the league each year. I have excellent players, so less than a league title this year will be a disappointment."

Sport - Baseball

Coach - Chuck Schwal

Season - 11-4 league, 18-13 season

Varsity baseball coach Chuck Schwal called his 15th season with the Parrots "a fun year," but said it was his last as Parrot head coach.

"I quit coaching because of all the other things that surround baseball, the fundraising, the field management, etc," Schwal said.

Still, Schwal said he was pleased with how the year went.

"We didn't reach the ultimate goal of winning the city playoffs, but we made it to the first round."

Schwal cited pitcher Oscar Soriano as the key player for the Parrot squad this season.

"Oscar Soriano was the one who stepped up pitching-wise and made us a lot stronger."

A string of six losses in late March-early April spoiled a 6-3 start and put the Parrots below .500.

"We lost our first three games," Schwal said, "and that's what cost us not winning league."

But Poly ended the regular season by winning its last six games and nine of their last 10 before losing a 1-0 nail-biter to Chatsworth. Chatsworth went on to take the city title.

"The playoffs were great and the team finally came through. We got the most out of the pitchers, ultimately, at the end we did."

Schwal said this was his last season as head coach and while he'll turn over the coaching chores to a new face, he still has some goals to reach in baseball.

"My 15 years here coaching were great, the best years of my life, tremendous, and I'm most definitely not tired of baseball."

Schwal offered some advice for next year's squad, which he said needs to be more consistent.

"The upcoming players better love baseball," Schwal said. "If they continue to work hard though, the team should have a great year."

Sport - Basketball

Coach - Dave Bonino

Season - 4-6 in league 10-18 season

This was a rebuilding year for Bonino, after three dominating seasons under coach Brad Katz and star guard DJ Gay.

"I thought we played to our potential," Bonino said. "We played at our level of experience."

The only player from last year's squad was shooting guard Albert Aranda, Jr.

This year things will be a bit better, Bonino says.

"There are 7 returners on varsity. We'll be contending for

the league title and most definitely make the playoffs"

Gay, now a sophomore at San Diego State, says he's currently doing a lot of training, getting ready for next season. He had a bit of advice for the Parrot players.

"I gave the team all my effort while I was at Poly and it prepared me to go to college and play well there," Gay said. "I want to motivate the players to never give up. If you want it, you gotta work it. Follow your dreams."

Behind the Scenes at Dodger Stadium

By Angel Silva
Staff Writer

Poly Special Ed teacher and former Dodger vice-president Barry Stockhamer took 120 juniors and seniors to Dodger Stadium on June 30 for a two-hour behind-the-scenes look at the Dodger organization.

"Everyone had a great time," Stockhamer said. "They saw things that you can't see as a fan. It was a private, behind-the-scenes tour for Poly students only."

Poly Athletic Director Kim McEwen and SLC Coordinator Cheryl Cohen-Thompson organized the field trip for students of the SPORT/EHS Small Learning Community (SLC).

The group left Poly at 9

a.m. and got to the stadium at 10 a.m. Although there was no game that day, the students got to go to every corner of the stadium.

"We went in a room where the players and coaches meet, and then we went to the press box where the media sits," said Stockhamer. "We also went to the private restaurant right in front of home plate."

The Ambassador's Club, a Dodger public relations department responsible for special guests, hosted the Parrot visit. Poly students also had an opportunity to talk about sports and job opportunities with Dodgers executives April Thompson, Josh Rawach, and Mark Langell.

"They heard from people

of all ages," said Stockhamer. "The message was to have a passion for their work."

"Everyone had a great time," Stockhamer said. "All the kids told us they appreciated that Poly High could do this for them. We got a lot in, we saw a lot. It was a memorable experience."

Stockhamer, in his third year in Poly's Special Ed department, spent 30 years with the Dodgers organization and eventually became their vice president of marketing.

"I oversaw all the promotions, all the sponsorships, fundraising, etc.," Stockhamer said.

Stockhamer worked with Mitsubishi in the development of the Diamond Vi-



Photo courtesy of Barry Stockhamer

FIELDERS: SPORT SLC students and staff on the field at Dodger Stadium during a break in their behind-the-scenes visit. The outing was coordinated by Poly faculty member and former Dodger marketing exec Barry Stockhamer.

sion TV screen and designed the 'Think Blue' sign above Dodger Stadium, among other innovations.

Since arriving at Poly, Stockhamer has put together a number of events at Dodger Stadium for Parrots.