

# The Poly Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

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SERVING THE POLY COMMUNITY SINCE 1913

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Politics '09

## LAUSD Cuts Continue

By Angel Silva  
Editor In-Chief

The Los Angeles Board of Education approved a new round of budget cuts at a June 23 meeting totaling \$1.6 billion for the next three years.

"Passing this budget makes me sick to my stomach," board member Yolie Flores Aguilar told the Los Angeles Times.

The cut means layoffs for an estimated 4,200 teachers and maintenance workers and the possible elimination of programs such as summer school and kindergarten in the next few years.

The new budget includes a \$700 million reduction this year that will affect summer school programs and arts classes already hurt by previous cuts. LAUSD also approved slashing the budget in areas such as transportation, professional development and training for new teachers.

Cuts scheduled for LAUSD's 09-10 fiscal year are estimated at \$143 million. Most summer school offerings were canceled for this year, saving the district almost \$34 million.

When federal stimulus money runs out in 2011-12, officials plan to chop another \$844 million from the budget if LAUSD does not receive other funding by then.

According to UTLA President A.J. Duffy, union officials have not approved any cuts or changes in schedule. Duffy stated that the recent reductions would have a damaging effect.

"The quality of education in this district will most assuredly go down," said Duffy.

Superintendent Ramon C. Cortines has suggested adding a parcel tax on next spring's ballot to offset some of the cuts.



"Find your personal voices, conduct yourself with integrity and watch what happens!"

-Principal Gerardo Loera



Photos by Hazel Kasusky

## Girls State Conference Develops Leadership

California girls learn government at the state level.

By Hazel Kasusky  
Layout Editor

Five hundred junior girls, representing high schools from all over California, attended Girls State 2009 at Pitzer College in Claremont from June 27 to July 2.

Girls State is a six-day summer program in 41 states offering instruction in state government. Girls run for office, write for the paper or perform in the talent show or orchestra. Funding is provided by American Legion Auxiliary posts.

"Girls State is one of the best American Legion Auxil-

iary programs that we have," said Aurora Ordunez of the Ladies Auxiliary Post 520. "Students learned so much about the government that we have."

Girls State is also a chance to make long-lasting friendships.

"Girl Staters" came from all over California and represented a diversity of ethnic groups, although the majority was Caucasian.

"California's Girls State is the most diverse," said Ashlie Burroughs, Girls State Alumnae Foundation president.

Each attendee signed in to a dorm and was assigned a "city" with a theme, such as pirate, Martian, or heart theme. Each

[ See Girls State, pg 7 ]

## Zodiacs Graduate

By Angel Silva  
Editor In-Chief

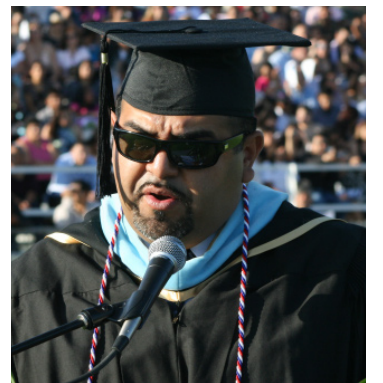
Nearly 730 Poly seniors received high school diplomas in a ceremony held Friday, June 26 on the Poly football field with family, friends and staff looking on.

"I think I see a lot of the students believing in themselves," said Principal Gerardo Loera.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Gustavo Gonzalez, M.D., a Poly alumni (Class of 1995) and former faculty member.

"His message to the graduating class was that it's important to stay focused and to do well in your education," said Loera, "and that the challenges that one faces will lead them to success."

Twenty-one valedictorians were honored for achieving GPAs of 4.0 or higher. Among them was Sara Villanueva, who gave the valedictorian address.



ADDRESS: Principal Loera speaks at 2009's graduation.

ink three consecutive winning seasons.

In his presentation, Principal Loera stressed the importance of perseverance.

"Everyone has challenges," Loera told the seniors. "Everyone has some obstacle standing in the way of achieving his or her goals. The successful person does not allow circumstances to stop them."

Nearly a third of the graduates will be heading right back to school in the fall.

"I am proud to say that an unprecedented 195 college acceptance letters from four-year universities were mailed home to our graduating seniors," said Loera.

Destinations for graduating Parrots include UC Berkeley, UCLA, Dartmouth, M.I.T. and Brown University.

"This was Poly's 100th graduating class since the school opened," Loera noted.

Poly, the second oldest high school in Los Angeles, opened in 1905.



4.0: Playmaker guard Sara Villanueva gives valedictorian speech at Zodiac graduation.

Along with her academic achievements, Villanueva led the Lady Parrots basketball team to a 12-0 record in the East Valley League for the 2008-2009 season. The playmaker guard was also the recipient of numerous basketball awards, including the Farmers Student Athlete Citizen Award. Head coach Tremeka Batiste used Villanueva's leadership and basketball smarts to



Using Yale's Money

See Page 3



South of the Border

See Page 4



Long Live the King

See Page 8



EDITORIALS

## Legalizing Marijuana: A Dopey Idea

On February 23, San Francisco's Tom Amiano introduced a bill that would tax and regulate marijuana. The Marijuana Policy Project launched television ads promoting passage of the bill.

So what would legalizing marijuana mean for Californians?

According to California Board of Equalization Chair Betty Yee, taxing marijuana can help pay off \$1.3 billion of California's budget deficit.

Legal marijuana should also drive out the illegal dealers and decrease crimes associated with the activity.

Only those 21 and over could legally purchase marijuana.

But what about health issues? We have been

taught since we were kids that marijuana, like many other drugs, is unhealthy.

People diagnosed with HIV/AIDS, epilepsy, or undergoing chemotherapy are prescribed marijuana to help relieve pain.

Beyond its use as a pain reliever, however, marijuana is still harmful to patients and those around them.

Regulation will be difficult. Dealers selling marijuana illegally will find it easier to distribute their product since it's "OK."

People driving under the influence of marijuana may cause more car accidents.

The harmful effects of legal marijuana greatly outweigh the benefits to the general health and welfare of the public.



## Challenged

Principal Gerardo Loera has challenged the 9th Grade Center's Ari Bennet to a 50-yard dash on the track July 31st at lunch. Tickets are \$1. Proceeds go to the Freshmen Center, 10th Grade Center, and Senior Council.

## Beating the Cyber Bully

Social networking on the internet is extremely popular. But it can also be extremely harmful.

Missouri mother Lori Drew and her middle school teen Sarah created a fake MySpace profile under the name Josh Evans. They began sending romantic messages to Megan Meier, 13, a classmate of Sarah's.

"Josh" and Megan developed an online "relationship" and Josh assured Meier he loved her. Then, the fictitious boy sent Meier a cruel message, telling her "the world would be better without you." Devastated, Meier, who had a history of depression, committed suicide the same day.

Any social network user can pretend to be someone else. Some people, especially teens, understand the danger and still fall for pho-nies.

Thirty-three percent of teens using social networks are victims of cyber bullying, according to i-Safe Inc, a non-profit organization specializing in internet safety. Some argue that social networking causes poor grades, emotional spirals, poor self-esteem, school absences, depression and sometimes suicide.

Only 38% of cyber bully victims talk to someone about their situation and the situation

gets better for about half of those, according to i-Safe.

Social networking users must be cautious. Anyone can use one of the services, including an impostor intent on bullying others.

Lori Drew was charged with violating a federal statute regarding illegally accessing a computer and found guilty in November of 2008, but a federal judge dismissed the charge on July 2 of this year. For the present, punishment for cyber bullying won't come from our legal system.

While legal and computer fraud experts say application of the federal Computer Fraud and Abuse Act, passed in 1986, has increased with the growth of social networking on the Internet, the Drew cases suggests that the legal system won't do anything about cyber bullying.

The Media Awareness Network recommends that parents monitor their teens' online activities. By taking an active role, parents can prevent cyber bullying and even save the life of someone vulnerable to hurtful comments.

No one is safe from cyber bullying on a social network site because each user is anonymous. The best thing to do is to be alert that cyber bullies and all kinds of cruel people are on the internet.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Parrots On Break

On my break I took college classes here at Poly. Everyone should try to take advantage of this opportunity, because the school is giving us free college courses.

I got to interact with not just Poly students, but also Valley students. This was a great opportunity to see how college students behave and what responsibilities I will be faced with.

- Nicole Willkomm, 10

Over the break, I took the most difficult, most horrible and most valuable class that I have ever taken in all my time at Poly: English 103.

The class seemed to take forever, and the professor was extremely picky, so no one got a perfect score on their essay.

But this class is the most valuable college course that I have ever taken, because my writing is stronger and I feel more confident about my abilities.

- Nataly Ochoa, 10

Over the break was a blast! Finally, being able to just re-

lax, put my backpack down, and sleep in for hours made me sane again.

Spending time with my family was probably the biggest gain from vacation. My family and I would go to the park and have picnics just the way we used to when I was young.

-Aime Lopez, 10

I had to come back to school and take college classes. I actually learned things about myself that I didn't know.

In my college classes, I learned it's not easy to be in a college class. It demands hard work and effort. They expect more from you than any regular class.

- Claudia Celestino, 10

I would go over to my grandma's house and help her take care of my great-grandma. While my grandma cooked for us, I would clean and talk to my great-grandma, telling her about school, and stuff.

- Melissa Rivera, 10

**THE OPTIMIST**

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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.14 or Mr. Blau's box.



# At Today's Top Universities, Money is Not Always an Obstacle

By Marvin Martinez  
Staff Writer

OPTIMIST reporter Marvin Martinez recently attended a conference at Yale University. Below is his report.

**L**ike many Parrots, I get summoned to the college center often to receive information on colleges and important tests and so on. One day I was given a pamphlet from QuestBridge, a non-profit program that links bright, motivated low-income students with educational and scholarship opportunities at some of the nation's best colleges. I filled out their college application-length form and mailed it.

A few weeks later, I found myself attending QuestBridge's College Admissions Conference at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. It was my first time going to the east coast, attending a conference, or even visiting a college campus.

Walking into the school's large dining hall that looked like something out of Harry Potter was intimidating. No, the size of the hall itself wasn't the most intimidating part. The hundreds of students from all over the country who filled the hall were intimidating.

They were all just like me: from low-income backgrounds and high academic achievement. But for some reason I felt they were all superior to me in every way imaginable and I wasn't supposed to be there. But that was just my overactive imagination. I shook off the feeling and kept walking towards the registration tables. I was assigned to group four and told to help myself to breakfast.

Afterward, all the groups made their way to the law school's auditorium for the opening comments. Just getting there took enough time to take in just how sizeable the campus was. To think this large area was just one part of an even larger university.

In his introduction, the president of QuestBridge told us that we were the elite. He told us we were the 1% of humanity who would get admission to a big-name school. And he told us that regardless of our low-income backgrounds, we could afford to attend a top-ranked private university. We then dispersed to various workshops.

At the financial aid workshop, I learned that a private university could actually be more affordable than a community college, however counterintuitive that seemed. I learned that some universities will meet 100% of demonstrated need and pay for leftover expenses the family can't cover. A university's sticker price is no reason to be intimidated and apply at less-expensive institutions.

Immediately my pessimistic nature led me to ask, 'well what if the problem is meeting academic requirements,



Photo by Marvin Martinez

**OLD SCHOOL:** Yale, founded in 1701, has 11,000 students and 3,200 faculty members on its 310-acre central campus.

not financial ones?' The personal statement workshop answered that question. The personal statement is often the decisive factor in being admitted or turned down. Without the personal statement, an application is just a stack of papers. The idea is to write, in a limited amount of space, what makes you interesting as a person and why an admissions officer would want you at their campus. The personal statement is what turns that stack of papers into a complete person. The big idea being slammed into my pessimistic head was 'it's possible to get into a big-name school simply by being me.'

I looked through the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's admissions statistics and learned that there students who scored lower than a 1500 on their SAT Reasoning Test and had GPAs lower than 3.0 had been admitted. True, only 4% of the applicants with scores that low got in, but we were reminded that we were already part of the 1% of humanity who would even get admitted to a top-ranked school.

Come lunchtime I was far more comfortable with the other students. I was more confident with myself and had stopped feeling inferior to the rest of the crowd.

Next we toured the Yale campus. The tour was only half an hour, but from the first I was just fascinated with the place. Yale is a big research institution in the middle of a big city but has the feel of a small community college. Outside in the streets, noise is everywhere. But step inside to one of the 12 residential colleges and the noise level suddenly dies into silence. And the University's gothic-style architecture, with its towering spires and magnificent buildings, was everything I dreamed of



Photo by Marvin Martinez

**MEET AND EAT:** Students converse and enjoy a buffet-style breakfast.

in a school. A big research institution, a small community feel, easy access to the big city, castle-like buildings and a prestigious name. Yale soon became my target and my goal.

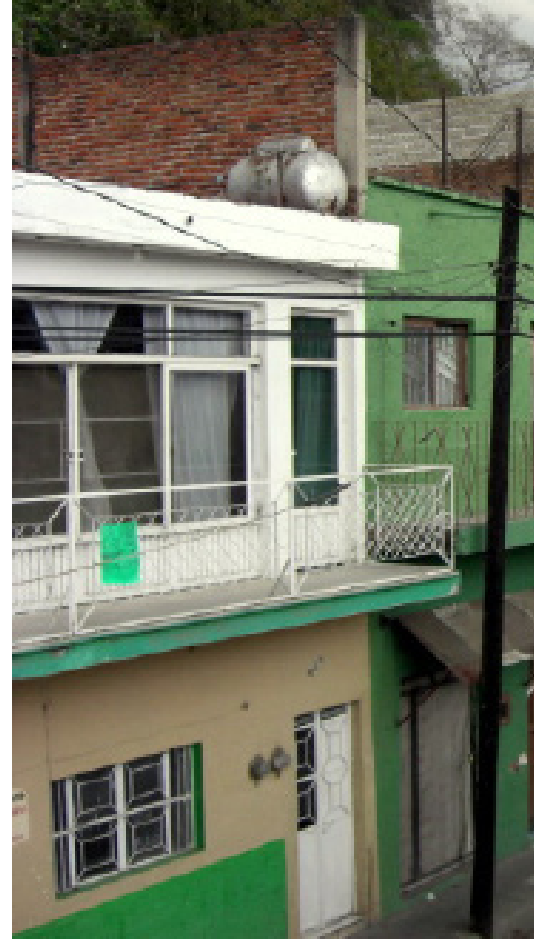
The college application workshop helped boost my morale. We were told that our specific situations were what admissions officers wanted to know about: socioeconomic obstacles and barriers, personal struggles and overcoming them all. The application shouldn't be just paper but our entire being. When the admissions officer wants to meet you by simply reading your application, that's when you know that you've written a persuasive essay. With good grades and test scores, an outstanding personal essay and a strong recommendation, you're all but in.

The National College Match workshop was the last of the day. This

was the reason I had traveled so far. Through this program, selected finalists from the 1000 students in the room would be given full scholarships to attend one of QuestBridge's partner colleges. We were told how the finalists would be chosen and what would have to be done to get there. Just knowing that the chance for a first-class education from an Ivy League university was being held in front of my eyes was enough to make me do whatever was necessary.

I've always thought pessimistically about opportunity and reward but this conference made me see that, at least in this case, I was wrong. I've already come a long way. This conference showed me that an even bigger goal is within my grasp. From there, I can take the tools to shape my life for myself. Not a bad deal.





# In The Land of the

**Photos and Story  
by Karina Muñiz**

Tamazula, Jalisco, 36 hours south of the U.S. border by car, is a small city that can be busy, but it has a very calming vibe to it. We have family there that we wanted to visit.

I was gone for a month and I mainly stayed with my mother's side of the family. I would go to my grandfather's ranch once in a while and I would visit my father's family when we could, but we mostly stayed in one house.

I had great fun there. It felt like I instantly became part of a huge family. Every time I walked a block there would be at least two people that I had never met before saying "good afternoon" or "good morning."

And I love how it rains there. It's not like it starts raining a little bit and it gradually gets stronger. I would just hear really loud thunder and all of a sudden it was raining buckets and buckets of water (like in the movies).

I went to hot water public pools and I went into vapor houses that felt like I was entering the pits of hell - it literally took my breath away. They didn't allow cameras there so I didn't get any photos of that.

The houses in Tamazula are unique and they use colors over there that I barely ever see here.

I learned how to make scarves, bracelets, and sandals at "La Casa de la Cultura" (The House of Culture). This "house" has many rooms where they teach things like painting, sewing, guitar and how to decorate little







# Sugar Cane



girls' hair.

One day I hiked up a mountain that had a beautiful cross on the top and a few caves. The mountain is very well known around the area. Its name is simply "La Cruz." There's a place higher up the mountain that we didn't have time to reach that is called "La Mesa" that is also well known.

The mountain was very difficult to hike because there were a lot of steps. That made me very sore and sleepy at the end of the day. It was about 30 minutes from my house to the cross and 40 to the caves. The only guides I had were my cousins, who are about my age.

Another day I went to "El Panteon," meaning "graveyard," where the

tombs are beautiful. They have a sign at the entrance that says "If they truly love me, they would be happy that I have returned to my Lord." So there was some sadness remembering our many dead family members, but we also had great conversations remembering the beautiful things about those people and how they are in a better place.

Some days we would go out and go to the center of the city and eat some ice cream or play video games in a local Cyber Store. On the days that there wasn't anything to do, it was very routine-like.

The whole month I was there I only tasted a burger once. I didn't miss the fast food there much because the local

food, in my opinion, was better than fast food here.

I didn't watch much TV or listen to radio because I was outdoors most of the time walking around. I would get on the computer about every week.

We never made a call to the U.S. because it would have cost my grandparents a lot. I felt pretty isolated, but my cousins would get it off my mind.

All of the men in my family work on farms, transferring sugar cane from farms to where it becomes sugar, wine, beer, and other products.

My family in Tamazula didn't treat me differently because I live in the U.S., but there were others who would think it was weird. Spanish is the only language I speak to my parents, so I understood everything my family told me, even a saying I had never heard of before.

I was already used to the lifestyle there because it's almost the same as here, only they spend more time outdoors. I didn't dress like anyone over there at all. I would dress the same way I would here because I don't like the local style that much.

I literally had my camera EVERYWHERE I went. Many people gave me strange faces, but I'll never see them again, so I thought it was alright.

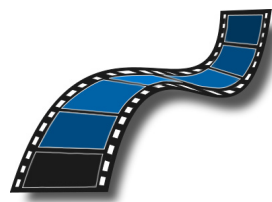
The plant life, the insects, the animals, and even the more run down places I took pictures of are my favorite things to look at, as crazy as that sounds, because they are amazing in their own way.

Note: Tamazula gained city status after the 2000 census reported a population of 51,545. Most locals work at Ingenio Azucaro de Tamazula, S.A. de C.V., where sugar cane from the surrounding area is turned into sugar and alcohol. The mill is Tamazula's major revenue source, along with tourism and trade.





SUMMER



FLICKS



## Decibel Overload, Decepticons Too

Bay and his bots blast everything in sight, and loudly.

By Sophia Mendez  
Staff Writer

Director Michael Bay's "Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen" is a loud, tedious movie with more violence and robots than the original.

Sam Witwicky (Shia LaBeouf) goes off to college, leaving his sweetheart Mikaela Banes (Megan Fox) behind. But when he learns the truth about the origins of the Transformers, he has to change his plans and help Optimus Prime (Peter Cullen) stop the Decepticons before they bring down the entire world.

Bay has added 46 new robots to the mix, this new batch transforming themselves into microwaves, blenders and anything else found in a kitchen.

But it's hard to sort out each new bot, and harder still to make out what the actors are saying. The noise level was so high that the dialogue was difficult to understand.

The movie depended too much on action instead of acting, including numerous shots of Fox running around in tank tops and tight jeans.

## It's A Jungle Out There

"Ice Age" gets hot when Sid stumbles on an underground world filled with dinosaurs.

By Jacqueline Zaldivar  
Staff Writer

"Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs" has found a new home. In the first two tundra tales, the action took place in a vast, frozen wasteland. But for the latest installment, the setting is a primitive volcanic jungle filled with dinosaurs.

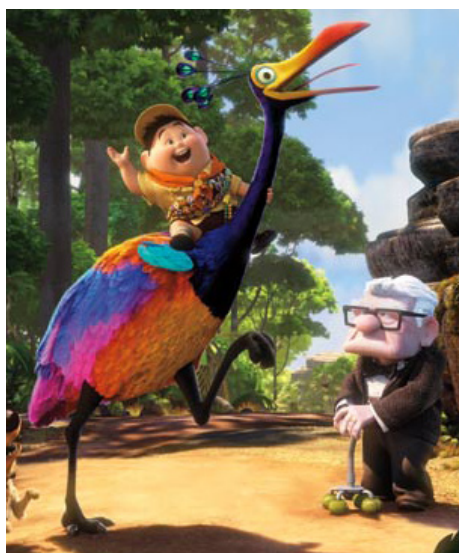
The old gang is back. Sid the sloth (John Leguizamo) is trying to raise vegetarian baby T-rexs, Diego the saber-toothed tiger (Denis Leary) is going through a midlife crisis and Manny the mammoth (Ray Romano) & Ellie (Queen Latifah) are getting ready to

deliver a baby.

Scrat the squirrel, still in search of the perfect acorn, gets side tracked by his new romance Scratte, who is also scuttling to get the sacred acorn.

The animation, as always, is crisp and colorful, from the lava falls to the carnivorous plants.

Some sexual innuendo has crept into this PG-rated movie. In one scene, Buck the weasel says, "Let me tell you about the time that I used a clamshell to turn a T-Rex into a T-Rachel."



## PIXAR PERFECT

An old grump and a young boy find adventure and realize their dreams together.

By Noemi Tovar  
Staff Writer

"Up," animation studio Pixar's 10th production, is a heartwarming film, full of artful animation and beautiful ideas about life, missed opportunities and second chances.

When 78-year old Carl Fredrickson leaves his former life in the city behind and floats off to South America on an amazing adventure, his life takes on a new meaning. Thanks to 8-year old Wilderness Explorer Russell, Dug the Dog and an oversized tropical bird

named Kevin, Fredrickson discovers he still has love to give and reasons to live.

Throughout this lovely film, Director Stephen Docter, who wrote "Toy Story" and directed "Monsters Inc.," suggests that life has its disappointments, but carrying on can lead to a fulfilling life in unexpected ways.

With support from Russell, Dug and Kevin, Fredrickson lives his adventure and learns to let go of the past.

## Sudoku

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

Using the numbers 1-9, fill in each of the boxes. Each number can be used only once per box. Good luck!

### GLRY 2 TXTING LOLOLOL

Panel 1: A girl with a green '6' on her shirt is looking at a green phone.

Panel 2: A close-up of the phone screen showing a heavily encoded text message: "HAY lol we shud get up LGR K?? ? Mf we @ do small twy k? LOL!!!"

Panel 3: The girl says, "GASP! A HEAVILY ENCODED MESSAGE! I MUST STUDY IT CAREFULLY TO DISCOVER ITS SECRET MEANING!"

Panel 4: The girl is sitting at a desk with a computer, looking at the message.

Panel 5: The girl says, "SURELY I'VE STUDIED THIS MESSAGE FOR TWO WEEKS NOW AND HAVE CONCLUDED..."

Panel 6: The girl says, "THAT YOU SWACK AT TREATING!"

Panel 7: The girl says, "YES."





Internet Photo

I AM YOUR FATHER: *A Big Daddy and a Little Sister.*

## Bioshock Delivers

By Hazel Kasusky  
Layout Editor

"I am Andrew Ryan and I am here to ask you a question. Is a man not entitled to the sweat of his brow?"

Action packed and gory, first-person shooter video game "Bioshock" delivers jolts at every turn as gamers navigate through Rapture, an underwater city created by obsessed mad visionary Andrew Ryan.

Players take the role of Jack, the only survivor of a plane crash in the mid-Atlantic, and are immediately plunged into Rapture. Here, a man can exercise his own free will without government or religious interference. But normal behavior to the citizens of Rapture, Jack quickly discovers, is terrifying and appalling to outsiders.

At first, Jack walks through dilapidated, airtight 1950s-styled rooms with only a wrench for a weapon. But "Bioshock" soon offers much more firepower than a plumber's wrench and a cowboy's pistol.

Ryan's scientists created plasmids, a sort of potion with special stem cells that genetically enhance Jack's body to shoot flames from his hands and use telekinesis to electrocute enemies with a swish of his hand. Players also have the option of getting creative in the combat mode.

Defeating the enemies is important in order to survive the underwater city because they hold ammo. The most common enemy is the "splicer," a genetically mutated human who survived a mysterious and chaotic incident in Rapture.

The real enemies, however, are the Big Daddies, humans meshed together with a diving suit and dangerous mechanical devices like a drill or rivet gun. Big Daddies protect Little Sisters who hold "ADAM," the

Players soon face a moral decision: whether to "save" or "harvest" Little Sisters.

genetic building blocks used to enhance the character.

Little Sisters, who play a major role in the game, seem innocent at first, but they aren't. Players soon face a moral decision: whether to "save" or "harvest" Little Sisters. The decisions made determine which alternate ending appears.

Behind all the gore and creeping freaks, "Bioshock" is a beautifully-imagined game with satisfying graphics. Background music from the 50s adds dark humor and entertainment as players steer through the environment.

"Bioshock," created by 2K Boston/Australia Games, was named "Best Game of 2007" by Spike TV and BAFTA (British Academy of Film and Television Arts) and received numerous other rave reviews. "Bioshock" is rated "M" and available for X-Box 360 and PC.

## No Controller Required

By Jose Martinez  
Staff Writer

Microsoft says its Project Natal, unveiled at the 2009 Electronic Entertainment Expo, will revolutionize the gaming industry by adding a new level of freedom and control to the Xbox experience. The add on will also include a number of other new features for the company's Xbox 360.

Project Natal is the latest and most sophisticated technology in the modern video game industry. Gamers can toss their 12-button controller to the side and use themselves as the controller. Power comes from the system's camera and a sound sensor, a wide horizontal bar that connects to a small circular base with a ball point pivot. The sensor detects the player's every movement and even accepts voice commands.

Project Natal is also slated to add Facebook, Twitter, and other social networks to the New Xbox Experience. Gamers can listen to music, watch videos, stream live movies from Netflix and even video chat



Internet Photo

HANDS-OFF: *Project Natal.*

with other gamers with a simple hand movement or a voice command.

By using an add on device instead of a new console, Microsoft saved millions, some of which can be passed on to consumers.

"With the economy the way it is now, you don't want to be buying another \$500 machine," said independent analyst Billy Pidgeon.

Microsoft hopes Project Natal will repeat its success with the recent Xbox Live. The software maker added 12 million Xbox Live subscribers after the new Xbox Experience was released in November 2008.

Project Natal, scheduled for a 2010 release, will only be available for the Xbox 360 console. No official price was given.

The Nintendo Wii was the first game console to have wireless motion-sensing controllers but the Xbox 360 will be the first wireless controller-free motion-sensing game console. Major competitor Sony is also working on a motion-sensing controller for its Playstation 3.

## Girls State Conference

[ *Girls State, from pg 1* ]

student received a handbook that scheduled six full days of classes on state government, meetings and eating times. Two counselors and a "City Mom" were responsible for a city's citizens.

Rules prohibited delegates from leaving campus or walking around without a buddy. The "no cell phones" rule was strictly enforced. "Cell phone free zone" signs decorated the campus.

Each Girls Stater picked a party: Tory or Whig. The Whig and Tory parties reflected today's two-party system.

Elections for city officials opened. Training to be a voter was an important part of the elections. Delegates needed to correctly fill out applications



Photo by Hazel Kasusky

GIRL TALK: *Conferees chat on the Pitzer college campus.*

for any position or they'd be immediately disqualified. Many of the speeches were profusely eloquent and patriotic.

Delegates were assigned to various committees on City Planning, Decorations and Cheer and chose city council members and a mayor.

Four or five cities made up a county, and county meetings were ongoing. Tories and Whigs ran for election as county party leaders. After the party meetings concluded, a state assembly and senate were created.

Everyone participated in passing bills. "Girl Staters" served as assembly members, pages, clerks, or on committees dealing with everything from state transportation to environmental issues.

The highest positions in Girls State were state treasurer, justice of the Supreme

Court, lieutenant governor and governor.

While running for office and voting took up most of the "Girl Staters'" time, there was also time for fun. During meals in the college cafeteria, "cities" broke out in cheers and dances.

During each day's lunch break, girls who had stayed up all night talking took naps. Others used their cell phones, allowed during breaks.

At 10:15 pm each night, girls shared interesting stories about their hometowns or themselves during "city friendship time."

Participation in the Girls State conference can lead to better opportunities.

"We've had some Girl Staters who became attorneys and who are working as Los Angeles councilwomen," said Ordunez. "They travel all over the world."

## Graduation 2009



Photo by Efrain Rodriguez

SPEAKER: *Poly alumni Dr. Gustavo Gonzalez at graduation.*



# Michael Jackson



Photo by Karina Muñiz

1958-2009



Internet Photo



Photo by Karina Muñiz

## Poly Remembers MJ

*M.J. took the WORLD by storm and I'm sure people will remember the good times and not the scandals he was involved in. M.J.'s talent will live on forever and he will be remembered always.*

- Karina Torres, 11

*Michael Jackson will always be remembered because he was a very talented person who not only introduced a new type of music, he made us realize that it doesn't matter if you're black, white or purple - talent is in many of us. He gave us the chance to hear his dreams and show us his talent in music and helped many people in need.*

- Lydia Flores, 11

*I think that the world will*



Internet Photo

*remember Michael Jackson as a wonderful singer who brightened the lives of millions of people. He will always be the King of Pop, everyone will remember him and a new generation will learn who he was, just as with other great singers who have passed away. The new generation will also love him and look up to him, just like others from before did.*

- Christina Aranda, 12

*I think Michael Jackson will be remembered as a great person, the best pop singer and dancer, and as a wonderful person for helping children by donating money. He lived a good life. He had ups and downs like anyone else, but he seemed very happy. His music is great and different from the rest.*

- Angelica Acosta, 11

*I think the world will remember him as the man who came closest to bringing the world together.*

said

- Brandon Gonzalez, 10

*Michael Jackson wasn't only just an icon, he was a humanitarian. And he will always be remembered as the King of Pop, even though he went through a lot of difficult situations in his life. He was still loved by his fans. The world will still listen to*

*his music and copy his dance moves. Everybody will try to imitate him but nobody will ever be like him.*

- Alejandra Garcia, 12

*People die every day but I guess he was the first to give people hope in his music and he had awesome choreography.*

- Kevin Perez, 11

*I guess it's true - you don't know what you have got until it's gone. Just the other day I saw his memorial on MSNBC. I saw his daughter crying and it really hit home - Michael is gone.*

- Julia Ruiz, 10

*Michael Jackson was one of the greatest entertainers of my generation. His exploration of music video, which was a new medium at the time, was extremely innovative. He was the first to produce a feature-length music video in "Thriller."*

*I had the honor of seeing him in concert back in '91. It was the most amazing event I could have hoped for. The music and dance was flawless and he even included some amazing illusions.*

*He died far too young and will be sorely missed.*

- Gary Aragon  
Math teacher

## He Said

*"When we sang, people would throw all this money on the floor, tons of dollars, 10s, 20s, lots of change. I remember my pockets being so full of money that I couldn't keep my pants up. I'd wear a real tight belt. And I'd buy candy like crazy."*

*"I never had the chance to do the fun things kids do. There was no Christmas, no holiday celebrating. So now you try to compensate for some of that loss."*

*"I hate to admit it, but I feel strange around everyday people. See, my whole life has been onstage, and the impression I get of people is applause, standing ovations and running after you. In a crowd, I'm afraid. Onstage, I feel safe. If I could, I would sleep on the stage. I'm serious."*

## They Said

*"He was so energetic that at 5 years old he was like a leader. We saw that. So we said, 'Hey, Michael, you be the lead guy.' The audience ate it up."*

- Jackie Jackson, in a RollingStone interview

*"Jackson had it all . . . talent, grace, professionalism and dedication. He was the consummate entertainer, and his contributions and legacy will be felt upon the world forever. I've lost my little brother today, and part of my soul has gone with him."*

- Quincy Jones, record producer

*"It's one of the greatest losses. In pop history, there's a triumvirate of pop icons: Sinatra, Elvis and Michael, that define the whole culture . . . His music bridged races and ages and absolutely defined the video age. Nothing that came before him or that has come after him will ever be as big as he was."*

- Tommy Mottola, former president of Sony Music