

The Poly Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

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Photo provided by Pia Damonte

GRAD: Poly's Jessica Olmedo.

Poly Talks To Obama Official

By Karinina Cruz
Staff Writer

Poly Principal Gerardo Loera, Literacy Coordinator Dharma Hernandez and Poly 2009 graduate Jessica Olmedo attended a conference sponsored by the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic-Americans at California State University Northridge (CSUN) last month.

The conference was chaired by senior White House official Juan Sepulveda as part of an "educational listening tour" in 18 states and Puerto Rico.

"Poly was one of the few

[See Poly, pg 7]

Parrots Meet Rice At Sacramento Ceremony

Ex-Bush official Condi Rice gives diversity award to Valley College.

By Karinina Cruz
Staff Writer

Former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice presented Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC) with the John W. Rice Diversity and Equity Award for its Early Start Program and partnership with high schools, primarily Poly, at a ceremony in Sacramento July 13.

Parrot alumni Jessica Olmedo, Mayra Estrada, Steven Huynh, Juan Fuentes and Florentino Salazar, Career Coordinator Pia Damonte and Magnet teacher Ron Lehavi represented Poly at the ceremony. The five former Parrots are currently attending UCLA, MIT, Yale and other universities.

"The Early Start program was very beneficial for me," said Poly alum and UCLA freshman Olmedo. "I would gladly do as much as I can to keep the program going for other students."

The Early Start program, created by LAVC's Yasmin Delahoussey, former head of student services and currently the school's



Photo provided by Pia Damonte

MEET CONDI: Poly alumnus, Yale graduate Florentino Salazar shakes hands with former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice before addressing audience at Sacramento awards ceremony for Valley College.

vice president, and Poly's Pat Flenner, at that time Magnet coordinator, provides access to college courses for high school students. By taking college classes, students boost their chances of

[See Sacramento, pg 7]

A Cat's Tale

Animal Lovers Club helps animals and Poly.

By Magdalena Corona
Staff Writer

Parrot senior Marcela Quintanilla, one of Poly ceramics teacher Karen Daneshvari's first period students, brought in a litter of kittens one day.

"The kittens were under her house, and the mom cat left," Daneshvari said. "The kittens have been without a mother for three days."

Daneshvari went to PETCO during lunch and bought KMR (kitten milk replacement). Because the kittens are so small, they have to be fed with an eyedropper.

"If Marcela takes the kittens

to the shelter, they will be euthanized," said Daneshvari. "As a school, what are our options? One of our ESLRs is to become conscientious members of society. Do we follow the ESLRs or turn our backs?"

Animal Lovers Club

Daneshvari was Quintanilla's first choice for help because the long-time Poly faculty member is well known on campus as a friend of animals. Daneshvari and Health teacher Leslie Wolfson started the Animal Lovers' Club about eight years ago as a way to get Parrots involved in caring for and about animals.

"We wanted to be a part of the solution, not the problem," Daneshvari said.

Daneshvari and Wolfson have had animals all their lives.

[See Animal Lovers, pg 7]

Politics '09

Tempest In a Teacup

Paranoia over "Socialist" speech to schoolchildren unfounded

By Angel Silva
Staff Writer

President Barack Obama gave a speech September 8 to all students returning to classes after a week of accusations that the speech was an attempt to impose his political agenda on children nationwide.

The White House released a transcript of Obama's speech one day prior to the event. The speech was primarily composed as a motivational message, urging students to persevere in their studies and parents to take an active role in their children's education.

"We need every single one of you to develop your talents, skills and intellect so you can help solve our most difficult problems," said Obama. "If you don't do that - if you quit on school - you're not just quitting on yourself, you're quitting on your country."

Preliminary reactions about the President's decision to speak to students nationwide sparked controversy. According to a "Houston Chronicle" article,

[See Obama Speech, pg 7]



MITES Gets Her To MIT

See Page 3



Can You Hear Me, Asher Book

See Page 5



Heavy On the Offense

See Page 8

EDITORIALS

In Your Head

Socialist ideology, abuse of power, Obama propaganda – oh my!

The motivational speech given by President Barack Obama on September 8 was directed to all students in the United States.

Some of the points Obama made included oft cited maxims on staying in school, taking personal responsibility for education, setting goals and asking questions and all that jazz.

But parents in Texas had planned to boycott schools showing the broadcast. Principals in many schools received phone calls from parents strongly opposed to the spread of Obama's political views. Kids were instructed by their parents to exit the classroom during the speech.

Why would parents in many states not want their kids to hear a feel-good-about-school speech?

Well, some thought Obama was intent on pushing socialist ideology and forcing students to watch his address. Others believed he'd brainwash children into government jobs with the same political views as himself.

A lesson plan for teachers supplied by the White House suggested students write letters to themselves

about "what they can do to help the president." Following the early outpouring of protest, the lesson was changed to "how they can achieve their short-term and long-term education goals." Like the broadcast, use of the lesson plan was not mandatory

LAUSD's Superintendent Ramon C. Cortines let principals and teachers, on a "strictly voluntary and non-political" basis, decide whether or not to broadcast the speech in their schools.

"The students of LAUSD have been provided with an extraordinary opportunity to engage in a teachable moment by watching President Obama speak to our youth about the value of education," Superintendent Cortines said

Some schools skipped the speech because of academic priorities and technical issues.

That was then, this is now. And the speech? Well, not a shred of socialism and no calls for universal health care either. Just the usual stuff about staying in school as both smart and patriotic. Parents in Texas can sleep a little easier now.

The rest of us can wonder – what were they thinking?

THEM'S FIGHTIN' WORDS

Put-downs are such a common thing in teen culture and high school that many educators don't look at them seriously. But a University of Illinois study suggests that psychologically hostile environments can make it more difficult for good students to learn and students who are behind have a harder time catching up.

Most people have the idea that bullying is only physical. Bullying can include verbal harassment which can be just as damaging to people. Some can brush it off but others take it hard and it costs them.

Remember sticks and stones? Well words may not break bones like they can, but words can leave lasting scars. People with low self-esteem will steadily lose confidence in their abilities and it reflects onto their classroom performance and grades. In worse cases, victims can lose the will and motivation to

do anything and slip into a state of apathy. But the effects go farther than that.

In 1982, three Norwegian boys committed suicide as a result of severe bullying from their classmates. Although extreme cases like these don't come up so often now, words can and always will hurt.

But pain doesn't just make people sad, it can also provoke anger. Retaliation is a real possibility and can lead to an even worse outcome. Retaliation is what keeps the cycle of hateful words going, but indifference and pacifism do nothing to help stop the cycle either.

Words can cause pain and torment or they can bring comfort and reassurance. Words can be elegant and graceful or sharp and venomous. Words are powerful tools with powerful effects and it comes down to the individual to choose how they're used.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The OPTIMIST asked students: "What did you do on your break?" Here's what they said.

Guest Editorial

During the break, I took a road trip to Canada. My cousin Abigail was getting married and my aunt decided that a road trip would be fun. If she considers day-long drives on the road, constant naggings from a younger brother and a stiff neck fun, then she succeeded.

We drove through places like the famous Sin City (or infamous, depending on your thoughts), Salt Lake City, Yellowstone National Park (which was a disappointment! I saw one geyser and after that there's no big deal. Plus, it reeked of rotten eggs), Mt. Rushmore (now I need to know why they were so important to be carved on the side of a mountain), and finally Canada. The air was crisp and fresh, you could taste the Hybrids and ethanol. I met relatives I never knew existed, and indulged in Filipino food and culture.

The wedding was small, but seemingly perfect. There, my cousin and her fiancé became Mr. and Mrs. Adam and Abigail Gooden. The reception was fun, I got to pin some money on the groom (it's a Filipino custom for a "money dance," where the guests have pins and stick money on the newlyweds to help them out). Then I took off my uncomfortable shoes and danced the night away with my family.

The day after, we headed home. Although we were over a thousand miles away, it didn't feel that way. It took about six days getting home, and I couldn't be any happier getting away from my brother. It was an interesting trip, but I wouldn't do it again.

- Gabriela Melendez, 10

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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.

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.

My dad took me and my family on a cruise to Mexico and back. It was awesome.

August 9 was my birthday and I got my drum set. It was so cool. I got my friends to come over to watch me play the drums. I was pretty good, but not good enough. My friends tried to play them, but they would get confused on which one's which.

- Carlos Jacobo 9

I went to Las Vegas. We had friends over there and we stayed the night at their house. We also went to Lake Tahoe where there are many resorts. I loved San Francisco, it was cold.

- Noelani Briceno 9

I went to Six Flags on Father's day with my dad and friends.

When it was really hot, we would go to the Santa Monica beach with my friends and family.

I also went to City Walk and Los Baños where my cousins and family live.

- Stephanie Madrigal 9

I read "Crank." That was by far one of my favorite books. That book has 500 and something pages and I finished it exactly in a week. One thing I do regret is not studying because the last days of middle school I threw all my papers away.

- Babel Romero 9

While many Parrots stayed as far away from school as possible during the summer, Poly senior Flor De La Cruz was in a classroom at MIT nearly every day.

A Boston Summer

Poly Senior Flor De La Cruz attended the summer program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, offered through Minority Introduction to Engineering and Science (MITES). She sat down recently with the OPTIMIST to tell us about her time there.

By Sophia Mendez
Staff Writer



Photo by Karina Muñiz

Q. Why were you interested in going to MIT?

I heard it was a super intensive program and that it really breaks you apart because it is so challenging, and I enjoy challenges. There were other programs, but I knew if I took those, I wouldn't have felt accomplished, and I didn't want to spend my summer doing anything easy. Now that I have gone to MIT I feel like I can do anything.

Q. Tell us about applying for MITES.

I had to fill out a five-page online application in February, write four essays, get letters of recommendation from my science teacher and my math teacher, one letter of recommendation from my counselor and do the other paper work. We found out if we made it into the program in early April. There were about 1,000 applicants and only 70 students made it. The program is completely free, except for airfare. MITES is one of the few free programs.

Q. How many students attended MIT?

There were 72 students from all over the country, including two from Puerto Rico and eight of us from California.

Q. What classes did you take?

I took Biochemistry, Multivariable Calculus, Harmonic Motion Physics, a Humanities course and Digital Design. We got to design iPhone applications for the summer. Physics was by far the hardest class and calculus was the second hardest, mainly because they are taught at an MIT college level. We stayed at Simmons Hall, a dormitory at MIT.

Q. Talk about a typical day.

I woke up around 7:40 am, because we walked to campus and that would take about 20 minutes. A typical day was two classes, lunch, two more classes, dinner and then

back to the house. Classes were from 9 am to 5 pm, and we had dinner at 5:30 pm. From 7 pm to around 3am and sometimes as late as 4:30 am, we were doing homework. Lots of it!

The weather was so gloomy, there was no sun, just rain. And it was always wet, wet, wet. There were many freak storms, so we would never know what weather to expect. It could be warm in the morning and by the time we would get out of our classes it would be pouring rain. And our feet were always wet.

Q. What was MIT like?

MIT has a really unique campus. When you think of MIT you think of everything being discovered there, and everything is happening there, and it really is. To me it personally gave me inner excitement. I think of everything that's happened there and everything that will happen. Students are studying cancer and stem cells and so much more. It's amazing.

Q. What else did you see besides MIT?

We got to visit Harvard, which is only a 15 minute walk from MIT.

Honestly, it was a gorgeous campus. It reminded me of "Hogwarts" and the dining hall was better than in "Harry Potter." The architecture was very gothic-like.

The environment at Harvard was a lot more elitist, and I felt as though everyone was more wealthy, because it was mostly upper class. And it is a legacy school, where mostly everyone buys their way in.

We got to visit Martha's Vineyard, an island off of Cape Cod. We took a 45 minute ferry that dropped us off on the island. We also got to visit Boston.

Q. How long were you at MIT?

We stayed for six weeks. I left June 19 and got back August 1.

Q. What didn't you like about MIT or Harvard?

MIT isn't a well-rounded school. If you are not doing science or engineering, don't go to MIT. Harvard felt way too elitist.

Q. Tell us about you.

I have a 4.3 GPA and I am ranked number one at Poly. I have been in cheer for three years. I am president of the Interact Club, a community service club. I am president of the National Honors Society and I am in CSF.

I was born in Woodland Hills and grew up in Sun Valley. I have two sisters and a brother. My dad is in construction, and my mom is a housekeeper.

I like to go hiking, to the beach, kayaking, anything that involves me being outdoors.

I want to be a biochemist or an architect, and I'd like to attend MIT.

Q. What do you like about life in LA?

I like that LA is really diverse and liberal, and everyone is open-minded, and the weather is great. And I love that you can find anything, from any culture because everything is in a 10-mile radius.

Q. What will you remember most about Poly?

I will remember that everyone helps each other.

Picture yourself in a boat on a river,
With tangerine trees
and marmalade skies.
Somebody calls you,
you answer quite slowly,
A girl with kaleidoscope eyes.

– John Lennon



A Haven For Hippies



All photos by Karina Muñiz

GLORY TO VIGOROUS TRAINING

IF WE'RE GOING TO JOIN THE PONG TEAM, WE'LL NEED VIGOROUS TRAINING!

OKAY...HOW DO WE TRAIN FOR PONG?

WATCH ME.

...THAT'S JUST SAD.

JUST START TWISTING.

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

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

Sudoku

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

Solution to September's puzzle

The OPTIMIST recently spoke with Asher Book, one of the stars of the new movie “Fame.” Nineteen and from Arlington, Virginia, Book appeared in episodes of “Medium” and “Zoey 101” before landing the role in “Fame.”

Reinventing FAME

By Sophia Mendez
and Jackey Zaldivar
Staff Writers

Q. What was it like working with director Kevin Tancharoen?

Oh man, Kevin is so dope. We are right around the same age. We have mutual friends and he is a great director to work with and a great friend. He has a great vision for the film and he is new to this. He is such an incredibly cool guy.

Q. Is this a remake of the original?

Fame isn’t a remake - it’s a reinvention. There are new characters, a new storyline, and new dance numbers. Some songs are still the same. We have two of the songs from the original movie and we still have Debbie Allen from the original film.

Q. Why do you think so many movies are being reinvented right now?

I look back when “West Side Story” came out and people responded really well to it. Musicals have a great storyline, and they make great movies. Everyone enjoys them, and there has been a gap so it’s good to bring back the real side of things.

Q. Does it bother you when people say your “Fame” is a remake?

Yes, but not really. Once people see the movie they will know it is different

Q. What’s good about “Fame?”

I think what’s good about our movie is that it’s different from “High School Musical” in a sense that it’s not just kids walking down the hall singing — it’s not an instant thing.

I think what our movie really capitalizes on is the work ethic that’s involved and what kids actually have to go through to be in the performing arts and to be in this business. It shows the fact that you might get turned down and you might not do well in an audition, but it gives you hope to do better and gives you the outcome of what we all go through.

We all just strive to do better and work hard, so I think there’s definitely more of what artists really truly go through. I think it will inspire kids to be like, “Oh my gosh, I can do the same thing!”

Q. What was the hardest scene to shoot in the movie?

The hardest scene was the “Cafeteria Jam” number, where we got to dance on top of tables. We shot for a long time repeatedly. It was a lot on the line, a lot of money and extras.

Q. Does the movie show the real experience of becoming famous?

It totally tells the storyline of what a singer, actor, dancer, goes through when they audition. And it shows the ups and downs, and it also shows that you don’t always get the parts you want.

Q. What reaction are you hoping to see from the audience?

“Fame” shows a real story. It gives belief to people who are trying to make it in this business. It shows them that they can do it too. Movies make it seem as though it is so easy to become famous but it’s not.



Photo provided by Terry Hines and Associates

DIALING ASHER: “Fame” star Asher Book talked to the OPTIMIST via phone about his role as Marco in the film’s remake.

Q. Tell us about the music in the film?

Well it has some jazz, pop, R&B, rock, some Louis Armstrong, and a reggae feature - a little something for everyone.

Q. Are you anything like your character?

Yeah, I am. It’s pretty cool to bring my personality into the character.

Q. What was your schedule like?

My schedule was four months in LA. Then two weeks in New York for exterior shots. We would probably have one day out of a week off.

Q. What was your favorite scene?

The “Try” scene where Marco serenades his girlfriend with a piano.

Q. Did you have any special training for the movie?

I didn’t. I thought I had to dance or train but I didn’t really dance in the movie. I did more singing and recording in the studio.

Q. What inspired you to become an actor?

I landed into this business. My neighbor told me about an open call for “Beauty and the Beast” and I thought, “Oh I can do this.” I also strive to get where I am at. It’s an amazing experience.

Q. Does your career interfere with your personal life?

I really don’t see it as getting in the way, but it sometimes does. Juggling your time schedule, sometimes you wanna go out with your friends but you can’t because you have a meeting.

Q. What impact do you hope your character has on the audience?

I hope they get inspired, to go for what they want. Marco starts with a normal family, working at a restaurant, he gets the girl he wants but he doesn’t become a superstar. The message is profound.

Q. What advice would you give to aspiring actors?

Work hard. Push yourself. It sounds clichéd, but never give up. There are always ups and downs with everything but never give up.

Q. What about high school students?

Follow your dreams. You don’t always know where you’re gonna end up in the future.

Panda Plays Punk at Wiltern

Mexican quartet brings odd song titles, pop punk sound to LA.

By Noemi Tovar
Staff Writer

Mexican alt-rock band Panda rocked the Wiltern August 22 as part of their U.S tour to promote “Poetics,” the band’s upcoming CD. Though the concert was only half-full, the band put on an energetic show and the audience, mostly composed of fans familiar with their songs, appreciated their effort.

Band members Jose Madero (vocals), Ricardo Treviño (bass), Jorge Garza (guitar) and Jorge Vasquez (drums) opened their set with “Y De La Gasolina Renacio el Amor” (From Gasoline Love Was Reborn) from their 3rd album “Para Ti Con Desprecio” (For You With Contempt).

In short order, people started jumping and singing along.

The band played their first single from “Poetics,” “Solo a terceros” (“Only in Thirds”). The rest of the night’s songs came mostly from “Para Ti Con Desprecio” and their 4th album, “Amantes Sunt Amentes” (“Lovers are Lunatics”).

Lead singer Madero kept the crowd involved, often putting down his guitar to concentrate on his moves.

When Panda played “No Tienes



Internet Photo

IMPORT: Mexican alt-rockers Arturo Arrendando, Jorge Vasquez, José Madero and Ricardo Treviño.

Oportunidad contra mi Antipatica Imaginación” (“You Don’t Stand a Chance Against My Unpleasant Mind”), people jumped and went crazy with enthusiasm.

The band ended the night with “Nunca Nadie Nos Podrá Parar” (“No One Can Ever Stop Us”). Panda dedicated the song, released last year, to their fans as a thank you for supporting the band from the beginning.

“Quiero aprovechar darte gra-

cias, no me puedo expresar, no encuentro las palabras,” Madero said. (“I want to take the time to give you thanks, I can’t express myself, I can’t find the right words.”)

División Minúscula, another Mexican band, opened the show. The audience loved División’s cover of “Que No Quede Huella” (“Don’t Leave a Mark”) by Bronco.

Panda formed in 1996 and re-

leased their first album “Arroz con leche” (“Rice With Milk”) in 2000.

In 2005, Panda won the “best independent band” award from the Latin American MTV Video Music Awards. Panda has a large fan base throughout Mexico and the U.S.

“Poetics” will be available September 22nd in Mexico and in the United States October 6.

Honey, I Shrunk the Concept

Can a big screen teen comedy be assured of success as a TV series? ABC Family hopes so.

By Jocelyn Henriquez
Staff Writer

The teen movie turned TV series has a spotty track record to date.

“Fast Times At Ridgemont High,” a 1982 teen comedy directed by Amy Heckerling, did well at the box office (\$27M), but the 1986 TV series that followed, also directed by Heckerling, lasted only a season on USA in 1982.

Heckerling struck box office paydirt again with “Clueless,” a 1995 teen comedy loosely based on Jane Austen’s “Emma.” The film’s Alicia Silverstone saw her Hollywood profile rise considerably.

The TV series lasted only a season on ABC (1996-1997) and two more on UPN (1998 and 1999) and then went into syndication, where it continues to be quite popular.

In 1999 came “10 Things I Hate About You.” Like its predecessors, the film was a teen comedy set at a high school, based on a classic (Shakespeare’s “Taming of the Shrew”) and featured two up and comers – Julia Stiles and Heath Ledger – who would go on to bigger and better things. It did a modest \$38M at the box office, about half the \$77M worldwide gross “Clueless” pulled in.

Could “10 Things” make it as a TV series? After a 10 year wait, viewers can judge for themselves. “10 Things” the series premiered on ABC Family in July

Like the film, the series revolves around the Stratford sisters, Kat and Bianca, their days at Padua High and their overprotective



Internet Photo

DIFFERENT STILES: Lindsey Shaw plays Kat in the small-screen “10 Things.” Julia Stiles had the movie role.

dad (Larry Miller, who had the same role in the movie).

Kat (Lindsey Shaw) is an intelligent feminist who wants to save the world and finish high school. But when she notices bad boy Patrick Verona (Ethan Peck), sparks fly.

Bianca (Meaghan Jette Martin) just wants to be popular, but when Chastity Church

“I swear, they will let anyone into public school.”

- Chastity Church

(Dana Davis), the captain of the cheerleading team, makes her the mascot, Bianca sees she has a long way to go.

Cheerleader Chastity thinks even less of Kat, telling Bianca “I swear, they will let anyone into public school.”

“10 Things” offers nothing new – one storyline features a teen who wants to be popular while a second has two teens who like each other but won’t admit it. Not exactly Shakespeare, but what makes “10 Things” work is the sarcastic and funny dialogue that fits the characters, teens that teens can relate to.

Both Martin and Shaw bring TV teen network experience to “10 Things.”

Martin was in the Disney Channel’s original movie “Camp Rock” and Shaw starred on Nickelodeon’s “Ned’s Declassified School Survival Guide” as Jennifer “Moze” Mosely.

Meanwhile, ABC Family recently renewed the series, promising fans another, what else, 10 shows, so the series seems to have found its audience.



Internet Photo

DISCHORD: Characters from Final Fantasy franchise as featured in Dissidia.

Cosmos, Chaos Clash

By Angel Silva
Staff Writer

The Final Fantasy series by Square Enix exemplifies the Role Playing Game (RPG) genre, with 12 successful titles and numerous spinoffs, all under the RPG genre.

However, Dissidia – Final Fantasy is unlike other Final Fantasy games. A fighting game with RPG elements, Dissidia pits the main protagonists and antagonists from the games Final Fantasy I through X against each other in a one-on-one hand-to-hand combat.

In total, 22 characters are playable – 20 from the first 10 Final Fantasy titles and two secret characters from Final Fantasy XI and XII. Characters can be customized with items and equipment and come in different costumes, much like Nintendo’s Super Smash Bros. Brawl.

Gameplay is centered around two modes – an Arcade mode exclusive to the U.S. release of Dissidia, and a story mode. The Arcade mode pits players against five random opponents. At the end of the matches, players are rewarded with items and equipment to be used in other matches and in Story mode.

Dissidia’s storyline revolves around 10 “Destiny Odysseys,” one for each Final Fantasy game from I to X. Players play as the protagonist across five fields similar to a board game, where events are laid out as the plot progresses. At the end of the fifth board, the protagonist faces the villain from the original game to collect a Crystal. Passing all 10 Destiny Odysseys unlocks the “Shadow Impulse” mode, where players fight against the main antagonist, Chaos.

Metacritic gave “Dissidia – Final Fantasy” 80/100, while gaming website IGN ranked the new offering 8.9/10.

Dissidia manages to combine aspects of Square’s Final Fantasy RPG’s with the features and gameplay of a fighting game, offering gamers a whole different level of engagement. Final Fantasy fans will flock to Dissidia, but the new features should attract a number of first timers as well.

Animal Lovers Club Gives Pet Info

[*A Cat's Tale, from pg 1*]

"I'm pretty experienced in taking care of them," Daneshvari said. "We both have background on how to take care of animals."

The top priority of the Animal Lovers' Club, Daneshvari said, is to inform people how important it is to spay or neuter all their dogs and cats.

A free mobile clinic comes into this area regularly to offer free spaying and neutering, free shots, and free flea control. Daneshvari encouraged interested individuals to contact her in room 72.

Spaying or neutering an animal prevents certain diseases, like cancer, Daneshvari said. The pets won't leave home and they're better with children and other pets.

"I have cats and dogs in my house that are all spayed and neutered, and they all love each other," said Daneshvari.

Cats On Campus

"There have always been cats on cam-

pus," Daneshvari said, "because people in the neighborhood don't spay and neuter their cats."

Feral cats were once people's pets, Wolfson said, that were either abandoned or ran away.

The cats come on campus and have kittens. They live at Poly because there's a lot to eat on campus, according to Daneshvari.

Things have gotten worse, Daneshvari said, because city workers put a park on Wicks Street. When they brought in the land movers, a lot of animals came on Poly's campus because their homes there were bulldozed.

"Animal lovers never feed the cats unless we are catching them in a cat trap," Daneshvari and Wolfson said.

"The only reason we feed the cats is to be able to trap them," Wolfson added, "so that we can get them spayed, tamed, and neutered."

"When they're feral cats, they're wild," Wolfson said. "It takes a lot of hard work

to make them friendly. But when that happens we are able to find them homes."

"Since I've been at Poly, Daneshvari and I have rescued many kittens and cats. And we have reduced the feral cat population on campus," said Wolfson.

"In the last eight years I have probably saved about 150 cats," said Daneshvari.

When they are eight weeks old, Daneshvari has the cats spayed or neutered, given all their shots and placed in homes. Those she can't find a home for are taken to any of the LA shelters.

"That's what I think the humane and right thing to do is," said Daneshvari. "We don't always have a happy ending, but we try our best."

Two cats can produce over 400,000 offspring within a five-year period, Daneshvari said.

"Think about those 150 cats I have removed from Poly," Daneshvari said, "and you start to realize what benefit we have made to Poly and the cat population."



Photo by Karina Muñiz

LUNCH: Club founder Karen Daneshvari feeds stray kitten with senior Marcela Quintanilla.



Photo provided by Pia Damonte

FRIENDS OF CONDI: From left; Clara Rice, Myra Estrada, Jessiac Olmedo, Juan Fuentes, Condoleezza Rice, Ron Lehavi, Steven Huynh, Pia Damonte. Seated from left; LVC rep, Valley president Susan Carleo, Florentino Salazar and Yasmin Delahoussey.

LAVC Ceremony

[*Parrots, from pg 1*]

admittance to top-ranked colleges and universities.

Poly students have taken part in the Early Start program since 1998.

Under the Early Start program, Parrot juniors and seniors (primarily from Poly's Magnet) were bused to LAVC to attend classes. In 2006, funding issues eliminated the availability of busing for Parrots.

In response, former Assistant Principal Pat Flenner created the Advantage program at Poly. Under Advantage, Valley college classes are held at Poly instead of LAVC. In addition, Flenner widened the scope of the program to include comprehensive students.

"The Advantage Program gives non-Magnet students who are also academically bright the opportunity to take college courses," said Career Coordinator Pia Damonte.

As part of the Advantage program, Flenner and Ninth Grade Center Coordinator Isaac Alatorre began to target incoming high school freshmen based on their previous grades and test scores.

"The students also had to take placement tests in English and Math to determine their strengths," Damonte said.

Advantage has been highly successful, Damonte said, with current enrollment at

"The Advantage Program gives non-Magnet students who are also academically bright the opportunity to take college courses."

- Pia Damonte

1700.

"Essentially, the program evolved from the Magnet, with 150-200 students," said Damonte, "to practically the whole comprehensive high school."

Damonte believes the program has also contributed to the rise in Poly's completion rate for the A-G requirements from 15% in 2000 to 60% currently.

"Many of the students in the program passed the CAHSEE with scores of 400 and higher on each of the sections," Damonte said.

The original Advantage students, Class of 2011, have an average of 267 credits, well above the 230 required for graduation.

"I am impressed when we are recognized by the outside," said Principal Gerardo Loera. "We demonstrate how our reform efforts produce great results."

Poly Participates in White House Initiative

[*Poly, from pg 1*]

schools in the Los Angeles School District to be invited to listen to Juan Sepulveda, the director of the initiative," said Loera.

Sepulveda focused on ways to improve Latino education and what the Obama administration can do to spearhead those efforts.

"The achievement gap between low income students of color and white and Asian middle and upper class students is well known," said Hernandez. "This initiative is focusing on closing that achievement gap for Latinos and giving these students equal access to educational opportunities."

High school representatives at the CSUN conference were asked to give their input on how to improve the quality of education for Latinos.

"Olmedo sought support for Advance Placement (AP) classes and lobbied for more partnerships between high schools and colleges," Loera said.

"She was very articulate about the issues public school students face," Hernandez said, "and she offered some very well-thought out solutions."

"Olmedo was a good choice because she has succeeded in the public education system, graduated with honors and is currently

attending UCLA," Hernandez added.

The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic-Americans is part of the four White House Initiatives on Education.

President Obama's four pillars to improve education were also discussed. They include working with the lowest performing 5% of schools in the U.S, performance pay for teachers, national standards instead of state standards and tracking students' education performance over time.

One of the conference's goals was to find ways to make college more accessible for Hispanics.

Loera noted that the maximum for Pell grants for low income students was recently increased to \$5,000. A Pell grant is a loan for college given directly by the federal government.

A streamlined financial application process, from 32 pages to six, will also help.

"The conference was part of a plan to update an educational reform bill passed twenty years ago," said Loera.

"The Federal government sees education performance only on the English and Math level," said Loera. "They should see it on a broader level, including all other aspects of performances."

Obama Speech

[*Tempest, from pg 1*]

parents there threatened to boycott schools. Florida Republican Party leader Jim Greer stated that he was "absolutely appalled that taxpayer dollars are being used to spread President Obama's socialist ideology."

Despite the attacks, Obama's speech was received with general approval from both sides of the political spectrum.

Capistrano Unified School District school board trustee and former Republican Ken Lopez-Maddox said that he found no issue with Obama's message.

"To the degree he's emphasizing education, I think it's great," he said.

The Los Angeles Unified School District neither provided accommodations to present the president's message or prevented students from watching at District schools that were open Tuesday.

All but 87 LAUSD schools opened on Wednesday, the day after Obama's speech. LAUSD spokeswoman Ellen Morgan said the District received hundreds of calls from parents saying, "Can't you change it (when the speech is given)?"

The speech was broadcast on the White House website via live stream and on C-SPAN.

Football

Parrots Sink Vikings

Running back Kevin Ervin's four TDs, 171 yards lead ground attack.



By Kelsey Cruz
Staff Writer

Poly junior running back Kevin Ervin rushed for 171 yards and four touchdowns on 10 carries as the Parrots rolled over the visiting Vikings of Monroe, 45-6 to open the 2009-2010 season.

Senior running back Anthony Manriquez added two scores and three 2-point conversions for 134 yards on 12 carries and senior kicker Jesus Serna had a point after for the rest of Poly's points.

"I was proud of their overall effort," said head coach Scott Faer.

Ervin got Poly on the scoreboard midway through the first with a five-yard run but the Parrots were plagued by penalties, mostly personal fouls, throughout the first half. Poly ended with 70 penalty yards.

"We made a lot of mistakes in the first half," Faer said, "and we talked it out in halftime."

Despite the errors, Poly dominated the first half, running the lead to 23-0 on two more Ervin TDs. The first came at the 11:03 mark in the second quarter for a 16-0 lead. Then, with 3:58 on the clock, Ervin romped for 39 yards and Serna got the point after.

Poly came out strong to start the third but gave up possession on an interception by Parrot senior quarterback Miguel Zapien, who was 4 of 11 for 55 yards and two interceptions. Monroe then controlled the ball for much of the third but couldn't get around its own mistakes and a tenacious Poly defense.

Senior running back Anthony Manriquez got Poly's only score in the third on 9-yard run. Another two-point conversion put the Parrots up 31-0 after three.

"I was happy that even though we were winning 23-0 in the first half, they still got out there and tried," said Faer.

Manriquez scored early in the fourth on an 11-yard carry and Ervin capped a late Poly scoring drive with an 29-yard sweep around the left side to complete the Parrot points at 45-0.

The Vikings then launched their only successful drive with the fourth winding down, scoring on a 2-yard crunch up the middle for 45-6. The point after failed.

Faer took the win in stride, pleased but not necessarily impressed.

"To be honest, I thought they were a little tired," Faer said. "Their effort was there, but they were just a little tired."

Next up for Poly is a four-game road trip that begins at San Fernando. The Tigers edged out the Parrots last year, 29-25. The Parrots will need to get some rest before their next one.

All photos by Karina Muñiz

VIKING SLAYER: Senior cornerback Marco Flores picking up some of his 26 yards in Poly's 45-6 win over visiting Monroe.

Poly Football 2009-2010 Pre-Season Report

2008-2009 Season Record: 5-5 League Record/Finish: 3-3 (tied for 3rd) Points-for Average: 31 Points-against Average: 24 Differential: +7	Top Players Kevin Ervin 6'0" 185 Junior RB/DB Anthony Manriquez 5'10 145 Senior RB/S Jorge Cervantes 6'0" 155 Senior TE/FS Miguel Zapien 5'11" 170 Senior QB Jesus Serna 5'11 175 Senior K/P	2009-2010 Schedule Sept 11 Monroe Sept 18 San Fernando* Sept 25 Granada Hills* Oct. 02 Canoga Park* Oct. 09 Arleta* Oct. 16 Van Nuys Oct. 23 Verdugo Hills* Oct. 30 North Hollywood Nov. 06 Bell* Nov. 13 Grant * - away game
2008-2009 Wins Bell 20-15 Grant 36-19 Monroe 61-8 Verdugo Hills 47-12 Van Nuys 46-0	Returning Players Offensive Starters: 5 Defensive Starters: 5 2008 JV Record: 6-4 Starting Quarterback Returning: no Top Running Back Returning: yes	



OFFENSE: From left: senior running back Anthony Manriques, senior quarterback Miguel Zapien, senior cornerback Jerome Castro and coaches Evan Nuñez, Scott Faer, Donald Carpenter, Aaron Henderson and Corey Johnson after the game.