

The Poly Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

VOL. XCVII, No. 6

SERVING THE POLY COMMUNITY SINCE 1913

MID-OCTOBER 2009

Politics '09

Peace Prize Politics

By Angel Silva
Staff Writer

President Barack Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on October 9 for “for his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples” by the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

“Only very rarely has a person to the same extent as Obama captured the world’s attention and given its people hope for a better future,” a statement from the committee read.

“His diplomacy is founded in the concept that those who are to lead the world must do so on the basis of values and attitudes that are shared by the majority of the world’s population.”

The award was met with surprise and criticism worldwide. Republicans attributed the prize to Obama’s charisma and oration rather than his diplomatic actions and sought to portray the president as undeserving of the award.

“It is unfortunate that the president’s star power has outshined tireless advocates who have made real achievements working towards peace and human rights,” said Michael Steele, chairman of the Republican National Committee.

Obama himself expressed doubt over his selection.

“To be honest, I do not feel that I deserve to be in the company of so many of the transformative figures who have been honored by this prize,” said Obama in a speech given October 9 at the White House Rose Garden.

Obama is expected to travel to Oslo, Norway in December to receive the prize. According to the White House, Obama will donate the \$1.4 million prize to charity.

Obama is the third U.S. president to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize while in office. Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson also received the award as president. Former president Jimmy Carter was awarded the prize in 1995.



Photo by Sophia Mendez

LAWMEN: LAUSD police officers Cabrera and Wright on patrol.

Mares Hurt In Car Fire

Blowout on I5 sets van aflame. Passengers also injured.

By Karinina Cruz
Staff Writer

Poly custodian Steve Mares and four family members were burned when Mares’ van caught on fire after a blowout while traveling south on the 5 Freeway last Sunday. Friction from the tire rim on the freeway pavement caused sparks which ignited the vehicle’s fuel tank.

Mares was taking his son, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren to Legoland when the mishap occurred.

After escaping the burning van, Mares pulled his son and daughter-in-law to safety. Mares suffered second-degree burns on his arms and stomach.

“He knew that he had to stop, drop and roll and he did,” said Poly secretary Tracy Dickason, who spoke with Mares Tuesday. “As he rolled over, he realized his grandchildren were still in the van and ran to save them. He yelled ‘Save my babies’ to passers-by.”



Photo provided by staff

BURNED: Custodian Steve Mares was injured in a car fire.

“As he rolled over, he realized his grandchildren were still in the van and ran to save them. He yelled ‘Save my babies’ to passers-by.”

Men In Black

Officers Wright and Cabrera keep Poly’s campus safe and secure.

By Jackey Zaldivar
Staff Writer

While Poly’s faculty and staff have a lot of daily duties, only two are in charge of law enforcement – the campus police officers.

“We keep the campus safe,” says Sr. Officer Brian Wright, “so learning can take place in a tranquil environment.”

Fellow police officer Arturo Cabrera agrees.

“We speak with dozens of students on a typical day,” said Cabrera, “some with good intentions and some not so good.”

Wright says a typical day involves patrolling the campus, enforcing laws and handing out tickets.

“We go to roll call and pick up equipment. We go on patrol around the school and at the end of the day we return to the station to give back our equipment.”

There are dangers, of course.

“Anytime you detain somebody or pull a traffic stop,” Cabrera says, “you are always in danger.”

“I’ve been shot at,” said Wright, “and in several high-speed car chases.”

The officers say determining how many gang members are at Poly is always difficult.

“We have identified some of the gangs that are prone to commit crime and the gangs that are active,” Wright says.

In a typical week, the number of gang-related incidents can vary.

“There were two last week,” Wright said. “Last month, there were about eight. Within the last year there were about sixty and all involved contact.”

Wright said half of those contacts were off campus, the other half during or after school. About half of gang-related incidents involve drugs, although Wright said drugs “are not a big problem” at Poly.

Gang incidents have gone down as the number of students at Poly has gone down, Wright says.

Wright, who has been at Poly for 2 ½ years, has been a police officer for twenty years. He’s worked at five different high schools and ten years on patrol.

Wright is a training officer, working with new recruits who have just graduated from the police academy.

Campus police get six months of police academy training and are expected to keep up with ongoing updates throughout the year, including a lot of physical training.

“We get additional training on how to deal with kids,” Wright said.

[See Cops, pg 2]



The Long And Winding Road

See Page 4



What’s My Name Again?

See Page 6



Parrots Strike A Pose

See Page 8

EDITORIALS

SUGARY FACADE

Senate leaders are considering new federal taxes on soda and other sugary drinks to help pay for an overhaul of the nation’s health-care system, according to a recent news story.

There are certain things that certain people aren’t meant to worry about. Youth and those not yet of age shouldn’t have to worry about death and taxes like adults should. And at the same time, Congress shouldn’t be worrying over a soda tax. That’s youth’s territory and affair.

This proposed tax tries comparing cigarettes to soda. Last time I checked, soda isn’t addictive or causes lung cancer. While some people start crying obesity and blaming it on soft drinks like soda, they’re forgetting to mention all the other garbage food Americans eat nowadays.

Yes, a study by UCLA and the California Center for Public Health Advocacy found 41% of California children drink soda every day and adults who drink soda are 27% more likely to be overweight or obese, but while the statistics line up soda and obesity, science has yet to make a clear link. Obesity is easily explained: tons of calories in, next to no calories out. It all comes down to balancing the intake of calories and outputting them. It’s completely possible to be a healthy person and enjoy a soda.

Comparing a tax for tobacco to a tax for soft drinks is almost not even funny, yet it’s a hilarious attempt at manipulation. It’s like making a joke out of the tobacco tax and trying to desperately scour up some more money that always seems to vanish into mysterious places.

NCLB Is Bush League

What determines intelligence? Some say it’s about logic, others say it’s about how much you know about the world.

But to others, intelligence is determined by test scores. Others like the federal government.

Passed in ex-president George Bush’ first year in office, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), was an attempt to increase student performance with government measures. It marked the shift from local and state control of education to federal mandate.

NCLB was heralded as reform that would finally work.

But after eight years of Bush’s NCLB, the numbers show anything but signs of improvement.

The most recent results for the Mathematics fourth-grade portion of the National Assessment

show an average score of 240 on a 500 point scale – exactly the same average as the last time that the test was given in 2007.

The same results show that student improvement actually grew faster BEFORE the passage of NCLB, when states had local control and weren’t under a federal government mandate. From 1996 to 2003, the average score on the National Assessment rose eleven points, from 224 to 235.

Compare that to the six years after that, since the NCLB has been in effect – a five-point score increase from 235 to 240. That isn’t progress.

Being concerned for the future of students is all good, but there’s something wrong when results show no improvement for six years straight. Maybe it’s time to rethink NCLB.

But after eight years of Bush’s NCLB, the numbers show anything but signs of improvement.

Parrots on Panel Discussion of SLCs

Southern California students discuss their Small Learning Community experiences.

By Karinina Cruz
Staff Writer

Poly seniors Oscar Rodarte and Alejandro Gonzalez joined students from three other California high schools to discuss their experiences with Small Learning Communities (SLCs) at a meeting October 14 at the Burbank Marriott Hotel.

“We were chosen because Mr. Loera and Ms. Damonte thought that we were model students throughout the school and would represent the school in a well-rounded manner,” said Rodarte.

The meet was held by the Alliance for Regional Collaboration to Heighten Educational Success (ARCHES), an organization funded by the James Irvine Foundation devoted to improve student achievement in California public and private schools.

Students from Temecula Valley High School, Santa Ana High School and Century High School in Santa Ana were also present.

“The discussion involved students from different schools from around the state talking about what their experience with their SLC has been,” said ARCHES spokesperson Kathryn Furano. “Students discussed what works in their SLCs and what doesn’t.”

Students participated in a peer panel, moderated by Furano, surrounded by representatives from California schools and discussed

aspects of their SLCs, as well as their experience with the SLCs offered at their school. SLCs discussed were Valley’s Automotive/Diesel SCL, Santa Ana’s Digital Media SLC, Century’s International Business SLC, and Poly’s HABIT, FAME and SPORT SLCs.

“We were able to talk freely and discuss what worked in the SLCs and what didn’t,” said Rodarte. “Almost all the students called for more challenging courses and an engaging curriculum.”

“They asked us about how our SLCs run,” said Rodarte. “We talked about how we have our 9th and 10th grade center and how they can take classes that are in a different SLC.”

After a half hour of discussion, representatives from other schools in the state asked students questions regarding the workings of SLCs in individual schools and the students’ opinions of the SLC program.

“They asked us things like if SLCs help and how college classes work with the SLCs,” said Rodarte.

Student opinions on their SLCs were generally positive.

“My school’s programs opened a new path and taught me things that I would have never learned otherwise,” said senior Vanessa Walker of Valley Hugh School.



Photo by Sophia Mendez

DISCUSSION: From left, panel moderator Kathryn Furano and Poly seniors Alejandro Gonzalez and Oscar Rodarte at the Marriott.

Cops on Campus

[Men, from pg 1]

Campus police officers carry guns, handcuffs, a radio, a baton and pepper spray.

Wright, who is married and has three sons, attended Sylmar High and Mission College before doing his police officer training at Rio Hondo Police Academy in Whittier. He was a building inspector for five years before beginning his career in law enforce-

ment in 1990.

Cabrera joined Wright at Poly three months ago. He’s been an officer for three years and worked at Byrd Middle School before coming to Poly.

Cabrera grew up in Sherman Oaks and served five years in the Navy. He majored in criminal justice at Valley College and studied law enforcement at the Sheriff’s Academy in Whittier.

THE OPTIMIST

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College Life

Take It From Someone Who Knows

Poly grad gives tips on what to expect, what to avoid at college.

By Armando Orozco
Staff Writer

Ex-Parrot Vanessa Orozco spoke to the OPTIMIST about life at college. Here's what she said:

Q. What did you learn the hard way about college?

How much you need to apply yourself. In high school I didn't really study long hours, and I thought it would be something similar. But I soon found out during my first set of midterms how intense it would become.

Q. What should Parrots expect college to be like?

You have absolute freedom and independence. You set your rules, gain independence and get to go to sleep whenever you want. Parental control is a thing of the past.

The dorms were a very fun experience. But expect school work to get a whole lot harder. If you plan ahead and manage your time wisely, you'll do ok.

Q. What else?

Meeting new people, learning about their backgrounds and culture, as well as being in a completely new town and environment. At Poly, it had never occurred to me that my high school was primarily a one-culture school. At UC Davis I experienced a culture shock. I was no longer the majority. For example I learned about new food, music and style and meeting people from different parts of the world.

Q. What should Poly grads avoid at college?

Procrastinating is something all students should avoid. Unlike high school, in college there is no second chance. The professors will not tolerate any late work or last-minute work. Being lazy is another thing to avoid because being lazy leads to procrastination and that leads to a big fat F on the assignment. Lastly, try not to spend money on things that aren't a necessity when you know you can't afford it.

Q. What have you learned about being independent?

I've learned how to make the most of my time. When I was a freshman the workload was a little less intense. Not only that but living on campus was very convenient. I felt like I had all the time in the world.

Living off campus and taking the upper division courses really makes you learn time management.

Try to be productive and take advantage of all the time you have, like getting a little work done while heading to campus on the bus, etc. Also, if you need help on a subject, seek it out by attending the professor's office hours. They are lifesavers.

Q. What are your classes like?

Working at college is difficult. Pay attention to every lecture, be prepared to go over the lecture material every day, take good notes, try to understand what the professor is saying and if you don't, ASK FOR HELP!! Don't just sleep through the lecture or play on your phone. Remember, skipping a class is like losing 30 bucks and could be the difference between getting a good and bad grade.

Q. What degree program are you in?

When I applied to UCD my major was chemical engineering. I picked it because I enjoyed chemistry and math in high school. I am now doubling in Biochemistry and Japanese.

The university offers so many interesting courses that you



Photo provided by Vanessa Orozco

DOUBLE MAJOR: Ex-Parrot and UC Davis junior Vanessa Orozco is majoring in Japanese and Biochem. Orozco says her classes are intense but fun, her professors' lectures mostly interesting and life at Davis is good.

should test classes that grab your attention. For me that was Japanese. I fell in love with the language. So I decided I would do both majors.

Q. What classes are you taking?

Chem 117A Physical chemistry; Jpn 135, a 4th year Japanese class involving article transcription/translation; Bis 102 Biochemistry, a mixture of Biology and Chemistry and NPB 101 Systematic Neuron Physiology; the study of how neurons work.

All of these courses are intense, but also a lot of fun if you stay on task.

Q. What are your professors like?

There are your typical wonderful and awful professors. Currently I have two that I really enjoy being in their lectures because I learn a lot of new material. Of course I also have one dull professor that makes students want to fall asleep in class.

Q. What about extra-curricular activities?

Nearly 500 student clubs and organizations are active at UC Davis, from political action groups to academic sup-

port clubs, from the Davis Ballroom Dance Club to the Astronomy Club, from Student Government to ethnic organizations.

Q. What is the campus like?

UC Davis is one of the few college towns left in California and one of the quieter UCs because it's in a more rural area

Overall it's a pretty calm school, and a very safe place to live. Don't get me wrong – Davis has its share of parties and town/school-sponsored events. There is always something going on.

Davis has the largest campus among the UCs. Downtown Davis is a block or two from campus and has a lot of restaurants and stores. Davis is 15 miles west of Sacramento and 75 miles east of San Francisco.

Q. What about food?

Learn to cook or else you will starve in college. Your mom is no longer around to make you breakfast, lunch and dinner – you're all on your own.

The long-anticipated remastered Beatles catalog was released on 9 September, five days of release in the major music markets of North America, Japan and

A Digital Mystery Tour

The Beatles: Rock Band traces the tunes, times and talent of the greatest rock group ever.

By Jose Martinez
Staff Writer

Harmonix CEO and Co-Founder Alex Rigopulos knew any video game of the Beatles would have to hit just the right notes, maintaining the integrity of the Beatles name and legacy while providing a completely authentic aural and visual experience for users.

"I think particularly younger players or listeners probably don't have an appreciation of just the sheer magnitude of the phenomenon, that there was nothing before and frankly, has not been anything like it since," Rigopulos said. "There are no rock bands in the world today that are the same magnitude or kind of phenomenon that The Beatles were."

Getting both the approval and the artistic input of Beatles Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr, as well as Olivia Harrison, widow of George and Yoko Ono, widow of John Lennon would be mandatory.

Just choosing a representative sampling of songs from the Beatles discography was a difficult task and bound to disappoint as many people as it pleased.

"The initial big list before we started whittling down was probably about 60 or 70 songs," said Rigopulos. "Then after a torturous process of whittling it down and making some hard decisions we ended up with 45 songs."

But the game would have to do more than just run through a Beatles set.

"It's not just a list of songs," said Rigopulos. "It's a sort of narrative progression, a journey through the life that these four guys had together over this period in time where they were making all of this music."

"They're the biggest band in the world still," said Giles Martin, creative producer and music supervisor for the project. "That's what we're trying to get across. Just trying to make people realize that as they're going forward in the game so is The Beatles music spreading around the world."

Helping set the tone for players are highly accurate reproductions of instruments the Beatles used, including Lennon's Rickenbacker 325 guitar, Harrison's Gretsch Duo Jet guitar and McCartney's Höfner 500/1 bass. Ringo fans get a set of Ludwig drums.

The setting are authentic too and include Liverpool's Cavern Club, the basement venue where the band first gathered a fan base, the Ed Sullivan theatre in New York, where the band first performed on American television in late 1963, Number Two Studio at Abbey Road in London, the Beatles favorite place to record and the roof of Apple headquarters, the company the Beatles

formed to nurture their music and that of like-minded artists.

"We focus on a single venue from each year of The Beatles' touring career, so we can give each stage the care and attention it deserves," Rigopulos said. "This means that some songs appear in locations other than where they were actually played, and other songs get their first-ever 'live' performances."

"We use Number Two Studio at Abbey Road to represent the many locations where The Beatles recorded their music. This lets us turn Studio Two into a place that launches different 'dreamscapes' – developed in consultation with the band and Apple Corps – for each song from Sgt. Pepper to Abbey Road."

Gamers can play in the new Story mode, Quickplay mode, Training mode, and the new Beatle Beats mode, in which users can practice and improve their drumming skills.

Then there are the vocals.

"Harmonies are such a critical aspect of The Beatles music," said Rigopulos. "We felt we had to innovate in this game. So one of the new features of The Beatles game is harmony singing."

Players can plug in up to three microphones and see both the main melody line and the harmonies displayed while they sing along.

"Most people can't sing harmony," Rigopulos said. "So when they start singing a particular Beatles tune and try to do the extra harmony parts, it's just horrendous. But it's a video game and they keep trying and trying, and after about 45 minutes of working on a particular song, these people who couldn't sing harmony to save their lives, are suddenly nailing the harmony parts of these Beatles

songs."

The music consists of 45 remastered tracks from the Beatles original albums, from Lennon's "I Feel Fine" to Paul's "Can't Buy Me Love." Gamers can expand their music library by buying downloadable content and full albums online. "Abbey Road," "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," "Rubber Soul" and a number of others are available.

The visual representations of the Beatles, while cartoon-like, are realistic in their dress, mannerisms, and their movements. Twenty "Dreamscapes," psychedelic visualizations of Abbey Road tracks, add a period feel to those songs.

The game also offers optional challenges that unlock prizes like artwork, photos, rare music, and unreleased footage.

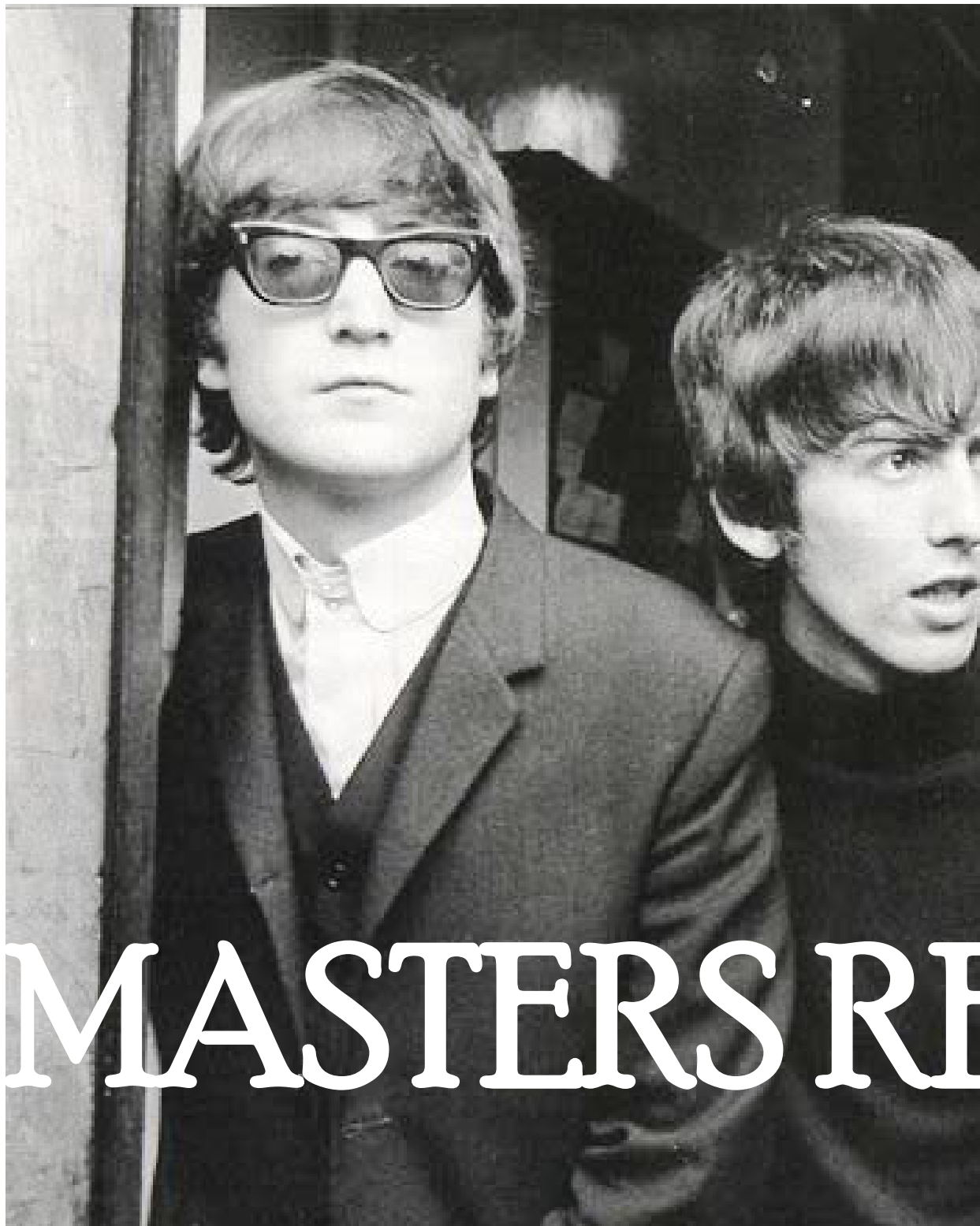
Remaining Beatles McCartney and Starr and the widows of Lennon and Harrison all gave their blessing to the final product.

The Beatles: Rock Band was developed by Harmonix and Pi Studios and is available for the Xbox 360, Playstation 3, and the Nintendo Wii. The game is not part of the Rock Band series, so users will not be able to import the Beatles Rock Band music library into Rock Band 2.

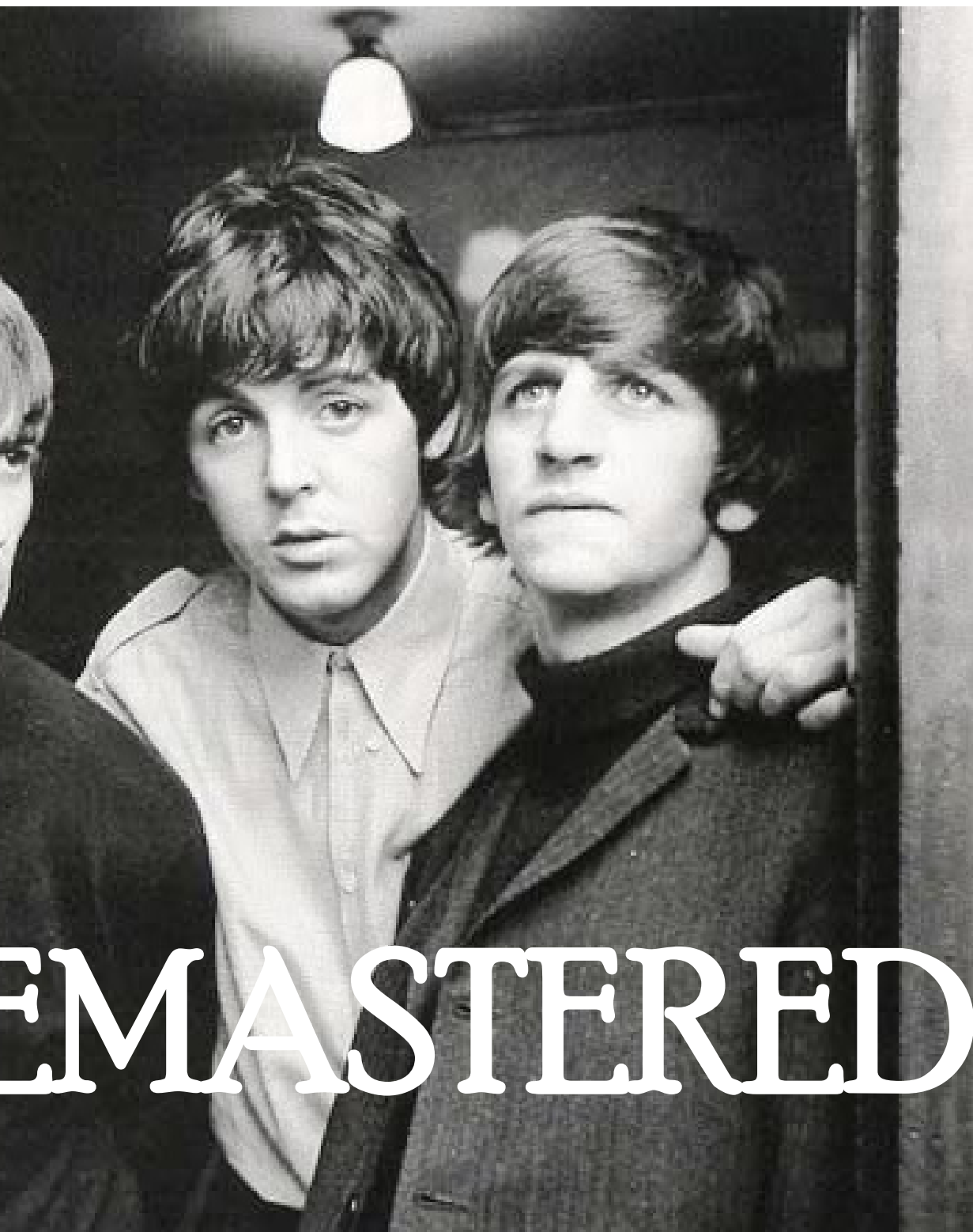
Early reviews say the video game has top-notch play graphics, superior to previous Rock Band games. "Game Informer" gave the release an 8.75 out of 10 and IGN rated The Beatles Rock Band 9 out of 10.

The stand-alone game sells for \$59.99, the Limited Edition Premium Bundle for \$249.99. John's Rickenbacker 325 and George's Gretsch are \$99.99 each.

Interview source: thebeatlesrockband.com



ber 2009. The remasters sold more than 2.25 million copies during the first and the UK. Americans purchased more than one million copies.



By Armando Orozco
Staff Writer

A Second Time

Fans have been complaining about the indifferent quality of the Beatles CDs since the albums were released 22 years ago. At last, Apple Corps Ltd. and EMI Music have remedied the situation.

Audio engineers at Abbey Road Studios in London worked for four years with the original Beatles recording tapes to digitally remaster the Beatles' studio-produced albums. On September 9, 29 CDs, in one of two box sets, went on sale.

The limited-edition "mono" box set contains recordings as they were originally configured by the band and producer George Martin. The set includes the first ten albums in re-mastered mono and a double album of singles and EPs, called "Mono Masters."

The newly minted mono collection is significant for several reasons. The mono songs were the original final takes and mixes as the Beatles and producer George Martin intended. The stereo mixes were usually done days, if not weeks after the original mono mix, and could include different takes when the engineers made the overdubs. Stereo mixes, particularly for the first five albums, did not include as much critical listening from George Martin, and almost none from the Beatles.

Most importantly, the box set is the best The Beatles have ever sounded and the most accurate reproduction of how they wanted to sound. These re-mastered recordings have not been compressed or "clipped" like

most current music made for MP3 playback. The full dynamic range of the original recordings is present, as well as the mixes the Beatles intended.

Each disc is presented as a miniature "long player," as the 33 rpm vinyl discs were called, and comes with a plastic anti-scratch sleeve, an inner paper sleeve, the original album cover, inserts and all original text.

The albums included are "Please Please Me," "With the Beatles," "A Hard Day's Night," "Beatles for Sale," "Help!" (plus original 1965 stereo mix), "Rubber Soul" (plus original 1965 stereo mix), "Revolver," "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," "Magical Mystery Tour," "The Beatles" and "Mono Masters," mono tracks that appeared on singles or EPs (extended plays).

"Yellow Submarine," "Abbey Road" and "Let It Be" were recorded in stereo originally and so were not included.

The stereo box set contains the same songs, though not necessarily the same "takes." Demand for the new "stereo" medium, in which vocals and instrumentation were separated into left and right channel speakers or headphones for playback, was growing and EMI wanted to exploit the new technology. The CDs in the stereo box set are also available individually.

As they digitized the master tapes, audio engineers removed any unintentional mechanical noise, such as hiss, clicks, sibilance but retained the musicians' ancillary sounds—coughs, breaths, side-chatter. The result maintains the artistic purity of the original masters while providing a more "authentic" listening experience.

The remastered digital recordings "have the integrity of the original master tape, they're just phonically superior" to previously released recordings, says Kevin

All They Needed Was Remastering

After a 22-year wait, Beatles fans can buy pristine CDs in mono and stereo.

Howlett, a radio producer who consulted on the project.

Original cover art and liner notes, as well as additional photographs and writings, are included, as is a short documentary video. The documentaries, each about five minutes or less, use photographs, video and audio from tape that rolled as the musicians recorded.

Blisters On His Fingers

Perhaps largely thanks to the Fab Four, Abbey Road studios is probably the most prestigious in recorded music. The Beatles created nearly their entire recorded output there and Sir George Martin, 83, produced their records. Today Martin is the most successful producer in the history of sound.

"Abbey Road is an institution," Martin told the Wall Street Journal in an interview. "This was my nursery. In fact, when I first came into these studios, we didn't use electricity to cut records, because electricity was not stable. So on each recorded take that I made with a classical orchestra, an engineer would wind to the ceiling a heavy weight that would drive the lathe at a constant 78 rpms. That was 1950. But things started changing enormously, particularly when the Beatles came along. We obviously had no computers back then, so we would use our own inventions to make sound. Today everything's available on tap; you just press a button."

"The Beatles often thought that Abbey Road was fuddy-duddy and old-fashioned. In truth, it was conservative, but it was solid and dependable, like Rolls-Royce: You knew you had a good product here. But the Beatles weren't Rolls-Royce people; they were Ferraris. Even so, the Beatles are very affectionate about this place. They'd rather come here than any other studio."

I do think the Beatles will still be with us in 100 years' time. I wouldn't have said that 40 years ago, but now it seems that each generation discovers their music like a new thing. My children found it when they were very young. My grandchildren have found it."

Source: the Wall Street Journal.
Editing by Armando Orozco.

What Went Blink In the Night

Mosh pits, body surfing, Aquabats and a tight squeeze at the Blink 182 concert.

By Sophia Mendez
Staff Writer

In the morning, my phone rang like crazy. I didn't answer it. Eventually I got out of bed. My mom walked in and handed me the house phone.

Manny was excited and anxious. Blink was having a concert later on that day. He asked me if I wanted to go and of course I said yes and told him I would call him later if my mom said yes.

Allen, a friend of Manny's, picked us up and we headed to Hollywood, watching "I Love You Man" the whole way there.

We parked in front of the Palladium and started looking for someone selling tickets. We got someone to sell us three for \$75 each. I was so excited. Not only did we have tickets, but I had a borrowed camera to document the concert.

Security told me I was not allowed to take my camera inside. I showed them my school press pass, thinking it would get me and my camera inside. Allen and I ran back to the car and left the camera.

Once through security, we found ourselves inside a room that would soon become a pit full of yelling fans.

The room, dim with glowing purple lights, seemed calm and relaxing. Beautiful chandeliers hung from the ceiling that most people wouldn't have noticed. We hurried to make our way into the crowd, leaving Allen behind.

Manny and I moved forward. We encountered some people in their mid 20's who were giving us problems. They would not let us pass to get closer to the stage.

One of the younger guys in the group told Manny, "look bro, I was here first. I'M NOT MOVING AIGHT." Manny started going off about how we just wanted to get through. Oh my God, are we really going to get in a fight over trying to get through?

Another girl from the group kept giving me dirty looks. I wouldn't give them back. I ignored Manny and the guy mumbling and gently pulled Manny away and told him to forget it.

Mickey Avalon came out on stage. I didn't know who he was, although his name did ring a bell.

"One, two, three, four, get your booty on the dance floor, work it out, shake it little momma."

Instantly, I knew who he was. I looked up to the stage.

Watching him perform was horrifying and shocking. He made himself look like an idiot, prancing around making fun of gay people.

He picked up a water bottle and started taking huge gulps to spit out at the crowd, which he did more than once.

Finally he was done. Impatiently, we waited for the Aquabats. I told Manny we should make our way to the front once the music started.

I don't know one single Aquabats song, but I did know the Aquabats claim to be superheroes on a quest to save the world from evil through music.

Music filled the room. Losing my balance to people shoving to start a mosh-pit, I looked over to the group of people who had previously given us a problem. I could feel my face form a smile.

They had been trampled and pushed by a group of excited fans who were singing aloud and jumping around. Finally they got



Photo provided by Manuel Estrada

TRIO: Guitarist Tom Delonge, bassist Mark Hoppus and drummer Travis Barker brought their brand of pop punk to the Palladium Sunday, opening with "Dumpweed" and running through their catalog of fan faves.

"Suddenly the backdrop fell and I forgot about the crowd. Too excited to see Blink. I started singing and jumping."

what they deserved. They didn't expect to be tossed around like beanbags.

We pushed and shoved our way to the front, squeezing our way between people.

Manny and I made friends with a few people who helped us move forward and saved me from being squished to death.

Literally

Before long we got pretty close to the stage, where there was no moving forward or back. We ended up three people behind a rail that separated us from the stage.

I still wasn't satisfied. I couldn't see anything. Manny is tall enough to see past

the people in front but I could barely see past their shoulders.

I looked up to see Aquabats lead singer Christian Jacobs. He had a fake mustache that looked like he drew it on himself. He wore a blue shirt with the letter "A" and black shorts, just like the rest of the band. Jacobs started to talk about a dilemma that would make Blink 182 half an hour late. The room roared with anger.

An "evil" man dressed in a gold Buddha costume would stop the concert unless Aquabats "saved the day." They did and ended their show.

A backdrop fell. We all cheered and chanted "BLINK, BLINK, BLINK," moving closer to the railing. I met a guy named Cody who needed someone to pull up his pants because he wasn't able to move his hands.

Lucky for him my hands were not in the air and I was able to pull them up. We all wanted to be close to Blink. So everyone pushed forward. I couldn't move an inch of my upper body. It was hard to breath.

We waited for Blink. Security passed out water bottles. Neither of us got one. A few droplets of water on our faces felt cold and refreshing. Like we'd been in a desert for years and finally found water.

After standing there 20 minutes, I saw everyone was sweating like crazy. Not only was my sweat on me but so was about 30 other peoples. We were really close. So close we could have been related. Everyone's arms and bodies around me began to scare me.

I started breathing heavily and I thought I would die of suffocation and no one would notice. So I told Manny and he pushed everyone away. He couldn't push people very far, but I could catch my breath.

Suddenly the backdrop fell and I forgot about the crowd. Too excited to see Blink. I started singing and jumping. I couldn't believe it. Every time I looked up I could see Tom, one of the two lead singers. We were so close I could see the blemishes on his face.

We jumped and sang along to their songs but the pushing and shoving got way out of hand and I couldn't take it anymore. Manny and Cody put me on their shoulders and let me crowd surf so I could make my way out of the crowd.

As soon as I got up on top of everyone, security pulled me out, helping me find the floor. I had to walk to the back of the pit. My body was drenched in sweat. It was like I'd walked into the shower with my clothes on and stood there half an hour.

I walked up a flight of stairs to the restroom. I passed a sign that read "powder room." I made my way to the restroom to look in the mirrors. Holy #\$\$%, is that me? I look like crap!

Making my way back out and down the stairs, I found a spot in front of the steps with a perfect view of Blink. I stayed there for the rest of the show and sang aloud to all the songs. Once they started singing "Miss You," my eyes began to water up. And I was sure many people did too. It's a feeling everyone gets when they see one of their favorite bands. You can't see it or express it but we all feel it. About half an hour passed and the concert ended.

I walked back to the car and met up with Allen and Manny. We drove home listening to Blink the whole way.

Coach's Corner

Football Squad 5-1 and Counting

Coach Faer says Parrot's "A" game will be hard to beat.

By Orlando Caddick
Staff Writer

The OPTIMIST asked varsity head coach Scott Faer a few questions about the last two Poly games. Here's what he said:

Q. The wins have been big and the losses close. You've had no major injuries. San Fernando forfeited, running Poly's season to 5-1. So far, what's your biggest complaint?

My only complaint this year is that we are not 6-0.

Q. Ervin failed to score against Arleta while Bray ran for three TDs. Bray averaged double Ervin's yardage per carry. Tell us what happened?

Bray scored on two nice runs and a fluke kick-off return. He may have doubled his yards but he was held to 13 yards in the second half. Kevin helped get us down the field and Arleta could not stop the QB sneak because our O-LINE was blowing them up off the ball. Trust me, Kevin could have scored!

Q. Poly made three rather critical errors against Arleta - two fumbles and a dropped pass. Were those errors the difference?

Every mistake hurts in a BIG game. I told them that before the game. With the turnovers and their big plays, the final score was only 28-21. They played better that day and looked better on film. If we play our "A" game, I think everyone is in trouble. That is hard to do, but this team is HUNGRY. I hope to see them in the playoffs...

Q. Poly had the ball with 1:45 to go and four downs but couldn't get the job done. Will you put more emphasis on the passing game in the future, since we missed on three attempts, any one of which would have tied the game?

The bottom line is WE RUN THE BALL. If our run game is hot then so will our pass game. When you are in a situation where you



Photo by Karina Muñiz

have to pass it makes it easier on the defense. There is nothing wrong with our pass game. Our QB is doing a great job. We do need to hang on to that ball though.

Q. Poly players looked pretty flat in the first half against a team where they clearly had to be at their best. On the other hand, Arleta's defense shut down Ervin pretty effectively. What happened?

I don't think we were flat but nervous. We played hard but not perfect. I will tell you this, they didn't shut down Kevin the whole game. Stopping him once behind the line of scrimmage is not shutting him down. He had over 160 yards against a good defense. Also, the coaching was even that night. They may have experience but it didn't show as far as play

calling on that day.

Q. The lopsided score in Van Nuys contest apparently ruffled some feathers on the other side. They felt we were piling on.

We knew we were better than VN but I didn't think the score would end up like that. I will not tell my players to take it easy on anyone. That is how injuries happen. We are on a mission to the playoffs. I had 5 different score with a running clock the whole game and played just about everyone. You always have to have a few starters on the field that can tell others what to do.

Q. Ervin's on track to rush for 2000 yards. Is he aware of that and do you consider that during the course of a game?

Ervin will most likely hit the 2,000 mark. I think about it more going into a game but you have to give the ball to the playmakers. Kevin has been hot all year but if you haven't noticed we have a lot of playmakers on this team! I do think records are meant to be broken and if he gets close to one I will let him go after it. You only get one chance to play high school football, so why not make the best of it?

Q. How much better is this year's team than last year's? Are they executing the double wing offense effectively?

This team is much better than last year's because of the year-round commitment and leadership. I have been waiting to coach this senior class. Their attitude is TEAM at all times.

My Lips Unsealed

Gabriela Melendez



Scary and Skimpy

When I was a little girl, my idea of Halloween was people dressing up and wearing masks to scare strangers. I also saw it as the ultimate opportunity to load up on candy.

Last Halloween, I dressed up as a demon while a lot of other teenage girls threw on skimpy costumes. I saw bold colors, incredibly short skirts, skintight waists and super v-necks everywhere. It's pathetic, and extremely provocative. Instead of dressing up, people are wearing less and less. Halloween costumes are becoming more sexual each year.

Halloween morphed from candy and costumes to naughty and scandalous.

If you walk into any costume store, you'll see what I'm talking about. A cute little rag doll becomes something for guys to drool at. Angels aren't angelic anymore. Fairy costumes look like a bikini with wings. I can only imagine what's going through a teen's mind wearing something like that. They're setting themselves up to be sexually harassed.

Shameless costumes send a message to the opposite sex. Wearing that, a girl is basically making a guy check her out. What does she gain from it? Confidence? These girls are willing to pitifully degrade themselves just to get a couple more stares. The lack of clothes leaves little to the imagination and more to want. What's odd is the girls in the costumes are fully aware of that.

No doubt most teenage girls will wear degrading costumes this year. Halloween has morphed from candy and costumes to naughty and scandalous. My suggestion is, dress up for Halloween, not down.

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

Sudoku

Use the numbers 1-9 to fill in each box. Use each number only once per box.

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

Solution to October's Puzzle

Life with Letty: Final Exams

Final Exam
Lv 100

FINAL EXAM >:D

Letty
Lv 61

Letty encounters foe Final Exam!

Attack Cry Guess Run

Final Exam
Lv 100

FINAL EXAM >:D

Letty
Lv 61

Letty tries to run! You can't run from a Final Exam!

Attack Cry Run

Final Exam
Lv 100

FINAL EXAM >:D

Letty
Lv 61

Letty uses Guess! It's not very effective

Attack Cry Run

Final Exam
Lv 100

FINAL EXAM >:D

Letty
Lv 61

Letty uses Endure! ...Nothing happened.

Attack Cry Run

This is one tough Exam!

Grr...

Only one thing left to do...

Letty uses Cry...

Must you do this every time we take a test?

Getting Stronger Every Day

The Lady Parrot varsity volleyball team just keeps getting better and better.

By Angel Silva
Staff Writer

The OPTIMIST recently sat down with head coach Peter Johannsen to talk about the season so far. Here's what he told us:

Q. What makes this year's team so successful?

There are a number of factors. First, this is the most experienced team in many years. For most players, this is their third year, and for many, their second year on Varsity. Second, through open Gym on Tuesday nights, players have been able to play one day a week year round. Finally, the team has been playing together since the spring when we played in a spring league.

Q. Verdugo and Van Nuys both have strong teams. Walk us through those games.

We won against Verdugo because our front row players are more athletic than theirs. We had strong hitting against them and they were not able to put up much of a block. It was also a breakout game for Arleth Ramirez, who surprised Verdugo with more than ten kills. Verdugo will be tougher next time; their gym is a little uncomfortable and cramped to play in.

Against Van Nuys, I felt we never really got our offense going. In addition, they have a quick offense which we had difficulty stopping. We are making adjustments to have more success next time

Q. There's defense and offense. Which one does this team do best?

There are different ways at looking at defense and offense. Both are crucial for a successful team. I have had the offense practice more than defense because I felt we needed a way to get points against the physically bigger teams. But defense keeps you in games and is also important, as I was reminded against Van Nuys.

Q. Did you mold this team to play the way you wanted or take what they do well and refine that?

Mainly, I try to improve a player's weaknesses, as players tend to work on their strengths on their own. For example, a good hitter usually likes to hit and keeps practicing that, neglecting other aspects of their game. In general, I believe in the

complete player, and that any player should be able to play any position. This is the first year I have really segregated front and back row players simply because of the number of players on the team.

Q. Go back to the beginning of the season. What were your thoughts on how far this team could go?

At the beginning, I figured we were a lock for the quarterfinals. More than half way through the season, I still feel we should make it to the quarter finals and good chance to go beyond. Although we have lost to a couple of teams in tournaments, I have still not seen the team that I feel is unbeatable. In terms of surprises, Leslie Olivares has become a stronger player than I had expected, and Arleth Ramirez is finally beginning to reach her potential. The team plays emotional volleyball, and as such will have terrific days and off days. The idea is to not have off days when we have important games.

Q. Talk about your critical players and their stats. How do you use stats as indicators of their contributions?

Key players are 1) Jocelyn Lopez, team captain and the heart of the team. She poses a threat in the middle, freeing up the outside hitters to swing away. This opens up our entire offense. She is also the coach on the court, instructing players like the captains before her. 2) Vidi Gallardo. Co-captain. The best all around player on the team. Able to play strong offense and defense. 3) Vanessa "Monkichi" Lopez. The other middle who has proven very good at reading and blocking opposing hitters, as well as never being shy about calling for the quick set.

As far as stats go, I don't find them overly useful except in determining which of the hitters is getting set, and who is making service errors. So much about stats is determined by the other team. For example, normally Jocelyn will get about ten kills during a match, but against Van Nuys she got one. Was Jocelyn really playing that bad? I doubt it.

Q. For those coming to girls' volleyball for the first time, what should they look for?

Everybody notices the kill. The reality is, someone had to pass the ball to the middle, and the setter had to feed the ball to the hitter. When anticipating the kill, look for the good pass to the front middle, then the kill has a chance of happening.



Photo by Jennifer Martinez

AIRBORNE: Junior Jocelyn Lopez goes skyward against Grant defenders in Tuesday's 3-0 win over the Wolves. Poly is 9-1 in league play with two games remaining.



Photo by Karina Muñiz

READER: Junior Vanessa "Monkichi" Lopez reads opponents well.

Q. What special blend of athletic skills does a volleyball player need that wouldn't necessarily be found in other

team sports?

In terms of true athleticism, a volleyball player has to be able to react quickly. Much of the training a volleyball player receives is so that they can hone their reflexes. After that, an ability to know where an opposing player is placing the ball is important. This ability can make players who are actually physically slow appear to be very quick. As I like to say it, the fastest player I ever had mostly just walked around the court.

Q. Tell us about your coaching career.

This is my seventh season coaching the girls. I began in August 2003. I had also coached the boys from Spring of 2004 through 2008. Previously I had coached the JV boys here at Poly for three seasons. I had never had any coaching experience prior to Volleyball at Poly.

Q. How would you describe yourself as a coach?

I believe the players are their own best coaches, and I let the players coach each other. When I see the same mistake, or I feel a player is ready for a growth step, I will step in and make some comments. The last few years I have stepped back a little from a leadership role and given that to the team captain.

Q. What been the most rewarding part of this season so far?

In terms of wins, beating Verdugo Hills. In terms of Poly volleyball, it is recognition by other coaches that we have a strong program. For the last four years, each team has been stronger than the year before. Watching the steady rise of Poly volleyball has given me a lot of satisfaction.