

# The Poly Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

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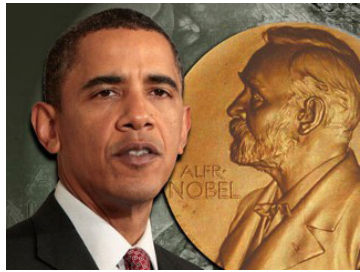
SERVING THE POLY COMMUNITY SINCE 1913

DECEMBER 2009

Politics '09

## Obama Accepts Nobel Peace Prize

By Karinina Cruz  
Staff Writer



Internet Photo

**NOBEL:** Obama next to the Nobel Peace Prize medallion

The Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded U.S. President Barack Obama the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize, just eight months after being sworn into office.

"I am both surprised and deeply humbled," said Obama to the waiting reporters at the White House.

Regardless of Obama's achievements, professional observers were surprised at the committee's decision, as the nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize were due only about two weeks after Obama's presidential victory.

Despite Obama's relatively premature nomination, the President's work towards global peacekeeping and advocacy for strong cooperation between people rendered the committee with much confidence to award him the prize.

Obama himself in his acceptance speech acknowledge that he was still at "the beginning of his labors on the world stage" and that the world has yet to see their fulfillment.

Such works that were mentioned was Obama's endeavors in the reduction of nuclear arsenals and in international relations.

Since the beginning of his presidential tenure, Obama has highlighted the problem of the threat of the dissolution of global relationships between the U.S and other nations. He also wishes to initiate peace agreements among warring factions, such as the Israelis and Palestinians.

Another issue that may evoke some skepticism towards Obama's Prize that Obama also recognized is the fact that he won despite the fact that the U.S. is in the midst of two wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

[ See Obama, pg 2 ]

## Poly Parrot Home for the Holidays

Poly staff member returns from deployment in Iraq

By Magdalena Corona  
and Angel Silva  
Staff Writers

Poly coordinator/advisor Isaac Alatorre returned from his second tour of duty in Iraq.

Alatorre was stationed in Ramadi, Iraq for almost seven months as a Platoon Sergeant for the communications section in his battalion.

"We had to make sure that "communication" is up all the time. We're the first ones on the field and the last ones to leave," said Alatorre. "In addition to learning how to properly handle different types of weapons, all our guys are trained to use all the communication equipment."

Alatorre left to Iraq in March of 2009, but started training October 2008 at Camp Pendleton, CA and 29 Palms.

"The training portion was much longer," said Alatorre.

Part of Alatorre's assignment during his last deployment involved returning defective equipment to the US.

"Part of our mission this round was to close down some of our bases in Iraq and return our gear," said Alatorre.

Since the last time Alatorre was in Iraq, the military equipment was upgraded.

"This time all of our vehicles were upgraded. The gear that was issued to us was upgraded," said Alatorre. "I notice that they



Photo by Jennifer Martinez

**STAFF:** Alatorre reacquaints his location in Poly

are still continuing to update the equipment. Everything is getting computerized."

But that's not the only thing that has changed since Alatorre was last in Iraq.

"The first time I was there we had many attacks. This time it was very calm-we had 3 indirect attacks, and 4 convoy attacks. I think the reason was because

[ See Alatorre, pg 4 ]

## Students Speak About Safety on Campus

Survey addresses student concerns about safety and security

By Magdalena Corona  
Staff Writer

Recent survey findings conducted by Poly show that some students don't feel safe at school.

"We wanted to see how students responded to the survey, so that we can be aware of how students feel on campus, whether they feel safe or not," said Poly's Assistant Principal Lourdes De Santiago.

A hundred forty four Poly students in computer classes took a Safety Survey last August. The findings of the survey led to the conclusion that many

students don't feel safe on campus

The survey asked if the students had witnessed violent incidents in the past 5 days, or felt unsafe on campus in the morning and/or after school.

Ten percent of the students who took the survey said they feel unsafe on campus, 14.5% reported feeling unsafe in the morning, and 7.6% reported feeling unsafe after school.

Ideally De Santiago wants anyone from the school community to be able to express any concerns they

[ See Safety, pg 6 ]

## Presents from Poly Parrots

By Jizel R. Emralino  
Staff Writer

Poly Leadership is raising funds to provide disadvantaged children with gifts this Christmas through the annual Toy Drive.

"Our donations are less than last year, but we are not giving up. We are doing the best we can so everyone can remember the holidays," said Poly Leadership Sponsor Brian LeClair. "Most of the campus is positive and helping as best as they can, but everybody feels the harsh fact and reality of the economic crisis going on."

Poly students raise money by doing house to house solicitations, garage sales, business letters and other means of fundraising.

"The Toy Drive happens all year-round," said Poly Leadership C-track president Dalia Galvan.

"It begins in July and ends in December. Our main focus with the Toy Drive is during November and December after Homecoming."

Poly Leadership has set a goal of buying toys for 4,000 children.

According to Galvan, Poly has fundraised a total of over \$14,000 for this school year, but is still open for donations.

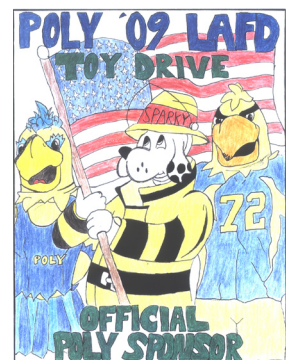
"Last year, we had gathered a total of \$27,000," said Poly Leadership A-Track president Gabriela Burciaga.

Those who donated are given "Thank you" letters with a flier stating that they are an official Poly sponsor.

"If they donate more than \$250, we thank them publicly through the school marquee," said Poly Leadership A-Track secretary Karen Ochoa.

On December 21, the whole

[ See Toy Drive, pg 6 ]



### School of Fear

See Page 4



### Twilight Saga: New Moon

See Page 7



### Rushing for the Goal

See Page 8

## Poly Students' Wishlist



Internet Photo

**SANTA'S WISHLIST:** Santa checks who gets a present.

The OPTIMIST conducted a survey asking students what they wanted for the holidays. Five most wanted gifts are:

1. Money
2. Clothes
3. iPod touch
4. New Cell phone
5. Laptop/ Gift Card

By Jennifer Escobar  
Staff Writer

It's that time of year again, where gifts are given and wishes are granted.

Money took the top spot this year, followed by clothes and the iPod Touch and a new cell phone. Tied for fifth were laptops and gift cards.

Money is always a favorite, since Parrots can buy anything with it. Clothing is always a favorite to gift and to receive. Technology was a favorite this year, with the iPod Touch (which features music, WiFi and more), new cell phones, and laptops. Gift cards were a new favorite as a substitute for cash.

Other holiday wishes include things one can't get at a store-acceptance into their dream college, an end to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, health and prosperity, to be with friends and family, and to spend time with loved ones.

The OPTIMIST wishes Poly Parrots Happy Holidays and a happy New Year.

## EDITORIALS

# Uprising On The Horizon



Internet Photo

**STUDENTS:** UC students protest tuition fee increase.

The University California Board of Regents approved a 32 percent fee increase that will push UC tuition above \$10,000 for all undergraduates.

UC President Mark G. Yudof is even asking students to exploit all and any financial aid possible so students don't get dropped. Wow, seriously? With the current economic crisis on our hands, financial aid is hard enough to get-let alone more scholarships.

Worst of all, university increase in cuts and lay offs leave students with less professors teaching courses limiting the amount of classes offered to students. Thanks a lot-now we don't really have much of a choice in classes we want to take.

Students will literally be paying more money for lower quality of education.

Most of us can't afford to pay \$10,000 more in tuition-not in this economy at least. This event could lead to millions of student dropouts because they can't afford to stay in school.

I'm pretty sure that you don't want to pay an extra \$10,000 out your pocket, and neither do your parents.

University students are protesting this injustice with banners and posters marching across campus and sitting inside buildings, refusing to leave.

Gaby Arita is a senior at UCLA who is working two jobs just to pay for her education and doesn't know how she is going to come up with the money for her graduation.

"I'm on my own," she said. "I can't ask my family. In this economy, no one is stable."

My neighborhood friend Armica Enriquez is worried about how he is going to pay for his next year at UC Riverside.

"This sucks man, I don't how I'm going to come up with the money-its just way too sudden" said Enriquez.

Is this the best the educational board has come up with to make money? Is there no other way then to purposely trying to get minorities to drop out?

Regardless this is our future education on the line. Will we sit around doing nothing while we let society get worse and worse or will we stand up while we have a chance?

# Children For Sale

Child trafficking, buying and selling a child from one from one country to another through force for the purposes of exploitation or involuntary servitude, is one of the most cruel things that can happen to anyone.

Child trafficking has become more prevalent with the help of Craigslist, an online Web community where people post job opportunities and items for sale. Children become those items for human traffickers.

Craigslist facilitates this sex slave industry though many users of this site may not be aware of its dark side.

The "Erotic" section on Craigslist seems to be one of the most efficient ways to post children and women for sale, for human traffickers because it's free and millions of users visit this website.

Recently, two women from Chicago were fined for selling girls as young as 14 years old on Craigslist, and forcing them to have sex with 10-12 men per day. The traffickers made over ten thousand dollars in one day, according to NofForSaleCampaign.org.

In another case, a Boston man and his niece were charged for plotting child trafficking operations selling teenagers as young as 13 years old by selling them on Craigslist from Massachusetts to New York.

These are just a couple of examples of cases of children trafficking. There are many cases that we are not aware of.

About 600,000 - 800,000 people are bought and sold across international borders each year; 50% are children, most are female, according to SCTNOW.Org.

Majority of the child trafficking victims are forced into commercial sex trade and prostitution. An estimated 14,500 to 17,500 foreign nationals are trafficked into the United States each year. About 200,000 American children are at risk for trafficking, according to the U.S. Department of Justice.

It's unbelievable to see that people can be so brutal. The thought of a child being taken away from home and taken to another country to be forced to have sex with strangers is sickening. Everyone can help reduce human trafficking by cooperating with organizations like Stop Children Trafficking Now and the Not For Sale Campaign.

Don't let anymore children suffer because someone wants to make more money.

## Obama Acceptance Speech

[ Obama, from pg 1 ]

According to Obama, one war is winding down, while the other was not prompted by the U.S and is supported by 43 other countries, including Norway. Obama did not refer to the war in Iraq and Afghanistan by their exact names.

Throughout his acceptance speech, Obama elaborated on the nature of wars, such as wars between nations and wars within nations.

Though Obama stated that he did not bring any definite solutions to the problems of war, he looked on past individuals that have persisted in fighting for peace and urged others to do the same.

## THE OPTIMIST

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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.

# Ex-Parrot Serves Country

By Jennifer Escobar  
and Armando Orozco  
*Staff Writers*

The OPTIMIST asked Poly alumnus Gerardo Arias about his recent deployment in Iraq. Here's what he said:

## THE EXPERIENCE

### Q. What was your position while in Iraq?

I was part of the Center of Command, which is where all the military operations are made.

### Q. How much of Iraq did you see?

Not much-I was stationed in Ramadi, Iraq. For the most part, I didn't see much of the city, the view was very limited and there were very strict rules in place. I was in Iraq for 5 months.

### Q. How did you come across Mr. Alatorre?

When I checked into my unit and received my contacts, I saw sergeant Alatorre and I spoke to him. I didn't talk to him in high school, but I saw him around when I was a student and I was familiar with him being a Marine.

### Q. Did you go into combat?

No I didn't go into combat. As far as the base as a whole, it was attacked a few times. Other units did experience combat.

### Q. How is Iraq like?

It was a desert. There wasn't much of a big local community, just a few towns here and there.

### Q. What did you get from going to Iraq?

When you are deployed, it adds to your experiences in life. You get time away from home, and you begin to grow as an individual.

## THE SOLDIER

### Q. Where were you born?

I was born in Northridge, California and raised in here in the Valley.

### Q. What did your family think about you going to Iraq?

Well they weren't too happy about it because no parent wants to see their kids go to war.

### Q. How did it feel to be away from your family so long?

You get used to it, however you still miss them and miss being with the people you are comfortable with, and it get kind of frustrating. But, eventually you start to thinking of your unit as family.

### Q. What made you join the army?

It wasn't so much patriotism that made me join, but I felt like if I had to do it out of respect.



Photo by Jennifer Martinez

**OFF DUTY:** Poly alumnus Gerardo Arias returned from a five-month deployment in Iraq.

### Q. Was military training tough?

It does get pretty intense and at points it gets really tough to handle. I was in boot camp for 3 months, but there was still more training after that.

### Q. Did you meet any of your friends in Iraq?

No, you get separated into different units and occasionally you see someone you know. Every once and a while you might come across familiar faces from different units.

### Q. Did you appreciate the United States more after being in Iraq?

You appreciate it more when you are in basic training.

### Q. Will you be going back to Iraq?

Probably not. The main concern right now is moving towards Afghanistan.

### Q. What are your plans for the future?

I plan to continue school. As for my major, I'm not sure what career I want yet-I don't even know where to transfer. I will spend my time more wisely.

### Q. Would you recommend joining the armed forces to high school students?

I don't regret join the Marines at all, but I am not going to suggest that you join. It's a great experience and you learn a lot from it, though.

### Q. What is your opinion in the war?

At this point in the war, there's no turning back. Even though I would like to see the troops come home, it wouldn't be the best outcome.

# Everyone Has One

Writer Gitty Daneshvari talks to students about overcoming fears

By Karinina Cruz  
Staff Writer

Published author Gitty Daneshvari visited and talked to Poly students about her newly released work, *School of Fear*, on November 16.

*School of Fear* was released early September of this year. In this book, Daneshvari explores a number of childhood phobias through the lives her four protagonists.

"I want people to see that most people have fears and it is normal," said Daneshvari. "*School of Fear* is something that you can read before going to bed and it is definitely a fun read."

"I started the book with four kids with distinct phobias who are sent to a special school in New England," said Daneshvari. "Theodore is afraid of death and is heavily melodramatic, Madeleine fears spiders and bugs, Garrison has a phobia of open water, such as the ocean and Lulu is claustrophobic and wears handcuffs so when someone would drag her to a closed space, she would just handcuff herself to the railings"

Daneshvari's book is partly autobiographical as she had many of the phobias of her characters.

"As a kid I was afraid of elevators and I used to ask my sister to go on the eleva-

tors and open the door to the stairs for me," said Daneshvari. "I was afraid of heights and bathrooms without windows, as I was claustrophobic. I was also afraid of spiders and other bugs. I moved out of my NYC apartment for a week just because I saw a cockroach.

In addition, Daneshvari hopes that the readers will understand the difficulty of overcoming one's fears.

"When the book ends the kids' fears did not go away completely, as it is a gradual process," said Daneshvari.

*School of Fear's* sequel will be released next September.

"I finished book two, which will come out next September with all four characters plus one new character," said Daneshvari. "Book three will only have two of the original characters in a totally different location."

During her visit to Poly, Daneshvari read a chapter from her book to the students and accommodated questions asked.

Poly senior Paola Leon asked Daneshvari about her writing techniques and style, such as the use of figurative language.

"Sometimes it comes together, but most of the time I write a version and then re-write it again and again," Daneshvari responded. "Sometimes the only way to find out which is the right version is to write all the wrong ones. With writing, you have to



Photo by Jennifer Martinez

**FEAR:** Author Gitty Daneshvari explores childhood phobias in her new book

play with the ideas without being so critical and just write it."

Daneshvari added that she always have an outline as she has a tendency to get carried away with writing.

"I had to re-write the entire second half of the book to get it right," said Daneshvari.

Other questions asked included Daneshvari's choice of names for the *School of Fear* characters.

"Theo is named after my cousin in Paris who loves to eat and is also quite dramatic.

I always liked the name Madeleine," said Daneshvari. "Lulu is named after two of my closest friends, but I do not know exactly why I named one of the characters Garrison."

Daneshvari also discussed the importance of re-writing and editing.

"Writing is re-writing. I would write, but not set the scene, so I have to re-write it. Don't be afraid of re-writing, that's what got me into college," said Daneshvari. "With the *School of Fear* I went over many drafts in between the five drafts I worked with my editor. It's mostly going over a passage and it took me many times to re-write."

According to Daneshvari, *School of Fear* will be made into a film in the near future.

"I'm not yet sure who will be the cast, but I think the kids would probably be played by new actors," said Daneshvari. "I wish Abigail Breslin will play Madeleine and Blythe Danner or Meryl Streep as Mrs. Wellington."

Daneshvari's first published book, *The Makedown*, is currently being made into a movie with Ashton Kutcher and Isla Fisher starring in the lead roles.

"I met Ashton Kutcher, but not Isla Fisher," said Daneshvari. "I visit the set, but not everyday. It's quite boring."

## Caught Being Good

By Jennifer Escobar  
and Jizel Ermalino  
Staff Writer

Poly is now promoting a concept brought by the district about positive behavior support plan called "4 for life." This program encompasses four principal concepts: Be safe, be respectful, be responsible, and be on time. It is to give students positive incentives in doing the right thing.

10th grade center Assistant Principal Lourdes de Santiago is in charge of the Four for Life program. Ari Bennett, 9th grade assistant principal is working alongside in promoting the goals of the program.

"The four for life is to acknowledge students who have a hard time doing the right thing," said Bennett.

Instead of focusing and punishing the students for their bad behavior, this program gives student a positive incentive to inspire them to do well.

Poly has tried to enforce this program year after year, but it has not been successful, due to lack of support from the administration.

This time around, however, the staff is determined to make this program succeed.

"The model is that consistency, stick with the program and play it out until you can see if its helping the kids or not, assess if it's making a difference in kids or either and continue or not. The longer we promote it, the more people will see the real value of it," said Bennett.

Poly Parrots are rewarded with pins and pens with gratifying messages for every good behavior.

The awards are based on a change or improvement of behavior, being responsible in class, great leadership, punctuality, and more.

Bennett added, "We need to become more contagious so we loose that negative stigma of being a school boy or a school girl."



Photo by Jennifer Martinez

**UNVEILED:** Poly's Senior Glade provides space and tranquility for staff and students.

## Senior Glade's Shade

By Daysi Nerio  
Staff Writer

One of Poly's less known features, the senior glade, is embedded with rich history.

Poly was built in February of 1957 along with the senior glade. The original poly was built in 1897 at downtown Los Angeles. Today the old Poly stands as LA Trade Tech.

Artifacts such as the sun dial, benches and the barbecue were brought from the original Poly.

"Back in the 1960's and 1970's when the seniors would turn 18, they would come back here and hangout," stated Mr. Colon, the horticulture teacher.

The glade is filled with almost every type of plants. "Cactus being a member of the succulent family, it does well here in Cali-

fornia," said Mr. Colon as he trimmed the edges of a cactus.

Other than the fishes in the pond, there are no animals in the senior glade. "Poly used to have an animal science program in the 1980's. Due to budget cuts, the program was canceled."

The senior glade was originally limited to seniors only. Today our senior glade is used for special events. Different clubs and organizations from Poly use the glade for award ceremonies and parties. Students are only allowed in the glade as a group and with a supervisor.

Lunches and breakfasts are sometimes held at the glade. Most recently, the senior picnic was in the glade.

The glade is maintained by Mr. Colon's agricultural classes, where the students earn to nurture and grow plants with more than love.

## Alatorre Talks About Iraq

[ Alatorre, from pg 1 ]

that's when we were establishing our presence in Iraq," said Alatorre. "The second time we didn't have as many attacks in our base."

Alatorre's won't be returning to Iraq soon.

"I'm not under obligatory time. I don't think the Marine Corps will recall any marines who've completed their term. But I have two years to reenlist if I want," said Alatorre. "I'm undecided as of right now."

Leaving his family and espe-

**"You can't force a country to be democratic—it takes time."**

cially his son was the hardest part of going to Iraq. Last time Alatorre was called to serve he didn't have a son. It was tough leaving his parents, but not as tough as leaving his son.

"The first time I didn't have a son," said Alatorre.

According to Alatorre, the conditions in Iraq have greatly improved.

"I think we've made progress in Iraq," said Alatorre. "They have a structured military and police force, and they're building on a democratic government."

However, Alatorre says that Iraq still needs work.

"They have a long way to go," said Alatorre. "You can't force a country to be democratic-it takes time."

# Three Generations of Teaching

By Marilyn Pocasangre  
Staff Writer

**P**oly English teacher Cheryl Kehrmeier has a rich past involving teaching and teachers.

Kehrmeier was born and raised as an only child in Alhambra and Temple City, California in a middle class community.

"It was a really nice place to grow up in," said Kehrmeier.

According to Kehrmeier, her fondness of teenagers drew her to teaching.

"Teens are on the brink of adulthood, I like the experience of interacting with them and learning about their future interests," said Kehrmeier.

To Kehrmeier, teaching is a family tradition. As a third generation teacher, Kehrmeier identifies her parents as her role models.

"They've been wonderful role models," said Kehrmeier. "My father was a radiological health physicist professor at Cal State Los Angeles for sixteen years,

and my mother was an elementary school teacher".

Aside from being a professor, Kehrmeier's father is an author and an expert in the radiation field.

"My father has written five books on radiation safety and he was chosen to travel to the Ukraine to inspect the Chernobyl Nuclear Accident radiation safety and aftermath," said Kehrmeier.

Her father's profession required her family to move to Argentina in order to accommodate her father's teaching occupation.

"While in Argentina, I attended a local school where no one spoke any English except for the English teacher. I got to experience total immersion and learned Castellano Spanish in about three months. This was a valuable experience linguistically and culturally," said Kehrmeier.

Her experience in Argentina was not the last time she would travel to South America.

"The second time, I lived in Brazil as a foreign exchange student for a part of my



Photo by Jennifer Martinez  
**SMILE:** English teacher Cheryl Kehrmeier has been at Poly for six years.

junior and senior year in high school. Living with a Brazilian family for a year gave me strength and in the end I formed a lasting bond with them," said Kehrmeier.

"I went to Graceland University in Iowa for two years, and then I attended San Fran-

cisco State University where I received a Bachelor's Associate in International Relations and a minor in Spanish. I obtained my teaching credential from Cal State Los Angeles a few years after my B.A.," said Kehrmeier.

Kehrmeier started teaching nine years ago at Marshall Fundamental High School in Pasadena where she taught for three years before transferring to Poly. "I was told this was a great school to work at and the rest is history," said Kehrmeier.

"The kids are fun and the staff is good. As a whole, the Poly community is great," added Kehrmeier.

When she is not teaching, Kehrmeier's favorite pastimes are camping, reading, spending time with my kids and horseback riding on occasion.

Ultimately, Kehrmeier considers teaching as one of many accomplishments. Her advice to students is "Do your best and don't give up! High school is only one phase of your life, and yes it does get better!"

## Real Life Economics

Poly seniors learn about business firsthand

By Daniel Martinez  
Staff Writer

**M**ost economics classes teach from notes and lectures. However, Poly economics teacher Brad Katz does things a bit differently.

In an effort to teach students the teamwork need to run a business, Katz created the "Real Life Economics Project," where students learn how to run a successful business by working together through a mock business setting.

"I wanted to give the kids something different, and wanted to show them the teamwork that is required to run a business," said Katz.

The project consisted of a class working as a unit to sell a product. Katz's second period was in charge of selling keychain lights. Third period was assigned sports bottles.

For the project, each class was assigned a company president, a Chief Executive



Photo by Jennifer Martinez  
**MONEY, MONEY, MONEY:** Students sell water bottles for a profit in Mr. Katz's economics classes

Officer (CEO), a Chief Financial Officer (CFO), managers and assistant managers, and workers.

"I had to sell stocks and now I have to sell bottles," said senior Hugo Ramirez, whose role in the company is a worker.

The CEO holds the highest position in

the company and is in charge of all students. The CFO manages the money and the managers make sure the workers are doing their jobs.

In order to raise money to buy the keychains and water bottles, each student had to sell eight stocks for a dollar each. After

raising the money, the items were bought and are sold for three dollars each.

"I feel like the whole class learned the difficult processes of running a business," said senior Armando Figueroa.

Katz's classes will be selling their items up to December 15 in room 39.



Photo by Jennifer Martinez  
**POLITICS:** Magnet teacher Ron Lehavi loves to teach

## People to See, Places to Go

Teacher Ron Lehavi seeks PhD in political science after eight years of hard work

By Magdalena Corona  
Staff Writer

**R**on Lehavi will be receiving a doctorate in Political Science after eight years of hard work and dedication.

"My doctoral thesis is about the growth of environmental civil society in super national regimes," said Lehavi. "My first draft was already approved, but I have to present my thesis again in February."

Lehavi traveled to Argentina and Uruguay to do field work for his doctorate.

"I'm comparing MERCOSUR (a Latin American Trade Agreement) with NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and European Union. I have to do a lot of trav-

eling and field research. I'm evaluating and researching civil society in free trade agreements," said Lehavi.

Lehavi has worked at Poly for 11 years and also currently teaches at Valley Community College.

"I teach AP European History and Social Science at Poly, and I teach Political Science at Valley," said Lehavi.

Lehavi came to the United States after his sophomore year of high school in Tel Aviv, Israel.

"I was born in Israel. Half of my high school years were in Israel and the rest here. I went to Van Nuys High School, I went to UCLA to get my BA, and teaching credential and USC for my masters in political science," said Lehavi.

When Lehavi isn't teaching or working on

his doctorate, he enjoys reading Milton Friedman's "Capitalism and Freedom."

"I enjoy the academic experience and the personal experience of working with high school level students," said Lehavi. "And being able to make a difference in my students' lives and get to see the changes made is why I chose to stay at Poly."

Lehavi expects and strongly encourages all his students to go to college.

"The importance of going to college has two parts to it. Number one is that is the place where you are in an environment where learning is supported and you can immerse yourself in learning," said Lehavi. "Second, but equally important, that is the only practical way of ever receiving a degree that is acceptable by most careers."

# HOLIDAY GAMING 2009

2009 was a great year for gaming but with the year coming to an end its time to decide what games to get for the Holidays. Most major franchises have released sequels, prequels and whole new fantasies into the gaming community.

By Armando Orozco  
Staff Writer



Internet Photo

**DEAD:** *Left 4 Dead 2 survivors prepared to take out hordes of zombies.*

Infinity Ward has released the long anticipated Call of Duty Modern Warfare 2. Modern Warfare 2 redefines expectations bringing in some much more than before. All new weapons, perks, attachments, kill streaks and multiplayer features giving modern warfare 2 a whole new experience.

The campaign is entertaining from beginning to end and the veteran mode is as hard as ever. Introducing new protagonists to the game, MW2 brings back old characters from the previous game and takes player to farthest corners of the world from a little villa in Brazil to the frozen tundra of Russia.

The multiplayer has evolved since COD4 with all new weapons and perks giving a complete-

ly different online experience than expected. The game's new customizable kill streaks in multiplayer allows players to bring in new special equipment such as a small care package or even a tactical nuke that ends the game.

New to Modern Warfare 2 is the Spec-Ops multiplayer feature. Spec-Ops a two player co-op mode that makes gamers do various tasks from a stealthy sniper mission to a timed demolition mission. There are over 60 different missions to complete and each one is either harder than or just as hard as the last to complete them all takes time and dedication. This first person shooter is a must have for the collection and wont disappoint long time fans of the call of duty franchise.



Internet Photo

**WAR:** *Soldier in the midst of an epic battle between two opposing forces.*

## FLYBOY:

*Ezio pilots Leonardo Da Vinci's flying invention over Venice, Italy*



Internet Photo

Assassin's Creed II brings back the mysterious world of an order of assassins that silently keeps the world at peace. This time around the game takes players to 14th century Italy in time of great cultural rebirth the Renaissance.

Open world environments, constant exploration, and free-flow mechanics remain the best part of the game experience and it certainly has improved since the first game. The development of cities in the game are amazing Venice and Florence are breath taking and are the most historically accurate architecture seen in a game.

Assassin's Creed II has all the elements of great RPG game hidden tombs, secret items, treasure boxes and the ability to upgrade material.

Assassin's Creed II also enables the players to hire mercenaries, thieves and even concubines to distract guards and sneak by enemy defenses this feature is new to the game but becomes like second nature after a while. The game's only major flaw is that sometime transitions from side missions to the main quest might feel a bit out of order. Other than that the game is bigger, badder and better than ever.

## Safety

[ *Safety, from pg 1* ]

have about safety issues so they can be addressed.

"This is the first time we tried the survey, but our goal is to expand the number of students who respond to the survey," said De Santiago.

Administration and faculty members at Poly are working on increasing the security level on campus to help students feel safer.

"We are bringing on board mediation program, called the

HEART Program, so that students learn how to handle different situations by mediating instead of using violence," De Santiago said.

But the budget is also affecting the amount of security on campus.

"From June to July, we had a lot of staff leaving us, whether it was because they went to another school, or because they got laid off," said De Santiago. "Now we don't have as many people doing supervision. But we're trying to do the best we can with a small group of people."

There is going to be another

survey given to a larger amount of students. The chosen classes will go to a computer lab in order for the students to take the survey.

"We want to select random classes and bring them to a computer room to take the survey, because a larger amount of students who take the survey will have a greater impact," said De Santiago.

De Santiago hopes that giving the survey to a larger crowd of students will give faculty a stronger idea of how students feel on campus.

## Toy Drive

[ *Toy Drive, from pg 1* ]

Leadership committee will go to Tom's Toys and spend all the money they have collected for gifts.

"We personally buy the toys and we enjoy that experience," said Poly Leadership B-track president Alex Garcia.

According to Poly Leadership Stephanie Barba, Poly Leadership works in collaboration with the Los Angeles Fire Department

for the Toy Drive.

"After buying the toys, the Fire Department picks them up on the same day," Barba added. The Fire Department takes care of the rest, such as distributing them."

The Fire Department gives the toys to programs or institutions that request for them.

"For example, a local church with children whose parents can't afford to buy toys will request for toys through the Fire Department's toy program," said Poly Leadership B-Track vice president Alex Serrano.



Internet Photo

**FIGHT:** Jacob ready to attack Edward.

## A NEW PHASE OF THE MOON

By Joel Hinojosa  
Staff Writer

**N**ew Moon is different from other gory vampire clichés out there.

“There’s a feeling on a movie set when you realize you’re involved in something special. This is a subtle vampire movie, there isn’t a lot of fangs and blood spurting. It’s a fun world to create, a beautiful world, a romantic world,” said Andi Isaacs, Summit Entertainment Head of Physical Production (New Moon Illustrated Movie Companion), “We all wanted to make a movie we could be proud of, not just a success on a momentary level, but something that will be remembered.”

Most of the story takes place in Forks, Washington with an exception to the visit at Volterra, Italy where the Volturi, where a royal family of dangerous vampires live.

Edward Cullen (Robert Pattinson) and Bella Swan (Kristin

Stewart) are both madly in love. But when Bella’s birthday party turns into a showdown, Edward leaves because he believes the departure will enable her to live a safe and human life.

The departure, however, tears Bella apart and she soon becomes immersed in total depression.

“It has an amazing kind of emotional integrity and intensity,” said A.O Scott of “At the Movies.”

Bella painstakingly lives like a vegetable for 5 long months but soon becomes awakened by a trip with Jessica at the movies. In her trip she discovers she can hear Edward’s voice in dangerous and reckless situations.

Bella, in hopes of bringing the voice back, obtains a motorcycle and becomes friends with her technician friend Jacob Black (Taylor Lautner). Jacob brings light into her world until he too

backs away from her when he becomes pre-occupied with a cult known as the wolf pack.

The wolf pack’s Alpha dog or leader is Sam Uley (Chaske Spencer) and the pack is the protector of Forks from vampires.

“Twiards will appreciate director Chris Weitz’s faithfulness to the source text, even as he improves on it,” said Nancy Gibbs of the Times, “And Weitz (with the help of Lautner’s abs) might suddenly find himself responsible for a series of mass conversions: from Team Edward to Team Jacob.”

Despite record sales, most critics would say New Moon is directed towards a fan base and nothing more.

“This movie was made for the fans, and if you don’t get it, then you don’t get it,” said director Chris Weitz.

## My Lips Unsealed

Gabriela Melendez



## 2012: Fact Or Fiction?



**END OF THE WORLD:** Will 2012 be the year the world comes to an end, as many seem to believe, or is it just a big joke?

**M**any people believe December 21st, 2012 marks the end of the world. Others believe it is a big hoax, another joke, and they laugh at believers. No one knows exactly what would happen.

The year 2012 has become a promise of chaos. People have started living their lives in fear, or their lives to the fullest. Paranoia sweeps the world. Personally, I think it’s just another doom date, and wait to watch pointless chaos come.

Who actually believes this? Why are people so convinced this will happen? “Because of the Mayans.” The Mayan calendar is thousands of years old, created the year 3113BC. The calendar goes on for 5,125 years, ending on December 21st, 2012. A worldwide natural disaster would “cleanse the earth.”

Of course, this frightens people. I have found websites that connect 2012 to flood insurance, instructions on how to get your own electricity, and emergency survival kits. People are making money off others’ worries. I’m sure there are people now who live in fear, stocking up on supplies, waiting for the dreaded day.

There are a lot of theories about what would happen on December 21st, 2012. One possibility is the earth straightening itself, causing northern oceans to shift and flood the whole world. Another theory

was a solar flare deteriorating our atmosphere and cooking the world. The media feeds off the people’s fears and makes a quick buck doing so.

For example, the movie “2012” envisioned events such as land-splitting earthquakes, colossal tsunamis, and exploding volcanoes. Coincidentally, all these disasters took place in California, while the rest of the world was submerged in water. Another film, “Knowing,” displayed the possibility of global destruction via solar flare.

I do not believe in 2012 because it is completely illogical. Its premise is based on the Mayans. What if the Mayans just stopped continuing their calendar? A thousand years can erase a lot of history, so we can’t know for sure.

Also, this isn’t even the first time the apocalypse has been predicted. Nothing happened in March 1997, or

on 1999. The year 2000 went by smoothly, just as June 6, 2006, as well as September 10, 2008—the day that the Large Hadron Collider made its first run.

The truth is, there’s no solid proof that anything will happen at all on December 21, 2012. Brainwashing people by saying the end will come is the wrong thing to do. Convincing believers 2012 will not happen isn’t right, either. Let people believe what they wish. Anyone could be wrong. All we can do is wait and see.

### Life with Letty: Happy Holidays



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

## Sudoku

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

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

Solution to November’s Puzzle

# Poly Out In Second Round

El Camino's 5'10" sophomore running back Kawan Rally's 195 yards rushing and two touchdowns highlight 31-18 win.

By Armando Figueroa  
Staff Writer

El Camino used a strong ground game to grind out a 31-18 win over Poly, eliminating the Parrots from the playoffs.

"Although our efforts were good, we shot ourselves in the foot too many times," said Parrot head coach Scott Faer.

Poly senior quarterback Miguel Zapien threw touchdown passes to Erik Martinez and Marco Hernandez and was 5 for 12 for 128 yards.

Parrot junior running back Kevin Ervin, who came into the contest averaging 21 points per game, gained 164 yards on 14 carries but failed to score.

Poly's 238 rushing yards was well below its season average of 400. El Camino rushed for 408 yards and added 14 receiving, but total yardage for the game was a narrow 422-366 in favor of the Conquistadors.

El Camino sophomore running back Kawan Rally had two TDs and 195 yards rushing, while senior Rashon Harper ran for 75 yards and a touchdown. Kicker Keon Parsa added a 27-yard field goal and four points after.

Poly failed on all three points after touchdown.

"It wasn't the way I expected to go out," Faer said, "but at the end of the day, this team did a great job. We competed with everyone."

The loss ended Poly's run in the playoffs and wrapped up the Parrot's best season in nearly 20 years.

"I'm definitely happy with the overall outcome of the season," said Faer. "It feels good to be apart of one of the best Poly football teams in history."

Poly's 9-3, 5-1 season was its best in a decade and good enough for a second-place finish in the East Valley League standings. Arleta took the top



Photo provided by Larry Zhieler

**RUSH:** Poly parrot Kevin Ervin rushes past Conquistador's defensive line

spot with an 11-2, 6-0 record.

The Parrots were perfect at home this year and had a 517/234 advantage in points for and against on the season.

Poly junior running back Kevin Ervin had a record-setting year, rushing for 2297 yards. He averaged nearly 200 yards per game and nearly 14 yards per carry while scoring 36 touchdowns and accounting for 232 points, nearly 19 per game.

Ervin's 409 yards against Granada Hills set new records for both Poly and San Fernando Valley schools.

The Conquistadors (12-1, 4-1), who squeaked by Arleta's Mustangs 21-20 last Friday, will play Hamilton on the 11th. Only a 28-21 loss to Taft mars a perfect won-loss record for El Camino.

## Poly Basketball Schedule

### Varsity Boys Basketball Schedule

1/06/10 4:00 PM @	Los Angeles (Los Angeles, CA)
1/11/10 5:00 PM @	Canoga Park (Canoga Park, CA) *
1/13/10 5:00 PM @	Arleta (Arleta, CA) *
1/15/10 7:00 PM @	Van Nuys (Van Nuys, CA) *
1/20/10 5:00 PM vs.	Verdugo Hills (Tujunga, CA) *
1/22/10 7:00 PM vs.	North Hollywood (North Hollywood, CA) *
1/27/10 5:00 PM vs.	Grant (Van Nuys, CA) *
1/29/10 7:00 PM vs.	Canoga Park (Canoga Park, CA) *

### Girls' Varsity Basketball Schedule

1/13/10 5:00 PM vs.	Arleta (Arleta, CA) *
1/20/10 5:00 PM @	Verdugo Hills (Tujunga, CA) *
1/27/10 5:00 PM @	Grant (Van Nuys, CA) *

\*Conference Game | \*\* Tournament Game |



Photo by Monica Sagasume

**RUNNERS:** Poly varsity cross country.

## Cross Country Crushes Competition

By Armando Figueroa  
Staff Writer

Poly's Cross Country team went undefeated this season and become league champions.

The boy's varsity team won the league championships while girls cross country became second in the city league.

The guys cross country team won eight races in a row making them undefeated this season.

"They're an amazing team," said Poly cross country coach Pedro Valencia. "Each week they improved and every week they're time went down."

The league win seals Poly's 11th consecutive year at the title of league champions.

"I have a feeling that this years team is stronger then before," said consisting cross country coach Mario Rivera.

Boy's varsity made it into city finals but unfortunately fell short a couple of seconds of the participating requirement times for state competition.

Before the disqualification Poly ranked in the top five in city.

Overall Poly has great expectations for next year's team to go further then before.



Photo by Monica Sagasume

**TRAINING:** Varsity cross country prepare for city finals.