

The Poly Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

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JANUARY 2010

Politics '09

Senate Passes Health Bill

By Angel Silva
Editor In Chief

The Senate approved an \$871 billion healthcare bill on December 24, passing by a 60-39 vote.

"With today's vote, we are now incredibly close to making health insurance reform a reality in this country," said President Barack Obama in a news conference after the vote.

However, the Senate still must meet with the House of Representatives to merge the bill with another version that the House passed on November 7. The main differences between the two bills concern taxation, the addition of a public option and abortion rights.

The conjoint bill would increase the amount of people covered by private and government insurance by 30 million and would require most people to buy insurance. The bill would also provide federal subsidies to pay premiums and penalize employers that don't offer affordable insurance.

"My colleagues and I will work to stop this bill from becoming law."

Republicans, however, were not happy with the legislation.

"This fight is long from over," Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell said. "My colleagues and I will work to stop this bill from becoming law."

The passage of the bill marks a victory that Democrats have been pursuing since President Bill Clinton's previous attempt to provide healthcare in 1994. Republicans have halted any attempts to reform healthcare ever since until the passage of the bill.

"Our challenge then is to finish the job. We can't doom another generation of Americans to soaring costs and eroding coverage," Obama said.

A final bill may reach President Obama's desk by late January or early February.



Photo provided by Pia Damonte

FIRST AID: Poly First Responders on duty at Pasadena's parade.

Poly Brass Join All-City Band In Parade

By Diane Alvarado
Staff Writer

Seven Poly band members played in the Rose Parade on Friday, January 1 in Pasadena as part of LAUSD's All City Marching Band.

"I had an idea what it was going to be like," said junior Henry Mejia (Baritone), "because I watched the parade every year, but it is definitely a different experience to actually be a part of the Rose Parade then to watch it."

The day started early for the Parrot band members.

"We had to come to Poly around four in the morning so that the bus could pick us up," said Mejia. "Surprisingly, there was not a lot of traffic. It took us about two hours to get there."

The All City Marching Band was led by director Anthony White.

"It felt like we were never going to reach that end," said Alvarez-Parra, "but it was all worth it because we knew that all our hard work had paid off."

Poly Band members wore LAUSD band uniforms. They also wore special shoes for the event.

"We wore 'Show Stoppers,'" said Alvarez-Parra. "They are shoes that were made especially for marching."

The band preformed five songs, repeating them to the end of the parade. The tunes were

composed by Ken Dye, a college roommate of Poly band teacher Steven Isaacs.

At the end of the march, band members got some free food.

"There was an In 'n' Out truck at the end of the parade," said sophomore Daniel Bullecer (trumpet). "It was so good. That's what I call a well deserved meal."

[See Band, pg 6]

First Responders Work Rose Parade

Parrots provide first-aid services on New Year's Day in Pasadena.

By Stephy Menjivar
Staff Writer

A group of Poly's First Responders joined forces with the American Red Cross to provide first aid services at the Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade on Friday, January 1st.

"The parade is a great opportunity for my students to practice the medical skills and training acquired from my courses," said Poly ROP teacher Jeremy Sonenschein.

Sonenschein teaches a First Responders class at Poly and the 14 Parrots who worked the parade were his students.

The Parrot First Responder volunteers met at Poly at 3:45 am on New Year's Day and were shuttled by a Red Cross van to CalTech in Pasadena, where each student was assigned to a station leader.

"Each student must be a Certified First Responder, possess a valid CPR for the Healthcare provider card, complete a Red Cross background check and attend an

orientation covering radio operations, parade procedures, and review of basic skills," Sonenschein said.

Sonenschein made arrangements with Parade Coordinator Todd Blecha to have Poly's First Responders provide medical aid for the event some months ago.

Sonenschein has worked as a Rose Parade medical station leader for the past ten years.

Senior and level two First Responder, Luis E. Lemus was at Station 4 with Sonenschein during the parade.

"I got to Poly at 3:40 am and got to our station by 4:40 am," Lemus said. "I got assigned a radio and a team, which was Team 4 East."

[See Responders, pg 6]

Fishler Introduces PAES Training to Poly

On-the-job training prepares specialized students for life after school.

By Magdalena Corona
Staff Writer

Parrot teacher Brenda Fishler has instituted a job-training program for special-ed students at Poly that will improve their chances of finding employment when they graduate.

"I brought this program to Poly because I thought we needed something like this for our kids," Fishler said. "We were sending them out into the world without being ready."

Poly is the first comprehensive high school to use the program, called the Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) Lab, and the first LAUSD school to have the program.

"I had to speak with people from the District," Fishler said, "and get approval from Principal Lora because I needed a room to keep for the whole year."

"I have two assistants, Yvonne Vasquez and Steve Oganessian, because we have power tools and sewing machines. We need to have a close eye on the kids to make sure they don't get hurt."

Dr. Judy Swisher created PAES about ten years



Photo by Karina Muñiz

FISHLER'S LAB: Brenda Fishler teaches work skills in the PAES program.

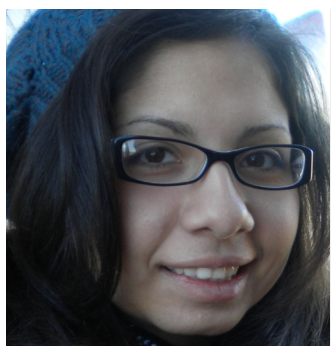
ago for her doctoral dissertation, demonstrating that the program is a valid assessment for special-ed.

Fishler brought the program to Poly after attending five days of PAES training.

"The training explained the scoring system, how to write down the information and what the symbols meant," said Fishler. "We had to learn that we can't help the students, we can't have our hands out and point at anything. They're supposed to figure things out on their own."

The PAES Lab consists of five components and

[See PAES, pg 6]



just
back
from
Spain
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into
the
Na'vi
world
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low
level
glide
path
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EDITORIALS

California Fails

If the U.S. were a high school, California would be one of many troublesome students.

First class that California would fail in - Funding 101. The state controls 67% of California's school funding, so when politicians upstate screw up and land California in a deficit, schools take the hit too.

So how exactly does the state provide money for schools? It's up to the Legislature, which controls 40% of school spending. And with over a thousand school districts with different amounts of students (LAUSD alone has 700,000, and 50 districts have less than 100 students), there's bound to be a screwup somewhere.

Now let's see how California does with some economics.

36.3% of CA high school grads go on to a college, compared with over 40% nationally. The cost of attending a UC has tripled in the last ten years, to the grand sum of \$27,502 a year. Hell, the cost of attending UCLA's School of Law is \$40k.

And now for social science.

A '05-'06 study showed that California has 21 students per teacher, the highest ratio except for Arizona and Utah. The same study showed that California spends approximately \$8,500 per student, placing it 29th in the nation for (K-12 student spending.)

Another study found more than 2 million dropouts for the '07-'08 school year in high schools in California.

Grade? A big, fat, juicy F. Someone put California in Intersession, please!

Politicizing Haiti

Whenever tragedy strikes, it is human nature to lend a helping hand to those in need, to comfort the hurt, to treat the wounded and to assist with whatever we can give.

If this is the case, then what do we call those who instead of providing help to the distressed politicize disaster?

Conservative radio host Rush Limbaugh's comments about President Obama's supposed failure to report the costs of providing aid to victims of the recent earthquake in Haiti and Southern Baptist Pat Robinson's statement that the earthquake was a form of infernal retribution are the newest idiocies from right-wing extremists.

Limbaugh's rant about the costs of "sending a man to Haiti" are nothing but pathetic. Angry at the swift response from Obama in providing assistance, Limbaugh's course of action was to dehumanize a massive natural tragedy into a game of numbers and politics.

As for Robinson's comment...well, read for your-

self.

"Something happened a long time ago in Haiti, and people might not want to talk about it," said Robinson on the Christian Broadcasting Network.

"They were under the heel of the French. You know, Napoleon III, or whatever. And they got together and swore a pact to the devil. They said, 'we will serve you if you'll get us free from the French.' True story. And so, the devil said, 'okay it's a deal.'"

So bizarre and inappropriate, one wonders where on earth did he pull that from. Rather than bringing people together in a time of chaos, he prefers to propagate ignorance and hate. And this is coming from a renowned Christian figurehead. Nice going, hypocrite.

Such glib comments only show how far the ignorance and willful stupidity of such people will go. Limbaugh and Robinson are nothing but sad, dismal excuses for the right and humans in general.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The OPTIMIST asked students if they kept their New Year's resolution last year and what they resolved to do in 2010.

My New Year's resolution last year was to challenge myself more in school. I accomplished my goal by taking classes I normally wouldn't have taken, and passing them. This year my main resolution is to be involved in other activities outside of school. I'm volunteering and joining a club and I hope to become a better person from my new experiences.

Krystal Schipper / 11

My New Year's resolution last year was to start off fresh at Poly and make new friends, get good grades and make the baseball team and I accomplished every single one of those goals. This year my resolution is to help Poly baseball win a city championship, play at Dodger stadium and enjoy the rest of my senior year with my friends.

Eric Reyes / 12

My New Year's resolution last year was to get good grades which I accomplished. My grades have gone up dramatically - from an F and D student to an A, B, and C student. This year my resolution is not to let my problems get in the way of my education or distract me from graduating and going to college.

Sellenne Diaz / 12

Last year I didn't have a New Year's resolution. This year my resolution was to do well in school and try to graduate on time and on stage. I started intersession alright and I'm going to try to keep it that way. I need 5 classes to make up and if I don't fail anymore I'll graduate on time.

Bryan Perez / 12

I can't remember what my resolution was for last year, but I know that this year's resolution is to get a driver's license, a stable job so that I can support myself and to graduate on stage in front of my parents and friends.

Haret Darbinyan / 12

My New Year's resolution last

year was to finish school and find a job. I didn't finish school but I did get a job at Pollo Loco. This year I will finish school after intersession and find another job.

Carlos Caldera / 12

My New Year's resolution was to do better in school and I did. This year I want to lose weight, graduate on stage, improve my vocabulary, and get my GPA higher so that I could get into a better college.

Juan Arreola / 12

To me, having a New Year's resolution is like making a promise. I once was told, "Don't make a promise you can't keep" - so now I don't make promises I don't keep. I just say I will try my best.

Christian Pagaduan / 12

To be honest I don't even remember what my New Year's resolution was in 2009. I find it pointless to make a promise every year. At this point I can only make the best of every year.

Karen Hernandez / 12

Last year my New Year's resolution was to think of a New Year's resolution for 2010. Unfortunately, I was unable to think of one. Nevertheless, I set one for 2010 - to come up with a resolution for 2011.

Jesse Melgar / 11

Few people manage to stay true to their New Year's resolution. My resolution is to do better at school and keep any harmful substances from hurting my body and mind. I am testing my willpower and stamina.

Cesar Martinez / 11

My New Year's resolution last year was to try to stop eating as much fast food. I broke it after a week. This year I plan to eat salads and eat less junk food. I also plan to run three times a week and at least four miles a day.

Julio Ceja / 12

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the Editor must be typed or neatly printed in ink and include the writer's signature. The OPTIMIST reserves the right to edit submissions. Send letters to Rm.14 or Mr. Blau's box.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The OPTIMIST is the voice of the Poly community and accepts the responsibilities of a free press. The OPTIMIST follows the Code of Ethics for the Society of Professional Journalists. Editorials are the opinions of the staff writers.

Jessica Caballero POLY SUCCESS STORY

“ I’ve been very fortunate to have such a great support system. ”

Poly senior Jessica Caballero recently learned that MIT had offered her a full ride scholarship. The OPTIMIST asked Caballero to tell our readers how she did it.

I know that I owe a huge part of this accomplishment to my teachers and counselors. Before attending the magnet I had no clue what an AP class was and I never even thought of applying to schools such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Harvard and Stanford etc. I was ignorant of this world of private colleges and universities.

But I’ve been very fortunate to have such a great support system. My teachers encouraged me for four years and helped me believe that I had all the potential to gain acceptance into top schools. I can still remember walking in to the cafetorium in ninth grade for parent conferences. The first teacher my father and I greeted was Ms. Martin and the first thing she told my father was that I was going to go to a top school like Harvard or Yale.

The Studying

Obviously wanting to go to these schools was not enough. I dedicated lots of time to studying and doing homework. Gradually I developed the discipline needed to keep up with such a busy schedule. I tried to avoid procrastinating and tried to work on everything day by day but of course this didn’t always work.

I think that over these four years I’ve learned how to manage my time and learned what works best for me academically. I hate working in a room that’s completely quiet. I usually do homework in my room while listening to some of my favorite songs on iTunes.

I plan to major in Biochemistry. My interest in Biology started during the AP Bio course I took my sophomore year. I had a fantastic teacher and her passion inspired me. After attending the 2009 summer program at MIT, I knew I wanted to incorporate Chemistry into my studies as well.

The Scholarship

In the beginning I was not considering the Questbridge application, I thought my possibilities of receiving a scholarship were slim. Luckily, a teacher insisted that it was a fantastic opportunity that I should not let pass by.

The Questbridge application consisted of three major essays and a couple of short responses. It required letters of recommendations and the typical testing information, grade point average, community service, etc. After being identified as a Questbridge finalist, I had to submit extra supplements to some of the other schools. In early Decem-

ber I was notified that I was admitted to MIT.

As of now I have a full ride for all four years to MIT and I will most likely be visiting for Campus Preview Weekend.

The Minority Introduction To Engineering and Science (MITES) summer program consisted of five rigorous courses over a six-week period. MITES was a great experience. It was ridiculously hard, but I had a fantastic cluster leader who helped me out every time I needed encouragement.

The Trip

I was recently in Spain for about 10 days. We went to get to know a different part of the world, a different culture and a different country.

We visited major cities such as Barcelona and Madrid and also got to see a couple smaller cities like Montserrat, Toledo, and Granada. We saw a lot of beautiful cathedrals, parks, museums, castles, and historical buildings.

The history of Spain is preserved in its architecture. My favorite building was the Cathedral Sagrada Familia (Sacred Family), especially since I had studied Antonio Gaudi, the architect, during the summer program at MIT.

Spain is a completely different culture. People buy flamboyant masks and wigs to welcome the new year. They have a countdown at Plaza Sol in Madrid where thousands of people get together to wait. They welcome the new year with lots of fireworks and happiness.

The Beginning

I was born in Sylmar, but I’ve lived my entire life in Pa-coima. I have a small family of five, including myself. I’m the middle child. I have an older sister who’s a sophomore at CSUN and a younger brother who’s a sophomore at Sun Valley High School. I live with both of my parents Maria and Alfonso Caballero.

I really enjoy reading for fun. I can read for hours and hours if I get my hands on a good book. I like working out whenever I have time as long as I have my iPod with my favorite songs. I also enjoy just hanging out with friends, going out to eat, and shopping.

The Future

Over these four years, I have tried to learn as much as possible not just on an intellectual level, but on a personal level as well. Starting at a new place with completely different people will be really tough but I know that with the help of my teachers I have prepared myself for this next phase of my life.

Top Ten Sports Moments of 2009

By Ivan Salazar
Staff Writer

Competition makes watching sports exciting and there was plenty of excitement in 2009, from upsets to buzzer-beaters. See if you remember these:

Steelers win sixth Super Bowl

Steelers' quarterback Ben Roethlisberger launched a miracle pass to wide receiver Santonio Holmes in the corner of the end zone with 41 seconds left to give Pittsburgh a 27-23 victory and a record sixth Super Bowl.



Please Stay Seated

A determined Roger Federer outlasted Andy Roddick in a 30-game fifth set at Wimbledon for his 15th Grand Slam title. The four-hour and 16 minute contest over 77 games was the longest in a men's Grand Slam Final. The score was 5-7, 7-6(6), 7-6(5), 3-6, 16-14.

Faster than Lightning

Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt broke the world record for the 100-meter dash in the World Championships with a record-setting 9.58 seconds, besting his previous record by 0.11 seconds.

One Second Victory

The Big 12 Championship featured Texas Longhorn quarterback Colt McCoy and Nebraska defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh. But it was Longhorn kicker Hunter Lawrence who kicked the game-winning field goal as time expired, giving Texas a ticket to the national championship game with a 13-12 win.

Nail Biter

The Villanova Wildcats narrowly defeated the Pittsburgh Panthers in the East regional for the 2009 NCAA men's basketball tournament. Guard Scottie Reynolds' make with 5.5 seconds left put Villanova in the Final Four.

A Block to the Cup

Pittsburgh won game 7 of the Stanley Cup Finals in the closing seconds when Penguin goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury blocked Detroit Redwing Nicklas Lidstrom's desperation shot.

World Series Hit

The Phillies, down 1-2 to the Yankees in the Series, were tied 4-4 in the top of the ninth with two outs when closer Brad Lidge fell apart. Critical hits by Alex Rodriguez and Jorge Pasada gave the Yankees the game 7-4 and eventually the World Series.

Triple Victory

Barcelona defeated Manchester United 2-0 in the 2009 European Champions League Final, becoming the first team in Spanish history to win the country's league (La Liga), La Copa del Rey, and Champions league titles simultaneously.

Nothing but Net

LA Laker Derek Fisher hit one critical three pointer with 4.1 seconds left in regulation to send Game 4 of the NBA Finals into overtime and a second in OT to defeat the Orlando Magic and give the Lakers their 15th NBA Championship.

Perfect Catch, Perfect Game

Chicago White Sox ace Mark Buehrle's

perfect game was saved when center fielder De Wayne Wise jumped over the center field wall to rob Tampa Bay's Gabe Kapler of a hit and save Buehrle's 5-0 perfect game.

In 2009, it was thrills, spills and chills for sports fan everywhere. Pass the popcorn, please.

1. TRANSFORMERS: REVENGE OF THE FALLEN

Total Gross: \$402,111,870

Autobots battled Decepticons to the top of the box office, becoming the top earning movie of the year and planting itself at number 9 among the top ten highest domestic grosses ever.

2. AVATAR

Total Gross: \$367,536,685

Arguably one of the most anticipated movies of the decade, director James Cameron's visionary sci-fi epic quickly went top ten and is on pace to be the biggest box office hit ever.

3. HARRY POTTER AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE

Total Gross: \$301,959,197

The popular teen wizard returned for his sixth year at Hogwarts to grab third place, but cast a powerful spell on the worldwide box office, taking the number two spot with a magical \$929.4 million.

Top Ten Grossing Films

By Andrea Herrera
Staff Writer

ings of all time.

4. UP

Total Gross: \$293,004,164

The animation wizards at Pixar did it again, nabbing the studio its second highest grossing movie ever (behind "Finding Nemo"), and becoming the highest grossing 3D movie of all time.

5. THE TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON

Total Gross: \$288,548,185

Hot off the success of 2008's 'Twilight,' the second installment of Stephanie Meyers' supernatural romance saga wolfed down a record-breaking \$72,703,754 for the highest opening day earnings of all time.

6. THE HANGOVER

Total Gross: \$277,322,503

The breakout hit of the summer, this tawdry tale of the ultimate Vegas bachelor party gone wrong defied all expectations, becoming the top R-rated comedy of all time.

7. STAR TREK

Total Gross: \$257,730,019

Live long and prosper! Director J.J. Abrams' bold re-imagining of the classic sci-fi franchise proved popular with old and new fans alike, grossing more than any previous Star Trek movie.

8. THE BLIND SIDE

Total Gross: \$210,068,528

Boasting no explosions, CGI robots or vampires, but propelled by good word-of-mouth, this inspirational drama reached the top ten over the Christmas holiday weekend.

9. MONSTERS VS. ALIENS

Total Gross: \$198,351,526

In a crowded field, this animated adventure towered over the pack, making the top ten with one of the biggest spring opening weekends ever.

10. ICE AGE: DAWN OF THE DINOSAURS

Total Gross: \$196,573,705

The prehistoric critter crew had their biggest box office outing yet and captured the number two spot at the worldwide box office with a massive \$883.7 million.

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SLAVES TO FASHION

By Diana Olmedo and Michelle Nolasco
Staff Writers

In high school, we all use fashion to define ourselves. The way we dress is a form of communication that needs no translation. Every year we follow new trends and make them our own. 2009 saw a lot of these.

Female

Gladiator Sandals: Every girl had a pair in her closet. These sandals could give any outfit a little edge. Typically made of leather, gladiators were a must-have for the summer.

UGGs: Not only are they super comfortable, but they can be worn with any outfit. UGGs have been on the scene for years now but they still work.

Elastic Waist Dresses: Typically made in two tone colors, the dresses were popular. The elastic waist is flattering to every girl's body.

Flannel / Plaid Shirts: These shirts' versatility gave girls a chance to show off their personal style. Deep dish Lauren Conrad loves 'em and you should too.

Floral Skirts: Looking and feeling pretty while staying fresh on a summer day with florals. Forever 21 was the go-to place.

Rompers / Jumpers: A strictly modern take on overalls, this popular item was seen on every one from celebs like Leighton Meester to your classmates at lunch.

Distressed Denim: Unlike the 90's grunge look, 2009 hip distressed jeans were simply cool and could give any outfit a rocker

In 2009, new artists and veterans had their time to shine, whether their career had just started or tragically ended. These ten had a big impact on music in 2009:

Lil Wayne: Wayne has sold over 6M units in his 13-year career and is considered the best rapper of his generation. He grabbed eight nominations for the 51st Grammy Awards, including Album of the Year and Best Rap Album for "Tha Carter III."

Beyonce: After charting four weeks on the Billboard Hot 100 with "Single Ladies," Knowles was invited to perform at Obamas' inauguration. The diva took home 10 Grammy nominations this year and had a big hit with her "I Am Sasha Fierce" album.

Taylor Swift: Taylor won five American Music Awards, four CMAs (country music awards) and eight Grammy nominations, including Favorite Female Artist. By producing both country and pop hits, Taylor has won a wide range of fans in a very short time.

Eminem: A battle rapper since he was 14, Eminem's "Relapse" sold 600,000 units in its first week, with "Relapse 2" released soon after. Using other artists on his albums has been a winning formula for the rapper.

Lady Gaga: 2008's "The Fame" put this artist's career in high gear. Gaga's UK summer tour was a huge hit with Brit fans. Most fans say her dance hits are the best out there right now.

Akon: Collaborations with others artists and a wide range of styles, from hip-hop to bachata to reggaeton, have been a winning formula for Akon. "Sexy Chick" with David Guetta was a big hit in 2009.

Michael Jackson: M.J was preparing for

Top Ten Artists of 2009

By Regina Martinez
Staff Writer



Miley Cyrus: Miley went from Disney teen product to full-blown adult. "The Climb" and "Party in the USA" got Cyrus nominated for Choice Female Hottie, Choice Music Female Artist, and Choice TV Actress in a Comedy.

Chris Brown: After the Rihanna incident, many fans lost faith in Brown, whose new singles "Graffiti," "Crawl" and "So Cold," left fans cold.

Drake: "Best I Ever Had" was a big hit, while guest starring on songs by other

My Lips Unsealed

Thank Goodness That's Over

By Gabriela Melendez
Columnist



Dirty, lowdown 2009 was so unkind and only occasionally fine, so this Best and Worst list is best read sitting down.

Octamom - She got knocked up and had eight children, bringing the total to 14. Mothers and taxpayers absolutely adore her. NOT.

Mad at Madoff - Ponzi schemer Bernie Madoff squeezed \$7B from his clients, saying their cash would go in a hedge fund when he really kept it for himself. He's been scamming people since the '90s. He got 150 years in prison. That's impressive.

Hold that Tiger - Woods affairs cost him his marriage, his crystal clean slate, and major endorsement deals like AT&T and Accenture. Now Woods is in for sex rehab. Better run, girls.

You gogo, Gaga - Lady Gaga's bizarre style dominated the media this year. "Paparazzi" and "Bad Romance" were catchy songs, but others were downright odd. I respect her because she got popular by being herself. She's still weird, though.

Balloon boy - The Heenes, a nobody family in Colorado, pretended to put their six year old son in a balloon and fly him over the state. They wanted a reality TV show. The parents got jail time instead. A sick way to get publicity. The kid must be traumatized.

Education Takes a Hit - More budget cuts. Wonderful. From 2006-2009, over \$1.6 billion was taken from LAUSD. Here in PARrotsville, subjects were cut, classes got incredibly crowded, and hundreds of teachers were handed pink slips.

Groovy Baby - Avatar was one of the coolest films I ever watched. Critics didn't like it, though. Apparently it was too "hippie." Like, whatever.

Long Live the King - June 25, the death of Michael Jackson, the worlds beloved Pop King. He overdosed on sedatives. After a remembrance movie, radio dedications, and a depressing funeral, we moved on.

Toothsome - 2009 was the year of the vampire. "New Moon," to be precise. Robert Pattinson can't walk down the street without attracting a posse of screaming girls. There were tons of vampire books and movies and even a TV show. I hope the trend ends with 2009. I'm sick of it.

Peace On You - President Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. I didn't like that. He hasn't earned it yet. He just has his plans. But if he comes through with his promises, like trying to rid the world of nuclear weapons, then no harm, no foul.

09 < Music | Best & Worst

a comeback concert series in London when he died suddenly on June 25. Michael's 50 sold-out concerts at the O2 arena were scheduled to begin July 13. At five he joined his family's musical group by 13 launched a solo career that quickly made his name a household word.

artists has helped his career as well. He received two Grammy nominations and many critics think Drake is as big as Kanye West and Snoop Dog when their career first started.

With 2009 gone, we can start again. New gossip, new television shows, new economic problems. I can't wait.

edge.

Suede boots: Steve Madden popularized these in '09. The simplicity and color variety of the boots made mix and match a breeze and could also dress up any outfit without being over the top.

Printed Nylons: They give a ladylike look, with a touch of modesty, while still showing lots of personal style. Prints range from geometric to floral and lace. "Gossip Girl" Taylor Momsen rocked these in '09.

Motorcycle Jackets: Seen on individuals not afraid of making a statement. They show off the wild you, but also give your feminine side a little boost.

Male

Flannel / Plaid shirt: Indie bands such as A Rocket to the Moon matched their music genre to their personal style by wearing flannels and plaid shirts.

"Authentic" Vans: "Got my vans on, but they look like sneakers", the catchy hook by The Pack really popularized the shoe brand and made them a must have item on every guy's closet.

Levi's 501 Jeans: a basic for any outfit.

School Boy Glasses / "Nerdy" Glasses: The nerds are back! Looking geeky has been cool ever since Chris Brown and Kanye West made the glasses popular.

V-necks: Combining v-necks and cardigans was the perfect combo to wear for the indie crowd. V-necks could give any casual outfit some spice.

Over sized Beanie: The quick fix to a bad hair day. Urban Outfitters carries a wide range of colors.

Nike SB blazers: Pairing these with 501s was popular because the jeans highlighted the shoes.

Colorful Hoodies: comfortable and more stylish than the trad grey-hooded sweatshirt.

Blazers: Celebs like Robert Pattinson were often seen sporting blazers. An easy way to make a casual outfit a little more interesting.

Cardigans: Mr. Rogers was the godfather of cardigan. In 2009, all the young dudes revived the old standby for the twenty first century.

First Responders At Parade

[Responders, from pg 1]

“At first our station was slow,” Lemus said. “Then by 9:00 am we got very busy and every responder was with a patient.”

Lemus did manage to see some of the floats, however.

“They were huge, epic and at the end, the parade leaves you wondering how they did it and how they made the floats function,” he said.

Junior Ashley Rodriguez also worked Team 4 East with Sonenschein and Lemus.

“The station I was in had a couple hypothermias, a sprained ankle and an older woman that was diabetic and had not taken her meds or checked her blood sugar level.”

“The older woman was a still call who was about two blocks from our station. We walked her to our station and checked her vital signs and gave her food to get her blood level back.”

The assignment made an impression on senior Karen Meneces, who worked another station.

“It was definitely an experience I’m never going to forget,” Meneces said.

“Everything looked perfect

and well arranged. It showed how much effort and work everyone put into it,” Meneces said of the parade.

Friday’s Rose Parade was the first Meneces had seen.

“I was pretty surprised and amazed at how pretty and well decorated the floats were and how great and rehearsed everything was,” Meneces said. “One of the floats that I really liked was one that had this life-like gorilla moving around. It was pretty interesting.”

All three Parrots had served as First Responders at Poly football games, but none had ever worked a Rose Parade before. Rodriguez was the only one of the three who had attended a Rose Parade in person.

Both Ashley and Karen want to be nurses and say helping at the parade was a great opportunity to test the water.

Lemus wants to make EMS his career and says working as a first aid responder has given him the opportunity to get hands-on experience and learn how to work well with others.

At the end of the day, Sonenschein was pleased with his First Responders.

“Knowing I had something to do with their interest in the field of emergency medicine and public safety and seeing the smile on

the faces of my students’ gives me a feeling of personal achievement,” said Sonenschein.

Poly Band At Parade

[Band, from pg 1]

Auditions for the All City Band were held at the Dodger Stadium. Only brass players participated in the event.

“We got to go to Dodger Stadium to practice our conditioning,” said senior Marlon Alvarez-Parra. “That was a lot of fun.”

Alvarez-Parra also marched in last year’s Rose Parade with The All City Band.

All seven Parrots in the All City Band agreed that music will be in their future.

“I think that it would be like a dream for all of us to be able to play professionally or for our colleges,” said Alvarez-Parra.



BRASS: Poly Band members Marlon Alvarez and Charles Hollowell.



Photo by Karina Muñiz

TRAINING: Poly’s Brenda Fishler works with a PAES student.

PAES Workshop Comes To Poly

[PAES, from pg 1]

each component has its own color. Categories include Business/Marketing (red), Computer Technology (green), Construction/Industrial (Blue), Consumer/Service (yellow) and Processing/Production (silver).

“We treat the program like a job,” Fishler said. “Students have to wear a collared shirt when they come in, they have to address me as supervisor and they have procedures to follow everyday.”

The students do activities based on the five components. Favorite activities include the cash register and cooking, said Fishler.

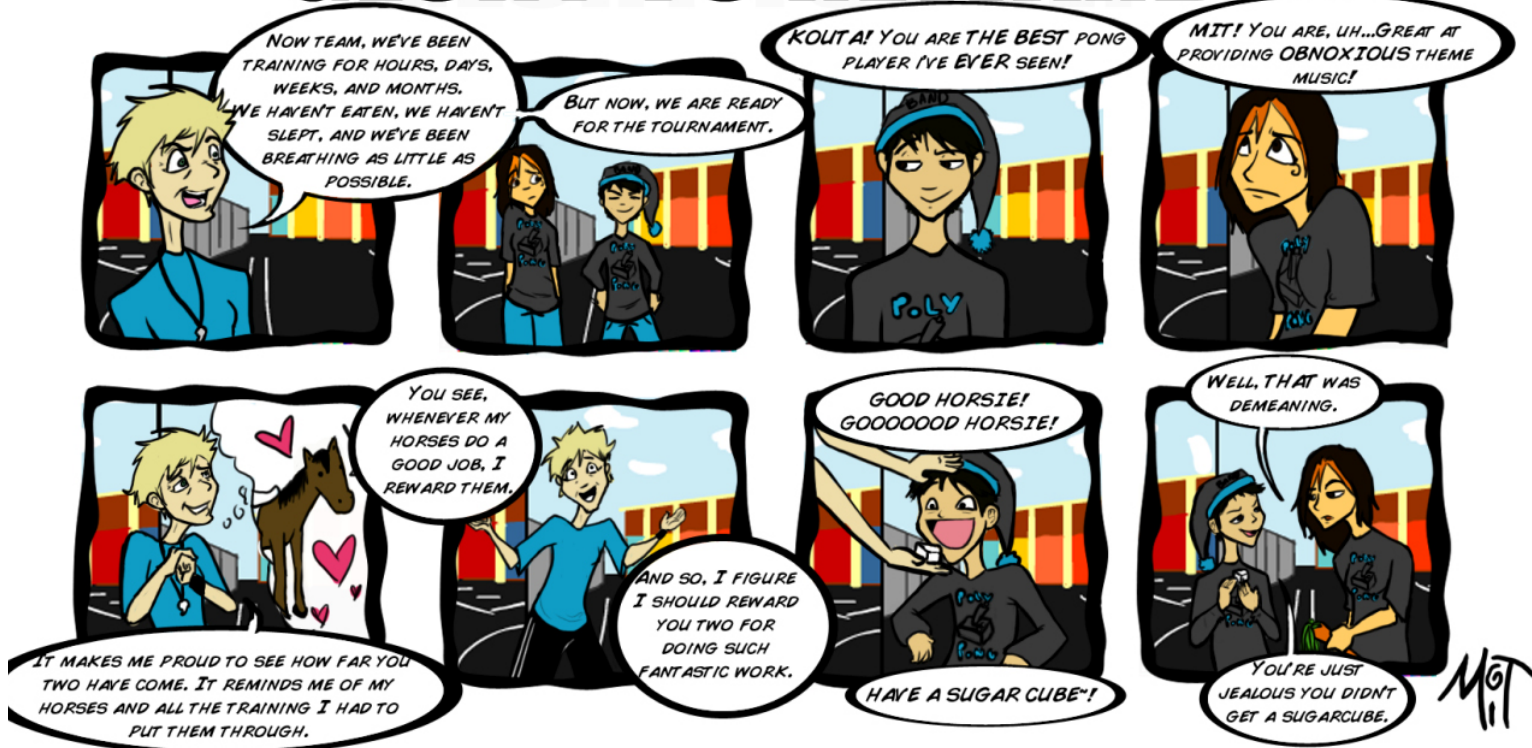
Fishler joined Poly’s staff in 2003 and has worked with special-ed since 1989.

“I used to work at Pacoima Middle School and at Hathaway Family services,” Fishler said. “Middle school kids are very squirrely, they can’t stay still, but kids are kids. They know when someone cares about them and they usually respond well to that.”

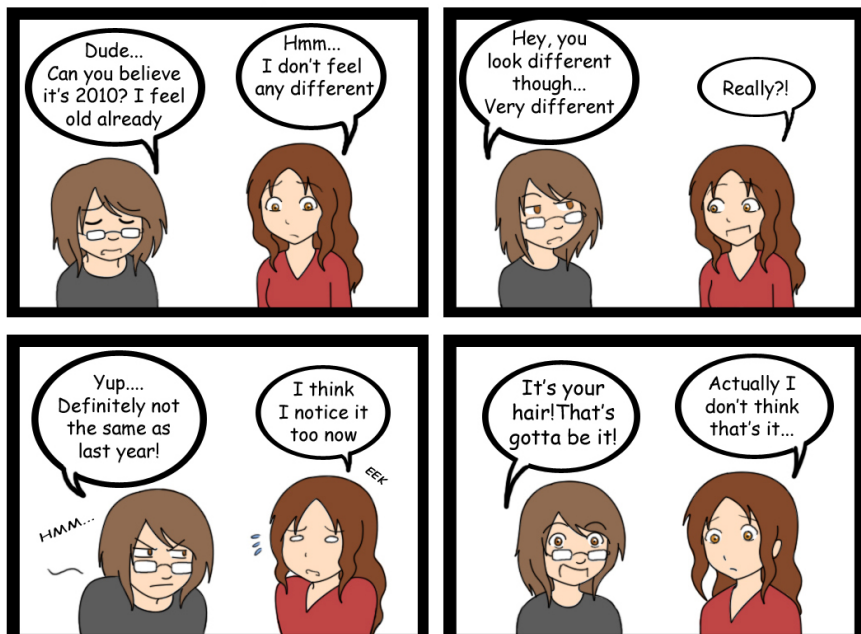
High school kids are sometimes harder to motivate because they have had a lot of failure in their lives, Fishler said. They are afraid to try new things because of the fear of failure.

“A lot of special-ed kids have been protected in a way because they would do something and it would be okay,” Fishler said. “But no one in the real world is going to say ‘Good job for making five mistakes.’ In here, we say ‘oh, good try, but you need to do it again.’”

GLORY TO REWARDS



Life with Letty: New Year, New Look



Sudoku

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

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

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

Solution To December's Puzzle



Cameron's Personal Vision

"Avatar," 2009's most anticipated movie, has already done \$1 billion at the box office.

James Cameron is best known for his hit movie "Titanic," which still stands as #1 worldwide, but his high-tech holiday blockbuster, "Avatar," may even outdo "Titanic's" box office take.

The movie has already made over \$1 billion dollars and is closing in on "Titanic's" record \$1.8 billion.

"Avatar" has gotten plenty of praise for its new technology and camera methods that are expected to revolutionize the film industry.

"The (film's) new technology, with live action seamlessly mixed with CGI imagery, has revolutionized film-making as a technical art form," said Jose Antonio Vargas of the Huffington Post.

The movie takes place on a moon named Pandora in 2154. A corporation named Resources Development Administration (RDA) has been exploiting the jungles and environment of the Na'vi, blue skinned natives, for unobtainium.

The Na'vi, tall harmonic creatures who love their nature-rich and bioluminescent home, embrace a nature goddess named Eywa.

Meanwhile, scientists use avatars, Na'vi bodies mixed with human DNA, to help communicate with the Na'vi and help them speak English.

Jake Sully (Sam Worthington), a paraplegic Marine, replaces his murdered twin brother, a scientist trained for the avatar program.

During a trip as avatars, Sully becomes separated from Dr. Grace Augustine (Sigourney Weaver) and her partner Norm Spellman (Joel David Moore). Sully is saved by a Na'vi named Neytiri (Zoe Saldana) falls in love with her and turns his back on the humans to help the Na'vi fight against RDA.

"The climactic battle sequence in Avatar is a stupendously orchestrated clash of color and movement, of machine-gun droids and Na'vi warriors flying their primitive griffin steeds down canyon walls," said Owen Gleiberman of the Entertainment Weekly.

"It's an impossible but completely plausible and seductive world that invites your total immersion," said Richard Corliss of the Times, "Don't resist it; sink in and fly with it. All Cameron asks is that you open your eyes."

"Avatar," pro-environment and anti-war, portrays humans as a destructive species.

"Avatar is dizzying, enveloping, vertiginous ... I ran out of adjectives an hour into its 161 minutes," said David Edelstein of the New York Magazine.



Stories by
Joel Hinojosa
Staff Writer

AVATAR

Conservatives Condemn "Avatar's" Political Message

The blockbuster's subtext is seen by conservatives as unpatriotic and anti-American.



Internet Photos

Technology Catches Up To Cameron's Needs

New camera systems and advanced stage make Na'vi world possible.

Filmmaker James Cameron delayed "Avatar" for years because the technology wasn't advanced enough for his project.

"In fact, Avatar wasn't possible when it was first written 11 years ago," said Cameron, "and only through pushing the technology to new levels over the past year and a half have we reached the point where the film is finally possible to make."

Cameron's CGI technology is advanced enough to enhance and analyze actors' expressions down to the small pores on their faces.

He used a head-rig camera that could even record eye movement.

"The key to it is the software, which interprets the movement of the actor's face, pupils, and eyelid responses as the image flows in from the video feed of the head-rig camera."

Another major advance in technology is the Simulcam, which allows Cameron to work as if he were using a live-action camera but still see a virtual world. Through the camera he would see Zoe Saldana as a ten foot blue Na'vi and the "The Volume," a motion capture stage six times bigger than normal stages, would be the beautiful forest of Pandora or the floating Hallelujah Mountains.

"Avatar's" technical feats have also revolutionized 3D. Cameron helped develop a filming rig that features stereoscopic lens which are paired like human eyes. The camera allows the user to capture two images simultaneously which creates a perfect alignment to produce depth.

Cameron's "Avatar" has broken new ground in film making technology.

"This film integrates my life's achievements. It's the most complicated stuff anyone's ever done," said Cameron.

James Cameron's "Avatar" has fascinated audiences and quickly become part of pop culture. Conservatives, however, find Cameron an unpatriotic director and his film a distortion of what America is about. They take issue with the many themes and political undertones implied in the film.

"Avatar" story involves the Na'vi, creatures on another planet that live in harmony with their environment and believe in a goddess named Eywa. The RDA, on the other hand, wants to destroy the environment for money by using military forces. Conservatives see the movie's message as pro-environment messages and anti-American.

"Avatar" is a thinly disguised, heavy-handed and simplistic sci-fi fantasy/allegory critical of America from our founding straight through to the Iraq War," said right-wing film essayist John Nolte. "It looks like a big-budget animated film with a garish color palette right off a hippie's tie dye shirt."

Conservatives are also upset with the film's religious undertones that point to pantheism and away from Christianity.

"Avatar" is Cameron's long apologia for pantheism -- a faith that equates God with Nature, and calls humanity into religious communion with the natural world," said Ross Douthat of The New York Times.

Conservatives see the movie as critical of former President George W. Bush and the Iraqi war. In the movie, for instance, the chief tells the humans they will "fight terror with terror."

"The conclusion does ask the audience to root for the defeat of American soldiers at the hands of an insurgency," wrote John Podhoretz in the "Weekly Standard." "So it is a deep expression of anti-Americanism."

Cameron, however, says his movie shows how greed and imperialism destroys the environment.

"They are doing the same thing on another pristine planet that we've done here on earth," Cameron said in a Today Show interview. "So it's a way, sort of looking back at ourselves from this other world and seeing what we're doing here."



Photos by Karina Muñiz

DRIVE-BY: Parrot senior Oscar Aguilar slices through two Arleta defenders in Wednesday's 53-44 win.

Bonino On the Season

Poly's Dave Bonino begins his third year as head coach. He talked to the OPTIMIST about the upcoming season.

By Jose Torres
Sports Editor

Q. Tell us a little bit about the preseason. Obviously, at 2-12, you weren't overjoyed with how things went. Did the team not play up to expectations, or were you guys overmatched?

Bonino: We were only outmatched in a few games. We have the tendency to only play hard for two or three quarters out of the four. The result of this inability to play hard for four quarters mixed in with turnovers and poor shooting led us to this record.

Q. What should Poly fans expect to see in this year's team - run and gun, half court, high scoring matches, defensive battles, lots of zone defense?

B: fans will see a team that likes to push the ball. The only problem we have had with this is turnovers and our lack of finishing at the basket. We are only scoring in the mid forties range, yet if we were able to cut down on turnovers and finish our shots, we could be a high scoring team.

On the defensive end, if we are playing hard and with intensity, we can play any defense effectively.

Q. Talk about stats. Which ones mean a lot to you?

B. I focus in on assists and turnovers. Assists show how the team is functioning as a whole and turnovers, well turnovers result in missed opportunities and adversely affect the momentum of a game. Offensively, Basketball is a momentum game. Excess turnovers kill any chance of going on extended scoring runs that demoralize an opponent and energize a team

Q. Tell us about your staff. Who does what, how long have they been with you, what experience do they have, who calls the shots if you call in sick?

B. I have a new sophomore coach, a Poly graduate, Danny Zelaya and a new JV coach, also a Poly grad, Charlie Martinez. I am very lucky to have both of them as they have coached the majority of our players in the local park leagues.

Coaches never get sick. Our sickness, which we carry our whole life like a virus, is the passion and zest to motivate and teach athletes to reach and perform at their highest level.

Q. The football team has a booster club. Does the

basketball team need one?

B. We are able to fundraise to support our needs. In an ideal situation, a school-wide booster club would be great, but it is a huge task to organize and run effectively. Poly is a reflection of the society, if you win, they will follow. I believe with the return to a traditional schedule, school spirit will also return.

Q. Do the players have to learn your system or do you tweak your system to fit this year's players?

B. As a coach you can have a system, but being able to adapt your system or get rid of your system based on your players' ability is the key. Ideally, players learn a framework in order to assure proper positioning on the court both offensively and defensively. Once players understand the framework and are in a position to achieve on the court, the teaching of fundamental skills through repetition will allow for that player to be successful.

Q. What does the preseason mean?

B. Losing in the preseason can demoralize a team. Things such as a good loss get old after a while. Losing wears you down mentally, no matter how hard you play. Since learning is a repetitive process, and learning from your mistakes is part of that process, mentally, you can learn how to lose, just like learning to win. One good win can cure lots of ills. I expect during the preseason, based on my own personal playing experiences, that everyone is fighting for playing time through the process of competition. Competition, along with the fundamentals of the game, need to be taught. In most aspects of life, we are in competition in some way.

Q. Look into your coach's crystal ball and tell us how the season might turn out. Who is the team to beat and what makes them so good. Is this another building year for Poly or should we have some pretty high expectations for what this team can do?

B. Verdugo is the team to beat. They have size, speed and quickness, along with an experienced team. They have played a much tougher schedule than Arleta. We would have a better overall record if we scheduled lightly.

We will struggle to finish in the upper half of the league unless we cut down on turnovers. Our first three away games in league will tell the story. I feel we can win all three, which would allow us to be 3-0 with six straight home games. Winning on the road is difficult, but is the quickest and best way to regain our long lost confidence as a team.

We begin league play at 0 wins and 0 losses, just like everyone else. Our goals do not change: compete for a league championship, make the playoffs. I hope that our best basketball is ahead of us and we start to believe we are very close to becoming a good team.

Poly Picks Up First Road Win

Both teams have bad shooting night but rules say someone must win.

By Jose Torres
Sports Writer

The Parrots got their first road win of the year with a relatively easy 53-44 win over host Arleta Wednesday. The win followed a disappointing 63-60 loss to Canoga Park on Monday

"We really needed this one to get our confidence back," said head coach Dave Bonino.

Senior guard Victor Solano led Poly's scoring with 11 points, while senior Oscar Aguilar had 10 points, including two threes, and shot 50%.

The Mustangs' William Simmons and Andy Ambriz combined for 28 to lead Arleta.

Poly took the lead early and was up 23-9 with five minutes left in the second quarter. But the Mustangs galloped back and were only down by 27-22 at the mid-

way mark.

The second half was a nail biter.

"Stay aggressive...play hard," Bonino told his squad during a timeout in the third when the Parrot pace started to fade.

Poly shot a weak 39% for the game, but Arleta was worse at 20%, making just 10 of 49 shots. Neither side could drop a basketball in the ocean from a rowboat.

A strong 15-10 finish saved the day for the Parrots. Solano hit two free-throws late in the fourth to put the game out of reach.

JV won 49-37, with junior Rene Arias putting up 10 points to help seal the win.

Poly (3-14, 1-1) visits Van Nuys Friday before beginning a six-game home stand while Arleta (9-5, 0-1) travels to North Hollywood.



Photo by Karina Muñiz

COACHING: Poly head coach Dave Bonino on the sidelines.

Soccer Diary

Some Fundamentals

By Yendi Lozano
Correspondent

Q. Let's cover some basics. What are the positions called and what are their responsibilities?

Goalie - blocks incoming goals.
Forwards - score goals.
Left wing - runs up and down the left side of the field only, she helps the defense and forwards.
Right wing - same as the left wing but on the right side.
Stopper - makes sure the ball doesn't reach the forward line or go through her.
Sweeper - the last defender, she sweeps all the junk that the middle didn't control.

Q. How many officials call a match and what are their re-

sponsibilities?
When it's the beginning of the season, there are two and when it's playoffs, there are three. When there are two, one gets half of the field and the other one gets the other side but they have to be in the opposite side from each other. If there's a fault in the other half of the field, the referee that is not there can not call it from his side unless it is on his or her side.

Now if there's three referees two of them get the same positions as the one of the top half and half and the third one gets to be in the middle and has to run up and down he could be all over the field.