

The Poly Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

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SERVING THE POLY COMMUNITY SINCE 1913

MAY 2011

Class of '11

Ad + seniors reflect on four years in the new program.

By Michelle Lopez
Staff Writer

Poly's first group of Advantage Plus students are graduating this June and heading off to college.

The OPTIMIST recently interviewed three Ad + seniors about their four-year experience with the program. Here are some of their comments

DENISE ACOSTA

– in the top 4% percent of all Poly seniors.

– attending Harvard in the fall.

I would not have accomplished as much as I have if I had not received the support of the Advantage Plus Program.

I would not have been aware of all the AP and college classes that are available. Also, I would not have had the support system to direct me towards pursuing a higher education.

I know there has been numerous times where I did not perform as well as I wanted to or as well as I knew I could have. Many times my schedule has been so full I have had to prioritize or simply go without sleep. Of course, this affected my academics.

I feel I have received much more support in pursuing a college education. All of the counselors and

[See Ad +, pg 6]



Photo by Karina Muñoz

MED SCHOOL: Poly '05 grad Diane Lopez will attend Harvard med school in the fall. Lopez, a Dartmouth grad, currently lives and works in San Diego.

Grad Makes Good

By Ivan Escobedo
Staff Writer

The OPTIMIST asked 2005 Poly alum and Dartmouth grad Diane Lopez to talk about her college days and her acceptance to Harvard's med school program. Here's what she said.

Dartmouth has about 4,100 undergraduates. It's the smallest of the Ivy Leagues and ranks first among undergrad liberal arts colleges in the U.S. Dartmouth has a wide range of majors but no professional PhD programs.

The school is in New Hampshire, but close to Boston, Massachusetts.

Most Dartmouth undergrads are pre-med students who want to become doctors or Econ majors who just want to know how to make money.

All the pre-meds share notes and help study for exams. The small undergrad class is great because

we all got to graduate together as a community and wear our different gowns. There's a lot of school pride.

Social studying was really a big thing. If I wasn't studying with friends, I was either doing class work or homework. I did spend time with the after-school counselor and I worked at the student center, but I'd say over 50% of the time I was studying.

Dartmouth doesn't want freshmen getting too involved in outside activities because students do better when focusing on work instead of being distracted by the new college

[See Diane, pg 5]

Poly Slated For Measure Q Millions

School's share of a recent bond measure could be as much as \$70 million.

By Valeria Gonzalez
Staff Writer

Poly could get as much as \$60-70M in new and upgraded campus facilities as part of the \$7B Measure Q bond passed in 2008. Construction is expected to begin in three to five years.

Voters approved Measure Q funds to make repairs to more than 800 existing schools, some more than 50 years old (Poly was built in 1957). The money is intended to bring existing LAUSD campuses on par with the new schools built since 1999 at a cost of \$13B.

"We have completed 76 new schools," LAUSD Chief Facilities Executive Guy Mehula said. "Now it is time to go back and fix our older school campuses."

The bond money will also pay for renovating and replacing buildings to bring them up to current earthquake safety standards.

LAUSD has already completed a survey of Poly and prepared three conceptual plans.

The first plan includes an expanded lunch area and upgrades to the softball field, baseball field, tennis courts, football field, track and bleachers. A new ticket booth and concession stand are included.

The plan includes relocating the ninth grade center to the Bryd Middle School campus and the construction of a bridge over Arleta Street connecting the two schools.

The second plan includes a new music building.

The third plan includes a new science building, and new courts for basketball, volleyball, and handball.

The crown jewel would be a new Olympic-sized pool.

An OPTIMIST survey of teachers and administrators about how best to spend the \$70M yielded a variety of responses.

"The money should be used on labs and buying new science equipment," said Magnet teacher Ron Lehavi. "The money should not be used on the building, but on the content of the lab. We should hire more science teachers."

"The money should be used to build the music building," said band director Steve Isaacs. "In our current room there is not enough room. Instruments, and students can not fit. It is hard to practice in the room and there are not enough places to secure the instruments."

"TVs in every main office that give updates or information on the

school or that specific office," said assistant principal Ari Bennett.

"Smart boards posted on walls permanently in classrooms and projectors hanging from the ceiling," said Poly Principal Gerardo Loera.

Since 1997, a series of four voter approved local bonds (Propositions BB and Local Measures K, R, and Y), have provided \$13 billion for the New School Construction and Modernization Program. The Program has added approximately 80,000 new K-12 classroom seats and enabled many students to return to their neighborhood schools.

Band Wins in Vegas

Parrots win five awards in Heritage Music Festival.

By Jasmine Aquino
Staff Writer

Poly's concert band, indoor drumline, and colorguard captured five trophies at the 2011 Heritage Music Festival in Las Vegas April 4.

Gold medals went to drumline and colorguard. Concert band earned a silver plaque and was named Most Outstanding Band.

First chair trumpet player Jose Reyes received the 2011 Las Vegas Heritage Festival Maestro Award, one of only two given out of 300 competing musicians.

"I'm not going to lie, it felt awesome," said Reyes. "But of course, I didn't let it go to my head. That's just me. It is one of the most amazing moments of my life, which I am thankful for, and sharing it with the whole band is just too beautiful for words to describe."

Reyes, who did not have a solo in this year's show, arranged the pep song "Take On Me" for the band.

"One of the judges spoke with me after the performance, but it never crossed my mind that I would get such an award", explains Reyes.

The band and drumline's are practicing for more upcoming competitions and a special presentation for parents and the young Byrd Middle School audience.

The awards ceremony took place in Circus Circus' Adventuredome theme park.

Food Fight

Food author Jamie Oliver wants LAUSD to change.

By Ivan Escobedo
Staff Writer

Food author celebrity Jamie Oliver is out to reform LAUSD.

No, he hasn't thrown in with Bill Gates and the mayor on bashing teachers and improving test scores.

Oliver, who has already changed the lunch programs at some East



Google Image

TRUCKIN': Celebrity chef Jamie Oliver's 18-wheeler.

Coast schools, including those in Washington D.C. and Fairfax County, Virginia, wants the District to serve healthier meals.

So Tuesday the famous chef invited two dozen students, parents, teachers, and fellow foodies to voice

[See Food Fight, pg 6]



Google Image

Spring break hot spots.

Four Parrots travel to faraway places.

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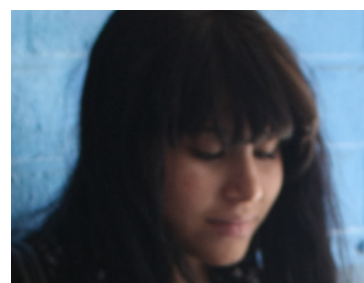


Photo by Mariana Santos

Striking Out Opponents

Lady Parrots rookie right-hander sparkles.

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OPINION

EDITORIAL

Bin Laden Is Dead, Not Terrorism

Terrorism's most wanted face, Osama Bin Laden, was killed in a firefight with U. S. forces on Sunday, May 1 (the same death declaration of the former most hated man, Adolf Hitler).

"Justice has been done," President Obama said in a late-night appearance in the East Room of the White House.

An extraordinary outburst of emotions erupted at the news of Bin Laden's death.

A deluge of people gathered in front of the White House, Times Square, and Ground Zero in New York carrying American flags while chanting, "USA!

USA!"

This immense display of nationalism makes it easy for people to jump to hasty conclusions about the safety of the American soil.

Many people consider Bin Laden's death as a sign of America's liberation from danger.

I don't think so. Osama Bin Laden is dead, NOT terrorism.

As Obama himself said,

"The death of Bin Laden marks the most significant achievement to date in our nation's effort to defeat Al Qaeda. But his death does not mark the end

of our effort. There's no doubt that Al Qaeda will continue to pursue attacks against us."

Al Qaeda's dreadful reputation as a terrorist group is so great that the mere death of its leader and symbol will not halt their evil attacks.

While Americans celebrate Bin Laden's demise, the mastermind of the attack that killed thousands, we should also be vigilant to the possibility of Al Qaeda's retaliation against the U.S.

Bin Laden's death is not the end of terrorism. It is an end of the battle, but definitely not the end of the war.



Barack Tough to Beat in 2012

With plenty of money and a boost in popularity from Bin Laden's death, the President presents Republican contenders with a formidable opponent in 2012.

Bin Laden is dead and Barack's getting the credit.

Will it make a difference when he runs for reelection next year? Probably.

Republicans who argue that the Democrats are weak and indecisive will have trouble proving that argument now. Opinion is nearly unanimous that Barack's decision was both gutsy and decisive.

Even some of Obama's most notorious critics such as Dick Cheney and Glenn Beck are in awe of having a Democratic president with the shoot to kill edge.

But even before the daring midnight raid on the Osama compound, Barack's chances in 2012 looked pretty good.

Current Republican front-runner and former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney said last September that Obama would be "difficult to beat" if the economy continued improving, which he predicted it would. A better economy always helps a sitting president.

Obama has the network in place to raise \$1 billion for his re-election campaign. With no primary opposition, the President is free to use the money against his Republican adversaries.

With more outside groups competing for Republican dollars, and the Tea Party presenting a possible voter split, Barack would seem to have the financial upper hand

as well.

The GOP is struggling to produce a surefire candidate. Thursday's first televised Republican debate, in South Carolina, is strong proof.

Only one top-tier contender, former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty, is scheduled. Pawlenty says the debate is legit.

"After two and a half years of Barack Obama's presidency, nearly one in five American workers are consistently unable to find full employment, our national debt continues to skyrocket, and inflating energy and food prices are eating away at families' budgets. We can do better. But first we need a new president -- which is why tonight's Republican debate is so important."

But many are skeptical. The rest of the field includes Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum, Texas Rep. Ron Paul, businessman Herman Cain and former New Mexico Gov. Gary Johnson.

Conspicuously missing are Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich.

Meanwhile, other Republicans are sitting out the whole affair.

Mississippi governor Haley Barbour is the latest to announce his withdrawal from the 2012 campaign.

The remaining handful of GOP candidates still willing to run suggests 2012 may be Obama's year.

Who Needs College?

Not all students are A+ valedictorians or destined to graduate from college. Yet public schools routinely fill rigorous classes with average students.

Students who don't want to be specialists in a certain subject could benefit more from classes about real-world economics and today's business environment.

Currently, however, academically average students are forced to suffer through difficult classes like calculus. Students not destined for careers as scientists, doctors, lawyers, artists or engineers shouldn't take the same classes.

All students are capable of learning, but not as many are willing or interested in learning the advanced courses that fill today's college-only curriculum.

Studies show that different people use different parts of the brain, yet national tests treat every student as a simple test score and colleges use these scores to sort students into classes students don't even want to attend (like math for an art major).

Average students who know they won't be the next Barack Obama shouldn't be forced to take college level classes when they have little interest in even going to college.

Money is wasted every time a college student spends money on books and tuition for unnecessary semesters. Students could complete their undergraduate studies easier and cheaper if they could avoid classes they will never use.

Students who don't want to specialize in a particular subject don't have to.

Many people make a decent living (if not a great living) using basic skills instead of highly-specialized knowledge.

A college degree doesn't ensure financial stability. Conversely, college dropouts and high school graduates turn out to be some of the richest people in the world.

Successful college drop-outs or people who never went to college in the first place include Microsoft billionaire Bill Gates, Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg and Oscar-winning actress Halle Berry.

People with basic skills can still make a good living and do what they like.

Mandatory classes in accounting, entrepreneurship and business make more sense than calculus and physics.

Let's construct a sensible curriculum.

One Teacher Who Is Mad as Hell

I am a public school teacher and a member of a union. Contrary to popular political rhetoric at play in Wisconsin and elsewhere, I am not, however, a leech on society, nor am I a lazy incompetent who shows up to collect a paycheck. I am a teacher and, in the words of Howard Beale in the film "Network": "I'm as mad as hell, and I'm not going to take this anymore!"

The outcry against unions and collective bargaining is a complete red herring. The unspoken message is: Let's make the average American forget that Wall Street crooks set up our economy for a meltdown and that, not only are they not in jail, they made money on the

deal. Let's make them forget that the richest 400 people in the United States make more than the entire bottom half of all earners. Let's hide the fact that CEOs today make several hundred times what their employees make, rather than the 20 to 30 times more they used to earn. Let's snicker as the workers rip each other's throats out, scrabbling for the privilege of going to the doctor when they're sick.

Who on earth does the public—which is accepting these political shenanigans—think will choose to become a teacher now? No one in his or her right mind would go into this profession. After seeing teachers beaten up in the media for our society's failings and being

portrayed by our elected officials as lazy fat cats when we are working our butts off having to "teach" to a test, no student with two brain cells to rub together is going to want to become a teacher. I would challenge anyone—including Wisconsin's governor—who thinks that teaching requires little effort, no summer break, or no decent salary to spend a year in the classroom. Get in there, Governor Walker. You wouldn't last a week.

This editorial is excerpted from a letter printed in "Education Week" by Angela Beeley. Beeley has taught 10th Grade English at Alta Loma (Calif.) High School for 18 years.



the
OPTIMIST

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SERVING THE POLY COMMUNITY SINCE 1913

INTERVIEW



Photo by Alex Cadena

COAST TO COAST: Senior David Nwachukwu, born in LA, will attend New York's Columbia University in the fall. Nwachukwu transferred to Poly in January from King Drew Medical Magnet.

Life in the Big Cities

Poly senior David Nwachukwu will attend New York's Columbia University in the fall. Recently, the OPTIMIST asked David to give our readers some idea of who he is and how he got so smart. Here's what he said.

By Armando Orozco
Staff Writer

I lived in LA 'till age four, when we moved to the valley. I grew up in Sun Valley.

It was fun. But when it rained, it would flood up pretty bad where I lived. The water would rise and drench my shoes on the way home. I lived in a condo, so you get to know the people who live around you kind of fast.

My parents are from Nigeria and are Ibo.

I wish my dad had taught me Igbo a little bit more. He didn't teach me because it is very similar to English, but I guess I will learn on my own later.

My parents are divorced; my dad is the one who takes care of me and pushes me to work hard and helps me with my homework. He used to be a science and math teacher and is the one who helps me in school, except for English. He isn't really an English person.

Everyone is supportive. They buy me books and supplies when I need them.

My mom isn't really around much, but she gives me an encouraging word here and there.

I have a younger sister who is seven, extremely annoying, but tolerable.

I am the first in my family to go to college.

I didn't really like too much about elementary or middle school. I went to a private school, West Angeles Christian Academy, from kindergarten to 8th grade. I hated the fact that teachers could still hit the students with rulers, especially my kindergarten teacher. She kept hitting me with the darn ruler.

Science was my favorite subject. I loved dissecting bugs and opening them up, seeing what was inside. I always thought that was interesting.

I went to King Drew Medical Magnet. It is close to Compton, which has a bad reputation, so I just say the school is in Willow Brooke because it sounds like a nicer place to go to school.

I took AP Bio, Chemistry, Physics, Calculus, Latin, US History, World History, Government, Language and Literature there.

My old school didn't let freshmen take any AP classes. I had to wait till 10th grade to start.

I played soccer in my old school. I joined in 11th grade but I liked playing soccer way before I even joined my school team. We didn't have the best team, but it was fun experience, something to keep me active.

I was in MESA (Math Engineering Science Achievement), where we did engineering projects and competed against each other. Our school was associated with the UC Irvine MESA program. We had an egg drop project where we had to build something that could safely absorb the impact of an egg falling from a height that would cause it to crack. The project that had the most number of uncrushed eggs won. The program would also give us tests on math and science to further increase our skills on the subjects.

I had an internship at Children's Hospital Los Angeles. I was a laboratory intern; I got paid three dollars an hour and it counted as community service. I worked most of the time in the research lab and got to look at healthy liver cells and compare them to cancerous liver cells. I learned interesting facts about organs, such as that the liver is able to regenerate from as little

as 25 % of the original size and knows how much it must grow once it is placed in a new body. I was fascinated and amazed by the medical world.

Some days I don't do homework and procrastinate until first period. During the morning announcements and other days I spend maybe 4- 5 hours doing nothing but homework. It varies. If I enjoy the subject, I enjoy the learning process, but if the subject is a bore, then I struggle to get it done.

I enjoy learning. I am the type of guy that likes learning random facts just so I can say something witty at times. For example did you know that without mucus, the stomach would digest itself.

I believe I can handle New York. It is going to be a different setting that is for sure and I know it won't be like sunny California, but it will be a new experience. I just hope the people aren't as rude as they say they are and that I come back home speaking like a true New Yorker.

My family is very proud of me, especially my father, but he shows his joy and his worries all together. He knows that I will be all alone and will have to work twice as hard to stay in Columbia and while I may stand out now in high school, in college I am no longer at that level. Instead, I am average, but I will double my effort and make my mark in some way.

I want to study Greek and Roman history at Columbia, or biomedical engineering. I plan to return to the west coast and pursue a medical career here when I am done. I might love New York, but I would love to come back to Sun Valley.

The first thing I'm going to do when I get to New York is find myself a barber. One who actually knows how to cut my hair, because it seems that no one in the Valley knows how.

CAMPUS



Hawaii Pacific

Who: ARMANDO OROZCO
Where: Honolulu
Enrollment: 7000
Majors: Arts
Campus: Metropolitan

Hawaii Pacific University (HPU) in Honolulu, Hawaii is a six hour flight from L.A. HPU offers majors in Humanities/ Social Sciences, Natural and Computational Sciences, Nursing and Health Sciences. HPU is one of the top small city colleges.

HPU, a culturally diverse campus ranked #20 in international student population, has 7,000 undergrads and 1,200 graduate students from all 50 states and 100 countries.

Unlike Poly, I realized college would be culturally diverse and learned about other cultures firsthand, both inside and outside of the classroom.

HPU has two different campuses, each with a different feel. The Loa Campus has a peaceful feel while the downtown Honolulu



UC Berkeley

Who: JIZEL EMRALINO
Where: Berkeley, California
Enrollment: 25,540
Majors: Engineering, Computer
Campus: Small Town

When we arrived at the campus, we went to the gymnasium and were separated by program: REACH, RAZA and PASS.

Invited students were given a list of programs beforehand. I had signed up with the Pilipino Academic Student Services (PASS).

Glendie Lou Domingo, Senior Weekend Coordinator, presented a brief history of PASS. She shared the political circumstances that led to the establishment of the program.

The 40 high school seniors signed up for PASS were divided into different "pamilyas," which means "family" in Tagalog.

The name of each "pamilya" was based on a popular film like "Lion King" or "Inception" or "Aladdin," which was my family.

Each "pamilya" had to create a skit or a battle cry to present on stage.



Carnegie Mellon

Who: QUENTEN MILLHAUSER
Where: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Enrollment: 6020
Majors: Business, Fine Arts
Campus: Metropolitan

I always say that there are two different kinds of surprises: there is a surprise to the point where Oh my God, you jump up and down and it's like "ahhh!" Then there is a surprise where you just don't know how to react. I swear, when I went to get my mail with my girlfriend, I looked at the Carnegie Mellon packet, but I didn't know what it was saying because it didn't have the letter up front. I turned to the back of the page and it tells me "Congratulations."

I was surprised to the point where I did not know how to react. I just went in there, sat down in the couch and looked up at the ceiling saying "Wow, I can't believe I got in." Not in the way that I'm not deserving of it, but in a way like "Wow, this is what my work has gotten me."

I've seen this moment for a long time. I've



Georgetown

Who: RAHWA YEHDGO
Where: Georgetown, Washington D.C.
Enrollment: 7433
Majors: Medicine, Foreign Service
Campus: Metropolitan

Our flight was long and we had a two hour drive from Maryland to D.C. because they booked us the furthest airport and I had to go find food. We had to pay for it ourselves and it was so funny because you'd think they would give you like a cafeteria card.

We arrived on campus Thursday afternoon. We had orientation and learned about the school and some of the resources the campus has and just what life in Georgetown is like.

My close friend Monica Vizconde goes to Georgetown. I roomed with Monica. Most of the hosts were freshmen that were also involved in the admit weekend last year.

Friday we had an orientation on how to get more financial aid. We had a banquet with the deans so we could speak to them. After

Spring Break

While you were on spring break, these Parrots went to college.

campus has the city life sense to it.

The downtown campus has seven classroom buildings in different styles, from tall and modern to old and classical and even one made of a crimson marble.

The hot spot for students is the Kukui Plaza in the north side of town. Students sit in the plaza typing on their laptops, drinking coffee.

Students cruise around town on bikes and long boards.

I toured the software engineering lab in the Frear Center, the media arts building.

The Loa Campus is a 15 minute commute from Downtown and is more peaceful and private. The Dormitories in Lokelani Residence were spacious with a view of the Ko'olau Mountains.

I attended an hour long pre-med lecture and another lecture on journalistic composition. The rest of the day students roamed around campus or went to the nearby beach

Before we left, we went to a luau with exotic foods, hula dancers and guys spinning fire torches.

After the presentations, we walked to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Hall for a multicultural party. Our hosts were volunteers who would provide us with board and lodging for the weekend.

The second day, in a workshop about writing and creativity, we wrote a short "I am" poem so we could get to know more about each other.

The second workshop, called "Brain Drain," was about the migration of medical professionals from the Philippines to foreign countries. The lack of doctors and nurses in the Philippines means more casualties in natural disasters like tropical storms and earthquakes.

The third workshop was about how to keep faith in God even in college. Students shared their spiritual strengths and weaknesses.

In the last workshop, called Berkeley Basics, Berkeley students discussed the academic curriculum at Berkeley and answered seniors' questions.

After the dinner banquet, we were separated into different teams and went on a scavenger hunt in San Francisco.

Saturday was "Cal Day." Different campus organizations and academic departments had booths to promote themselves to prospective students.

I met with my good friend and class of 2010 Parrot Karinina Cruz, now a freshman at Berkeley, who gave me a tour of the campus.

always wanted to go to college for my family. I know that some people get scared of the academics that they're gonna encounter, but I've always told myself that failure is not an option.

I'm gonna major in Mechanical Engineering. In my junior year, I was choosing between electrical and mechanical engineering. I went to this program at Cal State LA, where I got to experience a hands-on trial of how to be a mechanical engineer and it just totally spoke to me. I worked with alternative energy sources and I knew it was meant to be. I knew that it was my calling. I knew specifically that I want to do automobile engineering by applying solar energy to vehicles.

Our world is constantly degrading and people are constantly burning fossil fuels. No matter how efficient we make a hybrid car, they're still destroying the atmosphere and I want to finally put an end to that. I want to develop an efficient solar-powered vehicle that is not gonna tear at the ozone.

I want to get my PhD in mechanical engineering at either MIT or Berkeley.

Once I get my degree, I really want to continue my research in photovoltaics. I want to start my own company that sells those cars.

My mom ingrained in me at a very young age that education is the path to success. Because of her, I became who I am today.

My motivation is to push myself to the limits. I mean, good, better, best, you don't rest until your "good" is better than your "best."

that, we went on a campus tour. The campus isn't that big, but we saw some of the historical sites. They took us to these stairs where "The Exorcist" was filmed and they took us to the cemetery on campus where the priests are buried.

Saturday some of the clubs had little soirées so we could talk to some of the admits about what life in Georgetown is like. Some liked Georgetown for the internships and stuff that they were able to do, especially for political science and law people because the school is in the heart of D.C. They just told us the pros and the cons of the school.

Georgetown wasn't the right fit for me. We went to some lectures and the professors there are good, but it's just the attitudes of the people and their personalities. It just didn't feel like the right place for me. The people were kind of snobby, but it's just I guess what you would call the basic "East Coast Attitude" and it's very different from the West Coast.

But it's a lovely school, it's a lovely campus. I didn't realize that I wanted a big campus and I wanted to go to a large school until I saw Georgetown and I saw how small it was. There's a lack of diversity and personality. Everyone just seemed similar in their ideas. It's really just like a poli-sci- driven school and as of right now that's what I'm considering doing, but then it's like if I want to change my mind or just explore other fields too it wouldn't be the greatest place to do that in.

CAMPUS

Breakfast With Gote

Special Ed teacher Ellen Urciola spent years as a professional chef and restaurant owner whose guests included former Vice President Al Gore.

By Yenifer Rodriguez
Staff Writer

In 2003, former Vice President Al Gore Jr. was looking for a large restaurant in the San Fernando Valley where he could feed a large group and hold a town meeting.

Secret Service agents were dispatched to Northridge in search of such a place. They picked Sam's Cafe because it has a flat roof.

Kitchen manager Ellen Urciola and her team got 72 hours notice. They also got FBI background checks. Next came the bomb-sniffing dogs, three times in three days.

On the day of the meeting, the Secret Service disabled the phones and plugged in theirs.

At 4:30 am, armed guards moved to the roof and surrounded the facility.

The Secret Service stood nearby as Urciola and her team prepared the food, making sure no one poisoned the meals.

A short time later, Urciola and her team served 1200 meals in 20 minutes to 900 invited guests and locals and 300 visitors.

The fare included crab meat on ice, roast loin of pork and red wine reduction sauce with potato rissole.

Gore and 19 year-old daughter Angela were pleased with the meal.

"Thanks, everything was delicious," Gore told Urciola and posed for a photo with the chef.

A lengthy career as a professional chef and restaurant owner

had prepared Urciola for her celebrity.

Urciola was a professional cook for 32 years, working for AT&T and several catering companies in Connecticut.

She attended Johnson Wales University in Rhode Island where she had a class with Emeril Lagasse.

But Urciola always wanted to own a restaurant. So she started one in Meriden.

The West Main St. Diner, opened in 1985, served breakfast and lunch.

It was a typical 1940's style diner, comforting and with seating for 65.

"We were known for our pancakes and omelettes," Urciola said. "Today no one makes them as good."

Italian dinner cuisine featured chicken parmesan, lobster dishes and sauces.

Three years later, Urciola opened the 84-seat Hometown Eatery, a casual dining, country style restaurant with lots of wood.

"I did all the remodeling," Urciola said, "including the floor, tile, and tables, everything but the electrical and the 12ft long vent system."

The renovation took two months. What Urciola couldn't teach herself she learned from classes at Home Depot.

"The food at both restaurants was made from scratch," Urciola said. "We had an 'open kitchen,' where we had direct contact with the customers."



Photo by Alex Cadena

SWEETS: Poly teacher Ellen Urciola mixes a batch of Sweetie Dream Cupcakes.

"Everyone else cooked out of the box and we cooked from scratch" said Urciola. "It was challenging, 18 hours each day, from dawn to dusk."

"We had something that appealed to customers," said Urciola. "I always got a 90% or higher with the health department."

Urciola moved to California in 1999 and got involved in teaching Special Ed adults who had severe behavioral disabilities.

From 2003 to 2007, she taught at East L.A. Occupation.

Urciola joined Poly's staff in 2010 and teaches Special Ed English as well as a 3rd period cooking class.

On the class menu are a dessert-lover's dreams - Whoopie Pies, Sweetie Dream cupcakes and Extreme cookies.

Poly grad headed to Harvard

[From Diane, pg 1]

environment. People can get into sororities during sophomore year but everyone already knows everyone by the time that happens so it's really up to the individual. I was in the Outing club: giving hiking tours, clearing trails and supervising cabins. I even got chainsaw certified. I worked as a translator in a clinic.

I used my Dartmouth road bike to go everywhere, even though Dartmouth was small enough to walk. My freshmen summer, I actually took the bike from the Atlantic to the Pacific on a two-month road trip.

I also love how Dartmouth goes through all the seasons, including the beautiful winter snow. Sometimes on a random day someone would call a campus-wide snowball fight.

I majored in Latin American Literature.

I enjoyed that the most because writers tell stories about the past and historical fiction is more emotional than a text book. I also wanted to expand my language so I went to Buenos Aires, Argentina. It doesn't cost any more than Dartmouth's tuition. I also made a trip to Spain for 10 weeks. I even made money over there.

The Harvard med school requirements are almost the same for getting into college. You have to maintain a high GPA, higher than the average college minimum, of 3.7 to 3.9. There is also a test called the MCAT which I only took once. The MCAT is the entrance exam



Photo by Alex Cadena

PRE-MED: Diane Lopez is a Dartmouth grad and will attend Harvard med school in the fall.

for all graduates. It is the hardest test for those wanting to become MDs. To pass the MCAT, I studied hard, took prep classes for two months and had no job. The test is comprehensive for

all subjects - including physics.

The program takes four years to complete. The first two years are as students in the actual classroom, while the third and fourth years are in clinical work in a hospital. Most top schools have no A through F scores during the first two years because the naive underclassmen are likely to get competitive.

Med school students are expected to graduate in debt because no one is worried about doctors not being able to pay off loans. Not even students worry because the average debt at graduation is \$150,000. I will only have to pay off about \$24-25,000 in loans because I'm getting some money for free, which is a big deal for me.

Currently, I have a full-time job at the cardiovascular research lab at UCSD. I'm actually working more than I should. Working on embryonic stem cells and studying zebra fish for heart development.

I relax on my free time and just hang out with friends and family. I'm trying not to burn myself out with work before med-school.

I don't watch that much TV because there's never time. I like "House," "Glee," "Grey's Anatomy" and old episodes of "The Office."

I am a fan of Jane Austin, but I also like Gabriel Garcia Marquez's works. "Super Troopers," "Forest Gump," "The Shawshank Redemption" and "The Sandlot" are some of my favorite movies.

What I remember most about Poly is sports. I remember spending the most time in the cross-country and track and field teams after school. Practice always lasted to five or six p.m. Track for me was really just to stay in shape between cross-country seasons. I was the J.V. champion my freshmen year but the rest of the years I was varsity. Mr. Rivera made it more challenging. I wasn't the fastest runner but I really enjoyed my time there. Also Mr. Cuevas was a really good mentor. He pushed me in my academics.

Cuevas was my A.P. European History and Chicano Studies teacher. He was really the most enthusiastic and motivating teacher back when he was a fresh UCLA grad. I always had these engaging conversations with him about college and life.

My advice to Poly students is to not worry about financial aid. Don't let that be a factor in keeping you out of college.

And not knowing what you want to do in life is no excuse for not going to college. That's what college is for.

Don't quit and don't give yourself any excuses because it will feel so much more rewarding when you've reached your goal.

CAMPUS

First Ad + Grads Oliver's Food Fight

[From Ad +, pg 1]

program coordinators have been encouraging. I am proud to be part of the first Advantage Plus graduating class. We were the "guinea pigs," the students whose lives were closely watched for signs of success or setbacks.

LOLIS MARQUEZ
- attending UC San Diego, majoring in Psychology.

The Advantage Plus Program helped me get college ready. It kept me focused and pressured me to do well. It challenged me and was a great help to my confidence and knowing what I'm capable of.

In the ninth grade, I joined the Kaiser Permanente Medical Explorers and did that for two years. In tenth grade, I was on the soccer team as well as running for track and field. In the eleventh grade, I joined leadership, was secretary of the junior council and was part of the Young Senators. Currently, I am Leadership Vice President and a member of senior council and the Interact club. Since I was 15, I have been part of my youth choir at Abundant Life Church.

I am attending UC San Diego in the fall. I fell in love with the campus, the people, and the atmosphere.

I think ultimately we get ourselves into college but we cannot forget those who encouraged us not to give up and for that I have to thank my brother and teachers.

I was part of the Peer Mentoring Program and I really fell in love with teaching kids that were taking Algebra 1 for the 2nd and 3rd time. There was more to these students than laziness or that rebellious attitude of "I don't want to do my work" and for that reason I enjoyed encouraging them, making them see the reality of the situation.

JOCELYNE GUILLEN
- graduated a year early.
- freshman at UC Berkley.

I am very grateful for Advantage Plus. I feel like I got lucky because of all the APs and college classes. It looks extremely impressive on college applications.

I was recruited for the Advantage Plus program in middle school. The goal of Ad + is to increase student interest in higher education by proving that students are more than capable of taking and passing college courses. In doing so, students not only experience what it is to be a pseudo-college kid, but also realize that school is only as hard as you let it be.

I most definitely credit the Advantage Plus Program for my acceptance into UC Berkeley. It gave my application more substance and increased my confidence when it came to apply.

The Advantage Plus Program gave me the credits entering UC Berkley to bypass several freshman courses so I could begin my major-related courses.

My first year at college has been amazing. Moving away really helped me gain a more objective point of view. And classes you assume would be easy turn out to be the most difficult, and vice versa.

You learn how to be more self-reliant when it comes to punctuality in reading and with assignments, professor-student relationships become essential in doing well, and asking for help becomes the new social norm. You learn that those who ask for help are the ones who succeed; acting like you know everything yourself and the advice of others is meritless makes you arrogant.

Advantage Plus is amazing because it's definitely a gateway to success.

[From Food Fight, pg 1]

their complaints about LAUSD cafeteria food as part of a film shoot for his Emmy-winning ABC series "Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution." The action took place in his specially-outfitted 18-wheeler parked outside the California Endowment building downtown.

Elementary, middle and high school students read letters out loud, including some from classmates, regarding school food and ways to improve LAUSD's lunch program.

The District recently denied Oliver access to any LAUSD campus for filming. Oliver's intention was to use LAUSD as a foil for his show.

Oliver charged that LAUSD breakfast meals contain dangerous amounts of sugar and complained about the amount of time allotted for lunch on the average LAUSD campus - 24 minutes - the shortest time in the U.S, according to Oliver. European schools typically allow students an hour for lunch, he said.

"It's barely humane what they're doing to these kids," Oliver said.

Oliver claims new LAUSD Superintendent John Deasy expressed similar views in a discussion the two had.

Oliver's Food Revolution Truck houses a high-tech kitchen with sinks, ovens, counters, pantries and even flat screen televisions. The mobile kitchen takes three hours and thousands of dollars to open for use and move from place to place.

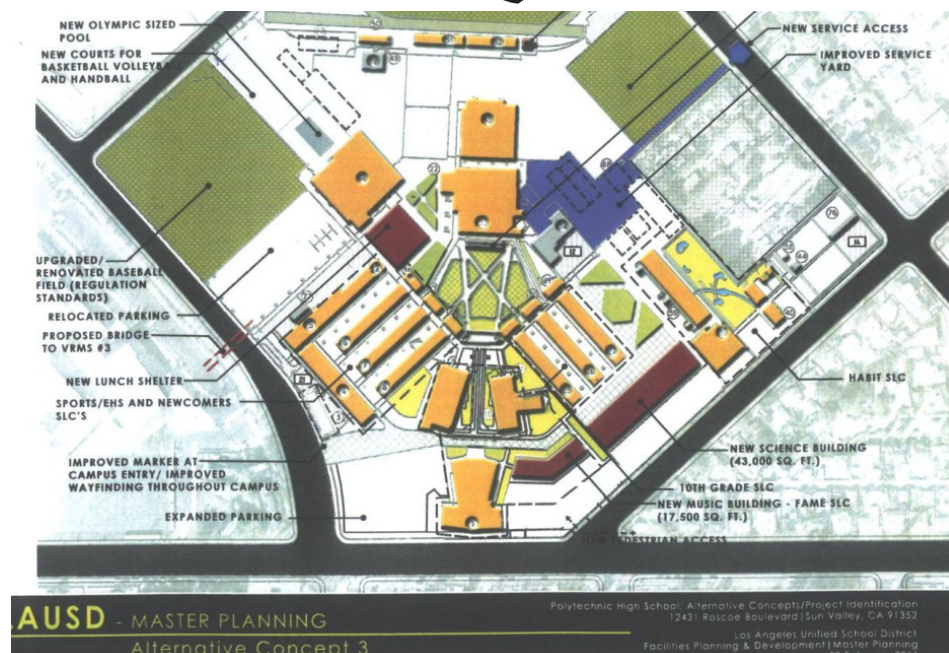
Oliver's television shows and specials in both the UK and the U.S. since the 90s have included "The Naked Chef," "Jamie's School Dinners," "Jamie's Kitchen" and "Jamie's Great Italian Escape."

The 35-year old British-born chef has won numerous honors and awards for his shows and contributions to the public and has written several bestselling cookbooks.

Oliver credits time spent in his parent's restaurant kitchen in London as the inspiration for his cooking career.

ABC will air "Revolution" reruns Friday, May 27 and new episodes beginning Friday, June 3 at 9 pm.

Measure Q Millions



ALL THE MARBLES: Concept 3 includes relocation and modernization of tenth grade center, Sports/EHS, Newcomers and HABIT SLCs. Construction includes a new science building, a new lunch shelter, a new Olympic-sized pool and a new Music Building. Portable buildings including the 9th Grade Center and the North Hollywood Adult School will be relocated.

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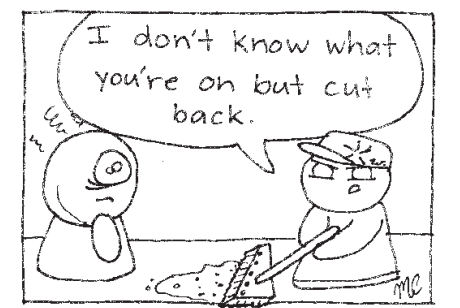
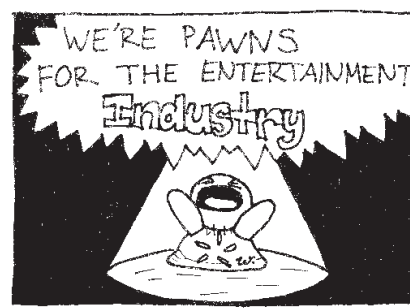
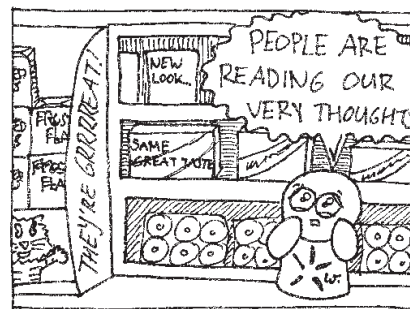
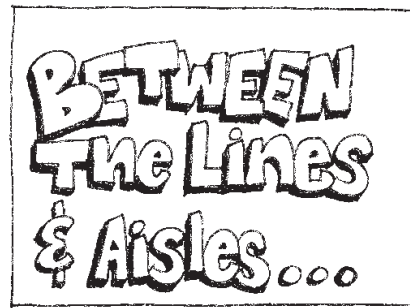
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April Solution

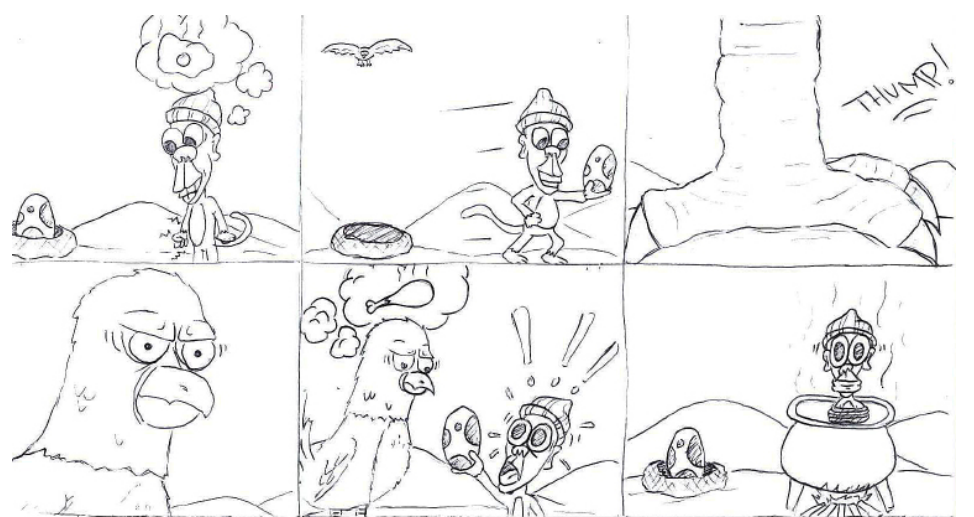
The Adventures of Jack and Jacky

by Melissa Cuevas



Me and My Monkey

by Ronald Ruiz



NEWS

Waity Katy's Wait Is Over

By Diane Alvarado
Staff Writer

The fairytale wedding watched by a billion or so on Friday was no whirlwind affair. The newly anointed Duchess of Cambridge had set her traps years ago.

Kate, nicknamed "Waity Katy" by the British tabloids, waited eight years for her prince to propose.

Prince William and Kate first met in 2001 at the University of Saint Andrews in Scotland where they studied Art History.

Kate first caught William's eye when she modeled a sheer dress for a charity fashion show. The new couple, along with two other friends, moved into an off-campus apartment in their sophomore year in college.

William and Kate's relationship first came to light when they were photographed together on a ski trip to the Swiss Alps. Attempts to keep their relationship a secret were fruitless and they were continuously hounded by the media.

After four years of dating Kate and her Prince separated, but within months Kate had her man back.

Kate grew up in Berkshire, England, along with younger sister Pippa and younger brother James, in a middle class family. Mother Carole was a stewardess and father Michael a pilot



for British Airways.

But in 1987 the Middletons opened a children's party ware business named Party Pieces and their fortunes quickly rose. Today, the Party Pieces is worth millions.

Kate lived a pampered and privileged lifestyle, attending private schools and hobnobbing with the sons and daughters of royalty.

In 2006, Kate became an accessory buyer for clothing chain Jigsaw and quickly developed her fashion sense. Many consider her one of the most fashionable royals in history.

Speculation ran rampant amongst the press and fashionistas regarding the maker of Kate's wedding dress, but the answer was not revealed until Kate stepped from her hotel to a waiting limo for the ride to Westminster Abbey.

Sarah Burton, creative director for Alexander McQueen, got the nod.

Kate's fairytale dream came to life when Prince William proposed while on vacation in Kenya in October of 2010.

The proposal was not announced until November 16, 2010 where Kate debuted the same platinum and 18-carat blue sapphire diamond engagement ring that his father, Prince Charles, gave to his mother, Princess Diana.

The public reacted more than welcoming towards Kate in accepting her to royalty.

The British government even declared Friday a national holiday in honor of the wedding.

Times have changed and the British Royals and government have become more accepting towards the people the royal family choose to marry, giving commoners such as Kate a chance at a fairytale ending.

"AFTER FOUR YEARS OF DATING, KATE AND HER PRINCE SEPARATED, BUT WITHIN MONTHS, KATE HAD HER MAN BACK."

AROUND CAMPUS

Roundtree - his life and times

Major Archie Roundtree talks about his early life in Poughkeepsie, his military career and the ROTC program.

By Vanessa Muñoz
Staff Writer

Poly's AFJROTC Major Archie Roundtree has come a long way since his small town days in Poughkeepsie, New York, 70 miles north of New York City along the Hudson River.

Roundtree was born in Patlaka, Florida, one of Annette and Orlando Roundtree's 10 children (five females and five males).

"All of us are almost two years apart," Roundtree said. "I am number six from the oldest."

Roundtree's parents were also born in Patlaka. The family moved to Poughkeepsie when Roundtree was young.

"My mom worked as a maid at local hotels and my dad was a construction worker" said Roundtree. "The house was always busy, noisy, loud, and crazy."

The Roundtree kids went to the same elementary, middle, and high school. The schools got four sisters, then four brothers and finally the younger sister and brother.

"There were a lot of kids and very little money," Roundtree said. "If there was food on the table, we all ate it, no matter what. But we were always happy for what we had."

At age 22, Roundtree graduated from New York University in New Paltz, NY with a degree in political science. After six months with the Dutchess County Jail in New York, Roundtree joined the Air Force.

Roundtree's mother was worried about her son joining the Air Force, especially since he had a college degree.

"But my dad served in the military so he had no problem with it," Roundtree said.

After 17 years, Roundtree took an early retirement through the Reduction In Force program, and began teaching AFJROTC at Granite High School in San Bernardino.

But Roundtree wanted to move to the Los Angeles area, so when the position at Poly became available, he applied for the job.

Poly's AFJROTC Program

AFJROTC is designed to help high school students become better citizens, while acquainting them with the field of Aerospace Science.

"All students at Poly are welcome and eligible to participate in AFJROTC program" said Roundtree. "But we are not here to recruit students into the military."

Any student with three years of AFJROTC who joins the military will get additional rank and pay, however.

Poly's AFJROTC program currently has 150 Parrots enrolled.

Roundtree expects cadets to have integrity, be committed and strive for excellence in all they do.

"Most importantly, never give up and don't make excuses," Roundtree said, "because in the real world, no one cares about excuses. It's your performance that matters."

AFJROTC courses include Aerospace Science, Leadership, Management, Finance, Cultural Studies, Survival Training, Drill and Ceremonies.

"Cadets do bookwork on Mondays and Wednesdays, drill on Tuesdays and Thursdays and physical training on Friday," Roundtree said.

A cadet's rank is based on the length of time the student has been in the program, the job position and the student's conduct. Course grades are based on the student's academic performance, dress and conduct.

The blue uniform is provided and paid for by the Air Force, while the Battle Dress Uniform (BDU) and the camouflage uniform must be purchased. The PT (physical training) uniform is also provided by the Air Force.

Every year AFJROTC participates in the Veterans Day Parade, Massing of the Colors on Presidents Day and in various Color Guard



Photo by Mariana Santos

IN CHARGE: Major Archie Roundtree runs Poly's AFJROTC program.

ceremonies.

Poly's armed and unarmed drill teams participated in a drill competition in Torrance on April 30th.

AFJROTC also visits Air Force installations, the Jet Propulsion Lab, the USS Midway Museum in San Diego, the Museum of Tolerance and various other curriculum related events. All students in AFJROTC are eligible to participate in the events and activities.

Recently, the AFJROTC instructors took a group of students to the USS Midway Museum in San Diego. The Midway was one of America's longest-serving aircraft carriers.

"After the tour, we treated the students to lunch at the Home Town Buffet, courtesy of the Air Force" said Roundtree.

The Air Force provides funds for transportation, lodging and meals for students during curriculum-related trips and tours.

SPORTS

Pitcher Perfect Season

Poly sophomore Monica Mendoza has had a stellar season for head coach Manny Peralta.

By Stephen Castaneda
Staff Writer

Q: Your best pitching effort this season?

Best game had to be when we went to North Hollywood because I got a two hitter.

Q: How confident are you going into the playoffs?

This season is the best because we are 10-0. I thank my team for backing me up on plays and saving me from pitching more than I had to.

Q: What do you do to prepare for a game?

I listen to music and make a ham sandwich.

Q: What music?

'No Scrubs' by TLC is the team's song.

Q: What strategy do you use when you see an intimidating batter?

As long as my outfield and infield back me up and as long as I throw strikes I know we'll do fine.

Q: Have you added any new pitches?

I started to learn changeups and I like them because it's an off speed pitch and the batter doesn't know what's coming. I grip the laces of the softball with my fingertips and make a 'C' shape.

Q: How have you developed since you started pitching?

Thanks to my pitching coach Sofia I've gotten better because she helped

me get focused.

Q: When did you decide you wanted to be a pitcher?

I wanted to be a pitcher since I was in seventh grade.

Q: Have you played other positions?

I've played shortstop and left field as a freshman. I got into varsity as a left fielder.

Q: How long have you pitched for Poly?

This season was my first year pitching.

Q: Who is your best friend on the team and why?

Me and Arlene played together in Sun Valley Park ever since we were little. If I can't make a game, Arlene is my replacement.

Q: What about you and Erika.

I was playing at Sun Valley Park since I was small and I met Erika when she started playing at the park.

Q: What pro athlete do you look up to?

James Loney and Monica Abbet

Q: What were some of the craziest things you've done on the bus after winning a game?

Once I sang 'Regulators' by Nate Dogg to the whole bus.

Q: Are your parents athletes?

My dad Salvador Mendoza played baseball for fun, my mom, Marisela Mendoza, played softball for fun too

and my uncle Martel Mendoza used to play for Poly.

Q: Where were you born? Where did you grow up?

I was born and grew up here in the San Fernando Valley.

Q: What do you plan on doing when you grow up?

I plan on playing college ball and study to be a nurse to help sick people.

Q: How much of your life is softball and how much is school?

Half and half.

Q: Brothers and sisters?

I have two younger brothers Salvador Jr. who is eleven, and Michael who is fourteen and one older sister Yvette who is eighteen.

Q: Your dream vacation?

My dream vacation is to go to Hawaii because I heard the beach is beautiful and calming.

Q: If you weren't playing softball, what would you want to play?

Without a doubt, I wouldn't play any other sport.

Q: How are your grades?

I try maintaining 'B' and 'C' average grades by doing all my work in class and following directions and do what is asked.

Q: Favorite class?

My favorite classes are Cooking, English and Biology because of my friends.



Photo by Mariana Santos

STRONG ARM: Ace right-hander Monica Mendoza has pitched Poly to #1.

Q: What do you do for fun?

When I'm not playing softball, I like hanging out with friends and going to the movies.

Q: What is your favorite movie?

"Grown Ups" with Adam Sandler.

"I wanted to be a pitcher since I was in the seventh grade."



Photo by Mariana Santos

STRUGGLED: Poly's Monica Mendoza couldn't contain the visiting Dons' bats on Wednesday and gave up 20 hits.

Dons pour it on

Seventeen-run Verdugo slug fest spoils Lady Parrots' perfect record.

By Stephen Castaneda
Staff Writer

Visiting Verdugo Hills pounded Poly's softball girls for seventeen runs on twenty hits, three walks and three Poly errors for an easy 17-3 win Wednesday.

"Worst performance ever," said Poly head coach Manny Peralta. "It seemed like they forgot the basics of the game."

The loss was the Lady Parrot's first in league play, ending their 10-0 streak.

Verdugo freshman pitcher Nicole Lindaman allowed three runs on seven hits and struck out five.

The visitors jumped to an early

3-1 lead and got nine more runs in the 4th and 5th innings.

Poly junior pitcher Monica Mendoza, who took the loss, scored a run in the second. Seniors Yesenia Reyes and Stephanie Hernandez both scored in the fourth, but the Lady Parrots were already down 8-3.

"We'll see today, playing Verdugo at their place," Peralta said. "If we play better than we did Wednesday, we'll be ready for the playoffs. If we don't, they'll lose their confidence."

(Note: Poly (14-8-1, 10-2) lost 18-15 to Verdugo (14-6-1, 10-2) on Friday and is now tied for first place in the East Valley League with Verdugo and Grant.)