

The Poly Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

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SERVING THE POLY COMMUNITY SINCE 1913

OCTOBER 2013

Students See Stars

Mount St. Mary's two campuses provide settings for TV and film crews as well as students

By Yesenia Carretero
Staff Writer

Star-struck students should have plenty to be excited about while attending one of Mount St. Mary's two lush campuses.

"Princess Diaries," "Benjamin Button," "Spiderman 3" and "Gray's Anatomy" were filmed on the Doheny campus, which is minutes away from the Staples Center. The campus has a park-like atmosphere, with large trees, big grassy areas and squirrels running around.

"Modern Family" and "Beverly Hills 90210" were filmed on the Chalon campus, located in the Santa Monica Mountains, minutes from the Santa Monica pier.

Mount Saint Mary's (MSM), a small private liberal arts institution in Los Angeles, has 1500 students on the two campuses. Founded in 1925 by the Sisters of Saint Joseph, MSM is a women's institution, but accepts men in the music and nursing programs.

Average class size is fifteen and offers opportunities for one-on-one attention and frequent interaction with professors. Professors offer office hours during which students can ask questions about homework, tests, projects and the like.

The top five majors are nursing, biology, education, business, and psychology.

Students

MSM wants well-rounded students who are involved in extracurricular activities. MSM encourages students to get involved in sororities, ASB, "Mount Movements," a hip-hop dance club and other on-campus activities.

Students attend an elegant four-course dinner once a year where the do's and don'ts of a business dinner are explained - how to call the waiter, use a napkin, and get comfortable in a professional environment.

Haunted Halloween on the Doheny campus attracts a big crowd. Last year the campus received over 30,000 pounds of donated candy. At the end of the day it was all gone.

Community Service

Service is a big part of the campus mission. Most students partici-

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Photo by Lirio Alberto

CRUNCHTIME: *Sophomore Petra Hernandez at Poly's first wrestling tournament under new head coach Terry Gillard. The meet was held Saturday.*

School Council Meets

By Mayra Benitez
Staff Writer

Poly's Governing School Council (GSC) met for the first time in August. The GSC will meet at least once a quarter and convene ad-hoc meetings as necessary.

Officers include Council President James Schwagle, Vice President Lisa Blackwell, Secretary Elva Madrigal and UTLA Chairperson Robert Scott.

Also attending were teachers Lori Combs, Cesar Felix, Evan Rabins, Devon Richter and Eric Thornburg.

Administrators attending included Art Arhanian, Ari Bennett, Kurt Jeppson and Yesenia Pleitez.

Parent Ana De Jesus also attended.

Principal Bennett and UTLA Chairperson Scott are automatic members. Combs, Felix, Madrigal and Schwagle have two-year terms. Arhanian, Blackwell, Rabins and Richter have one year terms.

The Council's responsibilities include establishing the responsibilities of faculty and principal required to maintain Poly's vision/mission, revise the per pupil budget annually, revise the "Elect to Work" agreement as necessary, contingent on a whole-staff vote for ratification and amend the make up and

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Neighborhood Breakfast

Poly's Chef Higgins and Cooking Club will serve 700 at annual City Hall fest.

By Joanna Rosales
Staff Writer

Poly's Cooking Club will serve 700 breakfasts and 700 lunches for the Neighborhood Council at City Hall on Saturday, Sept 28. Breakfast is 8:30 to 9:45 and lunch

is 12:15 to 1:30.

"In five hours, we will serve 1400 meals," said Cooking Club sponsor and Poly chef Bob Higgins. "We've catered a lot of events but we've never catered an event this big."

Cooking Club members will start prepping Friday. "Everyone is required to come in at 4 am Saturday morning," Higgins said. "We'll do all the cooking Saturday morning. And then load the truck and transport it."

Students will set up the chafing dishes and get all the food from the truck to the staging and food prep area.

"When we are ready to serve, we will take the hot food out of the holding cabinets and put them in the chafing dishes to serve," Higgins said. "I have baker's racks with plastic holders for all the cold foods."

"Some of my former students are coming back to help me," Higgins said. "While we are serving breakfast, they will be cooking up lunch."

Twenty-five Cooking Club members are going. Two Leadership students will film the event.

Higgins, who has taught culinary arts at Poly since 2005, was born in Idaho and grew up in New York.

"I took classes with a master chef Steve Jilleba at Johnson and Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island," Higgins said. "I've taken classes at Baltimore International College and a class at DHCT Culinary Institute in Switzerland."

Higgins owned Alfano's Italian Restaurant in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina for eight years and worked for the Hilton Corporation and Country Markets.

Higgins has also worked in LA.

"I was chef/manager for Carousel Restaurant in North Hollywood," Higgins said. "And I helped Wolfgang Puck do the opening of the Japanese Museum in LA for 5000 people."

"My students do competition every year," Higgins said. "This year I want to do competitions with the Art Institute of North Hollywood against Chef Rossi."

Higgins is certified by the American Culinary Federation and has been a member since 1987.

WASC Visits Poly

By Yenifer Rodriguez
Editor in Chief

WASC Chairperson Alicia Foulk paid a preliminary visit to Poly Thursday to meet with Principal Ari Bennett and various Poly stakeholders. Foulk, who is an Associate Principal at Palos Verdes High, will lead the WASC team's March 2014 accreditation visit to Poly.

Foulk's visit included a second period meeting with 20 Poly administrators, teachers, students and parents in the library. Under discussion was what progress Poly had made since the last full accreditation visit six years ago.

"We've made a lot of growth," said Bennett. "Six years ago, we didn't have a good way to monitor learning on an ongoing basis. Since then, we've developed formative assessments in all the core areas and implemented a data management system called Data Director."

Teachers at the meeting described how formative assessments have changed Poly's students, leading to higher pass rates on the CAHSEE and the CST.

Foulk asked the students how they saw the use of formative assessments working in their classrooms.

"Teachers challenge us with harder questions," said student body president Lorena Martinez. "For example, I know that because in my AP classes we are learning at a higher level and answering harder questions, we don't find the test questions as hard as the ones in class."

Tenth Grade Coordinator Royce Stuckey said Poly's CAHSEE prep has also helped more students pass the exit exam.

Bennett added that Poly's 4x4 block schedule has benefited students who need extra assistance in high stake exams like the CAHSEE.

Assistant Principal Jamille Kenion said Poly has offered students higher-level math classes than required to increase students' chances of acceptance to four-year universities. Grants helped fund this policy.

"We have a significant number of juniors that are in AP calculus because they finished Math Analysis

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Richter on WASC

By Joshua Penado
Staff Writer

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) is one of six regional associations that accredit public and private schools, colleges, and universities in the United States.

WASC will visit Poly in March 2014.

A three-member WASC committee visited three years ago to review ongoing improvements in Poly's action plan and make sure the school is continuing to improve.

"They were very happy with the school," said WASC coordinator Devon Richter, "and said that as long as we keep doing what we're doing, we are on the right track and meeting all of our targets."

WASC did a full visit six years ago. They were on campus four days.

"They went to every classroom, looked at everything we were doing, read our report and interviewed parents, students, teachers and faculty," said Richter. "From that visit we got a six-year accreditation with a three year mid-visit."

Three years ago, teachers met in focus groups and examined everything about the school - the orientation of the school, the curriculum, the instruction, the culture, the assessments. Those five groups looked at data and examined the school.

The leaders of those groups reported their findings and discussed where Poly could improve.

Poly's action plan had three main goals. The first was to increase the number of students getting proficient and advanced on the CST and decrease the number of students getting

[See WASC, pg 6]



Photo Courtesy of Christian Penado

Let's Make A Movie

Campus film crew is on the move.

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Photo by Lirio Alberto

Almonte Rocks Idol

Poly's annual songfest brings out the best.

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OPINION

EDITORIAL

I Want Candy

"Trick or Treat, smell my feet, give me something good to eat."

keyword - "good."

"Good" is there for a reason. It's not just a needed syllable in the song. Well to me it's not.

Halloween is a day kids race out the door to collect delicious, mouthwatering candies. Some are not happy.

Getting raisins or "Swedish Fish," whatever that is, is a real let down for kids. Most kids only get one day to pig-out without worrying about cavities and tummy aches. Kids don't want fish as candy, artificial flavorless tootsie-roll chocolate or corn shaped syrup.

What is Candy Corn? Traditional wax candy, that's what it is. This candy is over 200 years old and still a Halloween give away. Candy corn was made in the 1880s by George Renninger of the Philadelphia, PA-based Wunderle Candy Company. America is a smart phone nation yet we can't produce decent candy?

Actually it's not really that the candy is horrible. Kids expect more nowadays.

What surprises me is candy corn's popularity. The National Confectioners Association estimates that 20 lbs of candy corn is sold annually.

Regular Tootsie Rolls are gross. Why throw vanilla and orange cream into the mix? It's like trying to make celery taste better with chocolate syrup. They aren't pleasant together.

On the other hand, Smarties are not very popular. I don't get it. Sure, they aren't the greatest candy in the world but they're the type of candies you eat after all the good ones are gone.

Same with the strawberry hard candies. They're wrapped in a pretty strawberry-like wrapper. On the third day after Halloween when your best candy is gone this hard candy is equivalent to all the others.

I understand that spending \$25 on treats for neighborhood kids can be a bother for some. But kids are not asking for king-sized chocolate bars, although they probably wouldn't mind. They just want decent Dollar Tree candies.

I always thought goody bags with small notes were sweet. It shows the person actually took time making the bags and that they care about Halloween. Even popcorn is acceptable. Kids love anything that's sweet. They love sugar. Ironically, fruit will even do.

This Halloween when the neighbor kids come, don't disappoint them. If you're not going to give good candy, don't give any at all.

When School Follows You Home

The Glendale Unified School District recently hired a company to monitor students' posts on social media like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Their intentions are to watch for things like drug use, cyber bullying, sexual harassment and suicide.

I guess students will have to think twice before they click "post."

Glendale District superintendent Richard Sheehan says this plan is entirely for the safety of students. That administrators are just trying to listen to what their student body has to say.

If the Glendale kids had something to say to administrators, they'd speak to them directly.

And while the thought of school officials protecting students any way they can is sweet, there's no need for them to invade their privacy.

Supporters of this plan defend it by saying it already worked.

Officials tracked down and helped a student who was speaking of suicide on his social media.

But I guarantee that anyone who's serious about ending their life isn't posting about it on Facebook. Kids who do so either crave attention or just don't know what they're doing.

So did monitoring really save a life? Or did it just scare sense into a dramatic teen?

If schools monitor posts, then they'll monitor messages, and so on until students are living a censorship scenario from "Fahrenheit 451."

Schools are for learning. As long as both students and teachers are doing their jobs, they have the right to keep their private life private.

The last thing I want is the principal looking through my Twitter feed.

Halloween Costumes

Halloween was a day of horrifying and gross monsters. What happened?

I don't see Jokers, Screams or Skeletons much anymore. Instead there's half naked teenagers. Most costumes have been customized to show as much skin as possible. One can no longer be a super hero, more like super bimbo.

Last time I checked witches were portrayed as scary, not skimpy. You just don't see a decent witch with a long nose, broom and mole anymore. What you see is mini skirts with short, tight shirts.

You can't just put on two pieces of clothing and call it a costume. You can call it trashy but not a costume. Actually, nowadays I don't even consider them as "skimpy costumes." They're lingerie. Think about it. They're revealing, cute, provocative and

in most cases either red, black or both.

Don't get me wrong, society has always had these types of costumes. What's bothering is that's all you see lately.

If someone has to think about whether you're in a Halloween costume or just a prostitute then that's a problem.

You don't have to be scary. You can be cute. I see girls wearing decent skirts with stockings and some kind of prop. That seems kind of bland, I know, but I'm almost positive you can live it up.

We have many creative Parrots.

I'm not saying don't dress how you want to dress. I'm saying there's a time and place for these kinds of costumes. School is not one of them. Neither is a neighborhood full of kids.

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STAR GAZER

Senior Gi Min Choi went to New Mexico this summer to see stars not sights. So when is a Python not a snake?

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MEDIA MAN

Senior Cristian Penado and his merry crew of filmmakers, known for their work at Poly, are looking to go big time.

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PANAMA NATIVE

New Tenth Grade Center Dean Hardip Singh spent his youth living just minutes from the Panama Canal.

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PUTTING THE GREEN IN PARENTS

If Jasmine and Jihae can't convince you to keep Poly clean and green, then you need to join the Eco Club.

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A STAR IS BORN

If you didn't hear songbird Hannah Almonte at one of Poly's many Idol songfests, you missed a real treat.

The lady can sing.

By Joanna Rosales

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THEY'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES

Magnet veterans Devon Richter and Ramon Gomez have had great success teaching Parrots how to get "5s" on AP exams.

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DOWN & OUT IN SAN FRANCISCO

Director Woody Allen writes the role of a lifetime for talented Kate Blanchett in "Blue Jasmine."

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WHERE THE GIRLS ARE

Where the girls are is drooling over boy band One Direction's new docu, complete with wardrobe malfunctions.

By Christine Maralit

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MONKEYS CHANNEL DRE

Not content to continue their string of indie-rock CDs, rock combo Arctic Monkeys adds a hip-hop mash to the mix.

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ALL TERRAIN LEGS

Veteran Cross Country stars Isabel Ochoa, Jorge Palacios and Alexis Contreras run hills like some people net surf - relentlessly.

By Laura Martinez

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STREAKING LADY PARROTS

Can anyone stop these ladies of steel and ice? Not so far. The Lady Volleyballers are on a four-match win streak and counting.

By Tanneshia Acosta

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EXPERT ADVICE

OPTIMIST Sports Editor and former QB Danny Lopez takes a close look at Poly's varsity football squad's first four games.

By Danny Lopez

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EDITORIAL POLICY

The OPTIMIST is the voice of the Poly community, and follows the Code of Ethics for the Society of Professional Journalists. Editorials are the opinions of the staff.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Join the
OPTIMIST
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INTERVIEW

the

AMERICANIZATION



of Gi Min Choi

The OPTIMIST interviewed Poly Magnet senior Gi Min Choi about his journey from Gangnam, Korea to LA and his summer stay in New Mexico studying astrophysics. Here's what he told us.

By Christine Maralit
Staff Writer

Photo
Lirio Alberto

Coming to America

I came to the US in July or August of 2006 with my brother and my parents. I think I was 10 or 11 and in the fifth grade. We came here on vacation. My parents suggested my brother and I stay here and study instead of in Korea.

We've lived with three different designated guardians. We met the first set of guardians on a tour of the United States. My parents just trusted them. The guardian I'm currently living with is someone I actually know.

The past two guardians were Korean. But the current one is not.

Interestingly enough, the first guardian my brother and I had was matched by the bus driver of the tour we were on.

The one I'm currently living with now is one of the people that I actually got to know while I was living here in America. My previous guardians were charging my parents an outrageous amount of money so eventually we decided to move to the guardian I have now.

There are times when I miss my parents, definitely. It got worse when my brother went off to college this year. Now I'm literally alone.

But in Korea, each individual in my family was really busy. When I was in elementary school there, I came home late from school and my parents came home late too so I really didn't get to see them that much except for the weekends.

My family moved around a lot because my parents wanted my brother and I to have the best education. We're originally from a very rural area called Anseong. From there we moved to Suwon and eventually to Seoul. The last place that I lived was Gangnam. Gangnam is one of the most academically challenging areas in Korea. Most people there are really rich so their children are academically superb. It was difficult for me to adjust to that because there was a huge financial gap between my family and my classmates' families.

The first few years in America, while I was in elementary school, it was just a little worse because we could only see them once or twice every two years. Other than that, I was already used to living alone even when I was in Korea. My brother and I were used to taking care of ourselves while our parents worked.

When I came to the U.S., I became really used to living by myself. It's not really bad.

The elementary school I attended in Korea was academically advanced and competitive. I was basically over prepared in terms of academics. During elementary school for math and science I had no problems. I actually felt like it kept my brain behind. And then for English, I definitely had trouble.

Although I knew some English when I was in Korea, it wasn't really formal and it isn't the way people actually speak. In history I also had difficulties because I had to do a lot of reading. At the time I read really slowly because it took me two steps to read. Because I'm fluent in Korean, when I'm reading I had to translate it through Korean in my brain so it took a bit longer than what people would expect.

In terms of getting through classes, I had no trouble, but adjusting to a new environment was interesting because American culture is really different from Korean culture. In Korea there was only one culture - most people who live in Korea are Koreans. But in America, it's completely universal. It's very multicultural, so it was very strange to have many different kinds of people, not just in terms personality, but culture, ethnicity and background. It was very different.

New Mexico

This summer, I went to New Mexico Tech in Socorro as part of the Summer Science Program (SSP). We did astrophysics research in a college setting. We had college IDs and could use all the college facilities.

The program was for five and a half weeks, from June 16 to July 24.

At night we did research. In the morning, we got lectures on calculus and astronomy. During the evening we did problem sets and then conducted observations.

The program cost \$6,000, but because of alumni donations, it was reduced to \$4,000. I applied for financial aid and got approximately \$3,500 waived, so I paid around \$500. Considering all the educational enrichment that I got, the \$500 felt like it was free to me.

In terms of academics, we had three focuses. The first was programming. We learned Python. The second was math, mainly calculus and the third was astronomy.

For calculus, prior to going there, I had taken Calculus A, B, and C so I was thinking it was going to be easy for me but the materials they taught there were at a whole new level. In the beginning I felt clueless but eventually, with help of professors and my peers through SSP, I caught up. I felt more independent, knowing I could handle all the course work that they gave me.

And for Python, learning a new programming language is just like learning another language. In the beginning it was really confusing but toward the end, I was able to code different programs. I felt really happy. I was even able to help some of my friends out.

For astronomy, it was similar to learning Python but even worse. Out of the three, astronomy was the hardest because even though it is science, I wasn't fully exposed to the subject. It's not really related to chemistry or biology or any of the topics that Poly covers. It had a lot of physics but physics was something that I wasn't too comfortable with because I took it in 9th grade. I'm taking Physics C this year so there's a big gap in between for me to have forgotten information.

Even though we got this high level academic opportunity with SSP, what I really valued even more was the personal side. SSP has two locations. One is in West Mount in California and the other one was New Mexico Tech. Thirty-six students get to go to West Mount and 36 students go to New Mexico Tech. At New Mexico Tech, it felt weird from the first day. It was so different from the high school setting in the sense that we instantly became really close friends. There was no need for ice breakers, everyone was just very friendly and approachable and intelligent.

I was able to make a lot of new friends. I didn't have any trouble being integrated into the community. They were emotionally supportive. Even though working on problem sets and turning them in at mid-night was really stressful, after that we pretty much just had "free time" and we could technically do whatever we wanted as long as you weren't assigned for observation that day.

When we had free time we just talked and played games-- not video games though, just normal sports and just different games. We just had a great time together, staying up til 5 or 6 in the morning. And because it was a residential program we all saw each other and spent time together like a family. It didn't feel like I had just met these people, it felt like I knew them for ten years or something.

I still keep in touch with friends I made there. One friend I made was from Minnesota and he came here to California a month ago to visit colleges like Cal Tech and Pomona Tech. He also spent some time with me and we hung out.

CAMPUS



Photo Courtesy of Cristian Penado

ACTION: (from left) Alumnus Jeannette Buenrostro, seniors Simerpreet Singh, Cristian Penado and alumnus Gabriela Buenrostro produce films and videos for Treehouse Productions.

A Film Crew With Ambition

By Joshua Penado
Staff Writer

The OPTIMIST sat down recently to talk with senior Cristian Penado about his film production company and his desire to be a filmmaker. Here's what he told us.

Filmmaker

What inspired me to start filming were the visits from my dad on weekends when I was in middle school. Each weekend he visited, we went to the movies. I experienced a different world through the eyes of a filmmaker that I would most likely never meet. What I experienced through movies then is what I wish to make others experience through movies in the future; an emotional rollercoaster composed of lows, highs, humor, darkness and everything in between.

I have been filming for almost four years now. I started in early 2010 using Windows Movie Maker and now use industry standard visual effects, compositing software and a professional editing suite.

Learning filmmaking was a long process of trial and error. I started by making slideshows with videos, then moved on to incorporating video and soon it was all video. I began to watch movies not only to enjoy them but to study them and learn from them; a technique I greatly improved on in Mr. Herrold's film production class.

I went through a long process of self-teaching, using whatever resources I had, including Google, YouTube, studying videos and just getting out there and trying out everything I was learning. Of course there was a lot of failure, but every time I failed, it was a learning experience.

As a filmmaker, I look up to every other filmmaker out there who hasn't ever had his name on the silver screen. Filmmaking is not easy to learn. Many are talented and dedicated but never discovered. It is a stressful and difficult job and yet they pursue it, even if just as a hobby, because it is their passion and what they truly enjoy. This is what I find inspiring and something to really look up to.

My favorite directors are J.J. Abrams, James Cameron and Quentin Tarantino, Cameron also being my favorite cinematographer.

My favorite movies are "Avatar," "I Am Legend," "Super 8" and "Equilibrium."

Treehouse

Treehouse Productions is a production company, a club of sorts, where a group of filmmakers share each other's knowledge and experience in order to create videos that are entertaining and visually stunning.

My partners are Juan Granados, Simerpreet Singh, Gabriela Buenrostro and Jeannette Buenrostro. We originally started as Gabriela

and Jeannette Buenrostro and me in January of 2013. Simerpreet Singh and Juan Granados joined in June of 2013.

We have five tripods, one shoulder rig, two glide-cams (for steady walking and running shots), one five foot camera slider and multiple Gopro mounts. We also use three light stands with umbrella lights for low-light situations and one of these we double as a boom pole for our shotgun microphone. We also have spare memory cards, batteries and camera maintenance tools

The money for the equipment comes from events I do photography for under CP Photography.

I am always selective when buying equipment, looking for a balance between quality and cost. I built most of the equipment myself.

Treehouse videos include Ms. Groskin's "Like a Diamond" Teacher Lip Sync video and some of the videos and edited songs that played in last year's pep rallies, such as the Japanimation Club's video and the Photography Club's video.

These videos were all filmed in Poly and in the new 9th grade center.

Treehouse Productions' last project was a lyric video to the song "Memory Spectrum" by a local band called Future Holotape. This was filmed over two days. Visual effects and editing took endless hours more over the next week.

We have been working on a video for a few months now that will premiere at the pep rally on October 18. It's definitely something to look forward to.

Producing a video is a time consuming process. If we're making a music video about three minutes long, we will spend two to three days in pre-production which is planning it out step by step, three to four days in production, filming, and about one to two weeks in post-production which is visual effects, color grading and editing.

Each member's job in a video depends on our strong suits and what areas we each need practice on, but usually we will all share the work as cinematographer, the camera man, visual effects artist and colorist. We do have our specialties however. Mine are editing, color grading and visual effects. Simerpreet Singh's specialties are visual effects, directing and storyboarding. Juan Granados is well-rounded in color grading, editing and directing. Gabriela and Jeannette Buenrostro are in charge of make-up, props, art directing and producing.

My ultimate goal as a filmmaker is to be able to let others experience the emotional journeys I experienced in movies as a kid. To be able to create the worlds and characters that awe-struck me and be able to instill a movie-going passion in others in result.

Everything we have been doing has been to establish a body of work that showcases our talents and skills. We are close to making Treehouse profitable and self-sustaining.

Hardip Singh Takes Tenth Grade Center Dean Position

By Aranza Gonzalez
Staff Writer

Former Tenth Grade Center Geometry teacher Hardip Singh is the new Tenth Grade Center dean, replacing Levon Yeganyan, who is the new Bridge Coordinator. New Poly faculty member Michelle O'Connor is replacing Singh in the math department.

Singh has taught math at Poly for 17 years. He also served as attendance dean for three years.

Singh majored in math at Oxnard College from 1991-1992 before transferring to CSUN. He graduated in 1995 and got his bilingual credential at CSUN.

Singh was born and raised in Panama and lived there for 25 years.

"I lived in the city of Panama growing up," Singh said. "My family lives five minutes away from the Panama Canal."

Singh went to university in Panama and majored in Industrial Engineering, but when he came to the US, he changed his major to math. "Panama City is like Florida, very humid," Singh said. "The food is like Caribbean food, rice and plantains and so on."

"The city is very multicultural. When they were building the Panama Canal, people from all over the world came to work on the Canal."

Spanish is the official language but 25 percent of the people speak English.

"My mom and my dad are both Indian,"

Singh said. "I'm third generation in Panama."

"When I was in kindergarten, my mom was teaching me all these different languages and when I went to school in Panama people would make fun

of me because I was mixing all the languages. After that I decided not to speak the other languages and I chose to stay with Spanish."

Singh came to the US in 1989 because Noriega was in power and there were many political problems.

"I came to the US to finish school," Singh said. "It was hard for me because I had to learn a new language, and I had to leave all my family behind."

Singh's father worked for the US government in Panama and helped Singh emigrate to the states.

"I stayed with some friends in Oxnard for three months and after that I got my own apartment," Singh said.

"I go back to Panama every year during summer time to visit my family. I haven't missed a year."

Singh, who has three brothers living in Panama, lives with his son Steven, who is nine.



Photo By Lirio Alberto

I Say Eekco, You Say Echo

By Mayra Benitez
Staff Writer

Seniors Jasmine Guevarra and Jihae Snyder talk to the OPTIMIST about what they want to do with the Eco Club.

Poly's Eco Club wants to get Poly students aware of and involved in our environment and the world around us.

We want to make our campus and community a cleaner, more eco-friendly place while at the same time building relationships with each other to support this common goal. One aspect of our goal as a club is to really integrate all the members together by getting input and ideas from all of the members about what projects they'd like to see brought about and getting students to actively participate in them.

Basically, we want it to be fun for everyone so that everyone in the club can feel like they really were able to contribute something. The first project we are taking on is adopting an animal through the Los Angeles Zoo. The A.D.O.P.T. (Animals Depend On People Too) program through the LA Zoo seemed like a fantastic first project because we get to contribute a \$100 donation to help the LA Zoo's wildlife conservation efforts.

The funds go to various conservation projects to help endangered animals and we get to become the "adoptive parents" to one of the Zoo's animals.

In addition to this, we hope to integrate a more efficient and effective recycling routine into our school, among many other things such as volunteering in events such as the Heal the Bay, which is on October 19, and having education days where we provide information to younger kids about what they can do to help the environment.

Jasmine Guevara and I are the co-presidents of the Poly Eco Club. We meet in Room 23 during lunch on Thursdays and our sponsor is Mr. Alonso. We also hope to get business sponsors from the community whose goal is to help



Photo By Lirio Alberto

OFFICERS: Seniors Jasmine Guevara and Jihae Snyder are co-presidents and founders of the Eco Club. They hope to turn Parrots green.

“ONE OF MY MOST ENJOYABLE PARTS OF THE DAY IS WHEN I WATER THE GARDEN IN THE EVENING.”

out and protect nature.

We were really excited to see such a great attendance for our first official meeting with 38 people coming! We are happy to see that so many people are interested in making a difference and doing their part to help out. Anyone and everyone is welcome to participate in the club who is dedicated to helping out.

Last year, Jasmine and I started talking about how awesome it would be to have an Eco Club at our school and all the things we wish we could improve. We decided to form the club. We agreed that having so much trash lying around campus was terrible and too many times we've seen cans and bottles in the trash instead of the recycling cartons.

I also really enjoy growing things in my backyard because I love biology and nature and the outdoors and find it absolutely interesting to watch tiny sprouts grow into small trees so I keep my own garden. Some people might find it weird, but one of my most enjoyable parts of the day is when I water the garden in the evening because I just stand there listening to the crickets chirp and looking at the trees and various plants and everything is so quiet and calm and tranquil. I wish that everyone could feel how awesome it is to plant a little seed and watch it come to life and grow into something.

CAMPUS



Hannah

Photo by Lirio Alberto

“WHAT IMPRESSES ME ABOUT THESE SINGERS IS HARMONY. IT’S A BIG THING TO ME BECAUSE I THINK ITS SOMETHING HARD TO ACHIEVE. WHEN I TRY TO HARMONIZE WITH PEOPLE, IT’S NOT SOMETHING I DO EASILY, BUT THAT’S WHY I FIND IT FASCINATING THAT PEOPLE CAN DO IT SO WELL.”

Poly Idol DISCOVERS

Songstress Hannah Almonte caught our ear at a recent Poly Idol competition and we wanted to know more. Here’s what Almonte told the OPTIMIST.

I was first lined up to sing “Titanium” but it didn’t work out, so we changed to “I Will Survive.” Ms Groskin picked the song and I just agreed to it. It’s not a bad choice. It was a fun song so I was more than willing to do it.

I do Academic Decathlon and there’s this thing that we do with an interview and what actually ends up happening is it makes you really nervous. That song is kind of an anthem sort of thing. We actually had to sing it to psyche ourselves up. It’s about power and it is kind of nice.

I’m not familiar with the 70s. I’m sure if you mention some songs I will recognize some of them. I can’t think of any 70s song off the top of my head.

How did you start singing?

When I was in third grade, I had to sing for my first communion. After that, I never did it anywhere else. Poly Idol was my first experience doing it in public.

How did you figure out you had a powerful singing voice?

When I auditioned for Poly Idol in 10th grade, it was just sort of ‘oh you know, lets do it for fun’ type of thing. I didn’t think I was going to get really far. But I think from last year to this year my voice has gotten better. Especially since I think I’ve gotten more confident with doing more.

I was doing easy-going songs and lower register songs and I guess I sort of upgraded to doing more high register songs and more powerful songs. I don’t think I discovered it. It’s more about getting confident with the idea of it.

Who do you relate to as singers?

I listen to this band called The Civil Wars. They do country/folk. I like them a lot. Their lyrics are really heartwarming and they have good harmonies and I am a big fan of harmonies. I think they have good vocal chemistry and that’s a really good thing.

I listen to Mumford and Sons. I’m also a big fan of folk since it is just the whole harmony thing. I also listen to a lot of Queen.

What impresses me about these singers is harmony. It’s a big thing to me because I think its something hard to achieve. When I try to harmonize with people, it is not something I do easily, but that’s why I find it fascinating that people can do it so well. Queen is just a classic.

Etta James is pretty soulful. I kind of wish I could sing like her. So awesome. But I can’t think of anyone else at the moment.

My desert island songs? I like “Before My Time” by Scarlett Johansson. Never expected her to sing but I like that song. It’s about ‘I don’t want to die alone before my time’ so I think that’s appropriate to have on an island.

I like “Bohemian Rhapsody.” It’s a great song, the whole story aspect to it. I like Bruno Mars’ “Talking to the Moon.” You gotta have a love song so that’s one. And I like “The Cave” by Mumford and Sons and

By Joanna Rosales
Staff Writer

Almonte

“Poison and Wine” by The Civil Wars.

I listen to different types of music. I never really narrow it down to one type or genre.

Jazz is nice. I gravitate away from rock music except for Queen and occasionally Aerosmith because my dad listens to that. I don’t listen to a lot of pop. When people sing modern songs, I have no idea what they are talking about.

The dance song was particularly challenging for me. It was like a lot of pop dance songs and I have no idea what’s on the radio. I don’t listen to the radio.

Have you thought about songwriting?

I have not tried and I haven’t thought about it. I think of songwriting and poetry as sort of the same field. I’ve tried poetry and I don’t think I did a very good job.

I used to play the piano. That was a long time ago, almost seven years ago when I stopped. It’s been a really long time.

I’d like to learn guitar. It’s so versatile. You always see people walking around with a guitar and it’s an easy thing to do. I’m not saying it’s easy to play, but it’s a good instrument to play. You can’t carry a piano around.

To be a good singer, do you also have to be a good performer?

I think they are different. Singing is one thing and performing is a different aspect.

Performing is harder than singing. I think I can sing but I don’t think I’m a performer. I’m comfortable with singing but not comfortable with performing. When people try to make me move on stage, I am scared. It depends on who you are and what you’re comfortable with doing.

I’m not a good dancer. I have two left feet.

Are you competitive?

I’m fairly competitive. I have experience, especially in Academic Decathlon. We do speeches and it makes me really competitive. You gotta be like ‘I have the best speech’ or ‘I say the speech the best way’ so I think there are certain competitive aspects.

But I don’t think I have the best singing voice. I’m confident to sing the songs that I’m given but I don’t think I’m the best in there because there are a lot of great voices in Poly Idol. I guess if last year is any sort of indication, then I’m one of the best, but I think other people are really good.

Do you plan what you wear to Poly Idol?

I remember last year making a big deal out of what to wear on stage because I wanted to look really presentable. This year I kind of just didn’t really do anything special. Whatever I’m wearing, that’s what I’m doing it with.

CAMPUS

AP Teachers Get Results

Parrots ace AP exams for Math teacher Devon Richter and Chemistry teacher Ramon Gomez.

By Laura Martinez
Staff Writer

Magnet AP teachers Devon Richter and Ramon Gomez have seen their students hit ever-higher pass rates on AP Calculus and Chemistry exams.

"The results this last year have been absolutely amazing," Gomez said.

Richter's AP Calculus class had a 90% pass rate on the AP exam, with half the class scoring 5s, while Gomez's AP Chemistry class had 16 4s or 5s out of 22 students.

"The students were very talented and motivated," said Richter. "I saw a lot of skill and potential in them."

Both Richter and Gomez meet with the other teachers in their departments, discuss student weaknesses and share ideas on teaching.

"Even though everyone has their own way of teaching, we've tried to share our ways of teaching to each other," Gomez said. "The teachers who are willing to take some of the information and try new things see improvement in their students' scores."

Richter and Gomez have similar teaching styles.

"In the classroom, I tend to lecture and do some individual work," Gomez said.

"I give my classes lectures every day and work with them individually," Richter said. "I break down each question and specifically explain it to them."

Both teachers want student participation.

"I'm not really into group work," Gomez says. "I prefer my lectures to be more of a group discussion, so everyone is engaged with what the lecture is."

"I don't put students in groups," Richter says, "but some days I put them in pairs."

"The most important thing is the interaction," Gomez said, "how the teacher interacts with the students, how the teacher is monitoring how the students are thinking, what the students are doing every single moment."



Photos by Lirio Alberto

MAGNETIC: AP teachers Ramon Gomez (Chem) and Devon Richter (Math) have found formulas for success.

Gomez has been teaching for twenty-four years, nine in the U.S. and eight at Poly.

"I came to the United States in 2005 as part of an exchange program for teachers between Spain and the United States," Gomez said. "I was in Sacramento one year. LAUSD hired me in 2006."

Richter came to Poly in 2004, when Poly was year-around and on three tracks, after teaching the year before at Reseda High.

"I've taught 10 years of math at every level," Richter said, "from remedial math to calculus. I've taught four years of calculus."

Gomez was born in Barcelona, Spain and earned a masters in bio-chemistry at the University of Barcelona.

"I'm in the process of getting a permanent visa," Gomez said. "I always tell my family and friends that the experience I'm having in this school and with the magnet students is unique."

Richter is more local.

"I was born in Tarzana and grew up in the San Fernando Valley," Richter said "I attended Granada Hills High and did very well in calculus. Math always came easy to me."

Richter majored in math at UC San Diego and got her bachelors in psychology and a masters in school counseling.

"My dad was the first in his family to attend a four-year university and my mom's sisters were the first in their family," Richter said.

Mount St. Mary's

[From Students, front page]

pate in community service through classroom assignments, clubs, or personal interest. The campus has clothing and food drives, as well as short study abroad trips for Habitat for Humanity.

MSM is a Catholic institution. Students don't have to be Catholic or go to Mass to attend MSM, but those services are available

MSM encourages students to use their degrees to create change and help others.

Majors and Scholarships

A merit scholarship based on GPA and test scores is available for every student and ranges from \$12,000-16,000.

Average GPA at MSM is 3.1 but the school accepts 2.5 and above.

SAT scores average 1600 and 1200 and above are accepted. ACT scores average 19, 16 and above are accepted.

Students with a 2.5-3.0 GPA and a 1500 SAT enter the Doheny campus, while those with 3.1-3.2 GPA and a 1700 SAT attend the Chalon campus. Students go to the Doheny campus for a year and then transfer to Chalon.

Application Process

MSM uses the common application – used to apply to multiple colleges at one time.

An essay and a letter of recommendation from a college counselor or teacher are required.

The personal statement is optional but encouraged and supplements and personalizes the transcripts, test scores, and letter of recommendation.

Deadlines

Students who apply by December 1 will get an admission decision by January. The next deadline is February 15 with a decision by the end of March.

Students can also submit applications ahead of time

School Council

[From School, front page]

election process of the Governance Council and staffing.

The Council discussed the Professional Development (PD) calendar.

The Council decided to incorporate extra early days in the curriculum for more afterschool meetings.

The Council discussed the PSAT schedule. The Council decided that the PSAT will take place in October, the last day of quarter three.

To avoid interference with finals week, the Council decided to make a special schedule for final grades. Final grades will be due October 19.

The Council agreed to extend on-campus pep rallies by 10 minutes by shortening third period and not extending lunch. The council agreed to give a one-day prior notice to the teachers of those students who will participate in the pep rally the following day.

The Ninth Grade Center will have a special pep rally.

WASC and Accreditation

[From Richter, front page]

below basic and far below basic.

The second goal was to improve graduation rates, CASHEE pass rates and the A-G requirements.

The third goal was to decrease the achievement gap between the general education students and those with special needs.

"We are going to go through the exact same process this year," Richter said. "This year's goals might be practically the same but maybe a couple notches higher. I can't confirm that until the focus groups meet and actually decide the goals."

A WASC visit generates a self-study process to examine the school's mission and make sure that everything that Poly is doing is in the best interest of the students. Preparation for the visit takes about a year.

"During that year, I write a five chapter report plus an appendix," Richter said. "The report is normally around two-hundred pages."

The first chapter is about the school's data, including enrollment and test data. The second chapter is a reflection on the past six years and how Poly is helping students be successful.

"My part is to get administration involved," Richter said. "Then we get the whole school involved - all of the teachers and faculty, including the teachers' assistants, the secretarial staff, the janitors, everyone at the school is in those focus groups."

"The focus groups see where we are and where we should be going, what are our strengths our weaknesses. Then it's about the leaders getting together again trying to plan

for the next six years."

The findings are then presented to WASC.

"Throughout the year, we spend time making sure that students are being informed of what is going on around the school," Richter said. "Oftentimes students don't know what goes on outside the classroom. When the accreditation team comes, Poly wants to make sure that the students are aware of everything that the school is doing for them."

Principal Ari Bennett, Tenth Grade Center Instructional Specialist Norma Grimaldo and Richter are the primary contact points for WASC.

"I am the coordinator," Richter said. "My main job is to write the report. The focus groups write sections which I edit and put together. I also put together the appendix, the evidence of what we are saying."

Grimaldo is the administrator in charge of the visit. She helps out with planning the professional development meetings, which are the after-school meetings with teachers.

Each focus group leader writes his section. Then the leadership team, including administration, writes the school's action plan for the next six years.

"I'm getting a lot of help with those two chapters," Richter said, "but I write the rest. I get input from everyone but I'm in charge of writing it."

Magnet coordinator Jayne Couchois checks Richter's work.

"I have a couple people that I ask to read through what I wrote and make corrections," Richter said.

In the end, WASC gives years of accreditation based on its assessments.

"The best a school can get is a 'six-year clear,' meaning they won't visit us for six years," Richter said. "The second best is six years with a one-day revisit in three years. That's what we got the last time. Next is a one-year revisit."

Richter said WASC will probably see the Pilot as a positive.

"It's one more improvement we've made at the school," Richter said. "Taking charge of the activities of the school is a positive thing but they'll want to see how it works."

Visit

[From WASC, front page]

in the tenth grade," said Kenion

Two parents also spoke about changes at Poly in the past six years.

"My daughter said her ninth grade teachers were very flexible. If she had questions on anything, her teachers were really good at paying attention," said Ema Correa.

"In my program we receive classes of preparation to help our students for college. Ms. Pleitez, our title one coordinator she gave classes the whole year to prepare for college," said parent and ELAC rep Leticia Lamas.

"Six years ago we had very low API numbers. By using data, we've been able to focus more on individual student needs. My son is in the Magnet right now. He's smart but lazy. So he needs a little push from the teachers. The school motivates students more now and he really needs that," said parent Ema Correa.

Parents also said they greatly appreciated the new and upgraded parent center.

MEDIA

Woody Allen's Latest Woman



Australian actress and Oscar winner Cate Blanchett is the latest in Woody Allen's long list of female leads and the star of his latest film, "Blue Jasmine."

Blanchett plays spoiled New York socialite Jasmine, married to wealthy financier Hal (Alec Baldwin). When Hal's Madoff-like scheme is uncovered, Jasmine's world is turned upside down. Broke and desperate, Jasmine flees west to San Francisco and her working-class sister Ginger (Sally Hawkins).

Her change of circumstance leaves Jasmine in a state of despair. She suffers psychotic episodes brought on by stress and depression.

By Adrianna Garcia
Staff Writer

Blanchett found Allen's script intriguing.

"I read it and laughed out loud a couple times, but it was also quite moving and disturbing," said Blanchett.

Blanchett tried to find a balance between light moments and dark.

"Jasmine had chosen fantasy over reality," Blanchett said, "and because it was a serious matter, I tried to find the light so the movie wouldn't be too heavy."

Sometimes her complaints and rants are comical, but ultimately Jasmine's struggle is not.

Jasmine must adapt to Ginger's small apartment, hurtful comments and everyday life of financial hardship.

Allen's script offers glimpses of Jasmine's back story as the film progresses. Ultimately, the entire truth is revealed and the reason for Jasmine's mental deterioration and difficulties becomes clear.

Allen said he chose a woman lead because the script was more serious.

"When the character is more serious and the story more complex, I gravitate towards women," said Allen.

As usual, Allen's instincts were good. Many critics say Blanchett is the frontrunner in this year's Academy Award for best actress.

Arctic Monkeys' Newest Adds Hip Hop Touches

Indie rockers channel Black Keys, Dr. Dre in "AM," their fifth elpee.

By Adrianna Garcia
Staff Writer

English band Arctic Monkeys has a new album, their fifth, and a new sound to go with it.

"AM" is a departure. Turner's distinctive songwriting now has a modified pop sound. Turner says he wanted to get creative with the music.

Blues rock band The Black Keys was

a heavy influence on "AM," as were the signature beats of hip-hop idol Dr. Dre.

"It sounds like a Dr. Dre beat, but we've given it an Ike Turner bowl-cut and sent it galloping across the desert on a Strato-

caster," said Turner in an interview with NME Magazine.

Opening track "Do I Wanna Know?" establishes the slick and precise rhythm of "AM."

Falsetto back-up vocals now accompany Turner's lyrics on songs like "R U Mine?" and "One For the Road."

"AM" ends with Turner taking a romantic turn on "I Wanna Be Yours." crooning "Secrets I have held in my heart are harder to hide than I thought."

The Monkeys got help from Queens of the Stone Age's Joshua Homme on vocals and Elvis Costello drummer Pete Thomas.

"AM," released September 9, is the second fastest-selling album of 2013.

"We wanted to sound less like four lads playing in a room this time," said frontman Alex Turner. "Essentially, that's what it is, but if you can find a way to manipulate the instruments or the sounds, then there's something quite cool about that."

So the band abandoned their usual garage indie-rock sound to incorporate new influences in "AM."

The band catapulted to stardom with their record-breaking 2006 debut, "Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not." The album's fast-paced, drum-heavy tracks toyed with guitar riffs on songs like "I Bet That You Look Good on the Dance Floor" and "The View from the Afternoon."

"Favourite Worst Nightmare" (2007), "Humbug" (2009) and "Suck It and See" (2011) kept the original Arctic Monkeys' sound – fast music and quick-delivery lyrics.



SOUNDS LIKE: (from left) Guitarist Jamie Cook, frontman Alex Turner, drummer Matt Helders and bass player Nick O'Malley.

Google Image



Google Image

BOY TOYS : (from left) One Direction members Louie Tomlinson, Liam Payne, Harry Styles, Zayn Malik and Niall Horan document life on the road in their new film "This Is Us."

SHIRTLESS IN SEATTLE

By Christine Maralit
Staff Writer

Fans of One Direction, the world's biggest boy band, will love "This Is Us," director Morgan Spurlock's

documentary of the band's Take Me Home tour. The film is full of ruckus, laughs and plenty of members Niall Horan, Zayn Malik, Liam Payne, Harry Styles and Louis Tomlinson shirtless.

Spurlock shot some 900 hours of footage over a six-month period documenting One Direction's hectic but fun life on the road. Performances of their London, England O2 Arena concert were also included.

Rejected as solo artists, the five lads were brought back as One Direction by Simon Cowell, producer and judge on the British "X Factor."

One Direction placed third on the show, but endless fan support and nonstop promotion via social media like Twitter and YouTube brought them to where they are now.

Spurlock interviewed a neurologist to explain the rabid fan base.

"They're not crazy, they're just excited," the doctor said. "It's just all the dopamine."

Naturally, life on the road with these five pretty boys is never dull, whether they're in Amsterdam, Tokyo or Mexico City.

A look backstage reveals that One Direc-

tion is not the typical boy band. They pick their own wardrobe. They use a choreographer only so they know where to stand on stage.

Between continents, the boys took a few days off to revisit their hometowns. Styles relived his days as a bakery boy and Horan was best man at his older brother's wedding.

Payne bonded with his dad, who said how much he missed his only son.

All the parents agreed that their boys had been taken from them too soon.

Tomlinson's mom bought a life-sized cut out of him just so she can say goodnight to him every night. Malik's mom cried happy tears when Zayn bought her a house.

Fans, known as 'Directioners,' follow the boys everywhere. When the band visited an Amsterdam Nike store, hardcore fans swamp the group in a matter of minutes.

One Direction doesn't mind.

"We have the best fans in the world," Horan said. And no matter how famous they get, they'll always be the boys their fans fell in love with from the start.

Other than eye candy and flashy 3D effects, the documentary has few surprises to engage anyone except hardcore fans.

The movie only touched on the tour production process and the boys' private lives, leaving room for a sequel. That is, if One Direction is still going in one direction.

SPORTS

In the Long Run



Photos by Lirio Alberto

CROSS: (from left) Junior Alexis Contreras, senior Isabel Ochoa and senior Jorge Palacios are all-terrain runners for coach Mario Rivera.

By Laura Martinez
Staff Writer

The OPTIMIST asked Cross Country runners Isabel Ochoa, Jorge Palacios and Alexis Contreras what long distance running is all about. Here's what they said.



Why cross country?

IO: My sister didn't want me to join. I was waiting for track in the spring where I thought I was "destined" to be a beast sprinter, but distance was my calling. My sister's teammates encouraged me to join, and I've never regretted it.

JP: It's the sport that I really love. It's joyful to say I do a sport that most people are afraid to join.

AC: Because it's awesome, people are really nice and it's an amazing and a challenging sport.

What skills make a top runner?

IO: Mentality is the main factor. Without the strong mentality, you will be nowhere near ready to compete at a city level, where some of the fastest girls beat the fastest varsity guys here at Poly.

JP: A top runner must be able to handle as much pain as possible. Running requires characteristics like courage, dedication, enthusiasm, sacrifice and power of will.

AC: My thunder thighs. Determination, pushing myself to my limits and the willingness to succeed.

Where do you find your motivation week after week?

IO: It's hard and very challenging, especially in times where you think you've hit your rock bottom. But I can always depend on my sister, teammates in the varsity girls team, and some of my friends in other sports teams.

JP: I find motivation just knowing that when I run, I am representing my family, my school, my friends and even myself. In addition to that, I get motivated for the reason that I have a purpose in running. Unfortunately, that purpose is too personal for me to share.

AC: My motivation is my friend Paola because I see her doing extra workouts on her own after practice before I go home and I want to be like her. I was going home and she was staying to do bleachers and that made me realize that she has to work harder to get to my level and it just comes easy and naturally to me.

How do you measure personal success at a competition?

IO: Just by improving your time. It doesn't matter if your coach is really mad at you. You have to ignore when they are mad at you when you know deep down inside you did your best in that race.

JP: Measuring personal success can be really vague and abstract. The only time when you know you ran a successful race is when you know you gave it everything you had and that there was nothing else you could've done to improve.

AC: Keeping focus, maintaining my breathing and beating my personal times

When something goes wrong, what is usually the issue?

IO: You get scared. Mentality is the barrier in this sport that prevents a runner from improving. Or a runner didn't eat or rest well or didn't drink enough water.

JP: The usual issues are mental barriers and distractions. Nothing should go wrong if you always believe in yourself and you're focusing the way you should be.

AC: I didn't drink enough water, didn't eat or got cramps.

Is cross country more mental than physical?

IO: Both. You need physical and mental strength to carry on through the races and season

JP: Cross country is more mental than physical. One must be able to overcome the obstacles that are created by the human mind due to the physical pain one feels throughout a workout.

AC: Yes, way more mental, because sometimes you want to give up but you already have it like you already worked on it before.

Is this about beating your opponent, or trying to set a new record?

IO: It's both because beating your opponent which can be either yourself mentally or the person in front of you. Beating both helps you to improve your time.

JP: Cross country is about beating the most crucial and most important opponent, you. You can be in first place, have a huge lead on the rest of the athletes and relax, but always have in mind that the clock is still ticking.

AC: It's about breaking your personal time. You can be beating your opponent but you probably won't be hitting the same or even better time than before.

What happens at a cross country meet?

IO: The redcoats call, "runners behind the starting line. on your marks, set..." and the gun goes off. We run an agonizing 3 miles course and cross that finish line tired and in pain hoping for a better time than that of last week's race.

JP: Athletes line up at the starting line to initiate an intense and difficult race. Once the gun goes off, everyone rushes to get a spot at the front of the pack. From then on, it all depends on who has the strongest mind. In other words, it's like "Survival of the Fastest."

AC: We run three miles, two miles on a flat course and one mile up a huge hill to make the meet more challenging.

Is cross country about strength or stamina?

IO: You need strength and stamina to finish your long distance practices or else you'll never make it.

JP: Cross country is about both, strength and stamina. Strength is required for the reason that we must fight and attack really hard when it comes to running a steep uphill. And stamina is required because we must be able to keep an intense running pace for as long as possible.

AC: To me it's more about strength, mental strength.



Photo by Lirio Alberto

KILL TIME: (from left) Seniors Elenoa Taulaki, Alexis Sarabia and Ericka Tzic.

Four in a row

By Tanneshia Acosta Cortes
Staff Writer

The Lady Parrots notched their fourth consecutive victory with a 3-0 (16, 19, 18) win over the visiting Lancers Monday. The girls have not lost in September.

Senior Erica Magee had 13 kills and one ace, senior Brenda Campos had four kills and three aces, senior Aracely Vargas had four kills and two aces and senior Alexis Serafin had an ace.

Magee had eight kills and three aces on the road against the Huskies in a 3-0 win (16, 17, 18). Senior Cristina Ruiz had eight kills and two aces, junior Leslie Jimenez had four kills and an ace, senior Elenoa Taulaki had four kills and an ace, Campos had four kills and an ace, Serafin had 30 assists and senior Ericka Tzic had 14 digs.

Poly routed Chavez 3-0 (13, 14, 12)

on the road, with player of this game Campos getting six kills and four aces. Junior Anna Chavarria had four kills and three aces

The Lady Parrot streak's first victim was El Camino Real, another 3-0 Poly road win (14, 14, 13). Player of this game was libero Tzic with 16 saves. Jimenez had five kills and an ace, Ruiz had three kills and five aces, Campos had two kills and three aces, Magee had eight kills, three blocks and one ace, Taulaki had five kills and three blocks, Vargas had five kills and three blocks, Serafin had two kills.

Lady Parrots head coach Sina Aghassy was cautiously optimistic.

"Even though we won, don't get ahead of yourselves," Aghassy said, "because when we see them again, they'll be better prepared."

Poly (9-3, 3-0), currently in first place in the East Valley League, hosts Monroe (4-1, 2-1) Monday.

COMMENTARY

Work To Do

With the preseason completed, Poly is still missing some key components.

By Daniel Lopez
Staff Writer

Poly is 2-2 going into their first league game against the winless Huskies of North Hollywood on Friday. The four-game split says a lot about what Poly still needs to accomplish to be a contender in new head coach Jose Campos' rookie season.

Poly's running attack has its ups and downs. One thing stopping Poly offensively is their conversions on third and fourth down. Poly has a lot of drives that end by turning the ball over on downs or being forced to punt.

Poly's passing game is not all there either. Poly throws about five passes a game.

So Poly relies a lot on the ground game. The Parrot running backs are senior Isaiah Solorzano and DJ Jones.

Another offensive shortcoming is the lack of a kicker. Without a kicker, Poly is forced to go for it on fourth down. Even inside the redzone, Poly can't get a field goal. With a kicker, some games would be closer. For example, against El Camino, Poly was in the redzone a fair number of times but always turned over on downs.

Now defensively, Poly needs to work on their pass defense. Poly has a decent run stop defense. Their only struggle on the run was El Camino. Other than that they seem to do fairly well. But Poly gives away a lot of yards through the air. San Fernando put on a passing clinic versus Poly. Bernstein had a lot of success passing on Poly's defense, even though the Parrots won that game.

Poly's special team is pretty neutral. On kick off returns, Poly usually gets over 20 yards. But the defense allows opponents a lot of yards on their return or Poly kicks the ball out of bounds, leaving opponents with excellent field position near midfield.

Polys next games are NoHo (0-3), Arleta (3-0), Chavez (2-2), Verdugo (0-3), Grant (2-1), and Monroe (1-2).

Despite its problems, Poly could finish the season 6-4, possibly 7-3. Their only tough matches are Arleta and Grant.

Poly's next match is at home versus NoHo. Look for the trophy to come back because NoHo faced Bernstein and lost, while Poly beat Bernstein at home 26-13.

Poly may get into the playoffs as a low ranked seed, but anything better doesn't appear to be in the cards.



Photo by Lirio Alberto

SIDELINES: Head coach Jose Campos says his team has heart.