

The Poly Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

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SERVING THE POLY COMMUNITY SINCE 1913

APRIL 2014

Trio Cooks up Winner

By Yesenia Carretero
Staff Writer

Poly Cooking Club members Jose Garcia, Rodel Claro and Edwin Pleitez won a cooking competition at the Art Institute in North Hollywood on Saturday, March 22.

The three Parrots, all seniors, competed against two teams of college students, including two seniors.

On the morning of the competition, contestants were given seven ingredients: red snapper, a whole quail, a whole rabbit, artichokes, cuscus, long grain rice and dill.

Each group had four hours to make four servings, three for the judges and one for presentation. The menu was due in the first half hour and couldn't be changed.

"In a new environment, you don't know your surroundings," said Claro. "We didn't know where the ingredients were, where the cutting boards were. That has to be taken that into consideration when competing in a new environment."

The competition was certified by the American Culinary Federation (ACF), whose requirements are demanding.

"Everything is taken into consideration," said Claro, "the way you cut, how sanitized everything was, how many times you wash your hands, wearing gloves at the right time, how many times you change your gloves, the taste of your food, how everything is prepared, your mise en place (are all ingredients in order)."

The Poly trio chose to prepare an Asian-inspired ceviche (seafood dish) for the salad. The main ingredient was a red snapper, filleted, cut and mixed in with red, yellow, and green bell peppers, mangos, cucumber, tomatoes, rice vinegar, soy sauce, chili oil with mints garlic and chalets, salt and black pepper.

The appetizer was a dill, mushroom, and onion-stuffed quail on a bed of cuscus with the sweet fondue sauce and sautéed green beans.

The entrée was Asian dry rub rabbit with steamed rice, glazed sauce and glazed and sautéed artichokes.

The chef judges explained what the Poly team did better than the competition.

"They said we kept the integrity of each food and that we were the only group that fabricated the rabbit (took it apart). We took the legs off, the breast off and literally tore it apart.

The judges were impressed because the other teams didn't. Also, we were the only team with a menu that made sense. We used the lightest protein for the beginning course and

[See Trio, pg 6]



Photo by Lirio Alberto

BIG NEWS: NBC's Kathy Vara interviews Poly's MIT5 on campus Tuesday.

New program adds \$3.6M to budget

By Nicolette Reneau
Staff Writer

District funding for the Targeted People Services-Per People Services program, designed to support specific types of students, will add \$3.6M to Poly's budget for the new school year. .

"Last year, the state made some historic changes in the way California funds education," said Poly Principal Ari Bennett. "All schools get a certain amount of dollars per student called a base grant. The schools get additional money on top of that for three types of students: English learners, students of poverty, and foster youth."

Poly is at 88% poverty. Research has shown that schools with a high concentration of students in one of those three categories need additional support.

"Schools with a high concentration of one of those types get another layer of funding above that," said Bennett. "That's where we are. We're in that higher layer with the two additional funds above our base grant."

"The money will pay for teachers, counselors, coordinators, instructional materials, professional development, common planning for teachers to meet together and collaborate, data review, technology upgrades and adding electives," said Bennett.

The District decides how the money will be allocated. LAUSD is currently soliciting feedback from stakeholders on where the money should go.

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Sp. Ed Opens Thrift Store

By Tanneshia Acosta
Staff Writer

Special Ed will open Encore, its new thrift store, on back-to-school night, April 24.

The thrift store, located in room 90, already has a washer and dryer to clean donated clothes before they go on display, clothes racks donated by IKEA, shelves donated by Lowe's, hangers and a laundry hamper donated by Walmart and a cash register.

"We have spent days cleaning and painting the room and preparing it," said Special Ed faculty member Brenda Fishler. "We have already sorted all the clothes we've gotten by section, men, women, kids, and also by color and size."

Fishler and DOTS' Sandra Hall, who came up with the idea back in September, will oversee the operation.

No clothing will be for sale on opening night.

"We just want our community to see that we have a store so they can donate or come shop," Fishler said.

Encore will provide jobs training for Special Ed students not on the diploma track.

"They need to learn how to communicate better," Fishler said, "because we have some kids who are really shy and we want to bring them out of their shells."

Encore will also offer a customer service feature.

"When people come in and have questions like 'I just got a new job, do you have smart looking shirts,' we are able to direct them," said Fishler.

Setting up a new enterprise is a lot of work, Fishler said.

"When I first saw the room and all the piles of clothes that weren't sorted," Fishler said, "I thought to

Bennett Says WASC Disrespected Poly

Committee guilty of 'educational malpractice,' Principal charges.

By Yenifer Rodriguez
Staff Writer

Poly Principal Ari Bennett had harsh words for some members of the WASC committee at a special faculty meeting Tuesday in the cafeteria after school.

"Six years ago, we did a good job," Bennett said, referring to the last major WASC visit. "This time we were three times better. The committee committed educational malpractice by not acknowledging our progress."

Bennett was particularly upset about the lack of respect the committee showed for Poly.

"A high rating will never take away what they did to our staff," Bennett said.

"They called us out for a lack of 'access and equity,'" Bennett said. "They struck at the heart of what we do for our kids."

"They said our A-G completion rate of 50% showed a lack of equity and access," Bennett said. "Their list of curriculum 'growth' areas was absolutely outlandish."

Bennett then listed a series of major growth areas the committee either failed to acknowledge or misinterpreted.

"They didn't acknowledge that Poly was one of three schools chosen

for the Capstone because of our equity and access," Bennett said.

The other two schools were the SOCES magnet and the Martin Luther King Jr. magnet."

"Last year 275 students completed a FAFSA application. This year over 500 did. We implemented the Edge a few years ago. This shows we have equity and access."

The WASC committee's report to Poly's faculty after school on the day of the committee's departure was a

[See Bennett, pg 6]

WASC Talks

Members had both praise and reservations for Poly.

By Josh Penado, Yenifer Rodriguez
and Joanna Rosales
Staff Writers

WASC committee members offered a variety of comments on Poly's academic programs in a series of interviews conducted by the OPTIMIST Wednesday morning. Most had praise for supportive teachers and enthusiastic students.

But members also mentioned areas of concern. Most of what they noted showed up in the committee's report to the faculty held after school in the cafeteria.

"You guys have a real nice program and a real nice school," said. Charter Oak High Assistant Principal Rick Ronquillo "I think anybody who would come to this school who has gone to another school would be able to see this is a high quality high school."

Ronquillo, who has 22 years in education, talked about his role as a committee member.

"My responsibility was to walk through classrooms and talk to students, teachers and community members to see if Poly high school is doing what they say they're doing," Ronquillo said. "I was looking at the type of instruction the students were getting."

But Mira Costa High School

[See WASC, pg 6]



Photo by Lirio Alberto

Bound for Boston

Five Poly seniors will be classmates at MIT.

ACADEME - pg 4-5



Photo by Lirio Alberto

Gomez Throws Grant Curves

Wily Parrot sophomore has Lancers' number.

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OPINION

EDITORIAL

Why pick on a tree?

March 21, Thursday morning. The sky was sunny, the air was cool. I approached the murder scene. The body was in the middle of the Polygon, lying on the ground. It was the shady tree, the tree that sheltered the seniors who hung out under her generous branches at lunch.

The tree was the alleged victim of a senior prank. But nobody was laughing.

The tree had no reason to be cut down. The tree was just trying to live a happy tree life by providing shade and producing oxygen.

And what of the criminals who committed this atrocity? They had no reason to chop down the tree. Would there be no punishment?

Some believe the fatal attack was part of a tree rival contest between tree groups. Or maybe it happened because some children didn't have anything better to do Wednesday night and took out their boredom on a defenseless tree. A senior prank is another explanation.

The same criminal act was committed on a palm tree last year.

These assassins obviously had no empathy. They felt no guilt. They never stopped to consider that what they were doing was

wrong, shameful, disrespectful.

And how did the criminals manage their vandalism? They certainly used sharp tools to commit their crime, tools clearly illegal on campus. Those weren't beaver teeth that felled that shade tree.

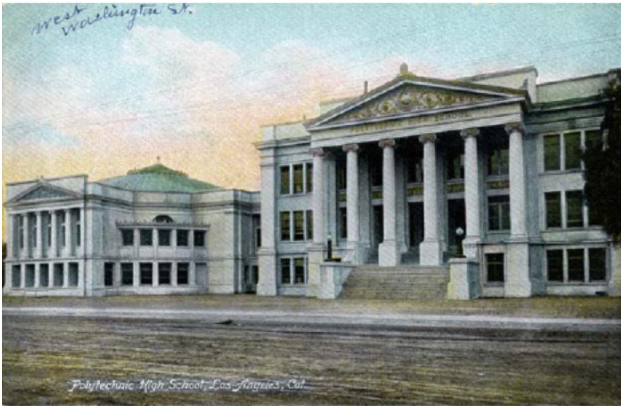
Poly has security cameras but I guess there was no footage of these villains at work. We should have cameras to view what goes on in school after no one is here. Security should have made this crime impossible.

The tree was quickly hauled away and the stump disappeared. Not much changed because the tree was no longer there. The Polygon has other trees, after all.

A lot of kids didn't really care. They simply stared at the dead tree on the ground that Thursday morning and moved on.

The hack job did affect the group of students who hung out around it. But worse yet, the crime and the criminals showed a complete lack of respect for the bond between Parrots and their school.

The crime remains unsolved. Sun beats down on the space where the tree was. Another senior prank that left nobody laughing.



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EAST IS WEST

Poly's loss is Meito's gain when veteran English teacher Jeff Herrold takes a two-year post in Japan.

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GIT TO MIT

Acceptance to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology couldn't happen to five nicer kids.

By Nicolette Reneau and Yesenia Carretero
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NO HOLIDAY INN

"Grand Budapest Hotel," Wes Anderson's latest fantasy, is drenched in color and characters.

By Adrianna Garcia
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YOU GOTTA HAVE ANGST

It's 20 years since Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain took the long walk, but his legacy continues to inspire.

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A FAMILY AFFAIR

Sisters that play together stay together. Just ask rock band Haim's trio of siblings from the Valley.

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CAN YOU SAY WHIFF?

Lancer bats were silent. Lancer batters gasped. Parrot sophomore. Mike Gomez was on the mound.

By Zein Delgado
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ARE THEY EXPERIENCED

Inconsistency has plagued Poly's volleyball boys all season. April was no different.

By Joanna Rosales
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THE LOSSES PILED UP

If AP classes were aces, Poly's tennis team would be in the playoffs. But they're not and they're not.

By Christine Maralit

The more you get

The year is 2014 and technology is as dominant as it has ever been. But is that really a good thing?

Sure, technology makes our lives less complicated, but we're sacrificing the most important thing each and every time we text by phone or computer: communication.

What happened to the times when the only way you met people was by going to small parties or going out on dates? I don't remember doing that, but I wish I did.

My generation has it too easy. If you want to learn about someone, all you need to do now is add them on a social network like Facebook and stalk their page for a couple minutes. The information is all there.

This lack of privacy leaves nothing to look forward too anymore, because you already know everything about him/her before you ever meet him/her in person.

Everybody around my age knows what I'm talking about. You go to a social event and find that you don't really know anyone there. Then the friend you came with disappears for a couple of

minutes. The proper thing to do is start meeting and socializing with new people, right?

Wrong. It's "2014." The acceptable thing to do is pull out your phone and surf the internet, then take a picture and upload it to Instagram with a caption of how much "fun" you're having when really you're pretty bored.

That's the kind of people we're turning into. The Spike Jones' movie "Her," about a man who falls in love with his operating system, is a perfect example of what love in the modern age looks like, and communication in general in 2014.

In a key scene, main character Theodore Twombly goes on a date with a girl he meets online. During their conversation, she notices that he already knows a lot about her. She asks if he searched her online. When he say yes, she says "Aww, you're so romantic."

That may sound bizarre now. But if technology keeps distancing us as humans from other real humans in real time, that just may be what we'll be hearing ourselves say 10 years from now.

Easter egg is no yolk

It's the renowned holiday with chocolate bunnies and multicolored eggs, but do most of us know the history behind Easter, other than the religious aspects?

As kids, we celebrate the first few Easters having fun and spending hours finding brightly colored eggs with candy and other goodies inside.

But why bunnies and eggs for Easter?

The Easter bunny was introduced to America by German immigrants who shared their stories of an egg-laying hare.

When the Germans first arrived in the 1700s and settled in Pennsylvania, they told stories about the "Osterhase," the rabbit that laid multicolored eggs. The children made baskets for the hare to lay its eggs in. And much like milk and cookies for Santa Claus, children would leave out carrots for the bunny in case he got hungry delivering Easter baskets.

The tradition of egg decoration dates as far back as the 13th


century. Eggs were forbidden during the Lenten season, so people would paint and decorate them to mark the end of the period of penance and fasting, then eat them on Easter as a celebration.

Easter remains mostly a religious holiday, with the egg symbolizing Jesus' resurrection and emergence from the tomb. But the Easter egg is also linked to pagan traditions. The egg was an ancient symbol of new life which the pagans used in festivals to celebrate spring.

The Easter holiday is second only to Halloween for candy sales in the United States. The traditional chocolate egg first appeared in the early 19th century in Europe, while the jellybean became associated with Easter back in the 1930s.

The largest Easter egg ever made was over 25 feet high and weighed over 8,000 pounds.

Over 16 billion jellybeans are made in America for Easter every year.



the
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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.

Join the staff

OPTIMIST

See Mr. Blau
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FACULTY



RISING SON: Herrold in Japan

Veteran Poly English teacher will have new students in the fall.

By Zein Delgado
Staff Writer

Veteran Poly English and filmmaking teacher Jeff Herrold has accepted a two-year teaching assignment in Japan. We asked him about that and related issues. Here’s what he said.

Informing the parents

My final interview for the job overseas was Wednesday March 26 at 6:45 pm. They scheduled my interview last so that I would be able to go to the closing WASC report. The interview lasted an hour. They informed me the next day, Thursday.

Saturday was informing the parents day. We called my mom first. She was stunned. She’s been to Japan. She was like ‘here are all the places I wish I would have seen and now we will go see them with you.’

My mom turns 70 next year. She was hoping we were going to fly back to upstate New York for a big birthday party, so she is disappointed by that.

But 99% of her reaction was ‘this is an amazing opportunity, I’m so proud of you, proud that you have the courage to go for it.

My dad was stunned. He said ‘well, this is amazing’ and he was very proud. His reaction was ‘well I guess I have to get a passport.’

Then we had dinner with my wife’s parents in Pasadena. My mother-in-law giddy with excitement and my father-in-law was ‘well, what’s this going to do for your career?’ My father-in-law sees me moving toward administration and then moving up into the District because you know, he’s a businessman, you’re climbing.

I see it more holistically. It’s not just about the money, it’s not just about the advancement, it’s about investing in myself. This is an experience; this is priceless; there are people who would love to spend two years working abroad. I can do that.

Ultimately, my father-in-law was supportive. Friends have been very supportive, like ‘wow that’s awesome, I salute you, this is gutsy and I’m jealous.’ They are saying ‘how do I help you move? Can I store some stuff for you?’ All of our friends are being very supportive.

Turning Japanese

We leave for Japan in late July. I think I have to arrive by July 24th. I don’t start teaching for another three or four weeks after that. So I have about a month to get acclimated and get myself set up, get internet service, buy a local cell phone, figure out where the grocery store and kind of get settled in to a routine.

We will live in Nagoya and I will be working at the Meito School, which means east side.

We will get a two-bedroom apartment, which will be small. Japan is an island-country and the real estate is much pricier. So it will be on the small side, smaller than we are used to, but it’s still a two-bedroom, what is referred to as a two-bedroom LDK, living room, dining room, kitchen, all in kind of one big common room.

I have been told the apartment is within walking distance of the school. We do have to pay the rent.

We are going to take a tablet of some sort, which we have yet to buy. At the very least so we can have our kids watch movies on the plane ride over. We will also be taking a laptop, which we have yet to buy. I am deciding between a Mac so I could edit over there on Final Cut vs. a \$400 Toshiba something.

My son is going to be eight in November. He start second grade in Japan and be there for second and third grade.

My daughter is turning five in September. We are going to put her in a transitional kindergarten class, a pre-K. She has been in a transitional class all year. She is advanced, so after a couple of weeks we will to move her into a kindergarten class.

We are going to rent our house to somebody through a property management company, who will manage everything for us. The property management company deals with everything,

so we just have money coming into an account and we pay the mortgage. We will be doing a lot of online banking.

I expect the flight to be 12 hours in the air, but take about 24 hours in terms of full travel times.

Chances are it will either be L.A. to Tokyo or San Francisco to Tokyo and then Tokyo to Nagoya. Tokyo and Nagoya are a little farther apart than San Francisco and L.A., a little than an hour flight.

We fly over Mount Fuji, which is between the two cities. Nagoya is due west and a little south of Tokyo.

I will work for the government of Japan, since Meito is a public school, the same way I work for the government of the United States as a teacher here.

Nagoya and Los Angeles are sister cities and this Chamber of Commerce program has existed between the Meito public school and LA Unified for over 30 years.

I will teach sophomores, juniors and seniors. The Meito school is an English magnet. To learn English in Nagoya, you go to the Meito School. I will be teaching English to almost entirely Japanese students of many different levels.

Nagoya is the fourth largest city in Japan, equivalent to Chicago.

I’ll have the same number of students as I would have at Poly. Meito has six periods vs. the 4 by 4 here. I will have four classes and two conference periods.

I do not know Japanese. My wife and I have been all over the internet and looked into a Japanese language program. Knowing Japanese is a necessity, because the students are coming to you to learn oral English.

The students have been learning English since grade five. So when they come to you in tenth grade, they have five years experience with English. But they don’t know how to communicate orally.

They are proficient at reading and writing in English, but not speaking in English. Therefore, I can still communicate by writing things down. But we are going to try to learn Japanese, enough to get around.

Our children are too young to fully get what we’ve been talking about. For my son, the big moment came when I told him that Transformer toys were invented by a company called Takara Tomy, a Japanese company. So he was like, “ok, cool.” So he is ready to go where Transformers were made.

They are aware of Japan as a concept in terms of us moving, as we go through our house and identify stuff we are going to sell and get rid of and give away.

My intent is to return, but, I am wise enough to understand that trying to predict where my mind will be at in two years is foolish. So, I am absolutely open to the fact that we may love it over there and decide to stay, simply because I think it would be foolish to exclude anything. You just don’t know, two years is an awfully long time.

So, certainly both of our parents, my kid’s grandparents, every one of them said well what if you guys like it there? And then we said well what if we do? We are open to any possibility, but our draft plan to return in two years and that’s why we are renting our house vs. trying to sell it.

That is why we are keep some stuff, we are trying to avoid putting stuff in storage and try to either use some storage space that my wife’s parents already have as well putting some stuff in Rubbermaid bins and kind of giving it out to our friends.

I am not guaranteed a position at Poly, but, without a doubt, I want to come back. There may not be a position when I come back, so I will deal with that situation when I come to it.

I hope to sort of remain a member of the Poly community by trying to connect Poly students with Meito students. I even have dreams that we might be able to start an exchange program.

The financial benefits are very attractive, but they are secondary. If this choice put a financial burden on us, that might have prohibited us from doing it, but as long as it was at least cost neutral, we were going to do it.

As it turns out, it will be a cost benefit. For one, I won’t have to pay income tax, either to the United States or to Japan. So

even though my salary will be less than with LAUSD, because I’m taking home more pay, we will be making more money.

We are also eliminating major expenses. We are not going to have cars, we won’t be buying gasoline, and we won’t be paying auto insurance. Our rent over there is significantly cheaper than our mortgage here. The rent on the house will cover most of the mortgage.

So I’m making more money and will have fewer expenses. This will help us pay down some of our mortgage or put some money away for my kid’s college fund.

No matter what happens, it will be a valuable experience. We will have lived abroad, my children will be exposed to a different culture. We will learn a lot of about ourselves, and I’m going to learn a lot about education and educational philosophy.

Any opportunity to broaden your perspective, to add new lenses through which you can see the world, is a good thing. Good or bad, we are the sum of our experiences, so good or bad, I will benefit.

Born and raised

I was born in Omaha, Nebraska, but only lived there for about a year. My dad was in the Air Force and was stationed there. I spent most of my childhood in upstate New York, went to college in upstate New York at Hamilton College, one of the “little Ivys.” I majored in English and creative writing.

After college, I moved to Boston for five years and then to California, where I met my wife.

It was at charity event at the Paramount studios lot, a silent auction put on by the junior Chamber of Commerce. We were both volunteering.

I was brand new to L.A. I had been here two months. Sparks flew, we talked to each other and we married two years later. We got married in 2000, 14 years ago.

I always joke with her, saying “Couldn’t you have given me a bit longer to be single in LA?”

So I tried to break in to entertainment, working a lot of small independent productions.

I did a lot of on-set work for stuff. I did some writing work. I did some producing work and then ultimately produced and directed some of my own short films.

My writing career was really starting to heat up and I was taking meetings at New Line with their VP of production. I was taking meetings with Stephen Cannell, the creator of the “A-Team” and “21 Jump Street,” “The Rockford Files,” “The Commish.” I was on the point of something happening but it just wasn’t quite happening yet.

My wife and I had started a family. I was still taking meetings, waiting for an offer. But I had also started working with a non-profit called The Story Project, bringing the arts to disadvantaged youth, in East LA, Boyle Heights at Soto and 8th street.

The students were from Roosevelt High, similar demographically to Poly. I worked with freshman and sophomore kids who were failing classes. We gave them something to do after school, which was filmmaking.

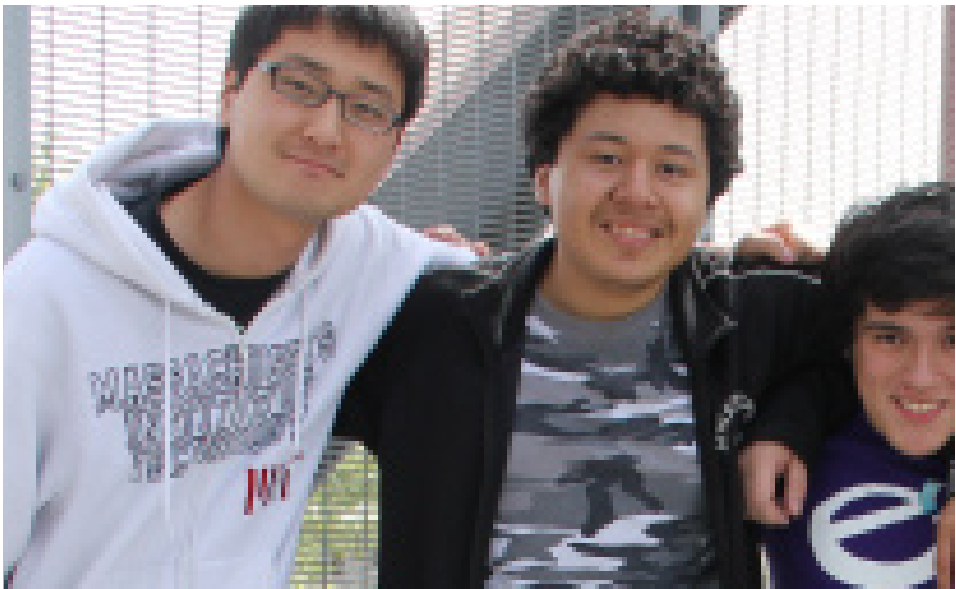
The program had no equipment, so we used my camera and cut on my computer. We had a film festival and it was fantastic. My wife saw that and said ‘maybe you ought to be doing this full-time.

You seem to just really love it. It’s better than being disillusioned and disheartened by taking a thousand meetings and having nothing come from them.’

She found an LAUSD intern program that allowed you to get your credential on the job. Part of the orientation was a short-term assignment at a school. They put me in Poly. That was 2006, and I’ve been here ever since.

That being said, I love filmmaking, which is why I find teaching it so rewarding and I still do goofy little projects as my students know. Now it is a hobby.

I have worked in banking, consulting, law, entertainment and had my own business. Teaching is by far the hardest job I have ever had, it is also the most rewarding.



NEWS MAKERS: Seniors GiMin Choi , William Lopez-Cordero, Kevin Escobar, Reymundo Cano

Different from the Rest

Rey Cano

I went through a program called Week-end Immersion in Science and Engineering (WISE) at MIT, a preadmissions program. They flew us out and paid for everything. It was a lot of fun.

I visited classes, including Eric Lander’s class. He’s a famous bio teacher, the father of the human genome. That’s the type of people you learn from. I had a lot of fun with my friends who go there. It’s pretty exciting that I already know people at MIT and keep in touch with them.

Poly’s magnet has a strong tradition of sending Parrots to MIT. I liked MIT because of the culture and the academics. I saw the culture as really nerdy and fun. They kind of reminded me of the magnet in terms of how we joke around. So I got that vibe from MIT and it became one of my favorite schools.

The other schools I applied to were more Ivy-Leagueish and pretentious.

One thing I did to differentiate me from other applicants was getting into music theory. I wrote some of my own pieces, and I really got into music. I think that put me a little bit apart from the other applicants. I also marched in the Rose Parade, so I had a bunch of things to talk about in terms of music.

I studied math that most kids don’t get to study like combinatorics and I really got into that kind of stuff. It made me want to do something like that in the future.

I also went to a summer program named COSMOS which introduced me to these things and I met some professors and after COSMOS I asked them about this stuff and they started teaching me discrete math and so I really got into the idea of weird math. But I don’t know if I want to do that yet.

WISE really prepped me for MIT. I went to an admissions workshop and I got a feel of how I should write a college essay and then when I came back I started them pretty last-minute, to be honest.

Initially I was going to apply to MIT through Early Admission (EA), but I was too lazy so I ended up waiting to apply for the regular admissions, which is January 1, and I was literally working up until the last minute.

And for other schools, I literally had to crunch everything in because I wanted to spend a lot of time on my MIT application because it was my dream school. So for Harvard, Yale, and all those other schools I had to do them at the last minute. I literally had to do my Yale app in an hour and for Harvard I was so scared I wasn’t going to get in so I spent like 10 minutes on my app. I just copied and pasted my essays from Yale and for other schools. Everything wrote itself basically.

After that I had to wait. It was a pretty grueling process to wait but I was lucky to get the likely letter from Yale pretty early on, so some of the stress was off.

I think I’ll fit in at MIT because I’m a nerd, but I mean in a good way. I have a lot of interests in a lot of things, politics, music, art, and I think MIT has all that to be a nerd and explore your passion and be passionate about things.

I also got accepted to Harvard. Harvard is really awesome for all that too. They have a special program, a really hard math course, so I want to try that out. It’s between Harvard and MIT. I think I’ll know for sure where I want to go after I visit Harvard.

Two Brothers in America

GiMin Choi

MIT has been my dream school ever since I came to the United States. I heard about it in Korea. I was in a very academic-oriented city and family so I knew about MIT.

In South Korea, even if you’re academically qualified, it’s really hard to get into top universities. South Korea has an excessively competitive academic environment and my parents thought it was extremely stressful.

I was nine when I first came here and my brother was 11. I knew a little bit of English, but I wasn’t fluent. We learned some English in Korea like the mechanical part of it, but the speaking part I had to figure out on my own.

I wasn’t expecting to stay in the United States. I came for a summer tour to have fun and I met this bus driver who was Korean. He offered to take in me and my older brother if we wanted to stay.

Staying here or going back to South Korea all depended on if my brother and I could trust each other to stay here. He wanted to stay here, I said ‘sure, why not?’

So we went through the whole school process and just dreamt big and aimed for MIT and other schools.

MIT doesn’t ask that you declare a major when you apply. They ask what you are currently interested in the most. I put environmental engineering. I really do like the environmental

science overall.

In my childhood, I lived in a rural area. I had to help my parents with farm land and everything and I got to see these organisms and it was pretty cool. So I kind of want to keep in touch with nature instead of being too industrial.

I also put computer science and genetics. Computer science because they get hired the most and I have a general liking for computers. I got in touch with programming at SSP. Once you know computer programming, even though you aren’t a computer science major, you eventually develop a good use of programming and it saves you a lot of time.

There are so many things you can do in programming that you can’t do with another major. It saves you time and you’re more efficient. That’s the main reason I want to study comp science.

Genetics has a lot to do with tenth grade in Mr. Alonso’s AP Biology class. Like when I found out I had to take bio in tenth grade I didn’t really want to, but once I took it, it was my favorite subject. In ninth grade, math was my favorite subject, but during tenth grade, after taking Mr. Alonso’s class, science was a favorite too.

So I want to do something that has math and science and genetics, has a ton of math and a lot of biology. I’m not too sure about double majoring, but I also want to do management, be-

FUTURE

Five of Magnet’s engineering pow

When the OPTIMIST learned that five Parrot se-
nowned Massachusetts Institute of Technology,
tory, we knew what had to be done. Our report
learned a lot. Here’s what they told us.

Screaming Like Little Girls

Andrew Koh

I started programming when I was in middle school and I really liked it. It’s kind of fun controlling robots and what not by using a computer. Just type in a code and get a robot to move around and do what you want it to do.

In ninth grade, I was placed in the AP physics class and I just went along with it. You’re supposed to decide where you want to go after high school and I decided, hey, maybe I can get into MIT.

I had a scientific paper out by the time I was in eleventh grade. Me and a Cal tech professor and other high school students developed ways to get solar energy more efficiently than using solar panels and stuff like that.

If you can heat water you can distill it, meaning you can clean it and make it drinkable. We wrote up a paper on it and submitted it to an international environmental science journal.

Our school is in really good standing with MIT admissions. Dr. Hunt comes to interview our school

exclusively and he loves our school. That for us.

I was anxious about getting accepted to MIT. I wasn’t going to sweat it because I had a back up school. At the same time, it is a big deal. I did early action, so he already knew I was going.

But the four of us who applied with the three of us did and he got in. Automati-
thought ‘I’m probably not going to get in already have one Asian, so I guess I’m do-
Then we decided to do this event thing, our friend’s house and we opened our dec-
together. Kevin got in and he was scream-
a little girl. Rey and I were both really we-
cause that was already three people that h-
in. Normally Poly only gets three per year.
Then I checked and I had to read it two before I actually realized what it meant. S-
of us were screaming and Rey was scared

cause I want to eventually have a startup company.

There were so many things working against me getting accepted to MIT, like my status and ethnicity. I was considered an international student for all the Ivy League schools and was rejected. But I was accepted to UC Berkeley, UCLA, UC San Diego, and MIT.

To get in to MIT, I tried maintaining straight A’s. I did tennis for three years.

I also did an online program of applied math called Camp Euclid through online video chat.

I did the Summer Science Program (SSP). It’s funny, because my older brother and I took very similar paths. We both did Camp Euclid, SSP, tennis, and we were both valedictorian at Poly. I went to New Mexico Tech in New Mexico for SSP and my brother and I were both at the same campus doing the same kind of research but on a different asteroid.

My brother and I have different personalities and interests, but we both like math and science. My brother is currently geared towards bioengineering to study cancer. I’m considering computer science, genetics, or environmental engineering.

My brother is more serious and quiet and I joke around. I’m also more interested in Korean-Pop and break dancing. My brother works harder than me. He is super diligent.

DEME



and Andrew Koh have been in big demand since receiving their acceptance letters from MIT.

BEAVERS

finest to attend werhouse MIT.

niors had been accepted to the world-re-
a number unprecedented in LAUSD his-
ers found each scholar and, not surprisingly,

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Then he opened his and we were all screaming like little girls. We were all really surprised that five of us got in because most schools can only get one. We got our decisions on March 14 which is Pi day. That's MIT's tradition to give admission decisions on Pi day for everyone so we all checked together there. I want to get away. California weather is nice but I want to go to the east coast. MIT offers needs-based scholarship, not merit-based. Even if it is \$60,000 a year, that's not really that bad because I have more than half of it already covered. I have to pay \$11k a year. Given the level of education MIT is giving you, it's not at all expensive. That's about the tuition you'd pay if you're a California resident going to a UC. The cool thing about MIT is that instead of giving you a packet when you've been admitted, they give you this MIT tube. It's definitely a lot of fun. They want you to make it into something fun, like a rocket or something. That's why they give you a tube instead of a letter, so you can do something with it. I don't know what I'm planning to do with it yet. People think MIT is only for people who study hard. That's part of it, but it's not just about studying. It's about what you make of it with the education you have. You can study all you want, but if you don't know what to use it on, at the end of the day, it doesn't even matter. I'm pretty sure I'm going to MIT but I'm still going to do the same thing William is, I'm going to visit the colleges. I got accepted to all the UCs I applied to. I got accepted to Berkeley, UCLA, San Diego, and Davis. I didn't apply to any Cal States. All admitted students can visit the MIT campus for a weekend and experience the people and the culture. It's having fun, a lot of people meeting each other, and having lots of food. I haven't decided what to major in. I'm kind of letting college decide that for me, once I get there and see what I like and don't like.

A Good Fit

William Lopez-Cordero

During the summer, I went to MIT's Summer Science Program. The research topic was celestial mechanics. We had to determine the orbital elements. So we used the telescope over the duration of five weeks and a half and we took three photos and used professional astronomy to find out the location and from the three photos we determined the entire orbit of the solar system. Just having that experience at MIT made me want to go there and actually experience what MIT life would be like. That's what made me want to apply To MIT. I honestly didn't know if I was going to be accepted because every year is different. There are always people who think they're going to get in and they don't. So I didn't know how to feel. I did early action. Some people were telling me that they thought I was going to get in, but I didn't think so. I was like 'I'm probably going to get diffired.' Decisions came out December 14 for me and I didn't check until thirty minutes afterwards because I didn't think MIT was going to make another website just for admission decisions. Then I checked on the MIT page but it was blank so I thought I didn't get accepted. But thirty minutes afterwards my friend was telling me that it was on a different website and I checked that one and then yeah, I actually didn't believe I was accepted so I read it multiple times. I wasn't even home, I was at a meeting with fifteen people in front of me and I was literally crying in front of everyone. I want to experience something different, a new environment with different people. Since MIT is need based, if you really can't afford to go there, they'll pay for your tuition. You just have to go about it nicely. They're not going to just give you money, but they'll try their best to match up whatever they can and make sure you can go. If they make you pay for everything, there's a good reason for it. For example if you're in the top one percent but coming from Poly it's most likely not going to happen. That's the good thing about going to a good school, they have so much money they can pay for every student's tuition. MIT doesn't choose a certain type of a person. The class is well rounded in the sense that there are different kids that specialize in different thing. Individually, they're all-around good, but they're especially good at one thing. The academics and the student life at MIT fit me and the things that I want to pursue. For example MIT is one of the top engineering schools in the world. I also like to be challenged and MIT fits all of those qualities.

Getting Straight

Kevin Escobar

My mom is from Honduras and my dad is from El Salvador. They went up to about 6th grade. I was born in California. I'm the first in my family to go to college. I was thinking about college ever since elementary school really because my mom didn't know anything about college, but she knew that to get by in this country you needed to have a good education, so she always encouraged me to get my act together, keep up my grades, and go to college. I was at Berendo Middle School, around sixth or seventh grade, when my math teacher started talking about MIT. I really didn't know it was an amazing place at all. I just thought it was another college. I was mostly drifting by, just barely managing to get through middle school, I was a crappy student. Then in ninth grade I realized if I actually wanted to go somewhere, I needed to stop screwing around and get my act straight. I went from a mediocre student to one of the top students by actually starting to care about school. I legitimately started caring, not because someone told me to. I went to E2 over the summer at MIT. It's a one week summer program where essentially every day we met with two admissions counselors for 30 minutes and they discussed the whole admissions process and what qualities they look for in an applicant. I first heard about E2 when I applied to MITES. It's a minority program to give underrepresented minorities an experience in the engineering field. E2 is a program MIT started two years ago. Because MITES had too many applicants, they decided to make another program to get at least 70 more students some engineering experience. I had Harvard in mind, but then I realized I don't like it. I applied and I got waitlisted. I was honestly expecting a straight up rejection but eh, I got on the waitlist.



I plan to major in aerospace engineering. Ever since I was small, in middle school I went to the jet proportion laboratory and it was seeing the curiosity mars rovers being built by engineers and just the whole aspect of that made me curious how it would be to be a aerospace engineer. I want to work for NASA. I want to be either a mechanic or aerospace engineer and help make space probes. In the ninth grade, I was placed in the AP Physics B class. It was pretty challenging because. The transition from middle school to high school is a huge step. But I liked to be challenged, so being double challenged made me want to pursue it even more. I took community college classes too and went to summer programs that really challenged me. That's really what I like. I also got accepted to Cornell, Dartmouth, UC San Diego, UC Santa Barbara, UCLA, UC Berkeley, John Hopkins and Cal States Pomona and Fullerton. I want to make a rocket that actually launches out of my acceptance tube, but I feel like just keeping the tube as a memory.

CAMPUS

WASC talks to the OPTIMIST

[From WASC, front page]

teacher Aaron Braskin felt some Parrots needed more support.

Poly is a great school and has a great faculty and staff, but there were some points that I was “Ify” about,” Braskin said. “Only 50% of your students complete the A-G requirements. I realize that it is not the school’s fault, but Poly could try to offer more opportunities to the failing 50%.”

“There are certain groups within the school that look like they still need an extra bump,” Braskin said. “I also noticed that the school is comprised mostly of Latino or Hispanic ethnic groups. Maybe Poly could do something to attract more ethnicities to the school.”

But Braskin was quick to note Poly’s hospital-ity.

“Everybody here has been very gracious,” Braskin said. “It’s been wonderful to see your students so engaged and teachers so supportive.”

Ronquillo felt the same.

“I’d say I had a real nice time here. Poly has a wonderful group of students. I was glad I spent four days here,” Ronquillo said. “Like every school, I just think you need to continue to evaluate what you’re doing for students in the class-rooms and whether or not you’re preparing them for the real world when they graduate.”

Lynwood Unified instructional lead Dena Duong had a similar view.

“Poly is a very good school in comparison to schools I’ve been to,” said Duong. “Teachers are very responsive to their students. Many, many students said they can get any help that they need from almost anybody. Nobody says no to the stu-dents here. So it is very student-centered.”

But Duong too had reservations.

“Poly has a really good support system for the high achieving students,” said Duong, “but what about the low achieving students? And I’m con-

cerned about the sub groups, like Special Ed, Eng-lish learners, the ones who aren’t motivated. What do you do with those students? Do you leave them alone so they can fail? Or do you help them?”

“I was surprised that there wasn’t a lot of tech-nology here,” Duong added, “and that the ninth grade center is over there.”

Duong, on her first WASC visit, said her school and Poly are similar.

“I’ve been at my school seven years,” said Duong. “The population and demographics are similar to yours. There are more low achieving students than high achieving students, but a per-centage of students go to Berkeley and MIT and Stanford and such.”

Third-year Perris High School assistant prin-cipal Adriana Lepe is also doing her first WASC visit and said Perris was similar to Poly.

“Perris High is very similar to the population here,” Lepe said. “Poly high school feels a lot like home.”

Lepe was pleased with what she saw.

“Poly offers great opportunities to students,” Lepe said. “Poly has great programs like the Mag-net program, the SAS program and a very strong foundation for ninth and tenth graders. It’s a car-ing staff and the students are excited to be here.”

The WASC committee knew a lot about Poly before their Sunday arrival.

“We were given two binders with background about Poly before we got here,” said Monrovia Social Studies teacher Annie Van Dyke. “We had almost four weeks to read about Poly. So we knew a lot before we came to this school and coming for these four days was to validate what we read.”

Duong agreed.

“There are a lot of things in your big binder,” Duong said. “We look for evidence of what is reported in there. We want to verify.”

“I ask a lot of questions,” Duong said. “The students answered a lot of my questions and they

clarified a lot of the things that I wasn’t sure were happening at the school.”

Braskin elaborated.

“The school provides us with their self-report,” Braskin said. “A school usually states all the different activities going on and we verify those statements. If we find anything not listed by the school, we add that to our report. Then we verify and take notes on the school’s strengths and weak-nesses.”

“The WASC committee’s responsibilities are to observe and interact with students and teachers,” said Braskin, “to determine your school’s progress and prepare a written report for the “official” WASC committee. They give the final decision, but rely on our recommendation.”

“I was really torn as to what to give Poly,” Braskin said. “Poly has many strong points, but its weaknesses are in some of the major areas. But with a little work, I think Poly could easily get a full six-year accreditation.”

“I think every school needs growth,” Lepe said. “No school is ever going to be perfect and defi-nitely the details of some areas will be reflected on the report.”

The committee seemed in general agreement on one aspect of their visit.

“The best part of the four-day visit for me was visiting classrooms,” Lepe said. “As an adminis-trator, being able to interact with the students and see what they’re doing and watching them learn, that’s kind of where you see the most growth. That’s just special.”

“The best part of our visit was just talking to the students and hearing how much they love the school,” said Duong. “They all love the school.”

“I like schools,” said Van Dyke. “I like kids and I like schools and I think every school is a gem in its own right. And I think that’s true about Poly too.”

New money

[From New, front page]

The District then writes a local control funding formula plan and allocates resources according to that plan. Completion of the plan is expected some time before next year.

LAUSD has decided to give concentration grants to schools like Poly.

“The District figures a school like Taft, in an affluent area, is going to get more support from donations from parents,” Bennett said. “They have more college-educated people in the community and they can provide support to the school. So they don’t need that money. The District said ‘let’s concentrate that money on high-poverty schools like Poly or San Fernando.’”

Additionally, Poly gets more money for being a Pilot school.

“The formula is the school’s stu-dent population times a base amount times the school’s P2ADA,” said Bennett. “The P2ADA is the school’s attendance rate divided by the total number of students in attendance on norm day, the day the school year begins.”

“The District uses a percentage of P2ADA a little lower than the at-tendance percentage.”

“Non-pilot schools get the aver-age percentage, say 90% of average ADA,” said Bennett. “Right now our percentage is about 96.2%, so nor-mally the District would take some of our money and give it to a school that needed more support.”

“But as a pilot school, we get to keep the funding that we earn based on improved student attendance,” Bennett said.

SLC Redesign

More changes are in the works for Poly next year.

“We’re going to hire another counselor and we’re restructuring the upper grades,” Bennett said.

“We’ll have two “houses” with 300 juniors and 300 seniors in each house,” said Bennett. “We’ll have two counselors and one coordinator supporting each house, or 200 stu-dents to one administrator, the same ratio as magnet.”

Poly will also hire another coun-selor for the Ninth Grade Center.

“Ninth graders are having dif-ficulties adjusting,” Bennett said, “so they need additional support.

Other planned personnel are two art teachers, another music teacher, and additional math teachers, so every student can get four years of math.

“It bothers me that students only have two elective classes,” said Ben-nett. “Part of that is a consequence of budget problems. We’re able to get them through their A-G require-ments, but nothing above that.”

“We’re going to invest the new money in the services and support for our students,” said Bennett.

Trio wins cooking competition

[From Trio, front page]

as the course continued the proteins got heavier. The other teams just threw everything on the grill.”

“We knew what we were doing,” said Garcia. “Rabbits are very muscular, so it’s a much tougher meat, it’s heavier. This fish is very light, not as much muscle, and the flesh is soft. The quail was a smaller version of a chicken.”

The trio practiced several times before the competition.

“We had an idea of what each of us could do and we worked around that,” said Garcia. “The ceviche was pretty simple and we knew one of us

could take our time cutting that. It was fun.”

Each Parrot received a personalized jacket with the ACF logo and a certificate that counts as five hours towards an ACF ranking.

“You have to complete certain tasks,” said Cla-ro, “and each task is a certain amount of hours. To improve your rank, you have to do those tasks.”

“Chef got us into the competition,” said Claro. “He has contacts with the main chef there, Chef Rossi.”

Garcia had previously taken second place in a state competition for the NAACP.

“The first place winner from our group won nationally and she only beat me by a couple of points at state,” Garcia said. “The judges said it a

matter of a coin toss.”

Garcia is enrolled in the Careers in Culinary Arts Program (CICAP) and has been cooking since ninth grade.

“This year Kevin Escobar and I did ‘Cook-ing Up Change,” and we had to create our own menu.”

Claro and Pleitez had not competed before.

Claro says he likes Mediterranean and Thai food, while Pleitez favors French desserts.

Garcia, who was born in Mexico, learned at an early age that spicy foods did not agree with him. He had surgery when he was eight.

“They told me it was because of the seeds,” Garcia said.

Special Ed Thrift Store

[From Sp. Ed, front page]

Fishler said. “I also posted it on Facebook and from there people also donated.”

Encore will open year-round.

Fishler, formerly Poly’s Special Ed coordina-tor, likes her new assignment.

“I wanted to get really involved with the stu-dents, not stuck in an office with only paperwork as my friend,” said Fishler.

Fishler also recently started a room cleaning service staffed by Special Ed students. Teachers can get their rooms cleaned for a nominal fee every Tuesday and Thursday.

“We try to make as many opportunities as possible for our kids, such as the cleaning crew,” Fishler said. “They clean classrooms by mopping the floor and cleaning desks for next to nothing, but the teachers always tip them.

Bennett has concerns

[From Bennett, front page]

PowerPoint presentation loaded with faint praise and numerous ‘areas for growth. The committee took no questions and Poly’s faculty left quickly.

Bennett clashed with San Diego School for International Studies Principal Dr. Carmen Garcia over data interpretation, among other issues.

Bennett also faulted WASC committee chair Alicia Foulk for letting Garcia “hijack the com-mittee” and taint the report.

The WASC committee agenda included a Sun-day afternoon meeting with parents, teachers and students and classroom observations on Monday and Tuesday.

Discussion at a Wednesday morning meeting signaled trouble.

“What happened at Wednesday’s 11:30 am meeting with our focus leaders and the committee was indescribable,” said Bennett. “The morning meeting was so contentious, the second meeting after lunch didn’t happen.”

Poly representatives and the committee clashed over the “equity and access” issue and others.

Join the staff
OPTIMIST

See Mr. Blau
rm 14

MEDIA

Welcome to Anderson’s Grand Budapest Hotel

Actor Fiennes hosts quirky director’s new fantasy world.

By Adrianna Garcia
Staff Writer

Director Wes Anderson’s peculiar films feature meticulous, dollhouse-like sets with saturated colors and deadpan dialogue. Off-kilter characters, particularly precocious children and child-like adults, dominate his films.

Each work is highly anticipated by his loyal band of followers, there since his “Bottle Rocket” debut in 1996.

In “The Grand Budapest Hotel,” Anderson creates yet another marvelous, fictional world, this one centered on the hotel’s extremely charming concierge, Monsieur Gustave H.

Gustave, played with panache by Ralph Fiennes, has an insatiable need to give people what they want – be it intimate dinners, flowers on their nightstand or even sexual favors. Gustave’s charm, knowledge and people skills are always available.

In short, Monsieur Gustave doesn’t just like his job, he lives for it.

When Gustave meets lobby boy Zero Moustafa, the two become instant mutual friends, and Gustave takes the young man under his wing.

But Zero, played by Anaheim native Tony Revolori, soon realizes there’s more to the poetry-reciting perfectionist Gustave than meets the eye.

Despite the adoration and admiration of guests and employees alike, Gustave is lonely.

And when an untimely death sends the pair out of their Grand Budapest bubble and into the real world,



CONCIERGE: British film star Ralph Fiennes stars in Director Wes Anderson’s latest fantasy.

things get sticky.

An impending war and some very unfriendly enemies in the fictional European country of Zubrowka complicate things along the way.

In the end, Zero has to prove his friendship and loyalty as he helps Gustave with his almost comical troubles.

Anderson credits Austrian writer Stefan Zweig as the inspiration for the film’s ambience.

“Zweig paints a portrait of Europe before 1914 that is vivid and filled with details,” said Anderson. “It’s personal. It’s his feelings about that moment and the destruction of a culture that he had completely handed himself over to.”

Visually, “Budapest” is typical Anderson, meaning its extremely detailed sets and quirky characters are anything but typical.

Zero has a drawn-on mustache and his love interest Agatha (Saoirse Ronan) bears a birthmark on her cheek shaped like Mexico. Hit man Jopling (Willem Dafoe) has an underbite that makes him look all the more menacing.

Anderson’s wardrobe choices match the set design. Fiennes and Revolori wear the Grand Budapest’s signature purple uniforms, while military man Edward Norton, who plays Henckels, is all in gray.

“I think Wes just likes tight trousers and epaulets on a man,” said Norton, “and I’m happy to wear them for him.”

Many of the cast are Anderson regulars. Bill Murray, Owen Wilson, Jason Schwartzman, Adrien Brody, Willem Dafoe, Tilda Swinton and Jeff Goldblum all worked with Anderson before “Budapest.”

Fiennes, new to Anderson’s world, said he liked the way the director worked.

“As an actor, you want to feel you’re in the hands of someone who’s got the reins,” said Fiennes. “It was great being told ‘Go this way, go that way, try this,’ until you’ve exhausted it. We did lots of takes and then probably by halfway through, whatever I was doing became Gustave.”

Revolori, meanwhile, had good things to say about his mentor.

“Working with Ralph was amazing,” said Revolori. “I picked up a lot from him. He’s absolutely a genius in what he does.”

Ultimately, the admiration and love that grows between the eccentric Monsieur Gustave and Zero is the key to “Budapest’s” story and the film’s success.

As usual, Anderson fans seem to be enthralled.



Angry Young Man

By Emily Pintor
Staff Writer

Twenty years after Nirvana lead singer Kurt Cobain’s death, his outsider image and angry lyrics still resonate with listeners.

Cobain was a tortured poet who hated the media and anything commercial or corporate. He had a deep passion for making music and the wealth that came from it was not his main interest.

Cobain and bassist Krist Novoselic started Nirvana in 1987 in Seattle. Drummer Dave Grohl came aboard in 1990. The band pioneered grunge, an angry mix of distorted guitars, growling vocals and angst-filled lyrics.

Drawing from influences such as Led Zeppelin and the Pixies, Nirvana released “Bleach,” their debut album, on independent record label Sub Pop in 1990. The record, loud, distorted and hateful, got Nirvana the attention they needed.

But Nirvana wanted more than the independent labels could provide. They signed with rock impresario David Geffen’s DGC label and began writing and recording their breakthrough followup “Nevermind.”

Released in 1991, Nirvana’s sophomore effort is full of fury and cascading dynamics, soft one moment, over the top the next. To fans, the record’s sound simply summarized their angst, alienation and need to rebel.

Cobain’s voice was raw and unrefined, the music aggressive and distorted. The songs mostly begin with melodic guitar riffs and slowly build to a crescendo of screeches, treble notes and bashing drums. “Smells Like Teen Spirit” and “In Bloom” got heavy rotation on radio stations almost immediately.

Never mainstream, despite their popularity, Nirvana remained defiant to the end. Cobain wore “anti-corporation” shirts on magazine covers. The group played lesser known songs rather than their hits on MTV’s Unplugged Sessions.

Nirvana’s swan song was “In Utero,” a versatile effort but not as successful as their previous records.

A “miserable, self-destructive, death rocker,” Cobain was an unwilling public figure. He couldn’t handle the attention. No matter how great the praise from critics and love from fans, Cobain was never able to love himself.

Cobain’s drug addiction, rooted in his struggle with depression, plagued Nirvana throughout their career. Fame and fortune were his ultimate undoing.

Cobain’s body was found in his Seattle home, along with a dark and insightful suicide note that explained his hatred towards everyone, including himself, and his dying passion for music.

“Better to burn out than to rust” Cobain wrote, quoting Neil Young.

Nirvana lasted a short seven years and released just three studio albums, but the band made an instant connection with their generation and over time, became one of the most influential bands of the modern era. Angry and alienated, Cobain spoke for every teenage misfit who struggled with his own demons.

Days ago, Nirvana was inducted in to the 2014 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn. Remaining members Novoselic and Grohl backed punk rocker Joan Jett on “Smells Like Teen Spirit.” Fans can only speculate on whether another singer may have had to substitute for Cobain even if he were alive.

Cat Stevens, Peter Dinklage, Linda Ronstadt, KISS, the E Street Band and Hall and Oates were also inducted.

Sister Act

These Valley girls are rocking all over the world.

By Emily Pintor
Staff Writer

San Fernando Valley sister trio Haim rocked an overflow crowd at the Pomona Fox Theater last week. Fans knew every word to every song and sang along.

Buzz for the band has been growing for months and hit a fever pitch with the release of their first full length album, “Days Are Gone,” in September of last year. Then came a November SNL appearance and a European tour opening for Phoenix.

Now Haim is back in the USA on the North American leg of their tour, which opened April 9.

Eldest sister Este, 28, plays a Fender bass nearly as tall as she is, Danielle plays guitar and sings lead and Alana plays keyboards and guitar. Drummer Dash Hutton drives the bottom.

The girls have been playing music since they were children in a band with their parents called RockinHaim. They played covers of classic rock songs. But as the girls grew older, they shed their parents and developed their own preferences and influences.

The sisters are clearly fans of Christine McVie-era Fleetwood Mac and that band’s soft, swirling pop harmonies. But Haim also cites R&B influences like TLC and Destiny’s Child. The result is a heavy disco beat, some classic rock guitar work with the smooth vibe and fluid vocals of 90’s R&B acts, dance moves included.

All three sisters have percussion backgrounds and floor toms, barreling kicks and rack toms surround the girls on stage.

Haim opened with “Falling,” the first track from “Days,” and the tightly packed crowd at the Fox Theater went crazy. The live version of “Falling” included a longer and well-crafted guitar solo.

Charming personalities make Haim easy to love. They are relatable and laid back. They don’t intimidate fans, they appreciate them.

Este bantered back and forth with the audience all night. Half way through the show, Danielle called out her best friend, who was in the audience, and wished her a happy birthday. When audience members began to claim they had birthdays



Photo by Lirio Alberto

LOCAL FAVORITE: Haim sisters Este, Danielle and Alana are turning up the heat on their world tour this summer promoting “Days Are Gone,” their debut LP.

that day too, the band broke out a chorus of “Happy Birthday.”

Haim’s live sound differs from the studio version. The stage act is more high-powered, with lengthy guitar solos, big drums and lots of emotion from Este, who puts on her well known “bass face”.

Towards the end of the set, the sisters brought out their parents for a Rock-inHaim reunion. Mom Donna sang lead and dad Mordechai played drums on Wilson Pickett’s “Mustang Sally.”

Haim has a polished sound rooted in a throbbing bass and beautiful harmonies. They draw on an eclectic mix of influences, enough to make them sound newly familiar. With youthful optimism, shiny long hair, black leather and a heady retro sound, the lanky trio has tapped in to a time-tested formula for success.

SPORTS

Gomez Throws No-Hitter Against Grant

Five runs on one hit is good enough.

By Zein Delgado
Staff Writer

Sophomore Mike Gomez threw a 5-0 no-hitter against visiting Grant Friday and Poly managed to get five runs off one hit as the Parrots swept their series with the Lancers. Poly won the first contest 6-1 on Tuesday.

“His curveball was on today,” Parrot head coach Gabe Cerna said. “He didn’t start using it until about a month or two ago.”

“Gomez has a fastball and a slurve, which is a lighter curveball, and his fastball spotted up pretty well today on the outside part of the plate.”

Cerna wasn’t aware of the possible no-hitter until the sixth inning.

“I usually don’t pay attention to that stuff,” Cerna said. “I’m on our defensive charts, so I usually track outs. So I didn’t even know about it.”

Poly scored five runs in the fifth on one hit.

“Grant’s pitcher was having control issues,” Cerna said. “He walked a couple of guys and hit a batter. Then Machuca got a base hit, so that opened it up a little bit.”

“Matt Machuca has been hot all year, probably hitting like .430, so that’s pretty good,” Cerna said. “Matt has been a pleasant surprise. We didn’t expect that from him. He was actually contending for the second base job with sophomore Vicente Olevera and he just stepped up his game big time.”

“Grant is not too offensive, so you put a couple of runs on them and you just spot up well and play defense.”



Photo by Lirio Alberto

STINGY: Poly hurler Mike Gomez kept Grant off the basepaths all day.

“As a head coach, you like seeing your team score runs and manufacture runs,” said Cerna. “We took advantage of their pitcher not throwing strikes. Then they made an error and we capitalized on that too.”

“Our bread and butter is pitching and defense. We are not going to 10-run a team, we are going to beat a team 3-2, 3-1, 4-2, that’s our game. Today it was 5-0 on one hit. So that’s us. We play pitching and defense.”

“That’s always been the story at Poly, even when Schwal was head coach,” said Cerna.

“Beating Grant set us up for the games against North Hollywood,” Cerna said, “so that’s pretty big. NoHo swept Verdugo recently, but we’re one of the favorites to win league. We have a lot of talent on this team, but this year we are going

to win league.”

The win over the Lancers came a day after a 5-4 loss to Granada Hills.

“We take it one game at a time,” Cerna said. “Yesterday’s game was a tough one. We lost to Granada 5-4. We should have won that game, but I think we should have won every game. We had our chances and we didn’t take advantage of them.”

Poly outscored Grant 6-1 on the road in the first game of the series.

Last year senior Jason Cisneros pitched a no-hitter against Grant.

“We got a little thing going on against them,” Cerna said.

The Parrots (11-8, 5-2) split back-to-back games against the Huskies (12-10, 7-2), losing 6-3 on Wednesday before taking Friday’s contest 3-1. Poly junior Isaac Gutierrez picked up the win for the Parrots.

Volleyball boys split four in April

By Joanna Rosales
Staff Writer

With three games to play in the regular season, Poly is 8-14, 4-5. The Parrot squad should win two of those three matches and finish at 10-15, 6-6.

Below are the last four league games and comments by head coach Sina Aghassy.

Chavez – 3-0 win – April 2

Poly	25	25	25
Chavez	9	10	17

Chavez was an ok game for us. Chavez is usually towards the bottom of the league. I stress to my guys that no matter who you play on the other side, it depends how we are playing on our side. The first game we beat them 25-9. That was a pretty good outcome for us. Towards the end, Chavez put new guys in and the focus just seemed to drop. If we want to be a good team, we have to stay consistent no matter if they are the best team in the city or worst team in the city.

Stats – 10 kills from Kevin Moore 12 kills from Richard Delgado

Grant – 3-0 loss – April 4

Poly	16	10	21
Grant	25	25	25

Throughout the season, teams are going to get better. Grant is one of those teams that got better as they went along. We didn’t quite have it all together.

It is especially hard when you are playing away from home to have that focus and consistency and especially with a young team. You’re going to see that at times. I think we saw that on Friday. We made a lot of errors. We’ve seen these guys before but we couldn’t respond.

The loss was a combination of getting beat by a better team and making too many errors. They aren’t a very good passing team. We beat ourselves with our serving errors and passing errors.

We definitely played worse against Grant the second time. The first time, we were a little bit more energetic and focused and fired up. We had a new group this time because Antonio Rojas was setting, not Jonathan Martinez.

Our serve receive could have been better. I think that’s number one. If we can’t pass the ball we won’t be able to get into any game. Our serve receive is what killed us the most.

Monroe – 3-0 win – April 7

Poly	25	25	25
Monroe	9	10	12

It was a good game. Consistent game, most important. We’ve talked about inconsistency all year and three games we kept that at a leveled pace and we didn’t do too much out of what we couldn’t do.

Kevin Moore had a really great game - 15 kills off of 20 swings and only one error. Limiting our errors is really going to help us as a team.

There was a little more motivation. We’ve been working very hard and we’ve had some very good tournaments this past weekend. Extra competition always helps. That’s definitely motivation for our guys.

We are a little bit more experienced than the first time we played Monroe. We have done better and played more of our type of volleyball, ball control, limiting our errors. Kevin was a good example of that. He cut down his errors ten times and that’s the difference between us dominating a game and us struggling to win.

Stats – Moore hit 700, meaning 70% of the time he killed the ball. Usually, 400 is pretty good, so 700 is double that. Jesus Bravo had 5 kills.

NoHo – 3-1 loss – April 10

Poly	21	25	19	17
NoHo	25	18	25	25

Energy is definitely a problem when you play away. Whether it is here or there, you have to have the same energy if you want to be a really good and consistent team. I told the guys we lack that and our errors definitely killed us that last game.

The absence of Rojas was a factor. Tony is one of our leaders. He always brings that energy, whether I put him to set or do another position. When you have a key component guy like that missing, it affects the team. And it was Martinez’ first game back since his injury.

There is a sense of over-confidence after a win. You feel confident and that you don’t need to get better. I have to stress to our guys that we have to get better no matter what.

Stats - Kevin Moore 17 kills, Richard Delgado 14 kills.

Playoffs

We should get into the playoffs no matter what. But if we keep winning we get a better seed. Hopefully, we’ll advance to the second round. Last year we only made it to the first round. We are just trying to build our season and move forward.

I told the guys ‘really bad or really good, keep it consistent.’ I don’t care if it is really bad. They have to get the experience and the repetition with teammates so they know what to expect from each other.

Tough Times for Tennis

By Christine Maralit
Staff Writer

Veteran boys tennis head coach Brian Block says his kids have been doing great, but the record says otherwise.

With one match remaining against Verdugo Hills, Poly is 1-9 on the season, including a pair of preseason losses in which the Parrots managed to win one set.

So who or what is to blame?

“I take full responsibility for our losses,” said Block. “As a coach, I haven’t been doing as good as I can.”

But Block wouldn’t accept all the blame. There was the scheduling, for example.

No, not the schedule of opponents. Block is talking about his players’ academic schedules.

“The four by four schedule and the kids’ A.P. classes and other extracurricular activities took up most their time, so they could not practice enough,” Block said. “I should’ve had them practice before and after school, even though it would be dark. I screwed up. I should have known better.”

Actually, Block did blame the schedule of opponents.

“This season, we had to play seven games in 11 school days,” Block said. “We did not have enough time to reflect and fix what we needed work on. So the new schedule was just not on our side.”

Block still wasn’t ready to blame his players.

“This team has been doing the best they can and they’ve been doing a great job,” Block insisted.

Good news or bad, most of this year’s team will return.

“Next year I plan to start recruiting ahead of time,”



Photo by Lirio Alberto

NET GET: Poly junior #2 doubles Brandon Vuong.

Block said, “so we can get a head start on practicing.”

Regardless of what happens against Verdugo, Poly is out of the playoffs.

“Some of our doubles and single Richard Lee do have a chance of making it into the individual competition if they do well during today’s game with North Hollywood,” Block said.

Poly lost to NoHo 7-0.

Richard Lee and Luis Curiel won one game apiece. Number two singles Kevin Chung fared better, losing 6-1, 6-4. Gregory de la Rosa went down swinging, 6-2, 6-2.

The doubles fared no better, with #3 failing to win a game.

“It is unfortunate that our team cannot compete in the playoffs,” Block said.

Maybe not.