

The Poly Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

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SERVING THE POLY COMMUNITY SINCE 1913

JANUARY 2013

Colorguard Wins First

By Jasmine Aquino
Staff Writer

Poly's Colorguard took first place at the 39th Annual Band and Drill Team Championships held at the East Los Angeles College campus on December 8, 2012.

Poly's marching band won second place, defeating seven other high schools, including Poly rival North Hollywood High School.

"What more is there to say than the fact that I am absolutely proud?" said Poly senior and Drum Major Martha Tinajero.

Van Nuys High School's band placed first in the competition

"Van Nuys High has a Performing Arts Magnet which allows their marching band more funding for things like new instruments and money for instructors to work with the students, money which Poly's marching band does not have," said Tinajero. "The fact that our score was fairly close to theirs, at all, is impressive."

The band practiced their "Les Misérables"-themed field show from August until December during periods four and five, ending around 5 pm. On Fridays, the band practiced til 9 pm. Saturday practices were also held..

"We even held practices during the Thanksgiving break at Fernangeles Park to make sure we did the best we could at the competitions," said Poly senior and Assistant Drum Major Diana Escobedo.

The annual LAUSD band competition, which features more than 3,000 student musicians from 45 LAUSD high schools, was first held in 1973.

School bands are arranged in divisions—1A Red, 1A White, 1A Blue, 2A, 3A and 5A—according to the number of performers in each group. Poly's 70-piece band competed in the 2A division.

The awards ceremony featured the LAUSD All City Honor Marching Band under the direction of Anthony White, coordinator of Visual and Performing Arts for the district's Beyond the Bell Branch and an LAUSD graduate who marched 27 years ago. The performance included ten of Poly's own musicians.

The leader retreat was next, with all band drum majors, drum captains, and guard captains marching onto the field to receive their awards.

Bands were scored on musical and visual excellence. The competition was broadcast on Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) several

[See Colorguard, next page]



Photo by Daniel Castro

BAREFOOT: Parrot colorguard member Elisama Alvarado carries a flag in the East LA College Band competition. Poly's marching band placed second.

Moving Day

By Rudy Guijarro
Staff Writer

The Ninth Grade Center opened the Spring semester at its new location across Arleta Street just north of the Byrd campus on January 7.

"From my perspective, the transition went very well," said Instructional Specialist Lourdes De Santiago. "I think everybody knew 'okay I need to move' and everybody just did their best and made the transition a real good one."

The Ninth Grade Center has 575 students and 21 teachers using 21 classrooms.

De Santiago is in charge of the Ninth Grade Center. Her administrative staff includes coordinator Kirk Jeppson, counselor Ninoska Duenas, deans Gabe Cerna and Juan Campos and clerk Gracie.

Truck Ups Moving Company, hired by LAUSD's School Occupancy

[See Freshman, pg 6]

Parrots in Rose Parade

By Jasmine Aquino
Staff Writer

Eleven Poly band members marched down Colorado Boulevard in the Tournament of Roses Parade on January 1, 2013 with the LAUSD All City Honor Marching Band.

The four Poly seniors and seven underclassmen included Martha Tinajero, Sarai Pineda, Abraham Godfrey, Diana Escobedo, Lorena Solorio, Lorenzo Reyes, Eluid Tejeda, Daniel Maldonado, Anthony Quintanilla, Kemberly Gomez, and April Ocampo.

"I had to wake up at three in the morning to catch the bus," said Poly sophomore Lorenzo Reyes, "and it was extremely cold. But once I stepped onto Colorado Blvd with my uniform and tuba on, I didn't even feel my body anymore. It was truly amazing."

The All City Band was established in 1973 to allow all LAUSD high school musicians an opportunity to represent the nation's second-largest district in the Rose Parade.

The band features 350 brass and percussion players. The tall flags, shield, drum majors and percussionists

have to audition. The brass players are recommended by their home school music teachers.

"The band allows musicians to have a place where they can feel successful," said Poly senior Martha Tinajero. "But marching in the Rose Parade is not an easy task."

Tinajero has marched in the Rose Parade the last three years, once as a trumpet player and twice as a baritone player.

"I was originally a flute and piccolo player," Tinajero said, "but because I wanted to march in the Rose Parade, I learned trumpet my sophomore year and baritone my junior year."

The band does not include woodwind players.

Band musicians attend Saturday rehearsals from October to winter break, during which they attend rehearsals every day until the Rose Parade.

The musicians learned six songs tailored for the band and spanning a variety of genres. The repertoire included "Ants Marching," "Patriotic Medley," "Spanish Skies," the Wanted's "Chasing the Sun," Rihanna's "Where Have You Been" and No Doubt's "Spiderwebs."

[See Rose, next page]

Poly Faculty Picks Pilot

By Tracy Salcido
Staff Writer

Under pressure to pick a new school governance model or accept more District control, Poly's faculty voted overwhelmingly to adopt the Pilot model in December of 2012.

The vote was 124 in favor and 10 opposed.

"Poly does a lot of things that are not normal practices by the school district," said Poly Principal Ari Bennett. "We're a 4 by 4 school. We have our own formative assessment system so teachers can monitor student progress. The way we think, our creativity and the things that we believe are important to support our students are not always according to district policies."

The Pilot plan codifies many of those reforms and protects the systems Poly has in place.

"Our school's attendance has improved over the past few years, but Poly has not seen any of that money," said Bennett. "Becoming a Pilot school allows that additional revenue to come directly to Poly instead of the District."

Under the Pilot, a school governing council will work with Bennett to develop the annual school budget to make sure that additional money is spent to meet the needs of our students.

The Pilot offers other benefits.

"The faculty was concerned that if I am removed as principal for whatever reason they would be at the mercy of whoever comes in," Bennett said. "The Pilot plan ensures that any new principal would have to follow the already stated school reforms and school plans."

The Pilot School Steering Committee is expected to approve Poly's Pilot proposal around January or February. Then the plan goes to the school board for approval around March. If accepted, Poly will go Pilot next school year.

The Pilot has an Elect-to-Work

[See Parrots, pg 6]

Toy Drive Nets \$18K

By Yesenia Carretero
Staff Writer

Poly's Leadership elves filled Santa's bag with an extra \$18,000 worth of toys in 2012, thanks to some generous support from the Poly community and beyond.

"The toys went to people who contacted the fire department saying that they needed help," said Leadership sponsor Brian LeClair.

Parrot students and faculty donated \$2-3,000. The rest was from restaurants, shops and individuals who just came to the school and wrote a check out to Poly for the toy drive.

Last year leadership raised \$23,000, LeClair said.

Poly principal Ari Bennett, Leadership sponsors Kit Heilbron and LeClair and the leadership students bought approximately 2,000 toys at the Mattel toy outlet in Pomona. Mattel sold the toys at a 40% discount.

"Each leadership student filled carts with toys," LeClair said. "The receipt must have been like thirty feet long."

The LAFD firefighters then took the toys for distribution the following week.

Poly's toy drive goes back 50 years.

"One kid was in the hospital," LeClair said. "It was right around Christmas. So this kid's teacher got gifts for him. When they realized other kids in the hospital weren't going to get a present, they started collected toys for them too."



Photo By Vanessa Aquino

Which One Is the Chiron?

Reunion plans are in the works for class of '64.

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Photo by Tracy Salcido

Lancers Too Sharp to Stop

Parrot hoopsters can't match Grant's speed.

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OPINION

“One Today”
By Richard Blanco

One sun rose on us today, kindled over our shores, peeking over the Smokies, greeting the faces of the Great Lakes, spreading a simple truth across the Great Plains, then charging across the Rockies. One light, waking up rooftops, under each one, a story told by our silent gestures moving behind windows.

My face, your face, millions of faces in morning’s mirrors, each one yawning to life, crescendoing into our day: pencil-yellow school buses, the rhythm of traffic lights, fruit stands: apples, limes, and oranges arrayed like rainbows begging our praise. Silver trucks heavy with oil or paper—bricks or milk, teeming over highways alongside us, on our way to clean tables, read ledgers, or save lives—to teach geometry, or ring-up groceries as my mother did for twenty years, so I could write this poem.

All of us as vital as the one light we move through, the same light on blackboards with lessons for the day: equations to solve, history to question, or atoms imagined, the “I have a dream” we keep dreaming, or the impossible vocabulary of sorrow that won’t explain the empty desks of twenty children marked absent today, and forever. Many prayers, but one light breathing color into stained glass windows, life into the faces of bronze statues, warmth onto the steps of our museums and park benches as mothers watch children slide into the day.

One ground. Our ground, rooting us to every stalk of corn, every head of wheat sown by sweat and hands, hands gleaning coal or planting windmills in deserts and hilltops that keep us warm, hands digging trenches, routing pipes and cables, hands as worn as my father’s cutting sugarcane so my brother and I could have books and shoes.

The dust of farms and deserts, cities and plains mingled by one wind—our breath. Breathe. Hear it

Poet Richard Blanco read “One Today” during the 57th inaugural celebration for President Barack Obama Monday on the steps of the U.S. Capitol.
“I was made in Cuba, assembeled in Spain and imported to the

through the day’s gorgeous din of honking cabs, buses launching down avenues, the symphony of footsteps, guitars, and screeching subways, the unexpected song bird on your clothes line.

Hear: squeaky playground swings, trains whistling, or whispers across café tables, Hear: the doors we open for each other all day, saying: hello, shalom, buon giorno, howdy, namaste, or buenos dias in the language my mother taught me—in every language spoken into one wind carrying our lives without prejudice, as these words break from my lips.

One sky: since the Appalachians and Sierras claimed their majesty, and the Mississippi and Colorado worked their way to the sea. Thank the work of our hands: weaving steel into bridges, finishing one more report for the boss on time, stitching another wound or uniform, the first brush stroke on a portrait, or the last floor on the Freedom Tower jutting into a sky that yields to our resilience.

One sky, toward which we sometimes lift our eyes tired from work: some days guessing at the weather of our lives, some days giving thanks for a love that loves you back, sometimes praising a mother who knew how to give, or forgiving a father who couldn’t give what you wanted.

We head home: through the gloss of rain or weight of snow, or the plum blush of dusk, but always—home, always under one sky, our sky. And always one moon like a silent drum tapping on every rooftop and every window, of one country—all of us—facing the stars hope—a new constellation waiting for us to map it, waiting for us to name it—together.

United States. My family arrived as exiles from Cuba to Madrid, where as I was born. Less than two months later, we emigrated once more and settled in New York City, then eventually in Miami, where I was raised and educated,” Blanco said.

Colorguard

[From Colorguard, front page]

times throughout the winter.
Poly’s marching band also performed for Councilman Tony Cardenas’ send-off on December 14 at the Los Angeles City

Hall. Cardenas was sworn in to the 29th congressional district seat on January 3.
Poly’s musicians are currently preparing for concert band competitions in late spring.

Rose Parade

[From Parrots, front page]

The band also performed the songs down Disneyland’s Main Street and Bandfest, an event that showcases all the marching bands who take part in the Rose Parade.
Director Anthony White is coordinator of Visual and Performing Arts for the district’s Beyond the Bell Branch and

an LAUSD graduate who marched with the band 27 years ago.
“We create music, but also talk about leadership and give the musicians the skills to succeed in life,” said White. “Music is a great vehicle for doing that.”
The eleven Poly students will next perform with the band in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day parade in late January.



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the
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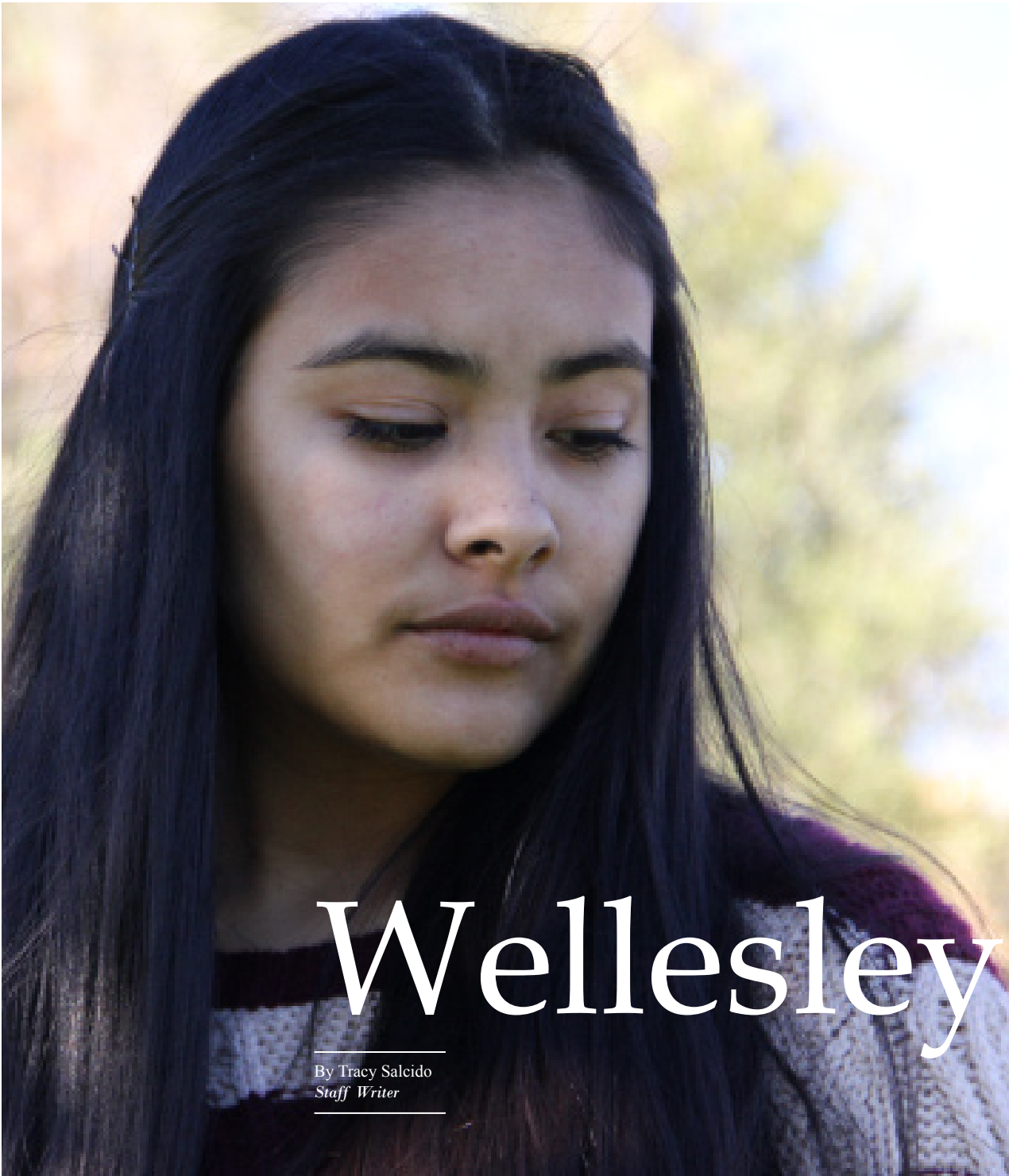
EDITORIAL POLICY

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.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

INTERVIEW



“It feels like Hogwarts.” Poly Class of 2012 grad Kathy Silva was speaking of prestigious Wellesley College near Boston, where she is completing her freshman year. “The campus is really pretty,” Silva said, “gorgeous and very green. We have a town nearby but the campus feels woodsy.

Silva is in good company at the liberal arts college, founded in 1875. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, former Secretary of State Madeline Albright, journalist Diane Sawyer and author Nora Ephron also walked the College’s hallowed halls. Wellesley’s 2,000 students are all female, but nearby Brandeis University, Babson College and Olin College have plenty of males. There are also shuttles that go to MIT and Harvard. “Life at Wellesley is busy. Something is always going on,” said Silva. “We have events every weekend, such as Christmas parties and dance mixers. I’m much more social than I was a year ago.” “There’s more sports than you can imagine, like snowboarding, intramural, Phys Ed. The teams are division 3 and play other schools in the area like MIT or Smith.” “I hardly have any free time actually, but I usually hang out with friends or go to lunch or dinner with them and we’ll just talk and laugh for hours,” Silva said. Adjusting to life on the East Coast wasn’t hard at all, according to Silva. “Summer is really warm, and I adjusted to the cold weather because I don’t go out a lot, so I’m not in the cold.” “I’ve been to Boston twice. I like it. There are a lot of art museums and an opera house that I’d love to visit.” But a big-time, ivy-walled college education doesn’t come cheap. “Tuition is \$200 a unit per semester,” Silva said. “A dorm room is \$12,000. Books can go as high as \$300, depending on the class.”

“The dorms are really nice. I live in a suite, so I’m very lucky,” Silva said. “All the dining facilities on campus have buffets with healthy vegetables, ethnic food and comfort food.” Silva won a Cardenas scholarship at Poly. The rest is covered by Wellesley. “Wellesley had good financial aid,” Silva said, “and I had visited twice so I had an idea of how it would be going there.” Silva also works in Health Services on campus. A pre-med major, Silva is taking History, Quant Reasoning, Italian 101 and 1st year seminar. A typical class has 10 to 20 students. Silva has three classes on Monday and Thursday, one class on Tuesday and Friday and two classes on Wednesday. “College is definitely harder than high school,” Silva said. “The professors actually make you think, the answers are not just in the textbooks. I learned that it’s better to study and not procrastinate.” “Before I came here, I didn’t think I would need help, but the counselors, teachers and my friends help me out a lot,” Silva said. “I see my mentor constantly. She’s like a sister to me.” Silva was born and raised in Panorama City. Her father works in construction. A younger sister is a freshman at Poly and two younger brothers attend elementary school. Silva attended Poly for 11th &12th grade. Despite her current residence, Silva has no intention of working on the East Coast after graduation. “I’ll come back to California when I graduate,” Silva said. “As much as I love Wellesley, nothing can compare to home.”



NEW FACES

By Daisy Navarrette
Staff Writer

Tenth Grade math teacher Thao Pham was born in Vietnam.

“Vietnam is a beautiful country,” Pham said. “When you visit Vietnam, you see a different lifestyle; you see something that you don’t see over here. The weather is really hot and humid.”

“I left when I was 19 and have been living in America for 15 years now.”

Pham attended UCLA and taught math at Nimitz Middle School in Huntington Park before coming to Poly. She also tutored math at UCLA.

“I chose math because I have done well in math classes and it’s a subject I prefer overall,” Pham said. “I have always done well in science classes like physics and chemistry, but math is my favorite.”

Pham says she chose to become a teacher because she likes helping students.

“My parents are both teachers,” Pham said, “so I feel like rewarding them.”

Childhood dreams of becoming a doctor didn’t meet her skills, Pham said

“I found out that I was not good in biology and I am afraid of blood,” Pham said. But if I didn’t teach, I would be a nurse, because I love to take care of other people.”

Pham chose Poly because she lives five miles away.

“Instead of spending two hours commuting, I only spend about 15 minutes now,” Pham said, “so I can spend the rest of the time focusing on lesson planning, grading and other stuff to help the kids.”

“I like the atmosphere here. I feel like I get support. I have a friend who works here too. He introduced me to Poly.”

“The kids here are very respectful, most of them. The kids I had in previous years were not as well-behaved and motivated like the kids here.”

Not everything at Poly is perfect, of course.

“Some of the kids here are motivated and want to go to college, so they are doing well,” Pham said. “But some don’t even know why they are in school and don’t have long term goals. They don’t realize that their behavior

right now won’t lead them anywhere unless they change. It’s going to affect their lives in the long term.”

Pham taught algebra one and geometry in the fall. This quarter she’s teaching CAHSEE Prep.

Personal Stuff

Pham has many interests outside of her teaching career.

“I love reading,” Pham said. “I used to dance a lot, but not anymore.”

“I love gardening because I have a back yard. I love traveling as well.”

Pham’s husband is also Vietnamese and they’re planning on having two children. She also has a younger brother and sister

I’m pretty good at the computer. I can do pretty nice flower arrangements. I’m good at decorating.

Pham stays in shape by running on weekend mornings and not watching much television.

“My television is broken,” Pham said. “I’m waiting to buy another one before the Super Bowl.”



Thao Pham
Tenth Grade Math



David Simms
Tenth Grade Math

By Liliana Ramirez
Staff Writer

New math teacher David Simms cut right through the red tape to join Poly’s faculty.

“On my way back from UCLA, I was driving down Roscoe and passed Poly,” Simms said. “I had heard over the years that Poly was a really good school. So I thought I should stop by and show my resume.”

“I met Mr. Bennett and our five-minute conversation turned into a 55-minute interview. That was Friday. Four days later I had a formal interview, a job and started working.”

If Simms sounds like a practical man, he is. “I mowed lawns when I was 11,” Simms said, “but my first real job was at Shakey’s Pizza.”

“I was 16 and living with my sister. At the top of the hill was a wall that divided her backyard from Shakey’s. I took the job because I could be there in 15 seconds.”

Simms was born in Pasadena, attended Don Bosco Technical Institute in South San Gabriel and graduated from UCLA in 1997 with a BS

in Economics

“I didn’t think economics would be like it was,” Simms said. “I chose economics because I wanted to go to UCLA. Economics was the closest they offered to a business program.”

We told you Simms was practical. “The degree you get doesn’t mean that’s your field of expertise,” Simms said. “I wanted to be an art historian.”

And that’s how Simms got into teaching. He taught math at Burbank Middle School in Highland Park for seven years before coming to Poly.

“It was pretty nice for a middle school,” Simms said, “and had about 2000 students.”

So what makes a nice school?

“First and foremost, the students,” Simms said. ”Do they want to learn, do they have manners? The staff, is it a team environment?”

But Simms is always practical too. “Third is location,” Simms said. “How easy is the commute?”

Simms knows what he wants in the classroom.

“Bring a pencil, paper, do your homework,” Simms said. “Bring energy, be awake, be

ready to learn, be excited. Most Poly kids are cooperative and willing to participate. They are good sports.”

As a teacher, Simms says he tries to keep it fun.

“Overall, I think I’m strict,” Simms said, “because I have big expectations for the kids, but I want it to be fun too. Learning should be fun.”

Simms says he embraces technology. “I love technology, but it has to work, and sometimes it doesn’t,” Simms said. “So I love paper and pencil because they’re reliable.”

Personal Stuff

Simms love to hike two to three times a week. His car, on the other hand, he washes two or three times a year.

He’s also a big 60s and 70s music fan and has hundreds of CDs

Simms swears he has a copy of “War and Peace” on his nightstand, but he confesses to watching some TV too.

“I like sports,” Simms said, “college football, professional basketball, Lakers and Clippers (more the Clippers).”

By Walter Linares
Staff Writer

“I’ve wanted to be a teacher since I was a child,” says new Special Ed teacher Angelica Richards.

So what kind of teacher did Richards turn out to be?

“I would say I’m an easy teacher,” Richards said, “but I’m still challenging, because I don’t let my students give up, and that is how they can pass my class.”

“I require proper grammar on the final drafts students turn in,” Richards said, “but I don’t give as much homework as I should.”

Like all teachers, Richards like student participation.

“What I look for in my students is that they contribute,” Richards said.

Richards also looks for new technology. “I wish I had more technology, because I love technology,” Richards said, “and students love technology too. It helps them be more interested in the material I teach.”

Richards attended the Science Magnet at North Hollywood High before getting her Associates Degree in Child Development from L.A. Mission College in 2006.

Next came a B.A in Liberal Studies from CSUN, where Richards majored in Child Development and Special Ed., followed by a Special Ed teaching credential in 2012.

“I’m currently working on my masters in Special Ed at CSUN,” Richards said.

Prior jobs Richards held included a summer with Clean and Green, a bookstore position and a children’s shoe store job.

Richards also worked for Headstart, a federal program, teaching pre-k for low- income families and taught 1st and 2nd grade at San Jose Elementary for two years before coming to Poly.

“I heard about the Poly opening because I student-taught here for a year,” Richards said.

Richards, who teaches English, Science and Health to a mixed class of 9 through 12, says Poly is a nice place to work because of the students and the supportive and friendly staff

“My goal at Poly is just to be a positive influence on my students,” Richards said.



Angelica Richards
Special Ed



Ninoska Duenas
Ninth Grade Counselor

By Daniel Lopez
Staff Writer

New Ninth Grade Counselor Ninoska Duenas was born in Managua, Nicaragua, in Central America, and attended Saint Teresa High School and National University (UNAN). Her first job was as an overseas telephone operator.

“I came here in 1982 for political reasons,” Duenas said. “A change was taking place. The Sandinista Revolution was taking place in

Nicaragua, a war was happening.”

Duenas attended Glendale Community College before transferring to Cal State Northridge.

“My major was Spanish/ESL,” Duenas said. “I have a BA and a teaching credential from CSUN, an MA in Spanish from CSUN and an MA in Psychology from Phillips Graduate Institute in Chatsworth.

Duenas was a lifeguard/swimming instructor as an undergrad at CSUN.

After graduation, Duenas taught Spanish for non-natives and Spanish speakers, AP Spanish

Language and AP Spanish literature at San Fernando for 10 years and Arleta for a year when it first opened.

“My first job as a counselor was at Taft High School, Duenas said. “I was there five years.”

Duenas recently returned from three weeks in Nicaragua.

To stay in shape, Duenas walks and swims. “I don’t really watch tv,” Duenas said. “I read books and watch foreign films.”

CAMPUS



There’ll Be Some Changes Made

New library aid
Dee Mason
has plans for
Poly’s library.

By Rudy Guijarro
Staff Writer

New Parrot librarian Dee Mason has plans for Poly’s library, big plans. Especially if money is no object.

“Well, if money was no object, I would like to change everything,” Mason said, “the carpet, definitely the chairs, just all the furniture. I’d like the library to be more inviting for high school students, something better than having all the tables lined up like it’s an office.

I’d like to have a little lounge area and places where kids can read books in comfort. But my first grand idea is to paint the walls a nice white color and have kids from art classes paint murals all around.

There’s a few up already, but I would like the students to have more to look at. It will seem a lot more inviting and comfortable. I feel we need to let the students know that this is their library.

Mason comes to Poly with plenty of experience fixing and repairing libraries.

“For 22 years I’ve worked in the library at Serrania Avenue Elementary in Woodland Hills, which was a charter school,” Mason said. “When I first started, it was a very old library. Some parents and I fundraised over \$50,000 dollars and we remodeled the entire library with new books and furniture, It was very nice and very up to date

“From there I went to Hamlin Elementary in West Hills. They had a wonderful reading library with a stage where the kids could sit down and watch a video, or the librarian could read to them. The library was open recess, lunch, after school, and even for the parents.”

“The parents there were very involved with the library. I worked there for a year.”

“After Hamlin, I worked at Gaspar De Portola Middle School, which was a real culture shock, because the kids there weren’t as involved in reading as the elementary school kids.”

“Then I came here. I was originally supposed to open up the freshmen library, but Ms. Blackwell was transferred, so now I’m here.”

“The freshmen library isn’t open yet, but it’s really nice.

They have 40 computer stations and it’s very modern. I was looking forward to working there, but I like it here. I really enjoy working with mature students and teachers and there’s a lot to do here. I like to keep busy all the time and at a school of this size, there’s always something to do.”

What books Mason gets for the library depends on the budget.

“I don’t know what the current budget is for the library,” Mason said. “I haven’t spoken to Bennett. I have a meeting with him on Monday so we’ll see. But I hope it’s enough to bring this library up-to-date. I don’t know the last time this library was updated, but it needs a lot of modernization. This library needs to be freshened up. But so far no one has given me a budget of any kind.”

But change takes time, Mason said.

“Making changes here will be a long process, because there’s a lot of material that is great, but a lot that needs to be weeded out because it’s not relevant anymore,” Mason said. “We need to get supervisors from downtown to come and figure out what comes and goes.

Mason grew up in the area and went to high school at San Fernando.

“I got married out of high school, married my high school sweetheart and I’m still married to him, we’ve been married for 47 years,” Mason said. “Back then, not everyone went to college.

“I did not become a librarian straight after high school. I had kids and had a life. I started in 1988 at Hamlin.”

Fixing the library is one thing. Getting high school kids to read the books there is another.

“Elementary school students are a lot easier to persuade to read than high school kids,” Mason said. “Elementary school kids are more imaginative. High school kids have more on their plate with classes and socializing.”

“But I think talking to the kids will help, helping them find books that they find interesting. After all, the library is theirs, not mine. I just take care of it for them.”

Getting to Know the Class of ‘64

By Lisa Guardado
Staff Writer

Poly’s Class of ’63 and ’64 will hold their 50-year Class Reunion in 2013. The OPTIMIST caught up with three ladies from the reunion committee, Barbara Drogichen, Diane Hudson and Mary Magness, and asked them to tell us about the good old days. Here’s what they said.

Our senior class, W’63, was called the Chirons: In Greek mythology, Chiron was a superlative centaur among his brethren.

The class of S’63 was the Tahitians, a reference to the warm and exotic Tahiti.

The class of W’64 was the Aldebarans, one of the largest stars in the galaxy.

S’64 was the Deucalions. Deucalion, son of Prometheus, survived the deluge with his wife, Pyrrha, and became the founder of the renewed human race.

We had approximately 192 students graduate in the Aldebaran class. S’63 was very large, I believe over 1,000 students, as was S’64.

Poly had approximately 3000 students.

We had seven periods, around 50 minutes each. Classes started around 8am and ended at 3pm.

Homeroom was about 20 minutes and was for taking roll and provide information for the day’s events or the week’s activities.

We didn’t have air conditioning and it was very hot. We started school in September right after Labor Day and ended in the middle of the following June. At no time was school postponed, cancelled or terminated early in the day because of heat.

The girls wore skirts and/or dresses ONLY, and they had to be below the knee. Pants for girls were not allowed, nor flat shoes, heels, see-thru blouses or spaghetti straps. Boys wore pants (Dockers or jeans) and shirts.

Women teachers wore dresses or skirts and the men wore suits and ties. Attire was more formal then. Shorts were confined to gym classes.

Some students brought lunch from home. The cafeteria had grilled cheese sandwiches, hamburgers or hot dogs or meatloaf and mashed potatoes.

The bungalows and the building by the “Cave” area weren’t at Poly when we were here.

Electives included Auto Shop, Home Ec, Agriculture and Horticulture. One teacher kept a greenhouse on campus and grew orchids that kids could buy for the prom. Wood Shop and Archery was offered as a PE elective for seniors. We also had drama, choir, foreign languages, journalism and business classes, including typing.

Monday/Wednesday/Friday the school would show a portion of a movie in the auditorium for a nickel. Tuesday and Thursday was dancing in the girl’s gym. Both of these took place in the second half of the lunch period.

The drama department put on plays and musicals and occasional Friday night “Fun Nights.”

A carnival in the spring raised money for the school.

Pep rallies for two or three big games were a big thing during football season. They were on Friday and organized by the cheerleaders and song leaders.

Homework was about 1-3 hours a night depending on what classes you took.

The only standardized test we had was the Iowa State tests. Other than that, no other tests.

There were no exit exams. Seniors had to take all the required classes and maintain a C average. We also had to take Senior Government.

If you had a typewriter, you were in the advanced group. Everything was by hand and on paper. If you typed something, you had carbon paper between pages one and two, which made a copy as you typed.

We also had the old mimeograph machines. The closest thing we had to a computer was a slide ruler for math and science classes, a device that probably very few people know



Photo by Vanessa Aquino
ALUMS: Former Parrots (from left) Diane Hudson, Mary Magness and Barbara Drogichen.

about now.

Most of the boys had cars, especially the ones in car clubs: the Pagans, Selectors, Deacons, Jokers and Townsmen. They parked behind the Boys Gym. Some of the girls also parked there.

We also had service organizations – the Knights (Boys honor-service), the Athenians (Girls honor-service), the Dorians, Dresdens and Fremfro-Ja’s/Charity Club, Jr. Debs/Big Sisters, Les Commencements/Welfare, the Rigels/service, the San Parrelles/library, the Taragons/Poly hostesses.

We also had a Stage Crew, a Pep Club, Rally Girls, Songleaders, Cheerleaders, Girl’s Glee and The Chanters. The Starlighters decorated the gym for dances and sold beverages.

We listened to anything Motown – Shirelles, Crystals, Duprees, Dion and the Belmonts, The Temptations, Marvin Gaye, Smokey Robinson. We also liked Elvis, Bobby Rydell, Fabian, the Everly Brothers, Johnny Mathis, Buddy Holly, the Big Bopper, Annette Funicello, Connie Francis and Bobby Darin.

The vast majority of the class was Caucasian. We also had Hispanics and we had quite a few Asians.

The neighborhood was very middle-class, blue collar/white collar. Lots of aerospace workers, policemen, firemen and the movie industry.

Landfills made it impossible to walk from north of Sheldon directly down Arleta Ave. to campus. The neighborhoods were quiet and unassuming.

Most of the houses were built in the early to mid-fifties so they were fairly new when Poly opened in February of ’57. There were a lot of mom and pop businesses close by also.

We were a new high school, so there was great pride and knowledge of our school’s past.

We knew Poly was the second oldest high school in Los Angeles and that the original campus was located in Los Angeles and was later used as the site for L.A. Trade Tech.

James Taylor, Poly’s former vice principal, became Poly’s first black principal in 1963. Parents and students fought hard to get Mr. Taylor into that position. Mr. Taylor had a positive impact on all students, but he had a special gift of working with “troubled” students. He would actually drive to student homes and take students to school. He instilled in us that education was important.

CAMPUS

Parrots Pick Pilot Program

[From Poly, front page]

Agreement that all teachers need to sign every year that demonstrates their commitment to the Poly instructional program now in place.

“We’re not going to make teachers sign the agreement every year,” said Bennett. “Once is fine. We’ll just roll that over from year to year unless we decide to change our plan and that would be a school decision.”

The Pilot is effective for five years before an evaluation.

“What they use as our evaluation is our accreditation,” Bennett said. “We get full accreditation every six years and midterm accreditation every three years to check how we’re doing.”

A long-established school like Poly going Pilot is a first for LAUSD. Most of the schools that are Pilot are new schools. Chavez High School has two or three Small Learning Communities that are Pilot but nothing like Poly.

Additional funding through the Pilot can offer benefits to students, Bennett said.

“For example, we are hoping to expand our Arts program. Additional funding from the Pilot might be used to hire an additional teacher in social studies, a teacher in the arts, elective programs and curriculum choices.”

A lengthy research effort preceded adoption of the Pilot

“In the research phase, Mr. Grigsby, Mr. Scott, Mr. Schwagle, Mr. Herrold and Mr. Rabins got information to help us make a decision,” Bennett said.

UTLA Chapter Chair and Poly science teacher Bob Scott has been working on the Pilot project for three years.

“We looked into various governance models, but the Pilot offered the best opportunities for us,” Scott said. “It gave us additional funding and additional opportunities for student’s improvement.”

“We worked on the Pilot program research for the last six months,” said Poly art teacher Wood Grigsby. “We found that the Pilot program offered the most benefits of all the programs that we looked at - more money through direct-people funding, more academic autonomy from LAUSD and the opportunity to choose our own school calendar.”

Grigsby revised the Elect-to-Work agreement to meet Poly’s special requirements.

English teacher Evan Rabins put together the 25-page Pilot proposal.

“A lot of teachers aren’t comfortable with their writing and I was the one who was willing to do it,” said Rabins. “Then also I kind of became

the face on it in terms of talking to other teachers and making presentations when we had whole group meetings.”

Acceptance of the Pilot required approval of two-thirds of Poly’s faculty.

“We said all along that we wanted to get 80% of teachers to approve,” Rabins said. “In the end, over 90% voted for it.”

“We’ve been looking at governance models for at least two years but Bob Scott, Jim Schwagle and Wood Grigsby really did most of the work,” said English teacher Jeff Herrold. “Wood Grigsby and Evan Rabins did the lion’s share of taking the Pilot model and adapting it to Poly as part of our accreditation.”

“I went out and talked to other teachers who were not going to the meetings to get their input and to hear what they said and how they felt about it,” Herrold said. “I thought that a lot of changes were going to be happening and I wanted to take an active role.”

LAUSD is increasingly about centralized control and dictating what schools should do, Herrold said.

“They’re sort of approaching things with a one-size-fits-all that doesn’t necessarily serve our students here at Poly,” Herrold said.



Photo by Tracy Salcido

RESEARCH COMMITTEE: UTLA rep Bob Scott (left) led the Pilot research committee. Other members included English teachers Jeff Herrold and Evan Rabins and art teacher Wood Grigsby.

Freshman Move

[From Moving, front page]

Transition Unit, moved everything across the street on December 17. Ten trucks full of boxes made the move between 7 am to 11:30 am.

Teachers had the option of moving on either December 20th or January 4th.

“They were here from 7am to late afternoon setting up their rooms,” said De Santiago, “and they got paid for the day.”

The new facility has the latest technology.

“Yesterday our teachers got their brand new document cameras and their tablets,” De Santiago said. “They have top-of-the-line technology, brand new computers, LCD projectors and access to outside media. We can’t complain.”

“We can actually write stuff and it’ll appear on the projector,” said math teacher Larry Ziehler, “so there’s a lot of things we can do with that.”

But Ziehler didn’t like the desk location.

“I like to be in the back where I can see everybody, their backs facing me during a test so that way I can see what’s going on,” Ziehler said. “If they’re facing me, then they know what I’m doing at all times so it’s easier for them to cheat.”

Students are more visible outside too.

“Some of the kids were a little hesitant because this facility is so small,” Ziehler said. “Now your secrets are going to be known, you can’t do anything stupid in the yard because we’re going to see it. At Poly there are blindspots, but here we have cameras a lot of places. We

are securing the area to make sure the students are safe.”

De Santiago believes the Ninth Grade Center is a positive place for students.

“Whether the students like the campus or not I couldn’t say. But we are trying as a faculty to do the best we can to make the experience for our ninth graders a good one.”

The Ninth Grade Center offers the same PE classes as Poly’s main campus.

“We have a field with a basketball court and track, but we don’t have a gym,” said De Santiago. “When it rains, we will have classrooms for the students.”

Chuck Schwall and Tim Feeley are the PE teachers.

Food is prepared in Byrd’s kitchen. Byrd and Poly eat the same food.

The Ninth Grade Center has seven faculty and six student restrooms. The library will be up and running by next month.

Poly security people take turns securing the Arleta bridge. Students are not allowed to go across the bridge unless they have a pass stating where they’re going and why, even during lunch.

“I’ve had Poly parents texting me saying they want to come help with supervision,” said De Santiago. “I am thankful for that.”

Ninth Grade Center students can participate in Poly activities, including clubs. The counselors hand out passes with a signature, a valid date and the student’s name. The passes are good for the one quarter, after which they have to be renewed.



Google Image

HEAVY MEDALS: Led Zeppelin members Robert Plant, Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones (from left) greet President Obama at Kennedy Center.

Kennedy Center Honors Led Zep

By Lisa Guardado
Staff Writer

The Led Zeppelin that hit the airwaves in 1968 hardly seemed like a future recipient of a Kennedy Center Award.

But there they were, lead singer Robert Plant, guitarist Jimmy Page and bassist John Paul Jones, in tuxes and smiles, on stage at the prestigious Washington D.C. hall.

Bluesman Buddy Guy, actor/director Dustin Hoffman, comedian David Letterman and ballerina Natalia Makarova were also honored.

The Kennedy Honors, begun in 1978, were created to commemorate performers who have impacted American culture throughout their lifetime and bring the public’s attention to the artist’s true place in society.”

Past honorees include Frank Sinatra (‘83), Lucille Ball (‘86), Johnny Cash (‘96), Bill Cosby (‘97), Clint Eastwood (2000), Tony Bennett (‘05), Paul McCartney (‘10), and Yo-Yo Ma (‘11).

A Led Zeppelin tribute, longest of the night, included performances by Foo Fighters, Heart, Kid Rock and Jason Bonham, son of original Led Zeppelin drummer John Bonham, who died in 1980.

Led Zeppelin was at the forefront of album-oriented rock (AOR) and arena concerts. Their song writing and nuanced heavy metal sound influenced most of the the rock musicians who came after.

Led Zeppelin has been “the biggest band in the world” since the late 60’s. With over 300 million album sales worldwide, including 111.5 million certified units in the United States, LZ is one of the world’s best-selling bands of all time, as well as the second best-selling band of all time in the United States.

“In my opinion, next to the Beatles, they’re the most influential band in history,” said Geffen Records executive John Kalodner.

Led Zeppelin was founded by vocalist Robert Plant, guitarist Jimmy Page, bassist John Paul Jones and Bonham in 1968.

“They influenced music on records, AOR radio and concerts. They set the standards for the AOR-radio format with ‘Stairway to Heaven,’ having AOR hits without necessarily having Top 40 hits. They’re the ones who did the first real big arena concert shows,

consistently selling out and playing stadiums without support. People can do as well as them, but nobody surpasses them.”

Kennedy Center History

Congress held hearings on plans to establish a new Department of Science, Art and Literature and to build a monumental theater and arts building on Capitol Hill as early as 1935.

In the summer of 1958, Congress finally passed the bill creating the National Cultural Center Act and on September 4, 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed it into law.

For the first time in history, the federal government would help finance a structure dedicated to the performing arts.

Construction on the National Cultural Center, renamed the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, began in 1967. The first performance was on September 5, 1971.

“Next to the Beatles, they’re the most influential band in history,” said Geffen Records exec John Kalodner.

The Kennedy Center presents theater, dance, ballet, orchestral, chamber, jazz, popular, and folk music performances for all ages. It is the busiest performing arts facility in the United States and annually hosts approximately 2,000 performances for audiences totaling nearly two million.

Over the years, the Kennedy Center Honors has recognized the lifelong accomplishments and extraordinary talents of America’s most-prestigious artists. Past honorees include Broadway composer Richard Rodgers in 1978, Aaron Copland in 1979 and Leonard Bernstein in 1980. More recent awards have gone to Bruce Springsteen (2009), Paul McCartney (2010) and Neil Diamond (2011).

CINEMA

Tarantino’s First Western Stirs Controversy

“Django Unchained” offers over-the-top pulp violence and plenty to offend sensibilities.

By Adrianna Garcia
Staff Writer

Oscar-winning writer and director Quentin Tarantino dives into unexplored territory with “Django Unchained” –

slavery. “I want to create the first iconic slavery film,” Tarantino told leading man Jamie Foxx (“Django”) before filming began. Many would call this Tarantino’s first western film, though he prefers calling it a “southern” due to its south Mississippi setting. Tarantino’s script captures the cruel reality of 1800s slavery in the American South. Django is a freed slave searching for his wife Broomhilda (Kerry Washington) in the land of cruel plantation owner Calvin Candie (Leonardo DiCaprio). German bounty hunter Dr. King Schultz (Christoph Waltz) helps Django on his quest for revenge. But “Django”’s blunt style has received some negative reactions. “A black friend of mine said ‘Well the “N” word bothered me,’ said Foxx. ‘It’s supposed to bother you,’ Foxx replied. But Tarantino is unconcerned with negative comments from critics. “They can shut up,” Tarantino told Nightline. “It’s my job to tell the truth.”

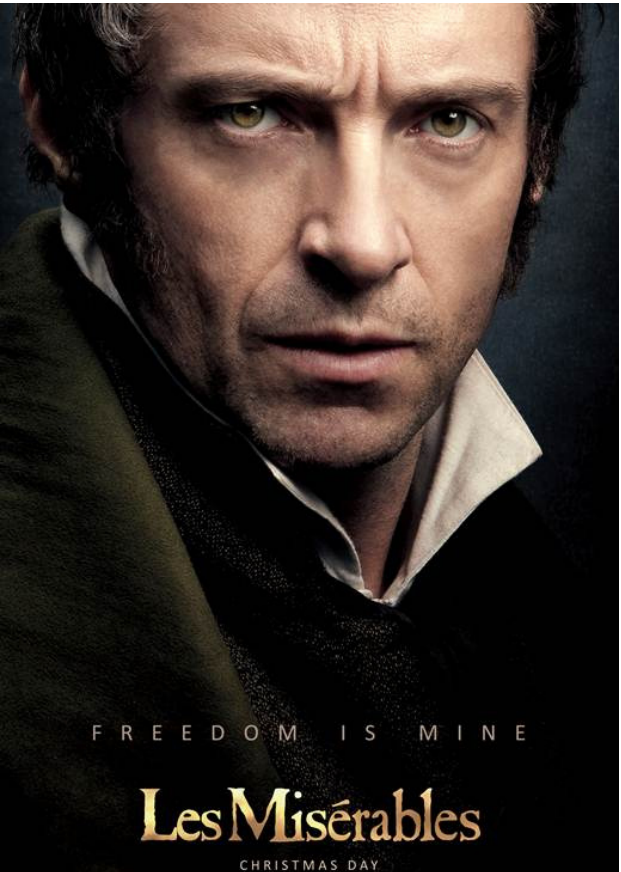
“Django’s” characters are like no others. “This was one of the most narcissistic, self-indulgent, racist, despicable characters I’ve ever read in my entire life,” said DiCaprio about Candie. “Django,” meanwhile, is doing just fine so far, with five Golden Globe nominations, including Best Supporting Actor for both Christoph Waltz and Leonardo DiCaprio, Best Screenplay, Best Director, and Best Drama. Oscar buzz for Tarantino and “Django” is also mounting. The writing in Django is sharp and charismatic, just like any other Tarantino film. The script combines intense drama with a hint of dark comedy. When a mob dressed like KKK members rides out to shoot Django and Schultz while the two men sleep, one man complains that he can’t see with a cloth bag over his head. The member whose wife made the masks angrily replies “I watched my wife work all day getting thirty bags together for all you ungrateful sons of ----- and all I can hear is criticize, criticize, criticize!” Distinctive writing and visuals such as crimson blood staining a plantation’s pure white cotton are cinematic details Tarantino does better than anybody. The movie is quintessential Tarantino - blood, violence, and memorable characters, but nothing new from the director of “Reservoir Dogs” (1992), “Pulp Fiction” (1994), and “Inglouri-



ous Basterds” (2009). “Django Unchained” is a must-see for Oscar watchers and Tarantino fans and engaging filmmaking for everyone else.

‘Les Mis’ and the Poor People of Paris

By Maureen Kang
Staff Writer



“ I once dreamed that love would never die... had a dream my life would be so different from this hell I’m living. ”

The words of despair from “I Dreamed a Dream,” sung by factory worker turned prostitute Fantine (Anne Hathaway) tell the story of a woman without hope. The lyrics also set the tone for the real stars of director Tom Hooper’s film musical adaptation of Victor Hugo’s epic novel, “Les Miserables,” the poor people of Paris amidst the political and social turmoil of 1830s France. An emaciated and red-eyed Valjean (Hugh Jackman), after 19 years in prison, gets food and shelter from the Bishop of Digne, but Valjean steals his silver. When Valjean is caught by the police, the bishop says the silver was a gift. “What Have I Done,” Valjean sings as he vows to start a new life. But former prison guard Javert (Russell Crowe), now a police officer, is determined to bring Valjean to justice, a quest that will take seventeen years. The story is well known, so Hooper concentrates his actors on the singing. The vocals are live on the set rather than recorded and the extra demands on the actors add dynamics and genuine emotion to the action. “Singing gives access to a deeper emotional range,” Hooper believes. Hooper used Clause-Michael Schonberg’s original music from the 1987 Broadway musical as well as several arrangements from lyricists Alain Boublil and Herbert Kretzmer. All fifty songs are operatic, powerfully delivered and emotional. Though the actors, mostly Crowe, sometimes strain to reach the high notes, the result is more realistic and believable. Hooper also uses tight closeups to add punch to his story. The camera gets so close

to Anne Hathaway’s face she might as well be shouting in your face, providing an almost 3D feeling and dramatizing the characters’ tragic situations even more. Jackman and Hathaway had to lose several dozen pounds each and sang up to 12 hours a day to get into character. “If you’re an actor, you sign up to make a fool of yourself, and that’s what happened,” Jackman said about the bench-pressing part of his extensive training for the role. “There’s no way I could relate to what my character was going through,” Hathaway confessed about her role as Fantine. “If you end up cutting my scalp and there’s blood, fantastic! Let’s go for it,” Hathaway told her makeup artist at one session. “Les Miserables” owes much to the determination of its director, cast and crew. Though the music sometimes overwhelms the storyline, making the scene more melodramatic than required, the film paints a vivid and lasting portrait of its subject, the poor people of Paris.

The vocals are live on the set rather than recorded and the extra demands on the actors add dynamics and genuine emotion to the action.

SPORTS

Lancers Ride Perry’s 30 to Easy 67-51 Win Over Parrots

By Amy Ayala
Staff Writer

Lancers senior Tullio Perry had 30 points, 17 in the first half, and senior center Kalib Wilks added 14 in Grant’s well-executed 67-51 romp over the Parrots Wednesday in the Cage.

“Parry played very well and was up for the challenge,” said Parrot head coach Alan Woskanian.

Poly bested the Lancers 55-40 in late December of last year.

“Grant made some great adjustments,” said Woskanian. “Last time they played a diamond and 1 on Cesar, which allowed all our guys to get off. This time they came out in a straight man and face-guarded Cesar without helping off of him, forcing us in to bad shots.”

Both teams came into the game undefeated in East Valley League play.

“Overall, the blame for that loss lies with me,” said Woskanian. “Howie (Lancer head coach Howard Levine) had his guys better prepared than I did. They were the better team that night.”

Poly was outscored in every quarter but the fourth, and was down by 15 at the half. Grant hit 58% of their two-point attempts, while Poly made only 42%.

“Almost all of our shots were off and we didn’t really come with the energy that we normally play with,” said Parrot senior Curtis Pike, who had eight points and six rebounds.

Poly sophomore scorer Cesar Reyes, who had 32 points against Chavez on Monday and 24, including six threes, against NoHo last Friday, had only three points at the half and 12 on the night, thanks to some strong pressure defense from Grant.

“We were setting him up with a lot of screens to get him open,” Pike said, “but his shots weren’t falling.”

Woskanian agreed.

“Our guys got caught in solely looking for Cesar,” Woskanian said, “and he was having an off night.”

Parrot junior Sal Gonzalez led Poly with 14 points, 9 at the half.

Poly’s defense was a step late throughout the game, chasing after Grant on fast breaks for much of the night.

Grant’s 21 offensive boards gave them too many easy put-backs and second chance points, thanks to their height and boxing out. Poly managed just nine offensive rebounds. Grant’s



Photo by Tracy Salcido

MY TURN: Parrot sophomore Cesar Reyes looks to score against Lancer’s senior Tullio Perry in Poly’s 67-51 loss to Grant. Perry had 30 points.

“Our guys got caught in solely looking for Cesar, and he was having an off night.”

-Parrot head coach Alan Woskanian

advantage on the defensive glass was bigger, 32 to 12.

“There was no communication on the defensive end from anyone,” said Pike. “We need to be more vocal because when everyone is talking, everyone is moving and it throws the other team down.”

Turnovers also hurt the Parrots. Grant usually turned sloppy passes and loose balls into baskets.

Both teams fared poorly at the free throw line, with Grant 3 for 6 and Poly 8 for 15.

“We remain confident knowing that when we are on our game, we can run with the best of them,” Woskanian said. “The League Championship is still the goal.”

Poly (9-7, 4-1) travels to Verdugo Hills (9-8, 3-0) for a 5 pm January 23 contest.

Parrots Bageled 6-0

By Alfredo Quezada
Staff Writer

Visiting Monroe handed Poly’s varsity soccer team a stinging 6-0 loss Wednesday.

“We just gave up,” said Parrot head coach Rafael Loza. “Maybe they just stopped playing with heart. If you don’t keep up, that’s what’s going to happen.”

Viking sophomore Carlos Solorio scored from a corner kick and senior Jeff Cordova scored on a through pass in the early going.

Solorio scored again after receiv-

ing a pass and junior Oscar Polanco scored with a through pass, all during the first half.

Monroe senior Junior Rivera and senior Cordova both scored in the second half.

Loza seemed disappointed during the final minutes of the game.

“We have to be aggressive, we have to be faster,” said Loza. “We didn’t play with heart and that is the biggest problem I see. Skill level is not a priority; you have to play with heart. If you constantly play very aggressive, you will give one hundred percent.”

Parrots Get NFL-style Workout

By Alfredo Quezada
Staff Writer

Nine Parrot football players worked out with former NFL linebacker Ken Rose in Newbury Park on January 6. Rose played with the Jets, Browns and Eagles during the 70s.

Junior Bryan Ramos, sophomore Scott Diaz, junior Orlando Garcia, junior Luis Pereda, sophomore Manny Peralta, sophomore David Salazar, junior Luis Silvia, sophomore George Wilcomm and junior Camilo Tongamao all made the trip to Rose’s football camp.

Math teacher Sean King, assistant football coach Kirk Dinsmore and PE teacher Chuck Schwal sponsored the trip and worked with the Parrot players.

“I know how important conditioning is to any athlete,” said King. “I wanted these varsity football players

to experience the training by a professional like Ken Rose to help focus their training here at Poly as they prepare for the 2013 season.”

The two-hour private training session included agility and conditioning drills and core, abdominal, hip workouts, all football drills.

“The workouts were different from what I’m use to doing,” said Peralta. “tiring and extremely difficult. My body felt sluggish and drained of energy.”

Giant training bands were part of the equipment used for both indoor and outdoor workouts.

“The kids were able to see how other workout techniques are really punishing,” said King.

“I kept up, luckily, throughout all of the workouts,” said Cruz. “They were challenging. The next day, I was extremely sore. Everyone was sore.”

Poly Burns Grant

By Amy Ayala
Staff Writer

The Lady Parrots stole a 41-40 squeaker from the visiting Lancers when a last-second layup by Grant rolled off the rim at the buzzer.

The ball was in Grant’s hands thanks to a Poly turnover on the inbounds.

Down 24-22 at the half, Poly came out blazing in the third, outscoring Grant 17-9.

“We turned to our bigs, who dominated the smaller Grant players,” said veteran Parrot head coach Tremeka Batiste.

Juniors Ele Taulaki and Stephanie Gurrola, who combined for 15 points and 17 rebounds, proved too big for Grant to handle.

But Poly tried their best to give

the game away in the fourth, scoring only 2 points.

“We started rushing,” Batiste said “and that led to turnovers.”

The Lady Parrots had 17 turnovers for the game.

“The team has not met my expectations yet,” Batiste said. “We are up and down still. The girls will work on one thing and forget something else. They’re still not using their speed, and they forget to box out.”

Batiste remains positive nonetheless.

“The girls definitely have the talent,” Batiste said. “The team is young, and with that comes inconsistency. But the girls are getting there. We’re 11-9, much improved from last year.”

Poly hosts Verdugo (1-5) on Wednesday.

Vball Coach Fired

Veteran head coach Gaby Gallardo is fired after three years at the helm of both boys and girls squads.

By Tracy Salcido
Staff Writer

Parrot Principal Ari Bennett fired Poly’s volleyball coaching staff, including head coach Gaby Gallardo, JV Coach Melissa Gillard and Frosh/Soph Coach Jeanelle Lou on Tuesday, December 11, 2012.

Bennett later met with some volleyball players and their parents in his office to hear their thoughts and clarify his actions.

“Problems with Gaby and the way she ran her program have come to my attention multiple times and from multiple sources,” said Bennett. “We offered her support over the past several months.”

Bennett said having Gallardo on campus affected the others coaches and put Poly’s sports program at risk.

Bennett was not at liberty to discuss the matter further because of LAUSD personnel and privacy restrictions.

“I’m sorry for who this situation hurts, but unfortunately, it has to be done,” Bennett said.

Bennett then gave the girls a chance to explain how they felt.

“No other coach will ever be like Gallardo,” said girls captain Ericka Magee. “Gaby put her students first and motivates them.”

“Gaby taught me how to achieve and pushed me to my limits,” said boys captain Richard Garcia.

“All the girls are at this meeting for a reason,” said girls captain



Photo by Vanessa Aquino

FIRED: Former varsity volleyball coach Gaby Gallardo.

Alexis Serafin. “Gaby was another person we could talk too. She’s a part of who we are now.”

“I was an athlete once, and I understand how hard it is to let go,” Bennett said, “but her relationship with the district was not working.”

Bennett said he hopes that the girls will still play and move on in a positive way.

Poly athletic director Kim McEwen has already posted the job opening online and at other schools.

Gallardo coached JV volleyball for three years and served as head coach for three years.

Gallardo had her best season as girls coach in 2010-11, when the Parrots lost to Palisades 3-0 in the CIF Championship game. The boys squad lost 3-0 to Palisades in the fourth round of the city playoffs in 2010-11.

This year the girls were 23-13-1, 10-2 and lost to Birmingham 3-0 in the first round.

GALLARDO TENURE AT POLY

GIRLS VARSITY VOLLEYBALL

Varsity 12-13 – 23-13-1, 10-2, playoffs: First round 3-0 loss to Birmingham Varsity 11-12 – 13-7-4, 9-3, playoffs: First Round 3-1 loss to Birmingham Varsity 10-11 – 27-6, 12-0, playoffs: CIF LA City Championship 3-0 loss to Palisades

Note that the girls were 20-7, 11-1 in 09-10 under Peter Johannsen

BOYS VARSITY VOLLEYBALL

Varsity 11-12 – 17-11, 8-2, playoffs: Second Round 3-1 loss to Van Nuys Varsity 10-11 – 21-7-2, 10-0, playoffs: Fourth Round 3-0 loss to Palisades Varsity 09-10 – 15-7-3, 7-3, playoffs: Second Round 3-0 loss to El Camino Real