

# The Poly Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

VOL. XCVIII, NO. 7

SERVING THE POLY COMMUNITY SINCE 1913

FEBRUARY 2013

## Poly Has a Cadre

By Alfredo Quezada  
Staff Writer

Poly Bilingual Coordinator Margaret Hidalgo is offering an after-school course for Poly teachers on Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) strategies.

“We learn different SDAIE strategies,” Hidalgo said. “Sometimes teachers just take for granted that all our students understand the content, when in reality, they are struggling. We learn and practice meaningful strategies that engage students and help them understand the content they need to be successful.”

The cadre began last February. “It was very successful, and we continued it this school year with even more teachers coming aboard.”

Cadre members agree on the value of the course.

“Everyone gathers at the cadre, math teachers, history teachers, English teachers, with the same problem - students don’t know the English language well enough,” said English teacher and cadre member Ethel Matlen. “The biggest problem these students have, understanding the English language, is the same in all classes.”

The cadre meets every Wednesday from 3:15 - 4:45.

“Some of us stay afterwards, discussing concerns and questions we might have,” Hidalgo said.

Hidalgo, who says she does a lot of modeling, is encouraged by the efforts of the faculty members in her class.

“The teachers really want to see strategies they can use with their English learners,” Hidalgo said. “I’m grateful to them, because they really want to reach out to their students and make sure they master the standards.”

Cadre members say the class is helpful.

“The class doesn’t involve someone from outside of this school telling us how to educate the language,” Matlen said. “The teacher is one of our own and it somewhat brings us together.”

Math teacher Sergio Lopez agrees.

“What they teach us really helps,” Lopez said.

Hidalgo asks for teacher input and includes discussion time in each class.

“I ask the cadre members to share what works for them.

Modeling is a favorite strategy for Hidalgo.

“I try to use strategies that involve interaction,” Hidalgo said,

[ See Cadre, pg 6 ]

## Highest Finish Ever For Poly



Photo Courtesy of Brian Block

**PARTY LINE:** *Russia was the theme of this year’s Academic Decathlon.*

## Ninth Grade Center Library Now Open

By Walter Linares  
Staff Writer

Poly’s newly opened Ninth Grade Center now has its own library up and running.

On Tuesdays, that is.

“I will be over there on Tuesdays all day,” said current Poly library aide Dee Mason. “The ninth

grade center is one fourth of the Poly population, so the Center can only have a librarian one fourth of the time.”

Sharing duties at the new library is Tenth Grade Center English teacher Lisa Blackwell, who works during lunch.

The library, on the north corner of the second floor of the Administration building, has 40 computer stations and four stacks holding approximately 10,000 books. Poly’s library has approximately 18,000 volumes.

“Most of the material here is not available in the Poly library,” said Mason. “The Ninth Grade Center library collection is newer. All categories are covered, although I haven’t fully explored the non-fiction yet.”

Ninth graders are welcome to use Poly’s library for any materials unavailable at the Ninth Grade Center library, Mason said.

The checkout procedure is the same at both libraries. But students are not

[ See Ninth, pg 6 ]

## Parrot team off to state competition for third time in four years.

Poly’s Academic Decathlon squad scored 42,355.7 points and finished ninth in the LAUSD competition held January 26 at Roybal Learning Center in downtown Los Angeles, Poly’s highest finish ever.

“It wasn’t a distant ninth,” said Poly veteran Aca Deca head coach Brian Block. “We were close to reaching the next level.”

By Maureen Kang  
Staff Writer

“Poly was a mere 555 points out of sixth place,” Block said. “When you finish 20 questions behind out of 2000, it doesn’t seem like you have to do that much to fill that gap.”

“I’d like to fill that gap within the five weeks before going to state competition,” Block said.

Poly finished in a four-way tie for sixth place in the Super Quiz with 3600 points, another Poly first. Poly also finished first in its 10-school conference and top ten in eight of nine subject categories that included Art (7), Essay (9), Interview (4), Lang/Lit (9), Math (9), Music (8), Soc Sci (9) and Speech (5).

Parrot juniors Reymundo Cano and Lezleigh Millhauser placed first in Interview, Parrot sophomore Hannah Almonte and junior Evaristo Capalla placed second and juniors

Armen Aslanyan and Luis Miranda placed third.

Almonte and Jihae Snyder placed first in Speech, Cano, Capalla and Millhauser placed second, and Miranda placed third.

In Conference 3, Almonte was top three in Honors, Aslanyan was top three in Scholastic and Miranda was top three in Varsity for all 10 events.

Aslanyan had the ninth highest individual score among all competitors with 7141.4 points.

Parrot Honors junior Andrew Koh and Varsity junior Paola Pereda were also part of the Aca Deca team.

Poly’s Aca Deca team brought

[ See Aca Deca, pg 6 ]

## Vaccinate a Village

Poly clubs are fundraising to stamp out measles and rubella.

By Jasmine Aquino  
Staff Writer

Poly’s Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Club and The Red Cross Youth Group brought the Measles & Rubella Initiative to Poly students this February.

The Measles & Rubella Initiative is a global partnership working towards decreasing the child death rate of measles and lowering the chances of children being born with congenital rubella syndrome. The initiative is led by the American Red Cross, the United Nations Foundation, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, UNICEF and the World Health Organization.

“The EMS and Red Cross Clubs work towards helping people and saving lives in our community every day,” said Poly senior and Red Cross Youth Group President Adan Renteria. “Now with this initiative, we are working towards helping more people world-wide.”

[ See Vaccinate, pg 6 ]

## Thornburgh At Carnegie Hall

By Lisa Guardado  
Staff Writer

It’s every musician’s dream to play Carnegie Hall, New York’s most prestigious performing venue.

On Sunday, Poly English teacher Eric Thornburgh made his dream come true, performing as a member of Cantori Domino, a choral group founded by his world-famous mother, Maurita Phillips-Thornburgh, at that famous theatre.

“This was my first time performing in Carnegie Hall,” Thornburgh said. “It was exciting. It was a privilege to be a part of history in the great hall. I didn’t imagine I would ever get there.”

The featured performance at the Sunday evening concert was Jonathan Willcocks’ “A Great and Glorious Victory,” which commemorates the battle of Trafalgar, Lord Nelson’s naval defeat of the Spanish and the French.

The Children’s Chorus, conducted by Francisco Nunez, performed first, doing songs of peace from different parts of the world. The two-hour concert was billed as “The Sounds of War and Peace.”

Thornburgh’s mother had invited Sir David Willcocks, Jonathan’s father, to do some workshops in 2009 with Cantori Domino in Santa Monica

“During the last visit, he brought his son, Jonathan and that was how we met him,” Thornburgh said.

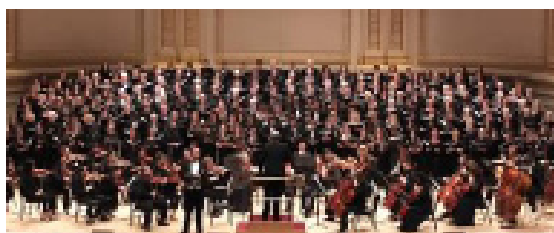


Photo Courtesy of Thornburgh

**SINGERS:** *Cantori Domino at Carnegie Hall.*

“When Jonathan invited us, I knew immediately I would go. I knew that would be the chance of a lifetime.”

Cantori Domino performed in the Isaac Stern Auditorium, the main hall at Carnegie. Men wore black tuxes and the women wore black dresses. Everyone had to bring their own tuxes and dresses.

“When we got there, the weather was at 24-28 degrees,” Thornburgh said. “We stayed at the Crown Plaza, right on Times Square, and about ten blocks from Carnegie Hall, so we walked there. The weather was really nice during the day, 40 degrees. For New York, that’s great.”

The group rehearsed two days, three hours on Friday and three on Saturday. Their performance was Sunday at

[ See Thornburgh, pg 6 ]



Photo By Tracy Salcido

## Wiz Kids In Rehearsal

Meet the cast of Poly’s upcoming musical.

**CAMPUS - page 4**



Photo by Tracy Salcido

## Cheer Tries Coed Look

These guys can toss ‘em higher.

**CAMPUS - page 5**



OPINION

EDITORIAL

Lovers’ Lane – Hope You Were Careful this Valentine’s Day

Valentine’s Day is a time when people share their affection through chocolate, roses and physical interactions, especially at Poly.

Poly’s campus has many “lover’s lanes” where couples spend their lunchtime enjoying each other’s company. They are often found showing each other’s affections through kisses.

I can’t even imagine what happened on Valentine’s Day. I suppose there was a whole lot of kissing, so let me inform your love-struck mind of some facts relating to kisses.

When you and your loved one are exchanging saliva, either behind some rooms, near the main entrance or on the Peoria side, you swap more than 40,000 parasites and 250 types of bacteria. Of course this doesn’t apply to pecks, but come on, almost no one at Poly pecks nowadays.

The research was done in Sweden. The study also claims couples exchange 0.7 grams of protein, 0.45 grams of fat and 0.19 grams of other organic substances.

Don’t get too paranoid; kissing isn’t such a horrible activity. In fact, a kiss can be ten times more effective than morphine in

reducing pain. A kiss activates your body’s natural painkillers. So when your mom kissed your boo-boo to “make it better,” she actually did.

According to another research study, you burn five calories during a French kiss. Not only that but the act puts 29 facial muscles in motion, working to prevent wrinkles. Pecks involves only two. French kissing increases your blood pressure and heart rate along with blood hormone levels too.

As you can see, kissing has advantages and disadvantages. One huge disadvantage is your appearance. No one wants to see two people eating each other. Be courteous to other people’s stomachs.

Trust me, when other people see a couple making out, they’re not thinking very well of you, especially if you’re a girl. Yes, we live in the 21st century, but people’s thoughts about being “lady like” have not changed.

If you’re part of the “lover’s lane” crowd, think about how nauseating you look with your tongue down your partner’s throat. Have some respect.



the OPTIMIST  
VOL XCVIII No. 7  
FEBRUARY

3 DOWN TO EARTH  
Poly magnet senior Valentina de la Rosa doesn’t do Facebook or video games. Find out where she does hang in this OPTIMIST interview.  
By Walter Linares

4 WHICH WITCH IS WHICH?  
These Wiz Kids are working on a new play, but they’ve got plenty to say about themselves. Hopes and dreams galore is what they’re planning for.  
By Yenifer Rodriguez

4 ONE WOMAN SHOW  
She writes, she directs, she acts, she stars. She is Lena Dunham and the show is “Girls,” an edgy look at Manhattan twenty-somethings growing up fast.  
By Adrianna Garcia

5 LEAGUE CHAMPS  
Poly’s Unified basketball team is on a roll. Head coach Jorge Ramirez says his team is having fun and winning too.  
By Amy Ayala

6 HOW HIGH CAN THEY FLY  
Cheer coach Susan Garcia knew how to bring some new energy to the squad – bring on some muscle-bound boys to launch these Parrots straight outa sight.  
By Byron Fajardo

6 FIFTY IS THE NEW TWENTY  
Any band that has fifty candles on their birthday cake must be doing something right. We’re talking about the Stones. Return with us to the thrilling early days.  
By Lisa Guardado

7 A LEGEND RETURNS  
Parrot head baseball coach Gabe Cerna didn’t have to look far to find a pitching coach. Poly veteran Chuck Schwal was happy to volunteer his services.  
By James Torres

7 BIG AND TALL  
Poly’s bigs planted themselves under the basket and tossed in 35 points the other night, more than enough to pound the visiting Huskies into submission 65-46.  
By Amy Ayala

8 SOCCER TAKES A POWDER  
The girls’ soccer squad bowed out in the first round of the playoffs, but head coach Yesenia Cervantes wasn’t happy with the officiating. Read her side of the story.  
By Amy Ayala

8 THIS KID IS HOT  
Sophomore sensation Cesar Reyes continues to light up opponents with three-pointers. This time the victim was Grant. Who’s next?  
By Amy Ayala

Academic Pressure

Every year, Poly improves immensely in every aspect, especially academics. Every year, the OPTIMIST prints at least three monthly issues that include interviews of Poly seniors who are accepted into some of the top schools in the country: MIT, U Penn, Harvard, and Stanford just to name a few.

These students work at a high level of intellectuality with energy and motivation that comes from some unknown fountain of magic. These students drill their brains with more information than the school library holds with the common goal to graduate from the top schools in the world.

But this goal is common among students across the country, making it highly competitive. These students work throughout the night during school, often running on few, if any, hours of sleep. This goal almost seems impossible considering the obstacles—the intense pressure from numbers, such as test scores and GPAs—that they face, so what keeps them going?

My answer: Facebook.  
Almost every American student has a Facebook page, their own personal site where they are allowed to brag through statuses, photos, videos and just about anything that can be posted on the internet.

During this time of year, high school seniors have just finished their college applications and are waiting for the decisions made by the admissions offices. This gives the students a wonderful opportunity to brag about what schools they have

gotten into.  
Now, this doesn’t necessarily mean their success based on endless efforts is a bad thing. On the contrary, it is a great thing they take pride in what they have accomplished. But I believe it drives the concept of competition to a whole new level.

During the months of October, November and December, I saw endless amounts of statuses from fellow students regarding their GPAs and test scores. I did not mind this, yet when I found out some fellow classmates were rethinking about even applying to college, I found it a little disturbing.

Self-loathing comes from comparison with others, which is always a bad thing.

Colleges don’t just pay attention to numbers; they pay attention to extra-curriculars as well. They also, more importantly, pay attention to the content on the personal statements (something I did not see on my Facebook newsfeed).

While high school students are comparing themselves to classmates based on what they put on their status (statuses which are not verified for their validity), they need to remember their chances of getting into the college of their dreams is solely based on what they bring to the table, not what their peers do.

Facebook might have the right idea, however, at pushing everyone to do their best. It must be viewed as a positive vehicle for success.

January Corrections

A front page photo caption identified a drill team member as Elisama Alvarado. The student in the photo was Elisama Miguel.

In a page five story about Poly’s Library, former librarian Diane Blackman was identified as “Blackwell”



the  
**OPTIMIST**

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School  
12431 Roscoe Blvd, Sun Valley, CA, 91352  
<http://polyhigh.org>

**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.

**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**  
Yenifer Rodriguez

**SPORTS EDITORS**  
Amy Ayala  
Alfredo Quezada

**PHOTO EDITOR**  
Tracy Salcido

**WRITERS**

Jasmine Aquino	Maureen Kang
Amy Ayala	Walter Linares
Byron Fajardo	Alfredo Quezada
Lisa Guardado	James Torres

**OPTIMIST ADVISOR**  
John Blau

**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.

INTERVIEW

Need a Sax Player?

Magnet senior  
Valentina  
De La Rosa  
knows her way  
around a  
saxophone  
as well as  
a school book.

By Walter Linares  
Staff Writer



Photo By Jaime Torres

I don’t think the other kids see me differently because I’m smart.

Maybe they just see me as someone they can ask for help. I have always been smart because my mom never accepted any grades lower than a B. Even when I got a B she told me to raise it to an A. I consider myself a curious person, especially with math. It bothers me when I can’t solve a problem since that’s my best subject. I do consider myself motivated. It comes from my parents, because they were never able to go to school and they always repeatedly tell me do good in school go to college. Before I would just assume I would ace all my classes, but now I do study. The only electronic device I can call my own is my cell phone. I have to share my laptop with my brothers and sisters. I have a Facebook but I don’t really use it so I don’t really care about social networking. I just have one to just say I have a Facebook. The one subject at Poly that is most important is Chemistry, because that helped me discover that I wanted to major in science. The friends I’ve had here the longest don’t know chemistry as much as I know chemistry because I took the AP course. I’ve taken AP Bio, AP Chem, AP US History, AP English Language, AP Lit, AP Physics, AP Spanish and AP Calculus. I get my GPA and ranking from Ms. Bryan but I look at my grades in the report card to see if I have any C’s. Twenty years from now, I’ll look back more favorably on my college years than high school because in high school my parents still look over me. I’ll have more freedom in college. I’ll be away from my parents and I’ll have to become more independent and learn how to cook. I want to go to MIT but it’s hard to get into. I want to be a scientific researcher. My GPA is 4.369 and I’m ranked third at Poly.

**PERSONAL**  
If I could, the first thing I would improve about Poly is definitely the food. I can’t even describe the food anymore. Second, classroom size, because it’s hard to learn in a room full of 50 students. I buy clothes mainly at G Stage but I usually wear hand-me-downs. I shop with my mom and my sister. In the morning, I just grab the first thing I see to wear. If I could change one thing about my looks, it would be my height. I’m really short. I think that’s part of the reason why people think I don’t look my age. On Friday, someone thought I was 14. When people meet me, the first thing they notice about my personality is that I’m too quiet. I have a dog named Brownie, but he does not study with me. My hobbies are music and reading. Sometimes when I feel like it, I play accordion and saxophone. I guess my favorite music genre is pop. I don’t have an iPod, so I listen to the radio. I’m in band, I play the saxophone, and I do not play sports.

**MUSIC**  
I joined band and that’s where they taught me to play the saxophone. I chose it because it interests me. My dad kept encouraging my brother to play the saxophone and I just decided to play it. When I was little I wanted to play the guitar so my parents found a music school called San Fernando Music School but the school only had accordion lessons, so that’s how I got started

playing the accordion. Choosing to play the saxophone was just a spontaneous decision I guess, since it was one of the most popular instruments, more recognizable than the flute, and I was thinking about it since it was band. It was between three instruments: the clarinet the saxophone and the flute. But the flute is difficult to hold, it has to be parallel to the ground, so I did not want to do that; it was too hard. It didn’t take me that long to learn to play the sax. All I needed was the fingering chart. Within a month I was playing with the band. I joined band mostly because of my dad. He was always telling my brothers and I’m like ‘why doesn’t he tell me’ because I’m better in music than they are so I went into it right after meeting the section leader, Helen. Well the first song I ever learned on sax was “The Star Spangled Banner.” Then I learned “Glory to Poly” and the other football game songs. But once the show music came, it was difficult. It was “the Mask of Zorro.” I can’t even play some of the parts today. I never learned all of it. I’m not sure about my timing. Maybe I’m better than I was before, because I did not know how to read conducting. I was just following, so I could easily fall off tempo. I can’t figure out a song by just listening to it. I’m used to reading sheet music. I mostly just play the band music on sax. I once tried playing the “Nightmare Before Christmas” song. I don’t own a sax. It’s too expensive. I usually borrow the one from school. I take it home.

“I have a Facebook but I don’t really use it so I don’t really care about social networking. I just have one to just say I have a Facebook.”

During marching season, the band stays here up to 4:30. When we get close to competition, we stay til 5. On Fridays, we practice til 9. No I don’t have a job but I help my mom sometimes since she cleans houses. I don’t really get paid. Maybe if I do too much work, she gives me some of the money she got. For school, my parents just give me one dollar per day, so I just save it up.

**BOOKS**  
I can’t tell you how many novels I’ve read, but I read the “Twilight” series in middle school. That led to a lot of vampire series like the Morganville Vampires and The House of Night series. I didn’t read the “Hunger Games” for some reason. I didn’t know about them til after the movie premiere. For school, I read more classical books like “The Awakening” and “Frankenstein.” I get all the books I read from the library. I read action manga like “Naruto” and “Bleach” but I usually get them from the internet because the physical copy is too expensive. I just read whatever interests me. It’s usually fantasy books. I read “Brave New World” in AP English and “Frankenstein” in AP Lit.

**DATA POINTS**  
I was born in Mexico, Nayarit. I came to the U.S. before I turned one. I attended Sun Valley Middle School. My mother is a housekeeper and my father is a gardener. In the US, I have one brother and two sisters. My younger brother is 14 and my two younger sisters are 16 and 11. I have an older brother, 23, in Mexico.



CAMPUS



Photo by Tracy Salcido

**WIZ KIDS:** (from left) junior Ana Contreras, sophomore Zein Delgado, senior Alexis Campos, junior Crystal Cruz, sophomore Audriana Wilson, junior Lillian Valencia, senior Manuel Arellano and senior Nohemi Fajardo.

“The Wiz” Kids Talk

By Yenifer Rodriguez  
Staff Writer

Poly’s play production is currently in rehearsals for “The Wiz,” an urban update of the 1939 Judy Garland film “The Wizard of Oz,” itself based on Frank Baum’s 1900 novel “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.”

“The Wiz” was first a 1975 Broadway musical and later a 1978 film starring Diana Ross and Michael Jackson. Both featured disco and soul songs typical of the era.

Parrot senior Alexis Campos is playing the Scarecrow, the same role Michael Jackson had in the film.

“Alexis Campos won a lot of attention in the talent show for his version of Michael Jackson,” said drama and play production teacher Katy Groskin.

Campos has been in a recent talent show as well as “Rent” and “Across the Universe.”

“I would just like to be an entertainer,” said Campos, “an entertainer just in general involving singing or dancing.”

Campos believes experience is the best teacher. “I don’t think you need to go to school for that,” Campos said. “I’d rather just learn on my own,

Junior Lillian Valencia will play Dorothy.

“I’ve wanted to be an actor since I was a child,” Valencia said, “so acting and singing has always been a big part of my life. Acting lets you transform into someone completely different.”

Poly Idol winner Crystal Cruz is the Lion.

“Ever since I was little, I liked singing,” said Cruz. “My aunt is a singer too, so we would always sing songs together.

Senior Manuel Arellano and sophomore Zein Delgado are playing the Tin Man.

“Acting is a big part of my life because I enjoy it a lot,” said Arellano “I used to dance numbers backstage to the Annie soundtrack.”

Neither Delgado nor Arellano plan to major in acting in college.

“Acting is just a hobby,” Delgado said. “Medicine and movie directing are the big parts of my life.”

Delgado plays piano, drums, guitar and bass. “Drumming is one of my biggest hobbies,” Delgado said. “I’ve done that for about five years now and I’m getting better and better.”

Arellano is interested in forensics but says he’s still enjoying high school.

“I’m scared. I don’t want to graduate. I love high school,” said Arellano.

Sophomore Audriana Wilson will play Addaperlee, the good witch of the north.

“Acting has been part of my life since fifth grade,” said Wilson.

Wilson says she wants to be a singer, an actress or an OB/GYN.

Junior Ana Contreras and senior Nohemi Fajardo will play Evillene, the wicked witch of the west.

“I like being Evillene because I get to do my evil laugh,” said Fajardo.

Contreras enjoys acting but won’t make it a career.

“I’m probably going to get into criminal justice or the fashion industry,” said Contreras.

The Drama class has done three musicals, “Annie,” “Rent” and “Across the Universe,” in two years.

“For ‘Across the Universe,’ we slacked off in the beginning. It was just like fun and games,” said Cruz. “But with ‘The Wiz,’ we have already started reading the lines and rehearsing.”

Poly’s actors spend most of their time together. “We always call each other, go to each others houses and go to the mall,” said Cruz.

Performances for “The Wiz” are scheduled for May 8, 9 and 10. The two-act musical runs approximately two and a half hours.



Photo by Tracy Salcido

**CHAMPS:** Poly’s Unified basketball team beat Kennedy to take the East Valley League title.

Unified Takes League

A 26-20 win over Kennedy sends Poly squad to the City Championship.

By Amy Ayala  
Staff Writer

Poly’s new Unified basketball team defeated visiting Kennedy High School 26-20 in the East Valley League championship game Wednesday and now advances to the City Championship.

“Winning league means the world to the team,” said Parrot head coach Jorge Ramirez. “They feel accepted and proud of earning the title of league champions.”

Poly Special Ed junior Kevin Delgado had the hot hand, opening the game with two three-pointers on his way to a 14-point night.

Senior Angel Mosqueda and junior Carlos Martinez chipped in four points each, while junior Chris Merlos and sophomore David Figueroa had two points each.

Prior wins against both Kennedy and Verdugo preceded the league title contest.

The Unified team’s nine players are supplemented by five general ed students. General ed students help facilitate the flow of the game, but can only score every other basket.

“I’m proud of my regular ed students for participating in this league,” Ramirez said, “but it comes as no surprise because here at Poly we have the best students.”

General ed senior Luis Manzo agreed. “Winning the championship means a lot to the

kids and to me,” Manzo said. “We worked hard for this, they love this sport, and I think they deserve the best.”

The Unified squad was not part of a recent Poly pep rally held Wednesday during second period in the auditorium.

“We should have been on the stage showing our trophy,” said Manzo. “It would have meant a lot to these kids. They deserve a lot more attention from the school because they don’t get opportunities like this.”

Ramirez agreed.

“I’m sure the students would have enjoyed themselves at the pep rally,” Ramirez said. “However, they know that they are league champs and have been awarded a big beautiful trophy.”

Ramirez said Poly has made great strides in the inclusion of Special Ed students.

“I hope they continue to do so,” said Ramirez.

Meanwhile, the team is now motivated to prove themselves in the City Championship.

“These kids are proving to everybody that they have the potential to be great,” said Manzo. “They are good kids with great personalities.”

Ramirez said he’s learned a lot.

“Coaching the team has been an honor,” Ramirez said. “I was to teach the students, but they taught me the biggest lesson. I have learned to embrace and appreciate their uniqueness and differences.”

Poly’s Unified squad will represent the District at the City Championship in Los Angeles on February 14.

Dunham Does It All

“Girls” 20-something New Yorkers are not yet adults, but their youth and inexperience add a nuanced comic element that makes them alternately attractive and annoying.



Google Image

**ENSEMBLE:** (from left) Zosia Mamet, Allison Williams, Lena Dunham and Jemima Kirke are back for a second season.

**H**BO’s “Girls,” back for a second season, is quirky, off-beat, self-centered, almost claustrophobic and frequently rude. So why is it such a hit with critics and discerning twenty-somethings?

Look no further than Lena Dunham, the show’s decidedly unglamorous creator, writer and costar. Virtually unheard of before her film “Tiny Furniture” won Best Screenplay at the 2010 Independent Spirit

Awards and set critics raving, Dunham has quickly made a name for herself, with the talent to back it up.

It’s Dunham’s dialogue and characters that make “Girls” click. Dunham’s characters themselves aren’t funny, but the way they handle their issues and situations is.

Dunham wrote herself into the show as main character Hannah. Complicated and self-involved, Hannah is the center of gravity for the rest of the cast, which includes Allison Williams (Marnie), Jemima Kirke (Jessa) and Zosia Mamet (Shoshanna).

Hannah works at a local coffee shop but wants to be a writer. Concluding that her dreams won’t come true, Hannah is determined to make the most of her situation.

Williams was tapped by producer and sometimes cowriter Judd Apatow (“This is Forty”), who first saw and loved the Yale grad in a YouTube video.

When Hannah is fired from her internship, and then financially cut off by her parents, cold and anal best friend Marnie has to pay the bills.

Marnie and Hannah struggle because Marnie’s worked for what she has and Hannah hasn’t. Hannah is unwillingly pushed a bit further into adulthood by having to earn money.

Jessa (Kirke), who had a part in “Furniture,” is the laid-back British girl who travels the world. Kirke has a bachelor’s in fine arts and says she’s primarily a visual artist and an actress on the side.

Shoshanna is the innocent college student looking for love.

Other friends Ray (Alex Karpovsky), Charlie (Christopher Abbott), and Elijah (Andrew Rannells) hang around various locales.

“Girls” 20-something New Yorkers are not yet adults, but their youth and inexperience add a nuanced comic element that makes them alternately attractive and annoying.

“Girls” is uncensored, with sex, nudity and a variety of everyday obscenities. A quirky mix of intimate and wide shots keeps the pace fast and the scenes short.

Too explicit for regular television, and too subtle to attract the mainstream, the show appeals to upscale young professionals with an edgy taste in entertainment.

Girls recently won a Golden Globe for best series, musical, or comedy and Dunham won best actress in a musical or comedy.

The show’s second season premiered January 13.



CAMPUS

# The Energizers

## Poly cheer adds seven new members, all males.

By Byron Fajardo  
*Staff Writer*

No, you weren't seeing things at the last basketball game. Those were male cheerleaders in their crisp white outfits. Seven to be exact, all brand new, lifting and tossing and catching. Coed cheer is the latest twist from new cheer coach Susan Garcia, who has given Poly's cheer squad some extreme stunts and a new look. Seniors Christopher Menjivar, Daniel Quinteros, Braulio Gonzalez, juniors Alvin Cooper, Luis Solares, Joshua Fong and sophomore Jose Dominguez are the new cheerleaders. "They were very motivated and caught on very quickly," Garcia said. "We were very surprised. It was really nice." All the guys felt good about the tryouts. "The first thing we did for the tryout was stretching and jumping," said Cooper. "They were just teaching us the basics on how to do libs and abs, how to do the jumps, knowing and remembering the counts." "The girls helped me stretch out properly," said Dominguez. "All the girls were really nice and patient. It is not an easy job. You must depend on everyone in the stunt group for it to go right. In fact, I think it's one of the most challenging things I've done."

"It was hard in the beginning," said Menjivar. "The routines are hard; they go by counts. I would have to run back to my original position to start over." "You get more flexible," said Quinteros. "I can actually do my splits now." Cheerleading isn't as easy as it may look, the guys agreed. "Practice is from 3:15 to 6. It's rigorous," said Menjivar. "You get really tired, there's people getting mad at each other and complaining but it doesn't work out until you keep trying and trying to perfect it. Practice makes perfect, basically." "You have to deal with all the stress, seeing if your flyer goes up," said Menjivar, "or you hear from your three coaches and people in your group. You're working as a team. You have to be able to work it out." "Practice is tiring," Dominguez said. "And it can get a little frustrating when we can't get a stunt up, or during a full out we fall. But over all it's very fun." "Getting everything on time is tough," said Quinteros, "because if you're half a second late, it ruins the whole routine." "The hardest is probably the long practices the day before we perform," said Dominguez. "And dancing, because I have two left feet." But the boys agree that everything seems to be working. "Everyone gets along with each other," said Menjivar. "Everyone's cool and everyone talks, there's



Photo by Tracy Salcido

**TOSS UPS:** (from left) juniors Luis Solares, Alvin Cooper, , sophomore Jose Dominguez, Daniel Quinteros, junior Joshua Fong and senior Christopher Menjivar. Braulio Gonzalez not in photo.

no one excluded or pushed away. It's a very friendly environment." "Everyone is nice to each other," Dominguez said. "You can say it is almost like a family in there." Even the uniforms are nice, the guys say. "We wear a polo shirt with the Poly P and blue shorts," said Menjivar. "I like them." "I like the uniforms," Quinteros said. "It's better than wearing a skirt." Garcia said the boys are strong competitors.

"Most of them are athletes, so they have this mentality that they want to win," said Garcia. "They strive to get the routine down the right way. I couldn't be more proud." The boys brought power and gave the girls the extra boost of energy, Garcia said. "Now we can do the routines longer," Garcia said, "or more difficult stunts." Braulio Gonzalez did not take part in this interview.

# Gathering No Moss: the Rolling Stones Turn Fifty

By Lisa Guardado  
*Staff Writer*

No one who knew the Rolling Stones in 1962, including the band members themselves, would have said they'd still be playing 50 years on. But they are, most of them anyway, and set to embark on a 2013 tour. Their story is an unlikely one. Founding members Mick Jagger, vocals and Keith Richards, guitar, were both born in 1943 in Dartford, England. They were childhood chums who drifted apart and then met again in 1962. Jagger and Richards shared similar musical interests, American blues and R & B, and formed the Rolling Stones with fellow blues enthusiast Brian Jones that same year. Richards' guitar style, raw and basic, was the perfect match for Jagger's bluesy vocals on the early Stones songs, most of them covers of rock & roll and R&B hits like Chuck Berry's "Come On" and Marvin Gaye's "Can I Get a Witness." Jagger and Richards inspiration for the band's name came from "Rollin' Stone," a song by American blues singer and songwriter Muddy Waters, a long time idol of the pair. Brian Jones, guitar, Bill Wyman, bass and Charlie Watts, drums were quickly added and the band hit the road. The Stones played London's Marquee Club in '62, covering songs by Americans Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley. They quickly acquired an image as "the dirtier version of The Beatles," an idea brought up by manager Andrew Loog Oldham. Jagger was the pouty-lipped, hip-shaking, front-man with the slinky dance moves while Richards' devilish rock and roll spirit and commitment to hard rhythm and blues made him the perfect foil for Jagger's swagger. Richards' "fluid, easy, rambunctious rhythm guitar put feel and groove way before technical prowess." "The Beatles were obviously wearing the white hat," Richards recalled. "The other role was putting the black hat on. The more the press played up to it, the more you found yourself thrust into the role of the villain. And then you got used to it. It was easier.



Google Image

**BAD BOYS:** (from left) Bill Wyman, Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts, Brian Jones

You could actually be yourself in the Stones." "We were such nice children underneath it all," Jagger says now. "It's the blowback from Andrew Oldham: The Rolling Stones are the rebels. And the blowback was quite intense, because you got labeled with this and it was a self-fulfilling prophecy." In '64 the Stones released their first album, "The Rolling Stones." The debut album was mostly covers of American blues tunes, the only original being "Tell Me (You're Coming Back)." The album was #1 on the UK charts for twelve weeks. The Stones toured the U.S. twice in '64, following in the wake of the Beatles, and made appearances on network TV shows, including The Ed Sullivan Show. Throughout 1965, the band toured Ireland, the Far East, the UK, Europe and North America.

In '66, the Stones released "Aftermath," their first album of all original material. The album included the hits "Paint It Black," "Lady Jane" and "Under My Thumb." Then came the three albums that put them at the top of the rockpile and helped them fill stadiums all around the world: "Between the Buttons"(67), "Beggars Banquet"(68) and "Let it Bleed"(69). The singles from those albums - "Let's Spend the Night Together," "Sympathy for the Devil," "Street Fighting Man," "Midnight Rambler" and "You Can't Always Get What You Want" - solidified the Stones credentials as a band that could write timeless hits as well as fill stadiums. On July 3, 1969, Jones was found dead in his home in Hartfield, East Sussex. A month prior to his death, Jones had confronted the band, saying that

he was unable to "go on the road again." Jagger had said that Jones was "not psychologically suited to this way of life" and that drugs had taken him over. The Stones played a free concert in London's Hyde Park two days after Jones death and dedicated the concert to Jones memory. During the concert, Jagger read an excerpt from Shelley's "Adonais Pastoral" elegy and released thousands of butterflies in memory of Jones. The performance captured the mood of the times and the power of the Stones' influence. In the winter of '69, the Stones ended their American tour with a free concert at Altamont Race-track, near San Francisco. But the concert turned ugly when the Hells' Angels, who had been hired to provide security, beat a man to death just yards from the stage. The Stones beat a hasty retreat, while the international press painted the band as decadent and out of control. But the best of the Stones was yet to come. The band ended their contract with Allen Klein and Decca Records and formed their own record company, "Rolling Stones Records." The first release on the new label was 1971's "Sticky Fingers." The cover art was a pair of blue jeans with a working zipper that opened to reveal a pair of white briefs underneath. The album featured hit singles "Brown Sugar" and "Wild Horses." In '72, the Stones released their masterpiece, "Exile on Main St," much of it overdubbed and recorded at the legendary Sunset Recorders in Los Angeles, the first portion having been recorded in France. "Exile," a two-record set, draws on many genres, including rock and roll, blues, soul, R&B, gospel and country. The album, though not as popular as "Fingers" at the time, is generally considered as the band's greatest album. Subsequent Stones guitarists Mick Taylor and Ron Wood played with Richards on classics like 1972's "Tumbling Dice" and 1981's "Start Me Up." Jagger and Richards have written some of the most recognizable songs in rock & roll including "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction," "Honky Tonk Woman," and "Jumping Jack Flash." But though their career would last another forty years, the Stones never topped "Exile," the ultimate rock and roll album.



CAMPUS

Aca Deca Will Compete at State

[ From Highest, front page ]

home 12 medals, five gold, four silver and three bronze. Last year, Poly won four medals at district and 21 at state.

“Now that we know we’re in state,” Block said, “we’re looking at results analytically to find out each individual’s strong and weak points. We’ll use the stronger students in each subject to improve weaker ones.”

The same theme, subjects and categories are featured at the state level.

“But this time, we just have a little more time to study and prepare,” said Block. “Only ten LA teams will be going up there. There will be a total of 65 schools.”

“We’ve done very well at state the past two competitions. I have high hopes that this team will do as well.”

Each Aca Deca team has nine members, three Honors members with 3.75 GPA or higher; three Scholastic members with 3 to 3.75 GPA and three Varsity members with Academic GPA less than 3.0.

The key to any team success is having students who have less than 3.0 GPA and are really bright.

More than 500 students from 58 LAUSD high schools competed in the 32nd annual event.

Students were tested on their knowledge of Russian history, including the space race between the United States and the USSR, Russian composers, art and architecture; and the economics of communist and post-communist Russia, as well as the Boris Pasternak novel “Doctor Zhivago.”

Granada Hills Charter High clinched the top spot for the third straight year with 56,805 out of 66,000 possible points.

Marshall, Franklin and El Camino Real Charter also scored more than 50,000 points, with Bell, Garfield, Hamilton, Narbonne, Poly and North Hollywood rounding out the top 10.

Those schools will be in Sacramento next month, competing for the state title. The winner of the state competition will travel to Minneapolis in April to vie for the national title.

Granada Hills captured the state and national championships in 2011, and defended its titles last year.

Cliff Ker, the district’s decathlon coordinator for the last 13 years, said he was astonished by the students’ mastery of the people and cul-

ture of Russia, the theme of this year’s contest.

“Never in the history of the Academic Decathlon has any team broken 50,000, and we had four of them,” said Ker.

“I had a sense this was going to be a historic season, but I didn’t think the teams would be this good.”

A national championship title by a Los Angeles Unified team would be the 14th for the district since the contest was launched in 1982.

El Camino Real, which converted to a charter this year, has six national titles, the most of any school in the nation. Taft has three while Granada Hills and Marshall have two each.

Coach’s Diary

On day one of the competition, students must write an informational essay on either the literature or science, give an interview, and perform both a prepared and impromptu speech. Because LAUSD is so large, there are morning and afternoon sessions. We were in the afternoon on Saturday, January 26, so we arrived at 10 am and finished around 4 pm.

The essay came first. The students were given three topics to write about and had fifty minutes to complete the handwritten essay. Most chose to write about the economic developments of “Dr. Zhivago.” According to sources, this topic was the most chosen topic to write about.

The students were given time from 2:15 to 4:00 to give their interview and speech. The speech judges and interview judges were in different rooms, and no two students had the same judge. This year’s team contains several extroverts and all the speeches were expertly written and performed.

The interview is untimed, lasts approximately seven minutes and is similar to a college interview.

The speech is a prepared performance on any topic lasting three and one half to four minutes. The impromptu is on a random topic, with one minute to read and prepare, and one and one half to two minutes to perform.

When we go to state, the essay will actually be typed, online, approximately one week before the actual flight to Sacramento. The speech and interview procedure would be identical.

The Super Quiz relay is a 12-question live test with two questions each on Science, History, Literature, Art, Music and Economics.



Photo Courtesy of Brian Block  
**WINNER:** Poly veteran Aca Deca coach Brian Block holds trophies from competition.

This year was the first time that the Super Quiz included more than one subject. Questions can be protested, and only the top two students overall count in the Super Quiz score.

We finished 10th last year, 15th in 2011 and 11th in 2010 in the Super Quiz. At state, however, we finished third in our division both times and have earned medals as a result.

What makes this group special is that they have done more with less. The core 2010 team had been together for two years before they made state. The 2011 and 2012 teams had the entire month of January off to prepare for the District competition, a huge advantage.

This year’s team, crowded by the amount of AP classes they are taking, and not having a free month of January, had to find time before the school day, during lunch and after 5th period to study. While there are many positive aspects to the 4 x 4 scheduling, time for extra-curricular activities is not one of them. With as little time as they had, their performance has been phenomenal.

The secret to this team’s success has been their innate intelligence, ability to focus in on study, and their competitive drive. The students don’t feel they “studied hard” because the time has been spread out over seven months, instead of seven days. They have put in enormous time and effort, but because they have been studying for such a long time period, it often doesn’t feel that way.

Team Talk

“We’ve been working a whole year for this,” said junior Jihae Snyder. “We think we have a good chance.”

“My speech was about the flaws of the tuba,” said junior Reymundo Cano. “I was literally drenched in sweat. It was funny because the speech didn’t get a response this time and usually it does. The judges laugh or something.”

“There are two to three judges in a room. You give an introduction of yourself. It’s nice to make them laugh and leave a positive note,” said junior Evaristo Capalla. “It’s about being unique but still likeable to adults.”

“The team this year is a lot more dedicated,” said senior Luis Miranda, “more focused and determined to reach their individual goals.”

“I have been in Aca Deca all four years and never regretted a single moment,” said Miranda. “I will miss the super quiz competition, as the team gathers together ready to walk together representing our school.”

Vaccinate

[ From Vaccinate, front page ]

Measles is a highly-contagious virus that weakens the immune system, increasing chances of death by offering opportunities for secondary health problems to occur, such as blindness, diarrhea and pneumonia. Measles is spread by an infected person through coughing and sneezing. Symptoms include high fever, severe skin rash and cough.

Rubella, a mild disease, can have harsh effects on a pregnant mother and child. An infant has high risk of being born with Congenital Rubella Syndrome (CRS) if the pregnant mother is infected within the first trimester. CRS causes multiple problems for the infant, including heart problems, deafness and blindness.

Measles and Rubella can safely and inexpensively be prevented, however, with vaccines. They may even be prevented with just one vaccine: the measles vaccine (MR) or the measles and mumps vaccine (MMR).

Though these vaccines are safe and inexpensive, approximately 139, 300 people around the world die from measles every year—that is, 380 deaths every day with most victims younger than five years of age—and about 110, 000 global children are born with CRS annually. This is due to the lack of resources in many developing countries who suffer from poverty, poor health systems and lack of information.

“The vaccines are readily available and very effective,” said Poly senior, EMS Public Affairs Officer and Red Cross Youth Group VP, Luis Angel Zarate. “What isn’t as available is the money needed to help these children. I know Poly can help these victims and I know we will once we get the wheel rolling.”

The EMS and Red Cross Clubs are holding several fundraisers aimed at delivering vaccines to assist in the plummeting death rates. Each dollar raised can vaccinate another child, reducing the number of problems they already face in their home country.

“We are working to vaccinate an entire village, if not, two,” said Renteria. “Our main goal is to bring Poly together in this initiation.”

The clubs currently distribute awareness pins for a \$1 donation (enough to vaccinate one child). There is no limit as to how many pins one person can purchase.

The clubs have also gotten other Poly clubs involved, including the help of leadership. Several upcoming events are scheduled, such as a measles awareness day and a bake sale.

“I think our goal of vaccinating two villages—that is \$1,000—is an easy target for Poly,” said Zarate. “North Hollywood High School’s Red Cross Youth Group is attempting to do the same, but Poly is going to reach the goal first.”

Library

[ From ninth , front page ]

yet able to check out books at the new library.

“The IT Department still hasn’t put the students in the system,” Mason said, “so the students can’t check anything out.”

Mason reports a brisk business at the new library anyway.

“More students are using this facility each day,” Mason said. “Last week, Mrs. Blackwell’s four English classes learned the basics of how to use a library and do library research.”

But activities at the new library are limited by a lack of seating.

“Teachers at Poly use a program called Alex on the computers,” Mason said. “The ROTC teacher uses the computer to search for current events. Ninth grade teachers can’t really do the same.”

Both Mason and Blackwell believe much can be done to upgrade and improve Poly’s two libraries.

“At this point, we are mostly thinking of the curriculum and building the 9-12 research curriculum,” said Blackwell.

Blackwell, who has had a library credential for six years, assisted former Poly librarian Diane Blackman about five years updating the catalog.

Concert

[ From Thornburgh, front page ]

8:30 pm.

“This was my second time in New York,” Thornburgh said. “My first was with my University’s choir in the 80s.”

“During that trip, I went to the Empire State Building and up to the 82nd floor,” Thornburgh said. “It is a nice view from there. You really see the town and its landmarks and how close or how far the buildings are from each other.”

Thornburgh said New Yorkers were very friendly, full of energy 24/7, with a great buzz.

“This time I visited Central Park,” Thornburgh said. “I went to Ground Zero and saw all the names on the fountain, the Reflection of Absence. It commemorates those who died on 9/11 and also during the bombing of 1995.”

Thornburgh said the trip was a great experience and a nice taste of the Big Apple.

Cadre

[ From Poly, front page ]

“because I want teachers to provide interaction between the teacher and the student, and the students with students, using what we call ‘accountable talk.’”

Hidalgo taught ESL 1A, 1B, 2A and 2B before taking the coordinator slot.

“I also taught LAPL, which stands for Language Arts in the Primary Language,” said Hidalgo. “I taught literature and language arts in Spanish to our Spanish speaking ESL students. The idea is to build the primary language skills which in turn transfer to English.”

Hidalgo succeeded Gigi Slezak, who held the bilingual coordinator slot for 25 years.

“She was a great support to me and to English learners at Poly,” Hidalgo said.

Be an  
OPTIMIST  
reader





SPORTS



Photo by Tracy Salcido

**RETURNER:** *Former Parrot baseball varsity coach Chuck Schwal works with Poly’s baseball squad. Schwal led the Parrots from 1993-2008, reaching the City Finals in ‘96 and ‘99.*

# Baseball Legend Back in Uniform

## Former Parrot baseball head coach Chuck Schwal will handle pitching coach chores.

By James Torres  
*Staff Writer*

Former Parrot varsity baseball coach Chuck Schwal, whose Poly teams won City titles in 1996 and 1999, is back as pitching coach under current head coach Gabe Cerna.

“The pitching coach, Richard Barrette, got a job in St. Louis, so Cerna asked me if I would do it,” Schwal said. “I had nothing to do, so I just figured ‘you know what, it’ll be fun, I’ll come back and coach.’”

In addition to the pitching coach chores, Schwal also works out the team during fourth period while Cerna is dean at the Ninth Grade Center.

“Schwal is unique figure, a Poly legend,” said Cerna. “It’s an honor to be working with such a decorated coach.

Schwal has praise for Cerna too.

“Coach Cerna has done a great job,” Schwal said. “That’s one of the reasons why I came back too. He’s got the kids going in the right direction and he’s building a good program. It’s taken a bit of time, but this year we see a really good team.

Schwal says he wants another City championship and that’s the goal this year.

“It’s the goal you should always have,” Schwal said. “That’s the highest goal, you reach for that.”

Cerna thinks Schwal can help achieve that goal.

“Schwal’s knowledge is immense,” Cerna said. “He’ll get us three or four wins alone with his knowledge and experience.”

Schwal said he likes his new role.

“I don’t have to be the bad guy, I can be the good guy,” Schwal said. “I don’t have to be the coach that gets on people for being late or not turning in their fundraising money, I can just coach the kids. It’s much easier, I don’t have to worry about watering the field, that’s all coach Cerna. He’s the head guy, he gets all credit and I can just have fun.”

That’s why he left, Schwal says.

“I was getting tired of being the head coach because of all the responsibilities. I was just done,” Schwal said. “I got out of coaching because I wanted to spend time with my wife and be able to travel and do all that.”

Schwal has no regrets.

“When I left, it was time, time for me to go,” Schwal said. “I was getting negative towards the kids in my mind. I was only there 98% and that two percent of me was going ‘what am I doing here?’

“Two percent, not a lot, just a little, but every now and then it would creep in my head, ‘what are you doing here?’

“I was working harder than my players. I decided it’s time for me to go, let a young kid come in like Cerna and build the program up.”

So now the pressure is off for Schwal.

“The biggest difference is now I don’t have the responsibilities of a head coach,” Schwal said. “They have to fundraise, they have to take care of the field,

they have to watch the grades of all the players, they have to buy the equipment, all I have to do now is get out there and coach the players and teach them how to pitch and mentor the head coaches if they have any questions.”

Cerna is excited about Schwal working with his pitchers.

“Schwal is great with the pitchers,” Cerna said. “Pitchers and staff love him.”

Alex George, Oscar Romo, Alejandro Lopez, Felipe Hernandez, Jason Cisneros, Issac Guritez and Jesus Caranza will pitch for Cerna this season.

“We have different kinds of pitchers,” Schwal said. “We have guys who have good curve balls, guys who have good change ups, guys who a good slider, some guys don’t throw as hard but they’re good because they keep the ball low.”

Alex George has a two-seam fast ball.

“A two-seam fast ball acts like a slider but it’s fast,” Schwal said. “He also has a good slider.”

Edgar Romo has a good curve ball and keeps his fastball low, according to Schwal, making him an effective pitcher.

Felipe Hernandez has a 12 to 6 curve ball.

“His curve ball starts at twelve o clock and breaks at six,” Schwal said. “He has a slider and change up too. He is the only lefty.”

A curve ball is pitch that breaks from a higher level to a lower level.

“A ball moving is harder to hit than a ball that is straight,” Schwal said. “A curve ball breaks more on a downward plane, and breaks more than a slider. A curve ball can break anywhere between 1 to 2 feet depending on how good it is.”

“A slider breaks more on a horizontal plan, so it breaks a little bit. A slider should break anywhere from 7 to 12 inches. A slider breaks across.”

“A slider and curve ball can be gripped the same way,” Schwal said. “It’s all a matter of how far you rotate the wrist and how hard you snap. A curve ball is going to come over the top of the fingers, a slider comes off the side of the fingers.”

**PERSONAL**

Schwal went to Inglewood High for two years and Taft for two years, where he played baseball and football.

“I came to Poly in 1993,” Schwal said. “My first five years here I taught Biology, and then a PE job opened up and I took the PE job.”

Schwal started coaching in 1982 at Taft High School as a graduate.

“I went to City as an assistant coach at Kennedy High School,” Schwal said.

Schwal is on a gluten-free diet and works out five to six times a week.

“I work out here and then if I have time I’ll go to 24 Hour Fitness in North Hollywood,” Schwal said. “I swim now, because I have arthritis in my hip, and lift weights.”

But in the end, it’s all about baseball for Schwal.

“I am not doing this for the money,” Schwal said.

# Poly Routs NoHo

By Amy Ayala  
*Staff Writer*

Poly’s bigs combined for 35 points, 25 rebounds, and six blocks in a 65-46 blowout win over visiting North Hollywood Wednesday.

“It’s always our goal to involve our bigs, especially if the team is smaller than us,” said Lady Parrot veteran head coach Tremeka Batiste. “Ele and Stephanie did everything they were supposed to do and scored half the team’s points in the process.”

“We really played to the best of our ability,” said Lady Parrot senior captain Allison Samonte. “We hustled from the beginning til the end of the game, swung the ball around and stayed calm.”

Lady Parrot junior Stephanie Gurrola led all scorers with 18 points, six rebounds, two blocks and three assists. Ele Taulaki added 12 points and 12 rebounds, 11 on the defensive end. Sophomore guard Bella Lopez had 11 points, three rebounds and six assists.

“They showed me and everyone else at the game their full potential,” said Batiste. “I finally saw the team I knew they could be.”

In the girls’ most impressive offensive performance this season, Poly had double digit scoring in every quarter.

“I’ve been telling them all season to apply their fundamentals for the whole game,” said Batiste. “They need to box out, catch and look, pass ahead, see the ball, don’t rush, and talk.”

“We knew what we wanted and went after it. We were communicating, hustling, staying calm and utilizing our bigs,” Samonte said.

The team has been up and down this season,

inconsistant both defensively and offensively.

“We are a very unpredictable team,” Samonte said. “We move forward, we take steps back. It’s because not everyone has their mind set on the game.”

“Our defensive goals are to pressure the ball, push players to their weak side, anticipate moves, and protect the key,” said Batiste. “We accomplished them against North Hollywood.”

Those issues didn’t appear in the North Hollywood game.

“We usually do our own thing on the court, making stuff up as we go along,” Samonte said, “but everyone was on their A-game today.”

The Lady Parrots were focused from the opening tip.

“We knew what we wanted and went after it,” Samonte said. “The confidence and focus was there.”

Poly’s defense limited North Hollywood to 16 points in the first half, eight in each quarter.

On the offensive side, the Lady Parrot guards controlled the tempo and played their roles effectively. The Lady Parrots had only 15 turnovers.

“The NoHo win gives us momentum because the team now knows that it’s possible to play a great game for all four quarters,” said Batiste. “They’re starting to understand how important basic fundamentals are in a game.”

“We learned from our mistakes and improved every game and now we’re in the playoffs,” Samonte said.

The Lady Parrots play Sylmar Friday night at home in first round playoff action.

“To have any success in playoffs, the girls will have to repeat the way they played against NoHo,” Batiste said. “If they do, they will give any team a run for their money.”

# A Tale of Two Halfs

## Lady Parrots soccer squad out in 1-0 first round playoff loss to Sylmar.

By Amy Ayala  
*Staff Writer*

Poly lost 1-0 to Sylmar in the first round of the playoffs to close out a 8-8-4, 4-4-4 season with a third-place East Valley League finish.

“It was a really great game,” said Parrot head coach Yesenia Cervantes. “We scored, they didn’t count the goal. We had a penalty shot that they didn’t see. They just weren’t calling anything.”

Cervantes believes the goal should have counted.

“The ball hit the inside of the pole, the net,” Cervantes said. “Anybody that’s a ref that coaches, or plays soccer knows that’s a goal.”

Cervantes believed the early lead would have helped Poly.

“It would have been 1-0 and everybody would have defended and we would have wasted time,” said Cervantes. “The first half we were attacking 80% of the game, second half of the game they were attacking us more.”

Injuries forced Cervantes to change her lineup during the game.

“My right defender’s back started hurting so I had to switch her out,” Cervantes said. “My right middle was tired because Sylmar was running a lot through her line. So I had to make those two changes.”

Sylmar scored in the closing minutes to win the contest.

“This gives us hope for next year,” said Cervantes. “It wasn’t a bad game for us.”

Verdugo’s perfect season put them first in league, followed by Arleta at 10-2. The bottom three teams, Grant, North Hollywood and Chavez, managed only one win among them in league.

Injuries plagued Poly during the season.

“Our sweeper, Griselda Diaz, ended up having asthma. She had to be out,” said Cervantes.” She couldn’t play for more than four or five minutes, so that switched our whole lineup.”

Other injuries included freshman sweeper Jackie Tejeda, out for a month with a twisted her knee, and sophomore right defender Gabriela Ramos, whose bad back limited her play to one half or ten minutes.

“That meant we had to play a person with no experience,” Cervantes said. “I put a JV player in. Our sweeper and stopper had to change because Griselda Diaz couldn’t play. I had to put a new sweeper in, Brenda Gonzalez.”

Cervantes’ bench players weren’t as effective as her starters in the Sylmar match.

“Because they are beginners, they do not have that much ball control,” Cervantes said.

Poly hoped for a quick score as time ran out.

“We tried to play the ball in the left wing,” Cervantes said. “Lupe is our strongest kicker. We needed her to get a ball and send it to Linda or Madison, our fastest forwards. Our goal was just to get the ball in there and try to get a penalty or a free kick somewhere close by.”

Cervantes felt the officiating could have been better.

“The refs are really bad. Every year they’re bad,” Cervantes said. “The only games we had good refs were the Arleta and North Hollywood games.”

But Cervantes was satisfied with the season overall.

“For my first season as the head varsity coach, I think it went well, better than I expected,” Cervantes said.

Next year will be different, Cervantes said.

“I have to be more prepared for injuries, train harder, have double the people for each position, just in case somebody gets injured,” Cervantes said. “We need to have a backup instead of trying to switch our line-up.”

“My goal is to get first place in league, so when we go to playoffs, we will have a higher rank,” said Cervantes. “We deserve to be on the top. A couple mistakes kept us down.”

Cervantes will lose some key players to graduation, however.

“We’ll lose a good attacking player in Lupe Ramos,” Cervantes said. “She had 13 goals in season, she took 3-4 shots every game and she gave us a lot of hope. Griselda Diaz was our sweeper and best defender. Losing those two leaves big holes in the line-up.”

Sophomore Brenda Gonzalez is high on Cervantes list.

“Sylmar was her best game, so I know that she is ready for next year,” said Cervantes.

“Individually I want to build everyone at the same level,” Cervantes said. “Everybody needs to know how to stop the ball, how to dribble a ball, how to pass a ball.”

“As a team, we need to know how to switch right to left, we have to switch the ball quickly.”

“I’m really proud of my seniors. I’ve watched Lupe grow since she was a freshman and I was an assistant coach.”

Cervantes says her first season as head coach was satisfying.

“It’s been a great experience,” Cervantes said. “I’m really happy with the outcome this year, and that we made playoffs. For a first year coach, it’s a lot to do.”



SPORTS

# Parrots End Grant Streak

## Poly’s 70-51 win climaxes season with first-place finish.

Poly sophomore star Cesar Reyes scored 20 of his 26 points after intermission as the Parrots helped themselves to a share of first place in the East Valley League with a 70-51 road win over Grant.

“I think the kids played hard, they came in determined, and they executed,” said Parrot head coach Alan Woskanian. “Grant is tough, they didn’t let up. But Poly is back.”

The Parrots’ 48-point second half helped Poly win its first league title since 2007, at the same time snapping the Lancers’ 39-game league winning streak.

Poly’s 11 3-pointers included nine in a second half that started with a 9-0 Parrot run for a 10-point lead. Grant (20-7, 11-1), a City Section Div. III finalist last year, never got closer than seven the rest of the night.

“I think we played outstanding,” Reyes said. “I’m just really happy. We played harder than them.”

Reyes, who also had six assists and three steals, managed only six first-half points,

including a scoreless second quarter. But the sharpshooting Reyes hit two quick 3-pointers after intermission, stretching Grant’s defense, and then scored on a series of coast-to-coast drives that kept the Lancers on their heels.

The loss was Grant’s second in three meetings against archrival Poly (16-7, 11-1), including a tournament loss.

“This is the best feeling in the world, but there is still the playoffs,” Reyes said. “We’re not done yet.”

Poly senior Sal Gonzalez scored 16 points, while Grant senior Tullio Parry scored 21, including 8 of 10 free throws.

Reyes, who came in averaging nearly 22 points and ranking among California’s top 3-point shooters, was bothered by Grant senior Sherman Cromartie’s defense in the first half. But Cromartie spent most of the third quarter on the bench, and Reyes took advantage.

INTERVIEW

# No Doubt

The OPTIMIST caught up with Parrot head coach Alan Woskanian for his thoughts on his rookie season. Here’s what he told us.

By Amy Ayala  
Staff Writer

Walk us through the Grant game.

We came out focused on the goal at hand and played some of the best defense we have played all year.

**You outscored the Lancers in every quarter, but things were still pretty even at the half.**

Grant was playing a strong game, the game was where we expected it to be in the first half. We could have shot a bit better but weren't shooting bad.

**Then you come out and take the game in the third. That seems to be a pattern for this team.**

We are a well conditioned team therefore third quarter for us still feels like the start of the game, we just out energy teams to start the third.

**Is it your halftime pep talks or are the boys just slow starters?**

I'd like to think our strong defense just wears on teams and becomes a matter of time before the other team breaks.

**Talk about Reyes in terms of actual performance in the regular season and realizing his potential. Has he played better than expected or could he have been even better?**

I think he is having a good season. He leads the City in to three-pointers and he is top 10 in the state and top 40 in the nation. He is also top 10 in the City for assists.

He works hard, he adapted well to his new school, and most importantly, he went from quiet and reserved to taking a strong leadership

role as a sophomore.

**The kid's a sophomore and a deadly three-point shooter. He's basketball smart and runs the floor well. Could he be the next D. J. Gay?**

He is a very good basketball player but still needs to do a lot of developing. His potential is obviously endless. Only time will tell.

**Defense is critical to winning games, not to mention getting the offense rolling. How is Reyes on D and how is the team overall?**

Reyes, as you said is very basketball smart. That rolls over into defense as well. He understands rotations, he understands concepts and he has good on-ball defensive skills.

As a team, I'll put us up against anybody defensively. The kids are locked in and playing well together.

**If you don't have that mental lapse at home against Grant, Poly is 12-0 and Grant is 10-2. How badly do you wish you could have that game back to do all over again?**

We are fine the ways things are. We fell, We learned, We're back.

**You guys seemed flat and out of sync that night. Any idea why?**

Lack of energy and maybe the prior win we had. Looking over that game tape, we missed a lot of shots we regularly hit.

**Breaking Grant's 39-game streak was itself an achievement that will put this team in the history books. Did you say anything to the team about that stat?**

I mentioned it to them but I don't think they cared if Grant had won 1, 10 or 100 consecutive, they were upset about dropping the last



Photo by Tracy Salcido

**AIRBORNE:** Parrot sophomore three-point ace Cesar Reyes scores two of his 26 points in Poly’s 70-51 route of host Grant High School Friday. The win gave Poly a share of first place in league.

“The last time somebody took something from us, we beat them by 19 and ruined their streak. I’m hoping the boys are upset again.”

one.

**Looking at the stat sheet on the Grant game, what stands out to you?**

Our shooting percentage stands out to me. But that Grant game was won due to factors that you can’t keep stats on: focus, team defense, intensity.

**Poly seemed to dominate in the Grant game to the point where the outcome seemed assured. Did you have any doubts along the way, or did you feel more certain as the night progressed?**

When I saw the guys for the first time that day, I felt good. When I saw them in the locker room before the game I felt better, When the game got going, I knew Grant was in trouble. No doubts, Never.

**Did you picture your rookie season as coach turning out this way?**

It’s the only way I pictured it.

**Realistically, what is the playoff picture? How deep can Poly go?**

I’m very confident in these guys. I believe I have the best player and the best team for Playoffs.

MaxPreps has us ranked as the #1 seed, The Seeding Committee for the City has a different agenda and gave us the #4 seed.

The last time somebody took something from us, we beat them by 19 and ruined their streak. I’m hoping the boys are upset again.

**Thanks for your time, coach.**