Global Initiatives Program welcomes Japanese students

Students from Nihayama High School in Japan had the opportunity to spend the day at Poly, gaining insights into Poly life and lending some of their own.

By KEVIN CHU
Assistant news editor

In the pursuit of fostering new cultural experiences for students at Poly, the Global Initiatives Program hosted students from the Nihayama High School of Japan on November 8-9, for their second annual visit. The students from Nihayama kicked off their time in Pasadena with an evening event held at Poly on November 8. The Barbeque Club volunteered to prepare hamburgers, which was followed by a presentation by Nihayama students in Gusey Auditorium. During the presentation, Nihayama students described their school, clubs, lifestyle, traditional Japanese games, and even taught the audience origami. The students also performed a traditional high school cheerleading routine.

To express their gratitude towards their hosts at the end of the evening, Nihayama students gave Poly students several games to be kept in the Student Commons and hung a board filled with short messages on Post-it notes. The Japanese students then attended the first-round CIF volleyball playoff game in Scott Gym. The following day, Nihayama students were paired up with Poly students to shadow them in a sample day at school. The visit’s main purpose was to provide an opportunity for Poly students to communicate and interact with the students of Nihayama. The participants learned a great deal about school life at Nihayama as well as the interests and hobbies of the students.

History teacher and coordinator of the Global Initiatives Program Rick Caragher, who organized the visit, commented, “The event was a great success. It provided a great opportunity for interaction between students from both Nihayama and Poly.”

Sophomore Lillian Mecum hosted three Nihayama students during the school day, taking them to her classes and eating lunch with them. Mecum echoed with Caragher’s sentiments and described, “I had a great time interacting with the students and learning more about their culture. It was surprising to find out how similar we actually are.”

Mikiko Chikata, the supervisor of the trip and head English teacher at Nihayama, also considered the trip to be a success. After expressing gratitude for Poly’s hospitality, Chikata noted, “This visit was a tremendous experience for both me and the students. Talking to students at Poly has helped us to develop more confidence in speaking English.”

Through this experience, Poly has developed a special bond with Nihayama High School that will last for years to come. Caragher commented that he hopes to fold the Nihayama visit into one of Poly’s many international traditions and noted that he is already “very excited for another visit.”

English Department hosts gay marriage symposium

Students observed and asked questions in a debate on same-sex marriage, moderated by Poly parent and KPCC host Larry Mantle.

By ANNA WOHL
News editor

A same-sex marriage symposium sponsored by the English Department sparked interest and debate for the Poly Upper School community. Facilitated by KPCC’s Larry Mantle, the November 5th debate featured Lambda Legal staff attorney Tara Borelli, who argued for same-sex marriage, and Chapman University Law professor John Eastman, who argued against same-sex marriage.

After the success of last year’s healthcare symposium, English teacher Laura Marion decided to arrange a second one. Marion recalled, “At the end of the summer I was listening to NPR and heard that Judge Walker had struck down the state’s ban on same-sex marriage. I figured the issue would be in the news through the fall, so I contacted Larry Mantle that day to see if he was up for another symposium. Once he agreed to facilitate the event, he made some calls and found the two speakers.”

Fortunately, Mantle, Borelli and Eastman were all available to hold the symposium during the school day, making the event accessible to the Poly community. Attendance was required of all eleventh grade students in the Advanced Placement English Language course and the ninth grade class, but the event was open to all students, too.

While the issue of gay marriage interests many Poly students and faculty members, students were also encouraged to focus on how the speaker appealed to their audience and developed their argument. Marion noted, “My class spent two days analyzing the effectiveness of each speakers claims and evidence.”

After providing some background on the current controversies concerning same-sex marriage, Mantle asked each student to write a one-page essay summarizing the topic.

Two Japanese students exchanged gifts with Head of School Debbie Reed and Upper School Head Jamie Nelson before eating lunch with Poly students.

John Eastmen and Tara Borelli presented their opinions on the issue of same-sex marriage during a symposium on November 5.
From Poly to Hollywood: David Stone ‘00

Alain David Stone discussed the benefits of having a Poly education and working in the entertainment industry with students at a lunch hosted by PolyConnect on November 10.

BY CONNOR MCKNIGHT
Sports editor

Offering another PolyConnect lunch for Upper School students, the Alumni Board welcomed Da- vud Stone ‘00 on November 10 to discuss his career as an agent in the film industry and to stress the advantages of a Poly education in the real world.

Graduating with a Bachelor’s Degree in Film History and English from Wesleyan University and earning his Masters Degree at USC, Stone spent his summers during his college years pursuing interests in many fields through internships.

After an internship at The Creative Artists Agency, Stone approached the head of the agency and asked to continue working at the firm as an employee. In a very typical Art Gold response (HB0’s Entourage), the company president responded, “Who are you and what are you doing in my office?”

Battling a day job and night classes at USC, Stone began to advance in his newfound career path, starting in the mailroom at Creative Artists. Stone commented, “I was with many recent graduates of Harvard Business School, and some of the basic thinking processes that originally came from my Poly education. I was one step ahead of them, leading to my immediate promotions.”

In five years, Stone rose through the ranks of his company until he was eventually hired as an agent at another agency, William Morris Endeavor.

Stone went on to tell the students that the education he got at Poly allowed him to excel in Hollywood. While at Wesleyan, Stone began to appreciate the preparation Poly had given him specifically with writing: “I noticed that everyone’s writing [at Wesleyan] was nowhere as developed as what we took for granted at Poly.”

Representing Hollywood stars, such as Forrest Whitaker in his television roles and Anna Boden and Ryan Flick (2010’s It’s Kind of a Funny Story with Zach Galifianakis and 2008’s Sugar), Stone inspired his student audience by stressing the fact that with a Poly education and motivation, there are no boundaries.

Describing Stone in high school, classmate and Poly mathematics teacher Rick Thompson ‘08 responded simply, “Stone was a very confident student. He was very popular, but there were a handful of students who could not stand him. Smart and athletic, Stone was co-captain of the varsity soccer team his senior year and led the squad to a CIF Championship.”

Regardless of his high school identity, Thompson was the first to agree that Stone’s Poly education contributed to his success and made him the businessman he is today. Summarized simply by Stone, “At Poly, we are given a step ahead in the world, and it’s up to you to take full advantage of that.”


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As an athlete, I’ve always been taught to be strong and aggressive. The long hours in the weight room, the encouragement to be immune to physical pain, and the drive to keep cool in tense situations all promote a culture in which strength is valued. I’ve been around this culture and played sports at a competitive level since I was a little kid. Anybody who knows me will say that my passion for my sport is second to very few. By now, I hope I understand what it means to sacrifice for a team—both in mind and body.

But though my real for athletics, even I can recognize that there is something inherently violent in the game of football.

I must say I’m a fan of the game at every level and count myself as one of the strongest supporters of our Poly team. I also know the appeal of the game runs deeper than the sport. A fan’s gladiatorial lust is tingled every time a defender springs a big hit on the ball carrier.

There’s no denying the real violence of football. Let’s start with the simple facts. Here at Poly, during the current season alone, at least nine out of the 27 regular season active players have suffered serious injuries (defined as an injury requiring the player to at least a week of play). These injuries include a torn ACL, a broken fibula, and four concussions. You’d be hard pressed to find any other team on campus that has had a third of its members seriously hurt.

In fact, the sport that is believed to compete with football for the most injuries proportional to its number of team members, soccer, experienced nothing like football in terms of injuries last year. In the last three years, Coach Pat Gray maintains, his girls soccer team has only had one player sustain a “serious” injury. While the boys’ team has six players “seriously” injured last year out of 20 players total, only one of the six was to the head or neck. The football team sustained four injuries to the head or neck. Thus, the potential for long-term detriment in soccer seems to be less than that in football.

Defensive Coordinator Chris Schmoke commented, “The only real way to avoid injury is to not play football...it’s unlike any other game because each team is actually trying to take down the other on every play.” Before I go on, I want to make it clear that anything I’m writing here is by no means intended to be a shot at the football program here at Poly. I’m using our school program as an example simply because I know it— the players, coaches, parents, and fans—so intimately. A number of the players on the team are some of my very closest friends. I sincerely wish the varsity team the best of luck in the playoffs, and I will continue to be one of the team’s loudest and most avid supporters.

The last thing I hope to accomplish is to shed negative light on or discourage a team that has had so much success this season. I’m writing this precisely because I care about this team.

I’ve talked about the safety issues with our Athletic Director, Steve Beerman, our Head Coach, Brendan McGreal, Coach Schmoke, and a number of players on the team. To the school’s credit, our Athletic Department has definitely recognized the dangers football presents. This year, two doctors are present at each home and away game, in addition to the training staff of both teams, to treat and diagnose injuries sustained on the field. The accepted protocol for clearing concussed players has become much more stringent. And the new “Zymith” helmets we’ve started to use are designed to provide more head protection than the helmets the team has used in the past.

But do these steps truly address the real issue? Do they really make the game itself safer for the players? Imagine that at the Caltech parking garage, there was no speed limit and there were winding curves all the way down to the bottom of the garage resulting in several students getting hit by cars. As a response, would we station two doctors in the parking garage to treat each injury in the best way possible? Or would we change the basic traffic patterns and impose speed limits and buffer zones in order to modify the very structure of the parking garage itself, so as to make it safer and stop the accidents from occurring in the first place? Let’s remember that we’re not talking about NFL players who get paid to take heavy risks. These are our classmates, whose lives have barely yet begun. That being so, I think we truly should consider taking preventative measures. We need to be proactive and stop the injuries before the fact. To accomplish this, the game itself may need to be amended. Again, I’m not alone at Poly in coming to this conclusion. Schmoke, Beerman, and McGreal all agree that high school football will probably not be the same in five years because of safety concerns.

Beerman said that there is talk about eliminating parts of football that involve high-speed collisions. Instead of kickoff plays, a play that involves the two teams sprinting at each other from opposite directions, teams will start with the ball at a certain yard line.

Another possible change that is being discussed is taking linemen out of three-point stances (a stance in which a lineman has two feet and one hand on the ground) and requiring them to line up in two-point stances (a stance typically used on obvious passing downs in which only the two feet are on the ground). The new stance restriction would presumably heighten linemen’s center of gravity by forcing them to stand more upright, and consequently it should decrease the force exerted in hits made when blocking near the line of scrimmage. I doubt any football enthusiast would feel that such changes would completely ruin the game.

These amendments would no doubt improve the safety of the game, but Beerman conceded that it will be difficult to change high school football. Amending the game itself is not something that Poly itself can control, of course, but is instead in the hands of CIF. And it’s not likely that CIF will view itself as having the proper resources to search and make the necessary changes.

Instead, the normal pattern is for rule changes that affect high school to come from the collegiate level, in this case, the NCAA, which performs its research and issues changes that then trickle down to the high school level. Even so, Poly could surely be a proponent of such change. To the extent they agree, our coaches can add their voices to advocate amending the game.

I truly want the game of football to continue to be played at the high school level, because I believe that the players of playing high school are numerous. The possibility of injury can’t be eliminated in any sport, much less in life inside or outside school. As Schmoke pointed out, “We all have to drive on the freeway.” But we need to consider drawing the line in a different place and striking a safer balance so that the game itself can survive. One thing I hope I’ve learned in my sports career is that wins and losses will fade, but the impact on people and their health may not.

“Preventative measures must be taken, so that the injuries can be stopped before the fact.”

-DWR

Paws and Claws is a forum for students, teachers and interested readers to briefly express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with any issue concerning the Poly community. Submissions may be placed in the senior box of opinion editors, emailed to thepawprint@polytechnic.edu or posted online through the Paws and Claws Facebook. Any non-monetary contributions are not accepted.
My first time

By Bebe LaGra
Opinion editor

Voting for the first time on November 2 was simultaneously anti-climactic and a bigger deal than I thought it would be. I traveled to a small church by my house and spent less than ten minutes reading through and voting on the propositions and future office holders in California. But don’t let the less than ten minutes scare you. I promise that I went in to vote with at least minimal preparation.

Registering to vote was easy, perhaps easier than it should be. I filled out a form of biographical information and sent it off in the mail. Soon after, I received a rather important looking packet detailing each of the propositions that would be on the ballot and the pros and cons of each.

I admit that I was confused. Some propositions were easier to understand than others and even when I did understand them, it was hard to predict the consequences of voting yes or no.

My family ended up fighting over whether it was responsible to legalize marijuana or not. My somewhat conservative sister argued the cons as my mom and I took a more neutral stance. Although my mother was against legalization, she said that if it were legalized she’d start growing and selling it. My mom is pretty chill.

Even though a lot of people disparaged voting and said that it doesn’t matter because your vote doesn’t count, I felt that the most exciting aspect about turning eighteen was the opportunity to have a small voice in something bigger than myself. When I showed up at that church by my house, voting booklet in hand, I felt excited as I entered my polling booth and was taught how to correctly use the ballot.

Overall, I enjoyed voting for the first time in the 2010 midterm elections. I wore my sticker with pride. But I am in the minority for my age group. Voter turnout for youths 18-29 years old fell from about 25.5% in the 2006 midterm election to 20.4% in the 2010-midterm election.

Why was there such a substantial fall in youth voter participation? It is a combination of apathy, distance, and procrastination.

“It wasn’t that we didn’t care,” said Brendan Campbell, Chairman of the University of Michigan College Democrats. “We were disgusted with rhetoric from the right. To see such undemocratic dominating political discourse turned off young voters this cycle.”

This quote from the Michigan Register view helps shed light on why some of the leftist youth felt “turned off” from the midterm elections but, in the end, choosing not to vote hurt them more than it helped them. And, by not voting, the people who employed the rhetoric they were “disgusted” by ended up in power.

But this is honestly not about left or right, won and who lost, I want to know why young voices are consistently underrepresented in voting. I talked to students, and most of them told me that the only reason they didn’t vote was because they hadn’t registered in time. Some claimed they were scared to vote because they felt they didn’t know enough about the propositions to make an informed decision. Some just didn’t care.

In a way, this is actually perfectly representative of typical teenagers. Some were completely apathetic, some felt it was too much responsibility, and some simply procrastinated.

I’m glad I voted. It may not have changed anything. Maybe my vote didn’t count for much at all. But it’s the principle of the matter. I turned eighteen this summer and I was thrilled at the opportunity to vote at the midterm elections. I’d like to think I contributed to shaping whatever comes next.

Poly’s Bucket List: a compilation of plans

By Olivia Russak
Opinion editor

Many assume that Poly students work for the sake of working, that our ultimate goals are academic or collegiate. We rarely realize that we are, in fact, normal students: we just want to have fun, and leave a legacy at our school. Be it positive, negative, or “legendary,” we all want to look back on these years in a way that makes us proud.

I recently asked the student body to answer the question “If there was one thing you’d want to do by the time you graduate, what would it be?” Instead of writing an article discussing what these responses all mean, I figured they would stand stronger on their own. So, I present The Poly Bucket List:

- Get a banner on the wall in the gym
- Try a sport I’d never done before
- Be as cool as Jack and Hunter
- Go to a CIF championship game
- Win a CIF ring
- Get in trouble with McGrail
- Watch a poly athletic event as a spectator
- Have a whole class sleepover
- See every play, musical, recital and performance at Poly
- Take an acting class
- Ask Debbie Reed to a dance
- Be principal for a day
- Pass off a teacher for once
- Beat Strom in an eating contest
- Become McGrail’s apprentice
- Come up with the perfect senior prank
- Skip a class
- Skip an assembly
- Microwave fish in the yellow house one last time
- Start a food fight
- Play tag with Nikita
- Raft the LA River
- Visit more places in LA and take advantage of this great city before I have to leave
- Start a legit slow clap
- Make up a dance to pretty boy swag
- Find a way to ding-dong-ditch the yellow house
- Screem at the top of my lungs randomly in class
- Go on the roof of the gym
- Have an epic game of hide and go seek at Poly at night
- Finally convince the administration to rename Gouney Hall
- Once I turn 18, I want to scare my mom into thinking I got a tattoo
- Participate in the musical
- Think of a good senior prank
- Have a dance off in the Caltech parking lot
- Send all of my classmates a thank you letter
- Send all of my teachers a thank you letter
- Give a good Secret Santa gift for once
- Be able to say quiche nach bar none and daddy in one grammatically correct sentence
- Go to Roscoe’s
- Attain some work experience in the field I’m interested in
- Become friends with someone in the class I’m not currently close to
- All I really want is to leave my mark on poly so that people remember me
3D Movies

By JAVIER CIENFUEGOS
Student contributor

Unless you’ve been living under a rock for the past year or so, you’ve probably seen at least one advertisement for a movie in 3D. 3D has literally invaded theaters around the country and there are countless promotions releasing more and more movies this way, supposedly for the enjoyment of consumers. 3D is nothing but a gimmick for movie studios looking for some quick money. When you go see a movie in 3D you pay a surcharge that can range anywhere from $4 to $7 to cover the cost of buying thousands of disposable glasses, and, theoretically, new projectors. But all the new theaters that are capable of showing 3D films use the same projectors to screen all of their movies. In other words, the only real privilege you pay for is that fancy pair of disposable recycled glasses that will be refurbished and redistributed over and over.

“Money aside, is 3D really an advancement in filmmaking? Absolutely not.”

3D films have been around since the 1950s when they were introduced as a way to get consumers away from their brand new televisions and back into theaters. None of these 3D films were acclaimed, and only a select few are remembered today. In 1954 Alfred Hitchcock, the director on horror films, filmed his hit film Dial M For Murder in 3D, but opted to release it normally rather than change his film with the effect. After the 50s, 3D fell out of favor with audiences and studios alike. Although it experienced a brief resurgence in the 1980s, 3D was for the most part driven out of mainstream cinema and reserved for cheesy theme-park attractions like How I Shrink the Audience. Every so often some children’s films were released with a 3D spin, but those were nothing but absolutely amazing.

Does the added dimension really deepen the film viewing experience? Roger Ebert argues that it ultimately detracts from the viewing experience. Many viewers complain that it causes headaches or nausea. In an interview with Reuters, Dr. Michael Rosenbaum, Professor of Ophthalmology at Northwestern University’s Peinberg School of Medicine, explained that normal 2D pictures are often processed quite easily by the average person, but 3D translates into a greater mental effort, making it easier to get a headache. Not to mention the fact that people with glasses are forced to put an additional frame on top of their daily eye wear, causing additional discomfort.

Recently, 3D has made a comeback. The task has been completely accomplished in the realm of animated films with both of the major animation powerhouse Dream Works and Disney/Pixar, in full support of 3D. Still, 3D had not been accepted by the film industry at large until last year when James Cameron rocked the world with his release of the 3D epic Avatar.

Avatar was the first 3D film to be taken seriously, going on to earn more than any film before it and even an Oscar nomination for Best Picture, an impressive first for a 3D film. That said, I personally enjoyed the film more on Blu-Ray than I did in 3D. No headaches, no clumsey glasses upon glasses configurations, no surcharge, and no reduced brightness, resulting in a much more comfortable and engaging film-viewing experience.

3D movies keep coming out, and I keep avoiding them, but now 3D is invading living rooms with the release of Blu-ray players and TVs. Even TV is turning to 3D, with the launch of Britain’s Sky 3D channel, ESPN’s announcement of ESPN3D and several other companies following suit. Despite its flaws, 3D is here to stay. I guess I’ll just take some Dramamine or something...

Student activism

By JANE DAVIDSON
Assistant opinion editor

Sophomore Hassan Shabayev gave a presentation about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the high school on Friday, October 8. He did not do this for a junior speech or a class assignment; he did it to educate the Poly community about something he truly cared.

Many students with whom I spoke after the assembly told me that they had known very little about the issue prior to the presentation. Most of us knew of an Israeli-Palestinian conflict existed, but little about the specifics.

Some students who were aware of the subject had only seen it from the perspective of American media. As a supporter of Israel, the United States covers the issue, Shabayev argued, in an inherently biased way.

Though Shabayev may have expressed a bias on the subject as well, his presentation allowed us to see the other side of the conflict in order to develop a more balanced view.

Being taught by a student who is truly passionate about a topic was definitely a satisfying experience. Five days a week we sit in classrooms listening to teachers lecture. It is always clear when a teacher truly cares about his or her subject. I sometimes drift in and out of daydreams in one class if a teacher does not find a topic anything more interesting than I do, yet the next class I will be enthralled, with the teacher transferring his or her enthusiasm onto me.

When the class of 2011 gave speeches for their junior year English classes, many students gave performances that went far beyond what I had expected. I had no idea how large a role passion played in the ability to speak public.

Speaking ranks as one of the most common phobias alongside heights, spiders and claustrophobia, but when someone truly cares about what they’re speaking about, this fear disappears in the eyes of the audience. We have so much to learn from each other. Poly students are smart, passionate people, and the best way to create a more intellectually stimulating environment is by sharing that passion and knowledge with each other. Giving a speech is just one way to do this. Poly students should challenge themselves to find unique ways to bring what they’re passionate about to the community.

Everyone has their own ways of sharing these passions. Other members of the opinion section and I write articles for The Paw Print about issues with which they are concerned. Many students form clubs or organizations to address problems they believe needs to be addressed.

The collective knowledge of our student body is overwhelming. Each of us has more to contribute to the Poly community than we might imagine.

If we can depart more often from the lows and arbitrary communication level of high school kids to sharing what we are truly passionate about, our school could become a more genuinely intellectual place.

We have the opportunity to learn from fantastic teachers, but we also have the incredible resource of each other. Unlike this resource and be a resource for the rest of the school. Maybe then we can really live up to our reputation.

If you would like your voice to be heard, contribute a response to this article for the next issue of The Paw Print, please email a member of the opinion staff at thepawprint@polyphony.org.

...the best way to create a more intellectually stimulating environment is by sharing that passion.

A LETTER FROM MEXICO

By HAYDEN BETTS
Opinion editor

When it hit the Los Angeles Times on August 26, the headline read: “Marina marines find 72 bodies at ranch, navy says.” To many readers in United States it was another in a torrent of headlines that reported the drug cartel related deaths in northern Mexico. The news received no direct proclamation from Hillary Clinton like the Ciudad Juarez murders of three members of the United States Consulate General did back in March.

Why did the uncovering a mass grave reminiscent of the all too memorable atrocities of World War II only ninety miles south of the Texas southern border set off more alarms in the United States? The situation in northern Mexico is a war, and nothing less. A fact too often neglected in the press is that in recent years drug cartels have taken control of vast sections of northern Mexico. This is not unlike military occupations in that there have been no “formal declaration[s] of war.”

The drug war in Mexico over the past four years has been dramatic. 28,228 people have been murdered as a direct result of cartel related conflict in Mexico. In four years of this fighting, seven times as many lives have been claimed as the total number of American deaths in the Iraq war.

The cause of all the violence is, of course, control over drug routes into the United States. In a January 2010 report, the United Nations found that the current situation is a result of “the behavioral of the Mexican cartels [which] has unleashed an interminable violence, where the survivors are trying to reorganize and try to take advantage of weaknesses.”

This “beheading” took place in 2007, when Felipe Calderon, Mexico’s current president, proclaimed that he was starting a “War on Drugs.” He sent in federal police forces of the north. This action shattered the tentative balance that had existed between the cartels. So, by declaring a symbolic war, Calderon started an actual one.

If one were to disregard the United States border on a map, Ciudad Juarez and El Paso Texas look like they are part of the same settlement. In terms of their distances, one could practically be a suburb of the other, like Pasadena to downtown Los Angeles.

I feel a feeling, though, that if beheaded corpses were to be found hanging from a freeway overpass in Pasadena, and if one murder were taking place every three hours, the government of the United States would do a little bit more than send money over to the area to help out.

Proposition 19 was on the ballot for California’s November election. The passage of this proposition would legalize the possession of small amounts of marijuana for adults over the age of 21, and would open up possibilities for legal commercial cultivation of Cannabis, the plant from which marijuana is produced, in California. Marijuana happens to be the most widely used illicit substance in California and one of the largest moneymakers for the drug cartels. It seemed logical that legalizing marijuana in California would put a major dent in the illicit revenue stream of the cartels. Proposition 19 might have been the only chance for American voters to make a political stand against the tyranny of the cartels.

Some argued this point, while others opposed it, saying that the cartels are too diversified to feel the hit. With the failure of Proposition 19 at the polls this November, it is clear that the opposition is strong.

Of course, we may not ever have gotten the chance to see the effects of Proposition 19 as the United States Treasury department, Eric Holder, proclaimed prior to the election, for marijuana’s illegality under federal law ordered to be “rigorously enforced.”

If the United States is not willing to take a risk on marijuana to fight back at the cartels, what is willing to do? Assessing the seriousness of the situation on November 8, Hillary Clinton claimed, “These drug cartels are showing more and more indices of insurrection” — insurgencies that have forcefully occupied territories less that one hundred miles south of the United States border. These are insurgencies that enforce their authority by murdering and making examples of their enemies. The murders of mayors and policemen happen on such a regular basis, as crime is hardly starting anymore. What is happening in northern Mexico is the rise of the worst kind of despotism, and the American habit for drugs feeds it.

The United States government has put forth to “protect freedom” around the world over the past decade, it sure has missed a spot.
**Fall play review: The Miss Firecracker Contest**

**By LOGAN CRILEY**

*Life editor*

The Miss Firecracker Contest graced the Garland stage this fall with spark and soul. The cast of six actors painted a picture of American life that felt truer than reality in its depiction of the balance of dysfunctional family life and the unconditional love that holds a family together.

Set in Brookhaven, Mississippi, the play is centered on Camelle Scott’s (Bebe LaGrua) pursuit of beauty: she hopes to win the annual Miss Firecracker beauty contest and earn the respect of her community.

Despite initial lack of support from her family, Camelle follows her dreams, devoting herself to the contest. Ironically, it is not through the contest that Camelle eventually finds beauty, but through her relationships and friends who really rally around her.

As a testimony to the quality of actor Beth Henley’s writing, the play provides moments so tragic that a small part of you might die upon witnessing them—but fear not, high-octane comic relief is around every turn to rejuvenate your aching soul. In fact, many of the play’s most tear-jerking lines are delivered with a smile.

At one point near the nadir of his family’s descent into dysfunctional pandemonium, Delmont Williams (Grant Genske), Camelle’s belligerent cousin, shows a wide grin and exclaims, “It’s as if everything is the verge of collapse.” His line embodies the essence of the play in that throughout the drama, the characters are poised to live a happy existence together, yet reality always manages to rear its ugly head and the play returns to a state of hysterical hysteria.

Because of the play’s small cast, all actors spent plenty of time on stage, in time which they demonstrated the skill and determination they brought to the performance.

Because of the audience’s on-stage seating, the actors faced the challenge of performing for an audience on all sides, which did not, in fact, seem to be any challenge at all.

Besides LaGrua and Genske, the excellent cast included Alice Deadrick, Maggie Burch, Zara Neill, and Matt Lochner.

LaGrua and Matt Lochner share an intimate moment before LaGrua’s final display in the “Miss Firecracker” beauty contest.

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**“Artist of the Issue” recognizes actresses from the fall plays**

**By AUDREY CHAI**

*Life editor*

**Katie Antonsson**

For senior Katie Antonsson, what started as a hobby in the ninth grade has quickly developed into what she calls, “a total passion.”

Antonsson began acting at Poly and has participated in every fall play and spring musical in high school.

For this year’s fall play, Antonsson was cast as the searing defense attorney, Daniel Kaffe, in the play *A Few Good Men*. Antonsson looked to her brother for inspiration to play this role, as both her brother’s demeanor were very present in Kaffe.

Antonsson found herself loving being able to show and experience the journey that Kaffe went through. “I love his attitude, but most especially how he developed such confidence that he didn’t have in the beginning. In the end it really knows who he is,” she noted.

Antonsson’s realistic and impressive portrayal of Kaffe was due not only to her talent in acting but also to her connection to the character. “As soon as I was cast as Kaffe, I sat down with my lines, read through them and analyzed the whole play,” she said.

Antonsson believes that by doing this, she found a connection with Kaffe, allowing her to play the role with authenticity and passion. Her strong delivery and ability to successfully and authentically play a male character impressed not only the audience, but also fellow cast members. Sophomore and fellow actor in *A Few Good Men* Ritu Goshard commented about Katie, “She took such an iconic role and turned out such an amazing performance that none of us will forget.”

After her first performance on opening night, Antonsson felt “out of this world” and was proud of herself and the entire cast. “We all worked so hard for this, and to see it all end successfully is the most satisfying feeling in the world. We put in so many hours, and we finally made it,” she described.

Antonsson noted that the feeling of family amongst her fellow performers is what pulls her so strongly toward acting: “You develop this intense feeling of trust that no one else can understand. We’re a huge family that works together to support each other on and off the stage.”

Antonsson said that she would like to pursue a singing musical and expects to continue her passion for acting after high school as well. “I am going to be a major career path for me,” Katie admitted, “but acting is something I love to do, so it will definitely continue to be a part of my life.”

**Bebe LaGrua**

Senior Bebe LaGrua has been acting since she was eight years old. Coming from a family with a love of theater and performing arts and valuing the ability “to mold yourself into weird and different characters,” acting has always been a natural hobby of LaGrua’s.

LaGrua has been an active participant in the Performing Arts program at Poly since her sophomore year. Performing in a multitude of fall plays and musicals, she feels she has found her place in the arts. This year has been no exception.

She took on the role of the lead and playful Camelle in the fall play, *The Miss Firecracker Contest*. LaGrua knew that tackling this role was going to be no easy task for her. When trying to understand her character, LaGrua described that although similar in their insecurities, she and Camelle are completely different in their portrayals of their insecurities.

The character of free-spirited, always singing and dancing Camelle sharply contrasts with that of LaGrua, who described herself as being more reserved and quiet. However, LaGrua found that the opportunity to portray Camelle this year to be a fun challenge.

“This year, I really put myself out there compared to any other play that I’ve done. I’m proud that I was able to pull it off,” Bebe described.

LaGrua and Matt Lochner share an intimate moment before LaGrua’s final display in the “Miss Firecracker” beauty contest.

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Students Clara Neilson, Grant Genske, Alice Readick and Bebe LaGrua were part of the six-member cast of “The Miss Firecracker Contest.” Together they make a toast as disaster unfolds.

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LaGrua and Matt Lochner share an intimate moment before LaGrua’s final display in the “Miss Firecracker” beauty contest.

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LaGrua and Matt Lochner share an intimate moment before LaGrua’s final display in the “Miss Firecracker” beauty contest.
IMPACT: Poly’s Invisible Children Club helps students in Uganda

By LINA VADLAMANI
Life editor

A recent addition to Poly’s multitude of student clubs, the Invisible Children Club has established itself as one of the most influential.

Invisible Children is an organization started by American college students wanting to help children in northern Uganda, a place ravaged and terrorized by Joseph Kony’s Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), a purportedly Christian army that seeks to overthrow what it considers a dictatorial government. The LRA has been condemned by the International Criminal Court (ICC) and other international human rights organizations for widespread murder, mutilation, sexual enslavement of women and children, and most importantly, its use of child soldiers.

Children are either abducted from homes after their parents are killed or taken from schools, which are then destroyed, leading to a diabolical decline in education.

Poly’s Invisible Children club is the main group of Invisible Children northern Uganda, with the support of student-run clubs in schools all over the nation. Poly’s club is one of the many in the nation that seeks to raise awareness and funds to help the cause of the children in Uganda.

Seniors Anna Gilman and Allison Falletta are co-presidents of the club, which they started in the fall of this year. Gilman says they started the club after Greg Feldmuth, the club’s faculty advisor, brought the Invisible Children organization to their attention.

When asked what attracted her to the cause, Gilman replied, “After I watched the documentary Mr. Feldmuth sent me, ‘The Rescue,’ I truly felt con- nected to it. It was striking to see three college students go to Uganda and be so affected by the situation there — it was extremely mean- ingful to see students tak- ing the initia- tive to make change, and I wanted Poly to be a part of that change.”

Poly’s Invisible Children club started off in year with a fundraiser at Soupplantation, with 20% of a Poly family member’s meal going to the club. Poly raised $800 in the fundraiser, which was matched by a private corporation, Halogen, thus effectively raising $800. These funds will go to the Sacred Heart School in northern Uganda through the Schools for Children initiative, in which each school races funds to help a certain school in Uganda.

According to Gilman, “I think this program is really special, because it lets us know exactly how we are making a difference, and we can see exactly whom we are affecting. So often we blindly give to charities without actually knowing what’s happening — Invisible Children is more about building a meaningful connection with the people you are helping.”

However, the club is not solely about raising funds — raising aware- ness is arguably its larger purpose. Feldmuth remarked, “I was ex- tremely impressed with the organi- zation because, unlike other organi- zations that focus solely on raising money, Invisible Children focuses on raising awareness through docu- mентaries and other creative out- letts, such as music and art.”

This aspect of the organization came out in its other event, a con- cert and screening of a documentary at USC.

The club’s third event was a screening of a docu- mentary and presentation by a student in Uganda who benefited from In- visible Children’s Legacy Scholarship program. The program aims to provide students not only with financial aid to pay for their schooling and board, but also with social and psychological aid to pro- vide each student with a mentor outside of school. The mentor in effect be- comes another parent for the child whose life was completely destroyed by the rebels. This event was also supported by Poly’s Global Initiatives pro- gram, which designated the event as one of the fall Global Initiatives events. Probably the most striking as- pect of the evening was hearing the testimony of Fiona, a Sacred Heart School student devastated after losing her parents to the LRA and thus losing the means to con- tinue her education, since education in northern Uganda has become ex- tremely expensive.

Fiona told her story, from first learning about the Legacy Schol- arship Program and applying, to now, after taking a semester off of her second year of college to tour in America, bringing awareness to “brothers and sisters in Uganda that desperately need help. The children in Uganda are invisible because no one is aware of what is happening. I was invisible until Invisible Chil- dren rescued me, and made me vis- ible.”

Seeing an actual person that went through the devastating events that we only see in documentaries and the news truly brought home the is- sue for many students, and it made the conflict frighteningly real.

Poly’s Invisible Children club plans to do more events during the year, including new fundraisers and possibly showing some of the documentaries and bringing students from Uganda to the rest of the school.

Feldmuth remarked, “I see In- visible Children as a unique non- government run organization, and I’m extremely glad that Poly stu- dents are supporting it so whole- heartedly.”

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Fall play review: A Few Good Men

By VERONICA WICKLINE
Assistant life editor

Those who had the opportunity to see Poly’s production of A Few Good Men this past week enjoyed a remarkable theatre experience.

The story progressed from jail house to marine base to apartment, going back and forth in time between scenes. By parsing the stage, the production seamlessly traveled back and forth in time and space, maintaining the flow and energy of the play.

The actors, too, made A Few Good Men come to life. Actors who were in a particular scene sat on benches surrounding the stage, out of the light. Though the audience’s attention was not directed towards these actors, they maintained a mo- tionless sitting stance.

The scene-like ensemble set a rigid tone for the entire perfor- mance. Without their motionless stance, the production would not have been infused with the tension required for the themes of this play.

All of the actors should be proud of this achievement. They all worked together to make this production a thrill- ing success.

In addition to the ensemble’s collective victory, the lead roles carried the performance with im- pressible skill. Each performance struck me as believable and the ac- tors wholeheartedly committed to their roles.

While all of the performances impressed me, I must limit myself to discussing a very few that par- ticularly resonated with me.

Katie Antonsson, playing Lieu- tenant Junior Grade Daniel Kaffee, mastered the masculine manner- isms of her character and delivered a performance that will not soon be forgotten.

Her hands, stance, and immo- bility convinced me she was LG Kaffee from the beginning. Her energy sparked remarkable conflict between her character and Javier Cienfuegos’ Colonel Nathan Jessop in the climactic examination of Jessop. The two actors in that mo- ment of tension both proved them- selves as truly skilled performers.

Together, Kelsey Kawan as Lance Corporal Harold Dawson and Robert Ozen as Pri- vate First Class Louden Downey delivered a won- derful performance.

Kawan’s character’s impregnable bravery and black-and-white moral code created a strong, if misguided, character with a palpable aura of fear. Kawan delivered a mas- culine performance so convincing that I forgot she was my classmate and friend, Kelsey, many times during the performance.

Ozen’s character, in contrast, appeared meek and shiftless. Ozen succeeded in giving his weaker char- acter equitable presence in every scene he shared with Kawan—a feat to be cel- ebrated.

Hasan Sha- haway playing Lieu- tenant Jonathan Kendrick also de- livered a stunning performance. His accent was flawless and his demeanor intimidating. Sha- haway wholeheart- edly immersed himself in his unique character.

The cast and crew should be very proud of the wonderful perfor- mance each of them delivered. The play was truly remark- able.
Cross-country finishes strong

Both varsity boys’ and girls’ cross country successfully place 8th and 10th, respectively in the CIF Finals at Mt. SAC.

By Caleb Lee
Assistant Sports editor
Running in the pouring rain at Mount San Antonio College in the CIF finals, both the boys’ and girls’ cross-country teams produced admirable results to wrap up an impressive season. Because of the muddy conditions on the usual course, the races were rerouted to a different rain course, but this did not slow the Panthers down.

On the boys’ side, sophomore Michael Caughron placed fifth with a time of 16:52, qualifying him based on his individual results for the State meet. In his final race of an solid Poly cross-country career, senior Chris Marks ran a time of 17:42, good enough for 28th place in the heat. As a team, the boys narrowly missed qualifying for state competition, finishing in eighth place while the top seven teams move on.

The girls’ cross-country team surprised many by performing well enough at CIF to qualify for the finals even though it was with only a few key runners. At the finals, freshman Ryan Gancedo ran a time of 20:24, placing her tenth in the race and easily the fastest freshman. Emily Gifford also turned in a solid performance in her final meet of the season, placing 31st out of a field of 117. With the impressive results of her underclassmen, the girls’ team has high hopes for next year.

Coming into the season, the cross-country team knew that they were young and relatively inexperienced. With this in mind, both the girls’ and boys’ teams worked hard throughout the season to keep pace with the competition. Head Coach Rick Caragher stated, “The last few years we had some talented upperclassmen on the boys side and we lost those kids to graduation. Because we still have to compete against more experienced freshmen.

The results of only select runners do not fully reflect the strength of the team. Other athletes also performed well, gaining valuable experience to help fuel the team for years to come. Sophomore Willy Debreu, in his first year on the team, highlighted this fact, stating, “It’s been a challenge for me to adapt, not running in cross-country last year, but other people such as Lev [Asimov], have really stepped up for the team this year.” Marks, Sydney Cua, Mark Loyola, and Olivia Hudnut are the only upperclassmen, but the rest of the team has performed admirably race after race, improving on their times as the season progressed.

As the only seniors, Marks and Cua have matured tremendously to help lead the team. “Chris Marks has been as supportive and encouraging as anybody we’ve had and a great example of somebody who knows he’s a part of something bigger than himself,” said Caragher, “and on the girls side Sydney Cua has been a great force of focus and leadership.”

Additionally, sophomore Ryan Kilman also attributed the team’s success to the preparation under the leadership of the coaches: “We’ve had consistent training this year, starting with summer practices and continuing through the season, building up to the CIF finals to see what we can do together as a team.”

But to get to the finals, the Panthers had to be eligible by running well at the CIF prelims. At Mount San Antonio College, both genders persevered to narrowly qualify for the CIF finals.

Running without two leading runners including Gancedo, many of the girls produced near-perfect race time and surprised fans to place fifth as a team, making them finals eligible. All the girls finished among the top-50, and freshman Emily Gifford placed 18th with a time of 21:39.

The varsity boys did not disappoint either, also placing fifth in the field. Caughron finished fourth, Marks finished eighth, and the rest of the team followed close behind to vault them into the finals. Concerning the results of the fall season, Caughron mused, “Considering that we are a very young team and all the injuries and sicknesses that we have sustained, all in all it has been a good season; no one thought that we would get as far as we did.”

In response to how he believes the season has gone so far, Caragher offered, “Not a ribbon, medals, awards and honors that were won matters, but years from now we’ll be talking about. Whether these people become valuable, contributing, caring members of the communities, that ultimately defines what we want from the program, that they are a part of something bigger than themselves.”

With Coach Caragher at the helm and most of the young but now seasoned team returning next year, the cross-country hopes to succeed in years to come.

The Athletes of the Issue

Sophomore Joe Bohlager (left) and Willy Debreu (right) race for the varsity cross country team. The boys team finished 8th in the CIF Finals at Mt. SAC.

Gancedo has several Poly records for girls cross country despite being a freshman. Sarah Patterson, a co-captain of the volleyball team, won fourth place. Finally, Lauren Teague received 10 voting points, making her first fencer to reach the top five.

By Brian Holman
Sports editor
Alexis Genke, Blair Edwards, and Henry Pray were named Sportswoman and Sportsmen of the season by The Poly Print staff members.

This issue, 10 staffers voted for the awards, ranking their choices from 1 to 5. As in the past, a first-place vote was worth five points, a second-place vote four points, and so on.

For the boys, a rare tie for first place resulted in the following teams being awarded first place votes: Blair Edwards, star track and field star, was the first place vote-getter in his awards category, and Henry Pray, who led Poly to a big win over La Serna in its finale, was the unanimous choice for first place in the football category.

The boys only had one repeat winner: Mark Hough, who won for the third straight year in his award category.

The girls also had a repeat winner: Lillie Edwards, who won in her third year in the award category. She was joined by her sister, Morgan, who finished second overall.

The boys category included four new winners: Michael Caughron, football; Ryan Gancedo, golf; and Henry Pray, track.

The girls category included two new winners: Alexis Genke, cross country; and Lillie Edwards, softball.

The following are the winners for the fall season:

The Poly Print staff picks this fall’s Sportsman and Sportswoman of the Season.

By Caleb Lee

Graham Nesbit
As a four-year varsity starter, Graham Nesbit has been a cornerstone of the Poly water polo team. Nesbit came through this year on both ends of the pool, earning minutes as goalie in the Panthers victory against Aquatic High School early in the season. Along with teammate Henry Pray, Nesbit was named to the All-Tournament team for his contributions to Poly’s third-place finish.

“Over the years, Graham has improved in all facets of his game. This season he really stepped up his goal scoring, which added to his already productive contributions on defense and passing. His leadership this season was invaluable, particularly since we had such a young and inexperienced team,” explained head coach Paul Katayama.

Nesbit further exemplified his versatility in the second game against Prep by scoring ten goals in multiple fashions.

Along with his skills in the pool, Nesbit’s leadership helped contribute to Poly’s playoff drive to the CIF finals. Freshman Spencer Rogers commented, “Throughout the season Graham has really guided the team and tried to help each individual improve as a player. Without him we would have never been able to go as far we did. Even though it was for only one year, I am really glad that I had the chance to play with Graham.”

Charlie Patterson
Grace Shelton
A sport often overlooked by students, equestrian is one of Poly’s most time-intensive teams. Grace Shelton rides for the Poly Varsity Equestrian Team and proves that riding is no simple task.

When she was only seven, Shelton traveled an hour by car to Karen Hudy Stables in Westlake Village four times a week, and has been making the trip for ten years now.

With her hard work, Shelton has led the Poly varsity team in the top ten out of seventy other school teams, and has been ranked both fourth and third in individually overall in her past two years of riding for Poly. Shelton also placed first in the varsity medal class from thirteen other riders. Co-captain Lauren Kerns commented, “Grace is truly a valuable member of our equestrian team, consistently earning many points for Poly. To be as an accomplished rider as she takes hard work and serious dedication. This dedication earned her the Varsity Medal at the last Interchampionship Equestrian League Show on Halloween and has earned her success at many other shows as well. With Shelton’s leadership and talent for the sport, the Poly Equestrian Team will continue to improve.”

The Ankle Wrench

The Ankle Wrench is the Poly’s annual publication that recognizes the best in the Poly community, and this year it celebrates the achievements of the fall season. The Ankle Wrench is a celebration of the hard work and dedication of the students, coaches, and staff at Poly. It’s a testament to the strong tradition of excellence that characterizes Poly’s commitment to excellence in all areas of life. This year’s edition features stories and photos of the most outstanding achievements of the fall season, including academic, athletic, and community service accomplishments. The Ankle Wrench is a source of pride for the Poly community and a testament to the belief that anything is possible with hard work and dedication. This year’s edition is dedicated to the memory of Coach Richard Caragher, who passed away this past summer. Coach Caragher was a beloved member of the Poly community and a true inspiration to his students. The Ankle Wrench is a fitting tribute to his memory and the impact he had on the lives of so many. It’s a reminder of the legacy he left behind and the inspiration he provided. The Ankle Wrench is a celebration of the achievements of the fall season and a testament to the belief that anything is possible with hard work and dedication. This year’s edition is dedicated to the memory of Coach Richard Caragher, who passed away this past summer. Coach Caragher was a beloved member of the Poly community and a true inspiration to his students. The Ankle Wrench is a fitting tribute to his memory and the impact he had on the lives of so many. It’s a reminder of the legacy he left behind and the inspiration he provided. The Ankle Wrench is a celebration of the achievements of the fall season and a testament to the belief that anything is possible with hard work and dedication.
Water polo overcomes Crescenta Valley, falls to La Serna

BY IAN MCKNIGHT
Student Contributor

Summing up a very successful season with an undefeated Poly, the boys varsity water polo team finished in the runner up in CIF Division V with a 17-5 loss to La Serna in the Championship. Knocking off the #1 seed Crescenta Valley in the semifinals, the Panthers complete another successful season, this year just shy of the championship podium.

Having already lost to the Lancers 17-13 in the beginning of the year, Poly’s water polo squad hoped to beat La Serna when it really mattered. In front of a large turnout of fans, a high intensity match between the two finalists unfolded, both putting up a goal in the opening minutes of the first period. The Panther goal came the team's leading scorer and team captain, junior Henry Pray. However, from there, La Serra went off on an offensive tear. Moving the ball around the pool quickly, the Lancers kept the Panthers on their heels and forced in three more goals to end the first period up 4-1. Poly’s offensive prowess was stymied by La Sernas’ goalie Michael Skinas, who had only made key saves in the first quarter.

The Panthers had a tough time adjusting to La Serna’s emphasis on not just the set shot attack, but also the ability to move the ball and effectively execute strong plays on goal. The Lancers lit up the scoreboard to read 17-9 for the final score. Pray finished with six goals, including one that came when he stole the ball from Skinas and calmly threw the ball back into the face of the net. Despite the loss in the CIF Division V Championship, the success of the Panthers’ season cannot be ignored. The boys’ varsity water polo team dominated Prep League opponents, drawing little opposition with 36 goals recorded on consistent strong performances.

Pray and senior Gabriel Nestor, playing in a hard tournament, the team obliterated its opponents in the first two games with scores of 14-3 and 15-7, but lost against Crescenta Valley in the semifinals.

As CIF play progressed, the boys’ varsity water polo team did not back up their intensity. The final scoreboard in Poly’s second game against Prep this year wasn’t much different than the first. In both games, Poly completely outplayed Prep, with scores of 24-5 and 20-4. Nestor had a large contribution to the second match scoring career-high 10 goals in various ways. Pray and freshman Spencer Rogers’ backhand goal also helped to secure this win. In the remaining games before the lead, the Panthers’ teamwork and conditioning paid off, as they exploded on offense and played shut down defense to a final score of 20-14.

In the next match against Chadb- wox, Poly looked to improve on their previous match against Delphi. The team responded, led by Rogers’ five steals defensive performance. Meanwhile, junior goalie Colin Woolway was a saving 15 shots. The game clinched the league title, the third in the past four years, proving the competitive spirit of the boys water polo program.

The final game before CIF playoffs, Poly also dominated Milken Community in a hard fought and intense battle with a close score of 15-5.

In the first round, Poly was matched up with Hoover High School. Led by Pray and fellow Prep, Poly came into the game with a strong mental- lity and won 14-8. With a victory in first round, Poly advanced to the quarterfinals and met Walnut. Both teams came into this matchup hoping to knock the other team off to advance, but Poly’s defense proved to be decisive in the pool that day as the Panthers won 9-6.

With two games left on the road to a CIF title, Poly faced a strong Crescenta Valley squad. During the regular season, Crescenta Valley defeated Poly twice by close margins. As the underdogs in the CIF semifinals, Poly had a 17-5 upset of the number-one ranked team in CIF, once again with their superior defense holding Crescenta Valley to only two goals. Pray stated, “Our defense really stepped up, and we came against CV to hold the number one team in the division to just two goals, which is an incredible thing to do.”

The Poly varsity water polo team’s size is certainly a plus but the dedication and effort at every game and practice, Pray acknowledged. “This season has been harder than a lot of teams on our conditioning because we do not have the same strength that other teams have. This has helped us outlast other teams that we play as a team. From starting the season off as ranked number eight to playing the championship game, the dedication our team has given to one another.”

The team knew that in order to win, they had to mix their skills together and play as a unit. Rogers reflected, “We’ve had a great season so far, there are so many high- lights, not including this tournament or the CIF Playoffs. It was our first time in Poly’s history, our success greatly a result of how well we play together.”

\[ \text{Juniors Colin Woolway (top) and Henry Pray (bottom) drawn seed Crescenta Valley 6-2 in the CIF semifinals, a big upset.} \]

Volleyball serves its way into CIF Finals

BY THE PAW PRINT STAFF
Sports, Opinion, Editor-in-Chief

Exceeding pre-season expectations, the varsity girls’ volleyball team rallied through Prep League play and CIF Playoffs to reach the finals against Prep League cham- pion Chadwick. In front of a large showing of fans, the Panthers suffered a heart-breaking loss in four high-intensity sets, 3-1. Despite the unfortunate outcome, the success of the season cannot go over- looked as the squad finished their phenomenal season as the runner-up in CIF Division 3AA.

Poly entered the CIF Final having already lost to Chadwick twice during the regular season. At home, the Panthers lost in five games, while at Chadwick, the Panthers lost in straight sets. Addition- ally, Chadwick had not lost a game all season, and entered the final at 26-1.

The Panthers did not start out strong and were clearly outplayed in the first game, losing 25-14. The second game started differently, as the Panthers jumped out to an 8-1 lead. But they were unable to sustain their momentum, as Chadwick fought back 10-10 on a string of serves by their star senior Corinne

Hemmersbach. The Dolphins went on to win that game 25-15. The third game ended differ- ently as the Webbs jumped out in the lead after sophomore Cat Davidson served 7 straight aces. Riding that strong serving and hitting combination of junior setter Michelle Miller and junior Alexes Geske, the Dolphins escaped with a 25-13 victory in the final set.

The final game proved to be much closer than the previous two games, with the score changing 9 times in the beginning of the set. Chadwick went on a 6-0 run to pull ahead 17-14. From there, they did not look back, win- ning the CIF championship with a 25-19 victory in the final set. Junior Minni Morris led Poly with 13 kills, but Chadwick wins 25-12. Wolf came out on top.

The game that clinched the Panthers’ spot in the CIF Champions- hip was the semi-final game against Mayfield. Last year’s Prep League and CIF champion, May- field split games with the Panthers in league play. After falling in the first set 25-23, Poly was forced to rebound, particularly with the play of Geske. With a loud atmosphere in the Mayfield gym domi- nated by the cheers of the Poly Prepar- tient Section and the Spirit Squad, the Panthers escaped with a 26-25 win in the second game through tuc- nacular play.

The third game again saw the

slammed the ball across the court for her 27th kill of the game to end the Cubs’ playoff hopes. The Panthers fans stormed the court and surrounded the team in cheers and chants of playoff victory and beyond.

The third round of CIF playoffs, Poly rolled past oppo- nents Culver City, Riadho, and Cy- press at home, 3-0, 3-0, and 3-2, respec- tively. Emerging in especially these two games were the play of freshman Han- nae Kaufman and Natalie Triester. In their first two career playoff games, the two rose to the com- petition and bat- tled nerves and pressure to play phenomenally.

Senior Alex Hanel and Sarah Patterson, who Coach Lauranne Williams said both “stepped up this season,” exampled and kept the team composed with their matted nature.

In order to qualify for postsea- sons, the undefeated Prep League tied for second with May- field, despite falling to Chadwick 3-0, ending their 9-3 league record.

The strength of their league became evident as four teams; Chadwick, Mayfield, Rio Hondo, Poly, and Webb, all made the state final four the first reaching the quarterfinals and beyond.

Right before the end of league with the intention of prepping for the playoffs, the Panthers entered the Crescenta Valley Tournament in hopes of facing tougher competition and get into premier form. This mentality Williams hoped the team would grasp would be clear: “When they are down against tougher teams, the girls always manage to come back. They just keep playing.”

The girls beat the hosts 2-0 to open up the competition bracket for higher division powers Alta Loma and Saugus. Determined to end the tournament on a positive note, the Panthers fought past public school opponents Los Altos and Taft both to the score of 2-1.

Poly surpassed pre-season doubts over the fact that they had lost ten seniors. Pivotal underclassmen emerged as crucial components on the squad and the senior leadership of Hanel and Patterson, the team to victory. Patterson summar- izes the season simply by noting “Rightly played well this season. We surprised everyone’s expecta- tions, including ourselves, and the ring. I’m so proud of everything that we accomplished and how much support we got from our fans.”

\[ \text{Juniors Minni Morrish and Michelle Miller prepare to block a spike by a Mayfield opponent. Girls’ volleyball prepare to block a spike in the CIF semifinals in four close games.} \]

By CONNOR MCKNIGHT
Sports editor

Poly’s varsity football team traveled to Lancaster to face fourth-seeded Desert Christian Friday in the second round of the CIF Northeast Division playoffs after defeating Azusa Hamilton 56-18.

The first-round playoff victory over Hamilton came after three straight highly-anticipated league matchups resulting in victories against rivals Flintridge Prep and Chadwick, as well as a high-scoring loss to Rio Hondo.

Jumping ahead early with a 21-6 lead in the first quarter, the Hamilton Bobcats had no defensive response to the Panther’s offensive production, which included a 69-yard screen pass from senior quarterback Hunter Merriman to Blake Edwards, who maneuvered through Hamilton’s secondary for the touchdown.

On the other side of the ball, the defensive line of Poly faced little opposition from the Bobcats’ blocking. Junior Nathan Hammond, who finished the game with four sacks to increase his CIF Northeast Division leading total to 14 on the year, beat Hamilton’s left tackle on nearly every play. Hammond summarizes, “when I knew the quarterback was going to throw, I just got after it and made the play.” With only seconds to throw the ball, Hamilton’s quarterback had to constantly improvise with quarterback runs to avoid the impending Panther pass rush.

As the playoff matchup continued, Poly slowed down their offensive attack to prevent a complete breakdown, finishing the game with a modest 56-18 score. Rushing touchdowns came from Edwards, junior Harrison Hodgkins, junior Yusef Burpee, and senior Kevin Fohrer. Merriman also found senior Jack Porter for two touchdowns, including a wide-open score in which Porter outraced the Hamilton safety to walk into the end zone untouched. “Opposing defenses focus on Blake and our running game leaving our pass threat virtually unaccounted for,” Porter commented. “This gives our offense the opportunity and keep their secondary in check when we throw the ball. We score quite a few times from simple slants because the outside linebackers are so preoccupied with the run.”

Moving on to the quarterfinals, the Panthers were satisfied with the win. Hodgkins, who maneuvered around tacklers for a long rushing touchdown, described this win as “the road to improvement. Every game, we not only want to win, but also improve. From this point, we are just looking to keep moving on forward farther into playoffs.”

To qualify as the #2 seed from the Prep League, the Panthers needed to beat the visiting Chadwick Dolphins. With senior captain quarterback Hunter Merriman out with a concussion, junior Jonah Campbell had to take over under center, which he successfully did leading the Panthers to a 36-27 win. Campbell found Edwards in the endzone for his first touchdown pass as a starting quarterback.

However, the Panthers relied heavily on the run to put away their opponents. Edwards had 56 carries in the game for 151 yards and two touchdowns, largely with a strong performance of the offensive line, which senior center Jordan Pinsky puts as, “I couldn’t be more proud of the way we linearly executed against Chadwick.” Hodgkins added a touchdown of his own. Defensively, the Panthers had four interceptions, two by safety Porter. However, Porter called the pass rush by the defensive line essential for his interceptions and “without the pressure, my picks would not have happened.” Edwards and senior all-purpose player Chris Levin also added picks of their own. Chadwick, who consistently has a strong rushing attack in the form of Chudi Ihegbharn, was stifled by the defensive line to a meager 70 yards on the ground. Leon estimated this result to the fact that “everyone took care of their gap responsibilities, so Chudi had nowhere to go.”

Prior to the Rio Hondo contest of previously undefeated Prep game was palpable. Poly maintained its excitement by opening up their attack with two first-quarter screens to Edwards for 69 and 67 yards respectively, both turned into touchdowns. Porter returned a kickoff for a touchdown, which he describes as, “we knew they were going to kick it to the left and I knew I had to get to the edge quickly. Rio had scouted our kick return and pursued to one side, giving me an alley to cut up the middle capped off by perfect block execution.

Defensively, the Panthers could not stop the Kares ground attack, led by running back Charles Quinn. After a controversial call on fourth and goal that turned the Panthers over on downs in the red zone, Rio ran the ball on nine straight plays in a 99-yard drive to score once more. A Panther fumble on the ensuing possession allowed

Procedure Spotlight

The varsity football team could not have reached the CIF playoffs without the stellar play of its starting offensive line. This line, comprised of (from left) senior tackle Julian Abalos-Esquivel, junior guard Nathan Hammond, senior center Jordan Pinsky, senior guard Alan Duan, and senior tackle Zach Murphy, have contributed greatly to impact the team’s performance to the point where “when the offensive line plays well, the team usually wins the game, but when they don’t, it is usually going to be a tough battle,” quarterback Merriman explains.

During the first CIF playoff game against Hamilton, the offensive line “fought aggressively all night,” Merriman explains. “the linemen open up holes...to run through, and it all starts with them in the passing game. Without their blocks, there is no play, and I couldn’t even be able to make my passes.” The line did just that, opening big holes for the ball carriers and giving Merriman time to throw on passing plays. The line’s blocking led to 239 rushing yards gained by the running backs, and 180 yards passing for Merriman. This was obviously critical in leading to their decisive first-round victory with a score of 56-18. The rest of the team hopes that the offensive line can maintain its steady momentum throughout the CIF playoffs and towards the ultimate goal of a championship.

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