English Department unveils new senior elective courses for next school year
By NATHAN LEE
News editor

Poly’s English Department will be offering several new senior electives for the next school year. These classes include City of Angels, Literature of the Pilgrimage, Voice and the Search for Identity and Lives Lived/The Meaning of Life.

City of Angels will cover literature and history of the Los Angeles area. Using an innovative design of a two-period course, City of Angels will offer an immersive investigation of course material by integrating several off-campus opportunities. Cotter Donnell, who will be teaching the course with Nathan Stogdill, said, “It’s a departure from what we’ve been doing—the status quo—in a way that really addresses some of the exciting opportunities that we feel we underutilize as a school. For example: access to Los Angeles first and foremost, interdisciplinary work—meaning coming at a topic from the angle of literature and history and social sciences and visual art and performing art and music and really coming at it from different angles.”

Donnell and Stogdill have several ideas for the course. “Maybe that means going to Chinatown, commented Donnell. “Maybe that means going to Koreatown—a section of the city that has seen significant demographic change in the last hundred years.” He continued, “We want to talk about what the social dynamics were to lead to that, how’s that been reflected in what you see around you. In some cases that means going into a city and walking around. In some places it will mean visiting museums, architectural landmarks, walking tours and working with outside experts.”

City of Angels will also feature different experts within the Poly community and beyond to enhance students’ understanding of the historical material and its relationship to contemporary topics. Donnell also mentioned other unique opportunities such as hiking along the California coastline to observe beach culture and the effects of the landscape on the region.

Although the course will fill two periods and two teachers, Donnell believes that “it enhances the overall understanding in the room” and shows that we’ve been doing—the status quo—in a way that really addresses some of the exciting opportunities that we feel we underutilize as a school.

Operation Wallacea
By MANNY MEDRANO
Staff writer

Poly students may be travelling to Honduras with Operation Wallacea in a new GIP trip proposed for the summer of 2015. Abbreviated “Opwall,” the scientific organization sponsors cooperative work between ecological experts and post-graduate university students to research ecosystems worldwide, meaning that all current Polytechnic freshmen and sophomores will be eligible participants.

After considering several different locations, members of the science department have elected Honduras for the potential trip. Once there, students would spend a week in the cloud forest of the Casucho National Park performing fieldwork and collecting data. These numbers are used in submitted reports to the Reduction in Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) that helps fund the protection and preservation of the park.

The second week would either be spent on the local island of Utila or at a coastal marine research station, where students may earn a SCUBA certification while exploring the second most developed coral reef network in the world.

Operation Wallacea, named for the explorer Alfred Russell Wallace, began in Indonesia in 2004 as an opportunity for cooperation among leading ecological experts and post-graduate university students. The organization soon found that it was in need of more assistants at each of their nine worldwide expedition stations—a crucial role that high school students now fill. The operation itself has achieved incredible success, with its field research leading to the classification of hundreds of new species.

POLY’S connection with Opwall was first initiated by an email that offered free biology posters. AP Biology teacher Ellen Santochi commented, “I did have a summer opportunity [in high school], but it wasn’t nearly as exciting or productive as this is... with this, kids can actually make a difference. Alone, they would not be able to but as part of this huge research consortium, they can help to train the local people on how to conduct research and also as a result of their research can figure out ways to conserve biodiversity.”

Athletes sign letters of intent
By JULIA WOHL
News editor

Seniors Noel Askins and Brock Hudnut will be attending the University of Southern California to play soccer and water polo respectively. Spencer Rogers will be attending Stanford University to play water polo as well, while Emily Gifford will be attending Fairleigh Dickinson University to fence.

The seniors participated in National Signing Day, during which high school seniors sign their Letters of Intent to commit to colleges receive college athletic scholarships. Askins, Hudnut, Gifford and Rogers are the only seniors to receive this honor.

Poly celebrated National Signing Day on Babcock Field, which was adorned with orange and white balloons and banners for the occasion. Askins contributes significantly to the girls varsity soccer and varsity track teams. She says her proudest accomplishment as a Panther came when she competed in the CIF Finals and CIF State Championship last year as a member of the varsity soccer team.

Askins explained, “Soccer is a sport where every player is vital to the team’s success, so that was more of a team accomplishment, but team and personal accomplishments are one and the same to me.” She also set the Polytechnic girls’ long jump record, one of her favorite sports memories during her extensive and successful athletic career at Poly.

Askins is looking forward to her time on the soccer team at USC, where she hopes to be...
New courses 
Continued from page 1

“it’s not one guy that has all the answers to a given topic,” Donnell said. “We want a lot of different immersive opportunities.” Stroggill likes to say that “The city itself is the primary text of the class.” 

The English Department will also be offering three other courses besides City of Angels: Literature of the Pilgrimage, Voice and the Search for Identity and Lives Lived/The Meaning of Life. Literature of the Pilgrimage, taught by Grace Hamilton, will focus on both the literal and spiritual significance of the pilgrimage. Donnell commented, “This course sort of reimagines that idea not just in terms of the literal journey but also in terms of the metaphorical journey, coming to a place of deeper understanding of self through the trials and tribulations or the challenges that go along with this sort of metaphorical journey.”

Students taking the course will study both traditional and modern pilgrimages through literature such as Dante’s Inferno, a selection of Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales and other primary texts. Besides writing analytical papers, students will also create a project using individual research.

Voice and the Search for Identity and The Meaning of Life are AP courses in the spring and fall semesters respectively. Julia Davis will teach both next year, with both being taught with their own independent curricula.

According to Donnell, Voice and the Search for Identity will focus on “providing an experience in which the student is thoughtful and reflective about what it means to find your own voice and look about and reflect on the way your voice reflects your values, your beliefs, your priorities, your passions.”

Oriented toward first semester seniors going through the college application process, the course aims to help “put a sort of capstone experience on their time at Poly while they’re spending so much time and emotional energy focused on the future.”

The Meaning of Life centers on life questions that can arise when the process of college applications is over. In Donnell’s words, the course will focus on “making something that is more constructive than ‘senioritis’—looking forward at concerns and motivations that influence them emotionally, intellectually and scholastically. If Voice and Search for Identity is figuring out who you are and how that shapes your voice, The Meaning of Life is about questions such as ‘what do I want to do with my life?’”

Donnell concluded, “Our hope is that as the students look at the variety of options, they’ll see lots that appeal to them.”

Signing Day 
Continued from page 1

surrounded by fellow teammates who held similar inter- ests and experience the same challenges as she does.

Gifford leads the varsity fencing team with a stellar re- cord and will specialize in epee, a type of fencing in which she is traditionally ranked, next year at Fairleigh Dickinson.

Head coach of fencing Laura Holmeng said, “With an irre- pressible team spirit and fierce competitive nature, Emily has provided strong leadership on the team. She embodies the best qualities we espouse: strong work ethic, focus on team rather than individual and sportsmanship. Her mantra is ‘What can I do to help?’ She has anchored our championship women’s and mixed teams as well as worked enthusiastically with less experienced fencers.”

Hudnut has excelled on the boys varsity water polo team over the last four years, with a CIF Championship under his belt to prove his worth.

That CIF championship game remains his favorite Poly sports memory. He recalled, “I was such a great team win, and it showed our team’s strength and resiliency not only to come back from a deficit during that game but also to win after losing some key players from last year’s team, as well as coming up short in CIF finals the two years prior.”

Black History Month commences with play

By TEDDY DEBREU
Assistant news editor

Actor, writer and La Salle alumna Kelley Williams performed three acts of her play “Lovin’ Chocolate” for the Upper School at the beginning of February. Her performance initiated Poly’s celebration of Black History month, which was organized by the Black Student Union.

During her performance of “Lovin’ Chocolate,” Williams portrayed a young woman named Delores, who, in the confinement of her own room, comes to terms with the frustration of being pushed to act in stereotypes and struggles with her own identity. After the performance, Williams presented a slideshow on how colored women should actively define their own identities and personalities.

Senior Perrin Lang commented, “Her heartfelt and brutal performance forced me to engage with her depiction of black women in modern society in such a personal way that I often found myself turning away, overcome with complicated emotions.”

Williams graduated from Peifer College and later attended East 15 Acting School in London, England, where she further pursued her passion for activism through acting.

Since writing “Lovin’ Chocolate,” Williams has performed the play countless times, especially throughout Southern California. Her goal is to express the obstacles and challenges that African-Americans still face. She has visited several schools in Pasadena, including La Salle and Poly.

After the performance, the Black Student Union held a question-and-answer session with Williams so that the students could explore the issues she presented in her play in further depth. Over thirty-five Poly students came during their lunch period to participate in a thought-provoking discussion about identity and cultural stereotypes.

Sophomore Micah Nezene commented, “Ms. Williams brought up a really important factor in the way in which we identify ourselves. We act differently when we show ourselves to different audiences, but we should not force ourselves to be presentable to different people. We should just act like the people we are inside instead of our stereotypes.”

MD Junior hosts Dr. Mohammed Kamal

By STEPHANIE CHAI
Assistant news editor

Anatomical pathologist Dr. Mohammad Kamal spoke at a recent evening talk hosted by the MD Junior club. Dr. Kamal, a parent of two Upper School stu- dents, has his own private prac- tice, Omni Pathology, which analyzes images of cells to diag- nose possible diseases.

Throughout his presenta- tion, Dr. Kamal would ask, “Is it the art of medicine, or the art of medicine?” Dr. Kamal under- scored the fact that one cannot have medicine or art without the former to complement the latter. Dr. Kamal emphasized, “Medicine is a profession that incorporates science and sci- entific methods with the art of being a physician.” While medici- ne and diagnosis is fundamen- tal to science, Kamal maintained that the practice itself is real art. By having personal interactions, doctors develop connections with their patients that go be- yond cell diagrams.

Dr. Kamal projected images of cells he had been given to an- alyze and asked the audience the familiar figures they saw in each slide. Dr. Kamal then explained his diagnoses and illustrated his reasoning behind the decisions.

Dr. Kamal also talked about Ted Meyer, an artist who helps people embrace their physi- cal scars through art. His art functions as a form of therapy for patients who had been too scared to touch or even look at their scars.

When asked what he enjoys about his career as a pathologist, Dr. Kamal replied that he really enjoys aspects of patient care and helping doctors see diagno- ses they may have overlooked.

Although Dr. Kamal has worked in a hospital in the past, he enjoys owning a private prac- tice because he can standardize the process of diagnosing a pa- tient. Because he works cooper- atively with a team of patholo- gist, Kamal can review difficult cases with other experts to give accurate diagnoses.

MD Junior club president Shuchi Sehgal said, “It’s really great how doctors and other spe- cialists take time out of their day to come and talk to us. This past talk was really special because Dr. Kamal gave us a new perspective on medicine—something more relatable—and I think that his theory of “art is in medicine” is one to remember.”
OPINION

Take a (wage) hike: Obama’s executive order to raise workers’ pay prompts backlash

By HENRY BROOKS
Opinion Editor

On Wednesday, President Obama came through on a promise he made in his State of the Union Address one month prior, to raise the federal minimum wage. With Congressional legislation stagnating, Obama was able to capitalize on a dissatisfied public, and he sprung towards unilateral action. In front of a small crowd of American workers currently earning the minimum wage, the President signed his executive order to mild applause.

As with every executive order, there are some caveats. Firstly, because of the limited scope of presidential authority, the President’s order to raise the minimum wage from $7.25 per hour to $10.10 only applies to a small group of employees whose work falls into the President’s immediate sphere of influence. These workers – mostly janitors and cooking staff working in federally owned office buildings – number only in the thousands, far from the millions of Americans already provoking backlash, and not just from the usual conservative pundits.

In a rare instance of bipartisanship, a number of Democrats have joined Republicans to criticize Obama’s use of presidential power to circumvent the democratic process. Aside from openly criticizing the President on the House floor, a number of congressmen were upfront about their disappointment at the ceremony that the White House held on Wednesday in honor of Obama’s executive order. While Obama explained to his audience, “Today I’m going to do what I can to help raise working Americans’ wages,” a few Congressional invitees stepped out of the room, delivering a strong statement to the President on where Congress stands.

Among the many legislators who have come out in condemnation of Obama’s wage hike, Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) was the most direct. McConnell, in a prepared statement made shortly before the President signed his executive order, expressed his dissatisfaction with the proposed measure, even mentioning a possible confrontation between Obama supporters and Congressional Republicans on the issue. “Republicans are interested,” McConnell said, “in offering something that might actually create jobs, rather than something that would destroy jobs. So we are prepared to have that debate.”

Others have attacked the President for his perceived unwillingness to negotiate with Republicans and Democrats who are opposed to a three-dollar increase in the federal minimum wage. Proponents of negotiation stipulate, why couldn’t it happen in 2014?

In the aftermath of raising some workers’ wages, Obama has taken his petition for a new national minimum wage to the American people. In a new ad campaign designed to muster Congressional support for the measure, Obama asks his supporters to contact their legislators and learn more about the President’s campaign. “So ask your senator, ask your representative in the house, do you support raising the minimum wage to $10.10 an hour?”

To corroborate Mr. Obama’s claims that a higher minimum wage would help all Americans, Labor Secretary Thomas Perez released a statement of support. In his statement, Perez told Americans that a higher minimum wage would benefit the thousands impacted by Obama’s executive order and could help millions more by strengthening the economy, if Congress passed the President’s minimum wage measure.

The White House admitted that it has no official statistics on the subject of wage increases and has not consulted economists on the issue. What Perez and Obama have called fact, many Americans are calling wishful thinking.

Old-school racism resurfaces in light of Seahawks’ Superbowl win

By Julianna Lai
Student Contributor

Football’s most famous cornerstone of the moment has been making headlines for more than his play. Most recently, Richard Sherman and the Seattle Seahawks were crowned national champions on Super Bowl Sunday. But leading up to the big game, Sherman had already created for himself a firestorm of criticism about his passionate post-game rant.

Previously, against the San Francisco 49ers, the 25-year-old had made the play of his life, and on national television, gloated excessively about his own playing ability (although, to be fair, it was quite impressive). Instead of celebrating with him, a handful of bigoted football fans lashed out, specifically on Twitter, calling him a ‘jungle monkey,’ a ‘thug,’ and even a ‘dumb n’ger.’ The names that he has been called are fatuous and transparently racist. However, there is a less obvious problem – one that often goes undetected. Those that jump to Sherman’s defense may be guilty of prejudice and bigotry.

There are a few crucial facts that many people emphasize when they support Sherman: one, that he is a graduate of Stanford University, a prestigious school many dream of attending; two, that he got to Stanford from one of the worst school districts in the country, graduating second in his class with a 4.2 GPA; and three, that he is a product of the streets of Compton with an unblemished record. In other words, the implication here is that if Richard Sherman weren’t a Stanford grad, it would be more acceptable to call him an inarticulate and unintelligible thug. There’s a sense from Sherman’s advocates that we are calling the dread-locked, dark-skinned, and cocky 25-year-old had made the play of his life, and on racy athletes defined by Merriam-Webster as “brutal ruffians or assassins,” have gone through this mistake.

Instead, defenders should respond with the simple fact that arrogance does not deduce thug-like characteristics. Furthermore, Stanford does not define Sherman’s character, nor do the alma maters of other athletes. People who could actually be considered thugs, defined by Merriam-Webster as “brutal ruffians or assassins,” have gone through extended universities, to be sure. Thus, Richard Sherman does not deserve to be called a thug, not because he’s a Stanford University graduate, but because for all we know as outsiders, spectators of the game, he is just a brash and confident athlete with an ego too big for some to deal with. Sherman has acknowledged that he acted immaturely in an emotion-filled moment, speaking in multiple media sessions following his fiery outburst. He has told us, very eloquently, that he has learned from this incident. America should be learning along with him.
**Teacher Feature: Rick Thompson, intellectual curiosity embodied**

By NATALIA SANCHEZ-NIGOLIAN

Life Editor

Behind Rick Thompson’s cool demeanor and light-hearted humor is an intensely competitive spirit with insatiable curiosity. Thompson is a talented soccer player, who has revisited his life-long love for the sport in his coaching experience at Poly.

Thompson attended Chandler in middle school and La Salle in the 9th grade before transferring to Poly. “As much as I loved La Salle, I was academically stimulated. I understood very clearly the material at all times. It did allow me to regain confidence in my academic abilities after the rigorous curriculum I had experienced at Chandler. It also kept me grounded in later years at Poly. I excelled in math classes but was challenged by English and history courses. When you’re constantly surrounded by incredibly smart kids, it’s easy to forget that you are smart.”

Thompson developed differently in comparison to his peers. During his transition to Poly, social interactions were trying, taking advantage of his self-confidence until he reached a period of maturation during his senior year, “I had a hard time integrating with the older students. I also had a few dating strike-outs and was never able to successfully date a girl at Poly, making me realize that dating within Poly is tough. I learned quite the fact that my social life was challenging. I had a lot of friends outside of school, and senior year I started dating girls from La Salle and Prep. In general, academically as well as socially, I no longer minded failure. As soon as you start guessing what people think, it’s a lot easier to just be yourself.”

As a student at Poly, Thompson was frequently in awe of students that had reached heights in various subjects. He was provided with the opportunities to improve his weaknesses and enable his strengths to flourish. Being the co-captain and a talented student was empowering and forced him to think deeply and improve his analytical skills. Thompson was greatly influenced by his sophomore year teachers whom he wanted to impress. Amongst them are Grace Hamilton, Rick Caragher, Patty Tai and Laurianne Willingham. Thompson explains, “I was inspired by the different teaching styles, and Ms. Williams in particular made me consider teaching for the first time. I think it was her whole demeanor of humor that seemed to strike a chord.”

Thompson considered the possibility of teaching in his early years of college but did not seriously pursue the idea as a career. Instead, he attended the Columbia University School of Engineering in 1998, where he discovered that his interest lay in interdisciplinary science and math concepts rather than in-depth discussion of specifics. He majored in electrical engineering, motivated by a desire to understand how electronics work and not a serious interest in creating them.

During his undergraduate years, Thompson joined a fraternity. He met his future wife on a plane during his junior year traveling to Columbia for pre-season training for soccer as she headed to freshman-orientation at Cornell. They alternated visiting each other every month and maintained a relationship despite the distance.

Thompson said, “She was always very supportive of the change that I was constantly undergoing. I started reading for pleasure and took an interest in learning about the world. I realized that I was being pragmatic but that I needed more school not only to continue my intellectual journey but also to have more career options. Law was a respected profession and seemed to fit my criteria. I wanted a course of study that would open up doors and that would allow me to put my strengths to good use. I began working at Intellectual Property Law at the Hogan Lovells firm in D.C. It was a lot of responsibility, and I began to feel trapped.”

It was during this time that Thompson reflected on his experience as a teaching assistant at the John Hopkins CTC program. He missed the academic atmosphere and interaction with young people. During his third year of law school, he reached the conclusion that he wanted to become a teacher while he was still young enough to offer his energy and enthusiasm. “I felt like I had so much to give and that as a lawyer I was giving so little of myself. It was imper- sonal, solitary, grinding work. I wanted something else.”

Thompson’s first teaching experience was at Loyola High School, where he taught chemistry and employed leadership skills learned in college to understand and conquer the mindset of high school boys.

Now in his sixth year at Poly, Thompson reflects, “The intellectual curiosity of the students has been the highlight of my experience at Poly. Most students are here not to just take classes and graduate. Although many of them are intellectually curious in every single subject, I love that every one is curious about something. I am constantly interacting with fascinating people, whether it be my remarkable colleagues or my students.”

**Poly historical debate team conquers yet another national tournament**

By SHUCHI SEHAGAL

Assistant Life editor

Poly’s debate team had a strong performance in the Stanford national debate circuit competition in early February. Teams from the United States and China met to debate the international relations of Latin America and the United States in Policy Debate, the environment in Lincoln-Douglas (LD) and current events in Parliamentary. Freshman and JV LD debater, Mateo Ortiz, is the co-captain to the Poly historic debate team and was beautiful in his role as an intimate, dynamic debater.

The other teams came close to breaking records which meant that they advanced to the finals. Team co-captain Levi Asimow and Julia Alison made it to the octofinals of the varsity policy bracket.

The team met in the bookstore and cafe to discuss strategies to overcome competitors. The policy team were assisted by senior captains and juniors Manny Medrano and Richard Thompson in finding evidence and writing cases. The aid of the varsity debaters has been a guiding force in shaping the future of the program. The novice teams achieved a 3-2 victory and in LD 3-3 and 4-2 record.

Freshman Erica Lee, a novice Policy debater, said, “Stanford this year really helped me find my place on this team because it proved my passion of debate to be true. Even though we didn’t break, I learned about all the different cases to there and am really prepared for the end of the season and the upcoming years.”

Mateo Ortiz, a freshman and the only JV LD debater that broke at the national tournament, enjoyed his weekend and said, “Stanford was a great experience for me. Not only was it lots of fun to be on a trip with friends, but also I learned a lot about debate and the university.”

Poly debaters enjoyed interacting with their opponents while learning about international topics.

**Poly’s spectacular winter musical “A New Brain” inaugurates the Black Box Theater**

By MEGAN TCHENG

Assistant Life editor

The Black Box theater in Poly’s undergraduate building 3, on February 5th, saw its first production since 1997. A New Brain is a musical set to open minds and give everyone a chance to dream.

“Poly’s Undergraduate Building 3 is a big open space and it’s a great opportunity to create a set that is both grand and simple. I’ve always been passionate about creating something that is classic and timeless,” said director Alice Roth. Roth added that she wanted to create a set that was both simple and effective in order to focus on the story and the music. She also wanted to create a set that would encourage interaction between the audience and the performers.

The set design features a large, empty stage with a white backdrop and a large screen that can be used for projection. The stage is surrounded by a large audience seating area.

The music is arranged by the poly student band and features a mix of popular songs and original compositions. The songs are arranged in a way that makes the audience feel as if they are part of the story.

The costumes are designed to be simple and functional, allowing actors to move around the stage with ease.

The lighting design is focused on creating a mood that is both dramatic and intimate. The lighting is used to create a sense of movement and to highlight the different moods of the musical.

The musical itself is a story of love and transformation. It follows the life of a young girl named Mary, who is struggling with a rare and deadly disease. She is eventually given the chance to receive a new brain, but the operation is complicated and risky. Mary must decide whether to go through with the surgery or not.

The story is told through a series of songs that are arranged in a way that makes it easy for the audience to follow along. The songs are arranged in a way that makes the audience feel as if they are part of the story.

The cast of the musical features a mix of both undergraduate and graduate students. The cast is led by the talented actress, Mary Smith, who is playing the role of Mary.

“Mary is a great actress and she brings so much energy to the role,” said Roth. “She is such an inspiration and it is a pleasure to work with her.”

The musical is set to open on February 5th and will run for three days. The show is open to the public and tickets can be purchased online.

“A New Brain” is a story about love, transformation, and the power of music. It is a musical that is sure to touch the hearts of everyone who sees it.

**To the Girl with a Heart Like Jericho**

By NATALIA SANCHEZ-NIGOLIAN

You got a heart like Jericho, honey Too many walls to scale, Stepping on the scale Every five minutes Honey—you’re the grumbler. Deal out your love Like a blackjack hand— One face up, One face down, Half-hidden, Hit or stay At seventeen. But life is more than high school, honey Can’t stay stuck at seventeen. But honey, you got a love like the Of unknown depth, Spattered with collisions Etched like battle scars; Connect the dotted stars, The chance to be a wolf’s people. Cover the world with it Like that blanket Pulled up to your chin By calloused, loving hands Before your daddy told you you were beautiful And let you dream. And honey, you got a body like a temple Worth of worship Inside and out, Built strong Even on shifting sands. But you built walls up in your chest To anchor you, Weighing you down. Make your heart like a dictionary, Think, Pulsing with meaning, Paper-thin layers, Intricate complexity. Let them open your heart And define you. So let Jericho fall, And honey— It starts with one brick.
By ERIN LEE

Life Editor

“I don’t view myself as an artist as much as I view myself as someone who likes to do art. The truth is, I don’t do art for the attention, or to even get out a message, it’s more for myself. Sometimes you just have ideas that need to come out.”

Senior Anna Scheckel’s pencil drawings are bright and quirky. Paintings are bold and striking. She has a unique style reminiscent of Roy Lichtenstein and the comic book that first got her interested in art. She explains, “I’ve always had a super short attention span and truthfully, wouldn’t even read the comic books as much as just look at the pictures. I’m pretty sure that’s why my sister thinks I’m illiterate.”

As a child, Scheckel spent time doodling with her dad and drawing humming birds and animals. A self-taught artist, she did not take many art classes outside of school, opting to embrace the joy of art and try new things rather than focus on improving technique.

“I never really wanted to learn art because I feared it would take away the freedom and imagination of it that I had come to so fully love.” Anna has found her artistic voice by taking in the world around her. She is influenced by anything and everything. “Anyone who is willing to make art is someone I’m willing to be inspired by,” Scheckel commented.

She draws ideas from famous artists like Da Vinci and Van Gogh, as well as from artists on Tumblr to contribute to art magazines. Scheckel admires the artists’ willingness to disregard rules and expectations. She elaborates, “Life is a delicate machine of trying to be different in an acceptable way. The beauty of art, and the reason I do it, is its absolute truth and freedom because there are no walls, no opinions. The whole world is open to you.”

Though art was initially a passion she liked to pursue in her free time, Scheckel plans now on pursuing art in the future, especially in college. She is gaining recognition for her eye-catching work and recently won a Halloween art contest for the Pasadena Star News. “At Poly, I focused predominately on the performing arts for her art electives until this year when she started taking AP Studio Art. “It’s hands down the most amazing class I have ever taken. The great thing about it is that it cuts time out of your schedule to just explore yourself; there are really few things as therapeutic.”

Despite the rigorous requirements of AP Studio Art, which expects students to submit three different portfolios at the end of the year, Scheckel still manages to find independence and freedom in creating her art. She does not plan out herself pieces ahead of time, allowing her to explore interesting ideas and delve deeply into her work.

When asked to advise aspiring artists, Anna said, “I have to say it, but you should practice. I’m not saying practice is 100% of being an artist, but it is important. My sister once told me, ‘If you have to do something, it shouldn’t be work at all.’ If all else fails, be bold, be confident, and remember who you are and not who you should be.”

Another student echoed a similar sense of appreciation for friendship, and elaborated on the importance of character, “Integrity is the thing I try to practice. I’m not saying practice is everything, but that it’s an important. If you love to do something, it shouldn’t be work at all.”

Scheckel has found her artistic voice through taking advantage of the creative world open to her. The truth is, she is not an artist, but she is someone who likes to do art.
California courts reverse position on concealed weapons permits

By BRETT LAUDEMAN
Opinion Editor

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th District has made a landmark decision for Second Amendment rights by asserting California citizens’ rights to carry a concealed weapon for self-defense. In a two-to-one ruling, judges decided that it was unconstitutional for counties to require citizens to demonstrate “good cause” beyond self-defense in applying for a CCW (concealed carry weapon) permit. California has been one of the few states without legitimate concealed carry licensing for its citizens.

The case began when several San Diego residents sued the county after being denied such a permit on the basis of not having “good cause.” In order to obtain a CCW permit, a citizen must demonstrate good moral character, pass an extensive background check, which includes a mental health screening and finish a certified self-defense and firearms safety course.

This process can take a year and cost an applicant about $500, depending on the county, sheriffs and police chiefs who are responsible for the issuing of permits and can exercise their own discretion in issuing these permits.

Especially in counties like Los Angeles, there is practically no right to concealed-carry. In fact, often the only people with CCW permits in counties like Los Angeles and San Diego are well-to-do donors of sheriff’s campaigns or the sheriffs’ personal friends. The right to self-defense outside of the home is “may issue” states like California has often been reserved for the privileged. The San Francisco-based court has ruled that California’s requirements are overly restrictive and contradict the 2008 Supreme Court ruling in the District of Columbia v. Heller case, which resulted in the termination of D.C.’s handgun ban and rulings that guaranteed the Second Amendment right to self-defense in the home.

Thursday’s ruling is an unprecedented step in the right direction because, according to Judge Diarmuid O’Scannlain, “The right to bear arms includes the right to carry an operable firearm outside the home for the lawful purpose of self-defense.” Judge Sidney Thomas dissented by stating that the “good cause” provision “limits the risk to public safety by reducing the number of guns in public circulation, but allows those who will most likely need to defend themselves in public to carry a handgun.”

This statement is indicative of the overarching attitude of gun control advocates – that the law-abiding population cannot be trusted with firearms. Ironically, people intent on committing crimes and circumventing the law will “conceal-carry” without a permit because they have no interest in public safety. Conversely, those that choose to carry legally (with a permit) are well-trained and vigilant citizens carrying for legitimate self-defense. Citizens that choose to conceal carry present a legitimate form of crime prevention and mitigation and mass shooting intervention. According to a U.S. Department of Justice report, a citizen carrying a concealed weapon has an error rate of 2 per cent in engaging suspects, whereas the police will shoot or kill with an error rate of 11 per cent.

CCW permit holders are not only less likely to shoot in error but also proven to be more efficient in mitigating crime and shooting rampages. According to an examiner report on gun control, in terms of mass shootings, by the time police can arrive on the scene, 14 people will have already been killed. For those shootings stopped by citizens with CCW permits, only two people are killed on average. While the media chooses not to report these cases, every day CCW permit holders prevent or stop crimes either by simply displaying their weapon or by actually engaging criminals.

While this decision is a huge step forward for the rights of California citizens, other laws, like nonsensical “assault weapon” bans and the micro-stamping law - which requires a microscopic print on the tip of the firing pin that etches a marking on the ejection cartridges - prove that California has much progress to be made.
Win against Chadwick earns girls basketball league title

By ZACK BERN
Staff writer

For the sixth consecutive year the varsity girls basketball team has earned the Prep League title. The Panthers defeated Chadwick last week 40-34, completing league competition. Finishing 10-2 in the league, the team only experienced two difficult losses to Flintidge Prep and Mayfield. The Prep League title will be shared between Flintridge and Poly, both boasting the same record. However, when the draws are constructed for CIF, the Panthers will be considered the top seed, due to the difficulty of their schedule.

The squad will look to junior Kiki Yang and senior Kaitlyn Olah to lead the squad. Yang averages 22.3 points per game while Olah averages 15.4.

The squad faces N君rview Bridge on Saturday at 5:30. With a higher CIF ranking, the Panthers enter the matchup as the favorite.

The Panthers finished the regular season ranked 27th in the state with a 37-7 record overall. Four-year varsity player and senior teammate Kaitlyn Olah commented, “Winning Prep League during my fourth consecutive year was a very difficult goal, but I couldn’t be happier that I was able to attain it. We have put in so much hard work this season and I am so proud that it paid off. I’m very excited about CIF and we are sure that we are ready for that game.”

-Jared Lim

Girls water polo wins third consecutive Prep League title

By HUNTER WORLAND
Sports editor

The varsity girls water polo team earned their third consecutive Prep League title, remaining undefeated throughout league play (12-0).

After crushing league competitors, the squad looks to average last season’s early exit. Despite a number two CIF ranking, last season’s varsity team lost in the quarterfinals. However, with improvements and additions from last year, the team enters the playoffs with confidence.

“We’ve put in more training and we are more determined than in the past years, so we’re hopeful that we’ll advance far in CIF this year,” junior varsity defender Allie Hodgen commented.

The Panthers face their first opponent on Thursday at their home pool. Boasting a fifteen game win streak, Poly is the clear favorite.

“Throughout the season, we have improved greatly as a team,” junior varsity Natalia Sanchez-Noguera noted. “Defensively and offensively, we have never been so solid. We all trust each other to play our hardest. Our team chemistry will be our biggest asset.”

Boys soccer defeats Chadwick to win league

By CHARLIE RAMIREZ
Sports editor

With an 11-4-5 (4-0-4 in league) record, the boys varsity soccer team qualified for Prep League dominance.

The Panthers began their streak with a 3-2 win over rival Flintidge Prep. Poly struck first with a header from junior Dylan Hanel off a cross from junior Hunter Worland, however, the ball never even touched the net. The controversial shot had passed through a hole in the netting and was originally ruled a missed shot. Coach Doug Jolly argued and the referees overturned the call. The official reviewed the call and the score was counted. Senior Ali Kamal added two goals of his own in the victory.

Senior center back Ian McKeown commented on the win against Chadwick saying, “The team showed us that we had the ability to win long balls. The team showed us that we can score long balls.”

The Panthers most recently defeated Rio Hondo Prep in back to back games, outscoring them 8-0. Needing a flawless final regular season run, the Panthers faced a talented Webb team. In a strong defensive effort and an impressive performance by senior goalkeeper Brian Ward, the game resulted in a 0-0 tie.

Needling either a win or a tie to clinch a league title, Poly faced off against Chadwick who they tied 1-1 in their match at home. Early in the game, junior Ben Hubbs was fouled which led to a free kick. McKnight hit a 40 yard ball to which junior Skyler McLane headed into the goal. Additionally, Kamal scored two goals. By defeating the Dolphins 4-2, the Panthers guaranteed a first round playoff game at home.

“We came into the game focused and determined. Defensively, we kept our composure, even though the stakes were high. Offensively, we played with the confidence we needed to secure the victory,” Poly’s post season begins this Thursday against Linfield Christian on their home field.

Boys basketball finishes third in league

By EVAN KIM
Assistant sports editor

With the end of the regular season, the Panthers boys basketball team looks expectantly to a successful start to the CIF playoffs that will begin on Wednesday. The team finished third in the Prep League, earning them a spot in the CIF playoffs. As of last week, the Panthers were ranked fifth in CIF Division 5AA.

The Panthers finished the regular season with a league record of four wins and five losses and a non-league record of 11 wins and five losses for an overall record of 15-9. After starting the season with a strong record in December, the Panthers struggled in January but regained their form in February with a strong finish.

During the season, the Panthers suffered several close losses, including heart-breaking defeats by Webb (41-40) and Flintidge Prep (35-33), as well as a recent loss to Chadwick last Thursday (58-52). Despite these setbacks, the Panthers still displayed outstanding performances in multiple games throughout the season, including a game against Cate in which they routed the Rams in a decisive 60-27 victory. The team also pulled through with a narrow victory against Chadwick (61-58) and a decisive 66-47 win against Rio Hondo Prep.

According to Coach Rick Caragher, “The team had some close losses in league, but they have been a very resilient group that always bounced back with strong efforts. They play hard and have really improved, both individually and collectively, over the course of the season. Additionally, we are a strong defensive unit.”

After ending the regular season by winning two out of their last three games, the Panthers hope to continue this momentum into CIF with strong performances in the playoffs.

Senior Kyle Beerman commented, “If we work hard and trust each other as a team, I am sure that we will do well.”
Athlete of the Issue
Ian McKnight
As we saw with the Super Bowl, the phrase “defense wins championships” proved itself to be the most effective strategy for a sports team’s success. Now that the varsity boys soccer team has reached the playoffs, Coach Doug Jolly will once again concentrate his defensive tactics around four-year letterman and center back Ian McKnight.
McKnight possesses all of the traits of a star defender. He has great speed, exceptional heading and tackling ability and phenomenal field vision; he can clear the ball emphatically when opposing forwards get inside the penalty area.
Junior midfielder Hunter Worland commented, “Ian’s skill, speed and strength has made him the best defender in the Prep League. Going into CIF, the whole team feels more confident we can make a deep run knowing Ian will hold down the defense.”
Not only does McKnight’s defensive ability make the team better, but his leadership and guidance during games and practice also help his teammates reach their full potential.
Senior striker Ali Kamal comments, “Having Ian on your team makes everything easier. His leadership has been instrumental to our success so far, and practicing with him makes all of us better players.”
McKnight’s abilities have been recognized as he has been selected for the All-Prep League team four years straight and is a rare four year starter on a varsity sport.

Athlete of the Future
Mark Xu
Fencing at Poly has always stood out among other sports because of the necessary dedication required throughout all three seasons in order to achieve success. Apt positioning, impeccable balance, flawless dexterity and keen analysis of opponents are among the long list of abilities that must be mastered in the long trek towards becoming a high-quality fencer.
Xu, a freshman on the varsity fencing team, has boosted the team’s morale with his resilience and integrity while helping lead the Panthers to a winning record. Despite his skill, Xu came to the program with no prior experience.
Fellow teammates admire Xu’s dedication, competence and ability, with senior captain Emily Grifflod commenting, “Mark has maintained and strengthened his ability to keep killer distance on the strip which makes him very hard to catch off guard. He is already an exceptional fencer, and I can’t imagine his skill in years to come as he continues with high level of interest and seriousness towards the sport that he maintains now.”
Junior Alyssa Aquino added, “Mark has grown tremendously in his first year as a Poly fencer. As the year progressed, he became increasingly more focused and everyone could tell that he was going to develop into something special.”
Coach Laura Holmgren noted, “He is quick to learn the physical skills of footwork and handwork, it is his strategic mind and uncanny timing that make him such a stand-out in his first year.”

By The Numbers
38 Consecutive games won by the junior varsity girls soccer program.
4 Prep League titles Poly varsity sports won in the winter season.
186 Total goals scored by the varsity girls water polo team in Prep League.
5 Average number of goals scored by the varsity girls soccer team in league play.