Ali Ahn ’99 to take Broadway stage

By ISABELLE PHINNEY
News editor

Ali Ahn, class of 1999, has been cast in a modern revival of the Pulitzer Prize-winning Broadway play, “The Heidi Chronicles.”

Ahn entered Poly in fifth grade, which was when she first became seriously interested in drama. Her class performed a production of “Just So Stories” directed by Cynthia Crass, and Ahn said that she “just fell completely in love” with theater.

Ahn took every opportunity Poly offered her to participate in theater. She said, “I honestly wouldn’t be an actor today if it wasn’t for how amazing the theater department was at Poly.”

Ahn attended a variety of classes in high school, including Advanced Acting, Spanish Literature, English and History. In Spanish Literature, Laura Pendoff introduced her to the plays of Federico Garcia Lorca. Ahn would later perform in a New York production of one of Lorca’s plays.

Ahn credited Laura Pendoff and English teacher Grace Hamilton, who taught her for two years, as well as the rest of the language and English departments for “instilling [her] love of language and sounds.”

Garland and Cynthia Crass’ dance room were my havens in high school,” Ahn recalled. “Despite all the angst and awkwardness in high school, I have amazing lasting friendships that remain some of my most important and dearest.”

The transition from Poly to Yale University was fluent for Ahn, and she attests this to Poly’s rigorous curriculum. The most important skill Ahn took away from Poly was writing. “The way I learned to write at Poly served me not only through college but continues to be a skill that I draw upon today,” she said.

Ahn loved the variety that Yale provided her. She would attend classes in the morning and then spend the afternoon completely absorbed in rehearsals, a busy schedule that challenged her time management skills.

Despite her hectic schedule, Ahn still had time to form lifelong relationships. She said, “The friendships you make when you do something as intimate and stressful as putting a show together are some of the most special relationships I have.”

After graduating magna cum laude from Yale, Ahn returned to Los Angeles, where she received her M.A. at the California Institute of the Arts.

Soon after, Ahn took an acting job in Louisville, where the director of the play she was performing in took her under his wing. He invited Ahn to New York to do “House of Bernarda Alba,” a play by Lorca, one of Ahn’s favorite playwrights from her Poly Spanish Literature class.

It was only after graduate school that Ahn fully committed to becoming a professional actor. She said, “I knew I loved it, but I never really thought it could be a career. It was always kind of a hobby, and the reality is that even as you pursue a dream, when that dream is as inherently unstable as creative professions are, you are always juggling and questioning your decision because there is a lot of sacrifice that comes with choosing something that doesn’t operate with normal rules.”

In New York, Ahn was offered a series of parts, which turned her couple-month stay into several years. Ahn now alternates between L.A. and New York, although she will be settling in New York for New Year’s Eve.

See Ali Ahn, page 2.
Frosted Formal

Boys and girls water polo goalies come together and pose with their best blocks.

All photos courtesy of Mitch Buangsuwon and Rachel Erickson

The event was hosted by the Junior Class Cabinet (not pictured: Hannah Guevara).

The girls varsity basketball team takes a break from dancing to take a picture.

McConnell brothers and sophomore friends, Patrick Woodsome and Matt Alison.

Ali Ahn

Continued from page 1

the duration of “The Heidi Chronicles.” Ahn has been credited in numerous American TV series and films, including “Ugly Betty,” “White Collar” and “Law and Order Special Victim’s Unit.”

Ahn was recently cast in the role of Sarah Johnston, the best friend of the main character, in a Broadway revival of “The Heidi Chronicles.” Ahn will be performing alongside Elizabeth Moss, best known for “Mad Men,” who will be taking the lead role.

Ahn concluded, “The part is not intended for an Asian-American or even a person of color. And as an actor of color, you are often faced with parts that are stereotypical or underdeveloped, so it is really exciting that on Broadway I get a chance to play a person that is not defined by my ethnicity or prescribed by it.”

“The Heidi Chronicles” follows art historian Heidi Holland from high school to adulthood, addressing themes of feminism, friendship and love. Ahn’s character, Susan Johnston, is described as a vivacious, determined and intelligent character, who develops from boy-obsessed high school student to a Supreme Court clerk to a Hollywood chief executive.

The box office opens January 26.

New interdisciplinary elective offered

By STEPHANIE CHAI
News editor

Dr. Susie Kim of the science department and Dr. Nathan Stogdill of the English department will offer a two-block senior elective, Literature and Science of Disease, starting in the fall of 2015.

This new elective will include many topics similar to those taught in a previous senior elective, Advanced Topics in Human Anatomy, which is currently taught by Kim.

The course will also include a lab portion, where students will visit local hospitals, grow bacteria on petri dishes and study diseases throughout history and around the world. The purpose of the lab experiments is to give students an understanding of healthcare and disease outbreaks.

The “Literature” side of the course will offer students the opportunity to read and analyze literature surrounding the diseases they study. This will provide students with a different perspective, and they will be able to see the effect disease outbreaks had on people around the world.

Kim commented, “By examining literature that includes Hippocrates’ The Nature of Man to Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s Love in the Time of Cholera, while also listening to real stories by physicians relaying their encounters with the Ebola outbreak in Africa, we hope students will gain greater appreciation for the relevance of literature and science in their own personal lives.”

“The da Vinci Project” begins

By JACK FLEMING
Staff writer

Over the month of December, visual art teachers Arnor Bieltvedt and Alan Schaefer distributed over 230 blank journals to students and teachers. Inspired by the famous journals kept by artist and inventor Leonardo da Vinci, Bieltvedt and Schaefer sought to provide Upper School students with an unrestricted creative outlet and called it “The da Vinci Project.”

Student interest in the project outpaced the initial supply of the journals, and the department had to place a second order.

Freshman Mariano Rocha stated, “I think the best part of this project is that it encourages and gives students an accessible outlet to express themselves in whatever form they like, which could be writing, drawing or poetry.”

Bieltvedt added, “The journals are not just drawing books, but, in a way, idea books.”

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The argument against mandatory Human Development

By TEDDY DEBREU
Assistant opinion editor

This is not the first time a Poly student has written about the “Human Development issue,” and when I re-read Nikolas Angelopoulos’ 2013 piece suggesting that the program be eliminated, I agreed with him and wondered how the Polyn administration could possibly defend the class. The Paw Print followed up with a student survey in which over 90% of responses were highly critical of the program. However, I would like to emphasize that students feel that the problem is with the concept and structure of the class, not the teachers.

The goal of the Human Development program is to educate students about topics like health, sleep, social skills, sex, nutrition and substance abuse as well as to help them develop healthy personal relationships and to talk about their feelings about these issues. While the intention is admirable, this mandatory class has fallen short of its goals since its inception.

Whether we spend class time making a list of adjectives describing how to be a leader or learn values like “be nice” or “care about people,” our t i m e should be used otherwise. Yes, being nice and caring about people are things we need in our lives, but we know about these values. Poly has made improvements to the Human Development curriculum but, to most students I’ve talked to, the experience has felt the same. Junior Cyril Hicks said, “At no point have I felt like it helped me in my development. The topics themselves were rarely engaging, and most of them were completely useless.” As Angelopoulos suggested, the time would be better spent taking another art elective or learning something new. Human Development topics can be presented in assemblies instead.

Without important issues like alcohol, health, drug abuse and sex are brought up in class, the discussion never goes further than the list of “What would you do?” situations. The teacher goes around the room, asking everybody what they would do if they were handed a beer at a party. After 18 out of 18 students say that they would refuse the alcoholic beverage, we hold back our laughter because we know that half of us have lied.

The issue is not the teacher; it is just that Human Development class does not feel like a natural place for high school students to talk about their personal, and often private, opinions and problems. We end up only skimming the “emotionally safe” surface because no one dares to delve deeper. Who would when surrounded by seventeen classmates and a teacher?

I understand that Poly wants to give students a truly safe place to share their personal feelings. The best place for that is in advisory groups. With only seven students and a supervisor, advisory is a much more intimate gathering. If a student doesn’t feel comfortable confiding in a teacher, he or she definitely will not feel like confiding in it to an audience three times the size. Students can also go to friends or teachers they trust, but they do not want to feel pressured to talk about their private lives in class.

Most of us would prefer it if Human Development didn’t exist at all, but if Poly really believes it is vital to our growth, than the next best thing we can do is fix it. If we were to meet once a month for one X Period, we would have to focus on more pressing topics. As a result, class would feel too repetitive. Or better yet, it could be optional. If the class was optional, people could go to the meetings that actually interest them without being forced to attend a meeting that someone else might appreciate more.

The biggest issue with having Human Development is that it is a lost opportunity. Time wasted in Human Development would be better spent pursuing independent academic interests. To an artistically inclined student, the boring, repetitive nature of Human Development could be replaced by pursuing their interest in painting. It could even be replaced by an enjoyable time with one’s friends on the patio. Junior Angus O’Beirne said, “Human Development’s very name is a cruel irony. It is an artificial, synthetic substitute that tries to develop us as better humans, when rather it is outside of the classroom, outside of controlled and contrived environments, that we have real experiences, and with those experiences, real human development.”

Why Cuba is not ready for normalized relations with the U.S.

By HENRY BROOKS
Opinion editor

Miriam Zoila Pérez, a first-generation Cuban American political columnist, published her article “Why I Don’t Want to Hear About Your Vacation to Cuba” shortly after President Obama divulged an approaching shift in U.S.-Cuba relations. Though not writing from an explicitly political lens, Pérez addressed an important, short article shortly after President Obama divulged an approaching shift in U.S.-Cuba relations. Though not writing from an explicitly political lens, Pérez addressed an important, short article shortly after President Obama divulged an approaching shift in U.S.-Cuba relations. Though not writing from an explicitly political lens, Pérez addressed an important, short article shortly after President Obama divulged an approaching shift in U.S.-Cuba relations. Though not writing from an explicitly political lens, Pérez addressed an important issue: we must register with a network as akin to Hitler’s committees of territorial security.” Additionally, “thought of the Communist Party’s Department of Revolutionary Orientation, whose bureaucratic function is to

national CDR grid, police and paramilitary forces, university student organizing committees and the state-run labor syndicate. The purpose of the SSVP is to ignite national opposition to political dissenters and involves the formation of Rapid Action Brigades: civilian-run vigilante units that persecute anti-Castroists with covert assistance from the government, which equips vigilantes with weapons and intelligence.

Cuba is not the tropical paradise that it has come to symbolize in the American mind, but a police state, whose tactics of political intimidation and harassment, domestic terrorism, and economic exploitation have made the country one of the poorest in the region.

Before reopening an embassy in Havana, politicians should consider our experiences as Cuban exiles who cannot help but remember the reasons America closed its embassy in the first place.
Sleep deprivation at Poly: why Poly should emulate New York schools

By CELINE VENDLER
Opinion editor

We are being overworked. I’ve heard all the justifications—“It’s what it takes to be competitive in the college admissions process” or “it’s just preparation for the college years”—but I disagree. The truth is, Poly needs to reform the school phenomenon.

Have you ever felt like some weeks at Poly are relatively calm while others are unbearably stressful? This “calm before the storm” is not unique to Poly: it is an elite high school phenomenon. Lisa Waller, Director of The Dalton School, worked with fellow administrators and students to devise a plan to lessen Dalton students’ workloads. They have collectively decided to spread out major assessments over a five-week period and to suspend midterms for two weeks after winter break.

Trinity School has been making similar changes, such as trying to efficiently integrate papers, tests, projects and labs into students’ schedules. Jessica Bagby, Head of Trinity’s Upper School, reflected, “We have incredibly talented high-achieving kids who need to be appropriately taken care of. We realize the pressures on them, and to the degree that we’re complicit, we need to own that.”

We should have more frequent quizzes and no tests. This implementation could eliminate some of the need for private tutors and encourage students to actually do their homework for the sake of understanding the material rather than copy the answers from the backs of their books to earn points; it would also help students remain focused, work more efficiently and ideally be left with at most three-and-a-half hours of homework.

We should have more frequent quizzes and no tests. Quizzes regularly reinforce learned material in short bursts, while tests, especially finals, pressure students to cram the night before and promptly forget the information.

Most importantly, Poly should ban weekend homework because students should feel free to read for fun or explore independent interests. If Dalton, Trinity and Horace Mann can change, we can too. And in doing so, we can help redefine success and achievement and eradicate the sleepless American culture.

CIA abducted hundreds of Middle Easterners and transported them to “Black Sites” worldwide. None of these detainees were ever tried in court, and over 250 did not even meet the CIA’s own “standard for detention,” according to the Washington Post. In what the New York Times called “brutal and deceitful,” the CIA subjected detainees to methods of torture such as sensory deprivation, deliberate starvation, waterboarding and rectal rehydration. Often, the intelligence gathered from these inmates was false and served only to waste time and resources.

Ultimately, the U.S. government’s response to terrorism following 9/11 was a failure. It did very little to keep Americans safe and free and must be cautiously handled. Congress must first rein in the NSA and CIA, curtailing illegal and unconstitutional surveillance and detention. Congress must then provide funding for legal methods of intelligence and interrogation. Such methods include obtaining a warrant to wiretap or eavesdrop and providing judicial oversight for government agencies that engage in domestic anti-terrorism efforts.

In order to preserve the fundamental freedoms of life and liberty, America must strike a balance between governmental authority and individual rights. Although the recent killings in Paris are appalling, the West must not overreact. It is only when Western nations fully embrace these fundamental rights that they can overcome terrorism.
Poly's stigma with marijuana

By MATT ARENA

The rules and expectations in this handbook are designed to cover students while at school. If something occurs in an off-campus venue or context that has a disruptive or negative impact on the community and life of the school, Polytechnic reserves the right to respond to disruptive or negative impact on the community and life of the school. Polytechnic reserves the right to respond to disruptive or negative impact on the community and life of the school. Polytechnic reserves the right to respond to disruptive or negative impact on the community and life of the school. Polytechnic reserves the right to respond to disruptive or negative impact on the community and life of the school. Polytechnic reserves the right to respond to disruptive or negative impact on the community and life of the school.

What students do off campus, and how or when the school should get involved, is a predictable thorny issue. Whether the school’s administration is making decisions regarding a student’s consumption of drugs or alcohol or a student is deciding whether or not to consume these substances in the first place, the key to an ethical approach to these issues is awareness.

Encouraging situations that allow students to make bad decisions is irresponsible, but so is aggressively prosecuting their curiosity.

The irony to the generational gap can be frustrating for some. Almost every single one of our parents has had sex at some point in the past (for a lot of us, that fact explains why we exist), and still, most parents make a huge push against underage sex and other activities they experimented with when they were our age. They’re trying to protect us from consequences we can’t anticipate, but our parents turned out just fine, and there are some lessons our generation is going to have to learn through experience.

Even if parents choose to give their kids some leeway regarding these issues, things perceived by us to be out of the question can be considered inoffensive by the administration. The school has taken a strong stance on these issues by attempting to educate its students on best practices and by creating consequences in certain instances of student behavior that has been deemed “inappropriate.” These actions raise a question: if the school does take a report of underage sex or substance use into their hands, is it really worth it to take any punitive action? Whether a student gets called out or not isn’t going to change what he or she did, and more likely than not, it’s not going to make the student reason differently or discourage him or her from doing it again.

At the end of the day, we have to learn our own lessons, because that’s the only way they’re going to stick.

The primary purpose of a school is to educate its students, and this role extends to issues of morality. It is absolutely in the school’s job description to teach us everything we need to know about drinking, drugs and sex (whether or not we choose to apply that knowledge to our decision-making), and it makes sense that the school attempts to encourage safe decision-making by disciplining some of its students. Still, kids are going to do what they want, and they’re going to work through the repercussions (or lack thereof) of their actions because that’s how life works. People make mistakes and learn from them, and some of those mistakes just have to be made. It’s part of growing up.
Pattern Printing

Month of the Cheeseburger

Slater's 50/50

When I think about burgers, the first place that comes to mind is the restaurant Slater's 50/50, located on the busy corner of Raymond and Union in Old Town. The restaurant is known simply as 50/50 due to its unique hamburger parties, half of which are beef and half of which are bacon.

One of Slater's most popular appetizers is its vampe dip: a blend of three cheeses, roasted garlic and warm artichoke in a sourdough bowl served with fried pita. However, the real reason you should go to Slater's is for their amazing burgers. The burger choices on the menu range from the “Peanut Butter and Jelly-ous,” which features a beef patty placed underneath peanut butter and jelly, to the Classic 50/50 Burger, which includes a sunny side up egg, pineapple and Spam. Although their burgers sound unconventional, you'll be coming back for another, no matter your order.

If the pre-determined burger choices aren't your forte, then you can create your own burger and name it yourself. You'll get to choose your bun, your meat and your own array of toppings and sauces. Unconventionality is the perfect way to describe Slater's. If you'd like a burger unlike any you've ever had before, Slater's 50/50 is definitively the place to go.

- Ali Medina

Bachi Burger

I gathered together a group of my closest friends and embarked on a search for the perfect cheeseburger. Our hunt led us to Old Town’s newest burger hubbub - Bachi Burger.

After skimming the restaurant's menu of 15 Asian-inspired burgers, I settled on “Kiki’s Burger.” Despite its title, my cheeseburger of choice won me over in one, flawless bite.

Much of the success of “Kiki’s Burger” can be credited to Bachi Burger’s signature seventeen-ounce Angus Beef patties. The prime proteins provided the perfect canvas for the nuanced flavors of the burger. Without a doubt, the showstopper of the meal was the garlic-chili aioli. Unlike the predictable condiment blend of thousands of island counterparts, Bachi Burger’s special sauce consisted a collection of Asian-inspired ingredients. The sauce, with its hints of savory garlic, sharp sriracha and tart Yuzu (a popular Japanese citrus), cut through the meat of the patty and served an ideal complement to the intense flavors of the burger.

All in all, the fusion of traditional, American flavors and Asian influences in Kiki’s Burger defied the laws of the conventional burger and kept me pleading for one last bite.

-Megan Tcheng

Dog Haus

Although Dog Haus may be recognized for its California fusion of the German bratwurst and the American hot dog, some may not know that it also serves the perfect cheeseburger.

Take a break from studying, throw your stress aside and indulge in Dog Haus’ take on classic cheeseburger, which features Thousand Island dressing, crisp lettuce, onions and tomato, or build your own from a wide variety of fixings.

For those who enjoy a kick, try “The Little Mule,” smothered in tangy tomato sauce and chipotle aioli and served with a fried egg, white American cheese and avocado. Don't overlook “The Beast,” a 100% natural Angus beef burger with smoked bacon and onion rings, melded with white American cheese and barbecue sauce.

- Alex Patakis

Variations on Cheeseburgers in Dim Lighting

I. There’s something in fluorescent light that means naming your daughter American.

II. I eat cheeseburgers in tinted diners near the freeway to hear the grumble of speeding cars driving close because diner music is never sinful and faded molars never feel pain. There’s something in bread and meat that reminds me of motion, the breadth of wings and plates of celery, of eating wholesome and never needing to pinch my thighs.

III. My father moves to California when he is eight and grows up to instruct us that burger means celebration food just as home does not mean house but the permanent taste of fourteenth birthday parties and french fries.

IV. Maybe every time you think of home you think of plastic seats and metal napkin dispensers. Maybe every time you eat a cheeseburger it feels as though this New World may be your first.

-Maddie Kim

Acting III puts on Mental Health assembly

By JULIA WOHL

Executive editor

As a part of Shirali Shah’s Gold Award, the Acting III class informed Upper School students of specific mental health disorders that affect teenagers, such as depression, anxiety and anorexia with an assembly.

The actors were on stage in pairs of two, with each actor giving a monologue from the perspective of a person with a certain mental disease. Before each monologue began, a PowerPoint slide was projected on screen to give the basic definition of the disorder as well as the percentage of teenagers who suffer from it.

To prepare for the performances, the actors first read through blog posts and essays written by people currently living with these disorders.

“We picked material that we all thought best characterized each disorder, so we could get the audience thinking and connecting with a difficult topic,” junior and actor Hannah Humayun said. “I think the hardest part was definitely trying to find the balance with being truthful to these topics and trying to make it accessible to everyone in our high school audience.”

Junior and actor Maddie Kim added, “Playing a character who struggles with Generalized Anxiety Disorder hit close to home for me, and I’m positive it did for everyone in our high school audience. I realized that mental health issues are not something we talk about often even though they are pervasive. Even just statistically speaking, there are people in the audience who suffer from these illnesses, and by bringing these issues into the open, I hope this has allowed people to see that they are not alone in any of this.”

Poly girls attend “ToGetHerThere”

By MADDFE KIM

Assistant life editor

Poly Girl Scouts Hannah Humayun, Shuchi Sehgal and Annika Lars attended the organization’s 2014 “ToGetHerThere” luncheon this past December. The three joined 100 other girls who were accepted to the Girl Scouts Emerging Leaders program.

At the luncheon, the assembly of Junior and Ambassador Girl Scouts met with female heads of major corporations to discuss the role of women in positions of business leadership. Over 800 female CEOs, managers and other leaders of major Los Angeles companies, including Toyota, congregated to share their experiences with the attendees. In addition to instructing attendees on the importance of the role of female leaders, the luncheon also featured a fundraising segment in which corporations could purchase tables in support of Girl Scouts. Proceeds from the donations will be used to fund scholarships for girls who are financially unable to join Girl Scouts and to fund When Georgia Smiled: The Robin McGraw Revelation Foundation, an organization that sponsors and creates rehabilitation programs for victims of sexual assault and domestic abuse. McGraw, the CEO of her foundation and the National Celebrity Spokesperson for the Girl Scouts of the USA, spoke as a featured guest at the luncheon.

“Working with so many influential female leaders, Sehgal noted, “The luncheon opened my eyes to all the opportunities women like me have at their disposal. The mentors I spoke with made me realize the potential that every girl has.”

Humayun found that many of the women who spoke at the luncheon did not initially dream of becoming leaders of corporations but instead discovered that women often offer a unique, effective approach to business that tends to be dismissed in the professional landscape.

“The women I met stressed the importance of team work, but also knowing when to speak up for yourself,” Humayun remarked. “So many young adults feel like they can’t apply for a job until they are perfect. I was truly inspired by their courage and confidence in themselves and their goals.”
New Year, New You?

By DAVID OHTA
Life Editor

2015 is now in full swing, and so are the many New Year’s resolutions of people worldwide. With gyms brimming with members, job applications amassing in office buildings everywhere and many bedrooms left much cleaner than before, evidence of the New Year has already begun to reveal itself within all of our lives.

According to The Washington Post, 59% of commitments to change include weight lose, finances, exercising and getting a new job. Unfortunately, 25% of those making New Year’s Resolutions will quit within the first week of the year. Ultimately, only 19% of those making goals for the New Year will succeed.

Interested in what many of Poly’s own resolutions would be, the Life Section asked a number of students for their New Year’s resolutions. Who will succeed? Who will fail? Only time will tell.

By DAVID OHTA
Life Editor

SENIORS

Henry La Soya: “I’d like to grow a few more inches, maybe five.”

Nick McConnell: “My resolution is to finally drop my EP “Prof in Revolt!”

Adam Stanford Moore: “This year, I am running every day and training my mind and body for the whips and scorns of time.”

Khari Melhuish: “My New Year’s resolution is to get out and finally spend some time at social events, something that I really haven’t done yet in high school.”

Allison Woo: “I need to eat more vegetables.”

JUNIORS

Brenda Chen: “My New Year’s resolution is to learn how to tap dance!”

Tim Krasnoperov: “Brush my teeth twice a day.”

Annie Winton: “My New Year’s resolution is to not get detention because of tardies.”

Himmat Sahi: “I’ve decided that since I spend so much time laughing at my brother, I might as well laugh with him.”

Ferris Yang: “I want to smile more so I can let everyone know I’m lovable and kind.”

UNDERCLASSMEN

Freshman Sarah Johnson: “Spending more time with my younger brother, Prescott, and going to bed earlier!”

Freshman Michael Van Citters: “I want to eat more junk food and exercise less.”

Sophomore Sarah Ohta: “I want to dedicate more of my time to drawing and art!”

Sophomore Will McConnell: “1920 by 1080.”
Kelly and Angela are not related.

Although they have the same last name, Angela Liu

**Courtesty of Angela Liu**

Editor's note: Although they have the same last name, Kelly and Angela are not related.

**Angela Liu**

Angela Liu has been playing the flute and piano for seven and nine years, respectively. She has never been able to fully choose one instrument over the other, because they inspire and influence her in different ways.

Liu’s story, which began in a small piano room in San Marino, has taken her to the historical halls of Carnegie Hall. Liu was selected in 2012 to perform in the Portland International Piano Festival, where she competed with pianists from all over the world.

To prepare, her teacher Nobuyo Nishizaka arranged a Steinbeck & Sons piano studio for her. On the wall of the studio was a small poster of Van Dyke, Darrin Thaves, Hans Boepple, musicians, including Jim Walker, Karen Layne. Each one of these flute masters ranged a Steinbeck & Sons piano studio for her.

Liu began entering musical competitions around the age of nine, where she played pieces she had practiced for months in advance. Liu said, “Not surprisingly, my goal was to perform at Carnegie Hall, and I worked hard to make that dream a reality.”

In the spring of 2014, Angela Liu sent a video of her playing the flute to the American Protégé International Music Talent Competition. The competition was in search of “genuinely talented people, who have both creativity and stage charisma.” Liu earned first place in the competition. She has gotten opportunities to be trained in master classes with many world-renowned musicians, including Jim Walker, Karen Van Dyke, Darrin Thaves, Hans Boepple, Paul Roberts, Mark Richman and Micah Layne. Each one of these flute masters has shaped Liu into the musician she is today.

Liu described her performance at Carnegie Hall as the most exhilarating and extraordinary performance she has ever done. She was honored to share her talent and perform with performers from countries like Ukraine, Italy, Australia, China and Lithuania.

“That day, I realized how fortunate I was to be standing on this incredible world stage, and I know I will never forget that feeling.”

**Kelly Liu**

Kelly Liu started playing piano at the age of six for fun but became a more driven, goal-oriented musician around the age of nine, when she began to practice harder, longer and more often. Liu has experimented with many instruments through her life but remained a piano player due to the piano’s versatile, quintessential nature.

“I think people often underestimate the amount of energy required to play the piano. People assume that since it’s just a percussion instrument, you just press the right keys at the right time, and that’s it. They assume that it’s way more mechanical/technical than it is. It’s way more than that—behind every note, there’s a certain emotion, touch, connection with the next note. It can take hours just to perfect a few bars/seconds worth of music.” Liu noted, describing her connection with the instrument.

Liu’s story, which began in a small piano room in San Marino, has taken her to the historical halls of Carnegie Hall. Liu has performed in Carnegie twice, and each experience has been absolutely stunning to her. Liu’s first performance occurred at the Fall Gala Concert in 2012 and her second in December of 2014.

Liu has won over twenty awards in the past six years playing in competitions all across the United States. She continues to explore different instruments, including the cello for the Upper School orchestra. However, Liu always returns to her roots, namely the rich, deep-throated notes of the piano.

Performing the second time, Liu focused on the people and spent time talking to other musicians backstage, meeting different families and just sharing the love of music.

To Liu, music is “the beautiful way to express every emotion, color, idea and memory using sound.”

**LIVE**

Layne. Each one of these flute masters ranged a Steinbeck & Sons piano studio for her.
At Poly sporting events, our stands are filled with orange and white. But when the Poly community takes to the voting booth, our ballots are marked with an emphasis on just blue.

Located in a city where Democrats often run against their own in mayoral elections, Poly’s liberal surroundings bleed into our school’s politics. Campus liberalism is not only justified—it is inherent in a quality educational institution. In short, Poly's liberalism is not only justified—it is inherent in a quality educational institution. While political opposition is always healthy, the open-minded and progressive tendencies of liberal thinking should be ingrained in our curriculum, discussions, and culture. In short, Poly needs its liberalism.

Conservatives, like liberals, do not wholly agree on a set of principles, but historically, conservatives laud traditional American values, while liberals tend to be more progressive. This may be a dangerous generalization, but one that by and large tends to be true. Evidence of this is ubiquitous from presidential debates to political discourse amongst friends. Merriam Webster even synonymizes liberal as “progressive” and “open-minded,” while conservative is synonymized as “unprogressive,” “old-fashioned” and “traditional.” These values could not be more misaligned with Poly's pedagogic mission.

The very nature of a modern education begs us to uncover new perspectives, delve into the unknown, question the established. As students in this pursuit, we challenge the old ways. We steer away from the “old-fashioned” and into the new. We innovate. We discover. We challenge our values—values that conservatives often revere as “tradition.” This does not mean our faculty should indoctrinate its students into voting blue (or green), nor should conservative indoctrinate its students into voting blue (or green), nor should conservative indoctrinate its students into voting blue (or green) and its citizens by repeating our elders’ mistakes? Can we solve our world’s fracturing by continuing to exclude and cover at what is different? The liberalism that I espouse is much less a political viewpoint but rather an ethos, a state-of-mind. Stripped at its core, Poly liberalism has nothing to do with how we vote or what news channels we listen to, but rather an environment that does not belittle what’s dissimilar but embraces a student body that is complete.

We should steer away from the “old-fashioned” and into the new. We innovate. We discover. We challenge our values—values that conservatives often revere as “tradition.” Few can argue that we aren’t a predominantly liberal community, and on the surface, that’s not at all a bad thing. Of course we’re not perfect, but students are generally respectful of each others’ opinions. We are at least tolerant of the lifestyles of others—and for the most part, on the road to both accepting and supporting everyone around us. Although I’m a lifer and haven’t been in other schools, I still believe that this social context is one of our stronger suits.

But here’s fine print. Students are generally respectful of others’ opinions, but we deem those views worthy of our respect. We are at least tolerant of the lifestyles of others—if those beliefs align with our own perspectives. But for the few times that we’re thrown a curveball, when someone voices an idea that is completely unlike our own, we aren’t very “liberal” about it.

Two years ago, a student took the Garland stage to deliver her junior speech to the entire upper school. Although she never had struck me as a natural outgoing character, she confidently and passionately presented her case against abortion—but was confident and passionate. It’s time that we’re thrown a curveball, when someone voices an idea that is completely unlike our own, we aren’t very “liberal” about it.

We should never accept the complacency and intellectual stagnation that accompanies one-sided liberalism. Poly needs to find its balance. Instead of arguing about the irrelevant details of already liberal perspectives, and making our own intellectual growth slow to a relaxed crawl. Poly needs to find its balance. Instead of arguing about the irrelevant details of already liberal perspectives, and making our own intellectual growth slow to a relaxed crawl. Poly needs to find its balance.

We aren’t often confronted with these unpopular perspectives, so it’s easy to sweep it all under the rug of “feel-good” liberalism. We’re too satisfied with our “progressive” environment and our track towards accepting only the views that align with our desire. Poly isn’t afraid to push the envelope. It’s time that we’re thrown a curveball, when someone voices an idea that is completely unlike our own, we aren’t very “liberal” about it.

We should never accept the complacency and intellectual stagnation that accompanies one-sided liberalism.

That’s the problem with Poly liberalism. We don’t have a healthy balance of both liberal and conservative views, so we rarely have to be challenged by perspectives outside our “Poly Bubble.” Poly students would like to point to their roots as the definition of open-mindedness and acceptance, but our liberally-saturated aquarium has no room for anything besides what we see through our blue-tinted goggles.

With comfortability comes complacency. We become readily content with what we deem as the “correct view,” leading to the stagnation of our perspectives and making our own intellectual growth slow to a relaxed crawl. Poly needs to find its balance. Instead of arguing about the irrelevant details of already liberal perspectives, and our own intellectual growth slow to a relaxed crawl. Poly needs to find its balance. Instead of arguing about the irrelevant details of already liberal perspectives, and making our own intellectual growth slow to a relaxed crawl. Poly needs to find its balance. Instead of arguing about the irrelevant details of already liberal perspectives, and making our own intellectual growth slow to a relaxed crawl. Poly needs to find its balance.

We should never accept the complacency and intellectual stagnation that accompanies one-sided liberalism. Poly needs to find its balance, and we must strive to be more tolerant, more open-minded, more innovative, more progressive—in short, we must inflate our liberalism. Why? Because that’s what respects others, watching prejudices, the one voices that we’re thrown a curveball, when someone voices an idea that is completely unlike our own, we aren’t very “liberal” about it.

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We should never accept the complacency and intellectual stagnation that accompanies one-sided liberalism.
Boys basketball falls to Chadwick 46-44, ends four-game win-streak

By WILL McCONNELL
Assistant sports editor

A 46-44 defeat off of a buzzer-beating shot by Chadwick's Breannah Thompson dropped the boys varsity basketball team to a 0-1 Prep League record and ended a four-game win-streak.

“Our loss to Chadwick really opened our eyes to the level of play we are going to face for the remainder of the season. Like always, we are going take it one game at a time. If we can minimize our defensive lapses and take high percentage shots, I think the Prep League title is within reach,” senior Jared Lim added.

Poly last captured the Prep League title 4 years ago, and the Panthers have only reached a .500 mark in league just once within that span. Despite this early setback for the team’s league title hopes, their 9-6 record is nonetheless indicative of how far this team has come.

“We are definitely better, a lot better than they have in the past.”

“Unlike last year where we had a lot of experience and depth combined with stiffer competition led to a 2-7 record heading into league play. However, facing quality non-league opponents have given the squad’s underclassmen some much-needed experience to prepare for league play. In addition, the games have provided numerous opportunities for the team to build on their budding on-court chemistry, a key factor to the Panther’s strong league start.

Sophomore Sarah Ohta stated, “Lately the team has figured out how to work together as a single unit, which shows tremendous growth from our performances during the Thanksgiving and Poly Tournaments. With our first two league wins under our belt, we hope to continue maintaining strong work ethic, camaraderie and teamwork on and off the court.”

“The great part about our team this year is that each player has their own significant role on the team, and everyone is an offensive threat,” remarked Jared Lim.

A decorated coaching staff also hasn't hurt. Head coach Archibong, one of Poly’s most successful coaches of all time, and assistant coach Koko Archibong have played for the 2012 Nigerian Olympic team, have been vital factors to the team’s success.

Harper comments, “Coach Hall always wants the best out of us and doesn’t expect anything less, and Coach Archibong is always there to help us and point out things we can do better. Their combination has been a big reason why we have been successful.”

On Friday, the Panthers fell in a non-conference game to the San Marino Titans by a score of 55-38. The team will look to rebound in the next matchup against Laguna Blanca before facing league newcomer Firebaugh on January 16th. The Panthers will then take on Flintridge Prep, who has taken the Prep League title in four of the last five years.

Wins against Mayfield and Chadwick push Panthers to 20 league record

By JUSTIN AUH
Staff writer

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Girls soccer falls to Mayfield and Chadwick push Panthers to 20 league record

By ROBYN LEE
Assistant sports editor

The girls varsity soccer team has been focused on developing into a team that features a near equal amount of underclassmen as upperclassmen. “The seniors have definitely been a huge reason for our success and continued improvement, pushing us as a team in practice and stepping up on the court,” says sophomore John Genske.

At the same time, the efforts of Genske and the rest of the team are not understated by the seniors.

Senior guard Griffin Carter searches for a lane against Chadwick High School.

Assistant sports editor
Girls water polo takes 3rd at Western Tournament, finishes 4-1 in tournament play

By JULIANNA LAI
Assistant sports editor

The varsity girls water polo team has raced to an 8-1 start, including a 16-0 shutout against Prep League rival Flintridge Prep. Winning each game thus far by an average margin of 13 goals, the Panthers have once again proved themselves to be league favorites.

Coming off of the win against Prep in which nine different Panthers found the back of the net, the squad has once again proved themselves to be league favorites.

“Coming off of the win against Prep in which nine different Panthers found the back of the net, the squad has once again proved themselves to be league favorites.”

Junior Brett Kidman remarked, “The recent victories in the tournament really gave us motivation to work harder in practice and to try to win Prep League and hopefully make it to the CIF play-offs.”

“Winning these non-conference games is really important for us in building our confidence for facing teams outside of the [Prep League],” commented sophomore Colleen Woo.

On the second day of the tournament, the Panthers fell in their second match 8-2 to Laguna Hills. In the loss, the team dug themselves a 5-0 hole in the first quarter and found it difficult to generate any offensive momentum in the following quarters.

“Winning these non-conference games is really important for us in building our confidence for facing teams outside of the [Prep League],” commented sophomore Colleen Woo.

Out of the remaining regular season games, four will be played against non-league teams the Panthers haven’t seen this season. These matches will be critical preparation for the Panthers hopes of retaining the top rank in CIF-SS Division 6.

“We’ll continue to improve by working hard and playing smart,” remarked Allison Woo. “All the girls are open to suggestions and are willing to learn so we really hope that the Panthers are really improving. We just have to keep doing what we’re doing and us-ing not just brawn, but also brains to do it.”

At the moment, the Westridge Tigers seem to be the Panthers’ biggest challenge in league play. Currently riding a six-game win streak themselves, the Tigers and the Panthers face off on January 16th.
**Athlete of the Issue**

**Skyler McLean**

In his final season on the varsity squad, Skyler McLean has stepped up as one of the leaders on a very talented team. As a four-year varsity player, McLean is accustomed to the heightened level of competition. However, with the loss of key players Ali Kamal and Ian McKnight, the senior captain and forward has taken on a much larger role in his final year.

While the team has a number of excellent senior talents, McLean stands out with his precise dribbling, field vision and aggressive style of play. As a captain, McLean's chemistry with his teammates is an important factor for the team's success. Sophomore Zealad McLean comments, “To overcome the loss of multiple starters from last year, we must rely on our teamwork. Skyler does a great job of helping establish this teamwork by welcoming new players warmly and setting an example for others with his hard work and perseverance.”

McLean has tallied seven goals and two assists on the season and earned all-tournament team recognition at the Ontario Christian tournament. As a talented athlete and intelligent decision-maker on the field, McLean always delivers pinpoint passes to teammates and makes plays when the team needs it most. His efforts have been a big reason for the team’s 7-0-2 record over the last nine games. Sophomore James Valencia adds, “On the field, the team can count on Skyler being a go-to guy when the going gets tough. Besides being a great soccer player, Skyler stands out for his character and commitment to the team.”

McLean’s teammates admire his consistent vocal presence on the field as well. “Part of what makes Skyler so essential to our team’s success, besides his outstanding ability as a player, is his leadership. Spend five minutes watching a game or practice, and almost without fail you’ll hear Skyler barking commands or encouraging teammates. In addition, he consistently gives extreme effort on the pitch; he is a contagiously fierce competitor,” adds senior Nick McConnell. 

- Raj Garg

**Athlete of the Issue**

**Kayla Valencia**

Senior captain Kayla Valencia has quickly established herself as one of the most dominant attackers not only at Poly, but also in all of the Prep League. In her fourth year on the varsity squad, Valencia looks to lead the Panthers to another Prep League title and successful CIF run.

One of the team’s top goal scorers, Valencia is the go-to forward in the Panther offense. Her experience and poise has earned the respect of her teammates.

Senior midfielder Yecce Han said, “Whenever Kayla has the ball at her feet, good things happen for us. When she is in control, everybody relaxes because we all trust her to know what the right is. The combination of her speed and ball control makes it impossible to guard her.”

Her success comes as no surprise, as Valencia boasts all of the attributes of a star forward: rapid-fire acceleration, exceptional touch, phenomenal field vision and precise passing.

Valencia’s best performance came against Oakwood High School. The senior tallied four goals in the 8-0 rout. Despite her accurate finishing and high goal count, Valencia is a team player.

Han added, “Kayla is probably the most modest player I know. She works hard for her teammates and wants others to succeed. Kayla has been an amazing leader, ensuring that everybody feels apart of the team.”

Junior Ryan Casey added, “Kayla has a great presence on the field. She is a dynamic player and is great at distributing the ball to her teammates.”

-Jared Lim

**Athlete of the Future**

**Jackson Hayes**

As if making varsity as a freshman wasn’t enough, Jackson Hayes has become a major contributor to the varsity basketball squad’s success.

At 5-foot-5 inches, Hayes makes up what he lacks in size with his tenacity. At the Webb Tournament in December, Hayes totaled the second most rebounds on the team, despite being the shortest player.

Hayes has earned the respect of his teammates with his consistency. Against Fairfield from New Zealand, Hayes tallied eight points. He continued his high level of play against Rosemead scoring seven points—a perfect three for three.

Senior captain Jared Lim comments, “For a freshman, Jackson certainly doesn’t lack confidence. He provides energy and composure, and he never backs away from a challenge. As competition gets harder, we will definitely look to Jackson as a key contributor for our team.”

With three more years ahead, Hayes’ future looks promising. His speed and athleticism continue to cause problems for his opponents.

His best performance thus far came against Ontario Christian at the Webb tournament on December 5th. With the score tied at 48, Hayes knocked down a clutch jumper at the buzzer to seal the Panther victory.

Senior guard Andrew Trojan remarks, “Jackson is very poised for his age. He comes off of the bench and provides consistent energy for our team. With three years ahead of him, Jackson’s future in basketball looks promising.”

-Justin Hogan

**By The Numbers**

4
Goals scored by Kayla Valencia against Oakwood

6
Consecutive Prep League victories by girls water polo

26-2
Goals scored by boys soccer vs. goals scored against over Winter Break

58
Points scored by boys basketball against Rosemead

Varsity boys soccer defeats St. Margaret’s 8-0