New Director Martin Haase to head Development Office

By RICHARD HATHAWAY
Staff writer

Martin Haase, currently Director of Institutional Advancement at New York City’s Browning School, will assume the role of Director of Advancement in Polytechnic’s Development Office in February 2014.

As a new addition to the staff, Haase will continue strengthening Poly’s extensive development and alumni relations programs. He will be replacing Diane Binney, who has taken a position as Assistant Vice President of Campus and Community Relations at Caltech.

Through his involvement in two East Coast schools, Haase brings extensive experience in development programs to Poly. During nine years at Browning, he successfully rebranded the School, increased annual donations by 66%, revitalized alumni involvement and oversaw an increase in Browning’s endowment from $12 million to $50 million.

Prior to Browning, Haase served eight years in various positions in the Development Office at Blair Academy, a boarding school in northwestern New Jersey, including Director of Annual Giving, Director of Alumni Relations, Major Gifts Officer and Associate Development Director. While at Blair, Haase and his wife, Barbara, were also housemasters for ten years in a dormitory which houses seventy-five freshmen and sophomore women.

Haase attended the Pennsylvania State University, and its Graduate School of Business. Before entering the field of development, he spent twenty years in the corporate world in various public relations, sales and marketing positions.

“the pool, the athletic field, the performing arts center and the three divisions, each with their own distinct personalities, are all very appealing.”

Haase looks forward to being connected with all aspects of Poly life. He commented, “I very much thrive in an atmosphere where I am involved with the different constituencies at the school, including faculty, administrators, staff and of course, our external constituencies at the school, including faculty, administrators, staff and of course, friends.”

He continued, “I find that I get a lot of professional and personal fulfillment from these interactions, and I also find that I am more effective at my job when I can establish great lines of communication with each of these respective groups.”

Poly Pilferer strikes again

By MANNY MEDRANO
Staff writer

With the second quarter firmly underway, the Upper School community has begun to discuss a hardly new occurrence—the theft of items on school grounds. Especially due to Poly’s open campus, the beginning of the year has already seen the disappearance of many items, ranging from school supplies to expensive electronics.

Upper School administrators have continually warned students to keep their belongings either on hand or in their lockers. Accompanying warnings have included paper reminders in unattended backpacks, as well as a teacher-made animation in morning meeting alerting the student body to the problem and advising a similar course of action.

The thefts have taken a uniquely difficult toll on the students. Sophomore Jack Amshby has experienced the events firsthand, having had two TI-84 calculators stolen out of his backpack—one was found in the French classroom (Amshby takes Spanish), and the other needed to be replaced. In addition, he has had the batteries taken from his calculator several times. Junior Bryan Gleason has voiced the same sentiment; his calculator, lost in early December, will require a replacement.

Senior Michael Bowman has also been a victim of the thefts, reporting that “I have had two iPhones stolen at Poly in the past two years… both out of the boy’s locker room.”

The Upper School recently hosted Open Mic night, an event in which students performed various music, poetry and prose. See page 8.

LIFE

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NEWS

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Winter Play to be in Black Box Theater. See page 2.
How political is Poly? A survey of Poly’s young voters. See page 5.
Panthers in College during the Fall Season. See page 10.
**Feminist Activists host first bake sale of the year**

By JULIA WOHL
News editor

The Feminist Activist Club recently organized a bake sale to support the Lotus Pedals Foundation, an organization that provides bicycles for Cambodian girls. These bikes provide a quick and effective means of transportation to help prevent girls from being subjected to sexual abuse or abduction that often happens girls travel on foot.

In the past few months, the Feminist Activist Club has become a prominent organization representing women’s rights in the Poly community. The club’s 43 members span across all grades and include all sexes.

Senior Lian Wilt taught a fifth grader the programming language “Python.” The children also learned about algorithms and coding.

For the first time in history, Poly’s winter production will take the form of a contemporary musical instead of the usual play. The musical, A New Brain, by William Finn and James Lapine, will be performed in the new black box theater.

Unlike the Garland stage, the black box theater has no wings; the actors will not be able to enter or leave the scene. Luckily, A New Brain was written for a small cast. Props, lighting, and sets will also be kept to a minimum.

**Upper school students participate in National Hour of Code**

By JULIA WOHL
News editor

A group of Upper, Middle and Lower School students recently participated in the Hour of Code, a national event which aims to teach kids about algorithms and coding through computer-based exercises in order to develop their awareness of computer science. It takes place during Computer Science Week, an annual event dedicated to teaching kids in kindergarten through twelfth grade about computer science.

Upper School Computer Science instructor Richard White, Educational Technology coordinators Laura Holmgren and Kelly Ward, Director of IT John Yen and student mentors from the Upper School AP Computer Science class took to teaching “Python” to fifth and seventh graders. “Python” is a programming language that allows its users to work quickly and to integrate systems effectively.

Senior Anisha Cook, one of the student mentors, commented, “There were definitely several kids who had some previous experience of disappointment, stating that “having your personal belongings and meaningful items stolen at school is very disheartening. The thesps are unnecessary, and I feel that more should be done about them.”

Among the most perplexing of situations arose with junior Mitch Bangsuvwon: having secured his DSLR camera in his locker over the Trips Week, he returned to discover that his locker was empty, devoid of his expensive equipment. He is not unfamiliar with the thefts, as a portable boom-box was stolen from him as a freshman. Bangsuvwon was obviously upset with the situation, adding, “it’s not comforting that anyone can walk onto school grounds,” yet that the situation is still preventable to having “to put a fence around campus.”

**Winter play to take place in black box theater**

By ISABELLE PHINNEY
Staff writer

For the first time in history, Poly’s winter production will take the form of a contemporary musical instead of the usual play. The musical, A New Brain, by William Finn and James Lapine, will be performed in the new black box theater.

Unlike the Garland stage, the black box theater has no wings; the actors will not be able to enter or leave the scene. Luckily, A New Brain was written for a small cast. Props, lighting, and sets will also be kept to a minimum.

**Poly Pilferer**

Continued from page 1

In a campus that witnesses countless students passing through the athletic area for games and practices, locking up one’s belongings appears to be logical. The PE department has responded with weekly reminders to ensure that students secure their belongings in assigned lockers during athletic tournaments that include other schools.

Students have also had more expensive items disappear on the campus. Sophomore Mia Fernandez recently discovered a large amount of her personal jewelry to be missing, including her CIF soccer championship ring. Her response was understandably one
Some students have voiced concern and annoyance because class participation is a substantial part of students’ grades. To what extent:

1) Students who feel forced to participate will not make insightful comments and the drive to receive high grades can induce pointless questions that just waste class time for those who actually want to learn;
2) Reserved or shy students find verbal participation stressful;
3) Comprehension of a subject like English can more easily be displayed in written form; and
4) Grading class participation tends to be ambiguous because it is impossible to grade insight and opinion objectively.

Socrates -- the renowned Greek philosopher -- said, “I know nothing more than a boy and a man on a log, talking.” Socrates argues that learning is based on dialectic learning or dialogue, of mutual involvement between student and teacher. When learning, takes the form of asking rather than telling. Communication, especially verbal communication, is vitally important in our society. Sharing and debating ideas, no matter how foolish they seem, lends itself to excellent learning. A recent article in The Atlantic cites Dr. Kendall Hoyt, an assistant professor of medicine at Dartmouth Medical School and a self-described introvert, who says don’t get a free pass for your personality type... I understand that social anxiety is a real thing ... but part of my job as a teacher is to teach people how to talk and be heard.” Hoyt argues that, in life, people need to know how to talk — and encouraging class participation by grading it is the place to start.

In the same vein, class participation is an essential part of English class. Saying that grading class participation is unfair or discriminatory to more introverted students is similar to saying that grading math homework is unfair or discriminatory to those who are unskilled at math.

And, of course, the class will wind up with questions and comments from kids who are just saying things to get the grade, but one hopes that the students (or at least the teacher) in the classroom will be able to see through obvious attempts to improve one’s grade through meaningless participation. The whole point of class participation is to be evolved and to defend what you say, better understand what your peers are saying and progress together as a group.

Yet there are always ways to improve the current system. Discussion forums for class websites would be an excellent alternative for more introverted students in order to make up for lost points.

At the same time, we need to avoid distancing people from one another. The immediacy of direct human interaction is a difficult but important part of growing up, and kids need to be faced with it.

Participating in class and sharing ideas is great, but many still believe that class participation should not be graded because they believe that doing so would be discriminatory. First of all, dangling the proverbial carrot of grades in front of students’ faces is not what teachers really want to do. They would much rather have students be active, thoughtful people of their own accord. However, students go to school in the first place because one is not born a thoughtful and interesting person, so Poly, like any school, uses grades to do what Poly parents pay it to: help students grow and evolve. In essence, grades are not only for incentivizing participation but also for providing students with feedback and showing them how they can improve. If grading participation is discriminatory, then so is the entire grading system. Teachers are not by any means trying to separate the good from the bad. They want students to care about what they are doing in class, to evolve and to defend what you say, and the only way students can do that is by raising their hand and opening their mouths every now and then.
Get your teeth checked: Poly alumna depicts generations of body shame

By PAULINA PINSKY

Paulina Pinsky (Poly ‘11) recently published this article in the Columbia Spectator. We are reprinting it with her permission.

I WANT IT AND I’M HUNGRY. AND GODDAMN AND ANOREXIC FOR SEVEN YEARS. BUT NOW I do. I’ve already had an under-eating one.”

I paused, but before I knew it, the words were out of my mouth. I felt like I couldn’t even hear her. My ability to listen to my mother about her gym owners had disappeared when I had hit rock bottom four months prior and put myself into therapy. Putting eight times in one day to cope with the emotional stress of being home during spring break had finally scared me enough to take action. And here I was again, sitting in a car with her.

Without even thinking, the words erupted from my mouth. “Well, I’d rather have an over-eating disorder than an under-eating disorder.”

She said, “You don’t mean that,” to which I replied, “Yes I do. I’ve already had an under-eating one.”

Without thinking she responded, “No, you haven’t.” I paused, but before I knew it, the words were out of my mouth. “Yes, I have. I’ve been throwing up since the seventh grade.”

All of the air was sucked out of the space we both shared. This was not the way I wanted to tell her; this was not what I wanted for her. We imagined a triumphant moment that involved eating a whole cake with my hands without breaking eye contact and saying, “YES, I HAVE BEEN A BULIMIC AND ANOREXIC FOR SEVEN YEARS BUT NOW I AM BETTER. I AM EATING THIS CAKE BECAUSE, I WANT IT AND I’M HUNGRY. AND GODDAMN IT TASTES GOOD.” But the words flew out of my mouth before I had a chance to take them back. The following moment was the longest and most painful silence of my life; I felt like my stomach was going to fall out and that I was going to projectile-vomit onto the windshield. After a silence that lasted far too long, she responded, “Well, get your teeth checked.”

Two years later, I can say that for the first time in my entire life I have a functional relationship with my mother. Part of my recovery has been taking on a new identity with bigger responsibilities. It was hard for me to come from scratch. Our bond has become stronger as a result of my letting her get to know a more genuine side of me. And as we get closer, I finally understood her reaction to the first time I opened up to her about my relationship with food. She needed me to be perfect, something that neither I nor anyone else can be.

My mother was not the only one demanding perfection from me. I was the pretty blonde girl who was a cheerleader and an ice skater. I got good grades, had a boyfriend, and was thin. I was living the life everyone had always told me I should want for myself. But I was suffering under the weight of “perfection” in a way that even I didn’t completely understand. And how could I have understood it? My 13-year-long figure skating career fostered my eating disorder, which was normalized by the people around me. Both inside and outside the world of figure skating I was repeatedly praised for my “perfection.” Everyone constantly inquired about my thinness, asking how I did it and how they could emulate it. My hunger didn’t matter, I was told, because it was merely a means to an end. A friend’s mother told me that if I went to bed hungry, I would lose weight. And it was true. I began to realize that people liked me better thin. I had boyfriends who never failed to comment on how “amazing” and “beautiful” I looked; my friends and their mothers asked me what I ate and how I worked out. Thinness became my entire identity. Everyone needed me to be thin and, even worse, I needed myself to be thin.

I’m not the only woman who has suffered, though. Women are supposed to be small. As I watched my football-playing brothers stuff themselves with spaghetti carbonara, steak, and hot fudge sundaes, I would pick at my salad, as my mother did the same. It wasn’t just I who had been affected by society’s demands for my body. It was my mother and her mother before her.

As I started to let go of my mother’s mistakes, I started to let go of the idealized image she held of me. One month ago, I went shopping with her and she did not body-shame me by stewing in silent judgment when I needed a bigger size. That shopping trip is engrained in my memory, and that’s not to say that I was perfect, but I was not perfect. I was a real person. I was normal. In my mother’s world, I was an anomaly. I can be谢谢你。
Do you believe it is every American's duty to vote in an election unless they are unable to vote due to an extraneous situation?

“T’m conflicted on this one. On one hand, I believe that the whole majority rule strategy we are going on would be improved if the majority was the actual majority and not just the majority of people willing to go vote. So from a governmental perspective, yes. But I also believe that there are sometimes issues that just aren’t important to an individual, and that person shouldn’t be forced to weigh in or go through the voting process if it’s perfunctorily and not driven by the person’s conviction one way or another.”

-Senior

“Americans have the right to voice their opinions and choose who they truly think deserves to be in a position of power within the country, but it should not be a mandatory and enforced law for all Americans to vote as many Americans simply don’t find politics to be anything important in their day to day life.”

-Senior

“No, I do not believe that everyone should be required to vote because many Americans are completely unaware of the political matters affecting the society around them. They would see voting as a formality, and their arbitrary selection of a candidate could impact those who possess the knowledge and understanding to pick the person best suited for office.”

-Senior

Poly students express their desire to vote in upcoming elections

By HENRY CAFFERATA
Assistant Opinion Editor

Polytechnic School is full of politically minded people who enjoy hearing about all areas of politics. That interest inspired me to ask the question “How many of these students intend to vote in our upcoming elections and in the future?” Recently, a survey was conducted of Poly students that asked questions about what elections they wanted to participate in and how they thought the American people voted in presidential elections. The results reflected my observation and expressed how such a politically motivated community would vote.

All of the juniors and seniors have the privilege of participating in one or two of the upcoming elections, depending on their age. Next year marks another midterm election in November. 60% of Poly respondents said they would vote in the 2014 elections. If 60% of the entire youth vote participated in a midterm election, that would be unprecedented. Currently, only about 27% of young people vote in midterms. Even the total percentage of eligible voters is still only around 40% for each midterm election.

Our largest, most expensive and most publicized election is the presidential one. This election garners the most American vote. Even though the election is the most popular election in our country, on average only 55% of eligible voters cast their ballots. When asked if Poly students would vote in 2016, 87% of respondents said they intended to vote. Only 1% responded no and 12% said they were unsure. Those numbers are a clear indication that Poly students care about our nation's future. On average, only 45% of young voters participate in our presidential races.

The other question about presidential elections asked students what percent of voters they thought participated in presidential elections on average. 51% of respondents thought that on average either 50% or 60% of voters partake in our presidential elections. Those two percentages are closest to 55%, which is the actual average since 1960. 17% believed that 70% to 80% voted and 31% thought that 30% to 40% participated. The question was illustrates how low our political activity is as a nation. Each of these percentages should indicate to people, whether they are wrong or right, that our voter turnout is very low. Compared to other western countries, the American people vote far less in elections. In the French presidential elections, 85% to 90% of their population vote.

If you are going to vote, then what are the reasons?

When eligible, I will most likely vote in the presidential (and other) elections... I also believe, going to a school that teaches accepting and valuing different opinions, that I can make an educated decision and opinion based upon research of candidates rather than based upon my parent’s ideas, the aesthetics of the candidates and the shallow yet appealing aspects.”

-Sophomore

“I feel that it is important to express your right to vote... As a black woman it took a long time for women and African Americans to earn their right to vote and for me not to acknowledge the power I have would be a shame. Instead of people feeling that voting is a burden rather than a privilege, we should turn on the news or open a newspaper and awaken the political side in us. All Americans should understand what is going on in our country.”

-Sophomore

“The decisions that our politicians make affect us either directly or indirectly. Most of us at Poly have experienced very sheltered lives where we are not directly affected by cuts to welfare programs, increase in taxes and other laws enacted by our government. Still, all these policies affect our future, and we cannot be complacent about who is directing our country towards the future.”

-Senior

98% of Poly students responded that they would express their right to vote in local, state and national elections. If more people had the conviction or interest in voting, 95% of the people of the United States should have a compulsory voting law, only 22% responded yes. Compulsory voting is not the only way to obtain a higher voter turnout. 95% of the people of Malta vote in their national elections. In order to achieve a higher voter turnout, we as Americans need to change the way we view voting.

One method of receiving the greatest voter turnout possible is enacting compulsory voting laws. Countries like Australia, Belgium and India all have compulsory voting laws. The idea is that candidates will be elected by a true majority and not just politically motivated individuals. When Poly students were asked if they believed the United States should have a compulsory voting law, only 22% responded yes. Compulsory voting is not the only way to obtain a higher voter turnout. 95% of the people of Malta vote in their national elections. In order to achieve a higher voter turnout, we as Americans need to change the way we view voting.

The Paw Print December 19, 2013

OPINION

If you are eligible, will you vote in the 2014 Congressional election?

If you are eligible, will you vote in the 2016 Presidential election?

Do you think there should be a compulsory voting law?

When given the chance, whether it is local, state, or national elections, will you express your right to vote?
Teacher Profile: Jose Melgoza
By NATALIA SANCHEZ-NIGOLIAN
Life Editor

Jose Melgoza, passionate teacher and avid historian, might have never brought his talents and expertise to Poly. Instead, if he had conformed to his parents’ wishes, he might have been a doctor or a lawyer.

Melgoza grew up in the working class “Back of the Yards” neighborhood on the south side of Chicago. Despite having limited opportunities themselves, Melgoza’s immigrant parents instilled in him the importance of education. His mother, in particular, dedicated herself to fostering a hardworking and successful young man. He attended public schools before being encouraged to apply to the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools for his high school years. Although Melgoza’s family had limited financial means, the school’s financial aid program made his attendance possible. During high school, Melgoza combatted the pervasive image of his family’s socio-economic status. While some of his classmates were hung up on the fact that I received financial aid to attend, I found that many others were not. At the Lab School, I made friends with people from a variety of different backgrounds. My long lasting relationships were with intelligent and accepting individuals who possessed values similar to my own, despite our very different backgrounds. An academically adept and focused student, Melgoza excelled in his high school career, overcoming a difficult transition to the competitive environment. Melgoza acknowledged that this experience “built up my resilience and taught me to how to deal with difficult circumstances.” After high school, Melgoza attended Pomona College, initially tailoring his studies to follow his parent’s advice that medicine or law would be a sure route to career stability. Yet, at Pomona, Melgoza discovered his love for history in the midst of the campus’ rigorous academics. In his sophomore year, he took a class with Professor Tinker Salas, well known on campus for his challenging coursework. In Salas’ Latin American history course, Melgoza realized how much he had to learn about Latin America—and history in general. Such a shift in focus necessitated him conquering still another challenge: facing his parents. Confronting them about his desire to study history as opposed to going on to medical or law school was incredibly difficult. Melgoza explained, “I think one of the most difficult things my parents had to deal with was to let me go and allow me to follow my own instincts.” Letting his intellectual curiosity guide him, Melgoza would graduate in the top 5% of his class and earn honors for his senior thesis project.

Following his time at Pomona College, Melgoza traveled extensively throughout Latin America, immersing himself in its many cultures. “My travels to Mexico, in particular, helped me to see the commonalities between Mexico and the United States, and how such nations’ histories are intricately linked.” Now at Poly, Melgoza tries to instill in his students a passion for history and a willingness to explore the world around them. As Poly alumni Cat Davidson states, “Mr. Melgoza made what might otherwise have been a stressful class into one I really enjoyed attending. His conversational teaching style was engaging and cultivated my love of history.”

Art in Motion: GSL Dance Concert features wide range
By SHUCHI SEGHAL
Assistant Life Editor

Poly held its annual dance concert, “Art in Motion,” on December 6–9 featuring students from all grades of the high school. The dances ranged from ballet to hip hop to tap and drew in a large supportive crowd. Even though some dancers were missing on opening night due to a basketball tournament, the remaining team of dancers worked hard to fill in the gaps, and the show ran flawlessly as a result.

Sophomore Maddie Kim, an active member of the tap community commented, “Although I did not take any of the dance classes offered at Poly, I loved performing my tap piece in the show. The atmosphere both onstage and offstage was very welcoming, and I immediately felt comfortable with all the dancers by the first dress rehearsal. Together, we put on an amazing show.”

Senior Stephanie Pham said, “The dance show was absolutely outstanding. There is so much talent in the Poly community. When I saw my classmates up there, I could not help but be amazed. The revolution piece was fierce and perfectly choreographed.”

Senior Katrina Olah was impressed by the dedication and commitment of everyone involved in the production. “I really enjoyed seeing different facets of the Poly community come together to create such an elaborate performance. From the GSL to everyone who worked behind the scenes to all levels of the dance program, all the hard work and dedication that was put in was evident. A highlight for me was seeing all of the seniors who have given so much to the dance program these past four years be showcased.”

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"I am inspired by anything. I might be eating something and think how well it would work in the portrait I am doing." Chocolate, chewing gum, tea bags, feathers—all are fair game for senior Sarah Bellack. She specializes in using unconventional media to create beautiful and intriguing pieces of art.

At Poly, Bellack has taken the AP Studio Art course during both junior and senior year. Students in the course submit a portfolio with three different areas of focus: breadth, concentration and quality.

Last year, Bellack focused on portraying age using food and other substances instead of paint for her concentration project. She comments, "I had so many unanticipated issues that came up during the process because I had never worked with these media. I had issues with chocolate hardening too fast to get it on the canvas. It was fun though, and I am glad I did it."

Bellack's interest in art emerged with arts and crafts projects as early as Pre-K. She started developing her talent in middle school through the art classes at Poly. "I liked it because I was sort of good at it. It was fun and relaxing. Right now, I do it because I like pushing myself to come up with things I have not thought of before."

In addition to pursuing her interest in art at Poly, Bellack has taken summer classes at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. As she finds her artistic voice, she takes her inspiration from Doris Salcedo, an artist famous for stacking chairs between two buildings to create a sculpture. Bellack explains, "Art is about having an idea and putting it in action. It does not matter that anyone could do it or that it is easy to execute; she is the artist because she actually did it."

Bellack tries to make choices with her art that will surprise and intrigue her audience. Her experience in AP Art has pushed her to take more risks, and she hopes to continue to grow as an artist in the future. One of her main principles is being flexible in her art and not having a concrete end result in mind. "If I plan, things always end up going wrong. I think it is better to just see what happens rather than being too meticulous about damage control."

Though she is not planning on pursuing art professionally, she is interested in exploring design in college. She advises aspiring artists, "There is no right or wrong way to go about art. If you put in the effort and are happy with the product, then the piece is a success. The only person you have to please is yourself, which might be the hardest."
A Los Angeles Christmas
By CAROLINE IAFFALDANO
Assistant Life Editor

Christmas in Bali? New Years skiing in the Swiss Alps? As winter break approaches, the hallways are filled with the voices of many excited students flawlessly elaborating winter vacation plans. If you are staying in Los Angeles during the upcoming winter holidays, L.A.’s mild winter temperatures and vibrant nightlife will be sure to provide you with an unforgettable winter vacation.

The Nutcracker, a favorite holiday ballet, is shown at many southland theaters including Long Beach, UCLA and the Valley Performing Arts Center. Since sitting through a three-hour ballet may not be for everyone, other festivities include ice-skating, Christmas light viewing and, of course, attending holiday parties.

One of the best ways to have an L.A. white Christmas is to go ice-skating. There is a local, year-round ice-skating rink right in Pasadena, as well as a seasonal rink at L.A. Live downtown. The LA Live rink, a perfect way to add some holiday cheer to your break, will be open until December 31st.

Some of the simplest, yet most beautiful things about December are the holiday lights. Every year, Christmas Tree Lane in Altadena is completely decked out in Christmas tree lights. Bring a mug full of hot cocoa and you will be sure to enjoy a simple yet memorable night.

Winter break will be filled with gatherings and parties full of giving. Some of the best parties occur on New Years Eve, and you do not need to be in Times Square to have a fun filled night. The annual N Y E. L. A. at Grand Park party will include live music, dancers, art installations and food trucks. This free event occurs from 6 p.m. to 12:30 a.m and would be the perfect way to start off the New Year.

Finally, on New Year’s Day be sure to show up at the Rose Parade to support the rose queen, Ana Acosta.

Open Mic Night
By MADDIE KIM
Student Contributor

At the Open Mic event, students, faculty and artists from Poly, as well as neighboring communities shared their poems and musical talents on the Garland stage. The wide variety of performances ranged from villanelle poems to prose, tin whistle to electric guitar. Held on Friday, December 13, the Open Mic gave underground artists a chance to perform personal pieces in a welcoming and enthusiastic atmosphere.

Erica Goodwin, a student in Ms. Hamilton’s poetry class, explained, “The best part was hearing poems that were honestly able of all the performers and the variety of the performances. I had never read anything for an Open Mic before and enjoyed the audience member was there to support the others. Some students

Mr. Strom shared a heartfelt poem concerning his nemesis, a "creepy" illustration of a turtle, while Mr. Allard performed a song as an ode to the spirit of Oklahoma.

Students from Learning Works School and Triumphant School presented poetry about religion, relationships and personal experiences. A student from Triumphant School, Diana Torres, eloquently and passionately recited a poem about her broken relationship.

Nicky Steidel’s band played an original song, and Sam Astorga played the tin whistle before he read his piece “The Girl with the Blue Ribbon," a love poem.

Natalie Edwards, a returning poet to the Open Mic, commented, “The open mics always have such a great vibe because it is informal enough that you feel really comfortable laughing and cheering for everyone, but it is serious enough that you can share your words in a place where you know they will be appreciated. We had such an amazing turnout, and Ms. Hamilton organized everything flawlessly.”

Each poet and artist presented an aspect of his or her artistry with poise and courage—not a personal, and each performer and audience member was there to support the others. Some students had never read anything for an Open Mic before and enjoyed the ability of all the performers and the variety of the performances.

Erica Goodwin, a student in Ms. Hamilton’s poetry class, explained, “The best part was hearing poems that were honestly amazing from people who had never performed at open mic and are not in the poetry class.”

Water polo program hosts first annual alumni game
By EZRA SUNSHINE
Student Contributor

The water polo program hosted its first ever alumni game. Last month the water polo program invited graduates back to play a casual game of water polo during the Thanksgiving break.

Many returning alumni participated, including varsity water polo coach Ryan Katsuyama, to current student athletes. The teams were divided randomly, resulting in a very tight game.

Current coaches Colin Allen and Eric Reaves officiated the game.

Lauren Lantry, class of 2013, commented that it was “especially nice to meet some of the older players who went through the program long before any of us.” Other participants included current Poly players Brock Hudnut, Claire Ross, Allie Hodgen, Henry Brooks, Lindsey Kelleher, Spencer Rogers (committed to Stanford for water polo), as well as current college players Kelly McGee (MIT) and Henry Pray (UCLA).

Coach Ryan was proud of his team’s victory, and agreed that the event was a success. He looks forward to the game becoming a Poly water polo tradition.

By CAROLINE IAFFALDANO
Assistant Life Editor

The nutcracker, a favorite holiday ballet, is shown at many southland theaters including Long Beach, UCLA and the Valley Performing Arts Center. Since sitting through a three-hour ballet may not be for everyone, other festivities include ice-skating, Christmas light viewing and, of course, attending holiday parties.

One of the best ways to have an L.A. white Christmas is to go ice-skating. There is a local, year-round ice-skating rink right in Pasadena, as well as a seasonal rink at L.A. Live downtown. The LA Live rink, a perfect way to add some holiday cheer to your break, will be open until December 31st.

Some of the simplest, yet most beautiful things about December are the holiday lights. Every year, Christmas Tree Lane in Altadena is completely decked out in Christmas tree lights. Bring a mug full of hot cocoa and you will be sure to enjoy a simple yet memorable night.

Winter break will be filled with gatherings and parties full of giving. Some of the best parties occur on New Years Eve, and you do not need to be in Times Square to have a fun filled night. The annual N Y E. L. A. at Grand Park party will include live music, dancers, art installations and food trucks. This free event occurs from 6 p.m to 12:30 a.m and would be the perfect way to start off the New Year.

Finally, on New Year’s Day be sure to show up at the Rose Parade to support the rose queen, Ana Acosta.
Firebaugh High School of Lynwood to replace Webb Schools in Prep League next year

By HUNTER WORLAND
Sports Editor

Next school year, Marco Antonio Firebaugh High School will replace the Webb Schools in the Prep League in most sports. The Gaels will leave all programs except track and field and swimming.

While most teams in the Prep League have been there for decades, every four years brings the opportunity for new entries and exits as the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) conducts a period of league rearrangement. Webb’s decision came as a surprise to schools in the league after twenty years of Prep League competition.

Webb Athletic director Steve Wishek explained that Webb decided to leave the league so that it could better compete. “There were many factors that were considered but I believe what won out in the end was the desire to even the experience for our boy and girl athletes,” Wishek said. “When looking over the near and long term, Webb’s girls teams have had a much different experience then our boys teams when it comes to competing for league championships and playoff position.”

Poly Athletic Director Steve Beerman noted, “We were disappointed to hear Webb was leaving. Their student body and academics are very similar to Poly’s.”

Webb’s success has varied, but in recent years the Gauls have often finished at the bottom of the Prep League. In the past school year, Webb won only one league title. Webb has particularly struggled in football and cross country, two sports in which Webb has not won a league championship since 1991. In school history, the Gauls have brought home only three CIF Championships. Only one of those came in the last two decades. Meanwhile, the Panthers boast 46 CIF Championships and 140 Prep League titles in the last 20 years.

In its new league, Wishek stated, Webb “looks forward to new experiences as we play new teams and travel to new locations like Avalon on Catalina Island.” Nevertheless, Webb plans to keep ties with its former Prep League adversaries. Wishek noted that Webb will “still face some Prep League teams in the preseason and postseason parts of our schedule.”

After Webb’s decision, several schools submitted proposals to the athletic directors from the Prep League to join. Following criteria set by the CIF, the directors chose Marco Antonio Firebaugh High School in Lynwood.

Firebaugh played freelance in many sports and sought a long-term home for all of its programs. According to Beerman, “Firebaugh was excited by the organization and well-run administration of the Prep League, as well as the league’s emphasis on character.”

Although a public school, the directors saw Firebaugh as similar to other Prep League schools. Firebaugh was a charter school until a couple of years ago and still maintains a high academic standard. With 1,600 students, Firebaugh will be the largest school in the league by far. However, Beerman said that the athletic directors preferred taking a large school over a smaller school that might not be able to maintain a junior varsity program.

Despite Firebaugh’s advantages, Beerman, along with other Prep League athletic directors, voiced concerns. Due to lack of facilities, Firebaugh has not maintained a track and field or swimming program. However, the school told the Prep League that it intends to not only create these teams, but build the proper resources to support them. Firebaugh has planned to construct a new football field with a track course in the next several years.

Fencing gains momentum early in the season

By NOLAN MATHEWS
Student contributer

The fencing team started its winter season with a strong showing at the Robin Hood Tournament earlier this month with seniors Kendrick Wu and Maddy Mendell winning the men’s and women’s varsity divisions, respectively. Freshman Maya Barajas-Tavera and sophomore Michelle Chen also placed in top three for the Women’s division.

Mendell winning the men’s and women’s varsity divisions, respectively. Freshman Maya Barajas-Tavera and sophomore Michelle Chen also placed in top three for the Women’s division.

Senior Erik Chan commented, “The winter season has been a blast so far. Fencers who joined us in winter have added fascinating strategies to an already diverse pool while returning fencers have been honing their skills. Novice fencers have become impressively competitive against experienced fencers. All in all, the team as a whole has become much more stronger and better prepared for the three remaining tournaments of the season than we have ever been.”

The fencing team is very optimistic about their prospects for this season, especially with the addition of many new underclassmen fencers. With three tournaments left before the season’s conclusion, the fencing team hopes to continue their winning streak.

Freshman fencer Michael Hatch said, “We are being counted on to always perform at our highest level in both practice and competitions, and although it’s a lot of work, it is a very gratifying experience when we go to a tournament and leave with a medal.”

Girls soccer begins the season undefeated

By KYLE BEERMAN
Staff Writer

The varsity girls soccer team continues their success from last year’s stellar season with an early 6-0 record. The defending CIF Southern California Regional champions scored 24 goals in their first six games of the season and recorded four defensive shutouts. They began their season with wins over larger schools, Crescenta Valley, San Marino and South Pasadena with scores of 1-0, 3-0 and 4-0 respectively.

After posting a 23-2-1 record last year, the Panthers look to defend their Prep League title while also making an exciting CIF playoff run.

When asked about her thoughts on the season so far, senior Evan Gancedo commented, “I think we have played very well together as a team. We have had some good tests and our remaining schedule looks to be challenging, but we are an experienced group and I believe we will handle it just fine.”

After losing one of the best senior classes in Poly soccer history, the rising juniors and sophomores now have a much larger role on the team. When asked about her new responsibilities, junior mid-fielder Kayla Valencia added, “I think everyone has grown into their new roles with ease. Everyone has stepped up and helped each other out. Although we lost a lot of girls last year, many of the underclassmen now have a larger role on the team and are playing well.”

Playing behind senior leaders Noel Askins and Gancedo, the Panthers are expecting to have another big year.

The Panthers won their first league game against Webb 4-0.
Kelleher and Woo lead girls water polo to 5-1 start

By ZACK BERN
Staff writer

After a disappointing loss in last year’s CIF quarterfinals, the girls water polo team looks to bounce back this season. Despite losing five seniors, the team was able to start the season off with an impressive five and one record. The team is led by junior standouts Alison Woo and Lindsey Kelleher. The juniors combined for 47 out of the 74 goals, and exactly sixty percent each.

When asked about this season, Woo commented, “I’m really excited for this season. Although we lost valuable seniors, many players have stepped up to fill their roles. The team has gained two new club players from Rose Bowl: Colleen Woo and Allie Hodges. The new varsity players display a fierce aggression and a high level of play. Because of this, we can play as a team and play well together.”

Kelleher mentions the “team" mindset is evident on paper. All but two players on the roster have contributed with a steal, assist or goal. Lindsey Kelleher, the junior who leads the team in goals, assists, and steals also commented, “I think that our team has a lot of potential this year. We are working and training very hard and have been working well in the games together. If we continue on the path we are currently on, we will hopefully be able to make it far in CIF.”

Although Poly will break for the upcoming holidays, the water polo team looks forward to their return to the pool with league games and a tournament.

Boys Basketball begins the winter season with big wins against local high school competition

By DAVID ORNDORFF
Assistant Sports editor

Poly’s boys basketball team opens the season with a 6-1 record, placing first in the Webb Classic Invitational Tournament and third in Poly’s Invitational Tournament.

For a basketball team to be successful, the team must not be made up of all scorers, all great defenders, or all great rebounders. The team must be made up of players who have complementary areas of expertise. These include, but are not limited to, rebounding, shooting, dribbling, communicating, defense, knowing the game, busting out, screening and hustling. Each member of the team must possess some ability in each field and use each other’s unique skill to generate a win.

With a new winter season upon us, the boys varsity basketball team is striving for another successful record. Consisting of four returning seniors and two returning juniors, the team will have plenty of veteran leadership to carry them throughout the season.

The Panthers opened their season with wins against Sherman Indian (52-34), Fairmont Prep (46-38), and Western Christian (59-50), securing first place in the Webb Invitational Tournament.

However, a 34-43 loss to the Holy Martyrs was enough to move the team out of first place contention in the Poly Invitational Tournament. On Saturday, the squad defeated San Marino (53-49) taking third place in the tournament.

Senior forward and co-captain Will Genske states, “We had some rust out our game and it showed early on, but we are gaining cohesiveness and have had big wins over Monrovia (54-47) and San Marino (53-49). We play hard-nosed defense and that alone will keep us in most games so I am confident that the sky is the limit for us.”

While Genske brings emphatic scoring ability, scoring 22 points against Monrovia, as well as a solid jump shot, with the other four starters consisting of Kyle Beerman (point-guard), Griffin Carter (shooting-guard), Jared Lim (small-forward), and Brad Shanks (power-forward) bringing unique skills that help add to the team’s depth. Beerman contributes dribbling skills and outstanding passing ability to complement the other players’ scoring abilities. Carter provides speed and agility to quickly get down the court for fast breaks and solid transition defense. Lim combines his passing and shooting ability to get baskets when the team needs them. Shanks’ midrange game and basketball knowledge allows him to be an emphatic scorer at times and an effective defender.

Beerman adds, “We are a group of guys who have been playing together for a while, so it will not take that long to find our identities and individual responsibilities. Once we do that, we will be a strong opponent when Prep League action starts.”

Before league, the Panthers play in the San Gabriel Tournament against local high schools. The squad starts league on the road on Friday, January 10th against rival, Flintridge Prep.
Boys soccer looks to carry preseason momentum into Prep League competition

By JARED LIM
Assistant Sports editor

With wins against Chatsworth and North Hollywood on Saturday, the Poly boys' soccer team has opened the season with a 4-1-1 record in non-league play.

The Panthers have distinguished themselves in the early season as a much-improved squad. Unlike last year's rocky start, the Panthers were quick to make a statement. Behind a strong core of upperclassmen, the squad's experience and talent served them well in close games, and this experience will translate to their future Prep-League and CIF runs.

The squad opened the preseason with wins against Buckley (4-1) and San Marino (3-0), however, tough competition in the Ralph Brandt Tournament led the Panthers to a 2-1-1 tournament record. The Panthers entered the tournament representing the lowest division (CIF Division 6) of all entries, and after a 0-4 record in the tournament last year, the squad showed much improvement against strong competition.

Touring tournament play opened with a 0-7 loss to Burroughs and a 1-1 tie against West Ranch, but the Panthers rallied with wins against Chatsworth (1-0) and North Hollywood (3-0) on Saturday, placing 13th in the tournament.

Junior midfielder Hunter Worland comments, "The early games of the season have given us the confidence we need going into the Prep League in January. Last year, we didn't have a winning record this time of year; now we're 4-1-1 against teams mostly in higher divisions. The Prep League will be especially strong this year, but I think we've demonstrated since the start of the season that there's no reason why we shouldn't win league." In the first six games of the season, Worland has contributed two goals as well as consistent production on both sides of the field.

The offensive attack has been led by seniors Ali Kamal (2 goals, 4 assists) and juniors Ben Hubsch (5 goals, 2 assists), Skylar McLean (2 goals, 2 assists) and Worland (2 goals, 1 assist). Alongside this strong offensive front, sophomore Jack Queen established himself as a key component to the squad tallying one goal and three assists before being sidelined with a foot injury halfway through the tournament. On the other side of the field, senior Ian McKnight and juniors Vince Porter and Will Hubsch have led a strong defensive with two shutouts in the Ralph Brandt Tournament.

"Currently, our team has been looking really strong," McKnight adds, "in our last two matches of the Burroughs tournament, we proved to be strong on both sides of the ball by scoring four goals and allowing zero scores in two games. Our senior leaders have set a tone which has set a precedent for the remainder of the year and currently encourages the squad to train hard and remain focused on and off the field."
Athlete of the Issue
Ali Kamal

In his fourth year as a starting forward on the varsity soccer team, senior Ali Kamal looks to lead his team to a successful season to end his high school career. The Panthers’ success this year will depend greatly on Kamal’s speed, knowledge and skill to ignite their offensive attack and provide a good example for the younger players.

Senior goalie Brian Ward comments, “Ali has been an integral part of the team for the past four years. He leads the team by example rather than by orders in practice, games, and off the field. He has crazy good footwork as well as great game sense, which makes him an excellent forward.”

With his success in the first six games, Kamal is on track to gain all-CIF and all-area honors for a second straight year. “Ali is a great player because of his ability to make plays happen,” said sophomore teammate Jack Queen. “He is fun to watch, and even more fun to play with because of his skill and unmatched work ethic on the field.”

As the Panthers continue in the season, they will rely on Kamal to ignite offensive attacks in their run for Prep League title.

Midfielder Hunter Worland notes, “Ali is the has the speed, work ethic, and vision to lead our team to a successful season. With his experience, he is one of the most reliable players on the field. When league starts, he will be, without a doubt, one of the most feared players in CIF.”

- Charlie Ramirez

Athlete of the Issue
Evan Gancedo

With a perfect season thus far, the varsity girls soccer team appears to be maintaining their success from last season as Southern California Division III champions. Great credit for this success is due to the stellar play of senior captain Evan Gancedo, who has led the Panthers to a 6-0 record so far.

A third team all-CIF and second team all-area selection last year, Gancedo played a key role in last year’s success, scoring eight goals while tacking on 13 assists. Her ball-handling skills and breakaway speed provide a valuable asset for Poly to rely on in the middle of the field.

“Evan is an amazing soccer player,” commented fellow captain Noel Ashins. “Her skills on the ball and composure in games are only some of the qualities that make her one of the best players in the Prep League. She always has an upbeat attitude at practice even when we do fitness. I am grateful to call Evan my teammate and lucky to not have her as an opponent.”

In the Panthers’ closest game this season, a 1-0 win over Crescenta Valley, Gancedo played a prominent role in setting up the Panthers’ lone goal with a 30-yard free kick. As the season progresses, the Panthers look to Gancedo not only for leadership and reliability but also for a major role in their high-powered offensive attack.

- Charlie Ramirez

With a great deal of previous experience, Colleen Woo, a freshman on the Poly girls varsity water polo team, is playing an important role for the success of the squad. In addition to having five years of club water polo experience, Woo has also played on the youth USA National Team. Woo’s experience and skill will greatly make up for the five key senior players that the Panthers lost from graduation.

In addition to the contributions she brings to the team, Woo has the added element of being a younger sister on the squad. Her older sister, junior Allison Woo, a third year varsity returner, says “Colleen is a smart and talented player, so I’m excited that she’ll be helping the Panthers. She can and will fill the roles of the older players and past players. Colleen isn’t small; although she may be small, she is feisty and plays extremely aggressively.”

When asked how she feels about playing this year with her younger sister, Allison Woo responded by saying “It’s pretty cool getting to play on the same team as Colleen. Because we are in different age groups at Rose Bowl’s club water polo team, we have never really played together much, but it’s awesome that we get this chance at Poly.”

The Panthers have started off the season strong, with wins against Tremendous Valley, Claremont, Schurr and Los Altos en route to a 4-1 opening record. Undoubtedly, Woo’s contributions will be appreciated throughout the season and in the future.

- Will McConnell

The Panther Scoreboard

Boys Soccer
Poly vs. North Hollywood
3-0 (Poly)

Girls Basketball
Poly vs. Highland
58-54 (Poly)

Girls Soccer
Poly vs. South Pasadena
4-0 (Poly)

Athlete of the Numbers

22.7
Average number of points junior Kiki Yang scores per game. Yang currently leads the team in points for the 2013/2014 season.

24
Number of goals the girls varsity soccer team has scored in six games.

22
Number of points senior Will Genske scored against Monrovia.

47
The combined total of goals juniors Lindsey Kelleher and Allison Woo have scored this season so far.