

# The Poly Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

Vol. XV

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OCTOBER 2008

Vote '08

## A Little Is a Lot

By Angel Silva  
Staff Writer

In a close race, little things mean a lot. Even though many observers thought the first presidential debate had no clear winner, the event may still have had an impact on the course of the competition.

According to a Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg phone survey taken after Friday's debate, Democratic hopeful Barack Obama had a 49%-44% advantage over Republican John McCain, a two-point increase over the previous week's 48% to 45% lead.

Voter confidence in the two candidates also shifted in Obama's favor. The week before the debate, both candidates had 40% of voters' trust. After the debate, those numbers favored Obama, with 43% of voters saying that he had more "honesty and integrity." McCain's number was down to 34%.

Despite the gap in experience, Obama was seen as more presidential by 44% of viewers, while only 16% said McCain was.

Debate topics ranged from the nation's troubled economy to foreign affairs.

Obama said the root of the economy's problems was the foreclosures taking place all across the country and he promised federal aid for middle class taxpayers and home owners.

McCain offered loans for failing businesses and a spending freeze on everything but "defense, veterans affairs and Social Security" as part of his economic plan.

Some pundits suggested McCain's lack of eye contact with Obama during the debate and his temporary postponement of the debate may have swayed some voters in Obama's favor.

A CNN post-debate poll had 39% of viewers naming Obama as the debate winner, compared to 25% for McCain.

While the race remains close, the numbers suggest that Democratic contender Obama is slowly increasing his slight edge over the McCain ticket.

# "The Hills" Comes to the Valley

MTV chooses Poly campus to shoot a commercial for the hit series.

By Hazel Kasusky  
Staff Writer



Photo by Michael Obando

**DIRECTOR:** Soo-Hyun Chung works for MTV.

MTV filmed a commercial at Poly last Friday, in partnership with Sonic Restaurants, promoting "The Hills."

Sonic will sponsor a contest in which winners get to attend a special screening of "The Hills" final episode.

The popular series is a spin-off of "Laguna Beach" and stars Lauren Conrad.

The commercial, which used Poly's cafetorium as the backdrop, showed two students who were talking about "The Hills" instead of studying. They sat on the tree planter next to the student store, their Sonic beverages in plain view.

The 35-member crew began shooting around 9 am and left the campus around 6 pm. Yellow caution tape was used to keep Parrots out of the area.

Director Soo-Hyun Chung explained that she liked Poly's campus as a locale because of its look.

"The angles are nice here



Photo by Michael Obando

**MAKEUP:** Actress Betsy Wilson getting a touch-up between takes for MTV's commercial promoting its hit series "The Hills." Producer Walter said both actresses are from Ohio.

for a variety of shots," Chung said. "Some of the schools were too big. There are a lot of textures in this area of the campus, so they give us a range of possibilities."

The cast included actresses Betsy Wilson and Jenny Cook, who each had about three lines of dialogue, and a small group of extras, who portrayed other high school students.

"Soo and I sat down and looked at 30-40 people," said

producer Kris Walter. "Betsy and Jenny just killed it. And they are both from Ohio."

Wilson, who would only say she was "over 18," has been acting for about six years and has lived in LA since 2006. Her acting experience is in theatre and indie films, Wilson said.

"We didn't learn the storyline until the morning of the shoot," Wilson said.

Chung, a 10-year MTV vet-

eran who has worked on other MTV commercial promos, said her job was to use the brief time frame efficiently.

"I try to create a story in those 30 seconds."

Producer Walter called the one-day shoot a mid-sized production and said the cost was roughly \$70,000.

The commercial is expected to air between late September and early October.

Tay in Iceland

See Iceland | Page 4



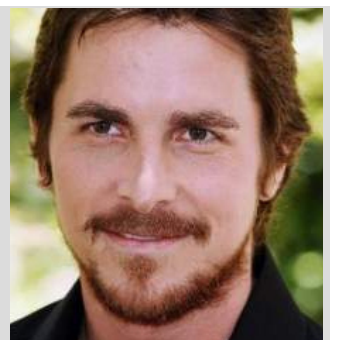
At The Fair

See Fair | Page 5



Summer Flicks

See Good | Page 7



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



## FEEDBACK

Comments on our September extra issue.

My favorite article in the newspaper would have to be "Making History." I think it's good that students are being informed about what's going on in this year's election.

YECENIA CID [9TH]

In this edition of the OPTIMIST I liked the media section. I also enjoyed reading that section. I also enjoyed the sports section. It gave good info about the football game

ANA RAMOS [9TH]

The part that I really liked about the OPTIMIST was the political part about Obama and Sarah Palin.

JORGE DIAZ [9TH]

I like this edition of the OPTIMIST especially because of their article about "Gossip Girl" and "90210." It makes me feel that I'm not the only one who's watching these shows and actually I'm also reading the "Gossip Girls" books.

CZARINA DE LA CRUZ [9TH]

I liked the football section from

the Monroe game since I wasn't there. I know everything that happened

RAMON PINELO [9TH]

I liked the "heart beat from the presidency." I liked this because it is true what kind of vice president she will be. I am with you all the way!

ZUKY GUILLEN [9TH]

The article that I liked the most was "hooked on 'Gossip Girl?'" I am indeed hooked. I've been watching the show since it first aired. I remember thinking to myself "why am I watching this," but then I found myself unable to change the channel. Ever since then, I've been tuning in every Monday at 8 on the CW. The writers of "Gossip Girl" really understand their audience and they know what they want to see, and every Monday they deliver.

DIANE ALVARADO [9TH]

What I like about this edition of the Poly OPTIMIST is that it keeps you updated on what's happening in school, like a football game if you don't go to it.

RICHARD CERNA [9TH]

What I like about this edition of the OPTIMIST is that it talks about the school and also what are some important things that could interest us some more

SELENGNA TERRAZAS [9TH]

What I like about this edition of the OPTIMIST is that it talks about the school, and also about some important things that are going on right now. The newspaper should keep writing on what they are writing, but should write things that interest us more.

GEROON TORRES [9TH]

What I like is the mention of school and after-school extracurricular activities. It keeps you informed of how your school is doing and you can show it to your parents and read them some articles so they could be sure that this is a good school.

ELENA OCHOA [9TH]

The Poly OPTIMIST is a very wonderful thing to have. The best thing that I liked about the OPTIMIST is the sports section. I like reading about sports here at Poly. It's cool finding out how Poly's sports teams are doing.

MAILA DE PERALTA [12TH]

I loved the September '08 issue of the OPTIMIST. Great job. I loved the articles about Poly's success in school and in sports. I also liked the technology. Being a techie person, I was surprised that "Chrome" would be on the OPTIMIST. You guys rock! I am excited to read about the next issue.

I like how information is directed and summarized. I like how the news is ordered in a formal way. Maybe in the future I would participate to write an article.

STEPHANIE HERRERA [11TH]

I liked that they wrote about a great show. "Gossip Girls" is one of my favorite shows and it's great that the OPTIMIST has things that are appealing to a lot more people.

KARINA MUNIZ [11TH]

In my opinion, the OPTIMIST does not get deeper into the school events and stories. The stories are not as interesting as I would like them to be. Most stories don't catch my attention enough for me to keep reading it.

ANGIE GUERRERO [11TH]

## ISSUES

## Twice the Traffic

These neighbors may be too close

By Karinina Cruz & Belle Tadena  
Staff Writer

Putting two public schools across the street from each other was widely predicted to create a variety of traffic problems. Since Byrd opened on July 2, those forecasts have quickly come true.

"About forty to fifty illegal U-turns are made every day on Arleta Avenue between Byrd and Poly," Poly teacher Glen Lamos said. "These U-turns and other traffic violations occur while parents drop-off and pick-up their kids."

Officials met Monday at Byrd Middle School to find solutions for the traffic issues and insure student safety.

Poly Assistant Principals Ari Bennett and David Sanchez, Poly teachers Brad Katz and Glen Lamos, Byrd Principal Sohn Reynolds and Assistant Principal John Plevack and Arturo Gonzalez, Chief of Staff for Councilman Tony Cardenas attended the meeting.

School Traffic Safety Coordinator Lorenzo Trujillo, who did not attend the meeting, sent a letter to Taghi Gharagozli, Transportation Engineer of the Los Angeles Department of Transportation outlining the concerns of the Byrd and Poly communities.

According to Trujillo, by simply modifying existing conditions, access to both schools and the safety of the students could be greatly improved.

Byrd/Poly suggestions included the removal of the yellow crosswalk at the South end of Arleta Avenue and Wicks Street and lengthening the pedestrian walk interval at the north end of Arleta Avenue and Wicks Street to prevent dangerous crosswalking.

Also suggested was the use of a "no left turn" light at Wicks and Arleta during the 7:00-8:30 am and 2:00-3:30 pm periods to improve the flow of east bound traffic.

Student jaywalking was also addressed at the meeting.

"Parents drop off their kids in the middle of the street," said Lamos. "That's very dangerous. And they park by the red lines, which are no-park zones."

Late-arriving school busses often find their parking spaces occupied by parents waiting for their children to get out of school.

Poly Assistant Principal David Sanchez suggested moving Poly's school bus parking down to Wicks Street by the right field fence of the baseball field.

"This will give more room for parents to park their cars while dropping off their children," Sanchez said. "By paralleling the bus stops to Poly's baseball field, parents would have their own designated parking space."

Valley Traffic began giving citations this week for speeding, illegal lane changes, illegal U-turns and other traffic violations.



Photo by Michael Obando

**CONGESTION:** Early morning traffic volume at Roscoe and Whitset has doubled since the opening of Byrd Middle School.

## THE OPTIMIST

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## EDITORIAL POLICY

The OPTIMIST is the voice of the Poly community and accepts the responsibilities of a free press. The OPTIMIST follows the Code of Ethics for the Society of Professional Journalists. Editorials are the opinions of the staff writers.

## LETTERS

Letters to the Editor must be typed or neatly printed in ink and include the writer's signature. The OPTIMIST reserves the right to edit submissions. Send letters to Rm.11 or Mr. Blau's box.

# MOUNT ST. MARY'S OFFERS LIBERAL ARTS

By Hazel Kasusky  
Staff Writer

Campus representative Christopher Quinn from Mount St. Mary's College was at Poly Tuesday to answer questions and explain the school's academic programs and campus features.

Mount St. Mary's is a Catholic liberal arts college with campuses in Brentwood (Chalon) and North University Park (Doheny). Women compose 95% of the student body and 80% of the faculty.

Undergrads attend the Chalon campus, located just above the Getty Center in the hills of Brentwood, while the Doheny campus serves the College's Associate of Arts program as well as its co-ed Weekend College, graduate, and certificate programs.

About half of the student body is Catholic.

Quinn said the school's smaller size and enrollment means students get more personal attention from the staff.

"The great thing about St. Mary's is that you know your professors," said Quinn. "And the bad thing about St. Mary's is that you know your professors."

The school's primary academic focus is liberal arts - art, literature, languages, philosophy, history, mathematics, and science.

"Liberal Arts means taking classes from a lot of disciplines," Quinn said. "Liberal arts classes expose you to a little bit of everything. You get a well rounded education."

Attending a school with a predominantly female student



Internet Photo

**CAMPUS:** Nestled against the Santa Monica mountains, Mount St. Mary's Brentwood campus offers views of the Getty Center.

body "doesn't mean you're never gonna see a boy," Quinn said. "There are boys allowed on the school campus."

But a women's college has decided advantages. Graduates of a women's college are twice as likely as female graduates of coed colleges to earn a Ph.D., attend medical school, attain higher positions in their careers, earn higher incomes and be more involved in philanthropic activity, according to Mount St. Mary's website.

The 12,000-student Doheny campus has a 1:20 student-teacher ratio and includes a large pool, a gym, a cafeteria and Our Lady of Mercy Chapel.

Founded in 1925 by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, Mount St. Mary's first

classes were held at St. Mary's Academy, then located at West Slauson Avenue and Crenshaw Boulevard.

In 1928, the Sisters purchased 36 acres of land along the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains and added an additional 20 acres in 1947. Featuring a blend of architecture largely in the tradition of the Spanish Colonial Revival and Mission Revival styles, the campus is located on an 1,100-foot ridge that overlooks the Getty Center and 40 miles of the Pacific Ocean coastline.

A second campus next to the University of Southern California was added in 1962. The 20-acre property, with the 22-room Doheny mansion as its centerpiece, was originally an exclusive residential enclave



Internet Photo

**Arches:** Elements of Spanish Revival and Mission architecture lend an Old-World feel to the 56-acre Chalon campus.

of Queen Anne-style Victorian mansions built at the turn of the century by Judge Charles Silent. Oil magnate Edward Doheny developed the property and eventually donated it to the school.

With its isolated location, beautiful vistas and architecture, the campus has been used for a number of movies and television shows, including "Spiderman 3," "Monk" and "The O.C."

## College Journal

As a service to our readers, the OPTIMIST asked one Poly senior to tell us about her senior year. Below is the fourth installment of her story.

By Belle Tadena  
Layout Editor

Listen up, senior Parrots. Before you procrastinate, don't.

In the past month, seniors flooded the College Office, signing up to meet with college representatives, requesting fee waivers left and right.

For seniors applying to four-year universities, taking standardized tests like the SAT I, SAT II and/or ACT is a must.

Seniors have until December to take these required exams. The tests are offered twice a month.

If you still haven't taken the tests, visit the College Office as soon as possible and see if you're eligible for Fee Waivers.

UC admissions just opened for all you ambitious applicants. You have until November 30th to send in your applications.

But don't be foolish. If you wait until Thanksgiving break to send your forms in, there's a good chance that the admissions office won't even get them.

Many seniors tend to take their chances and put off their applications for another day.

This continuous procrastination goes on and on until one day they wake up screaming, angry at themselves for not giving themselves enough time.

"It is tiring to hear people saying 'stop procrastinating' over and over again," said Poly senior Eunice Choi. "Yet, it is more disappointing to not be admitted to your prospective college because of laziness."

For seniors who are also taking energy-leeching, brain-draining classes and/or extra-curricular activities, managing your time to accommodate your classes, your applications and your personal life is a skill that must be learned.

"I was flabbergasted," said Poly senior Ricky De Guzman. "I had so much to do, I didn't know where to start."

The application process does not end with completing and signing the admission forms.

All applicants still need to write one or two personal essays addressing the reasons why and how a particular college benefits from having you as one of their students or talking about what makes

you special above the rest of your peers.

Sometimes, prompts ask you to write about the hardships you've encountered throughout your life and how it has shaped your world.

If the admission offices were merciful, they'd allow you to pick your own topic to write about. But they're not and they don't.

If you've already shrunk back from the word "essay," allow me to frighten you even more. Somehow, as an applicant, you must sell yourself to the school you're applying to.

Most colleges ask for a letter of recommendation, so you'll need to find a teacher who likes you enough to say wonderful things about you.

"Of course you may ask your counselor to write you one, but again, don't forget that other students might have asked the same teacher or counselor to write the letter for them," said college counselor Leona Warman. "So don't wait until the last minute."

Ask as soon as you possibly can.



Photo courtesy of Vanimali Tay

**OVERVIEW:** World traveller and newest Poly faculty member Vanimali Tay's stay in Iceland included a visit to the geothermal powerplant in Nesjavellir.

## TRAVELS WITH TAY

# COLD AS ICELAND

By Angel Silva  
Staff Writer

**A**t Poly, Vanimali Tay is a soft-spoken chemistry and earth science teacher. But when she's not working, Tay travels the world in search of adventure.

"So far, I've been to 23 countries and my goal is to visit 50 countries to see as much of the world as I can," said Tay.

This time, Tay's penchant for travel ended in Iceland - 7,000 miles away from Poly. Tay's search for renewable sources of energy is what took her there.

"I'm interested in all kinds of sources of energy," said Tay. "Iceland was a good example of the geothermal source of energy."

Tay's first stop in Iceland took her to Nesjavellir, the country's largest geothermal power plant.

"70 percent of Iceland's energy comes from geothermal energy," said Tay. "That's remarkable."

Besides the power plant, Tay visited the Mid-Atlantic Ridge (aka Reykjanes) - where the North American and European plates collide, as well as the dormant volcano Mt. Hekla, and the Gulfuss waterfall.

While in Iceland, Tay learned about the country's culture-both ancient and modern.

"I learned a lot about the Viking culture," said Tay.

"All over the country there are no trees thanks to the Vikings."

Iceland's food has its roots in Viking culture like sheep's heads and other savory meals.

"There was Harkal, which is a type of fermented shark meat," said Tay. "Icelanders eat it once a year out of respect to their ancestors."

According to Tay, Icelanders are not much different from people here.

"Icelandic people are really friendly and have a good relationship with the United States," said Tay. "They are very well-educated and they endorse diversity."

One of Iceland's appeals is that there are many ways to unwind and socialize.

"One thing that I really enjoyed in Iceland is that they have several ways to relax - geothermal pools,

lots of cafès, parks, etc. Icelanders are very social," said Tay.

Despite costing about five grand, Tay says that her trip to Iceland was one of her best.

**Despite costing about five grand, Tay says that her trip to Iceland was one of her best.**

tures.

"I think I definitely opened my mind to different cultures," said Tay. "I feel a connection to the global community as a citizen of this planet, not just a country, and whatever I do impacts the planet."



Photo courtesy of Vanimali Tay

**COOL:** Lake Ljotipollur, 14 meters deep and an excellent source of brown trout, occupies a crater formed in 1477. The lake is near Landmannalauger and 185 km from Reykjavik.

# A Fairly Good Time

By Jocelyn Alas  
Staff Writer

Every September, Southern California bursts with anticipation as the LA County Fair rolls into town. With its dozens of rides, attractions and food options, the Fair has gained a large and devoted following since it opened in 1922. Some 57,000 patrons walk around the 543 acres of sights and sounds every day.

The prices are ridiculous, of course. The entrance fee was \$17, parking was \$10, and an optional bike ride to the far-off entrance cost \$2-\$6 a person. Once inside, 40 tickets went for about \$20. You needed seven tickets to play a game, nine to go on a ride.

I was dreading the crowds of people, but wide pathways made them easier to deal with. The fair is corporate sponsored

and clean, not at all like the dirty, smelly, crowded and uncouth environment most have come to expect.

Either way, the plentiful rides and games filled every path with vivid colors and blaring sounds. The dart toss was fun, but I guess that was because I won each time I played. Classics like the Milk Can Toss, the Water-Gun Race and of course the Hammer



Photo by Jocelyn Alas

**BIG WHEEL:** Every fair needs a ferris wheel and LA's features one of the nation's largest.

Smash drew big lines.

I was looking forward to a large variety of bizarre foods, but the selection was pretty limited. Ice cream, hamburgers, hotdogs, caramel apples and barbeque were everywhere.

There were only two distinctive food options: the "Mexican" funnel cake, basi-

cally one long churro, and the deep-fried favorites. Deep-fried Twinkies, Oreos, and even pickles are fairly normal, but the deep-fried apple fries, White Castle burgers and Coca-Cola were something else.

Yes, they deep fry Coca-Cola, or rather, Coca Cola-flavored batter drizzled with Coke fountain syrup and

topped with whipped cream, cinnamon sugar and a cherry

I tried the deep-fried veggie plate, but soon regretted it. After about five bites, my mouth was far too greasy. In small amounts, however, it was actually pretty good. Sometimes it was hard to tell what I was eating - maybe it was an artichoke or an avocado - but overall it was all right.

There weren't many animals, unfortunately, but they looked happy, and had plenty of space to roam. They were not show animals, just normal farm creatures allowed to do as they wished.

My friend Estela and I like to people-watch, so we stopped to take a break. Before we knew it, two guys about our age sat a couple of tables down from us. Suddenly one whipped out a camera and the other began to stuff his face with a huge ball of cotton candy.

They kept going back and forth with the cotton candy for at least three rounds, laughing manically the entire time. It was odd and disgusting, but we couldn't look away.

As the day progressed, the heat was sometimes bothersome. It was dry and I felt like I was just burning waiting in all the lines.

Night was much nicer, however. There was a pleasantly warm breeze and everything seemed to move more calmly. Little kids were asleep on their parents' shoulders as everyone slowly strolled along.

I grabbed a caramel apple before we headed to the parking lot, the lights still ablaze and the rides still going wildly. After nine hours and \$60, I was ready to take my dopey orange elephant (a prize) and go home.

# Boon or Boom?

By Angel Silva  
& Jason Castro  
Staff Writers

If you can read this sentence, not only can you read, but you survived the first official testing of the Large Hadron Collider. Congratulations!

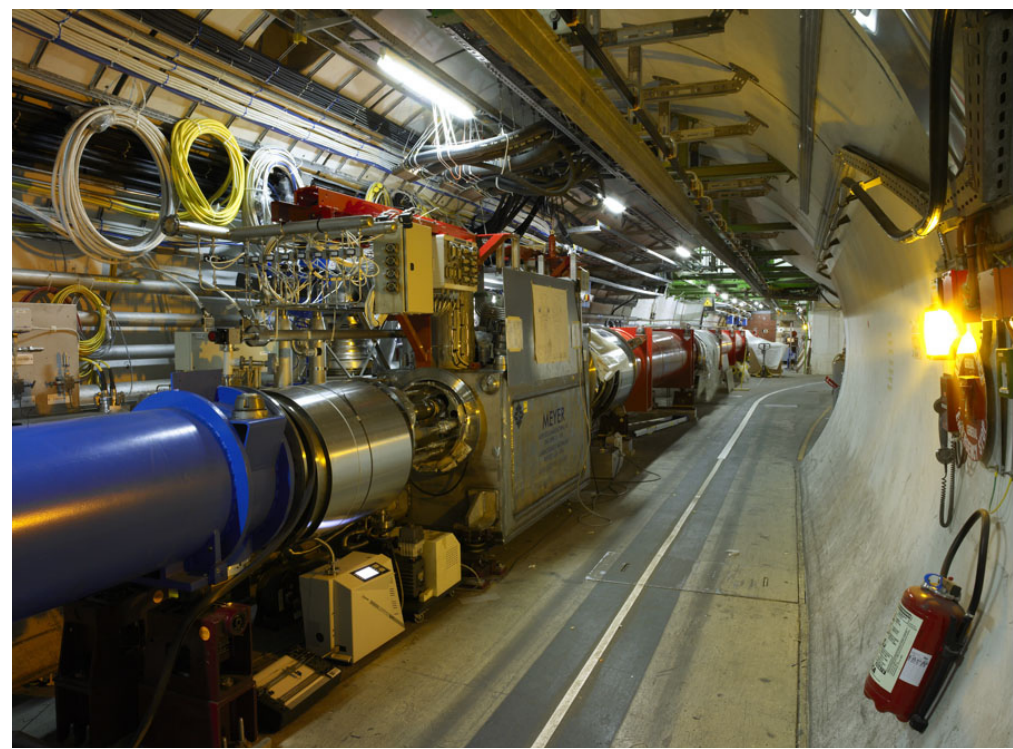
The \$8 billion, 17-mile wide particle accelerator, created to solve a longstanding mystery at the heart of all matter, was the subject of much speculation and fear around the world.

Some believed that starting the device could spark the end of the world. Others feared the particle accelerator would create micro black holes that would devour the earth.

Such beliefs have scared people worldwide, spurring death threats and lawsuits aimed at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), the makers of the LHC.

According to experts in particle physics, the chances of a catastrophic annihilation are relatively tiny - approximately 0.00000000000000000000000001%. As a matter of fact, there is a greater chance of finding absolutely nothing than creating a devastating micro black hole.

So what does it do?  
Scientists in Geneva, Switzerland built the LHC to look for the hypothetical Higgs Boson, otherwise known as the "God Particle." For those without a PhD in particle physics, the Higgs Boson is a



Intenet Photo

**DANGER ZONE:** Some fear that the Large Hadron Collider might destroy Earth.

particle that gives everything mass. The LHC was built to prove the existence of the Higgs Boson.

Inside the LHC, two beams of protons are shot from one end to the other, at speeds just under the speed of light. Eventually the protons collide and break apart, similar to throwing a clock against a wall to see how it works.

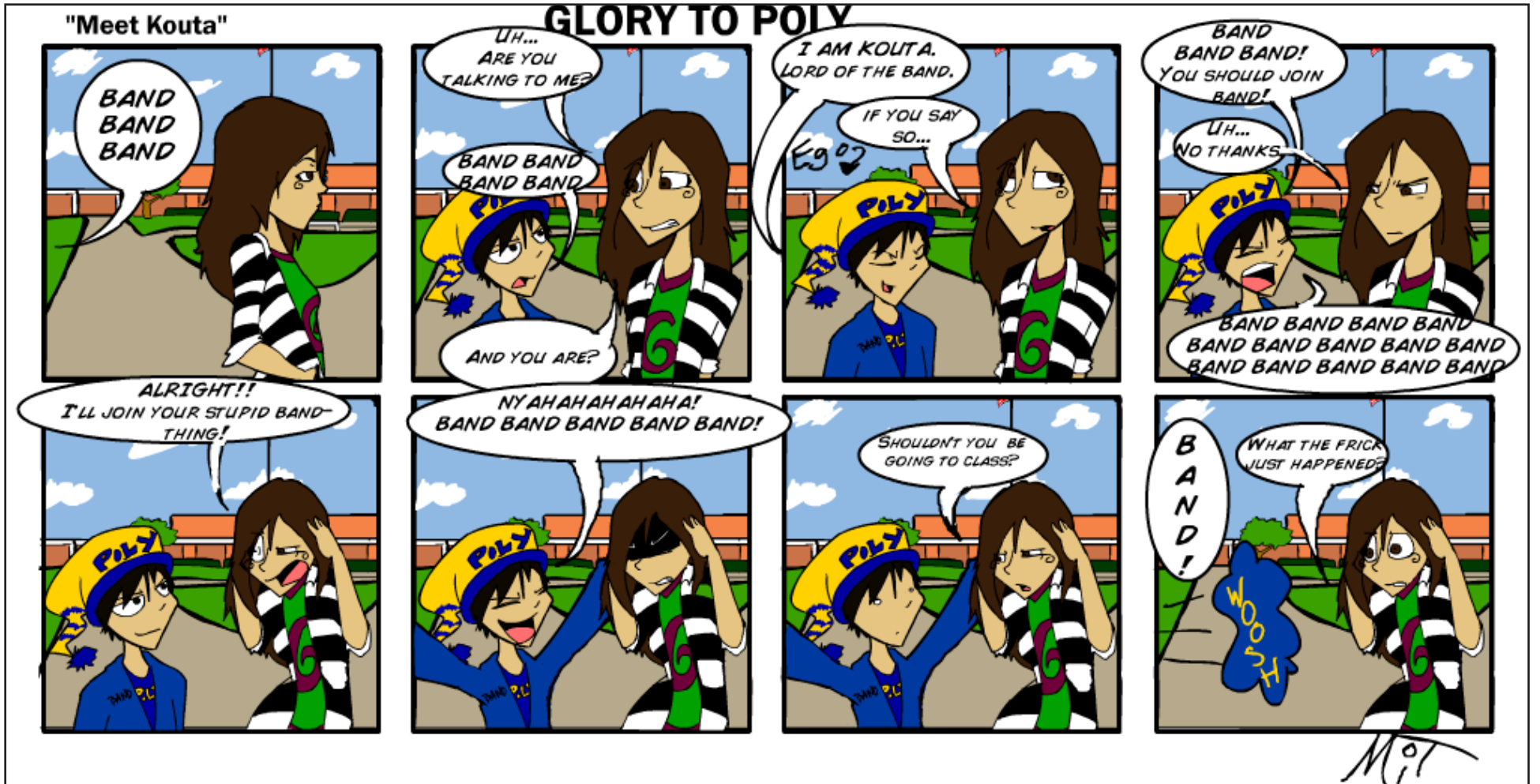
The discovery of the Higgs Boson will shed light on how objects get their mat-

ter and mass. In other words, this answers the philosophical question, "why do we exist?"

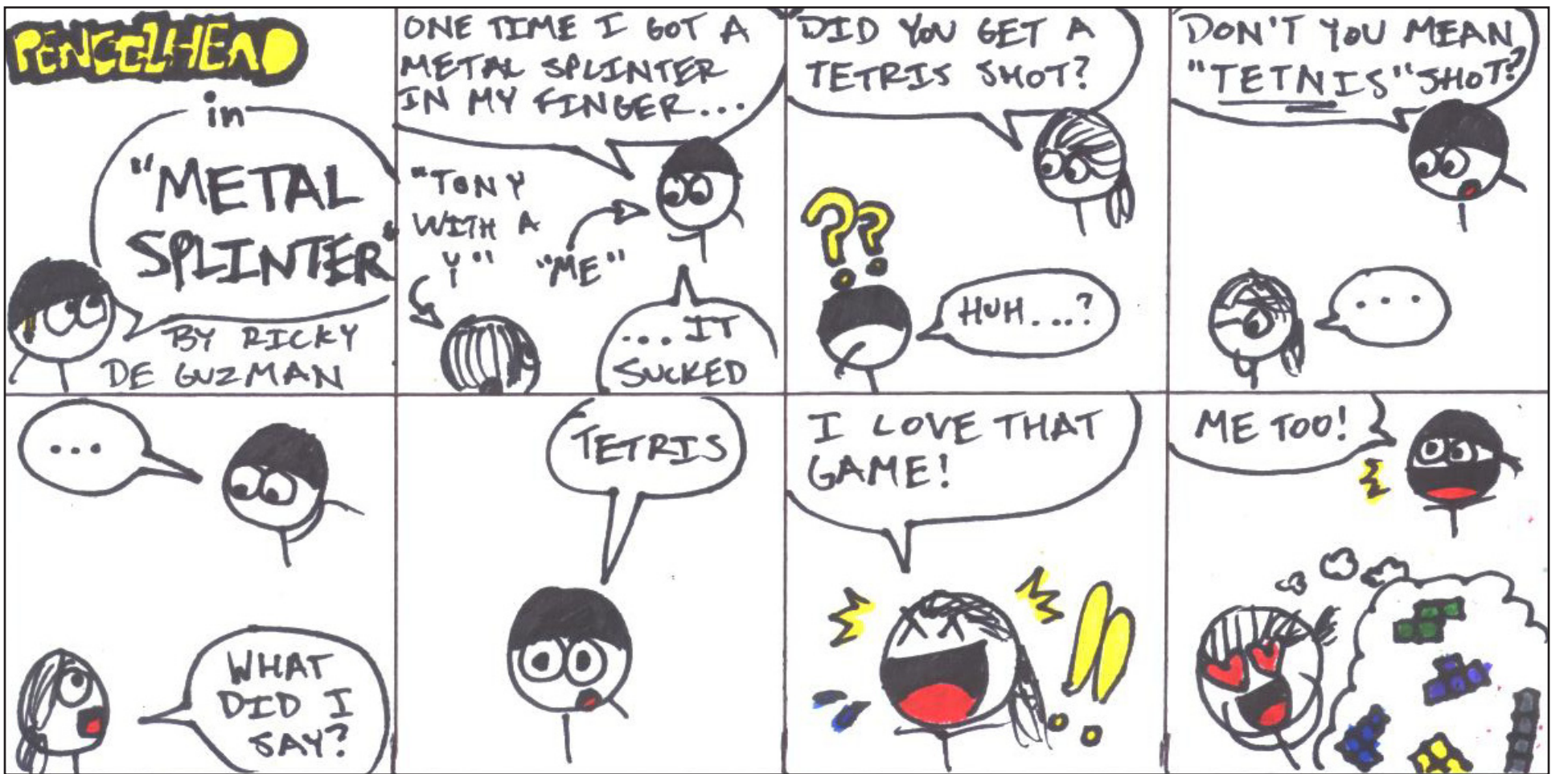
Recently, issues concerning a crucial magnet has delayed the operation for several months. Since the repairs are scheduled to be finished around late November, particles will not collide until spring 2009.

Humans are free to live for another few months.

Glory to Poly



Pencilhead



HOROSCOPIA

By Lizette Lopez Staff Writer

Taurus (Apr 20 - May 20)

Your patience will be demonstrated when someone close to you needs a friend to talk to. Find your quiet place to work on that major assignment and if it's due on Friday well then you have nothing to worry about.

Gemini (May 21 - Jun 21)

Joined any clubs lately, the school band... anything, what are you waiting for? Your multitalented and can easily adapt to any situation. So take all your energy and get your bright colored ruffled skirt and dance your way into the Folklorico club.

Cancer (Jun 22 - Jul 22)

Your nurturing and loving personality may be seen as overprotective. You can't help but feel the pain of others so take it easy don't let your emotions get the best of you.

Leo (Jul 23 - Aug 22)

Your generosity will be noticed so all the clothes you never wore and the toys you never played will put a smile on somebody's face.

Virgo (Aug 23 - Sept 22)

Don't let your shyness get between you and that special someone. Don't over think, just do. Break through your bubble of insecurities and "BAM" starting on Wednesday you won't have to spend your lunch alone.

Libra (Sept 23 - Oct 22)

Take a stand. Fight for what you believe in. Whether you want to change the look of mascot or get rid of the mysterious cafeteria food. Don't let your indecisive nature affect you. Don't be a follower become a leader.

Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21)

Nothing will stand in your way of becoming the next homecoming king or queen. Your determination will take you wherever you want to go. But be careful don't let jealousy get in the way of your success.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21)

A killer exam coming your way? Your positive attitude will get you through anything. Since you're always looking on the bright side whatever happens, happens and you'll be a-okay.

Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)

Watch what you say to others because your sarcastic humor may insult or hurt the ones around you. Don't be afraid of rejection. Your soul mate may be just around the corner.

Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18)

Unpredictable and eccentric, that's totally you so dying your hair GREEN won't be a surprise. Your different mood on whatever it is that day will frustrate people but then again who cares. Right?

Pisces (Feb 19 - Mar 20)

Still lost in the clouds? Dreaming of that certain someone? Wondering what will happen if you... or if...? Your imagination can take you wherever you want to go. Don't jump into reality yet keep on imagining.

Aries (Mar 21 - Apr 19)

Did you wear red today? I thought so. Remember, you're a fire sign. But that fight you're about to have with your best friend - it can be avoided. Looks like your month for a new romance. Expecting anyone?

## SUMMER FLICKS

## The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

By Adriana Amaya  
Staff Writer

Summer is over and so are all those summer movies. Some of them were pretty good. But some of them left you asking “Was I actually looking forward to that movie for three months?”



Internet Photo

**BOX OFFICE:** \$522M and counting.

The alleged comedies included “You Don’t Mess With the Zohan,” “The Love Guru,” “Meet Dave” and “Disaster Movie.” A few laughs, but most of this summer’s line-up was absolutely painful. The two exceptions - “Pineapple Express” and “Tropic Thunder” – were often crude but just as often funny. Critics praised both films for their fresh take on predictable plots.

Family fare was limited. “Speed Racer,” “Kung Fu Panda,” “WALL-E,” and “Star Wars: The Clone Wars” filled summer screens, but only “WALL-E” gave audiences the warm, fuzzy feeling they were expecting. Despite zero dialogue in the first 30-40 minutes, “WALL-E” had audiences enthralled with its deft animation and heartfelt story. Children loved the wacky hero and his robot mate EVE. The script even managed to take a stand on the environment. Despite its generally positive reviews, however, “WALL-E” didn’t enjoy as much box office success as previous Pixar films “The Incredibles” and “Finding Nemo.”

Hollywood added a non-superhero sub-division to the mix this summer. “Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull,” “Wanted,” and “Death Race” all featured flawed title characters. “Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull” had the highest expectations, but proved to be the biggest disappointment with fans and critics.

With 19 years since the last Indy flick, the stakes were much

Like walking through a cinematic carnival, ticket holders were occasionally dazzled, sometimes only entertained and too often greatly disappointed.

“The Dark Knight” mesmerized fans with its dazzling special effects and masterfully shot night scenes. “Dark Knight’s” heroes were compromised and its villains sunk to new depths of viciousness. Most of the series’ large and rabid fan base felt the film exceeded expectations and were overjoyed with the second installment in director Christopher Nolan’s darker take on the caped crusader.

There was plenty of horror out there for teens. The buzz on director M. Night Shyamalan’s “The Happening” was high, but this one failed to deliver the “big twist” ending Shyamalan is noted for. The plot was messy, the actors were uninteresting and the film generally left audiences wondering “What Happened.”



Internet Photo

**TIRED:** Harrison Ford, star of the long running Indy series, is back.

higher now. Young audiences, with no warm memories of the old films, expected much more than director Steven Spielberg delivered.



Internet Photo

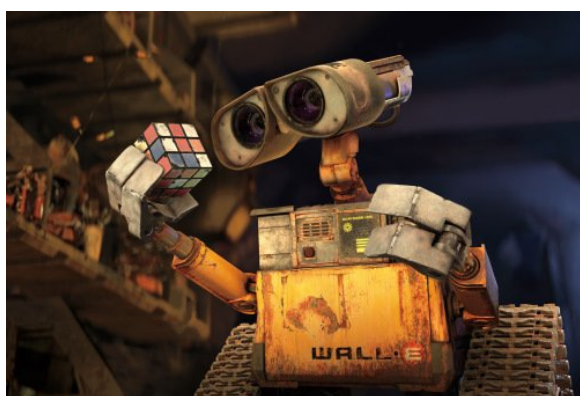
**APOCALYPSE NO:** Shyamalan’s supernatural thriller left audience’s deflated.

Indy’s cast is almost ancient by Hollywood standards, with the exception of Shia Lebouf, who couldn’t save this clunker. With its forgettable plot and no new tricks, “Crystal Skull” left audiences unsatisfied and unimpressed.

The Jones series, with its time-tested but tired formula, can’t compete with today’s serialized blockbusters like

“Spider Man,” “Pirates of the Caribbean” and “Iron Man,” where each entry tries to outblast and outspend rivals with ever more hype and special effects.

This year’s summer lineup had its share of hit film fare. But ticket buyers had to be careful. Much of what was supposed to be good wasn’t. Much of the rest was just plain ugly.



Internet Photo

**STELLAR:** Cosmic comedy from Pixar stars load-lifter WALL-E and robust robot EVE in a romance made in heaven, or at least close by.



Internet Photo

**TRIO:** It’s a jungle out there for Jack Black, Robert Downey Jr. and director Ben Stiller’s satire on Hollywood.

## Analysis

## Sizing Up the Stats

## Assistant coach Larry Ziehler talks about the season so far.

By Diana Jauregui  
Staff Writer

After four games, including Friday night's 46-0 romp over the Wolves of Van Nuys, Poly leads the East Valley League and the national average in points scored.

But that scoring is bunched up in the first 24 minutes. Poly is averaging only 14 points after halftime.

The Parrots didn't put up a point after halftime in Friday's shut out of Van Nuys or their close loss (29-25) to San Fernando two weeks ago. Their 29-point second half output against Marshall was better, but the defense gave up 34 points and Poly lost their second close game in a row, 56-51.

Still, the Parrot team's performance after four games is impressive. Poly (2-2) has scored 183 points in four games, while East Valley rival Arleta (4-0) has scored 129. No other team in the league has scored 100 or more.

Poly is averaging 462 yards per game after four games, while the national average is 282 yards. Rushing yardage for Poly is also well above the national average – 374 yards versus 180.

Poly's 46 points-per-game average is nearly double the national average of 25, and well above Arleta's 32 points.

So where did this scoring machine come from, and is the defense good enough to hold the line in close games? The OPTIMIST asked assistant coach Larry Ziehler for his thoughts.

"The scoring machine has always been there," Ziehler said. "The players are starting to believe in the program and believe in themselves and it's starting to show."

Ziehler added that the Parrots got a late start on defense and the two losses were against high-caliber teams.



Photo by Michael Obando

**CRUNCH TIME:** Poly running back Brandon Cruz is hit by a Marshall tackle in Poly's 56-51 loss to the visiting Barristers. It was Poly's second close loss in a row before a 46-0 victory over Van Nuys last Friday.

"Each week the defense is improving under the leadership of defensive coordinator Guido Caputi," Ziehler said.

Some new names showed up in the Parrots' scoring column in the win over Van Nuys. Senior running back Jeffrey Vivas had two touchdowns and 107 yards on nine carries and junior Kenneth Baldelomar added another.

"Jeffrey Vivas, Kenneth Baldelomar and Marlon Patterson stepped up this week due to the injuries of Anthony Manriquez, Brandon Cruz and Kevin Ervin," Ziehler said. "They were given the opportunity to step up and show their stuff and they did."

Quarterback Marco Manriquez' play continues at a high level. The senior has scored five touchdowns and passed for two more. With a completion rate over .700 on 15-21 and 263 yards, Manriquez' passing game is also delivering.

"Marco Manriquez is the epitome of a player," Ziehler said. "He is a well-rounded student/athlete. We call him 'Coach Marco' because he picks up on everything fast. He is every coach's dream."

But the team's real workhorse is sophomore running back Kevin Ervin, who has 397 yards on 41 carries and four touchdowns.

"Kevin Ervin is a young player with a lot of athleticism who is just starting to see his own potential," Ziehler said. "Considering he is just a sophomore, this is just the beginning of what's to come."

Poly's next opponent is Verdugo Hills (2-3). The Dons have relied on senior QB Matt Torres' passing game (14-31 and two TDs) and Chris Farmer's legs (297 yards rushing in five games) to lead their offense so far. But Ziehler says his Parrots are ready.

"Verdugo Hills had better bring their A game!"

## Volleyball

## GIRLS V-BALL OFF TO STRONG START

By Diana Jauregui  
Staff Writer

The Lady Parrot varsity volleyball team, led by senior Claudia Roman's 13 aces, made short work of Arleta Thursday, winning 25-2, 25-18, 25-3, running their record to 4-2.

But head coach Peter Johannson was more impressed with his team's play in tough losses against two strong teams, East Valley League leader Van Nuys and second place Verdugo Hills.

"We played without Jocelyn Lopez," Johannson said, "so we were outplayed in the middle. With Jocelyn, we would probably have won the Van Nuys match."

The scores were 21-25, 25-

21, 22-25, 25-23, 15-9.

Frustration marked the match against the Dons, where Poly gave up leads late in games three and four.

"We had 14 missed serves in the third game," said Johannson.

Verdugo senior Shelby Simonton had five aces and 21 assists in the 12-25, 25-22, 22-25, 23-25 Verdugo win.



Photo by Michael Obando

## Tennis

## Tennis Team Looking For Season's First Win

By Diana Jauregui  
Staff Writer

After six matches, the Lady Parrot tennis team is still looking for a win. The one bright spot in the season so far has been the play of twins Diana and Jessica Olmedo, both juniors, who have won two of their doubles matches.

"The team is struggling a little bit right now," said head coach Amy Matthews, "but a number of our players have turned in good performances so far, especially Diana and Jessica."

The Olmedo sisters, #1 doubles, won matches against Birmingham and Van Nuys.

Matthews also cited the doubles play of Mayra Estrada and Ada Nunez against Bir-

mingham and Alejandra Ortega and Aeji Ice, who lost by one point to Van Nuys.

"Each game we learn something new," said sophomore Mehak Ali, an alternate player. "If not, we improve what we have trouble with."

Gracia Arechiga, who lost in a tiebreak at San Fernando, Gabriella Rodriguez, who lost by one point at Monroe and Elizabeth Martinez, who played well at home against Verdugo Hills before losing 8-6, were singled out by Matthews for strong performances.

"All the girls are working out hard to improve the team," said Ali. "Elizabeth and Alejandra are really great captains, always cheering the team to win."

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