

Breaking Boundaries assembly seeks to spark empathy

By AUDREY KIM
Assistant news editor

While immigration and refugee issues have been highly contentious recently with reports about migrant caravans, border walls and detention centers spreading across news channels, the Poly community has rarely discussed the topics with people who can provide firsthand accounts of the issues.

In order to remedy this gap, on January 14, the Breaking Boundaries club, led by juniors Saya Desai and Bianca Murray, hosted an assembly and follow-up discussion surrounding immigrant and refugee rights in the United States and focusing on providing personal perspectives on the subject.

The assembly featured four panelists, each involved with immigrant and refugee rights in Los Angeles, and included questions from both Desai and Murray as well as the student audience.

The panel included Dr. Homa Badihian, an Iranian refugee and activist who focuses on women's rights and injustices in Iran, and Fabiola Flores, a Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipient and an assistant youth coordinator at Dolores Mission and a student at Woodbury University.

Also featured were Professor Marissa Montes—

a law professor and co-founder, director and clinical professor at the Loyola Law School Immigrant Justice Clinic, a legal service provider that aids in advancing rights of immigrants in East Los Angeles—and Miry Whitehill, the founder and Executive Director of Miry's List, a non profit geared toward connecting newly arrived refugee families with necessary resources.

The panelists discussed the largest misconceptions surrounding immigrants and refugees, how Poly students could help create change and the costs and benefits of immigration and asylum to American society.

While the assembly featured an enthusiastic crowd from the Upper School, with applause after every single response, it began with unexpected controversy when Badihian made a comment about why she chose to speak.

"I am here today to talk against Islam. Online, I see that American people think

that Islam is a religion like other religions and that we should respect their religion and ideology. When I was a student, I was the same, but after 40 years, I found out that it was not true," said Badihian in her introduction.

Badihian, who came to the United States in 1986, left Iran because of her imprisonment under the Khomeini regime after the Iranian Revolution. As it was not known to the Breaking Boundaries club that she was planning to make this statement, it was discussed during the follow-up discussion, and leaders agreed to denounce the rhetoric but to also treat the issue with empathy and compassion for Badihian's experiences.

Indeed, a large portion of the assembly emphasized the need for empathy, compassion, understanding and connections with actual people in order to fully understand immigrant and refugee policies and experiences.

"I think that immigrant and refugee issues have been painted with a



Graphic courtesy of Josephine Woodruff

broad brush when really they're made up of millions of personal stories. We wanted to emphasize that the point of the assembly was not to have a political conversation but rather a human one," said Desai.



Junior Philip Zhou with Aaron Fyke

NEWS

Anxiety and Depression support group. See page 2.

Frozen in Time. See page 4.

LIFE

Interviews with immigration panelists. See page 5.

Meet *The Paw Print* staff photographers. See page 11.

Policy debate team succeeds in Arizona tournament

By ELENA SAVIANO
Assistant news editor

Poly's policy debate team continues to travel around the country arguing over political and social issues in superspeed, and they recently saw a successful run at an Arizona competition.

Poly's policy debate team participated in a tournament at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona, from January 4 to January 6. Policy debate is a form of competitive academic debate where teams of two debaters take either a supporting or opposing side on a resolution about public policy. The affirmative team presents a policy action that supports the resolution, and the negative team disagrees with the proposed policy.

Every year, debaters across the country take on a new resolution. This

year's topic is "The United States federal government should substantially reduce restrictions on legal immigration to the United States." Students on the debate team take information from various sources and, according to head coach of the policy debate team, Dr. Chris Sardo, complete as much research as a student completing an undergraduate honors thesis.

In order to fully prepare for debates, the team meets one to two times a week. During these practices, the team holds mock debates to prepare new arguments or experiment with different strategies. They also focus on researching for their debates and gathering information for upcoming competitions.

At the most recent tournament in Arizona, all three Poly teams moved onto elimination rounds after achieving the best records after six preliminary rounds. A team of seniors Rae Friedman and

See *Policy Debate*, page 4.

with that focus in mind.

In addition, Fyke also serves as an adjunct lecturer at the University of Southern California and as a practicing engineer.

At the beginning of the presentation, Fyke posed three questions to the audience: "Must we change? Can we change? Will we change?" To answer the first, Fyke began to discuss many of the destructive effects that global warming can have on various regions.

For example, more than 70 percent of the Earth's surface is covered by oceans, which absorb the excess heat energy from global warming. Such an energy buildup in the oceans can lead to dramatic weather events, like in August 2015 when four hurricanes were raging at once in the East Pacific.

Global warming can also be named the likely culprit of the increasingly intense wildfires that plague California, including the Camp Fire of November 2018, which is now the deadliest and most destructive fire in the state's history. Even though many of the fires are caused initially by humans (the camp fire was caused by a downed power line), global warming can contribute to the accumulation of dried brush which can feed fires once started.

The topic of discussion then shifted toward the increasing practicality of renewable alternatives as reliable sources of energy. The past few years have seen an almost exponential decrease in the price

See *Sustainability Solutions*, page 4.

OPINION

Conservatives' experiences at Poly. See page 15.

Flare bracelets and the perpetuation of rape culture. See page 16.

SPORTS

Esports team's first matches. See page 17.

Winter junior varsity feature. See page 19.

Anxiety and Depression support group established

By ANNETTE LEE

News editor

Stressed, panicked, feeling "the blues," pessimistic, listless—these emotional stages are not unusual among teenagers. Adolescence is an unstable time for many, and coupled with school-work, these emotions are often amplified, manifesting in anxiety or depression.

Just two weeks before Block Days, a particularly tense time for many Poly students, Upper School counselor Andrea Fleetham created an Anxiety and Depression support group: an open, safe and confidential space dedicated to alleviating the isolations and stigmas associated with the two conditions. Since then, four to nine students across all Upper School grades have met regularly during Community Time on Day 4s, sharing their stories, supporting each other and devising coping mechanisms.

Prior to the support group, junior Caitlin Wu led an Advisory Shake-Up on the stigma around mental health at Poly. Students in the Shake-Up were required to fill out a survey, whose results revealed that students felt they were aware of mental health issues but didn't feel there was enough conversation about them.

Fleetham hopes that creating support groups and raising awareness of mental health on cam-

pus will promote better conversation and reduce the alienation or stigmatization of mental conditions like anxiety and depression.

"Poly puts forth a great image that we've got it all together and that is, to a certain extent, true, but ultimately, students are students, and teenagers are teenagers," Fleetham said. "Anxiety looks the same, depression looks the same, stress looks the same no matter where you are. It's just that at Poly, and society at large, we don't talk about those things yet. It's actually more normal than people think."

Fleetham plans on creating more spaces on campus to improve mental health awareness, including a new six-week-long group called Life Hack. Similar to a book club, students will read works of fiction, and the group will discuss characters' complex thought processes and lives.

Outside of these groups, Fleetham encourages students to reach out to her via email or stop by her office, find another adult on campus or use the crisis text line if they would like a person to talk to.

She expressed, "Most of all, I hope [discussing] mental health eventually just becomes a thing we do at Poly. I hope we take care of our mental health as we take care of our physical health."

Musical Block Days: orchestra and jazz band

By MEGAN HA

Staff writer

While many students toiled over their various tests and projects the week before winter break, the orchestra and jazz band classes spent their block periods honing their musical skills.

The orchestra class worked with violinist and chamber music specialist Elizabeth Hedman, who teaches at the Pasadena Conservatory of Music, while the jazz band recorded a number of pieces that they had been rehearsing for many weeks.

The orchestra spent time working with Hedman in order to refine their sound as a conductor-less ensemble. Hedman offered new ideas on listening and communicating across the group; she emphasized the importance of looking, breathing and moving together with the music.

"I love to have guest artists come in," said orchestra conductor Megan Foley. "I think it's important to have another perspective to help the music come alive for students."

Besides improving communication, Hedman also helped the orchestra develop their tone and advised the string players on specific technical elements. She paired her feedback with helpful demonstrations on her own violin.

"It was a really unique experience to say the least. I loved how she shared her view on the pieces we went over," freshman violinist Melisa Luis shared.

Meanwhile, Jazz Band director Rob Hayes brought recording equipment to Poly for a live recording session. The band recorded eight different jazz pieces, each featuring a number of soloists. This was the band's first time holding a recording session in a few years.

Hayes remarked that there's also a difference between recording live and recording in a studio. "When the red light goes on, people tend to get nervous. I thought the kids really rose to the occasion. They learned a lot from the experience."

Sophomore bassist Simone Cundieff added, "The jazz band recording was a fun and interesting experience that I wouldn't really get anywhere else. It was nice to see a variation of how live recording works and to still enjoy the experience!"

Photos courtesy of Poly Communications



Violin: Melisa Luis and Aleena Bhatti



Cello: Carrie Hashimoto and Trombone: Catie Bryant



Electric guitar: Liam Unanue, Gilly Denham and Jeremy Ancheta



Trumpet: Rafa Kaye-Lew, Beau Gillam, Miles Krieger and Eli Grossman

Poly welcomes back alumna as new library intern

By CARSON YU

News editor



Photo courtesy of Christina Snider

After having embarked on an action-packed career that included hiring future Golden Globe winners and casting actors for NCIS, Christina Snider '01 returns to Poly after 20 years away from campus as an intern in the Upper School Library.

Snider is currently attending graduate school at the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business and is working toward earning her Master's of Management in Library and Information Science. She is on track to graduate in August of this year.

Under the mentorship of librarians Sarah Peters and Alejandra Alfaro, Snider is using her time at Poly as an opportunity to learn the ins and outs of various library-related duties in order to be as prepared as possible for her first job after graduation.

Snider has not always been involved with libraries. In fact, she spent the last 15 years working in the television industry. After receiving a degree in Television Production with a minor in Film Studies from Pepperdine University, Snider worked in a multitude of industry jobs, including tape logging for "The Amazing Race," auditioning actors for shows like "Eastwick" and even serving as an executive assistant at a top-tier agency.

In her free time, Snider enjoys reading and watching TV shows or movies. Some of her recent favorite shows include *Bad Times at the El Royale* and *The Haunting of Hill House*, while *The Library Book* by Susan Orlean and *Circe* by Madeline Miller are two of her recent favorite books.

Snider also enjoys watching online web series if they feature the friends that she has made during her time in the film industry.

Overall, Snider is delighted to see that the library is frequented by so many students.

She added, "I would love to see more students making use of all of the great non-book stuff that the library has to offer them. As Poly students, you all get access to e-books and audiobooks along with the standard ink-and-paper books and access to online databases."

Upper School musicians perform in annual Winter Concert

By SARAH BURKE
Staff writer

For a night in celebration of music, Poly's orchestra, vocal ensemble and jazz band all took to the stage for the music program's annual Upper School Winter Concert. The performance took place in the newly-renovated Garland Theater on January 16.

The vocal ensemble began the concert with a variety of songs, including the classical Latin piece "Pie Jesu" and songs from the modern musical *Mamma Mia*.

The Upper School orchestra then performed the upbeat "Dance No. 3" by Antonin Dvorak, followed by an instrumental version of Leonard Bernstein's "Tonight." They also played a fun, cabaret-inspired piece entitled "Lazy Beguine" by David Reffkin.

The orchestra closed with music from the movie *Inception*, arranged by senior Lucas Humayun. The group played alongside the movie by wearing earpieces in order to hear the metronome. Orchestra Director Megan Foley described Humayun's arrangement as a highlight of the night.

"I think it worked so well because Lucas was open about the process. He was patient and persistent, listening to the suggestions from his peers and trying out different things," Foley remarked.

The newly formed jazz combo, a small group of musicians within the jazz band, kicked off their performance with "April Mist" by Tom Harrell. The rest of the jazz band then joined the combo for three additional songs: "All Blues" by Miles Davis, "Afro Blue" by Mongo Santamaria and the final song of the night, "Paco's Canon," a jazz riff on the classic "Pachelbel Canon in D Major."

When asked about his experience working with Poly musicians, Jazz Band Director Rob Hayes commented, "I believe the love our students have for jazz creates an environment where you can feel that Poly has a vibrant jazz culture. The kids love to play and rehearse; at any time of day, you can find kids grouped around the piano in the band room, jamming in their own free time."

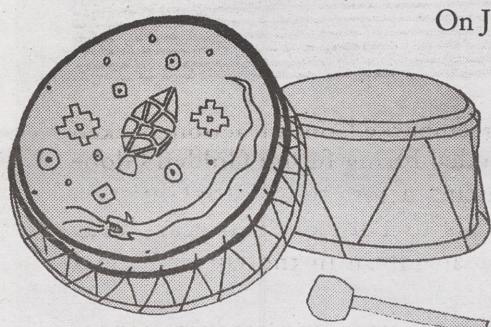
"I'm proud of us. We worked hard, and our performance was a smash hit," said freshman drummer Leo Smith.



Photos courtesy of Poly Communications

Ethnomusicologist Jonathan Ritter speaks on importance of Peruvian music

By GIANNI NOTARO | Staff writer



Graphic courtesy of Carson Yu

On January 10, the traditional rhythms of Peru could be heard emanating from the Black Box Theater. Professor Jonathan Ritter, an ethnomusicologist who teaches at the University of California, Riverside (UCR), had come to spread his knowledge on the music of Peru with Poly students.

Ritter specializes in the Afro-Hispanic musical cultures of Andean South America and is also the director of Mayupatapi, the Andean Music Ensemble at UCR.

Upper School English and World Cultures teacher Grace Hamilton helped organize the event to teach Poly students about Peruvian music and its significance. Hamilton will lead a group of students going on the Global Initiatives Program's Peru trip this June. The group plans to hike the Inca Trail and explore other parts of Peruvian history and culture.

Ritter's talk offered these students an opportunity to learn more about their future surroundings. Ritter started off by demonstrating a traditional Peruvian song. He encouraged the audience to hum along to the rhythm of the song's drumbeat and his melody. He then spoke about some of the major Peruvian music styles. Ritter has been traveling to Peru to learn about their musical customs for over 20 years.

"Professor Ritter shared his wealth of knowledge of South American and Andean music with the group, but he did not simply lecture," Hamilton said. "He used hands-on experience for the students so that they could really understand how the instruments work together to represent both community and culture."

Acting assembly focuses on unfortunate love stories

By AUDREY KIM | Assistant news editor

With recreations of "Ryan's Roses," online dating profiles and bad date stories, the annual acting assembly held in Garland Theater charmed the Poly Upper School. Based on unfortunate love stories, the assembly, entitled "Dating... Disasters, Dilemmas and Discoveries," featured both tenth and eleventh graders in the Intermediate Acting class.

Beginning with descriptions of bizarre dating sites, the actors went on to recount other romance horror stories, including unfaithful husbands, Tinder conversations gone wrong and a date at the cemetery, before concluding with pick up lines as an ensemble.

While the class is taught by Cynthia Crass, a Performing Arts teacher, the performance largely depended on student input. After choosing their topic, students did online research to find real-life pieces that they could use.

Once they found their material, they divided the parts among themselves and began preparation for the assembly during the mid-term block period. They then practiced their scenes twice a week.

The assembly was also one of the first Upper School gatherings in the newly-renovated Garland Theater. While the students were split up into two groups, it was still an exciting first look at the new space.

Junior acting student Olivia Kim commented, "It was a lot of fun creating characters from these crazy things that nonfictional people put online. I really enjoyed performing in the assembly!"

City of Angels class walks to Santa Monica Beach to understand their role in Los Angeles

By MARIELLE KANG | Staff writer

Graphic courtesy of Coco Angelopoulos

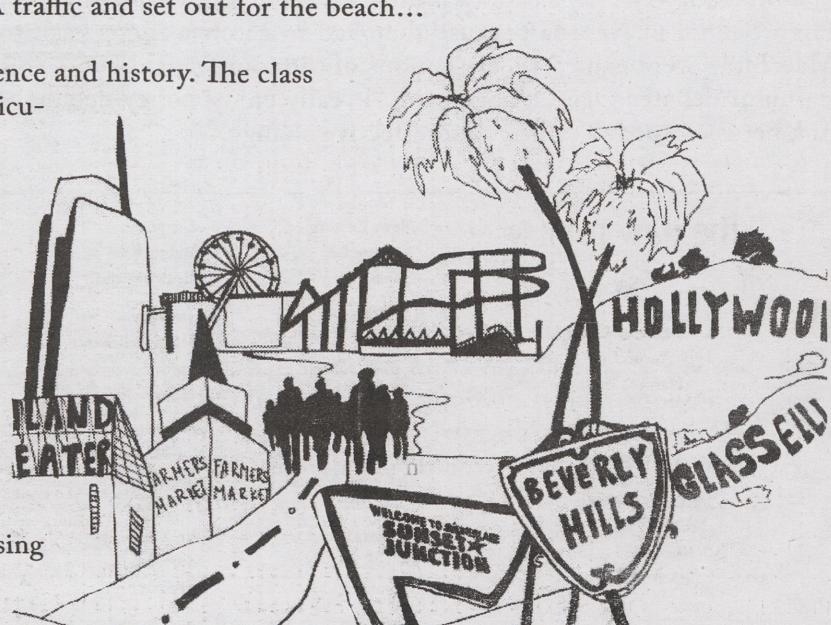
During winter break, the AP English Literature: City of Angels class decided to skip the LA traffic and set out for the beach... on foot.

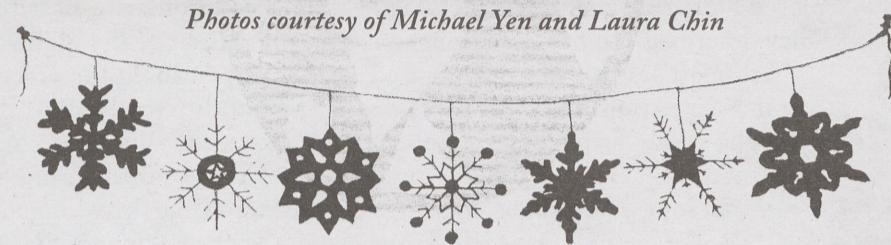
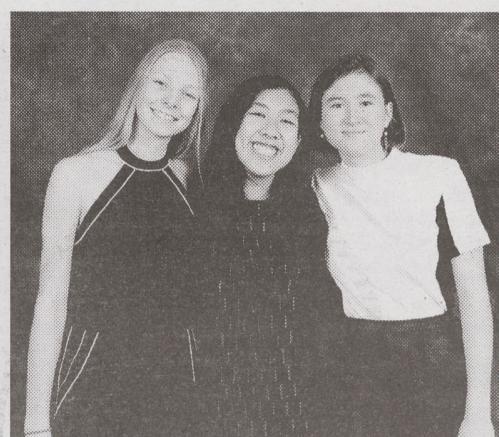
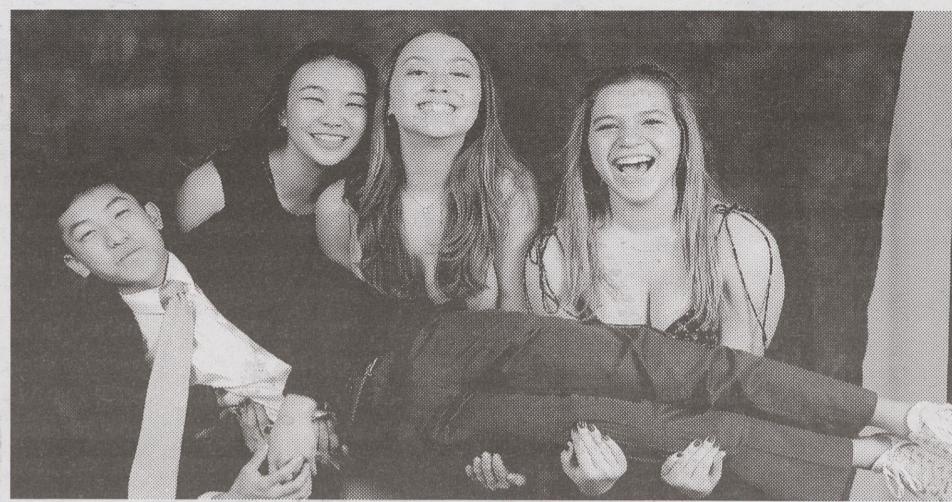
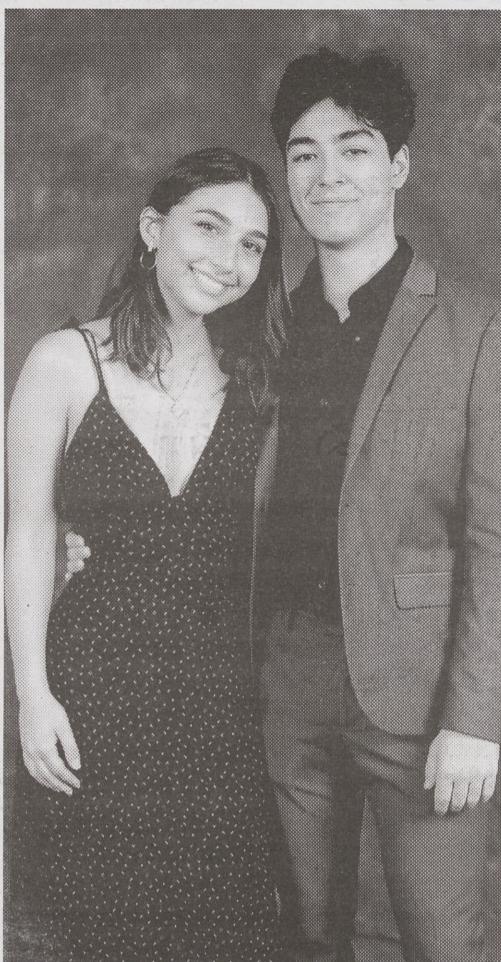
City of Angels is a year-long, interdisciplinary urban studies course that bridges English, science and history. The class takes up a double block period, providing time for field work to become a major part of the curriculum.

In celebration of the fifth year that the class has been offered at Poly, a group of ten seniors, alumni of the class, teachers and parents trekked across Los Angeles in order to find new connections with the city's geography as well as create new bonds with each other and prior City of Angels students. The group, led by City of Angels teachers Nathan Stogdill and J.D. Gladman, left Garland Theater at 6:30 AM. By 5:30 PM, they had completed their 27-mile journey to Santa Monica, passing through Pasadena, the Arroyo, Highland Park, Glassell Park, Eagle Rock, Atwater, Silver Lake, Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Century City and Santa Monica.

Stogdill expressed appreciation for the trip, noting, "You have this challenging experience with people, and it changes the relationship you have with those people. The walk, for me, became so much about relationships."

"Los Angeles is such a car-oriented city, and sometimes, Angelenos tend to ignore what they drive by," Cole Swanson, a student in the course, added. "By walking from Pasadena, traversing through Los Angeles and arriving in Santa Monica, I got to see Los Angeles from a different perspective."





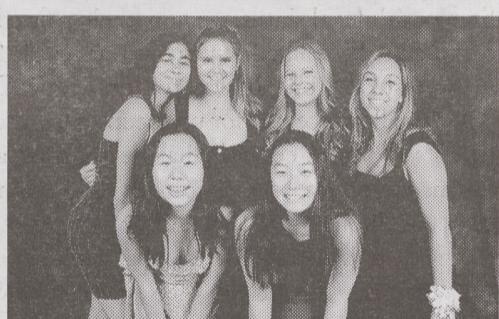
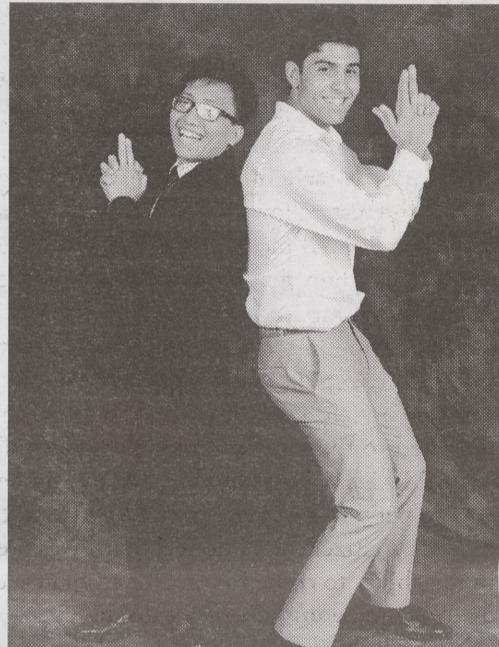
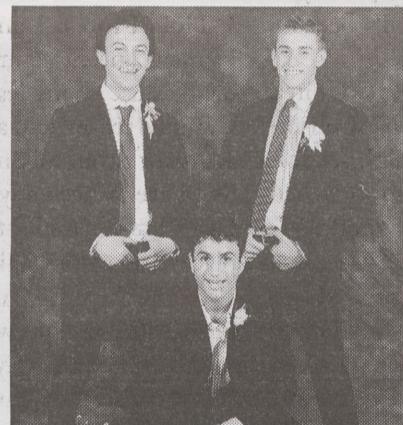
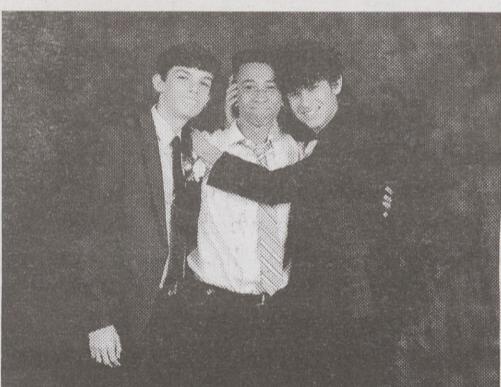
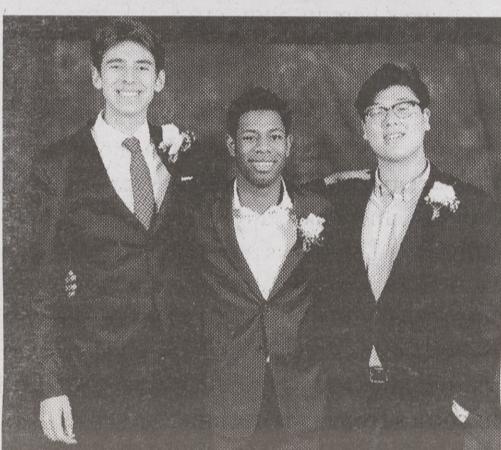
Frozen in Time

By CHANEL SHEN
Staff writer

This past weekend, Poly Upper School students were "Frozen in Time" at the annual Winter Formal dance. Held at the Hilton Pasadena, the dance marked the end of the first semester, and students happily took the opportunity to sit back, relax and enjoy the company of their friends.

Senior Harry Liddi Brown commented, "It's always nice to just have fun for a night while hanging out with friends."

Hosted by the Junior Class Cabinet to raise money for prom, the formal featured a refreshments table in addition to a full-on dance floor with music DJed by juniors Sam Salvati and Walter Corngold. There was also a photo setup where students posed for pictures, and photographers Laura Chin and Michael Yen helped make the night a memorable one for everyone.



Policy Debate | *Continued from page 1*

Alberto Checcone made it to the quarterfinals, and another team of seniors Jack Deschenes and Ako Ndefo-Haven moved onto the semifinals. The third team, seniors Eli Grossman and Lily Maechling, made it to the finals.

Moreover, all three Poly teams earned one bid to the exclusive Tournament of Champions hosted at the end of the year by the University of Kentucky. Bids are given to teams that reach certain stages of elimination rounds at large tournaments. Once a team receives two bids, they are eligible to compete in the tournament.

Sardo said, "Our debaters bring unique and creative arguments and strategies to bear on the resolution. This not only demonstrates their academic prowess and research acumen but also gives them a strategic edge in their debates."

Unfortunately, Poly's team was unable to compete in the final round against the group from Green Valley High School in Nevada because they had to catch a flight back to California; as a result, Grossman and Maechling were named co-champions of the tournament.

Junior debater Oge Ogbogu said, "I really enjoy policy debate because it allows me to find the missing link between today's politics and effective change."

Sustainability solutions

Continued from page 1

of producing and installing different forms of sustainable energy, especially in the realm of solar energy. In 2017, 54% of all new grid-scale storage capacity in China was dedicated to solar power.

Fyke also introduced the concept of "grid parity," which means that if the price of solar power dips below that of receiving electricity from fossil fuels, people will simply make the shift to solar energy. If prices continue to fall like they have been, grid parity is definitely achievable in the coming years.



Conversation continued: immigration and refugee issues

For this issue of *The Paw Print*, the Life Section did a follow-up with three of the panelists from the Breaking Boundaries assembly held on January 14, 2019. The assembly's objective was to promote empathy and understanding of both refugee and immigration issues. For this feature, we followed up with three of the panelists and they elaborated on and provided further context for their viewpoints. The fourth panelist, Dr. Homa Badhian, did not have any further comments.



Graphics
courtesy of
Coco
Angelopoulos

Saya Desai: Please restate what you do, how you got into your work and how your personal story reflects how you got there.

Marissa Montes: I am the clinical co-director and professor for the Loyola Law School Immigration Justice Clinic. I actually was able to step into this role right after I graduated from law school because I was awarded the Loyola Public Interest Fellowship, which is also a teaching fellowship that allowed me to create the clinic that exists today and the program that we have. Through the fellowship, I was able to jump into teaching.

My passion for doing immigrant rights work stemmed from my experience and that of my family. I am an immigrant myself. I was born in Jalisco, Mexico, and I immigrated to the United States at the age of two. My dad was a Mexican-American US citizen, and he was basically able to petition my mother and I over and then grant me derivative citizenship. I do feel that I was pretty privileged in my ability to come to the United States legally because many people don't have access to that.

Regardless of actually being able to enter the United States with legal status, we nonetheless faced many obstacles. I actually walked out my junior year [of high school] in protest of a bill. It was the first time California had failed to allow licenses for undocumented immigrants. My parents didn't agree with that decision because we came to this country to continue with my dreams and education and ditching was not in line with that. Nonetheless, teachers took an interest in what I did, and one teacher gave me the opportunity to present what I did before my classmates. But my presentation wasn't necessarily well received, and it ran over two class periods, which is what made me realize that my own friends and colleagues view me, [my family and my community] differently. That's what motivated me to continue this work.

Saya Desai: What frequent obstacles do you face in your line of work?

Marissa Montes: I do face a variety of obstacles. Right now the biggest obstacle that we are facing is this current presidential administration. I represent individuals who have been victims of crime, victims of human trafficking, asylum seekers. These are people whom our immigration law was designed to protect, and even though these are the people whom we claim in the media to want to offer legal status and accept, especially when it comes to family unity, there are a lot of obstacles in getting these applications approved. The government is denying [applications] and causing applications to be delayed. Even regardless of the current sentiment that may exist against the immigrant community, especially the rhetoric, I also have been incredibly surprised by the amount of support that we have received, even from people we didn't really think would be our allies, people who didn't previously share an interest in immigration issues. I know that is kind of the opposite of what your question is asking, but it kind of demonstrates that even though this is a difficult time, it has caused people to have an interest in the subject matter and vouch for those individuals despite what the administration is saying.

Saya Desai: Please restate what you do, how you got into your work and how your personal story reflects how you got there.

Fabiola Flores: I currently work at Dolores Mission School in Boyle Heights where I serve as assistant youth coordinator. I have been in this country for about 19 years now, and I am currently a DACA student, meaning I was granted deferred action as childhood arrival. President Obama started this program, and it pretty much allows undocumented students to either go to school or join the military. The whole system of applying allows us to find work legally in the United States. Through the program, I am able to work, go to school and make a living in this country.

Saya Desai: What frequent obstacles do you face in your line of work?

Fabiola Flores: I am pretty lucky because I am able to work in an environment where nobody causes me trouble because of my legal status in this country. I work at a Catholic school and a Catholic church where they are very adamant about talking about immigration issues, so luckily I haven't faced any troubles in my work. But every day I face a lot of simple struggles. Sometimes I go to different places and start speaking Spanish, and I get weird faces. I also face the everyday struggle of my parents' legal status in this country and whether or not they are coming home at the end of the day. It is a struggle for me, my brother and the rest of my family. I think it is a bigger struggle for my parents than it is for me. But we all face our struggles differently. At the end of the day, it is one whole fight that we are fighting for.

Saya Desai: What would you consider a marker of progress in 2019?

Fabiola Flores: I think for me, there are political issues even though I am not an expert on policies and law. But I think in terms of the human race, the biggest thing is showing empathy and compassion and really hearing the stories of immigrants who come to the States. It is not to steal jobs, and it is not to take advantage of the many benefits that this country offers. It is because people are facing horrible things in their home countries. Starvation, death and war are really bad and scary. Therefore, the biggest thing we need to do is learn the stories of the people who come here because it is not that they want to leave their home country. It is a necessity to leave their home country. Hearing their stories and their words will eventually lead to some sort of compromise in policy that will allow migration to continue, as it is a natural thing for humans.

Saya Desai: Why do you think these immigrant/refugee issues are important and relevant to Poly students?

Fabiola Flores: [In] one way or another, we are all connected to the issue. We all have ancestors who migrated to this country, whether it was 200, 100 or 10 years ago. Even though it is not our personal story, it happens within our lives, within our family trees. It is not a Republican and Democratic issue but a human issue. Overall, we need to take the time to be educated on these topics.

Saya Desai: Please restate what you do, how you got into your work and how your personal story reflects how you got there.

Miry Whitehill: I am the founder and executive director of Miry's List, a non-profit organization serving families resettling as refugees here in Southern California and beyond. We have seven programs for families arriving in the U.S. through our federal refugee resettlement program. Our programming begins the day the plane lands, and it goes all the way through the third phase of resettling, which is usually between two and three years after they arrive. I am a mom, and I have a three- and a six-year-old. The first family that I met was a Syrian family in Azusa who had a baby the same age as mine. I wasn't setting out to start a non-profit organization, but I could really relate to the mom because she was the same age as me and her baby was the same age as mine. Overall, the idea for my nonprofit comes from a place of motherly instinct and love.

Saya Desai: What would you consider a marker of progress in 2019?

Miry Whitehill: There are so many ways to measure impact. I would say my best measure of impact is the feedback that we get from our families, which are generally testimonials (i.e. Facebook reviews)—hearing from them and knowing that this organization is filling a void for them and made their first days in America more comfortable and more beautiful and more memorable in a good way. In terms of numbers, last year we exceeded our fundraising goal. I just looked at the financial report and learned that our "New Arrival Supper Club" program paid out over \$50,000 in wages last year. That is a huge benchmark for success because we began with one backyard dinner, and now it has grown into an enterprise of its own. We are booked months in advance and have so many events coming up just this year. We are also hoping to host a culinary event at your school. These experiences that we have hosted throughout Los Angeles allow people to experience new cultures and try new food. It is honestly amazing. Efforts like these are not just about having events. It is about creating economic opportunity for families who don't necessarily speak English. It is for people who come here with a lot of skills and a lot of love to share.

Saya Desai: Why do you think these immigrant/refugee issues are important and relevant to Poly students?

Miry Whitehill: I would say it is important to every single student at Poly because every single family in America has an immigration story. You do not have to be a refugee to understand what it feels like to be an outsider. If you have gone through high school, you definitely know what it feels like to be an outsider. Multiply that feeling by a thousand, and that is how our families feel all the time. You students are the next generation of voters. I think it is so important that even though some of you might be years away from voting, or super close to voting, that you get informed and educated. It is beyond what is on the news; it is about learning through personal experiences and seeking education on what these issues are and why they matter.

Artist of the issue: senior vocalist Katherine Polyzoides

by Megan Kelleher
Assistant life editor

Growing up alongside architects, photographers and music producers, senior Kat Polyzoides was born to be an artist. By the age of seven, she had begun mastering almost every instrument sold at standard music stores including the piano, violin, guitar, cello and clarinet. "You name it, I played it," Polyzoides joked.

Despite her musical prowess with instruments, Polyzoides never felt as happy as she did when she sang in the All Saints Church Children's Choir, Mastersingers from 2008-2012. Polyzoides continued to develop her passion for music in this program, starring in around three to four concerts per year and performing on Sundays.

Singing quickly integrated itself into all facets of Polyzoides' life as she decided to join the Los Angeles Children's Chorus (LACC) in 2011. The combination of the church choir and LACC required her utmost attention, forcing Polyzoides to give up her abundance of instruments. Polyzoides added, "I found that I just cherished the time I spent in choir more, and I vividly remember telling my mom my voice is my favorite instrument."

Polyzoides has been a part of LACC for eight years now, traveling from Canada to Norway to Iceland and even Japan. She exclaims, "LACC is the greatest thing I have ever been a part of because I get to travel the world with some of my closest friends doing the thing I love more than anything: singing."

Aside from venturing the globe, LACC has allowed Polyzoides to sing with the Los Angeles Philharmonic under famous composers like Gustavo Dudamel and John Williams, in addition to performing at the Hollywood Bowl and in Walt Disney Concert Hall.

Polyzoides is currently a member of LACC's three top choirs: Concert Choir, the main touring ensemble; Chamber Singers, the selective all-female choir and Soprano Alto Tenor Bass (SATB), the co-ed advanced

choir. She is also part of the select few chosen from Concert Choir to sing in LACC's 2019 February performance of "Buddha Passion" at the Walt Disney Concert Hall.

Chinese composer Tan Dun developed "Buddha Passion" in an attempt to highlight traditional Chinese song with accents of western style. Polyzoides described this



Photo courtesy of Barkley Thompson

composition as "one of the hardest yet most beautiful" she has ever worked on. "I have sung in more languages than I can count, but I have come to understand that music is an almighty language within itself. I love that when I sing, I possess the ability to communicate with entire audiences of people, regardless of their mother tongue," Polyzoides continued.

Movie review: Alfonso Cuarón's autobiographical *Roma*

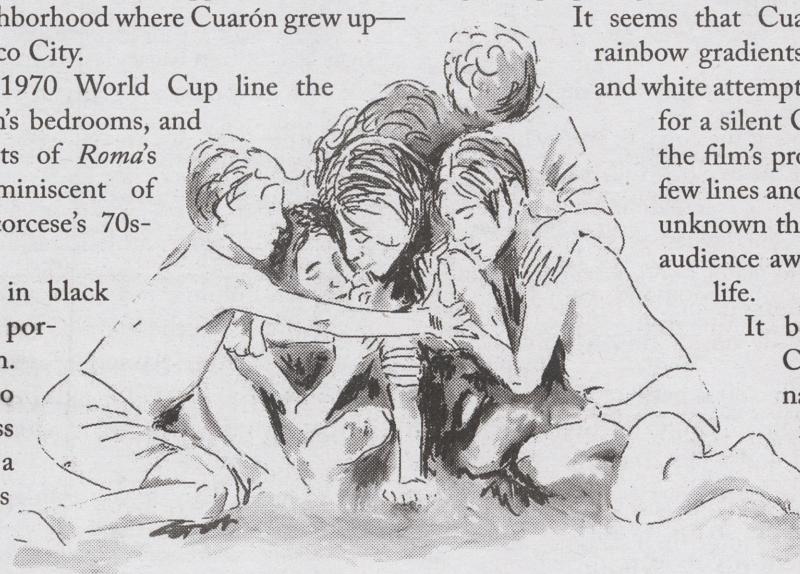
In his autobiographical film *Roma*, Mexican director Alfonso Cuarón expresses the depths of a small, ordinary narrative on a panoramic scale, using both magical realism and monumentality to create an intensely personal recollection of his childhood.

Cuarón returns to the intimate realism seen in his breakthrough film *Y Tu Mamá También* (2001); both are large-scale stories told with a unique sensitivity and attention to characters' relatable, day-to-day routines. The film—whose title references the Upper middle class Colonial Roma neighborhood where Cuarón grew up—is set in 1970s Mexico City.

Posters for the 1970 World Cup line the walls of the children's bedrooms, and long, sweeping shots of *Roma*'s streetscape are reminiscent of those in Martin Scorsese's 70s-era films.

Shot exclusively in black and white, *Roma* is a portrait of two women. The first is Cleo (first-time actress Yalitza Aparicio), a young indigenous woman who works as a housekeeper and nanny and is an all-present (but quiet) figure for a middle-class family that's falling apart. Her employer and matriarch of the family, Sofia (played by Marina De Tavira), is entirely reliant on Cleo as she copes with the infidelities of her husband and the literal decay of her household, which Cuarón uses to represent the collapse of Sofia's marriage.

Much of the film takes place inside the family's gated home (a recreation of Cuarón's childhood house), setting a tiled, open-roofed corridor as the focal point of both Cleo's relationship with the family's four children and the parents' increasing turmoil and dysfunction:



Graphic courtesy of Charlotte Holder

It seems that Cuarón's camerawork and rainbow gradients of pellucid grey, black and white attempt to illuminate and speak for a silent Cleo, who, despite being the film's protagonist and muse, has few lines and, as a character, remains unknown throughout the film to an audience awaiting details about her life.

It becomes clear that, to Cuarón, perhaps, the narrative of Cleo—who is based on a woman named Libo Rodriguez, who played a similar role in his childhood (and to whom the film is dedicated)—is still inaccessible to him. He portrays her as strong, stoic and all-loving.

After the success of previous films *Gravity* (2013) and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (2004), Cuarón had his pick of directing high-grossing blockbusters. He instead returned to his childhood to patiently illustrate his home and those who influenced his youth in *Roma*. The film is nominated for eight Academy Awards including Best Picture, Best Original Screenplay and Best Cinematography and is still available in select theaters.

-Sophia Duncan

As a Poly student, Polyzoides has strengthened her love for music by participating in Choristers in lower school, Contatori in middle school and the past spring musical. Furthermore, Polyzoides has created the Music Appreciation Club alongside senior Miles Krieger, sophomore Ian Unterseher and their advisor Christopher Schmoke to foster a community-wide interest in the art.

One of her most impactful experiences as a music student happened to be on Poly's campus in her first semester Music Theory class. Polyzoides studied alongside her fellow LACC member and dear friend Rory Xanders to explore music composition and the foundation of songs.

Dubbing the class "the best class [she] has taken at Poly," Polyzoides explained her desire for more music-focused courses. "I wish Poly placed more of an emphasis on the art requirements. We require six seasons of sports yet only two arts credits, and I want everyone to experience the positive effects music can have on one's life."

For the class's final project, her instructor, Ms. Foley, tasked Xanders and Polyzoides with developing their very own composition. Polyzoides chose to transpose the melody of the Bee Gees's "Island in The Stream," in which she created a SATB bass line and harmonies as well as adjusted the melody to ensure solid chord progressions. Polyzoides' experience in Music Theory completely altered her mindset going into the college process, making schools with a music component a necessity.

Polyzoides elaborates, "Over the last few years, music has become a form of therapy for me; it has the ability to entirely alter my state of mind. Music is by far the most powerful form of love, support and, above all, connection to others, and I truly hope to carry my love for music with me for the rest of my life."

PASC hosts January Fifth Quarter

On Friday, January 25, the Poly Arts Student Council hosted its second Fifth Quarter of the 2018-2019 year in the newly-redesigned Garland Theater. Fifth Quarter is an event for students to share their visual, literary and performing arts. From harmonizing duets to a quartet of saxophones, this Fifth Quarter showcased a variety of art forms from many talented students.

The event featured a gallery walk in the Black Box Theater, where students' visual artwork were displayed. The exhibit included a painting by junior VeeVee Holdsworth and illustrations, a four-canvas painting and a personally designed denim jacket by junior Addie Lillard.

Following the gallery walk, students gathered to watch performances, including junior Kate Salemier's comedy routine about a 4th grade Valentine's Day mishap and senior Coco Angelopoulos and junior Fionn Yapkowitz's guitar and vocal duet rendition of the song "Hero" from the 2014 film "Boyhood."

Students then proceeded to Garland Theater, where senior Cole Swanson screened his short film "The Dream," and senior Dexter Renick debuted three songs from his latest album "It's Lofi."

"Originally, I was just working on a chill song for my college creative portfolio, but when I showed the song to friends, I got a lot of positive feedback. When I played a few songs at Fifth Quarter, it was amazing to hear from people I haven't ever talked to before say that they enjoyed it. I'm excited to put my music out on a platform that, hopefully, a lot of people will listen to," said Renick.

He plans to release the full version of his album on February 15th, and it will be available for listening on most streaming platforms.

-Maddie Kwei

Editorial analysis: sports culture at Poly

The Paw Print recently sent out a survey to members of four winter sports teams (varsity girls and boys basketball and soccer) in order to investigate circulating anecdotal reports about discontentment with the teams, coaches or programs. The following is in no way an attempt to openly criticize the program but rather to elucidate any surprising, popular sentiments among members of the four teams. This report is not reflective of the entire athletics department; we chose to focus on those four specific teams, which may or may not be reflective of a larger trend at Poly.

During this winter season alone, the boys and girls varsity soccer and basketball teams went a combined 1-7 against Flintridge Prep, Poly's historic rival. This losing trend, however, isn't unique to this season. In the past five years, Poly's boys and girls varsity basketball and soccer squads are a combined 11-27-2 against Prep.

What makes this statistic even more noteworthy is the fact that the Panthers fared much better against the Rebels in these sports prior to the aforementioned five-year period. From 2009-2014, our boys and girls varsity basketball and soccer teams combined for a 21-14-5 record against Prep.

Part of this stark contrast may simply be attributed to the fact that high school sports tend to be cyclical—where some classes happen to have more athletes than others—and there is little to nothing that Poly's athletics depart-

My teammates might be the only reason why I'm still on the team.

ment can do to mediate this, as we will explain later.

However, considering our historic success alongside our recent struggles against Prep in soccer and basketball, the question must be asked: why has Prep been outplaying us?

One possible explanation could be the dynamic of each team. In order to explore the experiences of Poly's basketball and soccer players, *The Paw Print* recently sent out a survey to members of the varsity boys and girls basketball and soccer teams. One hundred percent of the 34 respondents (of the 58 total athletes on the teams) had played their respective sport before playing for Poly, and 82.4 percent had played on a club team. Exactly half said that they were serious about playing at a high level when they entered high school, and 32.4 percent said they were "sort of" serious.

However, once they had started playing at the varsity level for Poly, 52.9 percent of respondents reported that they had considered switching to the JV team for reasons such as lack of playing time on varsity, wanting to play with friends on JV and preferring the lower levels of commitment and pressure on JV.

Of those respondents who had considered dropping to the JV team, 38.7 percent of them noted a startling level of discontentment with their varsity teams, claiming either "I wasn't happy on varsity" or "I wanted to prove a point to the coach."

Moreover, 26.5 percent said that they dread practice, and 5.9 percent said they feel nervous when going to practice. Conversely, only 29.4 percent said they are happy and excited to play a sport they love when they go to practice. The rest indicated that they either are indifferent

or feel mixed emotions. This surprising range of sentiments is important to note: At a school like Poly, where the focus of the athletics is on the experience of students

rather than intensive training for recruitment, the numbers suggest that the basketball and soccer programs are falling short of this goal.

A surprising number of student-athletes named teammates as a big reason to join or continue to play on one of these four teams. However, the atmosphere of the entire team—including the coaches—is a different story. Of the 34 respondents, 88.3 percent (all but four athletes) rated their experiences with teammates as "good" (four out of five) or "excellent" (five out of five). On the other hand, just 35.3 percent of respondents gave similar scores to their coaches.

"My teammates might be the only reason why I'm still on the team," a member of the boys varsity basketball team said.

Another respondent from the girls varsity basketball squad added, "My teammates ultimately are what make me want to come back every year to this team. My teammates are my main support system, and I always know they will support me in the long run."

A member of the girls varsity soccer team noted, "I have connected with teammates from all different grades and skill levels, and I have grown to love and trust them on and off the field."

Several respondents also voiced concerns about their team's practice environment. One respondent on the girls varsity basketball team commented, "I feel that I am not able to ask questions because sometimes the answers I receive from my head coach make me sound and feel stupid. I am honestly afraid to speak up, and sometimes I have tried to speak up and defend myself, but I have been immediately shut down."

Another from the boys varsity soccer team said, "The absurdly difficult and confusing drills combined with the constant negative remarks about our attitude creates a practice environment that can only hurt our love for the game."

"[Our coach]

Senior guard Nicholas Tu drives into the lane for an easy layup against Bellflower.

only looks at the cup half empty but expects us to look at the cup half full," said a member of the boys varsity basketball team.

Practice is not only where athletes develop skills but also where teams build chemistry, a key component to winning games. A subpar practice environment can easily compromise a team's performance.

However, this isn't to say that our basketball and soccer programs are doing it all wrong. At a small school like Poly, with an Upper School student population of only 377 (which would be just a fraction of an incoming freshman class at some high schools), athletics can be difficult to run. The small class sizes make the cyclical nature of high school athletics even more discernible because less students generally means less athletes, especially at schools like ours that don't actively recruit potential athletes. The general lack of contentment and regressing performance on these teams can partially be ascribed to the unique nature of Poly's athletic department.

Poly's athletics have long embodied the philosophy of allowing any and all students to play multiple sports, but this allowance has come at the cost of year-round training—forcing Poly to suffer a slight competitive disadvantage—as our teams aren't able to spend nearly as much time together in trainings and games as teams at

other schools where playing multiple sports is prohibited.

Athletic Director Steve Beerman commented, "We do things so differently here. We don't go year-round, [but] other schools are going year-round ... So how do we stay competitive while supporting our multi-sport athletes? If we start looking at recruiting specialized athletes, then we can't support all programs because we don't have enough admitted students every year."

"Without a doubt I'm losing sleep over [this issue]... I feel like many schools don't know their identity; I feel like we know who we are, but I'm not sure in today's age that we can continue to be who we are... Because if we do change, then we'll be down to a ten sport school, and then we might be taking away some of the sports students love," Beerman added.

Beerman also noted that when hiring coaches, he ensures that they understand they must share multi-sport athletes with fellow coaches. Furthermore, the no-cut policy—an integral part of Poly's athletic identity for years—leaves the coaches less freedom in forming teams. Many other schools don't allow seniors to play if they're not on varsity, but Poly refuses to cut any player completely from the sport, so seniors may join a JV team.

Beerman said, "I think it's much more difficult to be a coach [at Poly than at similar schools] because of what our expectations of them are. I talk to coaches about that all the time. When we bring new coaches in, I'm always talking about how Poly's different and more difficult because we strive to give every kid an experience as best we can. We try to care about every one of them, and that's a hard thing to do because the numbers can't get out of hand."

The most significant factor for Poly's sports programs, however, is simple: Poly is not, and has never been, an athletic power-

house. Rather, athletics are an extracurricular—an auxiliary, but valuable, experience.

Beerman concluded, "We're an academic school. We understand our role in athletics as an important part of



Courtesy of Poly Communications

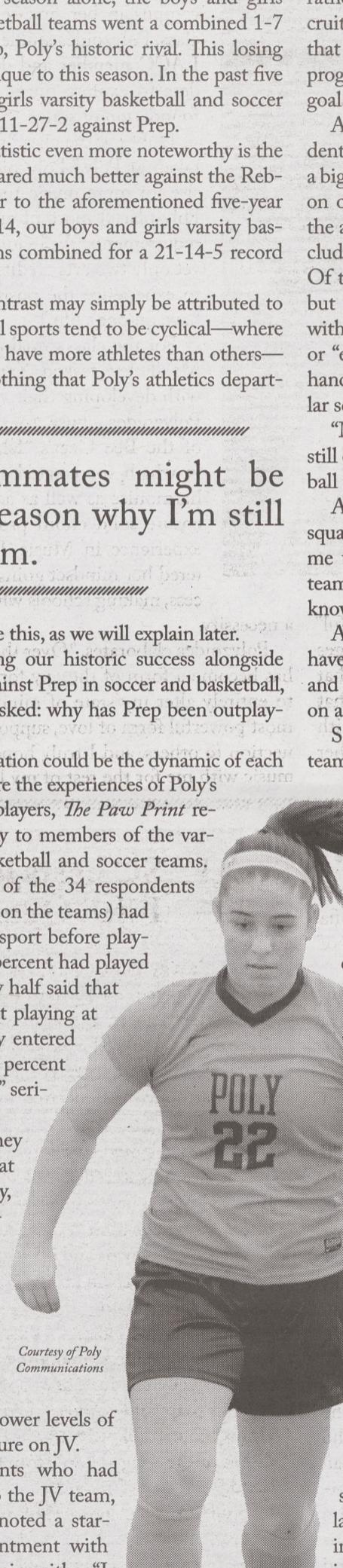
The absurdly difficult and confusing drills combined with the constant negative remarks about our attitude creates a practice environment that can only hurt our love for the game.

the school and an important part of the kids' experiences, but the kids are coming here for academics."

Our athletics department isn't perfect, nor should we expect it to be. However, in order to improve our athletics programs and ensure that student-athletes are enjoying their athletic experience at Poly, communication between players and coaches is necessary. Negative experiences are valid, but nothing will be changed if they are not voiced.

If students have had problems with a team, whether it be with coaches or teammates, Beerman highly encourages them to answer the end-of-season evaluations honestly or meet with him in person.

-MJK & ABL



Courtesy of Poly Communications

Senior midfielder Catalina Alonso dribbles down Babcock Field as she looks to counter against Mark Keppel.

To my fellow seniors: consider caps and gowns

If you've ever been to a Poly commencement ceremony, you may have noticed the unusual dress code. Instead of the classic graduation caps and gowns donned at high schools across America, Poly's female graduates wear floor-length white dresses while their male classmates wear blazers, slacks and ties. A few weeks ago, the senior class cabinet emailed to the Class of 2019 a poll asking whether we would prefer to stick with Poly's traditional commencement dress code or switch to caps and gowns.

This choice, while seemingly mundane, reignited a debate over tradition, inclusion and affordability that divided last year's seniors. Last spring, advocates for caps and gowns pointed out that the dress code reinforced a gender binary and placed an unreasonable financial burden on women. Other students argued to keep the old dress code, as they had grown up seeing graduates walk down the commencement aisle in dresses and suits and wanted to partake in the tradition themselves.

The Class of 2018 had to decide whether to prioritize customs or inclusivity, and they could not agree—so, in the end, the stage at commencement was split (as was the class itself) between graduates dressed in blue robes, white dresses and suits.

The Class of 2019 now faces this same choice, and the poll results show that we're split: 40 people voted for caps and gowns, while 34 voted for suits and dresses. The administration will probably allow us to decide, as individuals, whether to wear dresses and suits or caps and gowns. I am writing this editorial to explain why, in the interest of inclusion, accessibility and visibility, we should all wear caps and gowns this year.

Consider the directions conventionally given to seniors until 2018: women buy dresses and men wear suits (the school lends them blazers with Poly patches, so they do not have to purchase them). From the onset, these instructions rely on two harmful assumptions.

Firstly, they imply that all students identify with one of two genders: male and female. This presumption is out-of-date and wrong; for the last several decades, LGBTQ activists and educators have worked to dispel that notion and recognize the existence of gender-binary, genderfluid and gender-questioning people. As a community that prides itself on its progressive, egalitarian values, we should recognize that gender exists on a spectrum; some students may not identify as male or female, and others may still be exploring their gender identity. By telling them to identify them-

selves as male or female and dress accordingly, the dress code ignores and paints over the presence of LGBTQ students on campus.

For some, the choice of whether to wear a suit or dress at graduation may be fraught: the outfits themselves harken back to stereotypical expressions of femininity and masculinity, with women wearing flowy, wedding gown-esque dresses and men buttoned up in suits. The dress code is designed for students who feel comfortable expressing their identity with stereotypically masculine or feminine clothes. The dress code represents two extremes (uber-feminine or stereotypically masculine outfits), which suggests to commencement attendees that gender-nonconforming students are not a part of our community and excludes anyone who doesn't want to wear stereotypically gendered clothes.

In recent months, some have contended that, while they support an inclusive environment, "no one in our class identifies as nonbinary, questioning or trans," so there is no reason for caps and gowns. This assumption is completely unfounded; there may be members of the senior class who have not yet come out as nonbinary or trans, and the presumption that everyone has decided and announced their identity is misguided.

Either way, there have almost certainly been trans or nonbinary students in the last fifty-odd graduating classes who did not feel comfortable coming out to their classmates, and in years to come, there will certainly be nonbinary, trans or questioning students whom the current dress code will exclude. If Poly wants to support

ment traditions, but at what cost? Is maintaining past customs so important that we'll continue doing it even though it is antiquated and exclusive? In the words of senior Maya Cook, "looking good in a white dress for an hour is far less impactful than being the first class to break an elitist, heteronormative tradition."

The second problem with the dress code is its cost; it places a financial burden on female students, who have to purchase dresses. For most people, white gowns are not practical purchases because they aren't versatile or suitable for many events; in any other context they look like wedding dresses, and many of the floor-length white dresses sold online are, in fact, wedding dresses. In the last four years, I've heard countless seniors discussing how they dread the hassle of shopping for a dress they'll only wear at one event.

"You usually don't wear white dresses anywhere other than graduation or a wedding," said senior Rory Xanders. "[Caps and gowns] make more sense, and they give everyone the chance to be together one last time without having to worry about financial restraints."

For students with the resources to buy a dress, it may be an inconvenience, but for students who can't afford to purchase a dress they'll wear once, it's a major cost barrier that adds a layer of stress to what should be a celebratory occasion. Caps and gowns are a far more affordable option; students who want to buy their own could do so on Amazon for about \$25, and Poly could purchase and loan gowns for students who can't afford them. This is an easy, straightforward way to reduce financial burdens placed on students and make graduation a more positive experience for everyone involved.

"We, as 'the class that embraces unity,' should be the ones to set the precedent that this is what we do—we stand together and wear the same thing to support all of our classmates and provide a welcoming environment for all of our classmates," said senior Ella Cornwell.

Senior Emma Wennberg added, "We need to think about what legacy we want to leave. I hope we can collectively recognize that wearing gowns is not just the right thing to do for our own class; it will send a message that our community values inclusion over tradition."

So, to my fellow seniors, I hope you'll join me in wearing a cap and gown at commencement. It may not be what you envisioned, but it's a step towards a more inclusive, accessible and modern Poly.

Times have changed, and it's time for our traditions to reflect that.

students of all gender identities, we should consider the comfort of every person and embrace a uniform commencement outfit.

If, as individuals, we call ourselves allies to gender-nonconforming and trans people, we need to actually advocate for an inclusive system that does not reinforce the gender binary.

I realize that some of my classmates are looking forward to taking part in commencement.

Graphic courtesy of Josephine Woodruff

IT'S WHAT



It's What
(Dexter Renick)
is releasing his
debut album
It's Lofi
on February 15,
12:00 AM EST
on all streaming
platforms.

Feature: students reflect on new midterm schedule

The Paw Print recently sent out a survey to the Upper School asking about students' experiences with the most recent winter Block Days. A separate survey was sent to seniors, who also had to complete college applications during the period leading up to and during Block Days. We received 98 responses from ninth, tenth and eleventh graders and 38 responses from seniors (in all, about a third of the student body responded to the poll).

Since the administration implemented the new semester Block Day exam schedule last year, condensing exams into fewer days and encouraging teachers to replace tests with non-assessment "experiences," midterms have become an even greater source of controversy on the Upper School campus.

Under the original mid-year and final exam schedule—which was in place through the end of the 2016-2017 school year—students sat for one three-hour exam period per day for a week in mid-January. Most classes used that time for a sit-down exam, graded presentation or practice AP test. Additionally, tests were scheduled by subject: all students would have math exams one day, for example, then history the next, then language after that.

Last year, a few major changes under the Block Day schedule were introduced: students took two exams a day, but teachers were encouraged to lower the stakes of their assessments by replacing them with field trips, practice exams worth few points or presentations. While some teachers adopted some of these "experiences" in place of traditional tests, many classes—especially AP courses—continued to require conventional exams.

If students had two particularly demanding exams on one day, they were allowed to reschedule one of them to an open make-up exam period at the end of the week. Many students, especially upper-classmen, used the make-up day to ensure that they did not have two mentally draining tests in a row (such as AP Biology and AP Calculus).

This year, four new changes were instituted. First, midterms were held in late December—before winter break—instead of mid-January. Second, exams were organized by period rather than subject. Students took exams for A and B period courses the first day, C and D period courses the second day, E and F period courses the third day and G period course on the last day. Third, students were not allowed to reschedule or move exams unless they had pre-arranged testing accommodations. Lastly, the assessment-free week before midterms (previously known as "dead week") was shortened to three "review days," which were the Thursday, Friday and Monday preceding exams.

Most students responded that the three "review days" did not provide enough time to study for midterms without worrying about other non-midterm assessments. 31.3 percent of ninth, tenth and eleventh graders and 65.8 percent of 12th graders answered that the review days did not provide enough time to prepare for midterms. Further, 49.7 percent of ninth, tenth and eleventh graders and 10.5 percent of 12th graders said review days provided "almost enough" time to prepare. Only 15.6 percent of non-seniors and 23.7 percent of seniors said the review days gave them enough time to study for their exams.

"The 'assessment-free days' were not long enough, and I would have tests/quizzes or projects leading up to those days because the teachers knew things couldn't be due after that, so I didn't get to take as much time to review and study as I had hoped," one sophomore commented.

One junior remarked, "The fact that midterms started on a Tuesday and we still had normal school/classes on that Monday made me have less time to study for/prioritize the midterms since I still had normal homework and assignments to finish first. It also threw off the rest of the week."

In addition, in the weeks leading up to exams, students had mixed reactions to the new exam dates. The change was popular among non-seniors; 72.5 percent of fresh-

Dec 16	Dec 17	Dec 18	Dec 19	Dec 20	Dec 21	Dec 22
	DAY 4!	★ APUSH Presentation ★ ★	AP BIO Final! and Math Exam $a^2+b^2=c^2$	HD X	English Block Chinese Project!	Winter Break! ★
Dec 23	Dec 24	Dec 25	Dec 26	Dec 27	Dec 28	Dec 29
XMAS EVE EVE...	XMAS EVE EVE...	Merry Christmas! ★ ★				

Graphic courtesy of Aasha Turner

men, sophomores and juniors supported having midterm exams before break, and 11.6 percent had no preference between before or after break. Some students preferred earlier exams so that the prospect of midterms did not loom over winter break and so that the material was still fresh in their minds.

Within the senior class, however, the decision was more controversial. 57.5 percent of seniors liked having midterms before break, and 5.3 percent were indifferent; the other 36.8 percent preferred having midterms later.

Among the factors that may have led some seniors to oppose pre-winter break exams, one stands out as a source of significant stress that many students noted in their survey response: the college process.

Most college applications that will be considered during the regular decision round were due on January 1, but two of Poly's three college counselors were unavailable to provide essay feedback over winter break, so any students wanting to run their essays by their counselors needed to finish them before December 21. Of the 38 seniors who responded to the separate senior survey, 73.7 percent were working on college applications during the weeks leading up to and during midterms (December 11-21).

For many, the combination of Block Days and college applications proved to be difficult to manage. 76.3 percent of senior respondents reported that they spent less time studying this year than they did last year, and 65.8 percent said that the three assessment-free days before Block Days did not provide enough time to prepare for their mid-year exams.

When asked why they studied less, some students mentioned having less difficult, less high-stakes tests to study for.

"I studied less than last year mostly because I had fewer major tests (I think). I also received a positive college decision, so I felt less motivated to earn the highest score possible," one respondent said.

On that topic, 81.6 percent of senior respondents reported that they received an admissions decision from at least one college from December 11-21. As a result, many were stuck in an awkward situation. If they got

into their early decision or early action school as their top choice, they wouldn't have to write any more college essays, and those they had already written would never be sent anywhere. However, as many decisions were coming

in from December 11-21, students were unsure whether they should dedicate more time to preparing for Block Days or working on college applications.

One student commented, "As I was waiting to receive my college decision, I not only had the pressure of studying for my exams, I also had to finish writing the majority of my college essays before the Block Day schedule began."

While some students looked for ways to balance both Block Days and college applications, others chose to focus on the latter.

One senior said, "I completely prioritized my college applications over my midterms. However, I was lucky that my 3 midterms were practice AP tests graded on the AP curve. Thus, the fact

that I didn't study much for midterms wasn't really a big deal, and I ended up doing fine on my midterms."

Another student commented, "I decided to spend the week doing college apps. I probably spent two hours total studying for midterms."

Several students expressed frustration that the rescheduling placed midterms just before application deadlines.

"The fact that mid-to-late December is probably the worst time for seniors college-wise should have been considered before deciding to shift midterms to before winter break," remarked one.

"For a school so focused on preparing students for college, it is surprising that the administration would not give more importance to the stress seniors undergo during the application time period," another added.

Of the senior respondents who answered that they were working on applications during December 11-21, only 10.7 percent said that they were able to thoroughly prepare for their exams while working on applications. Conversely, 42.9 percent expressed that they were overwhelmed trying to prepare for exams while working on applications, and the rest (46.4 percent) were able to prepare just enough for exams while working on applications.

One respondent noted, "Because my most difficult tests were frontloaded in the first few days, and I had two per day (and thus less study time at home), I just had less available time to study. The two-day assessment-free period made no meaningful difference to provide more time, and I was also working on college applications the week before midterms, which took away study time."

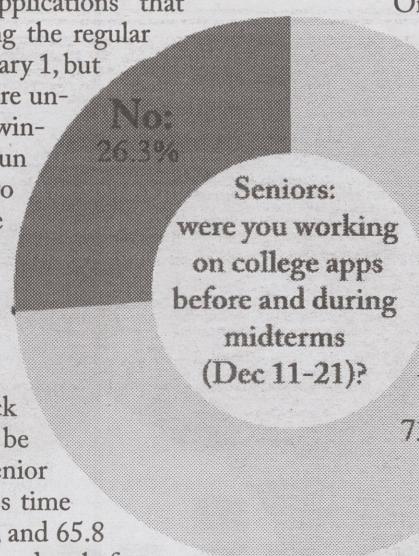
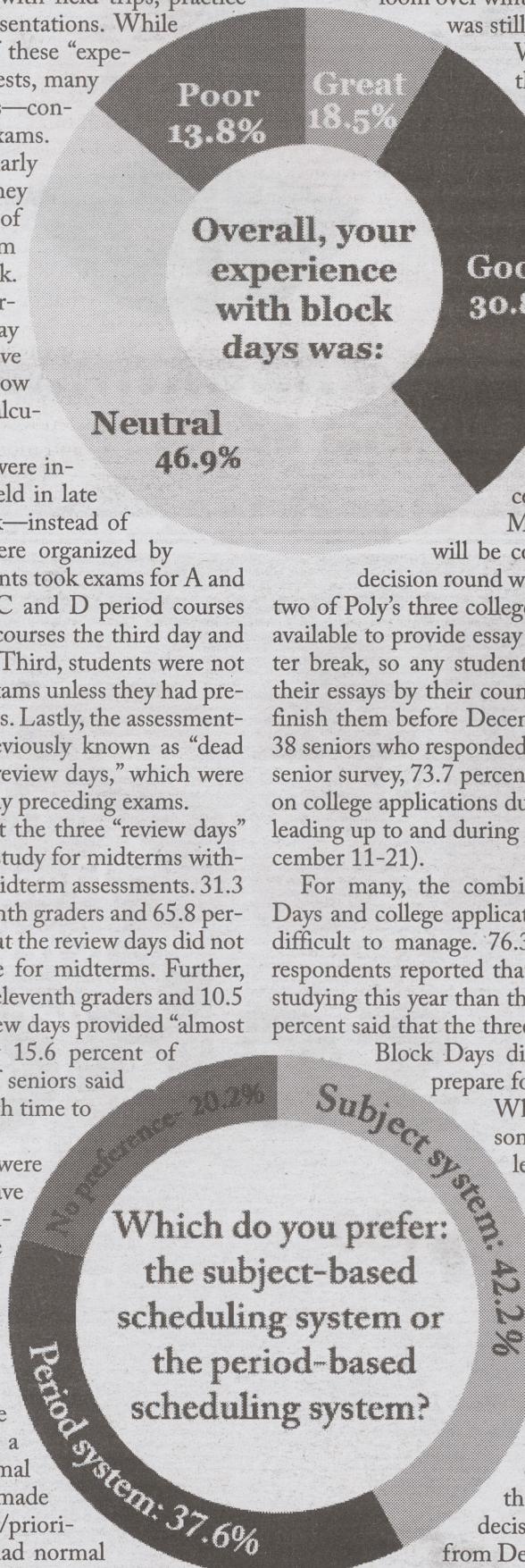
For other seniors, the nature of their mid-year exams this year made their Block Day experience manageable.

"Last year was full of very fact-based subjects such as U.S. History and Bio, whereas this year's exams really relied more on my critical thinking skills. Also, the curves this year eliminated a lot of the stress surrounding most of my exams," said one respondent.

Another one of the changes—switching to a midterm schedule based on periods rather than subjects—was also met with mixed reviews across all grades. Of the ninth through eleventh graders, the reactions were pretty evenly split, with 38 percent of respondents indicating they would rather have a subject-based schedule while 40.8 percent preferred the midterms to be period-based.

However, this change in schedule also caused a lot of unintended consequences, including forcing many students to cram a few difficult tests on one day. When asked whether the student felt that their "most difficult exams were evenly distributed through the week," exactly half of the respondents replied no. Furthermore, 52.6 percent of them indicated that they had "two particularly difficult exams on the same day."

The senior class, on the other hand, met this specific change with less enthusiasm. About 50 percent of the students preferred the subject-based schedule compared to only 31.6 percent supporting the period-based schedule.



A surprising 60.5 percent felt that their most difficult exams were not evenly distributed throughout the week while only 28.9 percent felt otherwise. Finally, 52.6 percent of senior respondents noted that they were crammed with two difficult exams on the same day.

It felt almost as if I took midterms twice."

An even bigger controversy that arose due to the new Block Day schedule was the awkwardly timed three-week transition after winter break (and mid-year exams) and before the start of the second semester, when most classes tended to pile on extra projects, essays, tests or quizzes. Regardless of whether or not the class had a formal sit-down mid-year exam before winter break, many classes—especially senior-level courses—assigned additional major assessments, and many students deemed the added workload unfair.

One senior respondent noted, "I would rather have midterms in December. That being said, however, I'd also rather take one set of midterms. The prevailing trend among my teachers was to give a formal 'midterm'

exam in the week before Winter Break and then give another project or essay due this last week in the end of January (which, coincidentally, is when Block Days were last year). It felt almost as if I took midterms twice."

This sentiment, however, was not limited to the senior class. Many underclassmen and juniors, especially those in non-AP courses, experienced similar added stress due to extra assessments.

"I think the main problem with the Block Day schedule is that some teachers will often have an 'experience' for the midterm and then give a cumulative test at the end of the semester. So rather than having the extra days to study for the test as we would for a normal midterm, we have a big cumulative test during the time that most teachers are giving out a regular homework load," said one junior.

Only 30.5 percent of ninth, tenth and eleventh graders and 42.1 percent of twelfth graders had four or more sit-down exams, but several underclassmen commented that they had more exams this year than in past years.

"I had quite a few more traditional exams this year in comparison to last year, which made it necessary to spend more time preparing," one underclassman said.

However, several seniors replied that they had fewer sit-down exams this year than in the past. One said they had "barely any traditional exams," while another added

that they "only had two classes [with exams]." See below graphs for related data.

Students had a myriad of suggestions to help improve the Block Day experience for all of those involved.

One underclassman commented, "Go back to the subject-based exams. We saved one day of class by switching to a period-based exam, which is quite a meager benefit considering the amount of stress a lot of my peers and I felt."

"Possibly a few more study days with more review sessions because those review days felt rushed," added another underclassman.

Several students also suggested that students with two of their most difficult or draining exams in one day should be allowed to switch one to the make-up day.

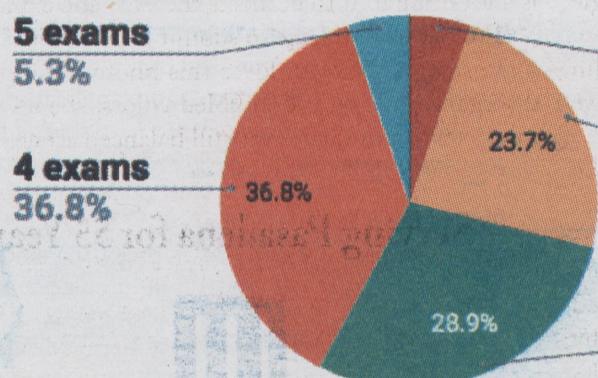
Another commented, "Students should be able to shift their schedule as was promised when the Block Days were first introduced."

Ultimately, the respondents indicated that their Block Day experiences ranged from manageable and pleasant to stressful and overwhelming; as seen in accompanying graphics, different students had different responses to the new schedule. However, many hope that the administration will consider their suggestions as they move forward and refine the schedule.

-MJK, ABL & HRO

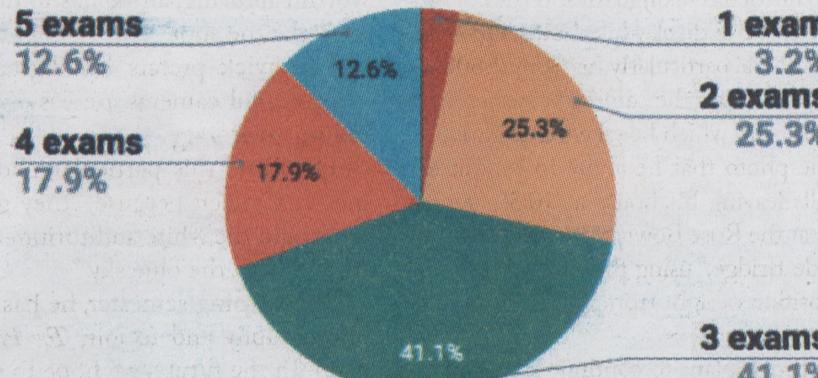
SENIORS: NUMBER OF EXAMS

Out of 38 respondents



9, 10, 11th GRADERS: NUMBER OF EXAMS

Out of 98 respondents



**Get \$10 off with this ad for
behind the wheel package**

(323) -254-0400

delta
driving school

2250 Fair Park Ave. #3

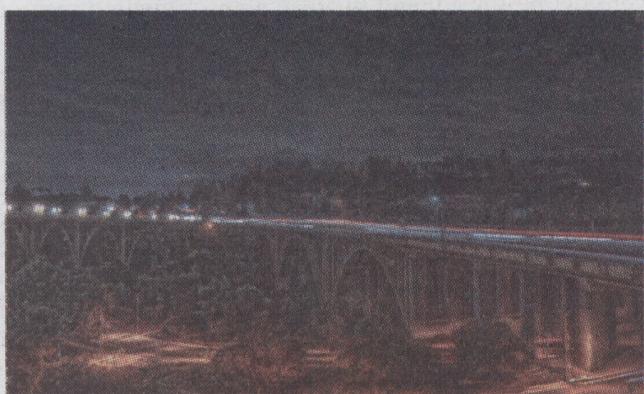
Los Angeles 90041

www.deltadrivingschool.com

Feature: meet *The Paw Print's* staff photographers

For this month's issue, the Life Section featured five students from *The Paw Print's* photography staff. Each photographer submitted one of their favorite photos, along with a brief explanation of why they took the photo, its medium and which aspects of the photo they think stand out. All pictures courtesy of the photographers.

Austin Wuthrich



Austin Wuthrich was first introduced to photography as a freshman looking to fulfill his art credit in Minto's Beginning to Photography class. He initially wasn't fond of the art but grew to enjoy it as he continued to Intermediate Photography in sophomore year.

Wuthrich notes that in taking the Intermediate course, he became particularly drawn to night-time photography; the concept of controlling light in darkness "opened a new world" to him.

Now, as a junior, Wuthrich is taking Advanced Photography and has his own website to display his photos. He prefers to shoot on a digital camera, particularly his Sony A6000, as the minimal amount of features the camera possesses forces him to perfect the process in which he takes his photos.

Wuthrich took the photo that he chose to submit as a sophomore. He recalls leaving his house at 10:30 at night and climbing a hill near the Rose Bowl to get this shot of the 134 Freeway's "Suicide Bridge," using the rule of thirds and capturing the juxtaposition of light from the cars and darkness of the surroundings.

In the future, Wuthrich plans to continue shooting and using photography as an artistic outlet for himself.

Barker Thompson



Junior Barker Thompson has been continuously exposed to photography throughout his life and notes that his dad's photography likely inspired his original interest in the art.

He prefers to shoot on film, as he has a limited number of shots to work with on each film roll and thus must take special care to set up each photo. He loves the anticipation between shooting photos on film and seeing the finished pictures once they're developed, and he finds the process rewarding when they turn out well.

Thompson enjoys photography both as a stand-alone art form and an accompaniment to other forms of art like creative writing.

He took this photograph last year in a Montreal neighborhood named Mild End. He notes, "I think this picture, specifically the juxtaposition of the light blue Mini Cooper against the old townhouse, says a lot about this up-and-coming neighborhood."

Ian Chadwick



In his free time, sophomore Ian Chadwick stops by his favorite places to seek out inspiration for his photography projects.

As a freshman, he took Studio Art with Mr. Bieltvedt and Photography Fundamentals. Chadwick found himself drawn to photography because he appreciated that, when taking pictures, he does not have to manipulate his surroundings in order to create art; the art is already in front of him. Once he sees beauty in his surroundings worth capturing, all he has to do is find the right angle and take the shot.

Chadwick prefers his digital Sony 3A7 over film since digital cameras are easier to work with and have unlimited storage.

He chose this particular photo of skateboarders he met at Caltech because, "they got some air off of that jump, and the white auditorium and the trees really contrasted with the blue sky."

This coming semester, he has plans to take advanced photography and to join *The Paw Print's* photography team. In the future, we hope to see more of Chadwick's artwork.

Diego Jaime



Before embarking on the France trip with Poly's Global Initiatives Program (GIP) as a rising junior, senior Diego Jaime made the spontaneous decision to buy a camera. While in France, he ended up taking numerous photos of his classmates and his surroundings.

Currently, Jaime is a photographer for *The Paw Print*, GIP Scholars and out-of-school events. His favorite medium is digital photography, with which he typically shoots portraits.

The photo above features junior Lucy Liversidge posing for senior Dexter Renick's new album cover. Jaime comments, "It's weird that one of the best photos I've taken came from me not necessarily even trying my hardest."

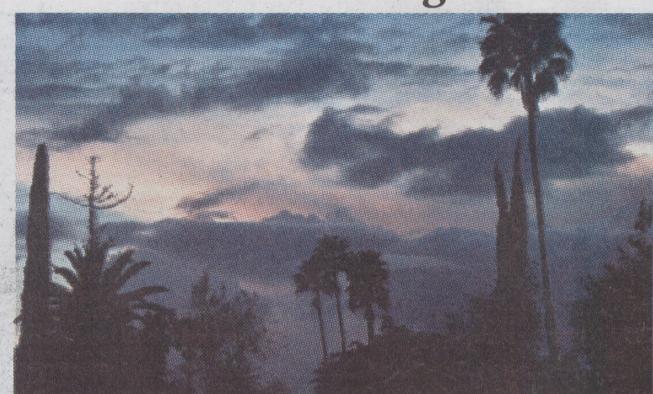
Instead of staging the photo like he usually does, the lighting naturally found him.

Jaime enjoys photography because it's a hobby that anyone can perform; all he needs is a camera. "You don't necessarily have to have the best gear, you don't necessarily have to be a professional photographer; it's just something everyone can get into," he notes.

In the future, Jaime hopes to take his craft to a new level of sophistication and buy his very own equipment.

By MIA PATZAKIS and MADDIE KWEI
Assistant life editors

Emma Cadogan



Sophomore Emma Cadogan loves photography because it offers an artistic outlet that she can practice when traveling or hanging out with friends and family. "I can create something beautiful and artistic while also experiencing it at the same time," Cadogan says.

She was introduced to photography as a freshman in Poly's photography class, taught by Jennifer Godwin-Minto. Before then, she used to think of photography as simply snapping a photo of something she liked. "There is a lot more to it than meets the eye," she explains.

The photo she chose to submit depicts Altadena after a rainstorm. Cadogan loves this photo because of how disorganized it is; the jumbled colors, shapes and textures create a dramatic yet still balanced scene.

Serving Pasadena for 55 Years



913 E. California Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91106
626-795-1123



Living in Israel: reflections leading up to studying abroad

Two years ago, I found out about a program called Tichon Ramah Yerushalayim (TRY), through which American kids could spend a semester living in Israel. I was immediately enamored. Throughout the process of making my participation in the program a reality, I've confronted issues raised by my family, the Poly administration and my friends, and I have tried to convince my community of the meaningful impact this trip would have on my life. However, beginning two years ago, I've struggled personally with what the true meaning behind my trip to Israel would be and the effect it could have on my community. Through these internal conflicts, I've grown immensely, and I believe that going to Israel next week will lead to many amazing experiences and discoveries.

Since its inception but especially in recent years, Israel has been a source of political conflict, partially due to its complex history as a state. Before 1948, Israel didn't formally exist. The land it stands on was previously part of a British mandate named Palestine, which was home to Palestinians with a national identity. However, in the wake of the Holocaust and the atrocities perpetrated against Jews in Europe, the need for a safe Jewish state became more urgent and popular among Jews around the world. In 1948, Israel was established as an independent state on land previously belonging to Palestine. Although Israel and Palestine originally claimed equal sections of the land, Israel eventually expanded into many Palestinian regions and took over a majority of the territory.

As a Jewish-American and an outsider to this conflict, I have been able to recognize the inequalities and injustices caused by the Israeli government, and I disagree with the Knesset (Israeli parliament) on the apartheid-esque nature of the state. This conflict represented a dichotomy I deeply struggled with because I also truly wanted to spend four months living in Israel

and learn about my relationship to Judaism there. This conflict between my Jewish learning and my opposition to Israeli politics plagued me through much of the process of applying to TRY. I wanted to embody my values through the way I lived, but I thought that either direction I leaned toward would compromise an important aspect of the other direction.

At first, I couldn't understand how these two deeply contrasting ideas could coexist within me. Although I recognized the actions of the Knesset, I separated



Photo courtesy of Austin Burke

that disagreement from my semester abroad and told myself that they were each isolated parts of my life. I settled on the fact that my semester abroad wasn't a political trip; the trip would be solely for the purpose of deepening my Jewish identity—not for the purpose of political discovery.

However, in the midst of my excitement about both going to Israel and all the growth I anticipated in my future, the distinct violence around the time of the U.S.'s relocation of its embassy to Jerusalem provoked me to reconsider my relationship with Israel. I was so

taken aback by the actions of the Israeli Defense Force and Hamas (a Palestinian terror group) that I started to overlook my genuine connection to Israel. These concerns proved extremely dangerous; I had painted an incomplete picture of Israel in my mind by focusing only on the things I disliked about it, which made me uncomfortable about joining the program at all.

What I understand now, having wrestled with my Jewish identity and attachment to Israel thoroughly over the past two years, is the opposite of what I originally thought. This internal conflict between my cultural connection to Israel and my disapproval of the forces that allow it to survive as a state can certainly exist together without one compromising the validity of the other. In fact, I believe that it's an important dichotomy to maintain. At one point, I was ready to cancel my application to TRY because of my personal contempt for aspects of Israel as a country. Now, I believe that developing firsthand experiences with the people and atmosphere of Israel in order to understand the political conflicts is more valuable than speaking from the sidelines without truly understanding the complex nature of said conflicts.

This seamless weaving of the two elements I thought couldn't be more different from each other really surprised me, but looking back on my journey, it makes sense. The two seemingly opposite aspects of Israel work to enhance and complicate each other: in order to completely understand the politics of Israel (which is most of what the western world sees of the country), one has to truly understand the reason it is a state at all—the profound connection of many people to the land and the culture. I'm so grateful to be able to go on this journey; I look forward to exercising my personal connection to the state by learning more about the human nature of the political conflicts because now I know they work best in tandem with each other.

Teacher feature: Upper School math teacher and department head Jack Prater

By MIA PATZAKIS
Assistant life editor

"Pick a fixed point on the earth and stand with your shoulder so that your eye lines up the edge of a star or the moon with a lampost. Don't move, and then watch the star or the moon move away from the post. That movement is evidence that we live in this huge void of space," Upper School Mathematics Chair Jack Prater recalled of the first scientific experiment he conducted in third grade.

Prater's interest in engineering originated from his childhood fascination with astronomy. While growing up in Houston, Texas, Prater monitored and recorded the trajectories of the moon and stars, dreaming of a career in astronomy. However, he soon realized that astronomy alone consisted largely of theorizing and analyzing the data collected by other people. Wanting to be more involved in manufacturing the technology used for data collection and analysis, Prater decided to focus on astrophysics at Caltech as he felt that the subject offered challenges and opportunities unique to his skill set.

Moving from Houston to Pasadena to study astrophysics at Caltech required him to immediately adjust to a new environment and workload. Immersing himself in his studies, he noted that studying astrophysics "put me in challenging situations very quickly, so I didn't have time to deal with anything else."

After college, Prater traveled to Wisconsin to study space physics for a year. He then returned to Pasadena to work at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), the nation's leading research and development center for the construction and operation of planetary robotic spacecraft. At JPL, he worked on airborne radar missions to image faultlines and glacier movement as well as developed radios that allowed spacecraft to communicate with Earth. Prater loved his work with space technology, but he preferred his projects involving airborne imaging, which included trips to Iceland and excursions along California's coast. After ten years at JPL, Prater moved to the Bay Area, where he worked for several startup companies including a short stint at Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin.

At Blue Origin, he worked on a variety of projects, including generating microwave frequencies to power spacecrafts into orbit and using helium balloons to lift launch platforms up to heights of 40,000 feet so that they could launch spacecraft from airplane cruise altitudes.

Prater defined his work at Blue Origin as "finding ways to implement all those science fiction ideas to

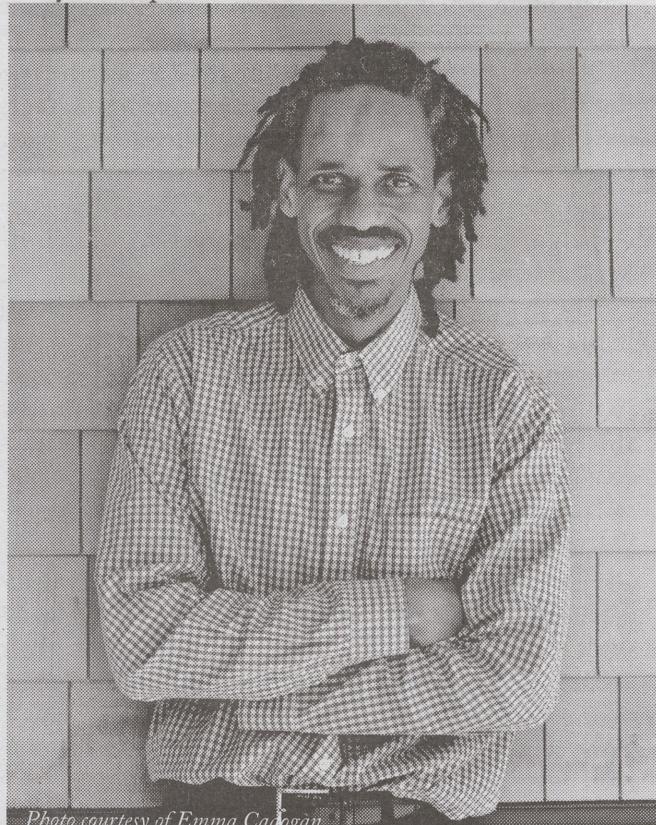


Photo courtesy of Emma Cadogan

see if there was any new technology that would make ideas that weren't feasible 50 years ago work."

Through his many experiences, Prater has realized that he thrives most in work environments that facilitate disagreement and, subsequently, problem-solving.

"Those were the best groups—people who were really smart and respectful of each other, who did not care if they were right or not. They just wanted the

right solution to the problem," Prater said. "I enjoyed the aspect of having discussions about building ideas and defending technical solutions and finding the weaknesses in a proposal. Approach with an open mind; learn how to accept criticism. I think that fits my personality."

The collaborative, problem-solving environments he described are why Prater loves teaching. Before joining the Upper School Mathematics Department in 2005, he taught summer school courses at Caltech and coached volleyball at Poly. Just as he was preparing to change departments at JPL, Poly Athletics Director Steve Beerman told him that the Upper School was looking to hire a new math teacher. Interested in the idea of teaching full time, Prater took the job and immediately knew he had made the right decision.

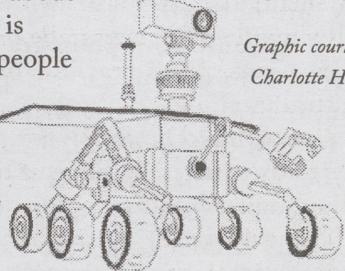
Prater has taught almost every math and engineering class Poly's Upper School has offered. He's discovered that teaching and coaching share the same skills required to work as an astrophysicist.

"You can try to interact with a student, and at the end of the day, looking back on that interpersonal relationship, you're never quite sure if it was right. Dealing with young people in a coaching or a classroom situation is invigorating. You're always navigating, negotiating how to solve something and do it well, and that changes so much from class to class, from student to student, from day to day; it keeps you on your toes," he said.

From astrophysicist to coach to Poly math teacher, Jack Prater seeks to illuminate every universe he inhabits. "Anything you can do that fosters curiosity about the world around us is important. Curious people solve problems."

The world becomes a better place if people want to learn about the things around them."

Graphic courtesy of Charlotte Holder



Ocasio-Cortez bucks establishment politics and the status quo

By MILO WOODS
Staff writer

To the dismay of members of Congress on the left and the right, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's progressive platform has challenged the conservative ideology of Republicans along with the centrism of many incumbent Democrats.

As a working class 29-year-old Puerto Rican Bronx native, Ocasio-Cortez boldly prefaced her campaign ad, "The Courage to Change," by asserting that "women like me aren't supposed to run for office."

Now that she has been elected as the youngest congresswoman in United States history, the hostile opposition she faces from establishment politicians on both sides of the aisle only proves her argument that a radical shift from the status quo is necessary.

Since her election in June of 2018, Ocasio-Cortez has faced skepticism about her working class background and criticism of her disruptive agenda. The first challenge to Ocasio-Cortez's background came from a conservative talk show host on Newsmax's America Talk Live, John Cardillo, who shared a Google Maps image of Ocasio-Cortez's childhood home.

He tweeted that the house was too nice for someone who claimed to be from the "Bronx hood" and blatantly lied about her attending Brown University. In reality, she went to Boston University, and her mother worked as a housekeeper to pay the rent for her nice, yet modest, home.

Ocasio-Cortez's social status was also called into question on Twitter by Eddie Scarry, a Washington Examiner writer with a history of misogynistic posts, who shared a picture of Ocasio-Cortez walking down a hallway for a congressional meeting. He claimed that the jacket she wore in the picture looked too expensive for "a girl who struggles."

Fox and Friends picked up on the trend and lambasted Ocasio-Cortez over an outfit she wore for a

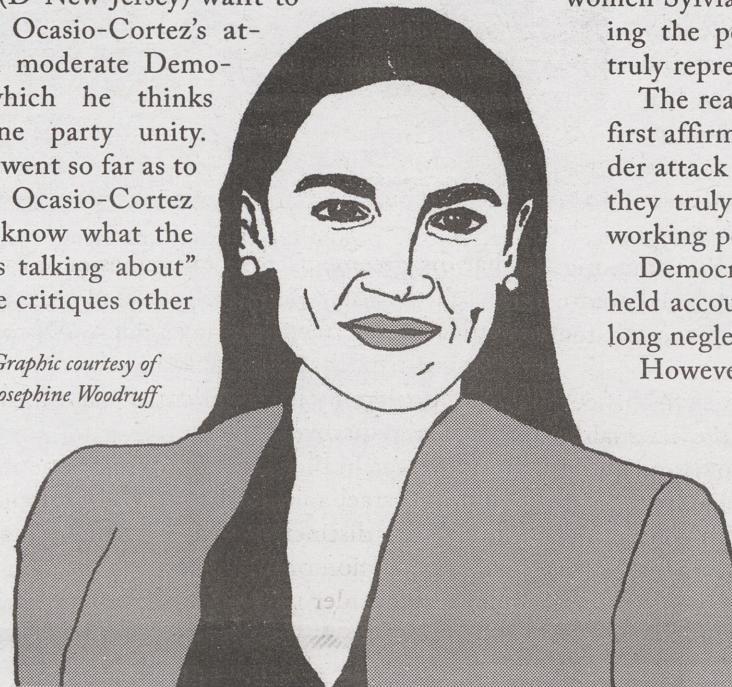
photoshoot in Interview magazine, saying she had "expensive tastes for a socialist." Not only does this claim reveal these critics' ignorance of how photo-shoots work but it also shows how superficial criticisms aimed at Ocasio-Cortez have been.

Ocasio-Cortez is no social media slouch. In response to these attacks, she boldly asserted that her critics' attempts to "strip [her] of [her] family, story, home, and identity [are] exemplary of how scared [they] are of the power of all four of those things."

Her fellow Democrats have not been much kinder. In a CNN interview this past December, former Missouri Senator Claire McCaskill discussed the behavior of so-called "crazy Democrats" but stopped short of calling Ocasio-Cortez crazy. Instead, she called her a "bright shiny new object" who had not done anything to merit attention.

While some incumbent Democrats have kept their criticisms private, others like Representative Bill Pascrell (D-New Jersey) want to reign in Ocasio-Cortez's attacks on moderate Democrats, which he thinks undermine party unity. He even went so far as to say that Ocasio-Cortez "doesn't know what the hell she's talking about" when she critiques other

Graphic courtesy of Josephine Woodruff



Democrats.

Additionally, Ocasio-Cortez's aggressive oppositional politics led Representative Lacy Clay (D-Missouri) to describe her as "petty" and Representative Alcee Hastings (D-Florida) to say that "meteors fizz out." Rather than aim for party reform, these incumbents would prefer a submissive junior congress-women that would continue business as usual.

However, Ocasio-Cortez is the frontwoman for a movement among young progressives that is bigger than any individual person.

This year's historic blue wave of diverse and dynamic junior congresswomen included the first-ever Muslim congresswomen Rashida Tlaib (D-Michigan) and Ilhan Omar (D-Minnesota), first-ever Native American congresswomen Sharice Davids (D-Kansas) and Deb Haaland (D-New Mexico), the first ever black congresswoman from Massachusetts, Ayanna Pressley and Texas's first Latina congress-women Sylvia Garcia and Veronica Escobar, reflecting the people's desire for representatives that truly represent their respective constituencies.

The real reason, as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez first affirmed, that junior congresswomen are under attack from both the right and the left is that they truly represent the working class and the working poor.

Democratic incumbents are also finally being held accountable from within for their decades-long neglect of the working class.

However, the top Democratic leadership now recognizes the asset of the new progressives to the party, which is why they appointed Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib and Ayanna Pressley to the House Oversight Committee, the primary investigative body in Congress. These shifts make one thing clear: time's up for the status quo.

The border wall is a terrible solution to our immigration woes

By DESMOND MANTLE
Opinion editor

Thankfully, it's beginning to look like Donald Trump's wall will never be built. Though many of his proposals are rejected by our community, I feel that Trump and his policies are often attacked from an emotional perspective, a strategy that doesn't usually convince anybody of anything they didn't already believe. My goal here is to explain why the wall along the southern border is a terrible idea from a practical, logistical perspective.

First of all, the wall would be an egregious waste of public money. As a libertarian, that's a very serious issue for me. I've believed in downsizing the federal government for a long time, namely by shrinking the military budget and eliminating certain departments. Building the wall would have the opposite effect, hemorrhaging public money toward the always-increasing cost of construction.

That's why the wall immediately set off "waste-of-money" alarm bells for me. I never believed Trump's promise that Mexico would pay for it, and his recent

grants and smugglers also likely have access to ladders or other basic ways of climbing a wall. Border enforcement really can't be effectively imposed by a physical barrier. The Border Patrol actually matters much more when it comes down to whether people can cross or not.

The wall also doesn't make any sense along the Rio Grande, where a very high percentage of immigrants cross illegally into Texas. It's hard to see how Border Patrol agents could gain a significant advantage from an extra barrier between Mexico and Texas when they already patrol the Rio Grande regularly to catch illegal crossings.

My second significant qualm with the border wall is the use of eminent domain to build it. In my opinion, taking private land through eminent domain, more than almost any other seizure or expenditure by the government, violates individual property rights without providing a significant benefit.

It doesn't matter whether your ethical system involves honoring individual rights, doing the greatest good for the greatest number of people or doing to others what you would want done to you. Eminent

option" to avoid needing congressional approval for the wall, would leave property owners with no timely recourse. By the time their lawsuits were heard, the wall could already be halfway built.

The final reason I oppose the wall is that it distracts from a much more effective way to reform our immigration system: make legal immigration easier.

I've written about my views on that subject before, and I continue to believe, even in an era of Trumpian nationalism, that we should be helping more people become Americans. As a Mexican-American person myself, I would like to see more Mexican-American citizens, Honduran-American citizens and others welcomed into our nation on the condition that they are committed to it.

Though I do believe that people have the right to leave their countries (which is why I oppose a penalty or tax on people renouncing their US citizenship), I believe the receiving country has the right—indeed, the responsibility to its own citizens—to know who enters its territory.

The easier we make it to become documented, the less incentive people will have to cross illegally, and

Graphic courtesy of Desmond Mantle

domain fails all three tests.

According to Representative Will Hurd (R-Texas), who opposes the border wall, eminent domain would affect 1,000 property owners in Texas, resulting in the cession of as much as 1.1 million acres to Mexico. Many Texans have built their livelihoods on that land.

Lest you think they might be able to sue the government in court for that damage and stop the wall, think again. The military version of eminent domain, which Trump threatened to use as a sort of "nuclear

statement that "the wall will also be paid for indirectly by the great new trade deal we have made with Mexico" was a sad new low for his attempts to save political face.

Since Mexico is clearly not paying, and will never pay, for the wall, it would have to be built with several billion dollars worth of public funding.

The wall would be a very blunt instrument for border control, where more precise tools are needed. Tunnels already exist under the border, and immi-

the more obsolete a border wall would be.

You might ask why I'm writing this now, when the wall appears dead. I write it because dead ideas can come back to life in an even more horrifying way than they arose the first time.

Trumpian nationalism is one of those zombie political movements, having been mostly dead since World War II. At the risk of getting another bitter nationalist as our president, we need to remember the logical reasons why these policies don't work.

LAUSD teacher strike: gains and why Poly students should engage

RACHEL TOKOFSKY
Student contributor

Last week, teachers across Los Angeles left behind their classrooms for the picket line, striking in support of smaller class sizes, more school resources and better pay. The Los Angeles teachers union, United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), after months of failed negotiation with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), endured the rainy weather to stand strong at the picket lines for six days, effectively closing down LA public schools.

UTLA, a branch of the National Education Association (the largest union in the United States), represents some 30,000 teachers across around 900 public elementary, middle and high schools throughout the Los Angeles area. LAUSD, which is the second largest employer in Los Angeles County, and the Union have clashed before.

In 1970 and again in 1989, Los Angeles teachers (including my dad, aunt and both of my grandmothers) went on strike demanding better pay, and, although they were short lived, the protests did result in raises of around five percent. Thirty years later, today's strike reflects both the history of union activism as well as the tension over spending within the current L.A. School Board, where the majority of members back charter schools.

This time around, though, it is unclear who the winner is. Teachers, who asked for a 6.5 percent raise, got six percent in two three percent payments. But they also lost about three percent of their annual salaries while striking.

They asked for smaller class sizes, and the compromise was a reduction of only about four students per class over the next three years. They pushed for a cap on charter schools—privately managed public schools—but the demand was misdirected since charter regulations qualify under state, not city, law. They negotiated for more full-time nurses, counselors and librarians and the creation of 200 community schools, all of which have potential to be good for the learning and well-being of students.

As a former LAUSD student myself, I was in full

support of the teacher strike. Knowing from experience what it's like to be in a classroom of 30 or more kids and to have parents with full-time jobs who relied on having a school nurse when they could not pick me up, UTLA's demands for reducing class sizes and increasing school staff feel personal to me.

Without a doubt, though, the most successful aspect of the strike was the community support it generated. The usually disengaged public came out of the shadows last week to support their city's teachers: parents, students, community members and teachers filled Grand Park on Friday afternoon.



Teacher rally in Denver, Colorado, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Neighbors brought striking teachers coffee and opened up their homes to strikers in the rain, and taco trucks even showed up to feed the crowds. Teachers, after years of feeling deprived by the district, have been re-energized by the recognition that they are not alone in their fight for education. Moving forward, it is imperative to capitalize on that community support and put pressure on the district, city and state to invest more in our public schools.

With a newly elected California governor who estimates a budget surplus of \$21 billion, the most important way to support our schools now is to continue financially prioritizing public education at the state level.

The district, much to UTLA and the public's frustration, can only promise reforms if they have the means to back them up. Of course, on a city level, there are steps to be taken, first and foremost electing school board members who are focused on our district schools.

For years, charter schools have been diverting money and higher-income students, who provide much needed funding, away from district schools. The fight over charters, although UTLA might disagree, is not black and white.

The district should be trying to understand the aspects of charter schools that appeal to parents and students. Often times it is their focus on arts or science that parents feel district schools aren't providing.

With the pressure from the public demonstrated last week, there can and should be more municipal ballot measures to support the arts, sciences and overall development of district schools. In the last election, L.A. voters supported increasing taxes to build more sewers for capturing rainwater. There was nothing about education on the ballot.

While I was excited about the community engagement that the strike generated, I was nonetheless disappointed by the seeming lack of interest, or even acknowledgement, that I saw from the Poly community.

Poly students are quick to complain about grades and block days but are quieter about the advantages our school provides: going to school everyday and sitting in classes with 16 other students, having an extremely personalized college counselor for every 30 kids (while the average in LAUSD is 1 to 378) and a school environment where we have the resources that ensure every student will graduate.

Going to a private school does not exempt you from caring about what happens to our public schools. The prosperity of our public schools determines the prosperity of our city and all the people who make up our city. I encourage Poly students to engage with their local public school district, which means supporting teachers when they strike and voting with our public schools in mind.

Activism has lost its historic value in the age of social media

By KAREEM ANSARI
Assistant opinion editor

When Rosa Parks, the civil rights activist, refused to give up her seat to a white man, she was promptly arrested, fined ten dollars and charged another four for her court fees, a sum equivalent to 200 dollars today.

A few days after Parks' arrest, Martin Luther King, Jr. formed the Montgomery Improvement Association, which persisted until 1956, when the Montgomery Federal Court finally ruled that racially segregated buses were unconstitutional.

The Civil Rights Movement and others like it have defined what activism is and what it can achieve. But as our society becomes more influenced by social media, we have to question what activism has become today.

Just last week, a nationwide controversy arose when a video clip of a group of high school students from Kentucky appearing to mock a Native American Vietnam War veteran at a Washington DC rally went viral. The video quickly incited outrage from social media users across the country.

However, as different videos of the incident showing other adults taunting and insulting the students emerged, support for the students began to increase. Within just a few days, the story became a topic of heated discussion across party lines.

Even the White House commented on the incident during the government shutdown, perhaps predictably in support of the aforementioned students, who were wearing "Make America Great Again" hats. In light of MLK Day, this event is a stark reminder of how superficial our ideas of activism have become.

King and the activists of his era understood that, in order to achieve real change, organized movements and per-

sistent individuals who are willing to endure the hardships that come with creating change are necessary.

The events led by activists like Parks and King were high-risk attempts at challenging the status quo and advancing the condition of black people in America. Furthermore, the individuals participating in the boycotts themselves deliberately sacrificed their well-being to achieve their goals. They were true activists who understand that progress comes at a cost.

Today, activism is too often a shallow and slogan-driven endeavor that is used to make people feel better about their engagement in society. The reality of social media activism is that it is low-effort and low-gain.



Graphic courtesy of Kareem Ansari

In the case of the Kentucky high school students, it was far too easy for Twitter users to either denounce or support the kids, sometimes in a vitriolic manner. So many people participate in online activism because nothing is lost by doing so.

It takes a few minutes to write a comment, apply a filter or like a Facebook page. Often, people have not fully given thought to what they are supporting and the implications of the changes they wish to make. Moreover, since getting

strong reactions and likes is the goal of social media activism, misinformation spreads more easily.

Shocking stories and claims receive attention on social media, while nuance and moderation are ignored. This shock value leads to brash comments, one-sided thinking and ill-spirited debate. But we must ask ourselves what we are hoping to achieve and what the causes truly mean to us.

That is not to say that support for organizations or causes on social media is wholly ineffective. Widespread hashtags for political and social change are in fact effective at supplementing the work of individuals or institutions.

In the case of the #MeToo movement, social media helped push forward the cause because it supported the women who spoke out about their experiences in Hollywood and other industries. It gave many women the space and opportunity to speak out about traumatic incidents they faced.

However, the movement really depended on the women who risked and sometimes sacrificed their careers and reputations to expose powerful executives abusing their privileges. Social media played a supportive but not unique role in amplifying the woman's voices.

As we look to engage in society and make a positive impact on our communities, we should remember what true activism looks like. It is not knee-jerk reactions, Twitter storms or uninformed outrage.

Rather, activism today should involve support for organizations that build true consensus and coalitions. Activism should involve the thoughtful use of all the tools that social media affords us. Activism today may require us to listen and talk to others who disagree with us. Most importantly, we should constantly remind ourselves that true activism will require us to sacrifice and persist.

Poly needs to stop drowning out conservative opinions

By ALICIA ZHANG
Staff writer

At Poly, we pride ourselves on independent thinking and fostering inclusion. In-class discussions expand on the curriculum, and students often ask questions that challenge others' views. However, even though our teachers attempt to promote diversity of thought within the classroom, our school has a culture of political homogeneity.

As somewhat of a centrist torn on politics, I have found that students at Poly, including myself at times, tend to be closed-minded about certain beliefs.

We sarcastically comment about parties or people with whom we do not agree in order to distance ourselves from them. Memes that mock the right-wing are texted to group chats and directly messaged to peers. Some dismiss our forty-fifth president as a "Cheeto Puff" or "potato." Such ad hominem attacks, while effective at channeling emotion, are not as useful in making a point.

Essentially, it's easier to blame, make fun of or ignore the opposition than it is to listen to the minority. Here at Poly, that political minority consists of those who subscribe to conservative beliefs.

Humans are creatures of habit. We would much rather converse about abortion or immigration or freedom of speech with people with whom we agree than with others who may challenge—or even change our opinions. After all, why seek out an opposing argument when we can just gather a group of people who share the same ideas?

Our fear of being seen as indecisive discourages debate and conversation. But discourse is vital. Without it, how can one learn?

Politics is a way for us to express our personal morals and thoughts concerning our nation. Maybe, if we talk with one another instead of bad-mouthing and generalizing the "other side," we can further our knowledge.

Poly's ideological monolithism dis-

courages free thought. There will always be a majority and a minority of something. That will never change.

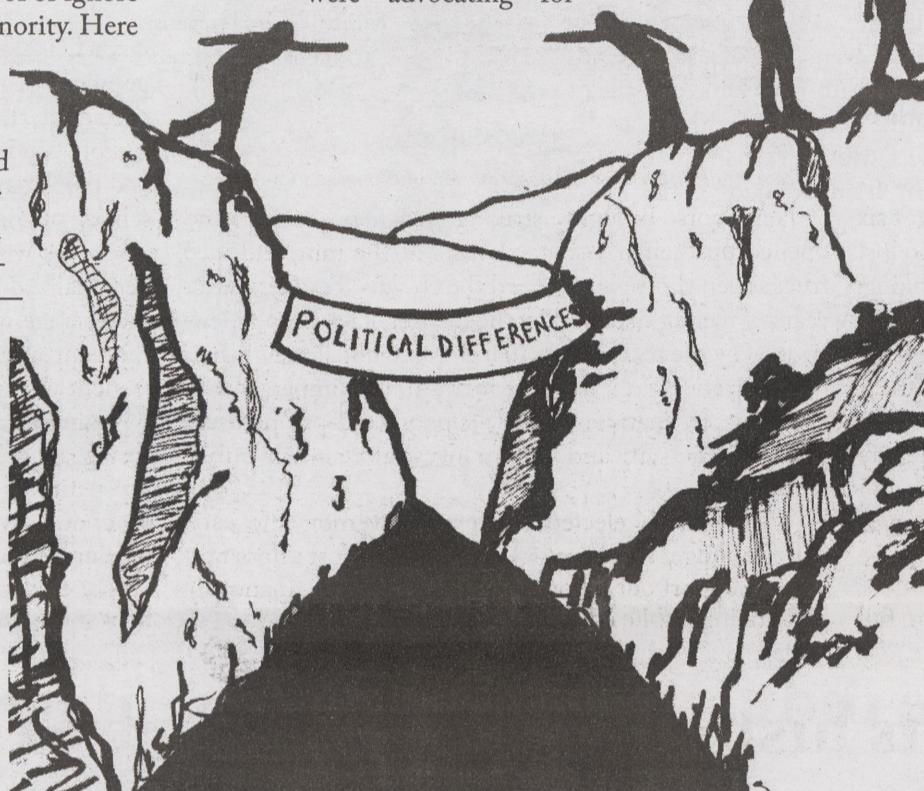
Where we can develop as a community is in acknowledging that other people may disagree with something we've said. Instead of tuning that voice out, we should listen.

My experience with politics at Poly began when I was first asked about my political alignment. It would have been easy—almost too easy—to throw my hands up in the air and call myself a Democrat because that is the party with which most Poly students identify.

I would have been comfortable calling myself a Democrat because I knew I would have others supporting me. I knew I would not have to defend myself and my beliefs as steadfastly as conservatives do when they are criticized and attacked over and over again.

Last year, students at Poly took part in the nationwide walkout after the Parkland shooting. I chose not to participate due to the fuzzy reasoning behind it: some students claimed to walk out in order to honor the lives of those who died; others said that they

were advocating for



Graphic courtesy of Josephine Woodruff

harsher gun laws and more restrictions on firearms.

In my eyes, the walkout seemed like more of a protest than a memorial—a protest for legislation in which I do not believe. However, more than four-fifths of the class I was in at the time of the walkout, including the teacher, left.

After the walkout, I was asked by my peers why I, along with others, had stayed behind. I had to defend my stance on gun control while others who walked out gave unclear reasons as to why they had.

Participating in the walkout was the default. I am sure that at least a few students who walked out had left solely because the majority did. Instead of the walkout being a choice, it had become an obligation. I could either walk out or stay in the classroom and be labeled by my peers as pro-gun violence.

Our ominous yet navigable plight stems from the echoing nature of Poly's political atmosphere. When people in the majority consistently repeat each other's points, we reduce the possibility of contrasting perspectives.

Those with opposing viewpoints are not only ignored but also shamed and shunted into stereotypes, discouraging others from exploring those minority opinions. Over and over we hear name-calling from both sides: "bigot," "snowflake," "heartless individual."

In our world, politics has become more polarized than ever, like a baseball game between the Yankees and the Red Sox, two notorious long-time rivals. Both teams' fans boo the others, focusing more on emotional grappling than the playing field below.

Let's keep the rooting to sports. I encourage you all to do a bit more research on the "other side" and stop generalizing people or beliefs. Politics isn't a two-sided issue: it's a world of different people who, as a function of their distinct personal experiences, subscribe to diverging thoughts on any number of topics.

In order to correct our school's political redundancies, let's reject party-affiliated stereotypes and imbue our dialogues with acknowledgement, so we can listen to what others have to say.

How the communities we belong to shape who we are

By MICHAEL DESCHENES
Opinion editor

In my life, I have enjoyed the immense privilege of having people and structures that have cleared the path on which I now walk. The immense freedom they have afforded me, however, has not made me a wholly independent citizen.

All humans begin life entirely reliant on another being. It seems to me that this reliance does not fade during maturation but is rather transmuted by the world and itself into innumerable other forms of support. I am no exception to this process.

I rely on my family to both emotionally and physically guide me through life, receive my love and radiate it back, nurture my investment in the world around me, help me in my journey of becoming a young man and provide for me the things I could not otherwise obtain.

I rely on my closest friends to pick me up when I am down, remagnetize my moral compass when the needle wavers, laugh with me, let me know my outfit isn't up to par and steer me back down if I ever fly too close to the sun.

I rely on my fellow staff members on this newspaper to act as a focus group for my ideas, temper my ideological discontent and point out blunders as they inevitably infiltrate my prose.

I rely on the members of my basketball team to catch me on bad days and keep me up on good ones, push me to my limit as I push them to theirs, put in the necessary work to reach our goals and share their relative expertise in areas where I am behind.

I rely on my school to build the foundation for my future academic and social lives, force me to reconsider my assumptions and presuppositions, inform my decisions and perspectives and facilitate—not architect—my growth.

I rely on my city, Los Angeles, to bring the world to my

backyard; document history as it passes; filter that narrative and tuck it away in parks, museums, coffee shops, neighborhoods; harbor people from the world over; and put up a home for those who need it most.

I rely on the world to moderate those dealing in excess, do right for those who have been wronged, show me the great expanse, keep in checkreckless human expansion and be generous with what it bears: complexity, grandeur and life.

The idea of community is an odd thing. Some insist on individualism as an accurate, and sometimes the only, framework for humanity. In considering my dependence on the various communities of which I am a part, I imagine I would quickly find myself lost without the people and institutions surrounding me.

Our school, Poly, is a prime example of this sort of community. I do not believe very many of us students have earned the money to pay our tuition or even the unquestionable right to attend. Similarly, we have not created the wealth that has allowed this school to exist, built these walls or maintained the school since its establishment.

We have not driven ourselves to school everyday, picked up the trash that we are so confoundingly hesitant to place in the conveniently marked bins or groomed Arden lawn for lunch-goers and study breaks.

And yet, we all find ourselves here. Our presence is not because of some individual instinct but because of an inconceivably long chain of events to which only the cosmos has borne witness. Our behavior within this community is also largely a product of circumstance.

During the fall season, when I do not play a sport, I return home immediately after school and begin homework before some of my peers have even begun to head home. Before at-

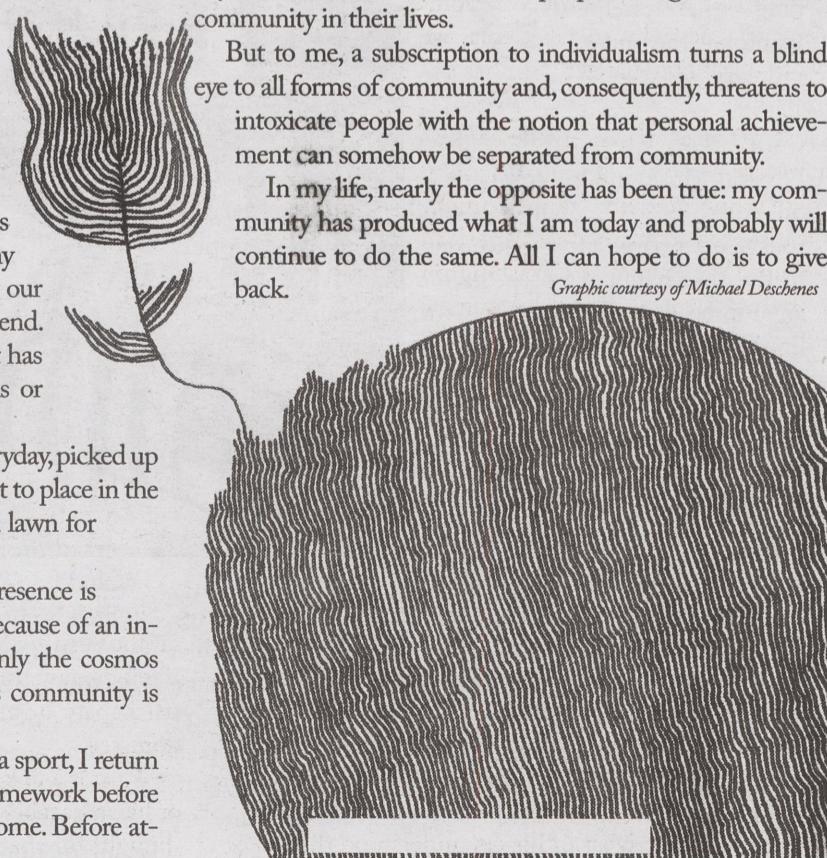
tending Poly, I went to after-school programs for math, studied cello under a remarkably knowledgeable instructor and studied at a wonderful elementary school in Boston, all experiences that have surely affected who I am today.

So what motivates people to deny the fundamental nature of community in their lives? Perhaps steely, pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps determination, a legitimate belief in the separation of humans from one another or a repudiation of any sort of communal aid drives people to negate the role of community in their lives.

But to me, a subscription to individualism turns a blind eye to all forms of community and, consequently, threatens to intoxicate people with the notion that personal achievement can somehow be separated from community.

In my life, nearly the opposite has been true: my community has produced what I am today and probably will continue to do the same. All I can hope to do is to give back.

Graphic courtesy of Michael Deschenes



Toeing the line: when does protecting ourselves strengthen rape culture?

By EMMA WENNBERG
Copy Editor

A few months ago, I was lying in bed and scrolling through Instagram when an ad appeared on my feed for Flare Jewelry. "A bracelet with a secret button to get you out of any sitch," the post read, stylized to catch the attention of any Millennial or Gen-Z'er with its minimalist cuteness, soft pink and all. Like a good new-age consumer, I succumbed to the algorithm, clicked on the post and proceeded to read its website. On the surface, the Flare bracelet seemed like a good idea: a normal-looking silver bracelet with a button on the side that will send a fake call to your phone.

But something about this product felt different from similar products that have popped up in the news intermittently over the past few years: nail polish that will detect roofies in a drink, apps that will track your location while walking home. Those products were designed for situations much more sinister, when perpetrators are actively seeking to assault others.

By contrast, Flare provides an out for a familiar situation for most women: you're at a party or bar, talking to a guy that doesn't want to leave you alone — not even aggressive, just persistent, and maybe a little creepy. With Flare, if you're uncomfortable, you can press the little button and your phone will ring, providing a perfect white lie: "Sorry, my mom wants to talk to me," or "my friend needs me." Roofie-detectors or safeguards from strangers on your walk home seems to ward against a threat of violence that's nearly impossible to change through an interpersonal interaction. Flare, however, protects women against their peers, acquaintances and friends.

At a certain point, people who go so far as to roofie drinks to rape women will continue to do so regardless of social norms.

The uneasiness and inklings of fear posed by creepy men in bars, however, are not inevitable but stem from the culture we live in. Men are taught that women exist for their pleasure, and this idea leads to negative male reactions when women reject them. Hence, Flare seeks to circumvent those rejections.

Rather than teaching men to learn how to take "no" for an answer, with Flare, we can continue to conduct ourselves in a way that makes men feel more comfortable, less rejected. With this device, we

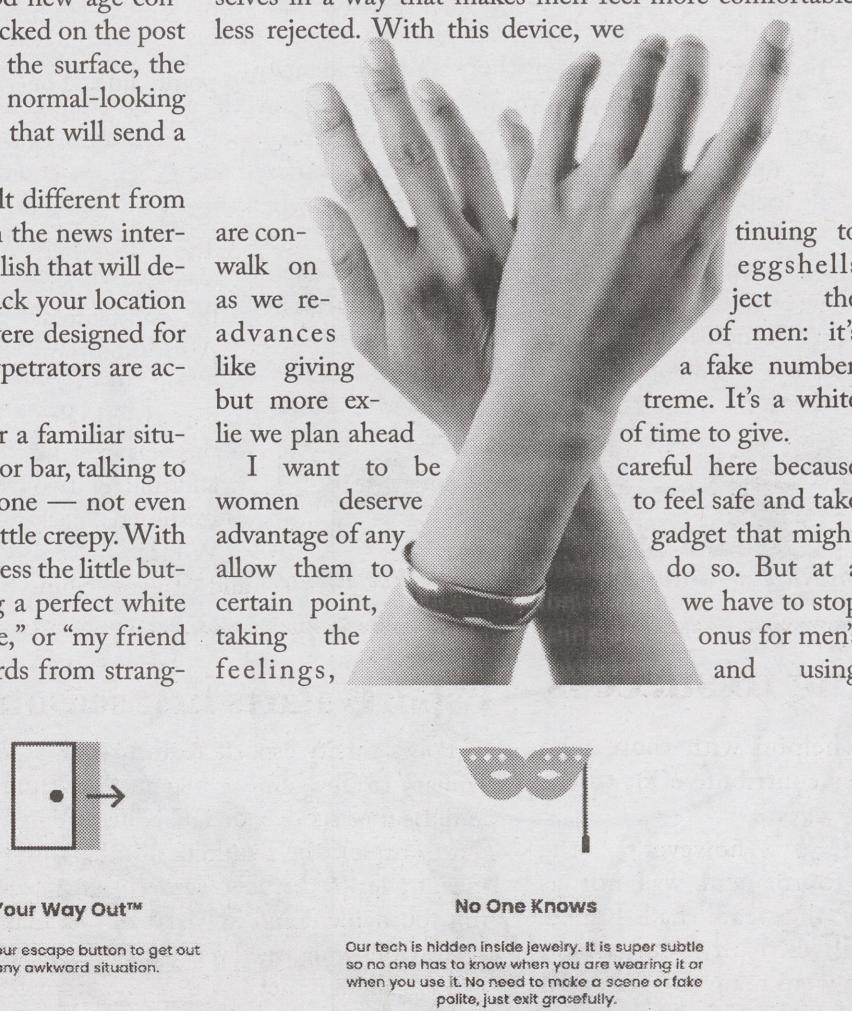
devices like Flare does nothing to change rape culture. The concept of this bracelet is predicated on the idea that women rejecting men will put us in danger, forgetting that if women never communicate their wishes assertively, men will continue to be upset when they do encounter a rejection. We all need to learn to have more honest and respectful conversations about dating and intimacy, and Flare prevents this necessary communication.

Furthermore, not everyone can own a Flare. While the price is not yet listed on the website (the product is still in development phase), it will likely not be cheap and so will be out of reach for many women.

One testimonial on Flare's website showcases the problem with this marketplace pretty perfectly: "When I get unwanted attention from guys I don't want to rock the boat or be rude. But that means I get trapped a lot. This has changed my life," says Kaila, age 22.

As women, we need to start rocking the boat or be okay with the idea that rejecting someone isn't rocking the boat in the first place. Let's start telling ourselves that we are entitled to reject the advances of men and that men are not entitled to our bodies. Men will never learn to be okay with rejection if we resort to white lies every time we wish to let someone know that we're not interested. Women using Flare actually perpetuates rape culture: it implies that women are responsible for planning each part of any possible interaction with men so that we are safe, rather than teaching men to listen and communicate respectfully with us.

Flare says something powerful and profoundly sad about the society in which we live today — that women feel so uncomfortable in public spaces and so scared of the need to tell a man "no" that we fashion intricate escape routes far ahead of time. I long for a world in which this is not the case, so let's start practicing that "no" in the mirror.



Images courtesy of the Flare website. Bottom image is marketing material listed on the site's front page.

The private space industry is creating great opportunities

By GIANNI NOTARO
Staff writer

Space science technology has advanced relentlessly since the organization of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the advent of the Space Age in the late 1950s, but only recently have engineers and businesspeople realized the profit potential of this new industry and formed companies focused on space travel.

NASA was established in 1958, three years before President Kennedy's famous goal of "landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to Earth within a decade." Now, over half a century later, private companies are stepping in and helping to propel the space industry for-

ward.

Elon Musk and his company SpaceX made headlines on April 8, 2017 after successfully landing a reusable rocket on a barge after delivering 7,000 tons of supplies to the International Space Station for NASA. This was an unprecedented achievement that streamlined the rocket launch and recovery process enormously. SpaceX is hugely important because of its low operating cost compared to that of NASA.

Jeff Bezos, the richest man in the world and CEO of Blue Origin, another company that develops rocket bodies and engines, is currently contracting with the government for things like satellite installation. The entry of billionaires into the field of space science indicates how lucrative this industry can be for relatively new companies. The obvious impact Bezos and Musk have had illustrate why people need to pay more attention to private space travel, and some are certainly starting to do so.

The influx of huge sums of money into the space industry has sparked competition between the various companies vying for the government contracts that keep these businesses afloat. Traditional aerospace companies like Boeing, Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman have dominated the market for years. But these companies occupy distinct parts of the industry, opening up other areas of the field to less traditional companies.

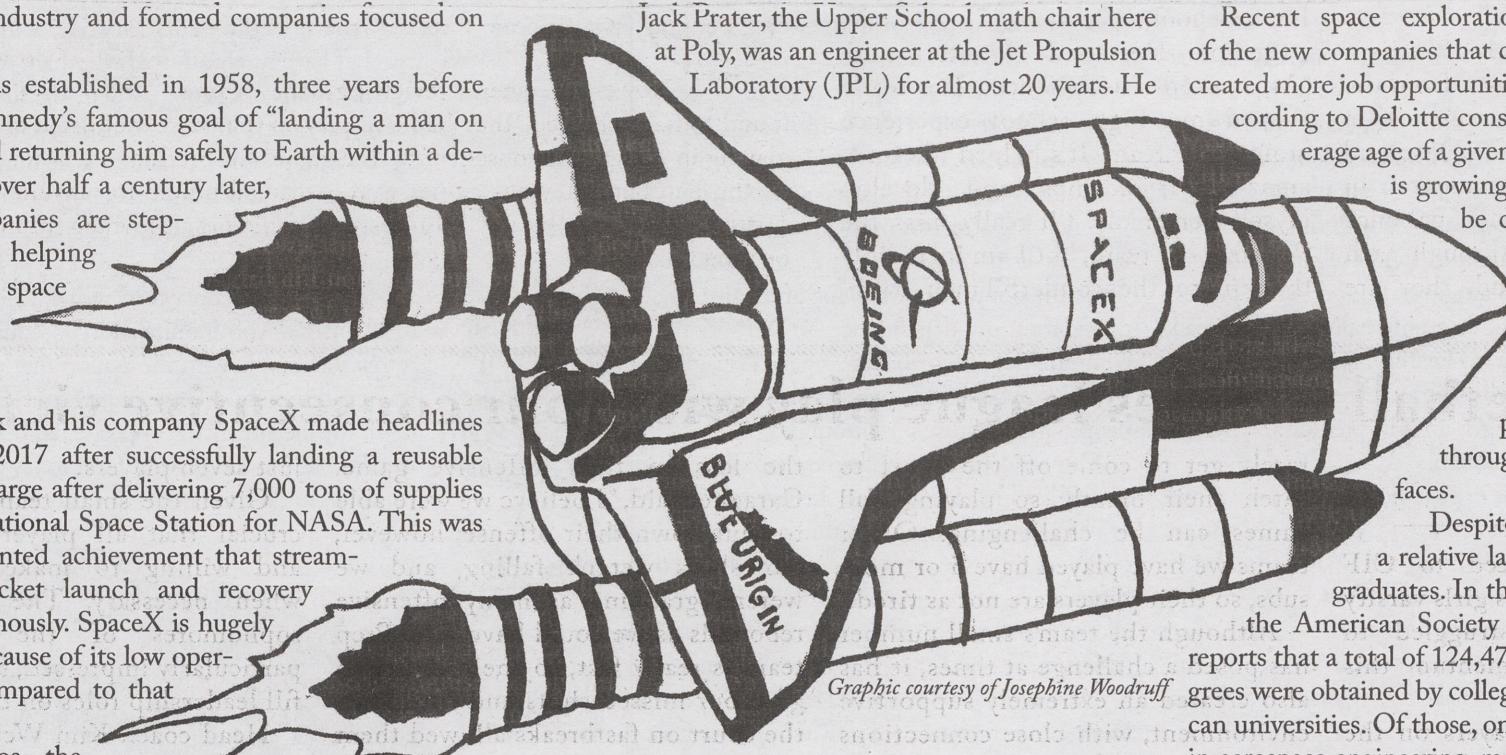
Jack Prater, the Upper School math chair here at Poly, was an engineer at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) for almost 20 years. He

stainless steel instead of carbon composite. Mr. Prater explained that older rockets used stainless steel, but the computer modeling wasn't advanced enough to determine the correct ratio between the thickness and weight of the steel. With new advanced computer modeling, old ideas are being revisited as the space industry marches on, now headed both by private companies and government organizations.

Recent space exploration — and the emergence of the new companies that came with it — have also created more job opportunities in an expanding field. According to Deloitte consultant Jeff Mathews, the average age of a given person in the space industry is growing older. Yet this age gap may be changing: the private sector of the space industry draws heavily from engineers straight out of college because it needs fresh ideas and techniques to push the industry forward through the different challenges it faces.

Despite the demand, there is still a relative lack of aerospace engineering graduates. In the 2016-2017 academic year, the American Society for Engineering Education reports that a total of 124,477 engineering bachelor's degrees were obtained by college students across all American universities. Of those, only about 4,000 degrees were in aerospace engineering, meaning that there is room in the workforce for these ever-expanding companies.

As Poly students, many of us have either forgotten our childhood interest in becoming an astronaut or recently been intrigued by this developing industry. The private sector for space exploration is experiencing growing pains as it matures, meaning you or one of your peers could be critical. Poly graduates who do go on to work in or lead this industry must not forget their parents' assurances that they can achieve anything. Now, even the sky is not the limit.



Graphic courtesy of Josephine Woodruff

worked on numerous projects during his tenure at JPL, including several antennas onboard the rover Curiosity, which is currently exploring Mars.

With regards to the industry, Mr. Prater said, "We can do things we wanted to in the past but never could because of the technology. There aren't many new ideas, but old ones have become more viable because development of technology over the years."

For instance, just last week, SpaceX announced the construction of a Big Falcon Rocket in Texas using

After defeating rival Flintridge Prep, boys basketball to make a CIF showing

By ANDREW DESCENES
Staff writer

The boys basketball program is currently in a transition year after losing four key seniors, three of whom were post players. Although the loss impacts the amount of leaders and forwards, players have stepped up into leadership roles. The team has adapted to a guard-focused, fast playing, 3-point shooting style of play in order to make up for their lack of size. So far, the team has been successful in this transition as they are 14-4 outside of league and 4-4 in league games, achieving an overall record of 18-8.

The leaders for the team have been junior co-captain Nicholas Richard-Craven and senior co-captain Nicholas Tu.

The two guards lead on the court with their sharpshooting and play-making abilities.

Outside of games, Richard-Craven and Tu work hard to improve and lead by example, which is critical with an

inexperienced team.

The skill that sets Poly's team apart is their ability to shoot. As a team full of guards, Poly must heavily rely on their ability to consistently sink outside shots. So

far, they have not disappointed. The team boasts a wide range of skilled shooters who have performed at a high level this season, and the numbers back it up. Poly had three consecutive wins in the Huntington Park tournament in which they

shot over forty percent from the three-point line. For reference, that

is five percent better than the NBA average.

The Panthers went on to win the tournament.

Also important to the Panthers' development this season is the

addition of two freshmen, Jack Williams and Trevor Shin.

Having played together with the Gabriel Valley Basketball Club since second grade, Williamson and Shin have developed chemistry together as well as individual skills off the Poly court, allowing them to seamlessly transition into high school basketball.

Richard-Craven praised their play in a recent Flintridge Prep match, saying, "Our two freshmen played very well in our last game. It's a big stage, which made it even more impressive."

This season, however, hasn't been free from struggles. At one point in the team's season, they lost four games in a row.

Head coach Brad Hall commented on how to come back from a rut and gain the edge in upcoming games, saying, "We just worry about ourselves and work hard to get better every day. Sometimes you play good teams, and you're not going to beat every team you play."

As league play has ended, the Panthers' hard work paid off as they will have already played their first CIF playoff game this past Wednesday.



Junior Nicholas Richard-Craven goes up strong over the defense.

Senior leadership leads fencing to success

By MARC PANOSIAN
Assistant sports editor

With the end of the winter season near, the Panthers have one final tournament left to prove themselves as a legitimate and competitive fencing team.

Senior Ian Kim said, "Right now we are getting ready for our final tournament with more conditioning and drills, as well as more bouts (fencing)."

After a full season of play, the Panthers currently have two rated fencers for the United States Fencing Association (USFA). Sophomore Rufus Marcussen is currently rated as E18 in foil and senior Ian Kim is rated as E18 in saber—the rankings go from "E" to "A." These two fencers compete in different events due to the weapons they use.

A key component to the Panthers' success this season has come from the leadership of the upperclassmen. Kim said, "Majid Bhatti and Desmond Mantle have been instrumental in teaching the underclassmen patience as well as perseverance through each and every match. To add, they are

friendly and helpful with those who struggle—they contribute a lot to the team in those ways."

Unfortunately, however, the most recent tournament was not as promising as the team had hoped. "It was a high difficulty tournament because there were many USFA-rated fencers. None of us performed quite as well as we had wished for since the competition was immensely difficult. Some of our competitors came in from other states, including Arizona," Kim recalled.

With only one tournament left for the Panthers, their season soon comes to an end. Many seniors will be dearly missed as they have been pillars of the team's success for the last four years, but they understand that they must put all their effort into their matches in the Team Foil Challenge at Gryphon High School.

Senior Desmond Mantle said, "As a seven-season fencer, I've really shaped my high school experience around the team. It's helped me form amazing friendships and develop myself personally. I'll really miss the Poly fencing team, but I am incredibly thankful for the wonderful memories."

Esports starts first season strong with 2-1 record

Poly's varsity esports team played its very first Overwatch match on Friday, January 18. The game was against St. Anne's High School, a school from Virginia, and the final score ended up being 2-0 in favor of Poly (the whole match was best out of three). The Panthers won handily, but they still have room to improve. It meant a lot to the new team, currently made up of seven players, both to play in this tournament and to win their first match.

The following week was the Panthers' second match against D.W. Daniel High School. Though they lost 2-0, the team learned a lot from the experience, and

they are ready to get back to work on improving their Overwatch skills.

The Panthers' third match of the season was against a team known as Syndicate, whom Poly lost to 1-2. Syndicate was

found to have cheated. They had two players that were not listed on their roster playing in the game. Consequently, the game will count as a win for Poly.

The Panthers' previous games were streamed online for anyone to watch at <https://www.twitch.tv/polytechnicsports>, which is also where future games will be broadcasted.

- Dexter Knaack

Girls basketball finishes league play with four consecutive victories

By BECKETT NEWTON
Staff writer

Though they advanced to CIF semifinals last year, Poly's girls varsity basketball team has struggled to maintain the same momentum this season.

Having only eight players on the roster has presented many challenges, with perhaps the most significant being that the girls have to play for much longer periods of time than they are used to. With very few subs on the bench, there are not many opportunities for them to take breaks during games.

Freshman Taryn Chadwick said, "Having only two subs for most of the season has been difficult. Players

rarely get to come off the court to catch their breath, so playing full games can be challenging. Other teams we have played have 5 or more subs, so their players are not as tired."

Although the team's small number has posed a challenge at times, it has also created an extremely supportive environment, with close connections among teammates.

Junior Keara Caragher said, "We are a very close team, and we get along really well, so our team chemistry is great. We're also an unselfish team, so passing the ball and finding the open player works well for us."

In a recent game against rival Flintridge Prep, the Panthers fell to the Rebels with a final score of 50-31. Ultimately, the team attributes

the loss to their offensive game. Caragher said, "I believe we were able to shut down their offense; however, our shots weren't falling, and we weren't grabbing as many offensive rebounds as we could have. The Prep team is really fast, so their ability to grab our missed shots and run down the court on fastbreaks allowed them to pull away."

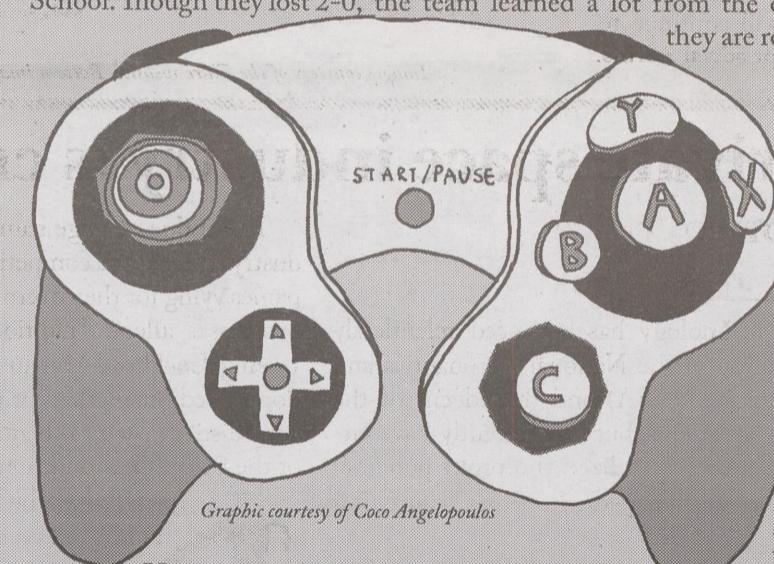
Another blow to the Panthers' already-short roster came when the Panthers faced Providence, a new addition to the Prep League. Junior Shannon Dilbeck, who had just come back from a concussion she suffered before the winter season began, re-dislocated the shoulder she injured last year, forcing the Panthers to have to play the rest of their season with

just seven players.

Given the small team, it has been crucial that all players be flexible and willing to make adjustments when necessary. The juniors and sophomores of the team have particularly impressed, stepping up to fill leadership roles on the team.

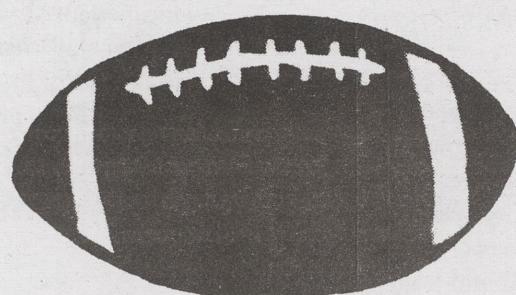
Head coach Kim Weber said, "I've asked a lot out of them. They've had to mature, so to speak, more quickly than other programs could ask of their sophomores and juniors."

To finish Prep League play, the girls team downed Rio Hondo, Mayfield twice and Westridge. Their strong last four games gave them the boost they needed to make the cut to replicate last year's run.



However, when reviewing the game, Syndicate was

found to have cheated. They had two players that were not listed on their roster playing in the game. Consequently, the game will count as a win for Poly.



Graphic courtesy of Jojo Woodruff

JV: an alternative experience

By THOMAS MCCONNELL
Sports editor

"JV sports: the pinnacle of athletic success". This was the much-quoted motto of the 2017-2018 JV Boys Soccer team. While many student athletes strive to compete at the varsity level, for some, this is not a possibility. Many other athletes aim simply to fulfill their sports credit requirement, and others want to play sports to have a good time or get exercise while avoiding the significant time and energy commitment required of varsity sports. Regardless of motivation, JV sports serve as a haven for all student athletes not looking for a varsity experience but still seeking competition and camaraderie.

Although the original purpose of JV programs was to provide a space for underclassmen not yet ready to play for varsity to develop, JV also offers upperclassmen a space to have a fun season with far less pressure and

time commitment and than that of a varsity team.

As a freshman on the JV football team, I was able to gain valuable experience playing football at the high school level, without having to go against kids three years my superior and, at the time, what seemed like four times my size. As a junior on the JV basketball team this year, I saw the other side of the JV experience. Now being one of the upperclassmen who had once intimidated me as a freshman, I was able to have a fun and competitive season, without having to worry about being on the varsity team, where I would have been one of the worst players and most likely would not have seen the court much.

We wanted to highlight the importance of JV sports in the Poly sports community, so we've included quotes from five different players from some of this year's JV teams, as well as pictures from each team's season.

Boys JV Soccer



The Panthers celebrate scoring a goal against Salesian High School.

Junior Harry Foy: "I play JV because I love the game and being on the field. I like winning but not being too competitive, like on varsity. On JV, you don't have to worry about messing up and losing playing time because everyone gets to play regardless of skill."

Boys JV Basketball



Freshman Cormac Murran snags a rebound against Buckley High School.

Junior Henry D'Amico: "I think the good part of being on JV is just having fun with it. As an upperclassmen who will probably never play competitive basketball again, I appreciated the opportunity to play a game that I have always enjoyed. Also, being able to get to know some underclassmen that I wouldn't know otherwise was cool."

Girls JV Soccer



Photos courtesy of Poly Communications

Senior Rory Xanders goes for a fifty-fifty ball against Mayfield Senior School. **Freshman Eleanor Veitch:** "My favorite part about JV soccer was definitely the laid back atmosphere of the team. We definitely had some skilled players and were a competitive team, but we still had a lot of fun and didn't take ourselves too seriously."

Girls JV Basketball



Freshman Sarah Burke takes the ball up the court against Flintridge Prep.

Junior Olivia Jessner: "Though we never found success in the traditional manner by winning any games, we took our losses lightly and found ways to be happy with how we improved. From the beginning of the season to the end our growth was tremendous and maybe next year the JV girls basketball team will get one or two wins."

Girls JV Water Polo



Sophomore Lena Oldfield drives by a Westridge defender.

Sophomore Lena Oldfield: "We had a really weird JV water polo season because we didn't have a full roster, but I personally prefer playing JV sports because the practices and games are usually less stressful and more laid back. It's really fun because we still practice with varsity, so we all bonded—the varsity and JV teams."

Girls soccer enters first round of CIF; boys play wild card game

By ANNA MCCONNELL
Staff writer

After a 7-1 loss against Flintridge Prep and a 2-2 tie against Mayfield, the Poly girls varsity soccer team has rebounded with three decisive victories against Westridge, Chadwick and Providence. The team defeated Westridge 2-1, Chadwick 7-0 and Providence 7-0, bringing their league record to 6-1-1 and overall record to 10-3-2.

In the recent game against rival Flintridge Prep, the Panthers, despite losing 7-1, ended the first half of play down only 1-0. This high level of play continued during the first ten minutes of the second half, which ended with the Panthers down just 2-1. However, the Panthers struggled to keep up with Prep's skilled offense as the game went on, giving up five more goals by the end.

While the game ended as a blowout, given the talent of the Prep team, the Panther's ability to compete with the Rebels to some extent bodes well for the rest of the season. This year, Prep's varsity soccer team is extremely skilled, holding an impressive 20-0-1 overall record. They are also ranked 18th in California, 44th nationally and first in CIF Division II.

Freshman Ella McDonald said, "In the first half, we all were playing hard, connecting passes well. We were definitely playing to the Rebels' level, but then in the second half, we started to lose momentum as Prep started to play harder, and we just kind of fell apart after that. Prep was a good team,

but I think we had a chance if we had played the second half like we played the first one."

The team's recent struggles can also be attributed to, in part, the heavy rain and two week winter break that came just before both games.

Head coach Pat Gray said, "Because this rain has lasted as long as it has as well as the two week winter break, we haven't had much time to practice on the field, so we're a little bit out of rhythm. The biggest thing we are working on now is continuing to connect on the field and get back into our rhythm."

In mid-December, the team also suffered the loss of junior outside defender Regan Gray during a home game. Gray tore her ACL, a severe injury to the knee, taking her out for the rest of the season. With Gray out, the team's depth and versatility have helped them fill the void left in the defense.

Freshman Ella Wu-Ancipink said, "Regan was an important part of our defense, and we really relied on her speed and strength down the side to help stop the other team's offense. It was a tough adjustment having her gone, but

we are all working hard to fill in the hole she left".

Despite losing to Flintridge Prep twice, the girls maintained their second place ranking in the Prep League.

This past Wednesday, the Panthers played their first CIF game.

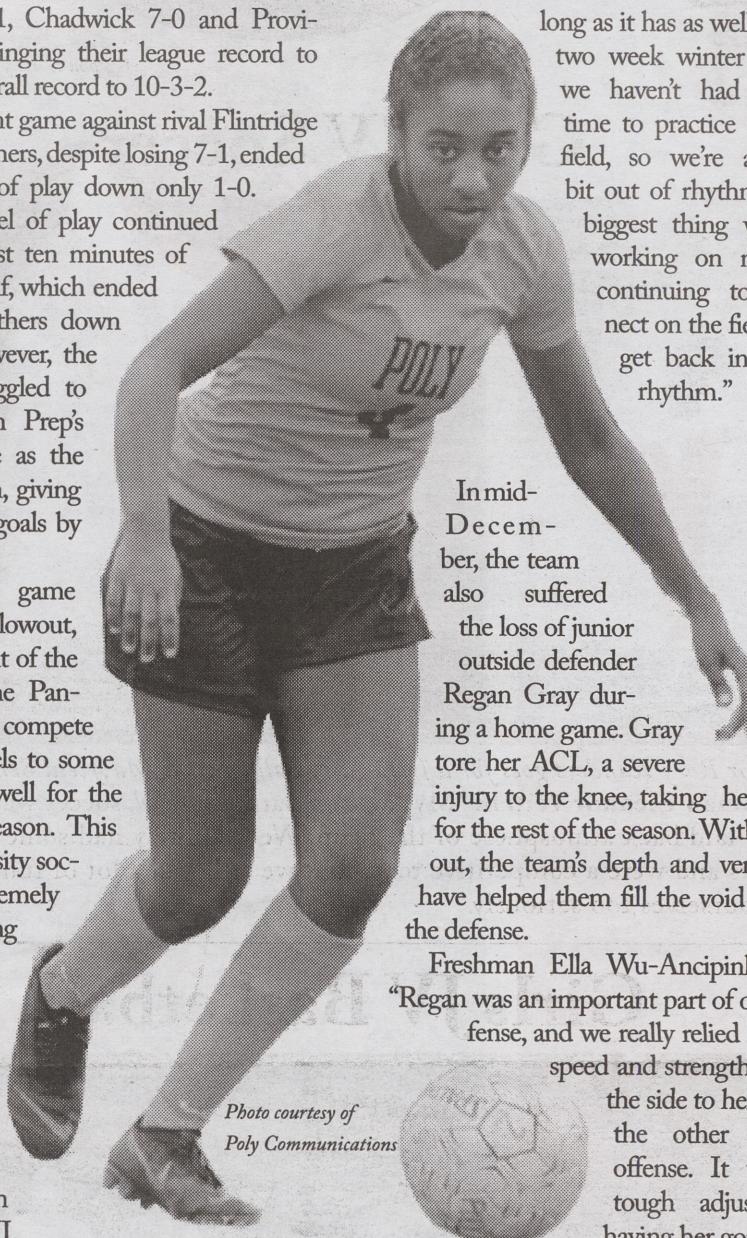


Photo courtesy of Poly Communications

By THOMAS MCCONNELL
Sports editor

Heading into their last three league games, the varsity boys' soccer team was unsure if they would qualify for CIF playoffs.

After a 2-0 loss to rival Flintridge Prep in a rare under-the-lights night game, the Panthers needed a strong finish to qualify for playoffs for the first time since the 2015-2016 season.

After a dominant

4-1 win against

Providence,

the Pan-

ters

went

into

their

last game

of the season against Chadwick needing a win or a tie to qualify. In a close game, the Panthers tied the Dolphins 0-0, giving the program its first playoff berth in three years.

Along with being the program's first playoff appearance in three years, this year is also first-year head coach Dan Sheridan's first playoff showing at Poly, an impressive feat in his first season coaching the Panthers.

The Panthers fin-

ished 10-6-3 overall

and 3-2-1 in Prep

League play.

However, while the team did finish the season with a playoff bid, as with any team with a new coach, it took some time for the players and coach to acclimate to each other. At the end of the Panthers' first five games, they were 2-3—a playoff showing did not seem likely.

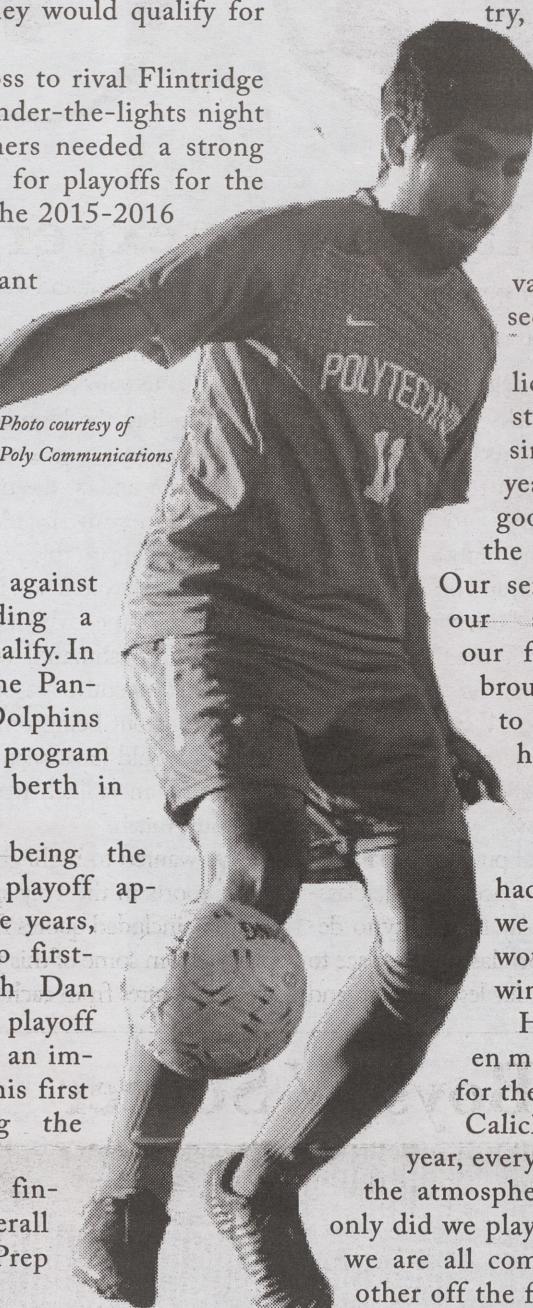


Photo courtesy of Poly Communications

This year's squad is also one of the best Poly has had in years. The team, despite losing two-time captain and defensive star Evan Hayes, who decided to focus on training for cross country, has a strong core of upperclassmen, backed by underclassmen such as sophomore Connor Boyle, who is starting on the varsity squad for the second year in a row.

Junior Josh Calichman, who has started on varsity since his freshman year, said, "We have good players across the board this year. Our seniors, our juniors, our sophomores and our freshmen all have brought something to the table, which hasn't been the case in the past. Coming into the season, we knew we had good players, and we were hoping that would translate into winning games."

However, it has taken more than just talent for the team to succeed.

Calichman added, "This year, everyone was close and the atmosphere was great. Not only did we play well together, but we are all compatible with each other off the field as well, which helped us form bonds that are impossible to form just through soccer. This chemistry combined with our skill on the field helped us a lot this season."

The boys played Lighthouse Christian at home in a Division VI wildcard game this past Tuesday.

Girls water polo seeded third in Division IV after falling in recent tournament

By BECKETT NEWTON
Staff writer

The girls water polo team started their season nothing short of perfect, winning all of their first seventeen games, before dropping their next 4 games. The 17-win start, however, was the team's best start in over a decade. The girls' dominating season includes an immaculate 11-0 record in league, with wins against Flintridge Prep, Westridge and Brentwood as they outscored their opponents 54-13 over the three games.

After having their season cut short in the first round of the CIF playoffs last year, the team is determined to end this season with a different outcome. Despite losing three seniors, including captains Kate McInerny and Natalie Clark, junior and leading goal-scorer Talie Wilmans says the transition into this season has been positive.

"We're a lot more focused on CIF and our captains are doing a great job of ensuring that our team is close and that we are getting better as a whole instead of players improving individually," said Wilmans.

This dynamic of team chemistry along with the players' hard work and dedication

are the driving forces behind the team's success.

"I think the fact that our team is very close helps us play very coherently," Wilmans added.

Alongside team chemistry, the team's level of focus in the pool as CIF approaches has been vital to their success.

Sophomore Caroline "Boo" Kelleher

said, "In practice we're implementing new plays, building our defense and improving fundamentally."

Kelleher is a part of a talented group of underclassmen that also includes sophomores Audrey Kim, Katie Hoffman, Lauren Kidman and Sarah Ryan. Last year, Kelleher finished with 57 goals scored, second to only Wilmans, who scored 134.

Both Wilmans and Kelleher were significant contributors to last year's goal total of 370, a number this year's team is on track to surpass by nearly one hundred. This year, the play from the underclassmen has softened the impact of losing three seniors and has given the upperclassmen the necessary support for the incredible run the team is enjoying.

In terms of CIF, every member of the team experienced last year's loss and understands what is needed to move past the first round and make a serious push to the finals. However before they officially move onto CIF, the girls must first win league.

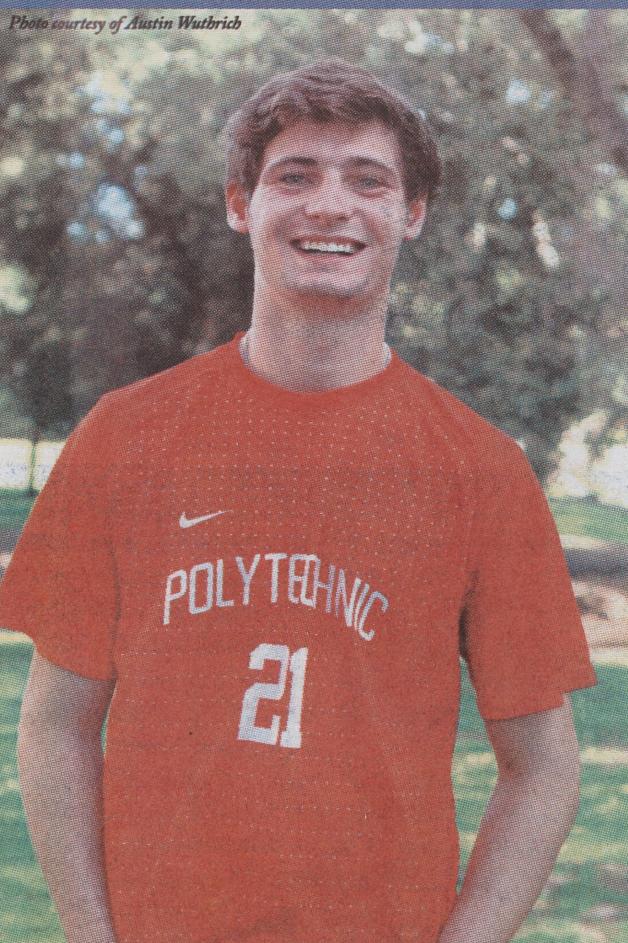
While the team qualified for CIF, ranked third in Division IV, the Panthers struggled in the recent Los Altos tournament. The girls lost all four matches, largely because of the absence of Wilmans and Kim. Additionally, senior Lily Maechling missed the majority of the games due to an injury. While two of the teams they lost to are in higher divisions, they also lost to Downey High School, who is also in CIF Division IV and whom they may face again in CIF.

This past Tuesday, the Panthers played their first CIF match against Rancho Cucamonga.



Sophomore goalie Lauren Kidman, in her first year on Poly's varsity team, reaches to save a ball.

Athlete of the Issue Alec Walsh



Senior Alec Walsh has consistently shown his athleticism and leadership, whether it be on Poly's varsity water polo or varsity soccer teams.

Walsh's varsity career for the Panthers started when he was a freshman—his clear talent earned him a starting spot among a team of primarily upperclassmen. Obviously, Walsh's skills didn't come from just anywhere. His passion for the game began years before sports were given even an inkling of focus in most children's minds.

Starting with an AYSO team at the age of three, Walsh learned the basics of the game and soon fell in love with it. Just five years later, he joined an extremely competitive club team where he continued to develop his game.

Walsh's varsity soccer career began his freshman year where he faced opponents that were often two or even three years his senior. Nonetheless, he managed to start in every single game that season and in every game since. Walsh has also proven his versatility by playing as both a right back on defense and a center midfielder, the latter of which is his current position on the Panthers' squad.

This season, Walsh has been a key contributor in many of Poly's matchups, helping them to their 4-3-1 league record.

Junior Renzo Soatto said, "He gets to practice early and leaves practice late. If you can't find him on campus, it's probably because he's shooting. This incredible work ethic creates an absolute rock in our midfield, unrivaled by anyone in recent history. Surely, Alec is one of the most dedicated and consistent players Poly soccer has ever seen."

As a senior this year, Poly's soccer team looks to him for leadership. While the Panthers don't have assigned captains for the soccer team, the upperclassmen are naturally seen as leaders, a role which Walsh has done an excellent job of filling.

- Kylie Kishi

Athlete of the Future Trevor Shin



Freshman Trevor Shin gives Poly's boys varsity basketball team a boost of energy every time he steps onto the court. In his first season of high school basketball, he has demonstrated not only the skillset but also the work ethic needed to succeed at a higher level.

Sophomore teammate Brandon Szeto said, "Trevor works hard to improve his game during every practice, making not only himself but also everyone else better. During games, his energy and positivity help the team greatly, especially when it's close."

Shin poses both an offensive and defensive threat—his quickness allows him to disrupt passes and frustrate opponents on defense, resulting in a number of steals for the freshman. His athleticism enables him to slip by defenders and get to the rim despite his lack of size. Additionally, Shin's years of club basketball experience add to his effectiveness on both sides of the court.

"He's a quick and aggressive guard who has a lot of potential to have a really good Poly career," senior captain Nick Tu said.

Shin's basketball career began when he was in kindergarten; since then, he has played for both recreational and club teams. His ten years of basketball experience, coupled with his love of the game, are clearly reflected in his accomplishments during his freshman season.

The plays that Shin makes off the ball—which may not always show up in statistics—are an important aspect of the Panthers' defensive game.

As a freshman, Shin has certainly made waves in Poly's basketball program, and much is expected from him as he continues to grow over the next three years.

- Kylie Kishi

Athlete of the Issue Simone Robinson



Senior Simone Robinson's ability to control the defensive side has made her a key player on Poly's varsity soccer team for four years. Her dominance and poise have helped the team succeed through all her seasons of play.

Robinson has become a reliable teammate and incredible friend to all of her teammates. Junior Regan Gray said, "I've learned so much and had so much fun playing with Simone for the past three years. Simone is a strong and extremely reliable teammate on and off the field. She has really stepped up as a leader for the team this season and has become someone the entire team can always count on."

As Robinson demonstrates her admirable control and movement of the ball, she embodies the definition of a captain, encouraging underclassmen as their play develops. She brightens everyone's day at practice, and her quick decision-making and calculated passes during games prove that she leads by example.

Head coach Patrick Gray commented, "It has been such a joy to watch Simone grow over the past four years. Her journey from a more quiet member of the team to now being one of the key leaders both on and off the field has been truly amazing. Simone is one of our most experienced and best defenders with a nice combination of speed, toughness and intelligence."

Robinson is an impactful player, a natural leader and a supportive teammate. Her growth over her four years has made her a confident, approachable senior, and this growth has not gone unnoticed by her coaches and teammates.

As the Panthers head toward the end of the season, the team will rely on Robinson's character and talent to lead them to another playoff berth.

- Luisa Breen

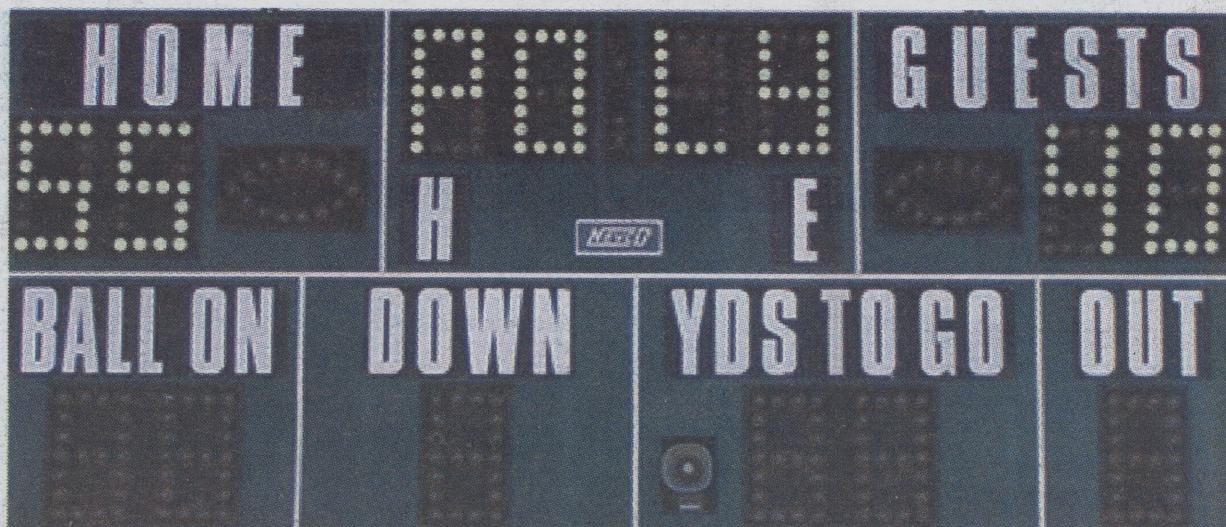
By The Numbers

7

Number of shutout games by the girls varsity soccer team

22

Points for freshman Jack Williamson against Fillmore



15

Number of assists by Sinjin Mendenhall this season

7

Number of blocks by Keara Caragher against Mayfield Senior