

# The Poly Optimist

John H. Francis Polytechnic High School

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SERVING THE POLY COMMUNITY SINCE 1913

SEPTEMBER 2011

The shot heard round the District Parrots scramble to meet state-imposed deadline for getting Tdap booster shot.

By Ana Gonzalez  
Staff Writer

In yet another strong showing, Poly hit 99% just before the Labor Day break.

But this score was for students with Tdap shots, not high API scores.

"I want to thank Parrots, their parents, LAUSD and the nurses and Poly staff," said Poly Principal Gerardo Loera.

The deadline for students to show proof of inoculation is September 6.

Only about 30-40 Parrots have not been inoculated and will not be allowed to return to school until they get the booster, which protects against Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis.

As recently as a week ago, 250 Parrots still hadn't received the Tdap.

The current Tdap flap began last year, when over 9000 cases of whooping cough struck the state, the largest such epidemic in decades. Health officials said unimmunized teenagers were a factor in the disease's spread.

In response, then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) signed a law (AB 354) imposing the pertussis vaccine requirement for older students in September 2010.

The mandate took effect July 1, 2011.

Preteens and teens were required to have their proof of vaccination in hand on the very first day of school, or be sent home until they get it.

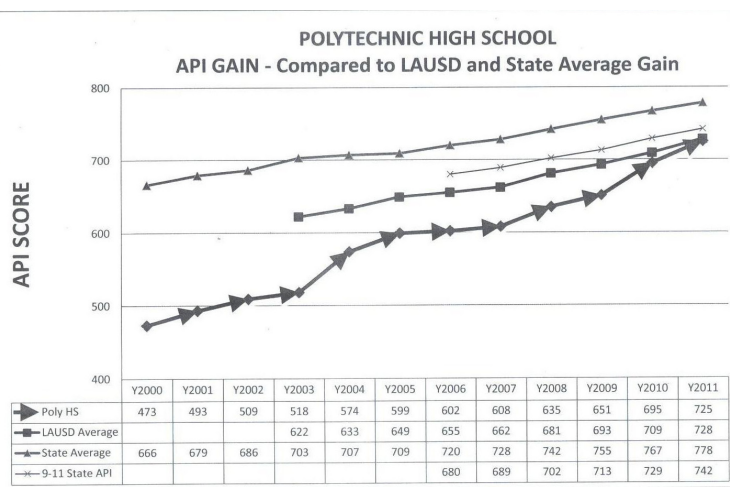
State officials started notifying school districts in October 2010, after the measure was signed into law Sept. 29. A radio campaign began July 1, 2011.

State public health officials were aware that year-round schools started in July, said Ken August, a California Department of Public Health spokesman, and attempted to target them. (LAT)

"Our efforts were directed at all schools," he said, adding that "different schools and school districts have approached this mandate in different ways."

L.A. Unified sent parents a letter

[ See Vaccine, pg 2 ]



Graph courtesy of Gerardo Loera

TREND LINE: Poly's API is up 257 points since 2000, most in LAUSD.

## All-Time High For Magnet API

By Mariel Lopez  
Staff Writer

Poly Math and Science Magnet's 2011 Academic Performance Index (API) of 904 is the highest in the small learning community's 16-year history, according to magnet coordinator Jane Couchois.

"The students and teachers work really hard," Couchois said. "The teachers have high expectations for students and most importantly, the students have high expectations of themselves, and I think that's why we did so well."

Considered the cornerstone of California's *Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999*, API measures the academic performance and growth of schools on a variety of academic measures.

Couchois said a sharper focus and targeted CST reviews have helped students improve their scores.

"Ninth grade English had over 90% proficiency, as did the 9th grade geometry," Couchois said. "Tenth and 11th grade summative math were over 70% proficient. World and U.S history were at or near 70%."

"Our biggest jump was in 9th grade physics, where we went from 50 to 70% proficient. Biology and life sciences were over 90% proficient and Chemistry was at 60%."

[ See New Magnet, pg 2 ]

## New Parrot Drama Coach

By Maureen Kang  
Staff Writer

The film was 2001's "Catch Me If You Can," starring Leonardo DiCaprio and directed by Steven Spielberg.

And that flight attendant with puffy hair and glasses, that was budding actress Katy Groskin.

You read that right. Katy Groskin, recently arrived Poly drama teacher.

"I would start at 6 am and literally work for 12 hours," Groskin said. "We weren't allowed to talk to the main actors. It was considered unprofessional."

DiCaprio was tall and geeky, Groskin said. "Steven Spielberg was a very friendly man," Groskin said. "He actually talked to us."

Today, Groskin says she just wants to act. "TV shows are what I'm aiming for," Groskin said. "That's where the spotlight and attention are at nowadays. Some of the best writers write for TV shows." Groskin grew up in Teaneck, New Jersey and started acting in second grade.

"I always wanted to be a singer/actor," Groskin said.

"I loved theater as a child, especially the attention."

At 15, Groskin was in a production of "The Jungle Book" at a children's theater's camp.

"I was the oldest member there," Groskin said. "I didn't like my part, so I went to talk to the director. He said, 'This role is for you because you're such a leader.' That impacted me."

Groskin came to LA in 1997 and studied at the UCLA's School for Theater, Film and Television. While in school, she helped found Equal Opportunity Productions, a non-profit arts outreach program that brings theater arts to elementary school children.

After getting her credential at CSUN, Groskin accepted a teaching position at Manual Arts in Los Angeles in 2002. The high school dropped its theater

[ See Drama, pg 2 ]



Photo By Diane Alvarado  
FRESH FACE: Katy Groskin.

## Poly Exceeds Expectations

Lengthy string of annual API increases continues with 30-point gain in 2011.

By Jacky Galvan  
Staff Writer

Poly's 2011 API of 725, released just days ago, represents a 257-point gain since the metric's inception in 2000. The latest score is a 30-point gain over last year's 695.

"The 252 point increase is the largest of any LAUSD high school in the San Fernando Valley," said Poly Principal Gerardo Loera.

Poly's target API for 2011 was 702.

The API is made up of a weighted average of CST scores, CAPA (California Alternate Performance Assessment) scores, CMA (California Modified Assessment) scores and CAHSEE (California High School Exit Exam) scores.

Ninth graders led the way this year.

"Poly 9th graders did really well," Loera said. "Thirty-six percent of the ninth graders scored advanced and that makes Poly number one in non-charter schools. That's huge for a high school."

Ninth grade magnet physics went up from 49% Proficient to 71% in one year. Far below basic (FBB) and below basic (BB) went from 8% to 6%.

"That's huge," Loera said.

CAHSEE scores also made huge jumps.

"The percentage of students who

passed both the English and math portions of the CAHSEE on their first try went from 80% to 86%."

Loera said beating last year's API gets harder every year.

"It's hard to continue to improve," Loera said, "and with the budget cuts, we are losing critical people. But we have to continue to teach and learn."

The API score is important, Loera said

"We want to know how students are doing."

## Boss Pays a Visit

LAUSD chief John Deasy is part of Poly's opening day.

By Ramses Lemus  
Staff Writer

LAUSD Superintendent John Deasy made a brief, unannounced visit to Poly on opening day.

"He got here around 10:30 a.m.," said Poly Principal Gerardo Loera. "He wanted to make sure that everything was running smoothly and that the teachers were teaching and the students were inside the rooms."

Deasy was accompanied by Matt Hill, who runs LAUSD's turnaround/outsourcing project. Hill's salary is paid by local billionaire Eli Broad.

Newly-hired Deputy Superintendent of Instruction Jaime Aquino and Chief of Staff Michelle King, hired by former Superintendent Ramon Cortines last July, were here also.

The high-level visitors went to classrooms on their own, according to Loera.

"We spoke only a few minutes in the hallway," Loera said, "while he was going from one place to another. Prior visits we've talked a little longer, but it's always been walk and talk."

Deasy left around 11:00. He also visited Arleta High And Sun Valley High, which also opened August 5.

[ See Deasy, pg 2 ]



Google Image

## Metal Fatigue No Problem

The Crue rocks the Strip 30 years later.

CITY LIFE - pg. 6



Photo by Diane Alvarado

## The Shift Is On

New coach says he'll run the Spread Option.

SPORTS - pg. 8



## OPINION

## EDITORIAL

## The Teacher's Kid

Educators and concerned citizens from across the country gathered on the White House Ellipse July 30 to urge national leaders to focus on education reform that provides a high-quality education for every student.

I flew overnight from Vancouver to be with you today. I landed in New York a few hours ago and caught a flight down here because I needed to tell you all in person that I think you're awesome.

I was raised by a teacher. My mother is a professor of early childhood education. And from the time I went to kindergarten through my senior year in high school, I went to public schools. I wouldn't trade that education and experience for anything.

I had incredible teachers. As I look at my life today, the things I value most about myself — my imagination, my love of acting, my passion for writing, my love of learning, my curiosity — all come from how I was parented and taught.

And none of these qualities that I've just mentioned — none of these qualities that I prize so deeply, that have brought me so much joy, that have brought me so much professional success — none of these qualities that make me who I am ... can be tested.

I said before that I had incredible teachers. And that's true. But it's more than that. My teachers were EMPOWERED to teach me. Their time wasn't taken up with a bunch of test prep — this silly drill and kill nonsense that any serious person knows doesn't promote real learning. No, my teachers were free to approach me and every other kid in that classroom like an individual puzzle. They took so much care in figuring out who we were and how to best make the lessons resonate with each of us. They were empowered to unlock our potential. They were allowed to be teachers.

Now don't get me wrong. I did have a brush with standardized tests at one point. I remember because my mom went to the principal's office and said, 'My kid ain't taking that.

The culmination of a week of conferences, Saturday's Save Our Schools March featured actor Matt Damon, whose mother was a teacher. Below is his speech.

It's stupid, it won't tell you anything and it'll just make him nervous.' That was in the '70s when you could talk like that.

I shudder to think that these tests are being used today to control where funding goes.

I don't know where I would be today if my teachers' job security was based on how I performed on some standardized test. If their very survival as teachers was based on whether I actually fell in love with the process of learning but rather if I could fill in the right bubble on a test. If they had to spend most of their time desperately drilling us and less time encouraging creativity and original ideas; less time knowing who we were, seeing our strengths and helping us realize our talents.

I honestly don't know where I'd be today if that was the type of education I had. I sure as hell wouldn't be here. I do know that.

This has been a horrible decade for teachers. I can't imagine how demoralized

you must feel. But I came here today to deliver an important message to you: As I get older, I appreciate more and more the teachers that I had growing up. And I'm not alone. There are millions of people just like me.

So the next time you're feeling down, or exhausted, or unappreciated, or at the end of your rope; the next time you turn on the TV and see yourself called "overpaid;" the next time you encounter some simple-minded, punitive policy that's been driven into your life by some corporate reformer who has literally never taught anyone anything. ... Please know that there are millions of us behind you. You have an army of regular people standing right behind you, and our appreciation for what you do is so deeply felt. We love you, we thank you and we will always have your back.

As I get older, I appreciate more and more the teachers that I had growing up. And I'm not alone. There are millions of people just like me.

## Survey Says

LAUSD, the nation's second-largest school system, issued a new policy mandating that homework count for only 10% of a student's grade, effective July 1, 2011.

Superintendent John Deasy later issued a memo rescinding the mandate and putting the matter under further study.

The OPTIMIST decided to ask Poly teachers how much homework they gave, how much was returned and the purpose of those homework assignment.

Twenty of Poly's approximately 140 teachers responded. We got seven responses from English, five from Math, four from Science, one from Social Science and three other.

Here's what they told us.

Thirteen of 20, approximately two thirds, said home-

work was already 10% or less of a student's grade. Six of the remaining seven said homework was between 15%-30% of a student's grade.

Six of 20 said less than half their classes actually did the homework. The rest had better luck, including one science teacher who said all but 5% of his students turned in their homework.

The three main reasons given for home work were

1. to practice skills (a Math favorite)
2. to reinforce content ( an English preference) and
3. to complete classwork (Social Science)

The OPTIMIST wishes to thank all those who took the time to complete and return the survey.



## New Magnet High

[ From Magnet, pg 1 ]

The scores put Poly's magnet among the top 3% of all high schools in California, according to Couchois.

Magnet API scores are included in Poly's API, which also reached a new high of 725. Available data don't include a measure of how many points Poly magnet boosted the entire school's API.

Couchois downplayed the fact that the magnet scores exceeded Poly's total.

"Nothing makes the magnet kids better than the regular school kids," Couchois said. "We are a whole family and should not be considered better than the rest."

Critics of standardized testing argue that improvement in already high scores become more problematic every year. Can the magnet continue to improve?

"One year at a time," Couchois said. "Right now, we're just proud of the accomplishment from last year and are excited about meeting that challenge again for this year."

## Deasy Pays A Visit

[ From LAUSD, pg 1 ]

"I first met Deasy when he started as Superintendent a year ago," Loera said. "He struck me as somebody who is down to business, not much for small talk. He would ask me a lot of questions, a very intense guy. We walked the entire campus, 45 acres, in about 25 minutes."

"Deasy definitely feels that we need more focus on accountability and performance. He wants to make sure that performance is a factor in the school district in terms of evaluation and promotion versus just how long someone has worked for the school district. Those are some steps he has consistently shared."

Other high level Californian education officials who have visited Poly include former superintendents David Brewer, Ramon Cortinez and Diane Siri. Judy Elliot, the former chief academic officer, recently came by, as did Aquino and state superintendent Jack O'Connell, according to Loera.

## Tdap Vaccination

[ From Vaccine, pg 1 ]

and put up a Web page. Some schools posted fliers and used automated calling systems and outdoor message boards.

Despite these measures, a majority of the 8,700 LAUSD students on year-round schedules who showed up for class lacked the vaccinations. The school district didn't have nearly enough of the booster shots to inoculate all of them.

California legislators quickly approved a bill July 14 that gives schools a 30-day grace period for enforcing the state law.

The law bought time for more than 34,000 students in grades 7-12 who started school in mid-August to get vaccinated.

## Drama Coach

[ From Drama, pg 1 ]

department in 2011 and Groskin came to Poly.

"The most important to me is that the plays speak to the audience," Groskin said. "There is no point if it only speaks to the actors and me. I need plays that speak to the Poly community. I want to get the whole community. I want the audience to be entertained, enlightened, inspired."

"I love watching young people make discoveries. It's really all about those moments. It's a beautiful thing to see people grow up."



the  
OPTIMIST

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## EDITORIAL POLICY

The OPTIMIST is the voice of the Poly community, and follows the Code of Ethics for the Society of Professional Journalists. Editorials are the opinions of the staff.

## INTERVIEW

## Eight California juniors were chosen by MITES to attend MIT's 2011 summer program. Two were from the same school: Poly

### Fernando Juarez

OUR PLANE LANDED ABOUT 7 a.m. in the morning and we were picked up by the teacher's assistant of MIT. We rode a bus to the university and for the first time I beheld the city of Boston through those bus windows. I was very psyched when we actually arrived at MIT.

The classes were extremely fast paced. My Calculus 2 professor was extremely hyper. When he got in front of the board holding his cup of coffee, he immediately turned around and started writing problems and equations on the board.

My classes were Calculus 2, Biochemistry, Physics 3 and Engineering Design where we will try to emulate robots of the MIT Hacks.

We weren't graded with an A-F system or any number grade. The system is based on evaluation and it has details about your improvement academically. The evaluations were given after the mid-term and the second one will come by mail on September. As the MITES program said, "there is no failure in MITES and improvement is important."

We took a Cambridge tour in a trolley where we saw historical landmarks such as the location of the Boston Massacre.

From meeting peers to taking the rigorous classes, the entire experience made a huge impact on me. The most special memory would be the strong bond that my Physics 3 class formed. It was like being a part of a new

family as we tackled our problem set (weekly homework) as a group and had fun at the same time.

I want something to do with Math and Science like Chemical Biological Engineering and Bio-Physics. Bio-Physics is a new field and there is a lot to discover, so it is intriguing.

#### Getting Personal

Junior year at Poly was the hardest, with three AP classes. The workload from those classes was really stressful but in the end, compared to the MITES workload, it was miniscule.

I like running and watching soccer but I'm not actively involved with sports.

I don't watch a lot of television but I started watching "Breaking Bad." My favorite movies are "Un long dimanche de fiançailles" ("A Very Long Engagement"), "Inception" and "Hannibal Rising."

My favorite bands are Coldplay, Naked and Famous, Rise Against and Avenged Sevenfold.

I live in Los Angeles, so I need to wake up at 5:00 in the morning every school day and travel at least 20 miles on either a school bus or MTA.

My motto is "don't think outside the box, think outside yourself."

# Their Boston Summer

By Ramses Lemus & Shean Santy  
Staff Writers



Photo By Vanessa Muñoz

MITES: Fernando Juarez (left) and Javier Castillo were part of the Minority Introduction to Engineering and Science program held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

## Javier Castillo

The MIT summer program itself was six weeks long. There were other summer programs, so there was quite bit of activity there, but I was told that the regular school year gets a lot more hectic, with a lot more activities going on.

We stayed in Simmons Hall. From Sunday through Thursday we ate at the dining hall. It was basically an all-you-can-eat buffet.

One of the biggest differences from California was the weather and how really spontaneous it can be. One day we were eating ice cream under the shade and within 10-15 minutes it was pouring on us. Another week we were going through a heat wave.

I didn't pack enough clothes, because I found myself washing clothes. It was the first time I had to wash my own clothes, so that was an experience. There were lots of firsts for me this summer. I wasn't prepared for the rainy days, so I had to buy an umbrella. I flew to MIT and back out of LAX

I'm really glad Fernando got accepted also. It was good to have that one person you can fall back on because you're a stranger to everybody and if there is something you want to talk about to someone, you know there is that one person you can go to. We hung out with complete strangers and we grew as individuals.

Because of all the homework, it was pretty hard to find time to go out. We did have

"mandatory fun," where we literally had to stop studying, go down stairs to the lobby and interact with the rest of the students there.

Being surrounded by people with the same interests as you and who are also pushing themselves academically is inspiring.

The students were just amazing, so many talented people out there. This program does a good job of collecting really bright students from across the country and uniting them under a single roof and exposing them to the college experience. The professors were amazing. It was awesome to ask them a question and never receive "I don't know."

We had classes for about six hours a day, but after that everything else was up to us. We decided when to eat and when to go to sleep. It was tempting to just slack off, but then you find out your grades and you know that you've got to stop slacking off.

Most of the classrooms at MIT have at least two sets of blackboards and each board has two sliding boards. It really facilitates the professors to cover their material faster.

I took Bio Chemistry, Physics 3, Calculus 2 and my elective Genomics.

The classes were as long as they are at Poly, so I think Fernando and I really had an advantage over some of the other kids who were not used to long classes.

The most difficult class was Physics. In one homework assignment, even with the help of

the T.A and everybody in the class, we couldn't get the answer. I wanted to cry because it was frustrating to not understand it.

#### Getting Personal

I study at least 15 hours a week for each class. When I have a lot of homework and the work load is really heavy I get around four-five hours sleep a night, but on average I try to get six or seven. I know it is almost the norm to not get any sleep in college, especially at top tier universities like MIT, because the work load is so heavy.

Ever since I was little, my parents have always pushed me, telling me "you have to go to university." They have been pushing me to strive for better.

Growing up, my dad would always get home late and had to sleep so we had little communication, so my dad wasn't really there for me. Not having a father figure was pretty difficult. I really grew closer to my mom. I can really go up to her about anything. Now that my dad realizes I'm about to go to college soon, he's trying to make up for lost time. I'm grateful he's trying to make up for lost time, but at the same time I feel like it's too late. Growing up, what I ended up doing was sticking my head in books. I read the Harry Potter series twice. I distracted myself with school work and music.

My biggest inspiration has got to be my

mom. I remember when I was smaller, we would go around taking the metro, walking place to place. She sacrificed so much even at a young age. I'm grateful of everything she's done for me. She puts me and my little brother ahead of herself. There are times when she buys us new clothes, new shoes and she doesn't really complain much that she has the same clothes from years back. She is truly inspiring.

I read a lot. It's habit since I was small. I kind of grew to love books. I'm currently reading "The Man Who Knew Infinity," which was given to me by an MIT professor. He told me it reminded him of me. It really inspired me to read it.

#### Getting There

The magnet coordinator went to my middle school and started talking about Poly, about how it has students going to top universities. I told my parents I wanted to go to Poly, even though it was farther away from home.

My CSU GPA as of the end of last year was 4.55. Last year I took AP English Language, AP Comparative Politics, AP Chemistry and AP US History. On the AP tests, I scored a five in chemistry, a four in US History and a three in English and Comparative Politics

I plan to go to MIT and major in Chemical and Biological Engineering.



## MEDIA

FIRST CUT *with Shean Santy*

## RUDE, CRUDE AND WIDELY VIEWED

Like it or not, some pretty awful stuff attracts millions of eyes every week on cable. Meet the villains.

Cable viewers seem to be addicted these days to characters in dramatic series that are ruthless and mean, snide and uncaring, rude and crude.

Repetitive comedies, teenage drama and low budget sci-fi are mundane. A likeable character with a unique and malicious disposition is the latest formula for success.

The most popular of these bad and audacious characters is serial killer Dexter Morgan, played by Michael C. Hall. Based on the novel "Darkly Dreaming Dexter", the show has been a cult hit since its 2006 inception. One reason is the critically-acclaimed performance of the talented Michael C. Hall.

Morgan is your average serial killer. He lives by 'Harry's Code', whereby he will never get caught and he only kills the morally indefensible, sort of an edgy Robin Hood. Viewers feast on Morgan's preoccupation with the justified revenge, making Dexter a sort of feel good killer.

The show also showcases popular supporting characters like Vince Masuka and his random innuendo and Dexter's foul-mouthed adoptive sister, Debra Morgan. Perhaps worst of all was the bloodcurdling Trinity Killer, who surely saddled audiences with nightmares during his tenure.

"Dexter" returns for its sixth season in Showtime on October 2, 2011.

"Breaking Bad" has been called one of the best television shows of the past decade and has received "universal acclaim" from various critics. Some rank it already with elite group of drama series that included "The Sopranos", "The Wire" and "Mad Men".

"Breaking Bad's" strong scripts and gripping narratives account for much of its success, along with the work of Bryan Cranston as Walter White. White is a mystery because he acts as the protagonist and antagonist of the show.

Walter White was once a promising chemist. When he was diagnosed with lung cancer, he turned to manufacturing methamphetamines to pay for his treatment. His cover: the disillusioned high school chemistry teacher.

Just as Batman has his Robin, White has Jesse Pinkman (Aaron Paul), a former student who now deals drugs. Teaching about chemical bonds and molarity is no longer his forte. But cooking meth for financial gain can have dangerous and violent consequences.

Cranston is a surprisingly malicious Walter White given his comedic turn as Hal from

"Malcolm in the Middle". Cranston has won three consecutive Emmys for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series, the first to do since the 1960's.

The combination of White and Pinkman, who has the best Supporting Emmy, makes enjoyable shows that will make you tune in every week. The fourth season of "Breaking Bad" is currently on AMC.

Across the pond, the Brits have produced their own cult favorites, among them "Doctor Who", "The IT Crowd", and "The Inbetweeners". In 2009, E4 created a new series called "Misfits", which features early 20s delinquents doing community service. One critic called the show "Heroes meets Skins".

The setup is a group of teenagers who were caught in an unusual thunderstorm and gained superpowers in the bargain. The scene stealer is the raunchy Nathan Young (Robert Sheehan). Young was sent to community service due for theft and his undisclosed ability is deliberated throughout the series. The jokes are sharply and silly and fans hang on Young's every word.

The rest get in just as much trouble despite their superpowers. Kelly Bailey (Lauren Socha), the chav of the group has telepathy. Curtis Donovan (Nathan Stewart-Jarrett) plays a rising track star headed for the 2012 Olympics whose cocaine bust shattered his dreams. Not to worry. Now he can manipulate time whenever he regrets something.

Alisha Bailey (Antonia Thomas) is the party girl of the group. Her DUI got her in trouble; her X-rated superpower gets her in more.

The last member of the group is the outcast Simon Bellamy (Iwan Rheon), charged with attempted arson, who makes himself invisible every time he is neglected.

"Misfits" is a rare fusion of dark comedy and drama perfectly accomplished. The program garnered positive and enthusiastic reviews from around the world and last year won the 2010 BAFTA Awards for Best Drama Series.

"Misfits" plays only in the United Kingdom and Australia but is accessible through Hulu and various websites. The show is a foreign gem set to return in autumn.

Audiences usually root for the protagonist, but Dexter Morgan, Walter White, and the Misfits teens turning that idea on its head. Take a look.



Google Image

**PATIENT ZERO:** Gwyneth Paltrow gets sick in "Contagion," which also stars Matt Damon and Jude Law. The three last worked together in 1999's "The Talented Mr. Ripley."

DOWN-TO-EARTH  
SEPTEMBER STORIES

Summer movies brought us apes, superheroes, cowboys, and wizards. Fall typically brings showcase movies – critical favorites or Academy Award contenders. Two September offerings – Steven Soderbergh's "Contagion" and the indie comedy-drama "50/50," should meet one category or the other.

The two films deal with a similar subject – fighting a disease – in different ways. "Contagion" is an apocalyptic thriller about a lethal airborne virus diffused throughout the world. An international team of doctors scrambles to tame the virus while the world lives in fear and society crumbles.

Steven Soderbergh ("Ocean's" trilogy) directs Matt Damon ("Bourne" trilogy), Jude Law ("Sherlock Holmes"), Laurence Fishburne ("The Matrix"), and Oscar-winning actresses Kate Winslet ("The Reader"), Gwyneth Paltrow ("Shakespeare in Love") and Marion Cotillard ("La Vie en Rose").

In a recent interview, Matt Damon described Steven Soderbergh as a fast-paced director and said fans can expect the movie to be a fusion of thriller and horror.

Some apocalyptic movies generate conflict and tension from fictional premises, a zombie mob from "28 Days Later" or a huge catastrophe in "2012." But a deadly disease is both frightening and believable and Soderbergh's film illustrates that "nothing spread likes fear."

Cancer is a touchy subject for a movie, but "50/50" uses a well-balanced blend of indie, dark comedy and talented actors to underline the importance of life as its theme.

The story revolves around clean-living 27-year-old Adam and how he copes with his disease and his girlfriend, concerned mother, obnoxious best friend and new psychiatrist.

Joseph Gordon-Levitt is first rate as Adam, while Seth Rogen ("Knocked Up"), as the selfish best friend, essentially plays himself. Anna Kendrick ("Up in the Air") is Adam's therapist and Bryce Dallas Howard is delightful as the girlfriend.

Early screenings generated positive buzz and praise for Gordon-Levitt, who also drew favorable reviews for his performances in "500 Days of Summer," "Hesher" and "Brick."

"50/50" is based on the true-life trails of cancer survivor Will Resier, the movie's screenwriter.

In an interview with Gordon-Levitt's "hitRECORD," Rogen and Reiser, real-life best friends, talked about the experience. Reiser described the time as "melancholic" and said it sucked but humor helped him cope. Rogen decided to produce the movie about his friend and Reiser said he was honored to write the movie.

Expect to laugh and cry at this one, set for a September 30 release.

"Contagion" opens September 9.



Google Image

**UNLIKELY HEROES:** Delinquents with super powers star in new Brit series "Misfits."



## CAMPUS

NEW  
FACES

A new year means new faces. The OPTIMIST recently talked to two new members of Poly's staff. Here's what they told us:

## LOURDES DE SANTIAGO

**TEACHING**

I feel really happy to be back, I feel very fortunate to come back to a school that is known to be more than a school, it's known to be a family. I feel welcomed here, and it's good to be back working with all the great students.

I was at San Fernando High school as an assistant principal, and I actually enjoyed my time over there because I got to work with the students.

Due to major budget cuts, there has been a lot of instability and every year a lot of administrators are being moved, and I happen to be one of those that move, but fortunately I landed at Poly and I was happy.

This is my thirteenth year as an educator.

I began my teaching career in Monroe High school, and from there I moved over here, and here I had the opportunity to teach math in the magnet and so from there I became the dean of discipline, and from there I became the Title one coordinator and then I became the ELA.

I was at Poly for eleven years before I left, I was a T.A, I was a teacher, I was a dean, I was a Title one Coordinator, the ELA Administrator, and then the assistant principal.

**PERSONAL**

I grew up in the San Fernando Valley. I went to San Fernando High School.

Then I went to CSUN. I got Bachelors in math, to be a math teacher.

I'm the oldest of three children. And I have three kids.

When I was little, I would always sit my dolls down and then I would pretend they were my students and I was teaching them. Maybe I didn't know that that's what I wanted to do, but I played that all the time.

If I could choose a job, I would definitely choose working with students again. I would want to be a teacher. I wouldn't change that.

My favorite is Mexican food, obviously, and my favorite is vegetable enchiladas.

I've never been a person that likes to travel, I've always been local.

I don't personally have a favorite movie, but I have a favorite channel called "Lifetime Movie Channel."

## JOHN LAUE

**EDUCATION CAREER**

Poly's head counselor called me at the end of the summer for an interview. They offered me a counseling position working halftime with Special Education students and halftime with so-called "at risk" students who are behind on their credits.

For the last five years, I've worked as a counselor for LAUSD's Options Program. I've been counseling students at Lewis and Mt Lukens Continuation High School and several Community Day Schools (CDS). I enjoyed working with students who have not succeeded at a traditional high school and need an alternative, smaller environment to graduate.

Before receiving my counseling credential, I taught English and social studies at Verdugo Hills High School and two high schools in Glendale where I coached track and served as yearbook advisor.

I started my teaching career right out of college when I joined the National Teacher Corps Program and taught at an elementary school on the South Side of Chicago, my hometown. But I got burned out after four years, took my pension money and traveled for a year.

The 1970's was the golden age of travel. It was cheap and easy to go almost anywhere. I took a year off, starting out in Europe, spent several months in East Africa (Kenya and Tanzania), took a boat to India, and then took trains and buses through Nepal, Afghanistan, Iran, and Turkey.

After returning to this country, I moved to San Francisco where I taught at an alternative school for high school dropouts called "Postal Street Academy." I then got a job in Micronesia where I developed curriculum for their adult education program. After that, I started a new career in public advocacy and transportation planning. I worked for an environmental group, a U.S. Congressman, and two city governments, including Pasadena, where I was the city's Transit Coordinator.

Then I got the itch to go back into teaching and got a job at Pasadena High School before moving on to Hoover High school in Glendale.

So far, I like the positive energy and spirit here at Poly. I'm enjoying working with Mr. Mendoza and getting to know the Special Education students. I'm also looking forward to helping students who are struggling here and may need to look at other options to succeed in high school.

Culture  
Shift

From sleepy charter  
to LAUSD's finest,  
this new Parrot  
reflects on the teen  
scene up there and  
down here.

By Karen De Leon  
Staff Writer

Until a few weeks ago, I lived in Hayward, a small city of middle class people in northern California. On an average day you can go for a walk and greet plenty of people doing the same. Hayward is very eco-green, with parks everywhere, and everywhere you can hear phrases like "be eco-friendly" or "save mother earth."

Friday nights weren't all that exciting. Watching TV with family or going to the mall with friends were options, going to crazy parties was not. There was shopping in San Francisco or going to Pier 39, but those were about the most exciting things around.

I attended King Collegiate, a small charter school of 400 students with portables for classrooms. The campus is tucked away and hidden by tree-lined streets. They've planned on expanding the school for four of its five years, but I'm not holding my breath. King doesn't have a gym or an auditorium or any sport fields, but there is a vegan vending machine.

The school was strict. We were required to wear uniforms. The typical teacher was a Democrat, well-educated, with very high standards, and open-minded. We had significant amounts of homework every night. I don't miss that either.

There weren't really any "popular" girls; we all just blended in. In a small school, most upperclassmen end up dating almost everyone. My mom said we "recycled boyfriends and girlfriends." Fashion was not that different from LA except we had to dress warmer.

I was born in Los Angeles and lived there till I was around 6. My mom married my step-dad and we moved to Hayward

where he lived back then. Now here we are in Sun Valley, 10 years later. My mom finally decided that family unity is important and that we've been away long enough.

I have a turtle named Georgio De Leon and a younger sister and I've heard that I have other siblings from my dad's side. My family is really big and crazy, but I love that we're united and we love to have fun. The family is originally from Guatemala, the country of the never-ending spring.

I've always loved LA. I love the heat and it's busy and full of life. I didn't like living in Nor Cal. It was always too cold, too calm and too quiet, like a retirement community of senior citizens.

Changing high school in the middle of the four years is good. I needed change. It all ended up being really good for my family and me. My life sometimes seems like a mystery, but it's fine with me. It makes living more interesting. All my friends think I'm crazy, strange and hard to figure out.

The physical move down here was exhausting. We had my step-dad, mom, sister, turtle and me, plus a load of stuff, in a five-seat car. Everyone had to cross their legs.

We got to my aunt's house and it was so hot all we wanted to do was jump in the pool. Instead, we had to unload everything.

We took a 30-minute break and seconds later, my mom throws me in the car and says we're going to enroll you in your new school. Not even 24 hours in LA and I was in school.

My first day at Poly was weird. I didn't know what to expect. But two weeks can make a big difference and I'm actually enjoying them now.



CITY LIFE

Sounds Like

When it comes to tribute bands, nobody rocks like these grrrls.

By Jasmine Aquino  
Staff Writer

**M**isstallica, Lez Zeppelin, The Iron Maidens and Girls Girls Girls are all-girl tribute acts to some of the most notorious rock bands of the twentieth century.

These girls are gaining wide national—and international—recognition with their note-perfect versions of Metallica, Led Zeppelin, Iron Maiden, and Mötley Crüe tunes and cheaper shows than the originals.

Philadelphia-based Misstallica band members Gina Gleason, Lauren Tsipori, Teddi Tamoff and Kaleen Reading even bill themselves with R-rated versions of the names of Metallica members.

The act sounds like a cute gimmick until their work blows the left hemisphere of your brain right out of your ear.

The girls focus on Metallica's 1980s work, including "Kill 'Em All," "Ride The Lightning," "Master of Puppets" and "... And Justice For All."

Gleason has the Hetfield in heart while the other members have the fire of hell in their souls.

The girls in Lez Zeppelin, formed in 2004, have reached great critical acclaim after appearances on VH1, MTV, CNN, FUSE, and CBS Good Morning and features in full-length magazine and newspaper articles across the world.

The group has toured extensively in the US and Europe and released its first album, "Lez Zeppelin," produced by Eddie Kramer, in 2007. Kramer recorded several of Led Zeppelin's albums, including "Led Zeppelin II," "Physical Graffiti" and "The Song Remains the Same."

"Lez Zeppelin" contains a song from each of Led's first six albums and originals "On the Rocks" and "Winter Sun."

Girls Girls Girls, in leather, chains, spikes and thigh-high boots, are the sexiest Mötley Crüe cover band going. Drummer Tawny Lee switches back and forth between a keyboard and her drum kit. Lead singer Vixen Neil, with crimped hair, red lips and a fist full of attitude, "flirts" with the crowd.

Lead guitarist Mistress Mars nails every solo on a sparkly black Hagstam and bassist Nikita Sies provides most of the backing vocals.

The band flaunts both looks and chops and its lively stage show features theatrical scenes scattered throughout.

The Iron Maidens have quickly established themselves as one of the most popular tribute acts of southern California and are rapidly gaining international recognition.

The line-up is Kirsten "Bruce Chickinson" Rosenberg on vocals, Linda "Nikki McBURRain" McDonald on drums, Courtney "Adriana Smith" Cox and Nita "Mega Murray" Strauss on guitars, and Wanda "Steph Harris" Ortiz on bass.

The Maidens cover Iron Maiden material from all eras of the band's career, from greatest hits to fan favorites. Even Iron Maiden mascot and cross-dresser "Eddie" goes on stage with



Google Image

**SPELL CHECK:** Tribute band Lez Zeppelin has a new CD of Led Zeppelin covers that also includes two originals.

the girls.

"We do the tribute thing, but it is not all we do," says Tarnoff of The Maidens, "and it absolutely does not define us as musicians. We do it because it's fun."

So what did they do when they got a chance to meet the originals?

"We acted like fans. We were such dorks," said Cox. "We were like kids on Christmas Eve. They seemed pretty tickled to find out that there was a group of girls paying tribute to them."

No Metal Fatigue For Crue

Sunset Strip Music Festival honors former badboys-turned family men Motley Crue 30 years later.

By Liz Gutierrez  
Staff Writer

Fireworks exploded around the stage as blazing red and blue lights flashed over the faces of fired-up fans. With the sun going down, headliner Motley Crue finally hit the stage, guitars thrashing and drums flying. It was the fourth annual Sunset Strip Music Festival and the aging Crue put on a pretty good show for a combo that hasn't made the charts in 20 years.

"Brides" performed songs from the band's new metal-core album, "Set the World on Fire," including singles "The Legacy" and "Fallen Angels."

Brides' black hair tease, ripped jeans and goofy grins gave metal-loving teens just what they wanted. Vocalist Andy Sixx looked like a heavy metal version of Justin Beiber.

Dark wave band She Wants Revenge performed their new hit single "Take the World" from 2011's "Valley Heart," and the legendary gothic rock anthem, "Tear You Apart." Both "Revenge" and the



Google Image

**BRIDES:** Metal Core quintet Black Veil Brides wants to "Set the World On Fire".

"KICK START MY HEART" KICK STARTED MOTLEY'S 90-MINUTE SET, A VIDEO OF A HEART PUMPING BLOOD PULSING BEHIND THEM.

"Kick Start My Heart" kick started Motley's 90-minute set, a video of a heart pumping blood pulsing behind them. "Girls Girls Girls," "Saints of Los Angeles" and "Home Sweet Home" were other crowd favorites.

Surprise guest Deadmau5 did a 360 with Tommy Lee and his 9 drum, 8 cymbal kit on the drummer's circular roller coaster, both upside down as Lee bashed away.

The three-day West Hollywood festival honored the former badboys-turned family men for their 30 years of glam-metal.

But youth dominated most of the evening and metal-core band Black Veil Brides led the parade. With new member Christian "CC" Coma on drums,

post-hardcore Escape the Fate had lots of technical difficulties, but the audience had a great time anyway.

Tribal Seeds, Cobra Starship, The Dirty Heads, Matt and Kim, and Public Enemy played the East Stage, while Brides, Revenge, Fate, and Crue had the West Stage. Bush played a few songs just before Crue blasted off.

The crowd, a mix of adults and teens, was calm, with very little pushing and shoving and no mosh-pits. Food trucks were everywhere as was free Vitamin Water & water.

The police presence was minimal, with two at the entrance and about three in front of the bands.

The weather was fair, a bit breezy and humid, another So Cal summer night. Just right for rockin'.

Komikko Janru! by Patricia Racelis



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September

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## CITY LIFE



# What a Trip

OPTIMIST reporter Lisa Guardado checks out the Metro and gets more than she bargained for.

By Lisa Guardado  
Staff Writer

We got to the North Hollywood Metro Station around 6:10 pm. We went down the escalators lifting our skateboards and scooter in the air to not hurt people.

It was rush hour. Many older people carried bags and young people had books with backpacks. There were also some younger kids with their bikes and skateboards. All types of people were just rushing in and out of the doors.

The ticket machines look like ATMs and are downstairs. I bought a “One Way.”

A “One Way” is one dollar and fifty cents, just like a normal bus fee. For five dollars, you can buy an “All Day Pass” and ride the metro all day with out paying a fee each time.

We passed through the roller stands, which get crowded because it is one person at a time, and went down some more escalators to our left.

Down the stairs were rails to our left and right. The waiting area has manila-colored floors and the gray walls. The lights are quite dim at the waiting stop.

The Metro came at 6:16.

I took the Red Line. The Metro cars, about ten of them, were grayish metal and had sliding doors that open at every stop. The walls are a soft yellow.

The smell is not so pleasant, a bit of stench of urine. On the roofs are many posters. Most were for the UEI College. Silver poles surround most of the seats. The seats are dark blue with reddish designs. There are about 30 seats on the Metro but it is really hard to find an empty one.

There are announcements at every stop. They mention the station we’re currently at and the station we are heading too. They also said, “Drinking, Eating, and standing on the seats are not allowed while riding the Metro.” The voice is clearly a machine. At first it is a man-type voice and then a woman’s voice translates to Spanish. It is always the same message.

I had to stand on this trip due to crowding. It is hard to stand because the train goes really fast and tends to shake a bit and it is easy to bump people sitting down.

I noticed two men sitting next to each other. Both had on blue dress shirts with black dress pants. They were probably coming from school. They didn’t stop talking throughout the

whole trip.

A man holding a book was yelling at the people around him. He was talking to a lady across from him who was not paying much attention to him. The man looked about 50 and was talking about President Obama and the elections in 2012. He kept on nagging, the lady kept on nodding. Every ride there is someone who just can’t keep quiet.

The second stop was Universal City. When a lady with thick curly hair and a pink blouse got off the train, I took her seat. My brother and his friend stood next to me. We didn’t really say much because it was too loud.

The third stop was Hollywood/Highland. No one got off. An Asian lady sat next to me and she was holding a purple umbrella. A man with a black shirt and black shades got on the train and stood in front of me. He didn’t seem too happy.

The fourth stop, Hollywood/Vine, was mine. We got off.

This station was much more appealing. The entire roof was made up of blue old film rolls. It almost looked like a disco. Next to the escalators were some super shiny palm trees that looked like blow-up palm trees, really creative.

At the end of the escalators was a big old fashioned director’s camera. After the cameras were the roller stands, more ticket machines and more escalators.

We went up the escalators. At the top was an amazing theatre, the Pantages. The building looked a little old and had two big palm trees outside surrounding its doors. The front of the building was really high. It had a big blue lit-up sign announcing the people who were going to perform that night.

Next to the theatre was another, bigger building that had a commercial for the new King Kong 3D ride. The building was tall and ugly, a faded white color. The sign was so big that King Kong almost looked real.

We took a right and skated down Hollywood Blvd. There were palm trees up and down the streets. The sidewalk was smooth and filled with black tile with the reddish stars naming each and every star.

We also passed by a CHASE bank. It had a huge fountain outside its doors. At the center of the fountain stood a black metal bull. Its horns were pointing out as if it were about to hit its target.

We passed by an old park with a dirty

public pool and a basketball court where many young men were playing ball.

We reached Fountain Street and ended up near a shelter. Down the street were homeless people in every direction. The shelter was giving out free food - a plate with hot rice, beans, and chicken. They gave each person a plate with fresh melon and a loaf of brown bread and a cup of orange juice.

The whole block smelled like rotten eggs. It was obvious that most of these people hadn’t showered. A lot of them were shouting. Some even walked like zombies. Others were just enjoying their meals.

We took a left and kept going until we hit what seemed like a photo studio. We passed by a huge black and white Beatles mural with John, Paul, Ringo, and George.

Another mural, a Campbell’s can that looked like spray can, was shooting red paint at a man slouching on a couch. The man just sat there while the paint was falling on him with force.

We also passed by the famous L.A. Ink shop on Fountain and La Brea, a famous tattoo shop owned by tattoo artist Kat Von D. The building is just a yellow square. At the top, a sign says “TATTOO” in red letters. A red lit-up sign on the window says “High Voltage.” On the front door is a “Heartgram.”

At that point, a friend called us to meet him at In ‘n’ Out. We skated back to La Brea and Sunset in about 15 minutes.

It was already starting to get dark and there was more traffic. We met our friend at In ‘n’ Out and decided to go to Amoeba, the music shop.

Amoeba, on Sunset and Cahuenga, has millions of pretty cheap CDs. Amoeba also hosts shows, sometimes free and sometimes not. It is a great store for someone who is into good music. They don’t sell anything lame like Lil Wayne, or maybe they do, I don’t know. I hope not.

We were at Amoeba for about an hour and a half. It was already nine and everyone was tired of riding all day. We decided to go to the Hollywood and Vine Station.

We went down Sunset and then down Vine. When we got to the Hollywood and Vine station, part of the street was already closed. There were about four cops, an ambulance and helicopters that kept roaming the sky. A lot of people were trying to see and a lot of people were just trying to avoid the cars and people.

Yellow “Crime Scene” tape looped around the street. There were cars from the News and people pushing and bumping into all sorts of things. The helicopter was right above the station. It was really dark. Cop cars with their lights blocked the street so no car or person could pass.

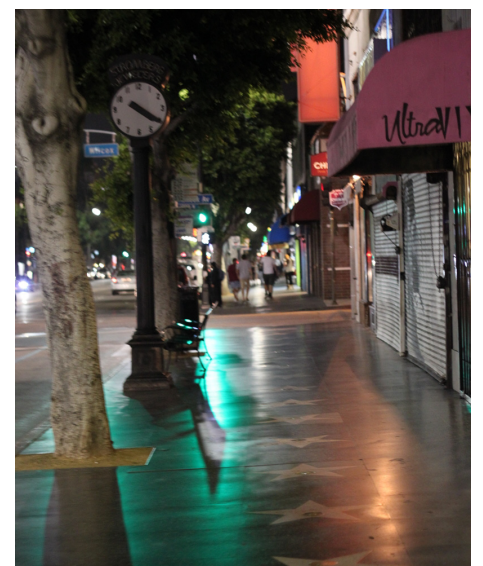
We asked a man what was going on. He said someone stabbed a man inside the Metro station and the man might have died. It was getting crowded. There was so many people. Who knew if I was standing next to the murderer. The guy talking to us could have been the murderer.

Hollywood is a crazy world. They caught the guy but I did not hear what else had happened. All I knew was that I was lucky enough to miss a horrible crime scene. Maybe the poor man was just on his way from work and was going home to his family. He might have just been a young man and just decided to go out and have a little fun when death struck him. He could have been an innocent man or he could have been a wanted man.

In the end, no one should have the right to choose another man’s fortune. The poor man was just at the wrong place at the wrong time. May he rest in peace.

Hollywood and Vine was completely closed. We had to go down Hollywood to the station on Hollywood and Western.

When we got back on the Metro it was still full of people. The trip back was more quiet. But still no seats. We finally reached the North Hollywood Station and got off.





## SPORTS

## INTERVIEW

## Coach Pierro Talks Football

By Kimberly Canas & Vanessa Muñoz  
Staff Writers

The OPTIMIST recently caught up with new head coach Joseph Pierro to talk about the Parrots' upcoming football season. Here's what he told us.

**How long have you been working with the team on a daily basis?**

Since I took the job in February. In March, we started on spring training. We practiced four days a week for two and a half hours. Now we do full swings 4<sup>th</sup> period weight training after school up until 6, five days a week. When season starts, we'll be doing film session, which is watching previous games.

**Our first league game is Oct. 6 against North Hollywood.**

**What goals have you set for the team this season?**

We want to be the first Poly team to make Division I playoffs and we want to win it. We also want to win a league championship and set a dynasty for this program inside and out.

**Also, we want to get our players to a 3.0 GPA and get them at least 10 Division I scholarships.**

**What kind of offense will you run?**

Spread option. A lot of people will be touching the ball, at least six people. It will be an unpredictable option.

**Who is your starting quarterback and what does he do well?**

As of now, Robert Rojas. He knows the offense and he makes good decisions.

**Should we expect high scoring games or defensive duels?**

Both. Sometimes the higher the scoring, the better. We expect to dominate opponents - we score a lot, they score a little.

**How big of a lead do you need to put in the second or third unit?**

21 to 28 pts. Depends on the clock as well. If we are low on time and we are up by two touchdowns, then we will mix the second and third strings.

**If things don't go as planned, will you make mid season adjustments or do you like to stick with the original plan until it starts working?**

Stick with the plan. You can't expect it to be perfect your first year. If you make mid-season changes players will lose identity.

**How much of winning is conditioning and how much is about execution on the field?**

50/50 - can't have one without the other.

**Poly is coming off four strong seasons in a row. Do you feel any responsibility to maintain that momentum?**

Oh absolutely. Coach Faer did very well on building Poly's image. I want to maintain and take it to the next level.

**What will the team do in the remaining days before the opener?**



Photo by Diane Alvarado

**OPTIONS: New head coach Joseph Pierro.**

Concentrate on tempo and execution, those are the main things right now.

We do mental reps for 30 minutes. The players lay on their backs, we turn off the lights. I tell them to clear their minds and focus on football. My voice is the only voice they are hearing.

**What are your personal criteria for judging this season a success?**

At the end of the day, can I say "did we leave it all on the field? Did we leave no doubt?"

## IN THE LONG RUN

From Chavez Ravine to Santa Monica, SRLA sponsor Dennis Madrigal will lead the charge.

By Nam Woo  
Staff Writer

Joining Students Run LA is good for you, according to co-sponsor and English teacher Dennis Madrigal.

"SRLA helps students get more active and feel good," Madrigal said. "It also teaches them discipline and makes them responsible and commit to a goal."

Madrigal says many people find that after they run a marathon, nothing is impossible.

"It builds your confidence," Madrigal said.

Last year was Madrigal's first in SRLA, now in its fourth year at Poly. Eight students finished the marathon last year, Madrigal said.

"We started with 10 kids. Three were seniors and five were freshmen."

Getting in shape is a big part of belonging to SRLA

**"We raise the mileage we run for practice one mile a week. Once a week, we do a run of 9-14 miles."**

"We raise the mileage we run for practice one mile a week," Madrigal said. "We also do pilates (stretching exercise) to relieve our muscles. Finally, once every week, we do a long run of 9-14 miles."

SRLA's first charity run is scheduled for October 9.

The big marathon, all 26 miles of it, is March 18, 2012.

"We run from Dodger Stadium to Ocean Avenue in Santa Monica," Madrigal said.

Madrigal said a few small scholarships will be available for seniors.

Students wishing to join SRLA need a parent to sign an application and a physical with a doctor's signature for clearance.

New member Loyda Palacio says she joined SRLA so she could do something more than sitting at a desk and doing work.

"You get to challenge yourself," Palacio said, "and if you keep on going, you will get better at it."

Palacio talked about the psychology of running.

"It gives me self-confidence," Palacio said. "I will be more optimistic in viewing difficulties."

## FOOTBALL FEATURE

THE SPREAD OPTION:  
more philosophy than playbook

Urban Meyer has turned heads everywhere he's used his offensive mindset.

The idea behind the spread option offense is simple: get the ball to the playmakers.

And the man who perfected this new offense was Urban Meyer.

Meyer was working for Lou Holtz at Notre Dame as the special teams coach when he first realized the need for a more reliable offense.

Star wide receiver and playmaker David Givens complained to Meyer after a bowl game that he didn't get the ball at all during the game. Meyer had a revelation. He would develop an offense that ensured his playmakers always got the ball.

Meyer and his friend Dan Mullen, a graduate assistant at the time, spent one spring with Scott Linehan, Louisville offensive coordinator and a former Idaho quarterback. Linehan was using his version of the spread attack to dismantle defenses. Meyer and Mullen paid close attention.

Next, Meyer turned to Kevin Wilson, the offensive coordinator at Northwestern under the late Randy Walker. From Wilson, Meyer and Mullen learned about zone option reads and how to optimize the spread attack.

Joe Tiller's passing attack at Purdue, another offensive powerhouse, was the final puzzle piece for the pair.

Meyer then took the head coach slot at Bowling Green State University and used the little school as his offensive laboratory. He implemented his new offense and proceeded to wipe out opponents. Bowling Green won 17 games in his two years there.

At Utah, Meyer's squad went undefeated, scored 46 points and 520 yards per game.

**Inside the Spread Option Offense**

The spread is about getting the ball thrown, handed off, pitched, or snapped to speedy offensive playmakers to let them work their magic, similar to a fast break in basketball.

If the quarterback reads the option correctly, the offense is always right. The offense should always outnumber or match the defense.

The Spread wants to use the entire field. Make the defense defend all 53 yards of width and 100 yards of length. The Spread wants to even out the numbers.

The Spread is an offensive philosophy, not a formation, a new approach to football that showcases the playmakers. It's a process, not a collection of plays.

The Spread tries to equate numbers - don't hand the ball off to



Google Image

**COACH: Urban Meyer's spread option offense produces big wins.**

an offensive player unless everyone is blocked or out of the play.

The Spread always starts from the shotgun. Always have to have a "hat on a hat," or a blocker on all the defenders. The quarterback has to read the off-side defensive end or linebacker, who goes unblocked at the point of attack, and then the quarterback simply runs the option play.

The offense is always right.

If a defense puts everyone in the box, the pass goes to the open

wide receiver. What defense can cover five speedy offensive players - running backs, wide receivers or tight ends?

If there is no deep, the quarterback should hit the deep ball and score an easy touchdown.

With the Spread, blocking assignments and formations don't really matter. The Spread can run the same play out of multiple formations.

A playbook is simply a collection of plays, but the Spread Option Offense is an entire philosophy and strategy.

After reading the defense, Meyer mostly runs the ball, either up the middle or on an option. He passes only when the defense allows it. Meyer will always run first, run second, run third, if given the option.

A lot of college teams now copy Meyer's Spread. Texas won a national championship with it. LSU has started using it. Vanderbilt, Tennessee and Auburn have all begun copying Meyer's plays. A lot of teams winning bowl games are using elements of the Spread.

*Edited from an article by Mohammed Alo in FootballTimes.org.*

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