

Unity Chronicles

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Unity goes wacky tacky & beyond

By Edwin Santay

From Monday, Dec. 17 to Friday, Dec. 21, Unity High School launched its first ever spirit week. Students sported crazy hair styles from afros to mohawks, twins wore identical clothing all the way down to their socks, and hippies toting peace signs roamed the campus. In a word, spirit week was about having fun.

The participation of each student in this event helped win points for his or her advisory. Cesar Baragan's junior advisory showed the most participation, followed by Damon Grant's freshman advisory, and Chinela Key-Newton's junior advisory.

Spirit week would not have been possible if it weren't for math teacher Erin Craig and her senior advisees who organized the event.

"I feel that students need a reward for all of their hard work, and spirit week is a good way to do it," said Ms. Craig.

One of the many Unity students who loved spirit week was senior Beatrice Rivera, who helped to tally each advisory's participation.

"It was fun for me because we didn't have to wear uniforms," said Beatrice. "My favorite day was



PHOTO BY DANIEL ZARAZUA

Principal David Castillo, science teacher Rowan Driscoll, and students Maria Barajas, Tania de la Cruz, Lucero Valdez, Vanessa Castellanos, Claudia Robles, and Saul Serralde show off their pajamas during Spirit Week.

wacky tacky day because I wore whatever I wanted and people couldn't say anything."

Freshman Philloria Brown said, "Crazy hair day was the best because I got to wear a black and red wig...with paper clips."

Some students chose not to participate.

"Spirit week was all right, but I am just not interested in it. It's not my thing," said sophomore Omar Zepeda. "I don't see the point in it."

On the whole, though, most students and staff deemed spirit week a success, especially because few behavior problems occurred.

"It's good to see that we can have fun because we are used to seeing students so serious about grades and college," said history teacher Daniel Zarazua.

Ms. Craig agreed.

"Students made it clear that this is something that could happen more often, something that I am willing to do again."

Colleges accept Unity seniors

By Carolina Cordero

Of the 63 seniors who attend Unity High School, 29 have already received college acceptance letters.

Senior Shatika Sloan has been accepted to five colleges, San Diego State University; Sacramento State University; Fresno State University; California State University, Los Angeles; and California State University, Northridge.

"I didn't cry or anything. I was just like ok. I don't think it's going to hit me until I get there," said Shatika.

Her parents shared the same feeling.

"At first they didn't believe me. They wanted to see it for themselves," she said.

Shatika's advisor, Daniel Zarazua, said, "I'm excited for the opportunities that you guys have that we didn't have, and we will live vicariously through you."

"Without my advisor, I wouldn't be where I am today," said Shatika. "He pushed me and wouldn't let me give up. He accepted all of my complaints and kept in close contact with my mom."

Senior Juan Cerna has been accepted to four colleges, California State University, East Bay; Chico State University; San Francisco State University; and Sacramento State University. His first acceptance letter arrived from San Francisco State.

"I felt proud. I started crying," said Juan.

At this time, Juan plans to at-

tend California State University, East Bay.

"I don't want to go somewhere too far because I don't want to leave my family and friends," he said.

Juan's advisor, Rowan Driscoll, said, "It made me feel kind of weird because I've known many of them since ninth grade, and now all of a sudden, they are going to college."

Senior Patricia (Patty) Baraza received her first acceptance letter from Fresno State.

"When I first got the letter, I was shocked. After I got over it, I was proud to be the first one to go to college," said Patty.

Patty has also been accepted to California State University, Northridge; Chico State; San Jose State; and San Francisco State. She plans to attend San Jose State.

"I really liked the campus when I visited it last year," said Patty.

"I was excited, proud, and relieved," said Erin Craig about her advisee's accomplishment.

"The fact that I could go to college and make my parents proud was enough for me to get here," Patty said.

Counselor Frances Ramos advised seniors who have yet to hear back from colleges not to worry because many colleges may not respond until March or April.

"The best thing to do is to call the admissions office of that school and ask them about your application," she said. "You can always get ahold of someone who can let you know how it's going."

Unity students take record number of college trips

By Zakiyah Murray

Since the start of the 2007-2008 school year, Unity students in all grade levels have toured several northern California college campuses. Freshmen visited California State University, East Bay or San Francisco State University. Sophomores visited San Jose State University and California State University, East Bay. Juniors visited San Jose State University, and the seniors collectively have gone on a total of four college visits to University of California, Merced; University of California, Davis; Fresno State University; and Sacramento State University.

Compared to other high school students in Oakland, Unity High students take a record number of school-sponsored college trips. By the time this year's Unity seniors graduate, many will have visited eleven CSUs, seven UCs, and four community colleges. Last year, select members of the class of 2008 also spent an entire week in southern California visiting private and public colleges, while another group of students explored four historically black colleges, as well as Georgia Institute of Technology and Emory University, on

a college tour of the South.

Under the supervision of Unity staff members, students get the chance to experience college life for a day. During these visits a representative of the school allows Unity students to see the campus firsthand, and Unity students are required to interview at least one college student. Students also get to enjoy the fun parts of college like club rallies and tasty food. Later on in the tour, if time allows, students have the opportunity to explore the campus by themselves and feel the freedom college students have everyday.

Counselor Frances Ramos organizes all college trips. She receives input from student advisors who supervise on the trips, as well as Unity students. With a limited budget, Ms. Ramos normally selects schools that are local and thus easily-accessible. Farther campuses force Ms. Ramos to pay for a charter bus.

San Jose State University is a favorite for Ms. Ramos as well as students.

Ms. Ramos said, "San Jose State is the perfect size: not too big, not too small. It's a really good school with a beautiful campus. Several Unity alumni attend SJSU. There are ample



PHOTO BY DANIEL ZARAZUA

Juniors Candido Santay, Hilda Rodriguez, and Diana Rodriguez show their enthusiasm on a trip to San Jose State.

opportunities there, and it's not super competitive. Students have a great chance of getting in. It's a really good school."

"The campus was cool! When we visited there were several activities going on. I got a lot of information on what I want to do, and I learned a lot of things. It seems like a fun school," said junior Eduardo Zaragoza.

Sophomore Courtney Douglas had more lighthearted thoughts about San Jose State.

"The college trip was good. I really like the dorms. We got to talk to the students and go on a scavenger hunt. What was really fun was we got to talk to the boys. They were hecka cute! It was just a really fun trip."

Many seniors make their col-

lege choices based on the visits. Senior Giovanna Romero benefited, especially, from the trip to University of California, Merced and Fresno State University.

"I applied to both schools. I really liked the campuses. They're diverse, and I see myself doing well there. College trips over the years have helped me see and explore several campuses. If it wasn't for Unity, I wouldn't have seen so many colleges and known I had so many options."

Students aren't the only ones who take something away from college trips. Math teacher and senior advisor Erin Craig said the visits helped rekindle her love for college.

"College trips that I've gone on with students motivated me and refreshed me of what the college experience was like before I went back for my master's."

Ms. Craig also reflected on why it's so important for students to tour colleges.

"Students need to know they have more options than SJSU, Laney, and East Bay. By going on college tours, students can make an educated, accurate choice on where they want to spend their future."

Unity students make their way into fashion industry

By Yareli Ortiz

Flash, flash, flash. The cameras go off as the photographer attempts to catch snapshots of the models strutting fiercely down the narrow runway. Wilneka Eason, senior, and Dominique Crosby, junior, shift their hips side to side, flaunting the silky, smooth fabrics.

Wilneka Eason has been modeling for about a year and three months with Mario B. Productions, a modeling training program that helps girls or guys find runway shows and photo shoots. A fashion scout for Mario B. discovered Wilneka at Oakland's annual Art and Soul Festival, and Wilneka accepted the offer to model in photography and in runway. The training program has taught Wilneka modeling tips including how to be more ladylike and more confident in herself, which she says is the most important lesson.

"I'm very clumsy, and the runway is very unexpected," Wilneka said. "Like this one time, my heel turned to the side and I almost fell, but I had to keep on going as I finished my walk gracefully."

Before Wilneka joined Mario B. Productions, she attended a modeling class at Youth Uprising, a non-profit program designed to create personal transformation and develop leadership in Oakland youth. Wilneka's passion for modeling came from her inspiration, Kimora Lee Simmons, who started off as a model and later became famous enough to start her own fashion line.

"If I could model for anyone, it would probably be Chanel because that's where Kimora Lee Simmons got her big break... I want to follow in her footsteps, and maybe I'll get lucky and be just as famous," said Wilneka.

Dominique Crosby, another aspiring model at Unity, has been modeling for a year. She started out in a modeling program called Top Notch but stopped attending because her mother felt the program's location was unsafe. Dominique transferred to a different



PHOTO COURTESY OF KMEL

Senior Wilneka Eason models on the KMEL runway.

modeling training program owned by Ms. Shampon, the daughter of a fashion designer. This modeling program has given Dominique the chance to model for Baby Phat. Although she didn't meet the designer, Kimora Lee Simmons did mail the clothing and sent the participants a letter thanking them for modeling her designs.

Dominique feels that modeling has helped her to grow personally.

"I learned off of the modeling program that you have to have patience with people, and learning how to communicate with my head coaches is very important."

One aspect of the modeling industry that Dominique hates is the way models struggle with eating and trying to maintain their weight.

"Weight loss is a big issue. I dislike when my modeling coach tells me that I am gaining weight or that I have to stop eating this to be healthy and in shape. I hate the fact that you have to be really thin to be the best model," she said.

Dominique doesn't look up to any one designer. She'd be happy to model for anyone who is willing to give her an opportunity.

Perhaps this opportunity will come one day from Unity sophomore Peter Flores. Peter has been sketching and designing hand-sewn outfits since the sixth grade. He learned to sew on his own time without a class, just by picking up a needle and thread.

"What inspires me to design is seeing designers' clothing and wondering how I can change the look or how I can make it look sexy and play around making the outfit more edgy," said Peter.

Peter prefers to design clothes for women because he believes there are more options for accessorizing in women's clothing.

After high school, Peter hopes to study fashion design at the Art Institute of California in San Francisco.

"It's my passion," he said. "I can't see myself doing anything other than design clothing."



PHOTO BY DANIEL ZARAZUA

Seniors Vanessa Castellanos, Ernesto Urzua, Tayler Davis, Eric Romero, Susana Tinoco and Shatika Sloan meet with Professor Marcyliena Morgan, director of Stanford's HipHop Archive.

The Unity students learned many new facts about Stanford from the visit.

"I was surprised by the fact that they have a lot of black professors," said Shatika.

In addition to professors, the Unity students also met the director of the African Studies

Department and the Black House Assistant Director.

"It went well because we had a small group, so we got to focus on people's main interests," said Mr. Zarazua.

Shatika said, "The Stanford trip was so good, that I even applied there."

Si se puede

By Leopoldo Zubiri



PHOTO BY DAISY BARRAZA

Senior Juan (J.M.) Zamora fights for justice.

Over winter break, senior Juan (J.M.) Zamora went to Detroit, Michigan to attend a convention of the political organization, By Any Means Necessary (BAMN). At the convention, J.M. had the opportunity to meet BAMN leaders from around the world. They discussed issues such as gay rights, immigration, affirmative action, and the national election.

"During the convention, I met other great leaders from [places like the] United Kingdom," said J.M. "It was interesting to hear their point of view."

J.M. has been involved in political activism for many years.

"I have marched since 2005 all around the nation, in Sacramento and Detroit. In this organization we only march if we have a cause; otherwise we don't march at all," said J.M. "We've had conferences against the overtake from the state of the Oakland school district, and we also look at current issues like gay rights, the war in Iraq, etc."

During the marches, the activists usually chant to make their statements heard. Marches can become rowdy, and the participants also risk getting in trouble with the police or the school administration.

"When chanting I try not to talk trash, but I can't control other people. It can get out of hand," said J.M.

BAMN sets up its marches at planning meetings at University of California, Berkeley. Anyone can join BAMN, said J.M., simply by talking to the leaders of the organization.

Art students explore de Young museum



PHOTO BY JAMIE TREACY

Juniors Jennifer Baires, Yesenia Quintero, and Nidia Padilla sketch a sculpture.

By Daisy Barraza

On Dec. 5, art teacher Jamie Treacy's junior art class visited the de Young Museum in San Francisco.

Mr. Treacy said, "I chose the de Young Museum because they have a very special exhibit on Louise Nevelson and also because of the permanent collection they have. It's very diverse. We also went to Golden Gate Park, which was a wonderful place to draw."

The students focused on Jewish-American artist Louise Nevelson's exhibit of abstract sculptures made primarily of wood. She created *Homage to 6,000,000* as a memorial to the Jews killed in the Holocaust.

"The sculptures are so big that they had to take a wall out," said Mr. Treacy.

Junior Joaquin Alamilo said, "The best part of the trip was that we saw the sculptures of Louise

Nevelson because of the dramatic, *Homage to 6,000,000*... Some of the sculptures were kind of weird looking, and I couldn't really explain what they were."

Junior Noemi Ochoa said, "They were dramatic and beautiful."

Mr. Treacy plans to take his art classes on several more trips this year.

"The purpose is to see the art work because we only see them in slideshows, and I want to take them so we can have an adventure," said Mr. Treacy. "It's important for me to take my students to the art museum to get to know them better. I get to see what kinds of things they like, and I also get to teach them and work with them in [a different] environment."

Stanford opens its doors to Unity students

By Alma Ramirez

On Nov. 28, seniors Vanessa Castellanos, Tayler Davis, Eric Romero, Shatika Sloan, Susana Tinoco, and Ernesto Urzua visited Stanford University.

History teacher Daniel Zarazua organized the trip.

"I know people at Stanford, so we didn't go through the regular admissions office. I just called people I already knew," said Mr. Zarazua.

The six students toured the campus and attended two classes, an anthropology class discussing the impact of downloading music and another class discussing video games' effects on people of color. Students also visited the dorms, focusing on those with different cultural themes, such as the Mexican dorm.

Unity teachers' shocking secrets revealed

By Leopoldo Zubiri

In the eyes of many students, teachers are perceived as boring and focused only on teaching. At Unity High, however, the teachers have a multitude of passions outside of school.

David Carter, math teacher, plays the drums in a band called Gosta Berling. The name of the band was created by the band leader, a fanatic of silent films, who was inspired by Gosta Berling, a silent film from the '20s. Their Oakland-based band plays independent rock. One of their major influences is Velvet Underground, a band from the '60s, and '80s college radio, which has heavily distorted guitars and sad mournful vocals with a fast driving beat.

"We get together to practice twice a week, and we [had] a show on December 20 in San Francisco...at Mr. Smith's Bar," said Mr. Carter.

"I thought it was really fun to see a teacher doing something other than teaching. He looked like a rock star," said English teacher Damon Grant who attended Mr. Carter's show.

Before becoming a teacher Mr. Carter was a professional freelance writer. He has written for newspapers like the San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Bay Guardian, and Explore Publishing. He has written food reviews, features, and articles on topics like suicide.

Mr. Carter's skills are broad. To take stress out, he likes to play chess and go to the gym. His great-



PHOTOS BY ERIN CRAIG (LEFT) AND DAMON GRANT (RIGHT)

Ms. Craig dressed as Grover dances on the stage of Sesame Street Live (left). At Mr. Smith's Bar in San Francisco, Mr. Carter drums like the new Travis Barker (right).

est passion, however, is teaching math.

"I plan to keep on teaching and start a free tutorial math club in east Oakland. I want to be able to teach math as long as possible and...develop a number of approaches to every problem," Mr. Carter said.

Cesar Barragan, the Spanish teacher, is an artist in his spare time. He enjoys painting acrylic on old found wood and on French paper. In particular, he likes to do abstract works that look like seascapes. Mr. Barragan's art work

can be seen in galleries in the Bay Area such as the Mission Cultural Center and Balazo Gallery in San Francisco. He has also organized and executed an international contemporary art show of Tijuana-based artists called Tijuana S.A.

Mr. Barragan loves world music such as juju (a style of Nigerian popular music), Soukous (also known as African rumba), and Mexican drum and bass. When Mr. Barragan goes out, he likes to go to Yoshi's Jazz Club at Jack London Square.

In addition to art and music,

Barragan loves to cook and makes dishes like vegetarian posole and blackened catfish tacos.

"My fish tacos melt in your mouth and hit you with the power of six different spices softened by a creamy gorgonzola cheese sauce," Mr. Barragan said.

Ultimately, Mr. Barragan, a father of two, likes to think he is a family man.

"I am genuinely interested in and like to listen to and ponder other people's ideas. I have a lot of passions, but my number one focus is my family," Mr. Barragan said.

Like the other teachers, math teacher Erin Craig has several interests outside of school. She used to train five days a week to compete in nationals for snowboarding in the Sierras in Lake Tahoe.

"I used to do half pipe, slope style, board across slalom, and giant slalom," Ms. Craig said, referring to all the different styles of snowboarding she practiced.

Ms. Craig was sponsored by and competed for the United States of America Snowboard Association for four years. At her best she ended up in ninth place out of the whole country.

Another interest Ms. Craig has is dancing. A former professional dancer, Ms. Craig practiced tap dance, jazz, ballet, and lyrical dance. She even toured with Sesame Street Live in the role of Grover, the furry blue muppet.

"Being on tour was the best experience. It exposed me to new things. I saw the whole country from Maine to Hawaii," Ms. Craig said.

When Ms. Craig has free time, she likes to go to the mountains and snowboard, go to baseball games, and shop. Even though school now takes up all her time, she makes up for it in the summer. If Ms. Craig ever gets burnt out from teaching, she would like to be a statistician for a sports team. One of her goals in life is someday to do a triathlon and travel to Fiji and Europe.

Even though teachers are often stressed out by school, they do, in fact, have a life beyond Unity.

Death becomes fresh again for sophomores

By Beatrice Rivera

Cemeteries, crematories, get out of here! Haven't you heard about the new way of getting rid of your dead corpse? Donating your body to the traveling exhibition Body Worlds!

On Nov. 15 the sophomore class visited Body Worlds 2 at the Tech Museum of Innovation in San Jose. They viewed dozens of plastinated corpses including a pregnant woman with her stomach cut open to reveal her unborn fetus, a man revealing every muscle in his body, a coal black lung, and many other bodies and body parts.

According to the Body Worlds website, the German anatomist Gunther von Hagens invented the plastination technique in the late 1970s. The purpose of Dr. von Hagens's exhibit is to teach laymen about the human body by introducing the insides of the human body and all of its wonders.

Rowan Driscoll, biology and chemistry teacher, organized the trip to the exhibit because his biology class has been studying the human body, and he believes for his students to actually see the different body systems is very powerful.

The plastination process starts out by preserving the body with a special solution called Formalin to make sure the body does not decompose. Then, the corpse is placed into chemical acetone to

absorb body water and bind to fat. Next, the body is placed in a bath of liquid polymer, which Mr. Driscoll explains is like liquid plastic or rubber.

He said, "The liquid polymer goes into the cells and pushes the acetone out of the cells and corpse, taking all of the water and fat with it."

They place the specimen in a vacuum chamber with no air for the acetone to evaporate, leaving behind a plastic or rubber cell. The body is then positioned as preferred. Finally, the body is hardened with heat, gas, or ultraviolet rays.

When the Unity students and teachers entered the exhibit, they were in awe, particularly because of the fascinating bodies and also because it did not smell.

Jamie Treacy, art teacher said, "It was better than I expected...I had no idea the bodies were going to be presented in so many ways... The poses were really neat!"

Some of the poses included a soccer player extending his leg as if kicking a soccer ball, a man and woman with blades under their feet doing an ice skating move, and many more dramatic poses.

Mr. Treacy also commented on how beautiful the floating lines of blood vessels and nerves looked. In one display, the human torso was depicted with only the circulatory system, and he thought it was interesting how the blood



PHOTO BY BODY WORLDS

A plastinated corpse from the Body Worlds 2 exhibit is arranged in a skateboarding pose.

vessels looked like tributaries of a river.

Sophomore Antonio Murphy said his first thought walking into Body Worlds 2 was, "This is awesome! You couldn't believe they

were real."

When asked if he would donate his body to the exhibit, he said, "Yup, I would donate my body, but I would want a microphone in my hand. I would want it to resemble me and what I was about when I was alive."

As many people as there are rooting for this extremely creative exhibit, there are others who wouldn't want to hear anything about it. Many people say von Hagen's use of shocking material is unacceptable, and numerous religions protest the exhibition of human corpses.

One student who would not donate his body is sophomore Ricardo Chavarria.

He said, "Your body is for yourself...you should stay intact with your body after you die."

There is also a lot of controversy over the cadavers and their organs. Many officials argue that there aren't any documentation codes, stamps or other ways of knowing who these bodies actually belong to. This topic is very polemical, and it is even believed that many of the bodies from

Gunther von Hagens's Body Worlds exhibits are taken from prisons and other facilities where people never authorized their bodies to be donated. However, von Hagens states that all specimens on display are authentic and that the people gave permission for the body to be used for this exhibit during their lifetime.

Despite all the controversy this exhibit has stirred up across the world, Antonio feels that Body Worlds could really impact people's lives.

"It made me want to learn more about it. I want to study the human body in college," said Antonio.

All in all, the visit to the exhibit was wonderful and exciting in the eyes of the Unity High sophomores, and even after a decade of being on display, the show is still a hit. Death is being reborn in the magical exhibit, Body Worlds.

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Tardy policy strikes seniors in the heart

By Kevin Lopez

It's 7:00 p.m. in the ballroom, and the lights come on. The students all look at each other wondering the same thing: Where is everyone? Are more people going to show up? Is this it? The music starts playing, and nobody goes up to dance. A few minutes later someone starts dancing, but nobody can tell who it is. They turn around, and it's Mr. Castillo wilding out, trying to pump up the only 10 seniors who were allowed to attend the senior prom.

The senior attendance policy was designed especially for seniors due to their numerous tardies and absences. The senior attendance policy states that any senior who has more than 10 tardies and/or absences may be restricted from senior events such as the senior trip and prom or walking the stage at graduation.

"The majority of seniors do come on time, but there is a small group that arrives to school late," said Mr. Castillo, the man behind the policy.



"We feel like 10 tardies and 10 absences is generous," he added.

What Mr. Castillo thinks is generous, students think is insane. For the most part, students don't come to school late by choice but by unplanned occurrences.

"There are students that live far away, and some need to take their siblings to school. They act like we want to be late and



PHOTO BY KEVIN LOPEZ

Senior Tatiana Alexander signs in on the tardy list.

have detention and not go on senior trips," said senior Mario Gordillo.

Senior Lucero Valdez agreed. "I don't think the rule is working because the students don't plan it; it just happens," she said.

Taking away senior events should not be the answer for the attendance problem. Most of us have been dreaming of going to prom and crossing the stage at graduation since our freshman year. Why take away two of the most memorable days of our teenage years because of tardiness?

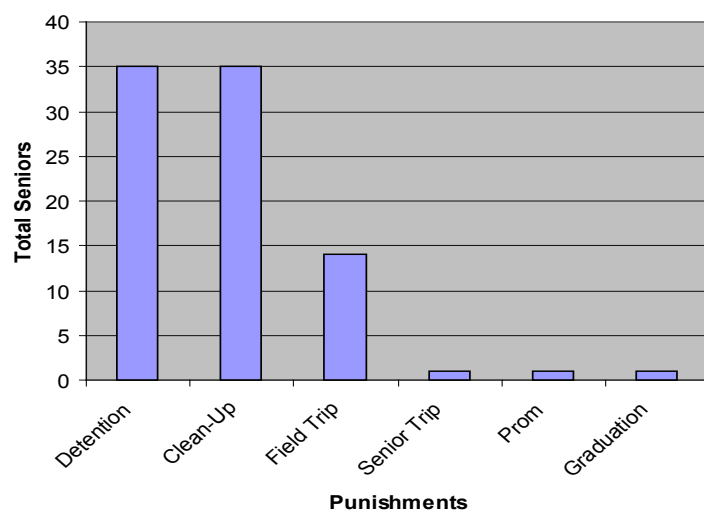
In particular, we, the senior class of 2008, have been working really hard to get to where we are now; it's not like we have been slacking off. In fact, we have been accepted to more colleges than any senior class in Unity history due to our hard work and determination. In light of all these accomplishments, should we have our most important senior memories taken

away just because of 10 tardies and/or absences?

If the school really wanted to stop tardies and absences, or at least minimize them, they should have started from the root, which is the freshmen, and built their way up to the seniors. Even then, people are still going to keep coming to school late, but at least it wouldn't be a surprise when the students got their privileges taken away in their senior year.

As a deterrent for coming to school tardy, we are already getting detention for being late. If detention isn't working, alternative consequences could be cleaning up the school, attending Saturday detention, and being restricted from regular fieldtrips. All of these would be better than robbing us of our most memorable teenage experiences. After all, when the lights go on, we don't want to see just Mr. Castillo dancing but the whole class of 2008.

Appropriate Punishment for Tardiness



GRAPH BY ALEJANDRO GOMEZ

Of the 55 seniors who responded to our poll, 35 said that detention and school clean-up duty were reasonable consequences for excessive tardiness. Less than five seniors believed that taking away senior trips, prom, or graduation were appropriate punishments.



PHOTO BY JESSICA PATINO

Seniors Rebecca Gonzalez and Ofelia Navarro feel overwhelmed from managing six classes plus college applications.

Six classes overload seniors

By Jessica Patino

Business, Journalism, Art 2, and Spanish 3: these are the mandatory electives that Unity added to its course offerings so that seniors could have a full schedule. This year Unity has decided to give seniors an overload by making all of us take six classes, whereas in the past, seniors took only four classes or at least only the classes they needed to graduate. Having to take extra classes that we don't need in our last year of high school is extremely stressful.

In almost every class, there is homework that needs to be done on time, and it can get really frustrating having to do it all at once because teachers don't seem to understand that students have work to do for other classes too. Besides trying to do all our homework and studying for tests, seniors also have to complete college, financial aid, and scholarship applications on time, which can cause additional stress. Especially in the last year of high school, students should be given a break. After all, isn't senior year about having more fun and more freedom than other grades, while still being focused and doing work?

Unity principal David Castillo claimed that giving seniors a full schedule is beneficial to them.

"Past seniors would only be part time students. They would come late and leave school early," he said.

Like many seniors, Viviana Zamora, who is taking six full classes plus study hall for AP

physics, believes that this policy is unwise.

"It's not fair. [Last year's seniors] got more liberty than what the seniors now have. Seniors now are paying for something that someone else did," she said.

If students didn't have a full schedule, said Mr. Castillo, they would "go home and do nothing."

In reality, though, most seniors could actually fill their



time with useful activities. They could get a job or internship, help out their families and do errands, or even take college classes to earn credits that would give them a jump start for next year.

In a recent poll, 22 out of 33 seniors who responded said they would drop their electives if they could. When asked which class he would drop, senior Moises Sandoval said, "Physics. It's too hard and stressful." If he were at another school, he would be able to drop it because he doesn't need the class to graduate, but Unity requires its students to stay in their electives.

Unity should reconsider changing seniors' schedules. The staff should let students take only the classes that they truly need.

Unity sports: Where are all the ladies?

By Carolina Cordero

The day is done for many students once the bell rings but not for the athletes. They are getting ready to warm up and go to practice. They are ready to go, but something is missing. Where are all the girls? Sadly, there are none. The reality is that there are virtually no girls at Unity playing any sport the school has to offer.

What is the reason that the majority of the sports played here at Unity are played by boys? There was a girls' soccer team last year, but that's no longer an option. The basketball team is supposed to be coed, but only four girls play and the rest of the team is boys.

"I am the women's basketball coach, but unfortunately there aren't enough women to coach [a full team]," said science teacher Rowan Driscoll.

Mr. Driscoll appears to be the only teacher encouraging girls to play. What about the rest of Unity's faculty? I don't hear any other teachers telling the girls to go out and play for a team sport. Is it all just left to Driscoll? The

teachers read out the announcements that the basketball or soccer team is having meetings, but they don't really care. They are not motivating girls to participate in athletics at Unity.

Another reason for low female participation is that in the past, women's sports at Unity have been completely disorganized. When there actually was a girls' soccer team, many girls dropped out because there wasn't any one particular coach. They didn't have the stability that the boys did.

"Girls that want to play feel discriminated against because they don't get a chance to show off their kinesthetic skills," said senior Vanessa Castellanos, a former soccer player.

It seems to me, though, that the girls themselves also need to shoulder some of the responsibility. Many girls at Unity just want to be girly girls and look nice for the boys. They spend so much time trying to impress the boys that they have little or no time to do anything else. It could be that they are too busy studying, but the truth of the matter is that they spend so much time in front of the mirror, they won't pick up a basketball or any other sports equipment. Most are just afraid to look too masculine for fear that some boys won't

like them. Where do they get this idea? Perhaps society is to blame. The media primarily gives men the spotlight in being good at sports. Many times, when they do put the spotlight on female athletes, these women are considered sex symbols rather than being known for their athletic capabilities.

All of these factors contribute to Unity having no girls' sports teams. There aren't enough women athlete role models out there to say, hey it's ok to be athletic, and you can still look cute and do well in school. The media needs to emphasize that girls can do so much more than just look pretty.

In addition, the faculty at Unity, not just Driscoll, needs to step it up and show their support for girls who play. They need to do their part to motivate and inspire. The school can also look into offering a broader range of sports. Not every girl in this school likes to play basketball or soccer. What about baseball or volleyball or even tennis? Boys at school can also help by motivating girls to join teams. Finally, we girls need to break out of our shells and be willing to participate in sports so that we can shine and show off our skills. We can be excellent athletes, good students, and to top it all off, look cute.

Your response: Letters to the Editor

Uniforms

I feel that students are hiding their true feelings towards Unity's dress code! I, along with many others, don't agree with a uniform being regulated at Unity High. The uniform policy at Unity is khaki and black or white polos and shoes ("Uniforms. Enforce consistently or get rid of them" by Alma Ramirez). I appreciate the staff's concern about wearing uniforms in order to keep us out of gang related trouble, but as many other students know, our uniform colors are actually gang related. Therefore, it brings even more trouble to students like me who stay in places made up of people opposing these colors. When I walk home, I usually have someone mug or come up to me due to my uniform.

I mean, let's face the truth! No matter what we do or what uniform colors we are forced to wear, gang violence will always exist...No matter what clothes or colors they have on, true members will always represent who they are! I see no point in uniforms. I suggest picking some non gang-related colors or just getting rid of the uniform for good.

Noemi Ochoa
Grade 11

Lunch

I agree with the idea of students having activities during lunch besides "chilling." In the article "Healthy food, no sports! Where's the fun in that?" by Leopoldo Zubiri, it states that students aren't getting enough exercise during lunch...

Studies show that exercise can reduce stress levels more effectively than any other method. Students need to take their stress off their minds...

[Also,] students with good grades should have the right to eat outside the campus. This will benefit not only their health but also their grades. Students with low grades will make more effort towards their grades when actually getting the privileges of going off campus.

Gorgonio Enriquez
Grade 12

Freshmen after school

I feel like it is not right what Unity High School is doing to the ninth grade students, that they are forced to stay until five p.m. because of a program that the school had decided to pay...

I think they have the right to go home and get some rest because they are probably already tired of the regular school hours. I don't agree with this because I remember when I first came to this school I was just waiting for the last bell to ring so I could be able to go home and get some rest and eat. They get bored being in school for so long. They should just go home like the rest of the students.

Maria Arceo
Grade 11

Mascot

I'm not alone when I say that Unity High School should change its mascot ("The Butterfly: Mascot that stabs players in the heart"). On Nov. 15, we, the high school men's soccer team, played a really important game against Oasis...

We were doing our best until a group of students from Unity High screamed, "GO BUTTERFLIES." I felt embarrassed, looking for a place to hide my face that had turned red. Other team members felt intimidated, and because of that we lost confidence and we started playing badly, resulting in a defeat. A couple of minutes before the referee indicated that the game was over, I saw a few guys from the rival team laughing and making fun of Unity High School's mascot...

In my opinion, I would change the mascot to a wolverine, and that way the students on my team at Unity would feel more secure and would have courage in the field and that would give us better results.

Eduardo Zaragoza
Grade 11

Dream Act

I believe that undocumented students should receive federal help to attend the college of their desire. Money should not be an obstacle for undocumented students to achieve a superior education. The state of California or even the federal government should reward these students because they work hard, they have high aspirations to make important contributions to

this country, and because everyone should have the right and the opportunity to receive a superior education at the same cost...

At Unity High School there are many students like myself that have the grades, the motivation, and the capability to attend the college of their desire, but they find it difficult because they don't qualify for financial aid...The Dream Act offers undocumented students the opportunity to achieve their dream of receiving a higher education... Myself and the Hispanic minority wish and hope to achieve a better future for our current generation and for future generations.

Ana Lopez
Grade 11

Parent meetings

This letter is aimed at most of the teachers at Unity High School. Parent meeting conferences are not a good solution to help students get better grades. Some students frankly just don't care and some other students just get very sad because they let down their parents. For example, one of my classmates was informed that he was going to have a parent-teacher conference because of his grades. He nearly cried that day because of the fact that he was going to disappoint his mother, but he is still going at the same grade pace...

I have also had various conferences in the past three years I have been a student at Unity High. All they ever did was make my mother worry about me. It never helped my grades improve. A good solution to this problem is to

stop phone calls home, especially conferences. Just inform them in progress reports and at the end of semesters.

Ricardo Arvizu
Grade 11

Volunteering

Every year during the holidays, my family and I get together at our home and celebrate. We eat a lot of food, listen to music, and party...Unfortunately, there is an innumerable amount of families who are unlucky enough to even have a roof over their heads, not to mention a hot meal. There are many poor and homeless people out there who need our help...I believe that Unity High School, as the community that we are, can help out a great deal if we choose to...

We can start out by setting up canned food drives, especially during the holidays. The students would be motivated to participate if there were points towards their advisory involved; it could be a friendly competition between the classes...We could also have a toy drive for the needy children during the holidays. Another thing that we could do is volunteer at different places where they help the homeless. For example, SF Connect is an organization in San Francisco where you could volunteer and give back to the community. Aside from helping the less fortunate, volunteering could give community service hours, something that is great to have on your college applications.

Gloria Monterroso
Grade 11



BY NOEMI OCHOA



BY SHATIKA SLOAN

Around the World

Japanese grandmother's influence lingers

By Beatrice Rivera

Shatika Sloan has strong African-American features, so many students would probably be surprised to hear that she has Japanese blood running through her veins. Her Japanese grandmother met her African-American grandfather while she was working as a nurse at a navy base in Japan. Shatika's grandfather was in the navy at the time. They got married in Japan then moved to the United States. Shatika's mother, who was born and grew up in the United States, is half Japanese and African-American, and her father is full blooded African-American, which makes Shatika a quarter Japanese and three-fourths black.

Shatika only visited Japan once when she was a baby. She was about nine months old and celebrated her first birthday there.

Shatika loves Japanese food. Some typical Japanese dishes Shatika eats are steak, chicken, and sushi. At her grandma's house they would always eat rice and broccoli for breakfast.

"You could always find rice in a pot on the stove at my granny's house," she said.

Shatika does not speak Japanese, but she knows some Japanese words because when her grandmother used to get mad, she would use the bad words on her.

Since her grandmother moved to the United States many years ago, she has adopted the U.S.

traditions, so they usually do not celebrate Japanese holidays.

Every time Shatika would spend the night at her granny's house, they would perform prayer together. They would use candles and red rosary beads as they kneeled on a stool to pray. When asked about special celebrations, she said she could not think of any except funerals.



"They have off the wall, big funerals."

What Shatika does remember about Japanese culture is dressing up as a geisha for a heritage ceremony at her church, which had a large Japanese congregation. Shatika's grandmother taught her and three other cousins how to perform a Japanese dance.

"It was hard because we had to dance in wooden shoes," said Shatika.

She says that the Japanese people she knows are very strict about cleanliness. There are no shoes allowed in the house at any time unless they are new out of the box.

Shatika also wanted everyone to know that not all Asians like

martial arts and that believing that is very stereotypical.

Shatika would like to go to Japan one day to reconnect with her roots. When she has her own children, she plans to take them to Japan to teach them about their heritage and for them to learn the Japanese language.



Missing the warm beaches of El Salvador

By Daisy Barraza

One of the stereotypes about Unity High School is that most of the students are Mexicans, but it's not true. Unity students and staff hail from several other countries, including El Salvador.

El Salvador is located on the Pacific coast of Central America with Guatemala to the west and Honduras to the north and east. It's the smallest of all the Central American countries.

Mabel Orellana, senior, said that what she likes about visiting El Salvador is its food.

"When we arrive they greet us with the main foods from El Salvador: pupusas which are really good and also sopa de gallina, which is soup of chicken. We also eat a lot of fruit like mangos, nanizes, and joctes."

Maria Valencia, Unity High School's administrative assistant, also loves Salvadorean cuisine.

"I like to eat yucca. It's like a potato, and what they do to it is fry it and you can eat it with



PHOTO COURTESY OF FLICKR.COM

Mabel Orellana eats sweet mangos like these in El Salvador.

chicharone, which is fried pork skin, and we add salsa. It's good," said Ms. Valencia.

Both Ms. Valencia and Mabel's family moved from El Salvador to the United States because they wanted a better life.

"My mom left El Salvador because of how poor it was and also because of the civil war. She

already had four girls and wanted a better life for us, so she decided to move to the United States," said Mabel.

Mabel still has vivid memories of life in El Salvador.

"I remember my grandma. We would always go out and have fun at the beach. The beach's name is La Costa Del Sol, which is very

nice."

"The beaches' water is warm," agreed Ms. Valencia. "It's not like the beaches from here that the water is freezing. The sun is always sunny, and you can just eat your cocteles."

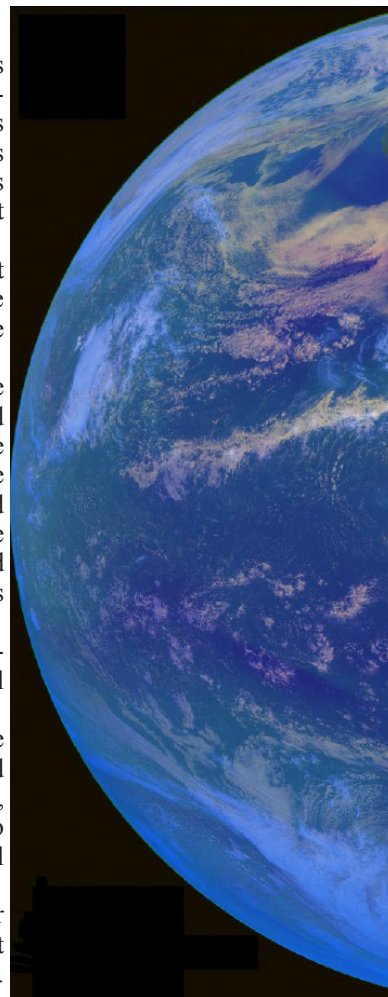
Just like Mabel, what Ms. Valencia misses the most about El Salvador are her loved ones.

"I used to spend time with my grandma. She lived in a little pueblo, and she had a big stove where she made tortillas. She would cook the maize and make it into dough, and I used to play with it once it was done."

Neither Mabel nor Ms. Valencia would want to live in El Salvador permanently.

"I wouldn't like to live there because of the poorness," said Mabel. "Walking in the streets, you have to watch your back to see that nobody is going to steal your purse."

"I wouldn't like to live over there either, but I like to visit it because of my family," said Ms. Valencia.



Guatemala's natural sites attract many

By Daniel Barajas

Guatemala is a country rich in coffee with a beautiful national bird called El Quetzal. It is in Central America, bordered by Mexico to the northwest, the Pacific Ocean to the southwest, Belize and the Caribbean Sea to the northeast, and Honduras and El Salvador to the southeast.

The city of Mazatenango is about three or four hours away from Guatemala City, the capital of Guatemala, and is located along the coast, next to the Pacific Ocean. Mazatenango is where sophomore Sergio Santay immigrated from nine years ago.

As in any other country, Guatemala has its own traditions that are celebrated by its people. One tradition that they have in Guatemala is Semana Santa.

"What makes this week unique is that the whole town gathers up to decorate the streets and the roads with different flowers and plants in order for the processions to pass. Many people carry religious monuments like Jesus Christ or the Virgin Mary," said Sergio.

Some of the foods that they make in Guatemala are Chiles Rellenos and Chicken Pepian, chicken cooked in a spicy pumpkin and sesame seed sauce.

"I love tamales that are wrapped in banana leaves, which give it that delicious earthy flavor," said Sergio.

Other delicious Guatemalan



PHOTO BY MIKE AUSTIN

Temple Tikal in Guatemala is a popular tourist attraction.

dishes, said Sergio, are shrimp ceviche, red snapper with cashews, and mushrooms with garlic.

Traditional music from Guatemala is music from a marimba. This instrument made from wood is struck with a mallet to make musical notes. But there are also different types of music that people listen to, including cumbias, meringue, corridos and rock.

"I just like to listen to rap because I am used to hearing that all the time," said Sergio.

Guatemala has become a popular tourist attraction because of its many places to visit, including relics from the

Mayans, who were known for their accomplishments in math and astronomy. In addition to famous sites like Lake Atitlan, El Tikal, and Antigua Guatemala, tourists have many other options to choose from.

"A famous amusement park in Guatemala is called El Irtra where they have big roller coasters and huge water slides," said sophomore Josue Carillo, whose family also immigrated from Guatemala.

Both Josue and Sergio enjoy visiting Guatemala.

"For me, one of my favorite places is my grandpa's ranch because he has cows and bulls," said Josue.

Sergio said, "One day I would like to go back...and visit El Tikal to go see the pyramids."

at Unity High School

Mexico's cultural dances come alive at Unity

By Andrea Perez

The dancers line up in front of their partners. The music starts playing slowly for the first few seconds. Then the faster part begins. Girls' big skirts in the colors of the Mexican flag wave around in a circular motion as the guys stomp on the ground in a routine. This traditional dance from Mexico called folklorico is one of the many cultural dances that students at Unity know and love.

"The dances usually depend on what part of the country



PHOTO BY ANDREA M. PEREZ

Betsabe Mejia shows off her folklorico outfit.

your family is from and what is a popular dance in the family," said sophomore Betsabe Mejia. As a young girl, Betsabe took folklorico classes for about two years.

"Jalisco, the state where my family is from, is well known for their traditional folklorico dances. Jalisco also has some songs that represent the state, and the folklorico dances are danced with Jalisco style."

Juan (J.M.)

Zamora, a senior from Veracruz, Mexico, dances the traditional El Son Jarocho. He learned the dance from his family and participates in many Bay Area cultural dance events.

"I was more active in it because when I came to the U.S., I was far from my native land. I wanted to show pride and people in the U.S. the different dances from Mexico," said J.M.

Originally from Durango, senior Gorgonio Enriquez is most familiar with the popular Duranguense dance. The style of this laid-back dance mostly involves feeling the fast rhythm of the music. Rather than moving the shoulders up and down, the dancer just shifts his body to the sides.

"I enjoy my state's culture and the joy out of dancing and what it represents," said Gorgonio.

Although each state is proud

of its own dances, most Mexicans do not stick only to their own regional styles. They expand and combine the cultural dances.

Although banda and corridos are the most popular genres of music in Jalisco, where freshman Nancy Gutierrez is from, she also dances to cumbia and merengue. Cumbia has both slow and fast rhythms. Depending on how fast the music is, two people face each other and move their feet in a routine going from left to right. To make it look fancier, people frequently do spins and switch sides with their partners.

"I like how these dances represent the culture within my family," said Nancy.

For many students at Unity High, music and dance represent their connection with Mexico and liven up the culture that they bring to school.

Students dish about favorite foods

By Jessica Patino

Tamales, posole, birria, and mole. These cultural dishes are very familiar to many Unity students, but what many don't realize is that the meals their classmates eat extend far beyond these typical Mexican foods. Some of the least common dishes Unity students enjoy come from countries like El Salvador, Guatemala, and even Senegal.

Pupusas revueltas is a favorite of senior Mabel Orellana. This dish consists of masa (dough for the tortilla), cheese, pork skin, beans, green loroco (which is like green peas), and repollo in vinegar with tomato sauce.

"Whenever my mom makes pupusas, it reminds me of my country," Mabel said. "They use a lot of herbs and spices that are only available in El Salvador."

Senior Roman Barry, whose family is from Italy and Senegal, said Maffe is his favorite dish. This



PHOTO COURTESY OF WASHINGTON CITY PAPER

Pupusas are the most common dish in El Salvador.

dish originated from Senegal.

"Maffe is consisted of rice with peanut butter in hot sauce. It's creamy, very spicy, and chewy. It's like magic in my mouth!" Roman said.

Some unique ingredients that they use in Senegal are goat meat and couscous, which is tiny rice grains with meat.

"There isn't any food that I don't like from Senegal," he said.

Junior Candido Santay, who is from Guatemala, recommends caldo de pollo.

"This dish consists of pollo, which is chicken, soup, salt, pimiento (pepper), and consome, which is chicken flavored seasoning. I like Guatemala's food

because it's more salty than other food and it adds more flavor," Candido said.

Unity counselor Frances Ramos, who is from Puerto Rico, said her favorite dish from Puerto Rico is white rice with fried chicken.

"Our rice is different. We use a lot of oil and salt, so it's really greasy."

Ms. Ramos' husband also happens to own a restaurant in Oakland, which serves Puerto Rican food. The restaurant is called Sofrito, and it's located on International and 35th Ave.

But how is Puerto Rican food different from food in other countries?

"We don't use jalapenos to make the food spicy, and it's really flavorful. We also use a lot of garlic, onions and cilantro," she said.

Although most students at Unity are most accustomed to eating foods from their own culture, they can expose themselves to new dishes simply by going to restaurants or sharing food with classmates of a different culture.



French, Cambodian... we are all the same

By Andrea M. Perez

Lucia Protopopescu-Sieng. That could be senior Lucia Sieng's name if she joined together both of her parents' last names. At Unity, many individuals have families that come from more than one culture. One of these students is Lucia.

She is French, Cambodian, Roma-



PHOTO BY ANDREA M. PEREZ

Lucia Sieng believes that we are all just humans.

nian, and Chinese. Her mother is Cambodian and Chinese and grew up in Cambodia, while her father, who is French and Romanian, was raised in France.

"Basically it doesn't tilt one way or another. I consider myself all four ethnicities," said Lucia.

Even though she does not speak any of the languages, she would like to learn to speak French one day and visit France. She says she

feels unique that her ethnicities are not what you hear typically around Oakland or at school.

At home, Lucia's parents follow some cultural traditions. For example, her mother has a fruit altar, which is an altar filled with fruits that are an offering to the dead. She puts new fruits in every few months once they begin to decay. Her mother has this altar placed on a small table in the kitchen.

Another Cambodian tradition her family follows is "The One Hundred Days Later." One hundred days after a loved one passes

away, families and friends gather and mourn but acknowledge that the loved one is in a better place.

These traditions are just what Lucia has seen growing up with her family. However, they do not reflect her everyday life, and she does not see cultures and traditions as a big influence on her.

"Ethnicities don't mean much of anything to me," said Lucia. "I consider everyone as humans that I don't categorize them by such things as race or ethnicities."

Ninth graders display photos, writing on gallery night

By Alejandro Gomez

On Dec. 19, the ninth grade class held Unity's first photography gallery exhibit in the school auditorium. The event was designed to show off the writing that the freshmen created in Lillian Hsu's freshman English class and Damon Grant's freshman Cultural Geography class.

For Ms. Hsu's class, the students took photos of eye-catching people, places, and objects around Oakland and wrote vivid vignettes describing the photos. In Ms. Grant's class, students described the geographical coordinates and features of the locations where they had taken the photos. Ninth grade students invited their parents, siblings, and friends to the event. In total, more than 21 families attended.

"Other grades weren't invited because it was only for freshmen and their families," said freshman Lupita Contreras who helped design the program for the event.



PHOTO BY LILLIAN HSU

Ninth graders Philloria Brown, Yessika Lupian, Ana Castellanos, Jeanette Andrade, Alejandra Villa, and Lonnie Walker helped organize the first ever freshman photography gallery exhibit.

Freshman Ana Castellanos, who served on the food committee and set-up committee, was proud of the exhibit.

"Dedication and love in our photos was something that I gave," she said. "[The pictures are] inspiring because they tell you something about yourself."

Lashai Walker came to the gallery night to support her sister, freshman Lonnie Walker.

"I thought it was fun and interesting," she said about the exhibit. "It showed people's different points of view."

Freshman Jonathan Chavarria's mother, Cecilia Chavarria, was there to support her son. "It was really good... The photos were really clear," she said.

The ninth graders sold food and drinks at the event, which were made by student and parent volunteers. The gallery night raised 106 dollars for the freshman class treasury.

Drunk driver kills best friend of Unity freshman

By Alejandro Gomez

On Thanksgiving night, on 89th Avenue and D Street in Oakland, drunk driver Carmelo Salas crashed into a Mustang with his Ford Expedition. Inside the Mustang, a 23-year-old woman and a three-year-old girl were critically injured, and two other girls died, including 14-year-old Stephanie Cervantes, a close friend of three Unity High freshmen, Jeanette Andrade, Marco Andrade, and Jonathan Chavarria.

"They were coming from Stephanie's aunty house and were going to Stephanie's house. Then an Expedition was going 80 mph, and he was drunk. He passed a stop sign, and they crashed," said Marco about the accident.

Jeanette was Stephanie's best friend for three years.

"I feel really bad [and] sad," she said about the tragedy. "December 29 we were going to have a quinceanera. I don't know if I'm going to do it. We already had everything ready. Stephanie got buried with her quinceanera dress."

Jeanette, Marco, and Jonathan helped raise money for the family by passing around a donation box at Unity High School. Students and staff contributed to a fund to pay for sending the bodies back to Mexico for burial.

The funeral was held at Cooper's Chapel in Fruitvale.

"It was sad and quiet," said Jonathan.



Jeanette Andrade holds a picture of her late best friend. An altar at 89th and D Street commemorates Stephanie Cervantes.



PHOTOS BY ALEJANDRO GOMEZ

At the funeral, a red Honda Civic filled with \$5,000 in donations for the family was stolen.

"That's sad. The money was for a good reason," Jeanette said. "We went around the stores and left boxes for donations."

Jonathan, Marco, and Jeanette all agree that drunk drivers should not drive on the streets.

"They're not supposed to drink, and that's why so many accidents happen," said Marco.

According to the Oakland Tribune, police said Salas may have been drinking since 11 a.m. on Thanksgiving Day.

"They need to control how much they drink," said Jonathan. "And if they do drink, they should stay home."

News flash from the director's desk: Mr. Castillo speaks

First off, I would like to thank the students from the Unity Journalism class for their hard work with the Unity Chronicles. Ms. Hsu has provided excellent leadership in creating the class and facilitating the creative process. The Unity Chronicles is Unity's first newspaper, and it is a great way for Unity, from the student's perspective, to spread the word about the amazing happenings on our campus. I would like to use this column to provide a few updates regarding school events at Unity.

Spirit Week - Thanks to Ms. Craig and the Spirit Week committee for organizing Unity's first Spirit Week. It was a great success. It was great to see students and staff wearing everything from pajamas to matching soccer uniforms. Be careful on those skateboards!



PHOTO BY ANDREA M. PEREZ

Principal David Castillo

Unity Intersession - Unity will hold its first Intersession on Friday, Feb. 1 and Monday, Feb. 4. Unity students will have great opportunities to choose from a diverse class and workshop selection. Selections will include Sushi Making, Street Law, DJ Introduction, Japanese Culture, Art in Nature, Violence Prevention, Hip Hop and African Dance, and many more. Activities will be held on campus and at off campus sites. Although regular classes won't be held, attendance is still mandatory, and students will be graded for their participation.

New After School Programs - **Conflict Mediation through Martial Arts** - Unity is excited to have Mr. Stephen Davis back on campus for this new after school program. Students will learn the art of self-defense.

Arrow-Soul Ancestry - Unity students will have an opportunity to learn the art of graffiti writing in this program that will be taught by Desi of Weapons of Mass Expression.

Students will have to apply in order to be considered for these programs, so please keep your ears open for more information.

Looking Forward.... As we approach the end of the first semester, please remember to study hard for your finals. We are halfway through the year, and I know that we set very high expectations of our students, but just remember that we are helping to prepare you for college and beyond. It will pay off in the end.

Thank you,
Mr. Castillo

EN ESPAÑOL

¿Son interesantes los maestros?

Por Leopoldo Zubirí
Traducido por Vanessa Castellanos y Amado Rosas

En los ojos de muchos estudiantes, los maestros son seres aburridos que solo se concentran en su trabajo que es la enseñanza. Sin embargo, en la escuela Unity High los maestros tienen múltiples pasiones de aventura fuera de la escuela.

David Carter, profesor de matemáticas en la escuela Unity High, es un integrante de la banda Gosta Berling, en la cual toca la batería. La banda toca independientemente y está basada en Oakland. Esta banda tiene muchas influencias, incluyendo Velvet Underground, una banda de los años sesentas. Su estilo de rock era revolucionario. También tienen influencias de la radio colegial de los años ochentas, la cual reproducía música de guitarra pesada y voces gemidas acompañadas por un ritmo rápido.

"Nos reunimos para practicar dos veces por semana," Carter comentó.

Antes de empezar a trabajar de profesor, el señor Carter fue un escritor para varios periódicos como el SF Chronicle, SF Bay Guardian, y el Explore Publishing. También escribió para sitios de Internet como SBC Pac Bell. Él ha escrito críticas culinarias, y artículos de primera plana describiendo temas como el suicidio.

Cesar Barragán, maestro de español, goza el pasar tiempo con su familia, pero cuando no está con su familia le gusta pintar acrílico en madera reciclada o en papel francés. Le gusta hacer trabajos abstractos que se asemejan a paisajes marinos. El arte del maestro Barragán ha sido presentado en galerías del área de la bahía en lugares como el Centro Cultural de la Misión y la galería Balazo en San Francisco. Le encanta cocinar y preparar platillos como pozole vegetariano y tacos de bagre.

"Mis tacos de pescado se derriten en tu boca y te impactan con el poder de seis especies diferentes acompañadas con una salsa de queso gorgonzola," Barragán expresó.



PHOTO POR DAMON GRANT

Le encanta la música de todas partes del mundo como la música juju (un tipo de música popular Nigeriana), soukus (también conocida como Rumba Africana) y música de batería y bajo (Drum & Bass) Mexicana.

Cuando Barragán sale a

pasear le gusta ir a Yoshi's Jazz Club en Jack London Square. El maestro Barragán ha organizado y ejecutado un show de arte contemporáneo de unos artistas de Tijuana llamada Tijuana S.A. También ha protestado contra la guerra en Irak y ha marchado por los derechos de los inmigrantes. Barragán se considera más que un hombre de familia.

"Tengo muchos intereses, pero mi prioridad número uno es mi familia," Barragán explicó.

Al igual que otros maestros, Erin Craig, maestra de matemáticas, tiene un interés especial. Ella entrenaba cinco días a la semana para competir nacionalmente en surfismo de nieve en Lake Tahoe en la sierra nevada.

"Yo acostumbraba el medio tubo, el estilo de pendiente, y prueba de slalom gigante," la maestra Craig explicó refiriéndose a los tipos de surfismo de nieve que practicaba.

La maestra Craig tuvo un patrocinador y compitió en la USASA por cuatro años y terminó ganando el noveno lugar de todo

el país.

Otro interés que la maestra Craig tiene es bailar, ella bailaba como Grover de Plaza Sésamo. Ella bailaba zapateado americano, ballet de jazz y baile lírico. El nombre de la obra era "Todos Hacemos Música." La maestra Craig estuvo de gira con Plaza Sésamo en vivo.

"Estar de gira fue la mejor experiencia. Me expuso a cosas nuevas y estuve por todo el país, desde Maine hasta Hawai," dijo la maestra Craig.

Cuando la maestra Craig tiene tiempo libre le gusta ir a las montañas y surfear en la nieve e ir a los juegos de baseball y también le gusta ir de compras. Aunque la escuela toma la mayor parte de su tiempo, ella lo recupera en el verano. Una de las metas en la vida de la maestra Craig es que un día pueda competir en un triatlón y viajar a Fiji y Europa.

Aunque los maestros se estresan continuamente por su trabajo en la escuela, ellos tienen una vida que va más allá de la escuela Unity High.

Los estudiantes de Unity visitan a universidades

Por Zakiyah Murray
Traducido por Claudia Garcia & Xochitl Herrera

Desde el principio del año escolar del 2007 al 2008, todos los estudiantes de Unity han visitado varios colegios en el Norte de California. Los estudiantes del noveno y décimo grado visitaron las universidades estatales de California (CSU) de East Bay, San Francisco, y San José. Los estudiantes del onceavo también tuvieron el privilegio de visitar la universidad estatal de California en San José. Los estudiantes que en este año se van a graduar, han ido a cuatro colegios que son la

Universidad de California (UC) Merced y Davis. También han ido a las universidades estatales de Fresno y Sacramento.

Durante pocos años, los estudiantes de Unity han tenido la oportunidad de visitar varios colegios, 11 CSUs, 7 UCs, y 4 colegios comunitarios. Comparado a otras escuelas de Oakland, los estudiantes de Unity han ido a muchos más. Cabe contrastar que la mayoría de las otras preparatorias empiezan a visitar colegios en su último año. El año pasado, estudiantes seleccionados de la clase de 2008 fueron por una semana al Sur de California a visitar otros colegios en California.

La consejera Frances Ramos

organiza todos los paseos de colegios. Ella recibe las opiniones de los estudiantes y de sus colegas. Con un límite de dinero, Ms. Ramos normalmente selecciona escuelas que son locales y tienen accesibilidad fácil para llegar. Para escuelas situadas más lejos, Ms. Ramos tiene que pagar por un autobús rentado por el día.

CSU San José es una escuela favorita de Ms. Ramos.

Ms. Ramos comenta, "CSU San José (SJSU) tiene un tamaño perfecto, no es muy grande ni muy chica. Es una escuela muy buena y tiene un campus bonito. Varios estudiantes que se graduaron en el pasado de Unity ahora son estudiantes de SJSU. Hay muchas

oportunidades ahí y no es muy difícil ingresar. Los estudiantes de Unity, tienen una buena oportunidad de ingresar a esta escuela. Es una escuela muy buena."

"¡El campus estaba cool! Cuando lo visitamos habían varias actividades. Recibí mucha información de lo que quiero hacer y aprendí muchas cosas, se mira como una escuela divertida," dijo Eduardo Zaragoza, un estudiante del onceavo que visitó SJSU con el resto de su clase.

Las visitas a los colegios pueden ayudar a influenciar a los estudiantes a que metan una solicitud de ingreso.

"Yo metí solicitudes a las dos escuelas. Me gustaron mucho. Hay

diversidad y me miro teniendo éxito ahí. Los paseos de colegios durante los años me han ayudado a conocer y explorar varios colegios. Si no fuera por Unity, no hubiera visitado muchos colegios y ahora conozco muchas opciones," dijo Giovanna Romero que solicitó entrada para el Otoño de 2008 a UC Merced and CSU Fresno después de visitar a las escuelas.

Erin Craig, maestra de Unity, comenta, "Los estudiantes necesitan saber que hay mas opciones que SJSU, Laney, y East Bay. Formando parte de paseos a colegios, los estudiantes pueden tener mas opciones de donde en verdad ellos quieren estudiar y donde quieren ir en su futuro."

Mundos del Cuerpo: Muerte regresa para los estudiantes

Por Beatrice Rivera
Traducido por Eric Romero y Luis Herrera

¡Cementerios, crematorios... salgan de aquí! ¿No han escuchado la nueva manera de deshacerse de los muertos? ¡Donando tu cuerpo a la exhibición viajera de Body Worlds!

En Nov. 15, la clase del nivel 10 de Unity High School visitó Body Worlds 2 en el Tech Museum en San José. Ellos vieron docenas de cadáveres plastinados incluyendo a mujeres embarazadas con su estómago cortado para revelar su bebé que no nació, un hombre revelando cada músculo de su cuerpo, y muchos increíbles cuerpos y partes.

De acuerdo al sitio de internet de Body Worlds el anatómico Alemán Gunther von Hagens inventó la plastinación al final de los 1970's. El propósito de la exhibición del Dr. von Hagen's es enseñar sobre el cuerpo humano viendo el interior del cuerpo y todas sus maravillas.

Rowan Driscoll, maestro



PHOTO POR BODY WORLDS

de biología y química, organizó el viaje a esta exhibición porque su clase de biología ha estado estudiando el cuerpo humano. Él creó que el hecho que sus estudiantes deberán poder ver los diferentes sistemas del cuerpo humano es muy poderoso.

El proceso de plastinación empieza por preservar el cuerpo con una solución especial llamada Formalina que asegura que el cuerpo no se pudra. Después los restos son puestos en un químico llamado acetona que absorbe el agua del cuerpo y lo amarra a las grasas. Después, el cuerpo es colocado en una tina de polímero líquido que

es como plástico líquido.

Ellos colocan el espécimen en una habitación donde no hay aire para que la acetona se evapore, dejando atrás células de plástico o hule. El cuerpo se posiciona como se quiere. Finalmente, el cuerpo se endurece con calentamiento, gas o rayos ultravioleta.

Cuando los estudiantes de Unity High y el maestro entraron a la exhibición ellos se quedaron asombrados. Particularmente por que los cuerpos eran fascinantes y también por que no apestaban.

Jamie Treacy, maestro de arte, dijo, "¡Eran mejor de lo que esperaba...yo no tenía idea que los cuerpos iban ser presentados en muchas maneras...las poses estaban chidas!"

Algunas de las poses incluían un futbolista extendiendo su pierna como si estuviera pateando una pelota de fútbol, un hombre y una mujer con navajas bajo sus pies haciendo movimiento de patinaje sobre hielo y más increíbles posiciones.

El también comentaba sobre que hermosas eran las líneas flotantes de células de sangre y como se veían los nervios. En

una muestra, el torso humano fue mostrado con solo el sistema circulatorio. El profesor Treacy no era la única persona que se sentía así por la exhibición.

Antonio Murphy, un estudiante de segundo año de preparatoria en Unity High dijo que lo primero que pensó al entrar a la exhibición del Mundo de Cuerpos 2, fue "Esto es impresionante! Ni pudieras pensar que son reales."

Se le preguntó al estudiante que si el donaría su cuerpo a la exhibición, él dijo,

"Sí, donaría mi cuerpo, pero quisiera que me pusieran un micrófono en la mano. Quisiera que refleje a mí y lo que yo era cuando estaba vivo."

A pesar de toda lo controversia que esta exhibición ha causado alrededor del mundo, Antonio siente que el Mundo de cuerpos puede impactar las vidas de la gente.

"Me hizo que aprendiera mas del cuerpo. Yo quiero estudiar el cuerpo humano en el colegio," dijo Antonio.

Así como hay tantas personas que hay apoyando esta exhibición, también hay otros que no quieren

escuchar nada de eso. Muchas personas dicen que von Hagens usa materiales electrocutantes que son inaceptables y muchas religiones protestaron contra la exhibición de cuerpos humanos.

También hay mucha controversia de los cadáveres y sus órganos. Muchos oficiales discuten que no hay ninguna documentación, códigos, estampillas u otra forma de saber a quien le pertenecía el cuerpo. Esto es muy polémico y también se cree que muchos de los cuerpos de Gunther von Hagens Mundo de Cuerpos son tomados de prisiones y otros lugares donde las personas no autorizan donar sus cuerpos. Pero von Hagens dice que todo lo que está en exposición es auténtico y que las personas dieron permiso de que sus cuerpos fueran usados en la exhibición durante sus vidas.

La visita a la exhibición fue fascinante y exitosa en los ojos de los estudiantes de Unity High y hasta después de una década de muestra, la exhibición todavía es un éxito. La muerte esta reviviendo a través de la magia de la exhibición del Mundo de Cuerpos.



PHOTOS BY ALEJANDRO GOMEZ (LEFT), ALEXANDRIA PEREZ (TOP RIGHT), MARIA VALENCIA (BOTTOM RIGHT)

Senior Alfredo Moran practices Muay Thai Boxing (left), Andrea Perez strikes a Capoeira pose (top right), and Maria Valencia punches her instructor (bottom right).

Basketball team struggles without enough players



PHOTO BY EDWIN SANTAY

Coach Rowan Driscoll pumps up his team before the game against Oasis High School.

By Edwin Santay

The referee blows the whistle, the basketball spins into the air, and both players from each team leap up trying to get the ball. The game starts, and the first minutes of the games are intense because the players are just getting warmed up.

The Unity Butterflies have been battling their way through this season and now are involved in the Bay Area Charter Schools Athletic Conference for Boys. This league brings together different charter schools from across the Bay Area. The Butterflies are expected to play at least twice a week until the regular season ends on Feb. 15.

At a typical basketball game, fans can see coach Rowan Driscoll screaming, "Box Out," meaning to get the rebound. He yells this instruction to get the players to position themselves between the opposite players and the basket to have an advantage at getting the ball first.

"I love the energy of youth. I see the need for youth from Oakland to compete and grow physically and mentally, and basketball allows that to happen," said Mr. Driscoll when asked why he has coached the Unity team for so many years. He also said that he loves to compete.

One of the main struggles that Butterflies are facing is that there aren't enough players on the team. At a December game against Oasis High School, most of the Unity players were exhausted because they had been playing their hardest since the first minute, compared to Oasis, which had enough players to make two teams and were substituting players every five minutes.

"I am mad because it's uneven. We have no substitution," said freshman Willie Baires when asked how he felt about the game at half time.

The basketball team is looking for other players to join in but only if they are committed and willing to play, said Mr. Driscoll.

They might take an example from sophomore Ricardo Chavarria who just joined the team a month ago.

"I play basketball because it's a fun sport and for my health," said Ricardo.

Unity students kick butt

By Alejandro Gomez

Sweat drips from senior Alfredo Moran's forehead as he tries to evade a sparring partner's fast punches and hard kicks and at the same time try to fight back. Since sophomore year, every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, Alfredo has attended martial arts classes at a school near High Street and Coliseum.

When asked why he decided to take martial arts, he said, "I didn't have any hobbies, so I wanted to try it out. I saw the style in the movie Ong-Bak," referring to a movie from Thailand.

Alfredo now practices two types of martial arts. In Muay Thai, Alfredo does Thailand boxing, which is using primarily elbows and a lot of kicking. In Shaolin Kung Fu, he works with his chi,

which is his inner energy, and learns to defend himself.

"It teaches you body skills, how to defend and attack," he said when asked about what he learns. "I enjoy it a lot. They don't use belts for levels. It's based on body condition and techniques."

Much like Alfredo, freshman Jonathan Chavarria took up martial arts because he was bored.

"I had nothing to do. It was better than being home," he said.

He has been taking taekwondo classes for four and a half years since age 10. Taekwondo is a martial art in which the fighters use weapons, hands, and feet to spar.

"I use a weapon called nunchaku, which I use to defend myself," he said.

Nunchakus are weapons, in which there are two sticks opposite each other, held together by a chain.

Senior Andrea Perez has been practicing capoeira, a Brazilian martial art, since May 2005, at Pitts' Martial Arts Academy, a coed school in downtown Oakland.

Andrea explains that capoeira is "an acrobatic play, a use of groundwork, and sparring in pairs in a circle." As each pair spars, the other students surround them and sing Portuguese songs and play instruments such as the berimbau, the pandeiro, and the agogo.

"It's very challenging," said Andrea. "I'm barely on the first level. It takes about three years to move to another level."

Andrea feels that capoeira has helped her to challenge stereotypes about the athletic ability of women compared to men.

"The majority of people [in martial arts] are males. The advantage of that is being able to prove a

lot of people wrong, that you can be just as strong and last as long as them, even more," she said.

At her martial arts school, Andrea also takes kickboxing classes, which helps her stay in shape for capoeira.

Another student that attends the same school as Andrea is Maria Valencia, Unity High's administrative assistant.

"My daughter asked me to join her in kickboxing classes, so I did. I'm a woman, and especially the times that we live in, I want to know how to defend myself, just in case I get attacked by somebody," said Ms. Valencia when asked why she joined.

"It has helped me mentally because I know what to do just in case something happens and physically to lose weight," she said.



PHOTO BY RAQUEL MARTINEZ

Senior Sara Martinez wears her Chivas jersey with pride.

By Daniel Barajas

In a white and red striped jersey and a matching painted face, that's how a true Chivas fan struts into a stadium every weekend to see his or her team win.

In Mexico there are 18 soccer teams that compete for the championship throughout the entire season, but there are four teams that stand out the most and have the most fans. In a recent poll, 61% of Unity students chose Chivas Rayadas, the team from Guada-

Chivas comes out on top among Unity students

lajara, Jalisco, as their favorite team. Next came team America with 20% of the votes, followed by Cruz Azul and Pumas, who are all from Mexico, Distrito Federal.

"What makes Chivas the most popular team is that they have what other teams don't and that is that they are the only team that plays with only Mexicans," said senior Luis Herrera.

Senior Moises Sandoval has loved soccer since he can remember and has been a Chivas fan his whole life. Every weekend he would sit down in the living room and put on his Chivas jersey to watch his favorite team play. Every time Chivas scored a goal, he would jump up and scream of happiness, sometimes scaring his mom.

Junior Maria Arceo became a Pumas fan after watching her dad scream at the TV every weekend when Pumas scored.

"I would always be happy to see my dad's face when Pumas scored because he would hug me

very tight," said Maria. "There is no team like Pumas because they are the best."

Soccer fans frequently do crazy things to show their loyalty to their team.

"I once lost a bet to my uncle that Chivas was going to win America and they lost, so I had to dress up like a girl for a whole day. What made it more embarrassing was the fact that a bunch of guys were whistling at me and I couldn't do anything about it...but as a true fan you always do anything for your team," said Luis.

Some fans take their fanaticism to a whole other level, even resorting to violence.

Senior Eric Romero, a Necaxa fan said, "One day I was in a stadium watching my team play when I heard a guy scream, 'F*** Necaxa!' That's when I got mad and started to fight that guy, and next thing you know a big fight broke out. The result of this was that many of us got kicked out."

Other fans just do funny

things in the stadium. That was the case for senior Sara Martinez when Mexico played against Ecuador in the Oakland Coliseum.

"I saw that people were too calm so I decided to spice things up by getting on top of a chair and dance," said Sara. "I remember that when the people started to jump up and down, Mexico scored and the people went crazy."

People like to celebrate in extreme ways when their team wins and drown their sorrows when they lose. When Chivas played the final against Pumas, Moises was convinced that Chivas would win without a problem.

"When the penalties came I was worried but was still confident that they were going to win. It was the last penalty when my mouth dropped because Chivas had missed the penalty," said Moises.

"I was so mad that I decided to lock myself in the room and not come out to eat."

ENTERTAINMENT

Bakesale Betty satisfies Oakland's bellies

By Yareli Ortiz

Bakesale Betty, located on Telegraph Ave. in Oakland, is probably one of the smallest bakeries in Oakland but also one of the best. As I walked into Bakesale Betty, I was greeted by a worker asking if I'd like to sample a free ginger cookie. The aroma of the cookie filled my sinuses with joy as I eyed a spongy sugary cake sitting on the baking tray.

As I waited for my order, I saw an army of bakers four feet away from me slaving away in the kitchen preparing banana bread, brownies, scones, ginger cookies, vanilla short cake, lemon bars, and lamingtons. These are the sweets that have the customers screaming for more. Bakesale Betty, however, is not only known for their sweets but also for the few sandwiches they make.

I decided to order the famous fried chicken sandwich. The chicken was slightly cold, but the sandwich itself was very delicious, thanks to the "coleslaw" which had no mayo. The coleslaw's vinaigrette was very tangy flavored. I could taste the



PHOTO BY YARELI ORTIZ

Dozens of baked goods are on display everyday at Bakesale Betty.

jalapenos, but it wasn't extremely spicy. The Acme bread the sandwich came on was fresh and soft.

I like to call the Fried Chicken Sandwich a healthier version of the fast food chicken sandwiches.

The price for this sandwich is amazing—only \$7—and the sandwich is big enough for two people.

For dessert I had a ginger cookie to die for! In every bite, I could taste the strong flavor of the molasses and the sweetness of the cinnamon. I was surprised that the ginger didn't overpower any of the other flavors. This scrumptious cookie is priced at \$1, or sometimes, customers walking in can taste one for free. Bakesale Betty is generous with sampling their sweets.

This bakery was opened by Allison Barakat, an Australian cook who moved to the United States four years ago. Before she opened Bakesale Betty, she had been a cook for three years at Chez Panisse Café, a Berkeley restaurant known for its organically grown fine dining. Allison opened Bakesale Betty's to provide excellent tasting pastries, which are her passion, and to give the best customer service. She also gives away recipes for the goods she makes on their web site, www.bakesalebetty.com. The site also has a theme song jingle to brighten up the day.

5098 Telegraph Ave.
Oakland, CA
Open: Tues-Sat 7 am - 7 pm

Unity students (and staff!) mark themselves for life

By Alma Ramirez

A magnificent great black horse—its muscles of great strength stand out and reveal all of its power. Flames roar in the background as it stands still over a mountain. On top of the great black horse sits Death, the blood on its scythe on the verge of dripping and the shield on its arm bearing a giant black bird. This is a tattoo with details designed so vividly, you think it's waiting to make you its next victim. In fact, although it's illegal for artists to tattoo those under the age of 18, many students at Unity have succumbed to the allure of tattoos.

"They just said it's your body," said senior Edgar Bautista about his family's reaction to his first tattoo.

Junior Gustavo Suarez tattooed himself to remind him of his family.

"I got them because I wanted to have my parent's names," he said.

"My name is what I got. It just stands for me," said Edgar. "I just wanted to see how it felt."

Like Edgar, who got his first tattoo at the age of 12, many teenagers don't completely think through the consequences of having a tattoo, especially how society might look upon them.

"People do look down upon you; it depends on where you have them, what they look like, and also what ethnicity you are," said history teacher Chinela Key-Newton, who has three tattoos and plans to get more in the future.

Gustavo has no regrets.

"I know one of them didn't come out good...but it brings me memories, so I just left it alone and don't want to cover it," he said.

Principal David Castillo has two tattoos, one on each arm.

"I don't think tattoos are bad or good," he said. "You just have to realize that if you are going to get a tattoo, you're going to have it for the rest of your life."



PHOTO COURTESY OF WARNER BROTHERS

Smith comes face to face with a blood thirsty demon.

Will Smith thrills in I Am Legend

By Zakiyah Murray

I Am Legend, starring Will Smith and directed by Francis Lawrence, is a sci-fi thriller about the last man on earth. Will Smith, most well known for his television role in The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air, has starred in numerous box office hits including Men in Black I & II, Bad Boys I & II, Independence Day, and The Pursuit of Happyness. Having received multiple Grammys and nominated for a Golden Globe and two Academy Awards, Smith shows absolutely no sign of slowing down. With the help of Francis Lawrence, a legendary music-video director who's directed hundreds of videos for artists including Britney Spears, Black Eyed Peas, and Destiny's Child, I Am Legend brought in \$76 million, making it the number one movie in the country.

Will Smith plays Robert Nev-

ille, a former scientist who is the sole survivor of a world dominating virus. The virus was created by a doctor who thought she had found the cure to cancer. Instead, her serum created a plague whose victims have mutated into carnivorous beings that can only exist in the dark and will devour or infect anyone or anything in their path. Neville, who is somehow immune to the virus and those who have been infected, devotes his life to surviving for the sake of the human race and attempts to find a cure. He seeks out the infected mutants at night, which seem to have completely forgotten how to act human. Their instincts and survival skills have become nonexistent. During the film, Neville either takes them out to survive or, in some cases, drags them to his underground lab for research purposes, in hopes of correcting humankind's mistake.

Will Smith gives a killer performance in this film. The movie has incredible special effects and unbelievably realistic graphics. Full of suspense, this action packed thriller will definitely keep you on the edge of your seat. Although the movie featured action and superb acting, it was mildly odd to watch a movie with only one main character. Most movies have a huge cast of actors and actresses who are featured throughout the movie. In this case, Will Smith's Neville was the sole survivor of a widespread epidemic, so he was in every part of the movie.

I recommend this film for several reasons; it's entertaining, makes you think, and scares you at the same time. Will Smith never fails to bring heart, passion, and raw talent to whatever project he's involved in. If you like zombie movies, definitely check it out. If not, I wouldn't suggest it.



PHOTO BY ALMA RAMIREZ

Principal David Castillo shows off one of his two tattoos.

ENTERTAINMENT

Music inspires students to develop their own sounds

By Martin Rochin

Senior Roman Barry has his headphones on so loud they can be heard across the room. When someone asks what he is listening to, he replies, "Coldplay." Huh? What kind of music do people listen to at this school? You'd be surprised.

Unity students have a wide spectrum of musical interests. Ernesto Urzua, senior, is fond of pop punk and rock bands such as Allison and Motel, which are both based in Mexico, and the hip-hop duo from Oakland, Zion-I. Junior Jennifer Baires likes alternative metal, especially music by System of a Down; classical symphonies with violins and cello; and Duranguense, fast paced Mexican music that includes the trumpet, accordion, bass, and drums. Senior Yareli Ortiz's favorites include Paramore, a pop rock group with lyrics that "don't follow the depressing cliché of rock" and Rilo Kiley, an alternative rock group with "good lyrics and electronic sound that helps the listener follow the rhythm." Roman likes the piano rock group Coldplay and the alternative rock group Red Hot Chili Peppers. Senior Jestin Ryles has a preference for Mint Condi-



Senior Yareli Ortiz plays guitar and sings backup for her band.

PHOTO BY YARELI ORTIZ

tion, an R&B group.

Students find this cornucopia of music on the internet and in music stores, while others have more unusual sources.

"Sometimes I get it from the

internet, sometimes I get it from friends, sometimes I just see flyers on the street promoting a group and decide to check them out," said Roman.

"I don't use MySpace for

friends. I use it for music. I just sign in and look for random music," said Yareli.

Not only do Unity students love to listen to music, but plenty also make their own.

Roman uses computer programs to make tracks that include rock, techno, hip-hop, and jazz.

Ernesto started DJing with his father at gigs when he was 13 years old. His father began DJing to earn some more money for his family, and he would take Ernesto along so Ernesto could learn how to help him. Ernesto would spice things up by using his own mp3 player to add different kinds of music. He started DJing solo at age 15.

Yareli is in a band called Fighting the Villain. She plays second guitar and sings backup vocals. The group plays alternative rock and indie rock and does covers of other bands.

Jennifer has been playing the piano since she was in fifth grade, and Jestin learned how to play the bass guitar in ninth grade.

For many Unity students, music is a pivotal part of life.

"If there were no instruments in the world, I'd probably make my own music, like beatboxing," said Jestin.

Roman agreed.

"[Without music] I think I'd find myself in the pinnacle of depression."

Review of J. Holiday's Back of My Lac

By Brittany Douglas

Back of My Lac is the debut album by the up and coming R&B artist and Washington, D.C. native J. Holiday, who has positioned himself as the new face of R&B, mixing old school soul with today's hip-hop and R&B. Filled with soft ballads and classic R&B tracks, Back of My Lac has an early 1990s feel mixed with captivating beats from some of today's hottest producers such as The-Dream, Darkchild, The Platinum Brothers, and J.U.S.T.I.C.E. League.

The overall feel of this album is very laid back and relaxing. All of the songs are easy to listen to and have catchy hooks and choruses that make the listener want to sing along. The album starts off with up-tempo R&B tracks, which both guys and girls can enjoy at a party, and finishes off with sexy tracks that are made for the lovers. All the songs are fun and easy going, but be warned that they do have their fair share of profanity. If you can block it out and look at the bigger picture, then you will see the point Mr. Holiday is trying to get across, namely that, yes he is very street (which he reminds you of in the title track "Back of My Lac," "Ghetto," and "Thug Ten Commandments"), but he also has a tender side and is obviously passionate (as evidenced in "Bed," "Suffocate," "Fatal," and "Fallin").

"Bed," the second single off the album and fan favorite, is a



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAPITOL RECORDS

sultry song of seduction with a laid-back melody and addictive hook. Written by The-Dream, it has similarities to some of the producer's other songs, such as Rihanna's "Umbrella," with the chorus repeating "Bed" throughout the track. With lush production by Los Da Mystro and J. Holiday's gentle voice, "Bed" is by far one of the best tracks on the album.

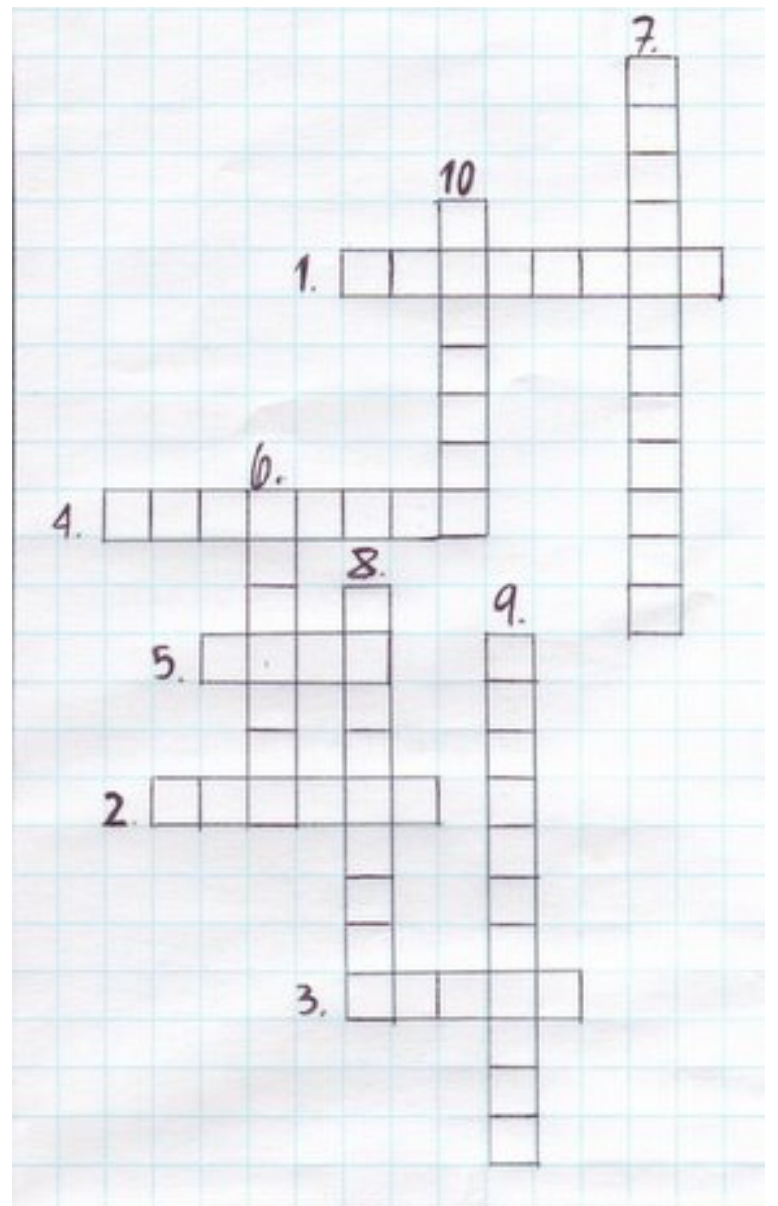
The album's third single, "Suffocate," also written by The-Dream, is a mellow song which features no repetition in the chorus and shows off more of J. Holiday's vocal ability. In this classic sounding slow jam, you can hear the vulnerability in his voice and experience the emotions of not being able to function without that special someone in your life.

Although the album is filled with quality production from some of the hottest writers and producers working today, there is one song that falls short. "Laa

Laa," produced by the Platinum Brothers, is one of the worst songs on the whole album. It's not the production that's bad: it's the lyrics, probably some of the worst that I have heard in a long time. The song is basically about getting high with his girlfriend. Other than the fact that drugs aren't cool, "Laa Laa" sounds very childish because it mixes J.'s gentle voice with a mature beat, making him less like a R&B prodigy and more like all of the other carbon copy singers in the industry today.

Altogether though, J. Holiday delivers on both the sultry tracks and club bangers, which makes this debut album very enjoyable. Back of My Lac is easy to listen to the whole way through, and other than "Laa Laa," you won't find yourself skipping any tracks.

Recommended if you like: Jaheim, Keyshia Cole, Trey Songz, Jagged Edge, Slow Jams and 1990s R&B



BY KEVIN LOPEZ

Across

1. Artist whose new album is Back of My Lac
2. Sesame Street character that Ms. Craig played
3. Grade that has to stay at school until five p.m.
4. College that Mr. Castillo attended
5. Number of Spanish teachers since 2005

Down

6. Mr. Zarazua's middle name
7. Name of Mr. Carter's band
8. Only teacher who was raised in Oakland
9. First principal of Unity High School
10. Name of Ms. Ramos's restaurant