



# Columbia Eagles' Watch

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## Murrillo Elected President, Trinh New VP

Angel Murrillo was elected president of Columbia Middle School's student body last Friday. "I am looking forward to helping make Columbia a great school," he said. Murrillo wants to see more student activities and some improvements in the sports and other equipment used by students.

Joey Trinh, who was elected vice president, also wants more activities and a review of the dress code policy. Like many students, Trinh opposes the practice of forcing students to tuck in shirts and would like to have the policy changed.

Other winners included Myra Gaspar, elected as secretary, Brenda Cervantes, who will become the student body treasurer, and Ashley Najarro, our new Sergeant-at-Arms.

Candidates had been working on their campaigns for about two weeks before the election, and their campaign materials showed up in some very interesting places. "I love wearing campaign stickers on my cheek," said one student. "It shows I am interested in what is going on." Other students wore ribbon and paper necklaces that included stars and hearts in a variety of colors.

This year's elections were organized by Mr. Galindo and Ms. Contreras. They volunteered to take on the responsibilities of helping to organize and run a student council because they are interested in helping students make this year a great year. In fact, when asked to handle the job, Galindo said, "I will gladly



take it on."

But Galindo is not a beginner. According to Galindo, he was on the student council when he was in the 8th grade. "I know how important the student council is," he said, and he will use that experience to benefit the students he will be working with.

One of the changes he will make is adding a historian to the council. There is a high level of interest in student government, and Galindo would like to "provide as many opportunities for service as possible" because it will benefit individual students and the school as a whole.

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## Seventh-Grade Fletcher Park Outing Real Success



**Pie-eating Contest and Tug-o-War**

All of the 7th graders went to Fletcher Park on Friday, Sept. 28, in order to have some fun together and to get to know each other a little better.

Most of the students had great fun. Sador Rangel like the tug-o-war and three-legged race, partly because he won. But when asked about the food, Rangel yelled, "I really liked the hot dogs that they served."

Other students reported having a good time "playing cool games with our best friends, like basketball, soccer, handball, and slaughter house."

Of course, new friendships were also made. Breanna Herrera, for example, met Helen and Angela, and "had a lot of fun."

Sergio Rodas won the pie-eating contest. Ruben Jimenez and Arturo Flores won the three-legged race, the tug-o-war was, of course, won by Ms. Schommer's class, and the poster-making contest was won by Mr. Sham's class. ■



**Hangin' Out With Friends**



## The Back Page

### Meet Our Staff

# Columbia's Student Counselor: A Man of Faith

Mr. Fathian is known to students at Columbia as a counselor who listens to students and who is willing to tell them what they need to hear because he wants all students to be successful.

But did you also know that Mr. Fathian is a Muslim? Well, he is!

And his faith and its traditions matter to him, just as Christmas and Easter matter to Christians.

As a Muslim, fasts and prayers to Allah are important to him, especially during the month of Ramadan, which recently came to an end.

Muslim's fast because Ramadan is a holy month for them. It is the month in which Muhammad became a prophet, the Quran began, and when Muhammad ascended to God.

"Fasting," says Mr. Fathian, "means you basically don't eat between sunrise and sunset. You can break your fast after sunset, but it's the same routine again the next day." In order for your fast to be valid, a Muslim must pray. You must be over 12 or 13 to qualify for fasting. "If you are younger, then you don't have to

fast," he continued. "And if you are not physically fit, or have to take any medication, or are one of the elderly, then you don't have to fast."

One major reason for fasting, according to Mr. Fathian, is that it "cleans your body and soul." It's also an opportunity to repent for sins, and fasting "makes you humble," he says. "Fasting shows you how poor people feel who don't get a day's meal."

During Ramadan Mr. Fathian prays five times each day. Of course, work can sometimes make it difficult to pray, in which case he "does double" when he gets home. Ideally, Muslims pray morning, noon, late afternoon, evening, and late evening.

There are two branches of Islam, Sunni and Shiite. Mr. Fathian is Shiite. The Shiite believe in Ali, who was martyred on the 19th day of Ramadan while he was praying. He died on the 21st day of Ramadan, three days after he was attacked. Shiites take fasting very seriously, believing that those who cannot fast for the entire month should fast, if



possible, for those three days, beginning on the 19th day of Ramadan. Sunnis do not share this belief.

Making a pilgrimage is important to Muslims. Mr. Fathian said that one must "meet certain criteria" in order to make a pilgrimage.

He is looking forward to making his. And when he does, we know it will be worth the effort. ■

## Columbia Celebrates Red Ribbon Week

### Students: "We're Drug-Free"

Columbia students celebrated being drug free last week. The reason for celebrating is that we are saying "no to drugs," said Officer Will Acosta, an El Monte police officer. Students received red ribbons and wore them during the week to declare that they are drug free. The week actually began on Friday, October 19, with an outdoor assembly put on by the El Monte police. During the assembly students pledged to stay drug and alcohol free.

Most students understand why Red Ribbon Week is so important. "It's a reminder to say no to drugs now and in the future," explained Acosta, and adds that staying drug and alcohol free will bring many health benefits.

Many students also understand the character-building benefits and the need to be involved. "Everybody can benefit from Red Ribbon Week if they pay attention," says Sally Voong, an eighth-grade student.



The first Red Ribbon Week was held in 1986 by a group of concerned parents. The Red Ribbon was adopted in honor of Enrique Camarena, a DEA agent who was kidnapped and killed while trying to stop drug trafficking. Nancy Reagan came up with the idea of students wearing the ribbons. Now they are worn by many students across America every October. ■

### Elections (con't)

The student council will have many ideas to think through, says Galindo. He hopes there will be more participation in different clubs and sports, and is thinking of dances where the DJ is a student playing the music, which should give students more opportunities to learn new skills.

He is also thinking about a carnival. "I would like to have the carnival again," he said, "and make sure that it's as successful or even more successful than last year's event."

Because Galindo is into technology, he is also interested in helping the student government with a website that would include announcements of coming events. ■