



Columbia Eagles' Watch

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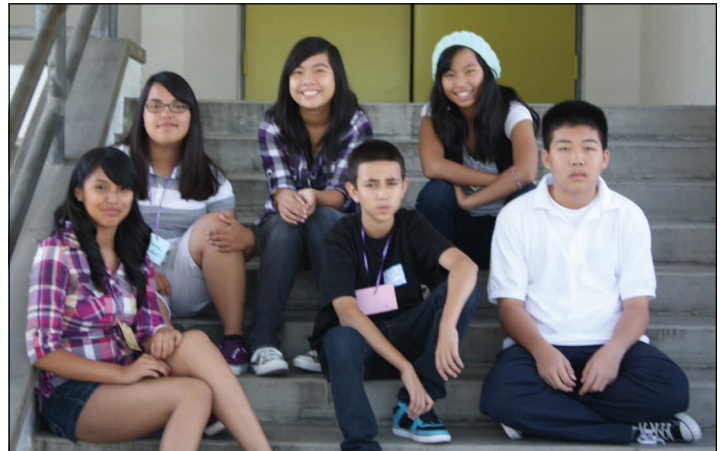
New Leadership Team Takes Reigns at Columbia Media Group

Amanda Melendez has been appointed as the new editor-in-chief of the Columbia School Media Group for the 2009-10 academic year. She replaces Mr. Mason, who has filled the post for the last three years and who will now become the group's founding editor. Joining the leadership team are Samantha San, Eagles' Watch editor, Ngoc Nguyen, Columbia yearbook editor, Jasmin Montes, editor of Dreamweaver, Columbia's Fine Arts Magazine, and Lizbeth De Leon, multimedia producer.

Rounding out the media group's leadership are Esteban Orozco, chief photographer, and Quay Gieng, chief technical officer. The appointment of a chief technical officer is new to the organization, but it was

felt that such a post was needed due to the many technical demands associated with computers and computer programs. "I'm really excited about the change," said Mason. "We have a top-notch leadership core and I look forward to working with them to serve Columbia's students." As founding editor, Mason will work with the leadership team to set goals for the production and release of media products to Columbia's students, but the leadership team will be directly responsible for carrying out the day-to-day operations.

Melendez, an eighth-grade student, said that "being in charge is difficult, but it's exciting to work with other students and see their work in progress" She describes her-



Student Leadership Team — Top: Amanda Melendez, Ngoc Nguyen, Samantha San. Bottom: Lizbeth De Leon, Esteban Orozco, Quay Gieng. Not Pictured: Jasmin Montes.

self as a self-starter who is well organized, traits that will serve her well in her new responsibilities.

San, Nguyen, Montes, and De Leon are new to the media group, but each one brings a

fresh approach and a willingness to learn. San, for example, has a passion for art that should bring some interesting new features to Eagles' Watch — and Nguyen produced a

See STAFF, pg. 2



Commentary: Say 'Yes' to Jeans!

by Samantha San, Editor

Attention Columbia Middle School! Do you ever wonder why we can't wear jeans as uniforms? If you think about it, uniform material and denim look very similar; the only difference is that they are, in fact, made of different materials.

Since our economy is in trouble — unemployed parents, understaffed schools, fewer curricular activities — it only makes sense to cut back our spending on new uniforms. For example, I myself spend \$20 or so every six months for new uniform pants; in other words, I spend at least \$40 a year JUST on uniform pants.

That \$40 (or more) could be put into school sports, school books, school supplies, fieldtrips, and much more.

As for jeans, just one pair can last for 1-2 years. Moreover, you can go to Wal-Mart and get a quality pair

of jeans for \$15-20 dollars, and because they're durable you don't have to worry about buying another pair every six months!

Many students agree with this idea. "I think jeans would be awesome and colorful!" said Helen Nguyen.

"Having jeans can be great because kids love them!" said Janelle Phung. Amanda Melendez, Ngoc Nguyen and Erika Crespo said, "Yes! Wearing jeans would be great!"

As for the teachers, some agree with students. "I don't mind as long as they aren't baggy or tight," said Mrs. Sham.

Mrs. Sloat agreed, "Yes, every Friday." Even Mrs. Garcia, our principle said, "Yes, but only the students who have good grades and participate in class. Those students should be

See JEANS, pg. 2

The Back Page

Back to school night a huge success!

By 5 p.m. on most days activities at Columbia are just winding down. But on Wednesday, September 23, things were just getting started!

Back to School Night was on and it was a success. Parents were excited to meet students' teachers and to be introduced to meet our new principal and vice principal. The evening began in the cafeteria, where Ms. Garcia, our new principal, thanked parents for coming, and then introduced Mr. Munoz, our new vice principal. Following that she spoke about the new construction and then gave parents valuable information about the school itself and its programs.



After that parents followed their own child's schedule as they went from room to room, meeting teachers and getting answers to questions about what would be taught and how, discipline plans, standards, and other important information. This was the first time we have done this at Columbia, and most parents thought it was helpful.

"I like meeting my child's teacher," said one parent, "because if I have questions for them I know who to ask."

Another parent said that wearing comfortable clothes for P.E. is "a good idea because students will enjoy P.E. more and do more."

Several parents did express concern about the number and weight of textbooks students must carry.

Mr. McCune expressed the feelings of most teachers when he said, "I liked meeting my students parents because it takes all three of us to make sure our students learn."



BTSN — Mrs. Sloat, tells a room full of interested parents about her life-science class.

Although Back to School Night was successful, there are some questions about the timing of the event. Many parents' work schedules did not allow them to arrive on time; as a result many were unsure about what to do when following student schedules. "This is a real concern," said Mr. Mason, an eight-grade ELA and computer teacher. "I think we need to begin no earlier than 6 p.m. and go until 8 p.m., which would help parents with late work schedules." ■

Staff

Continued from Page 1

video for Cortada Elementary school, which requires skills that will be critical to producing our yearbook.

"Being the editor of Eagles' Watch is a lot of work," said San. "My goal is to be the best editor ever and deliver an exciting newspaper that everyone will enjoy."

As the editor for the yearbook, Nguyen is committed to producing "something that students will read in the future and say, 'Oh, I remember that,' and just be happy and proud to have been part of it."

Last year was the first year the yearbook included a CD with an electronic version of the book along with many bonus photographs and a PowerPoint presentation for the graduating class. De Leon and her team will build on last year's success by adding some additional features.

The newest challenge, however, has been taken on by Montes, a seventh-grade student. As the editor of DreamWeaver, she will be responsible for providing an avenue for students who wish to exhibit their writing and artistic skills. DreamWeaver will include poetry, short stories, personal reflections, art, and pictures — all produced by Columbia students. The first issue is scheduled to be released this winter. "I'm excited about the challenge," she said. "I think it's going to be awesome to see what Columbia's students can do."

DreamWeaver will launch a campaign for student submissions during November. ■

Jeans

Continued from Page 1

able to wear jeans on Fridays."

Other teachers, however, disagree. Mr. Scull and Mr. Sham said that they don't think having jeans is a good idea because it makes it more difficult to participate in P.E.

That might be true, but either way students have fitness shorts, including many students who bought Columbia Eagles fitness clothes. And if that's the case, then what's the difference? In my opinion, there is no difference!

Another reason given for a dress code is that "student appearance should reflect the combined attitudes and high expectations of students, parents, and faculty for an academic environment." Is the district saying that they way we dress is how people judge us? Isn't that just wrong? Aren't we above that?

Teachers and parents should not be worrying about how we dress as long as we dress modestly; they should be worrying about our grades and education. The fact is we are just kids: our clothing or how we dress should NOT be something the school should be worrying about. Our education is the MAIN thing right now. I think the parent committee, teachers, principals, and the El Monte City School District should think this over and change a few things about the dress code. True, Columbia is based on tradition, but I, myself, say forget that tradition! Sometimes doing something new can be both fun and helpful. ■