



# Columbia Eagles' Watch

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## Columbia Media Group again publishing newspaper

It's been a long time coming, but here it is — the first edition of Eagles' Watch for the 2010-2011 academic year. We do apologize for the delay, but, as you know, we moved our operation into the new building and it took some time to get the equipment we needed: It just takes time for new equipment orders to be processed, delivered, and set up.

In any case, we are now set up and running, so we hope you enjoy this and future issues: You can look forward to some ground-breaking reporting and commentary — in addition to some new features and a new way for you to provide feedback directly to the newspaper staff on a wide range of issues. Our goal is to provide you with good information about what has happened or is happening and to provide you with an opportunity to voice some of your thoughts on subjects important to you. After all, this is your newspaper and we want it to serve your interests.

And a big "thank you" goes to Ms. Garcia for her support. Not only has she been willing to spend the money we need to support the newspaper, but she is also a big fan of students having the opportunity to write about events and issues important



**Columbia Media Group** — These students oversee the publication of a newspaper, yearbook, and magazine. Plans are also in the works for a new Website.

to Columbia's student body.

Finally, we would like to wish all of you a very merry holiday season. Whatever your family traditions, we hope you will find peace, happiness, and success in the coming new year. ■

### What Do You Think?

## Eagles' Watch launches new opportunity for student feedback

Everyone has an opinion, many of which are interesting and newsworthy. Unfortunately, nearly all of them remain unspoken, with no one to come by and collect them.

That is about to change. In addition to journalists interviewing students and teachers in their rooms and on the blacktop, Eagles' Watch will also start using a system that may become the bane of old-fashioned teachers, technophobes, and parents alike: texting. The system is easy to use, and we encourage you to use it.

Simply call or text (626) 539-5331. If texting, make sure your response is readable, even for technophobes and teachers. You can split up your text if it becomes more than 160 characters. Make sure to identify yourself and your homeroom; this is for security and safety reasons, although we will NOT publish your name without your permission. DO NOT send picture mail messages.

Use the same phone number when

calling. After no more than 2 rings, a short message will play. Wait for the beep and leave your message or response. State your homeroom and first and last name at the beginning or end of your message. Again, we will NEVER publish your name without your permission. If you do give us permission to use your name, we will always verify your message with you to make sure no one steals your identity.

Currently, these are the subjects you may discuss or vote on:

#### **For the Yearbook: Best of Eagles**

- Best smile
- Best hair
- Best eyes
- Class clown
- Funniest
- Most friendly
- Best look-a-like
- Best athlete

If these categories don't work for you, use your own.

**Ask Sally and Adam:** This new feature will allow you to bounce ideas of your peers. Sally and Adam don't claim to



know everything, but they might have a good suggestion or two.

**Questions and Suggestions:** Everyone knows Columbia School isn't perfect — no school is.

But rather than complain about the things you don't like, you can help make it better by offering suggestions of your own! Or, ask about anything that is confusing. Or, just maybe, pay a compliment or say "thank you." ■

## Earthquake! Columbia students, staff prepare the for ‘big one’

By Christian Camarena

Tables moving, people screaming, lights breaking from the ceiling. Sirens heard in the distance are growing louder and will soon cover the groans of the hurting and injured. Firefighters finally arrive and start helping people escape from the buildings that are about to collapse. Every school and business will be closed for days, weeks ... perhaps even a month.

Will you be prepared for this?

Most of the students I asked said they were prepared for when an earthquake strikes, and that includes preparations at home. “My parents are starting to worry, so they went out the other day and bought a bunch of supplies,” said Josh Viera. “They told me that all this stuff was for when a disaster happens so we will be prepared.”

Anyone who is at school knows what an earthquake drill is like, although some were not impressed by the October 21 exercise. “I think it was a waste of time since no one took the drill very seriously,” said Kevin Flores. “If we want to be really prepared, we need to be more serious

about things like drills.”

But another student said, “We can make progress just by paying attention and doing what we have to do when we have to do it.”

Although most students understand the need for the drill, some thought it took too long. One eighth-grader said, “I’ve never sat down that long. I think they could have done it in less time.”

But many other students said it was just enough time for the teachers to practice for when a real shaker strikes. “Even though it took long,” said Josh Viera, “it was a great drill that informed us all. Sure, it took a lot of time out of class, but we got to practice for the real thing.”

Another student said, “I’d be in big trouble if I didn’t know what to do when an earthquake hits. This drill helps me know.”

Unfortunately, no one knows what day or time the big one will strike. “The drill might prepare us for an earthquake,” said one seventh-grader, “but we will not know when a real earthquake will hit us or if we will even be in school when an earthquake hits.” ■



Students taking part in earthquake drill.

## Halloween ‘House of Terror’ at Columbia is a huge success

By My Nguyen

This year Columbia opened the House of Terror after school to celebrate Halloween. The maze took place in three class rooms, although it was awfully dark and a little hard to tell. When asked how horrifying the maze was, one student reported, “It was scary because of all the decorations. I screamed like a girl!”

“It wasn’t scary, but my parents were petrified!” said another student. “That made me laugh.”

Word spread quickly around the school about this great event. Soon, the lines stretched out from the old library to the basketball court.

“I wasn’t planning to come, but my sister said it was scary and insisted that I come,” said one Columbia student. “I got scared just a little bit.” Others were disappointed because they couldn’t make it and missed this horrifying event.

One seventh grade student, however, thought the House of Terror needed improvement. “I thought they could have done more scary decorations or had more monsters,” he said.

The last room included a crazed girl screaming and lying on the floor while a boy was rolling on the floor, screaming and being surrounded by red paint, or fake blood. “The end was scarier than the beginning,” commented one student. ■



## Frank Wright Forfeits!

# Columbia's Football Team Undefeated!

By Michael Trinh

Though their season was cut short, Columbia's Boys' Football Team has remained undefeated. The Girls' Team, however, lost in their second game against Potrero School. Conversely, the Potrero Boys' Team has never even scored against Columbia.

Unfortunately, the final game of the season was a letdown: Frank Wright forfeited. Students speculated that the Frank Wright Boys' Team didn't have a team because of their astounding loss to Columbia last season; they lost 38-0 in their first game against Columbia — even worse than Potrero, whose Boys' Team lost 34-0 in the first game against Columbia this season.

"Frank Wright ruined EVERYTHING!" said many Columbia students. "This is our last game, and we wanted to have fun. But Frank Wright just forfeited." ■



**Football** — The boy's team from Columbia takes the field for yet another win. They finished the season undefeated.

## Columbia students move to the beat

by Amy Valle

On the Wednesday before Veterans' Day weekend, students at Columbia had a fun activity during lunch break: musical chairs! (See the picture below.)

Out of dozens of students who played, two winners emerged. They were Robert Olea and Alejandro Hernandez — both from the 8th grade. Robert Tovar and Tom Lee were the two in charge of the game, as well as Mr. Jansen ... and they sure know how to put things in place. Thank You, Robert Tovar, Tom Lee, and Mr. Jansen. And congratulations to the winners, Robert Olea and Alejandro Hernandez. ■



## 801: Can it be done? We are the key ...

by Amy Valle

This year at Columbia school our API goal is 801; Columbia school's scores have been improving but not quite enough to achieve our API goal — yet.

Students should know that maybe if we tried harder there would actually be an elective for everyone and possibly there wouldn't be so many students in intervention. That's why every year teachers try so hard to help us achieve our goal.

Last year Ms. Garcia and Mr. Munoz did so much to encourage us — more than most principals. So we students should start to realize that maybe if we tried a little harder, then our school will improve and we can have even higher expectations.

Can it be done? Yes. All we have to do is believe in ourselves, focus more during class, and know that the teachers are there for us. And if we need extra help ... ask for it! ■

## 8-period day for students rejected

By Michael Trinh

Last year there was a proposal to have eight periods instead of seven. However, while two-thirds of the teachers supported the proposition, it failed to happen.

"Unfortunately, we couldn't get enough votes. We needed maybe 75% of the vote, but not enough teachers supported it," Mrs. Cortez explained. Had it passed, it would have meant that the existing periods would have been shortened by three minutes. It would also have meant that students in intervention would have had an elective; in order to meet the needs of the influx of new students into electives there would be more elective classes offered. In other words, there would have been more students in classes like computers, drama, music, journalism, art, speech and debate, and other new classes.

Another effect of the eight-period day would be that students *not* in intervention would have had two math classes, meaning that students could accomplish more during the school year.

Most students, at least initially, felt positively about the idea. Students Robert Olea and Kenya Ortega believed that having 8 periods "would be more fun," and Jennifer Rodriguez elaborated when she said, "Because that way everyone gets an elective."

Eighth-graders Ally Powell, Crystal Alarcon, Lisa Ly, and Eva Gutiérrez were particularly enthusiastic about it, saying "It would be the best thing to ever happen to Columbia!"

"It would be so great to do geometry before going to high school," said one student. When you think about where most students are in math as they enter high school, it would very likely give those who have a chance to learn algebra and geometry during middle school a big advantage.

However, for many students the general approval somewhat faded when told that that instead of receiving a second elective, many students would attend a second math class.

— see *Eight Periods*, page 4



## Red Ribbon Week

# Best Advice: Say 'NO' to drugs

By Amy Valle & Cristal Reyes

Red Ribbon week was a very important week here at Columbia School. El Monte City police officers came to our school to tell us about the brave men and women who protect us, and to honor them.

Over the years, this assembly has also helped Columbia students think twice about drugs. The meaning of a red ribbon is that you will say "no" if someone offers you any type of drug.

This is important because a survey done last year of Columbia students showed that nearly one-half of eighth-grade and more than one-third of seventh-grade students had been offered drugs. And friends and family members were the most likely people to make these offers.

Ms. Schommer, a seventh-grade language arts teacher, thinks of Red Ribbon Week as a great assembly because "it's something we all know about but never talk about since it's a sad subject." She honors it because when you're small you say that you will say "no" to drugs, but when you get older you start thinking twice about saying "no" because it's hard to say "no" to your friends or family.

Then you see "everybody" doing it — although that's probably not really true — and you feel like if they're doing it and they're okay, then you'll probably be okay too. But what those who use drugs don't see is damage they are doing to their bodies and minds. If you put garbage into your body, you can't expect it to be a high-performance machine.

It is a fact that those who use illegal drugs do not think as well as those who don't, and they suffer more injuries and illnesses. And all it takes is one serious drug-related accident to mess up your whole life! ■



## Science Teacher Wins Big Bucks on Game Show

By My Nguyen

"I would like to buy a vowel." That is what eighth-grade science teacher, Mr. Moreno, said before he solved the puzzle and won \$56,000 dollars on a game show we all know, "The Wheel of Fortune." With that large amount of money, Mr. Moreno bought a guitar, a new truck, and took his family on a trip to Texas. With every penny left he paid off his college expenses.

"Getting on the show was actually more challenging than guessing the puzzles," he said. He was first going to try out for Teen Week, a special week on "The Wheel of Fortune" where all the players were teenagers. He was only 16 years old at the time. Since Mr. Moreno's brother went along, the people behind the show told him to try out for Family Week instead. Mr. Moreno passed the test for solving the puzzles, and his brother passed the test for cheering and making the show more entertaining. Together they passed both tests and were ready to go out and play.

Mr. Moreno's little brother, who was 6 at the time, and his parents were there to support him. "It was like a dream when I won. I was shocked and very nervous," he said. ■

*Christian Camarena contributed to this report.*



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## Eight Periods

"If they make all the periods shorter, then my elective is shorter, and I have to do more math, too!" said another anonymous student. "I mean, if I'm doing [well] in school and don't have to do intervention, why should I lose 3 minutes of my elective?"

Mr. Mason, however, is not so sure it would have happened that way because, he said, the most important focus is what's best for the student. "For the first year or two," he admits, "two math classes were likely what would have happened. But once we became comfortable with the schedule and saw some results," he continued, "who knows what might have happened in the following years. Nothing was written in stone."

"I supported the eight-period day

because I wanted the students to get math help if they needed it, but still get to have an elective," said Ms. Schommer.

Mrs. Sloat said that since she helped come up with the schedule, she obviously felt very strongly about it. "Everyone would be able to have an elective, and right now," she continued, "a lot of people don't have an elective."

**'I supported the eight-period day because I wanted the students to get math help if they needed it, but still get to have an elective.'**

While Schommer and Sloat mentioned the elective that came with the eight-period day, Mr. Galindo, an eighth-grade math teacher, did not; rather, he focused more on the two math classes.

He felt that it was "a shame that the eight-period day could not be implemented. Our students would have benefited greatly," Galindo maintained. "We only have 46 minutes of math. The State of California recommends 60 minutes."

Of course, two-period blocks are what we have for language arts, and most language arts teachers can see the benefits for the students. It's hard to believe that two-period blocks would not be equally beneficial for teaching math, especially when the quality of Columbia's math teachers is taken into account.

Science teachers Mr. Moreno and Mr. Lachica were undecided, believing that it would not affect their own classes, but would support an eight-period day if the majority of teachers also supported it. No teacher asked had a negative view of the eight-period day, although a few teachers did refrain from comment. ■