

Memoir and Social Change Class confronts food waste

■ The senior English class chose to fight wastefulness by encouraging Trader Joe's to donate more surplus food products to food banks.

By ALLY ARRIETA
News editor

In the past semester, English teacher Julia Davis and nine seniors have taken their studies in English to the next level— using their linguistic and analytical skills to tackle a real world issue that matters to them. The Memoir and Social Change class (MSC) is offered to seniors as an alternative to the AP English Literature class. After spending the first semester exploring their individual identities through reflective writing, during the second semester the students change their focus to the issues that shape their world, becoming activists through a project they organize themselves.

Earlier this year, Davis decided to show the students "Dive! Living off America's Food Waste," a documentary directed by Jeremy Seifert. The film traces the causes, perpetrators and effects of food waste in the United States, a country in which 96 billion pounds of food are thrown away every year. Seifert and his friends had obtained their groceries through dumpster diving for years, but they soon realized that the presence of perfectly edible food in the dumpsters of their local supermarkets revealed a true societal issue.

Throughout the film, the group works to confront the wastefulness of our society by pressuring grocery store chains such as Trader Joe's to direct more of their surplus to food banks. Seifert describes the problem of food waste as not only detrimental to the environment but also unacceptable in a world in which millions of people live in hunger. The students in MSC knew that they had found the societal issue they wanted to address.

They decided to present the film to the Upper School in an assembly to encourage students to support the EAT TRASH campaign to end food waste. Following the assembly, more than 100 students sent letters to Trader Joe's CEO Dan Bane to express concern. After the



Mark Loyola/The Paw Print

The Associated Student Body Cabinet was elected on Friday, April 8. After a week of campaigning with posters, food, videos and Facebook groups, each candidate gave a speech summarizing goals for the upcoming school year. For election results, see page 2.

flux of student input, Matt Sloan, the Vice President of marketing at Trader Joe's, agreed to participate in a discussion with the members of MSC on Wednesday, April 6.

"I wanted to better understand the class' goals and the way this

and understand their ideas."

The students' main goal was to request that Trader Joe's adopt a corporate-wide policy for directing extra products to food banks. Currently, individual stores make their own decisions about whether or not

sold goods. Senior Daniel Lizardo stressed, "Individual stores are not handling food waste to the extent they should be. A corporate-wide policy will be much more effective than a store-by-store memo."

Sloan explained that the desire at Trader Joe's headquarters is not to tell their branches what to do in regards to handling surplus goods. Referring to the phrase "zero food waste" used by many supporters of the EAT TRASH campaign, Sloan noted, "The word 'zero' is absolute, whereas the elimination of food waste should be a goal. I'm not here to say that we're doing everything perfectly, but we do have stores working with food rescue organizations."

According to Sloan, Trader Joe's works primarily in conjunction with Feeding America, a national network of local food banks, in order to handle its extra food. He explained that each of the 353 stores has a local Feeding America contact but the organization currently does not have the resources to pick up all the surplus food.

Sloan noted that Feeding America is one of the few food rescue organizations that Trader Joe's can trust because it can adjust to prob-



Ally Arrieta/The Paw Print

Julia Davis and her senior English class worked throughout this semester to find solutions for the issue of food waste, which affects both the environment and people living in hunger throughout the world.

project fit into the curriculum," said Sloan, when asked about his purpose for visiting the class. "I also wanted to see the degree to which we could answer students' ques-

to donate and need to make their own connections with local food banks. This absence of accountability enables stores across the country to fill their dumpsters with un-

April Fool's Day Assembly features hypnotist

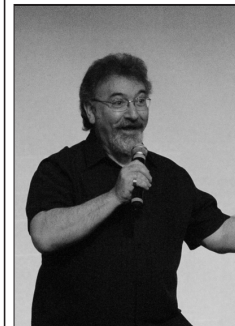
■ The ASB surprised the Upper School by bringing in hypnotist Marc Bachrach to host a fun Friday Assembly.

By ANNA WOHL
News editor

As an April Fool's Day surprise, the ASB cabinet hosted stage hypnotist Marc Bachrach for the second consecutive year, eliciting much excitement and enthusiasm from the student body.

Mark Bachrach, who is a full-time professional hypnotist and hypnotherapist, contacted faculty member Laurianne Williams earlier this year to find out if the Upper School would be interested in hosting him for a special assembly. Although the ASB has traditionally hosted a hypnotist every other year, Williams and the ASB cabinet members recalled the positive response to last year's hypnotism assembly and decided to incorporate it into an April Fool's joke.

Initially, ASB cabinet members planned to have Bachrach interrupt a "serious announcement" from Upper School Head Jamie Nielson.



Courtesy of Jennifer Godwin-Minto

Unlike many professional hypnotists, Bachrach conducted a "cruelty-free" hypnotism show that was enjoyable for members of the Upper School.

Instead they told students and faculty members to expect an assembly dedicated to registering for Advanced Placement Exams.

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INSIDE

NEWS

News details the three Poly-sponsored spring break trips.



LIFE

Life discusses the Japan earthquake relief in the Upper School.



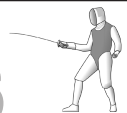
OPINION

Opinion questions the sincerity of students holding multiple leadership positions.



SPORTS

The Sports section covers the success of the fencing program.



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lems like unlabeled allergens on donated products, which other organizations may not be able to do.

Despite the Good Samaritan laws that prevent companies from being held liable if anyone becomes sick from donated goods, Sloan expressed that Trader Joe's is still concerned about the edibility of their donations, explaining, "Food banks want to have some control. People who visit them often do not have sufficient health care coverage, so they do not want to give away something accidentally that will make them sick."

In response to questions student posed about why Trader Joe's locks their dumpsters, which are often full of edible food, he responded that this is done because Trader Joe's is liable for any injuries individuals may encounter in attempting to retrieve food.

Students also worked to convey the importance of Trader Joe's making their policy on food waste open to the public, outlining the benefits for both consumers and the company. Senior Jordan Kutzer suggested, "If Trader Joe's establishes a corporate policy, why don't you inform consumers about it in the Frequent Flyer newsletter that is already distributed?"

Regarding the usage of the Frequent Flyer, a newsletter which is currently used to advertise the store's products, Sloan commented, "Food waste just

isn't as sexy as chocolate covered peanuts. In fact, most consumers do not care about where the extra food ends up."

Because he was visiting an English class, Sloan placed a major emphasis on linguistic distinctions, not only highlighting the problem with the phrase "zero food waste" but also observing, "There is a reason why businesses are called businesses and philanthropic organizations are called philanthropic organizations. This does not mean that businesses should not care about philanthropy, but they also cannot lose sight of their business goals."

Sloan expressed disappointment that the letters he received were not written by individual students but were instead standard letters from the EAT TRASH campaign.

He also emphasized to the group the need to recognize his role as the VP of marketing, claiming that he does not play a directive role but rather is working to make sure that people are aware of the food waste issue.

"The issue is not about profit: it is about doing things better than we have done before," Sloan commented. Later in the discussion, when asked what Trader Joe's is currently doing to reduce the amount of wasted food, he said, "We are doing work to have stores control what they bring in so that it is not guesswork and taking a systematic approach. However, we can best eliminate food waste with a culture change, by learning to know how to buy what we need versus what we want."

After a highly tense and frus-

trating discussion for both the class and Sloan, Lizardo and senior Marie Masters asked Sloan for the bare minimum: that he would help them locate the Trader Joe's stores with surpluses so they could rescue dumpster-

we now have a relationship with Trader Joe's corporate offices we would not have had. It's too bad that a company we see as our neighbor here in Pasadena can't make a stronger commitment to end hunger. But if they won't,



Ally Arrieta/The Paw Print

Matt Sloan, the Vice President of Marketing at Trader Joe's, recently visited the Memoir and Social Change Class to help answer students' questions about the company's current methods of food rescue.

bound food and bring it to food banks themselves. Sloan agreed, and MSC is currently organizing a program for Poly students to gain community service hours by saving food from Trader Joe's dumpsters.

"When it was clear that Trader Joe's had no interest in corporate transparency, making a public commitment to sustainability, or being held accountable to the reputation they profit from but haven't necessarily earned, the students switched gears and got practical. This was an effective strategy," reflects Davis. "Though there was tension in the meeting,

then the responsibility falls on us."

On Friday, April 8, Seifert paid a surprise visit to MSC to debrief the discussion with Sloan. He shared his own experiences of being frustrated by Trader Joe's refusal to share company policies with the public and to listen to the opinions of concerned consumers.

He also noted that Sloan did send out a letter to encourage Trader Joe's branches to do a better job of handling extra food but has not made an official association with the organization Feeding America.

Although Sloan claimed to care about food waste, students felt that he was emotionally disconnected from the issue. Senior Stephanie Tercero elaborated, "Speaking with Matt Sloan was such a frustrating experience. He kept repeating that a corporate policy isn't in their 'business model.' Sure, their 'business model' is that individual stores work independently, but how can helping local communities not be part of their plan?"

Proud of the conduct of her students during the discussion, Davis commented, "Mr. Sloan was expecting a pliable audience and he got a Poly audience—rigorous critical thinkers who pushed back and were not swayed by easy answers. In terms of moving forward, I suspect that visit emboldened us all."

Through their efforts to reduce a wasteful, extravagant society, the students in MSC are bridging the gap between classroom knowledge and real world application.

They hope to gain support from the Poly community as they continue to confront this issue through volunteerism and by pressuring the Trader Joe's corporation to develop a corporate policy for handling food waste at all their stores.

"The students' passion and determination is inspirational," commented Seifert. "They asked hard questions, pushing for real change at the corporate level. In many ways, I think their efforts with Trader Joe's and the larger issue of food waste have just begun."

Alum leads discussion on human rights and international law

■ The Global Initiatives Program invited Saira Mohamed to speak to students about issues related to foreign intervention in countries engaged in internal conflict.

By KEVIN CHU
Assistant news editor

Students recently had the opportunity to attend a talk in the Boswell Library regarding international law and human rights by Poly alum Saira Mohamed in an event co-sponsored by the history department's Globalization and Human Rights course and the Global Initiatives Program.

Mohamed graduated from Poly in 1996 and is now a Professor of Law at University of California Berkeley's Boalt Hall. She led the discussion by identifying factors that play into issues of intervention and then transitioned to a brief question and answer session.

Focusing on humanitarianism and the overall concept of right and wrong when dealing with foreign involvement in struggling countries, Mohamed began with the question, "When should states start intervening for human rights?"

Mohamed outlined three types of foreign intervention: intervention that is necessary but does not occur, intervention that occurs outside of the legal barrier, and intervention that is premature.

According to Mohamed, intervention is usually necessary, but too often results in heightened tension.

Using the examples of the Rwanda Genocide and the current situation in Libya, Mohamed emphasized the development of the world's view on intervention and human rights.

Mohamed described how immediately following the horrible genocide in the Holocaust in which the entire world merely sat back and watched, countries worldwide vowed to "never again" fail to intervene when necessary. She also noted that our

involvement in Libya resulted in a "monumental change in how we think of country borders and limits."

Though Mohamed explained that it would be ideal if the U.S. could allow struggling countries to improve their conditions independently, she also expressed that it is not realistic for the U.S. to stay out of these issues. Mohamed stressed the need to find a balance between brushing off problems in other countries and initiating excessive involvement.

"War as a method of intervention used to be a common tool in the toolbox, but it is not so much

anymore," said Mohamed, reflecting on the manner of involvement the U.S. should employ. "It is now much more closely scrutinized and used with caution."

Because the United Nations plays a large role in setting the standards for intervention and international law today, Mohamed stressed that the "UN should be international, not internal," meaning that it should extend its care to areas that need its involvement. She added that another factor that is currently impacting international law is the "Responsibility To Protect" doctrine which states that every government has the responsibility to protect its own people and that if this is not met, the U.N has the right to step in and intervene.

Mohamed concluded by saying that intervention should be for humanitarian purposes and should always confront ongoing genocide or ethnic cleansing.

Junior Mark Loyola, who attended the presentation, said, "It really opened my mind up to a lot of issues I really don't normally hear about too much. The experience was overall, very enlightening and informative."

Saira Mohamed's presentation of ideas offered the students a very unique perspective and insight on the topic of humanitarianism and international law, issues that are widely debated today.



Courtesy of Greg Feldmeth

Saira Mohamed, a Professor of Law at UC Berkeley, led a question-and-answer session following her presentation on April 7 in the Boswell Library.

Associated Student Body 2011-2012 Election Results

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Vice President

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Chief Justice

Jackson Allan

Secretary

Harry Hodgkins

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Eric Yin

Community Outreach

Jaelyn Cole