

Pony Express

Volume 34, Number 5 • San Marin High School, Novato, California • February 7, 2003

Board begins slashing budget

By Susan Beresford



The Novato Unified School District took a pre-emptive strike last month, slashing over \$900,000 from the budget in the middle of the school year that will have a definite effect on the education in all fourteen district schools.

Governor Gray Davis proposed billions of dollars in cuts due to its \$34 billion budget shortfall. In December, categorical funding to school districts was cut by 2.7 billion dollars, a move that will affect school districts statewide, especially those like Novato, whose budgets are already limited. Because the budget situation the District faces will have many repercussions over the next several years, the entire community has gotten involved in trying to convince the Board to lessen the effects of the cuts on students.

By July 1 of every year, the state, as well as each individual school district, is required to adopt a budget for the upcoming year. Our district adopted its budget on June 18, while the state didn't finish its budget until September. Once the state's budget is adopted, the district revises its budget to agree with the allocations from the state. Normally, the state sends out a consolidated application by September or October, but this year the district received it two months later. The final revisions were not made until late December because the district had to change its budget once again to account for the state's reductions.

At press time, the Governor's office, the Assembly, and the Senate were trying to engineer fixes in the state budget because everyone wants something different. For example, the Assembly wants school districts to have the flexibility to access their state-mandated 3 percent reserves. The Senate, on the other hand, has no provisions for such a case.

The district is facing diffi-

cult times, and, as Superintendent John Bernard put it, "We need to learn to work in the rain." Within the next eight weeks, the district has to look at millions of dollars of potential budget cuts. Midyear budget cuts have been proposed and discussed at the school board meetings on January 14th and 22nd, and preliminary cuts were finalized at the meeting on the 28th. At this meeting, the Board voted on cuts totaling \$712,800 that included reduction or elimination of supply, conference and equipment budgets, limits on watering and fertilization of playing fields and elimination on classified substitutes. Staff positions were next on the cutting block. Within the next month or so, cuts are expected to total \$1.2 million. Says Bernard, "This is really the first step in a process that is probably going to last six to eight months."

On the brighter side, there were a few survivors in the first round of cuts. A warehouseman, the third counselor at each high school, and the Novato High School pool were spared. The PG&E bill and chemicals for the NHS pool cost \$5,000, but the Board will cut something else to keep it open through swimming season.

Parents, teachers, students, and school staff expressed their concerns at the January 28th Board meeting. Many insisted that staffing cuts be kept far away from the classroom and focus on administration at the district office. "Why weren't central district office management positions considered in these budget reduction options?" asked Aaron Brown, a parent and member of Partners for Better Novato Schools. Another concerned parent, Lila Razo, urged trustees to protect reading specialist programs, which are on the list of potential cuts for later this year or next year. "[These programs] make a difference between long-term success and failure for

so many children," she said.

Despite these pleas, the board cut \$192,622 in school staffing. Ironically, however, these cuts don't affect district administrative positions or involve pay cuts for the highest paid administrators in the county. Twelve classified employees as well as 6 temporary teachers were laid off effective February 1st. Elementary schools will be hardest hit by the cuts because eight part-time classified office technicians at eight different schools as well as 1.5 full-time librarians have been laid off. At the high schools, full time librarians will be reduced to half time.

Students need these people and programs to get a well-rounded education. For an administration that is trying to increase test scores, it is strange that they have cut and are considering cutting resources and special services, which will result in an undereducated student population and ultimately lower test scores. Decisions on what to cut should be guided by the major objectives of the district. It would seem that disproportionate cuts on services that directly affect students, while sparing administrative services that have little impact on student learning, are inconsistent with the district's stated objectives.

In defense of the district, Bernard told the community that contrary to popular belief, 17 district positions have been "impacted" since 1999. "We've

reached a point where we can't cut any further without undermining the infrastructure of the district," Bernard said. However, what Bernard doesn't say speaks more loudly than what he does. Although 17 district positions may have been impacted, he gives no specifics to support his generalities. Many school staff positions have been impacted as well, possibly more this year alone than the district has seen downtown in the past three years combined. Many of the positions that are being lost are held by overworked classified staff in the schools, rather than administrators at the district.

At the January 28th meeting, the trustees admitted their confusion about the state's budget requirements. No one from the district office could explain to the trustees the budget process and situation in Sacramento. If they can't explain the "confusing" proposal from the Assembly that seems to have been "written by lawyers," how can the trustees make educated, informed decisions about what to cut? Maybe because they're not usually on campus, the district administrators and school board members don't realize how much students need people like the career room tech or the librarians.

These budget cuts, so far totaling \$905,422, will only have limited effects on the officials downtown at the district office; they will largely affect the schools, the curriculum, the staff and the students. Bernard and Chris Thomas, the district's CFO, make the state appear entirely responsible for the budget crisis, although many of our problems start right here in the district. For example, in the 2001-2002 school year, the district was overstaffed by 14 teachers, accounting for \$700,000 of the district's budget deficit.

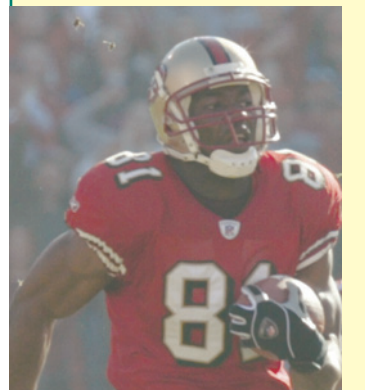
Assemblyman Joe Nation has chosen to address the budget crisis by leading by example. His office is taking pay cuts, reducing both staffing and office expenses. The district administrators should use his model to cut expenses by reducing their expenses and their paychecks. However, they aren't even considering this approach, and as a result, the schools, students, and school employees will suffer.



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Why war? Why now?

By Logan Bartling, Sean Johannessen, Zack Kinyon

In his Jan. 28th State of the Union Address before congress, President Bush devoted almost a quarter of his time to the topic of America's imminent showdown with Saddam Hussein.

He referred to Hussein as "a brutal dictator, with a history of reckless aggression [and] ties to terrorism," once again singling out Iraq while slapping North Korea with, at best, a harsh reprimand. Despite North Korea's history of selling and trading nuclear and long range missile technology to states like Iran, Pakistan and Yemen, as well as the recent reactivation of its nuclear program, President Bush still considers Iraq the number one threat to national security.

The ability of the weapons inspectors to contain Hussein's ambitions to obtain weapons of mass destruction has been impressive enough to satisfy every member of the United Nations with the exceptions of only three nations, the United States, Great Britain and Israel, and yet war drums can still be heard from Washington to Baghdad as American men and equipment arrive in Turkey, and the Persian Gulf. A hospital ship was among the equipment to receive orders to proceed to the Gulf, acknowledging the unfortunate probability of a large number of American casualties. Hussein has declared his wish for the war to take place "in the streets of Baghdad," where the Somalia fiasco in 1994 proved American troops would be most vulnerable, and where the possibility of a large number of civilian casualties would be highest.

According to a series of polls done by CNN and Time Magazine, public support in the United States has been in virtual free-fall in recent weeks, finally stabilizing with the State of the Union address. However, the damage is done and a majority of the American people now believe that more time is needed to find alternatives to war.

Reasons for a widespread lack of support around the world center around concern for Iraqi civilians that may be caught in the cross-fire, and the consequences should Iraq decide to attack Israel in a last ditch attempt to spread United States military action into a broader, regional war. Israel would undoubtedly respond, and the Israeli government has refused to rule out the use its of nuclear weapons in retaliation. If Israel used nuclear weapons

on Iraq and Baghdad's tightly packed population of four million men, women and children was decimated, several Arab nations would be obligated to enter into the conflict. Instead of a new, democratic Iraq, our gift to the region would be the most terrible war in decades, in which we would be forced to defeat not only Iraq, but a number of other countries as well.

CIA analysis has come to the conclusion that Saddam Hussein would only use weapons of mass destruction in the event that his regime was threatened. As long as we avoid a conflict, and maintain a comprehensive inspections regime, it is very unlikely he would take aggressive action. Therefore, a direct assault on Hussein's regime is certainly not the most promising way of keeping the world safe from the danger of his chemical and biological weapons.

Experts agree that it is virtually impossible that Iraq has any nuclear weapons, as in the 1980's, Israel destroyed Iraq's nuclear facilities in a tactical air strike. Pakistan and Israel (both considered allies of the United States) both have nuclear weapons, and neither require war, military buildups or even sanctions; in fact, both of those countries receive a significant portion of our foreign aid budget, and Israel has received more American military aid than any other nation in the last 50 years.

The 12 chemical warheads unearthed by inspectors have been touted as irrefutable evidence that Iraq has been hiding it's weapons, and some have even claimed that this is all the evidence we need to take action. Senator Ted Kennedy takes the opposite point of view, saying "This is not justification for war; to the contrary. This is evidence that the inspections are working."

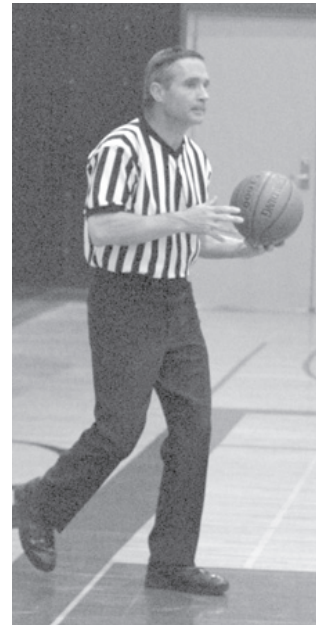
Unfortunately, Saddam Hussein has one last sword hanging over the head of any army that intends to remove him by force. He can torch his oil fields. When he set the Kuwaiti fields ablaze during his retreat at the close of the Gulf War of 1991, the industry took over a year to begin to recover. The ecological damage was catastrophic, and Kuwait's environment may never fully recover. If the same thing were to happen in Iraq, the results would be far worse. If Iraq's oil supplies were targeted by Hussein in a final attempt at vengeance, the damage would not be limited to Iraq. The damage would be felt all over the world.

You're blind, you're deaf...

By Niki Kidd

In my numerous years of participating in and watching sports, I have found one universal comment that every fan can relate to: refs suck.

I have come across many impassioned onlookers that had a deep disdain for the men and women with the whistles. They curse their names, yell epitaphs in their



Math teacher Terry McBroom, a hard-to-find good ref

direction and question every decision they make. They swear a blind monkey could do better and have often been tempted to hire one. They've thrown objects at the officials, made gestures at them, and have wondered what game they were watching. All because of the universal truth that refs suck.

And these fans are partially right. Yes, I admit, I have often agreed that the referee in question has no clue what he/she is talking about.

In the eighth grade, I dressed up as a blind referee for Halloween in an attempt to show my wry humor and show my displeasure for the often-maligned official, all because I thought that refs suck.

I've even categorized officials into four categories: the power-trip ref (that cares more about how he controls the game than what he is calling), the confused ref (that asks the other officials what exactly the rule is), the vengeful ref (that hates one team and always calls the game in a one-sided fashion), and the hard to find good ref (that humble person who calls the game correctly and refs for the love of the game.) As you can see from my list, most refs suck.

But recently, I've begun to realize that maybe refs aren't so bad. I mean, come on, they're only human, right? Shouldn't they be allowed to make mistakes? Shouldn't they be allowed to officiate the game without being the scourge of the fans?

What has changed my mind on refs? I've been one. For the past several years, I have been a soccer referee. I have had people criticize me, yell at me, question my decisions, and think I had a hidden vendetta to ruin their lives.

So what's the moral of the story? Refs don't win or lose games, players do. Even if referees seem not to be living up to their responsibility, yelling at them and egging them on doesn't help.

Do most refs suck? Yes, especially in amateur sports in Marin County. But even if an official is the epitome of awfulness, remember this: the result of a game is determined by the flight of the ball, not the shrill blow of a whistle.

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New charter school to take SM resources and students

By Amber Shields and Abby Yim

Over the past decade, charter schools have been giving a new face to public education, offering an alternative approach to both teaching and learning environments. Novato has felt the impact

School; both are now juniors at San Marin. Each agrees that the 'charter school experience' is much different than public high school. The small, personal environment of the charter school is a

vision Schools, a nonprofit organization that wants to create small, high-performance public high schools. Bishop says the high school would be an "exciting alternative" and commends the district for being open to different methods of teaching.

Novato High School is also planning a similar venture and plans on opening its Marin School of Arts in 2003, enrolling grades 9 through 12. The school will offer challenging academic courses with advanced classes in the arts, including music, dance, creative writing, theater, visual arts and technology.

Julia Selfridge, a junior at San Marin, is planning to apply to this new school for her senior year because of the wonderful dance and academic opportunities the school will offer. Even though the school offers a large number of performing art classes, Selfridge feels that San Marin's own strong performing classes will still draw a considerable number of students and notes that she will greatly miss the Show Choir class. While Selfridge feels the school is a great opportunity for her, she doesn't believe it's for everyone. "It's a good opportunity for very focused people who know what they want to do in life, but it is important to keep the same great programs San Marin has for the people who

don't know what they want to do." The school will be an exciting alternative to some, others aren't as optimistic about it. Claire comments, "I wouldn't want to go to another charter school, it would be too hard to adjust to college and the real world."

With the already existing budget problem, the prospect of new schools worries some that the district will be plunged further into crisis.

Pleasant Valley PTA president Julie Casey said, "I think that charter schools have a definite place in the education system. But the state has to find a way so that charter schools will not harm Novato's budget. The charter schools are currently affecting our budget. The problem is with our budget. If we were defined differently Charter schools would not have as much of an impact." Casey is also concerned that the charter schools

will harm the existing Novato high schools in other ways. Casey claims, "When Novato students go to Charter schools we lose their talent and the money that is given for each student." San Marin art teacher Denise Mozzetti is also apprehensive about the new charter schools. "The students have to come from somewhere, and if the enrollment at San Marin goes down a lot, we won't be able to offer the comprehensive education that we now enjoy." Among the anticipated problems, Mozzetti foresees the cut of art programs, especially upper level art classes.

With the current budget problems, it seems the wrong time to be raising two new schools. Before you rush out to join the new Charter schools, take a moment to think about what you can contribute to help your existing, and somewhat suffering, high school.

No easy solutions to California deficit

By Michael Lovejoy

What was a \$12 billion budget surplus only four years ago, when Gray Davis became governor of California has become a \$35 billion deficit.

As the leader of the technology and dotcom industries, the state is more vulnerable than the rest of the nation to the effects of the stock market. With the recent downturn in the economy, California's budget has been hurt the most; its deficit now totals more than all the other states' combined.

The deficit may also be a result of its unique legislature. To pass a budget, a two-thirds majority is required. Democrats are just shy of this majority, and Republicans will not support any democratic idea. But they can both agree to put off any decisions until the next year, a policy that only hurts the state. Several propositions passed by the voters have also contributed to the deficit. Revenue from certain taxes, such as the gasoline tax, go into specialized areas, such as transportation, rather than the general fund.

Davis has proposed increased taxes in his new spending plan, including a one percent sales tax increase, increases in the cigarette tax, and tax hikes for the

wealthy. Republicans have refused to pass any tax increases or new taxes. Davis also wants to cut state aid to public schools, cuts that would hurt many financially-strapped school districts.

Davis has also been accused of overstating the budget deficit by \$3-9 billion. According to Elizabeth Hill, the legislature's top economist and nonpartisan analyst, the state's revenue will be \$26 billion short, not \$35 billion. Even using the governor's own accounting, Hill calculated the shortfall to be \$3 billion less than reported by Davis. Republicans have accused him of overstating the deficit in order to push tax increases through the legislature. During a speech in January, Davis said, "I would be thrilled if the analyst was right because my problem would be \$3 billion less than I think it is." His financial director said that a \$3 billion differential is within the margin of error of their calculations.

Whether the state deficit is \$26 billion or \$35 billion, cuts will have to be made, and the new economic hard times of the country will affect everyone. School districts will have to make drastic cuts, and many teachers' jobs will be at risk.



The new Marin School of Arts and Technology, Marin's first charter high school, plans to open in fall, 2003, under the umbrella of the Novato Unified School District. This postcard, complete with spelling error, was sent to district 8th graders to try to lure them away from San Marin and Novato and to the privately run MSAT.

of this educational reform. With one operating charter school, Novato has plans for two new high school charters that will go into effect next year. But how is this new form of education, while offering alternative to some, taking away from the majority?

The Novato Charter School's director Rachel Bishop feels that charter schools bring choice to public education and provide opportunities for students and their parents, but students have mixed feelings.

Emily Kruger and Chelsea Claire were among the first graduating class of Novato Charter

sharp contrast to the large and often impersonal classes of high school. However, the change was hard for both, who felt that their school hadn't prepared them for the different way of teaching in high school and ultimately college. Claire says, "Charter schools are better for younger kids, but when you get older they're too sheltered."

Preparations are already underway to open a new charter high school in Novato next year. The Marin School of Arts and Technology, starting with 110 ninth-graders will be part of En-

vision Schools, a nonprofit organization that wants to create small, high-performance public high schools. Bishop says the high school would be an "exciting alternative" and commends the district for being open to different methods of teaching.

It takeschutzpah to plant a tree



Paul Himmelstein, Dan Saslow, Alex Saslow, Michael Cusack and Eric Eisberg, members of the new Jewish students' club, Chutzpah, plant a redwood tree on campus in honor of Tu B'Shevat, the Jewish birthday of the trees.

The club is planning events for Purim, Passover and Yom Hashoah.

Throughout February, the club is collecting toiletries for donation to Novato Human Needs.

Please deposit toothbrushes, deodorant, shampoo, and other items in the boxes in the front office and in room 501.

Chutzpah meets every Friday at lunch in room 501. Anyone who is Jewish or interested in Jewish cultural traditions is welcome.

ASB Account Totals

ASB general	\$ 7,305.50
Class of '03	\$ 8,142.70
Homecoming	\$11,531.19
Class of '04	\$ 3,019.14
Class of '05	\$ 1,637.73
Class of '06	\$ 769.67

as of January 31, 2003

Get moving

By Rebecca Guthrie

We all know that typical New Year's Resolution. Some of us may be freaking out because, in the back of our minds, we

until it's "bathing suit season." Aside from the ability to discipline oneself into working out regularly and trying to eat healthily, many people just find a lot of boredom in exercise. They can't run for an hour because, after fifteen minutes of the same CD, the thought of TV seems more appealing than the treadmill. All of a sudden, that bathing suit doesn't seem as important as it did January 1.

Nowadays, in a world of caramel macchiatos, voice-activated dialing, and flat screen televi-

sions, make room for the new



approved ways of keeping fit! We hear of Madonna religiously practicing yoga, Daisy Fuentes selling pilates tapes, and Billy Blanks preaching his Taebo. Well, why shouldn't we get the best of the modern fitness world? The one barrier: cost.

Due to the fact that Marin is such a health conscious area full of scenic trails and back roads, it is no wonder that there is no difficulty in locating a gym or studio nearest you. The three well-known and attended health clubs in Novato are Nautilus of Marin, Marin Fitness, and Meridian Rolling Hills Health Club. Prices for membership vary but all of these gyms offer the new and exciting trends in fitness.

Yoga

The Bay Area is the place to be if one is in search of a way to become more flexible, strong, and spiritually centered. Many gyms offer yoga classes but there are also many studios all around Marin that focus solely on the Indian practice. The Yoga College of India (located in Ignacio by the Safeway) specializes in the Bikram method. This is where groups practice regularly but in a heated room, to improve cardiovascular health. One class costs \$15.

Spin

Spin is a high energy, indoor stationary cycling system where the instructor takes the participants on a "virtual" outdoor road race complete with hills, valleys, and finish lines between 30 to 60 minutes long. It originated in the UK when Schwinn developed the bike. It works the quads, hamstrings, calves, hips, thighs, glutes, and abs. It is an excellent method of losing weight because it burns a tremendous number of calories. Bike resistance is self-adjustable and the music keeps you going. Spin boosts cardiovascular fitness, muscle tone, and endurance.

Pilates

Developed in the 1920's by Joseph Pilates, this exercise system focuses on improving flexibility and strength for the total body without building bulk. It is very popular among women. Pilates is a series of controlled movements engaging the body and mind. It is performed on a specifically designed exercise apparatus and is individually supervised by extensively trained teachers. Though it can be quite expensive, Pilates focuses on the "powerhouse" of the body, which contains the abdomen, lower back and buttocks, to support the whole body to move freely and prevent damage. Pilates is located in any health club but usually costs extra.

CONCERT CORNER

By Julia Capasso

This month in music: Interpol, riding a wave of hype since releasing their new album "Turn on the Bright Lights," pays a visit to the Bay Area on February 15. Interpol is not just a trend band. The album is great, showcasing the band's unique sound and plaintive, often melancholy vocals by Paul Banks. Definitely check them out (especially if you're fan of Joy Division, who Interpol is often likened to.)

Hardcore heavyweights Embrace the End will show up at the Phoenix Theater on February 15, which will, of course, be an insane performance. Ladytron hops across the pond to play at Bimbo's on March 7.

Other concerts worth knowing about:

February 8, **Locale A.M.** (cd release) with **The Matches, Desa** (formerly Link 80), and **A Burning Water** @ iMusicast, Oakland \$TBA

February 10, **Don't Look Down with Plain White T's** and **Rock Kills Kid** @ Slims \$8

February 12, **Coheed And Cambria** with **Onlinedrawing** and **Hopesfall** @ the Pound \$8/\$10

February 14, **The Gourds with Four Year Bender** and **Firecracker** @ Slims \$12.50/\$14

February 15, **Interpol** @ the Fillmore \$17.50

February 15, **Norma Jean, Falling Cycle, Beloved, Me Without You, and Embrace The End** @ the Phoenix \$9

February 19, **Trans AM** and **Har Mar Superstar** @ the Vet's Hall \$10

February 21, **26 Miles Per Hour, Hostility, and Skribble** @ the Phoenix Theater \$TBA

February 22, **Moe** @ the Fillmore \$22.50

February 23, **The Roots** @ the Fillmore \$35

February 26, **The Donnas with Ok Go** and **Rooney** @ the Fillmore \$16.50

February 27, **Finch with The Movielife** plus TBA @ Slims \$12

February 28, **Hot Rod Circuit** and **Tsunami Bomb** @ Bot-

tom of the Hill \$11
February 28, **M.I.T's and the Phenomonauts** @ the Oasis \$TBA

March 7, **Ladytron** @ Bimbos \$TBA

March 7, **Death Cab for Cutie, Velvet Teen** and **Thermals** @ Slims \$10/12

January/February CD Releases

Unwritten Law "Music in High Places"

Massive Attack "100th Window"

Wilco "Kamera EP"

De La Soul "Spit Flows & Safety (It Ain't Safe in Water)"

The Promise "Believer"

In the Studio:

Pennywise and **Rancid** (summer releases)

Rumors

Members of **H2O, Madball, New Found Glory** and **the Movielife** to start a band? I'll be waiting for that.

Warped Tour 2003

Bay Area Dates:
July 12 **Pier 30/32** or **Pac Bell** Parking Lot, San Francisco
July 13, **AutoWes**, Sacramento

- Bands:
- Distillers
 - Dropkick Murphys
 - Glassjaw
 - Rancid
 - The Used
 - Less Than Jake
 - Suicide Machines
 - Andrew WK
 - The Ataris
 - The Unseen
 - S.T.U.N
 - Taking Back Sunday
 - Pennywise (on some dates)
 - AFI (on some dates)
 - Finch (on some dates)
 - From Autumn to Ashes
- Simple Plan**
(Warped Tour info courtesy punknews.com)

Grueling schedule for skater

By Paige Lehman

Weekday mornings, while the majority of us are snug in our beds, waiting for our alarm clocks to wake us up, Karen Glass is wide awake and spinning for that matter.

As an ice skater, Karen has to get up every weekday morning at 3:30 to make a 5:00am practice in Santa Rosa. And while most people would shudder at the thought of getting up long before the sun comes up, this is routine to Karen; she's been skating since she was seven.

Karen first became interested in ice skating after seeing skaters perform in the Olympics. Her parents and three sisters all skated at one point, but now it is only her father and younger sister out on the ice with her.

In addition to her Monday-Thursday morning practice, she also has a practice at nine on Saturday mornings. Her favorite part of skating has always been jumping- right now she's working on a double axel, a triple salchow, and a triple loop jump. For those unfamiliar with ice skating terms, those jumps are some of the hardest moves to complete on the ice. The only thing about ice skating that Karen

doesn't always enjoy is competitions. She competes in about five every year.

On top of ice skating, Karen also plays basketball (on the JV team) and is an avid bass clarinetist. Karen is not sure of where ice-skating will take her in the future, but she knows she wants to continue to skate into college. One of her criteria for picking a college is if it has a skating rink near by. She is also considering the possibility of an ice skating scholarship. Whatever she does, she'll most certainly succeed.



Oooh... Oooh... Uh-Oh!

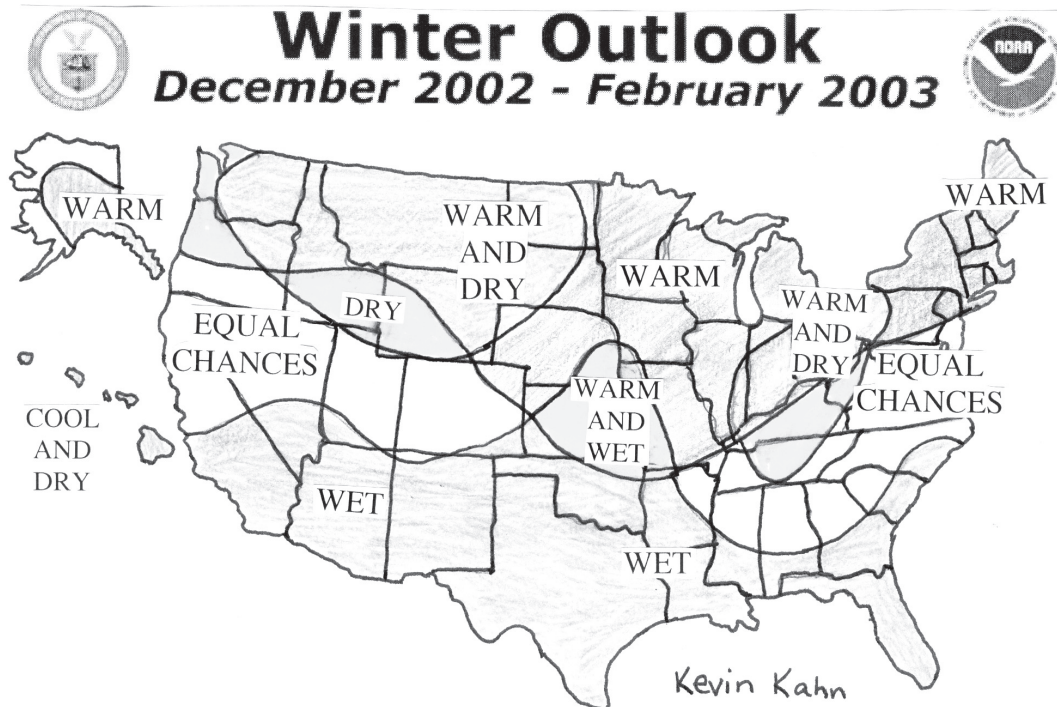
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Remember El Niño? It's back!

By Kevin Kahn

It's been 5 years, but it's expected to make a valiant return. El Niño, the weather phenomenon that has intrigued scientists since its discovery, has been predicted, through advanced meteorological data, to once again affect the United States in the winter of 2002-2003. The questions posed to scientists now, however, are how strong the El Niño is and what impact it will have on the region.

El Niño obtained its name from fishermen off the coast of South America, who noted abnormally warm water temperatures that greatly disrupted the marine ecosystem. They named it "El Niño," Spanish for "Christ Child," because the unusual temperatures always came around Christmas. Although meteorologists and geologists are still researching its precise origins and causes, El Niño is defined by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) as "a disruption of the ocean-atmosphere system in the tropical Pacific having important consequences for weather around the globe."

El Niño is a phenomenon that originates in the tropical Pacific Ocean in the Southern Hemisphere. In a normal Pacific spring and summer, cool trade winds blow west to the coasts of the Americas. These westerly winds allow the western Pacific waters to cool down

in the fall and winter, resulting in ocean temperatures off the San Francisco coast to fall below 50°F in January. The cold water generates the Pacific jetstream to push south from the arctic, resulting in cool temperatures and precipitation. In non-El Niño winters, Novato averages a temperature of around 44° F and roughly 30 inches of rainfall. However, El Niño drastically changes almost every facet of the weather in California and the world. The El Niño phenomenon occurs when the westerly winds that normally cool the west Pacific, cease. According to NOAA, "the trade winds relax in the central and western Pacific, leading to an elevation of the thermocline in the west." The greater the thermocline, the more powerful the El Niño is. For example, in the winter of 1982-1983, which was considered one of the most powerful El Ninos and one of the worst California winters on record, the Pacific water temperatures increased by 17°F.

What has baffled scientists who study El Niño is how and why this influx of water temperature can have such an immense impact on the world's weather. Rainfall typically follows warmer water, answering the question as to why the western Pacific sees over double the normal precipitation in El Niño affected winters.

In the last El Niño of 1997-1998, also a very powerful one,

Novato saw rainfall of over 50 inches. However, the temperatures were very mild because most of these seemingly endless storms were generated in the tropics, as opposed to the Gulf of Alaska. In the west Pacific, heavy rain and warmer temperatures are the norm, with flooding from California to Peru. Conversely, the eastern Pacific sees devastating droughts. Australia, Indonesia, and the Far East face blazing heat in the summer and bone-dry winters. Along with disruptions in the atmosphere, El Niño greatly impacts marine life. Many nutrients and life in the oceans that generally migrate south to warm tropical waters in winter stay in the northern hemisphere, drastically disrupting the ecological marine food chain. Many migratory whales and birds die due to El Niño's adverse effects. El Niño is a phenomenon that impacts almost every part of the globe.

The El Niño of 2002-2003, most scientists predict, will be mild to moderate, unlike the powerful forces in '82 and '97. Northern California is likely to see an increase in rainfall and above normal temperatures, although not too drastic.

El Niño's strength is supposed to be most felt this spring, however, so it is most likely that we'll be carrying umbrellas well into March and April.

Too good to be true?

By Stephanie Alderson

Are people actually supposed to believe that after popping a couple of pills for a few weeks that their once flabby, pale body will become a flawless figure of toned muscle and tan skin? According to the commercials they are. Sorry to break it to those dreamers out there, but it doesn't exactly work that way. America is obsessed with appearance, and living in one of the richest countries in America, it doesn't go unnoticed.

Everywhere there are little miracle potions offering the power of melting pounds. The booming diet industry grosses billions of dollars and lures in 17.2 million Americans each year. Ever taken a walk down a health food store? There are aisles and aisles of diet pills promising outrageous results.

Despite manufacturers claims, diet pills and supplements will not solve anyone's weight problems by themselves. Unless one exercises and eats low-calorie foods, the pills will just be a waste of money and even with that the best they can offer is short-term weight loss. "You have to take a whole lot of them. They are out for your money," says an anonymous senior girl. But more than being a waste of money or a short-term fix, over-the-counter diet supplements can be quite dangerous.

First of all, the FDA does not regulate the weight loss products sold in stores very well so the pills are not proven to have any weight loss benefits and also contain active ingredients that can be detrimental to a person's health. Be wary of over-the-counter "fat-burners" and herbal "all-natural" supplements, many of which contain ingredients that act as stimulants. These special ingredients are allegedly supposed to increase the metabolism and help the body melt away fat. Despite these claims by manufacturers, the use of over-the-counter diet products alone will not cause weight loss and cannot truly burn fat.

Two active ingredients in many diet pills are ephedrine and caffeine. Some pills that might ring a bell include Metabolife,

MeTrim, Hydroxy Cut, and Xenadrine. Ephedrine, also known as Ephedra and MaHaung, has been the cause of hundreds of illnesses reported to the FDA including heart attacks, seizures, and strokes. It acts as an amphetamine-like compound that has powerful and potentially lethal effects on the body. If that isn't enough, the compounds can cause depression, nervousness, insomnia, and rapid heart rate. Its combination with caffeine, known as Guarana, raises the risks much higher.

Ephedrine and Guarana are not the only dangerous ingredients out there. Among them there is also phenylpropanolamine (PPA), chromium picolinate, pyruvate, chitosan, and Aristolochia fangchi, just to name a few.

Although eight out of ten dieters do in fact lose weight, is it really worth all the risk? The weight loss is temporary, meaning it is gained all back in matter of weeks. It can also cause heart problems and become addictive. While on the pills, some of the side effects include: restlessness, high blood pressure, fatigue and hyperactivity, heart arrhythmias and palpitations, dry mouth, vomiting and diarrhea or constipation, intestinal disturbances, tightness in chest, excessive perspiration, dizziness, change in sex drive, hair loss, brain hemorrhaging, fever and urinary tract problems. Overdoses can cause tremors, confusion, hallucinations, shallow breathing, renal failure, heart attack and convulsions. Sure, this seems like a pretty picture.

Another senior girl recounts her experience with diet pills as "absolutely horrible," saying, "I started shaking uncontrollably and I couldn't sleep. By the third day my stomach was in a knot and my heart was racing. I ended up having to go to the hospital and getting all these tests done on me."

If someone wants to lose weight, there is no secret or quick way out. Eat healthy and exercise. That is the only way to effectively raise metabolism and actually burn fat.

Perfect Valentines film

By Jamie Lummis and Alyssa Pomponio

February 14 is fast approaching, and for those of us looking for a bit of chocolate, lust, and a Valentine's Day date, without any long-term commitment, this movie will help you avoid hitting the dangerous "two-week" mark in the relationship.

Chock-full of "how-to-drive-him-away-without-having-to-break-up-with-him-yourself" tips, Kate Hudson plays the conniving vixen, Andie Anderson, in this month's top chick flick. Inspired by her friend's relationship mishaps, Andie accepts the

challenge to write "How to Lose a Guy in Ten Days" for her column. The lucky guy, Ben, played by Matthew McConaughey, ironically has been challenged to make a girl fall madly in love with him within the next ten days.

A hilarious relationship ensues including situations involving a family album, feminine hygiene products, and a love fern. Though the ending may be predictable, the comedy and the classic romantic calamities make this movie a must-see for Valentine's Day.

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Spirited San Marin basketball fans, February 1998

Old traditions gone forever?

By Mark Kellner

No, it's not a myth. There once was a day when San Marin basketball fans could stand without sending the administration to the rule book for clarification.

At San Marin's first home game versus Justin Sienna the administration officials prohibited San Marin fans from standing and threatened to kick them out if they failed to comply. However, the rule they were adhering to—"Please sit in the area designated for your school"—does not explicitly prohibit standing.

"It really pisses me off that our administration would take a rule out of context and completely deceive us," said a senior who preferred not to be named.

Because these rules are somewhat imprecise in their intent, at the San Marin-Justin Sienna game, the administration decided to be cautious and prohibit standing until further clarification from the Marin County Athletic League. "I'm really not sure of the intent of this rule," said San Marin Principal Loeta Andersen. Because they were unsure, a decision was made to be on the safe side and follow the unclear "letter of the law." The administration conservatively interpreted the request of the MCAL to "sit in the area designated for your school."

But asking students to sit, and prohibiting them from standing, are two entirely different things.

Phil Roark, MCAL director, sent a fax to each MCAL school requesting their interpretation of the rule, because he, as well, was supposedly unsure of the meaning of the word "sit" in the context of the rule.

Essentially, if league administrators had interpreted the rule to mean, "do not stand," then from then on, fans would have had to remain seated. However, SM administration's current interpretation of the rule is "stay" in the designated area, meaning that at home games students may stand.

Although a more clear set of rules has yet to be produced by MCAL, Andersen said that she will bring it up at the next MCAL Board of Managers meeting, attended by all MCAL schools' principals.

On January 16, the administrators visited classrooms to explain their expectations. Assistant Principal Toni Beal told students in Mike Vice's 1st period economics class that fans are not permitted to "boo." If students break this rule, serious consequences are in store. "We will stop what's happening and dis-

miss the whole rooting section," said Beal.

Students have become largely discouraged by this sudden enforcement of these vague rules, and some believe home games are no longer worth attending. "Why would we want to come to a game if the administrators say that we cannot do this and cannot do that," asked senior Rebecca Guthrie.

Hopefully the future games might regain the popularity they used to have. After all, students are allowed to stand.



Killing the spirit

By Niki Kidd

I'm probably one of the most spirited people you'll find on campus. Every Friday, you'll see me proudly don my festive green and gold, and every spirit day I'm decked out in outrageous attire for the day.

But for the first time since I've been here at San Marin, I've started to question my own spirit.

It's hard to support a school that, however they put it publicly, tries to dowse school spirit at sporting events.

Inventing rules and enforcing them on opening night did nothing but stir up the crowd into an uprising, with students just fighting for the right to stand at a game. Stand. We're not talking anything more outlandish than standing and supporting your team.

Once that debacle was cleared up through MCAL, administration went around to classrooms to clear up the misunderstanding and encourage students to show some San Marin spirit.

But most of the comments I heard were all negative towards SM. People were planning to boy-

cott the games in protest of the administration. This was the complete antithesis of what the administration had been hoping from this situation.

But it's nothing new for San Marin. Ever since that one infamous basketball game, San Marin spirit has been in a sharp decline. An incident, ironically, that occurred before any current student at San Marin, yet San Marin still has a poor reputation because of it and still faces rules that were created so it won't happen again.

During most years, this is all San Marin would have to be concerned with, but unfortunately, spirit is not the only thing San Marin has to worry about right now.

With major budget cuts in the works, San Marin will be facing a lot of changes on campus, from the possible elimination of the ELD program to loss in staff members.

Again, San Marin students didn't know what to take from these events, and I especially started to thank my lucky stars to

be getting out of here in June.

That's not something I would have thought of before. Is this just a case of senioritis, or is it the normal reaction of someone who has been jerked around ever since she stepped foot on campus?

School districts always claim they are for the students, but I beg to differ. After the fallout from the Tam game, the district shook up San Marin's administration, something it has continued to do. Since that date, there have been three new principals, four total, a change that is never productive when trying to educate students.

Staffing has had major overhauls over the past several years, with changes in all departments. We have had three athletic directors, countless numbers of assistant principals, and many other staffing changes. Counselors have come and gone at this school like the wind, and I personally have had five counselors for my four years here.

If all of this sounds a little ridiculous, you'd be right on the money. How was I supposed to prepare for college if I had a dif-

ferent counselor every year? How was San Marin supposed to have any solid foundation if staffing continues to be overturned? But more importantly, how are students going to survive if they have to manage with less because of these budget cuts?

I'll still continue my spirit by wearing San Marin colors every Friday and still show pride in my school, but I'm close to the edge.

I'm sick and tired of having to explain why San Marin is so lacking and why we can't fill the football stands during the regular season or the bleachers during basketball. Why my report cards list countless names of people who aren't here anymore, and sadly, some that might not be here in the future.

I've supported San Marin through a lot, but now it's tougher than ever to support an institution that antagonizes its students so consistently. But I'll stay with San Marin, because I keep my eye on the bigger picture. June 14th, June 14th, June 14th...

What is respect?

By Stephanie Alderson and Rebecca Guthrie

Who is this school for? Is it for the students, really?

All of a sudden it seems as if the purpose of this high school has been sacrificed. Once thought to be a place where the leaders of the future generation are taught and inspired, San Marin has been stripped down to reading, writing, arithmetic, and maybe an occasional art class if the schedule permits it.

The students no longer have the confidential and helpful peer counselors or experienced academic counselors and may also lose the aid, confidence and support of career tech Paula Vantreas. The student, it seems, is not taken into consideration any more.

And, when you really think about it, students are simply young, inexperienced, teenagers unable to make such important decisions for their future.

It is well known that there have been instances of unsportsmanlike behavior by San Marin students at the basketball games. Parents have complained that San Marin students are the worst behaved group of young adults they have seen. But it is wrong to mistake our behavior at a sports game for teenage behavior in general or to think that a list of rules is the answer.

Comparing San Marin students' outbursts of school pride with those of college or pro team fans, San Marin pales in

comparison. Adult fans can be more crude and crazy than any San Marin fan is allowed to be. Our age group, ranging from 14-18, is expected to be more mature than college or pro fans.

The teenage period of life has only been in existence for 50 years or so. Prior to this shift, most of us would have been married with children at 17 or 18. This period of delayed adulthood has put us at a standstill in our growth, leaving us caught between childhood and adulthood.

During this time of transition we are looking for some sort of role model, something to aspire to. The reality shows such as Joe Millionaire and Howard Stern on the airwaves don't leave us with too many options. The Bachelor portrays thirty-year-old women selfishly throwing themselves at a good-looking man with money in front of the entire country. This evidence proves that maturity is not defined by an age.

Obviously, youth don't have as many life experiences that make older people wiser, but is there an age when all of a sudden everything becomes clear? We have the human in-

not stick us all under one label. We are complex human beings just like adults.

You can yell at us for not being good adults, but you are preventing us from becoming that responsible by suppressing all of us as punishment for some of us.

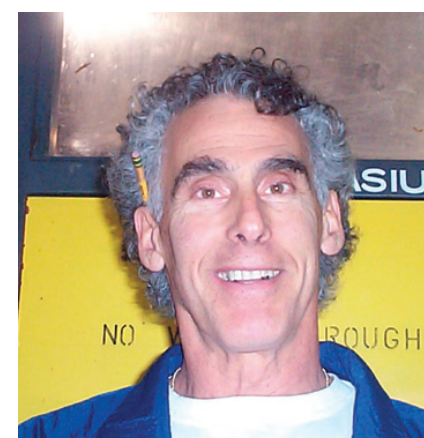
No one is perfect, but adults should give us room to grow.

Respect can only be given when it is received and there is a mutual understanding.



Question of the issue

How do you feel about the current regulations at San Marin sporting events?



David Bedar – A government that governs least governs the best. Too many regulations don't let people think and make good choices on their own. I want better sportsmanship showed by having the basketball teams shake hands after the game.



Eric Egide – Is this Russia?



Liz Maurer – Signs allow students to show more spirit



Chris Probst- If we have to sit [at basketball games], we might as well have REAL seats with cup holders.



Ashleigh Childers- This is all just ridiculous!



Dario Garzo – You can't paint your face, you can't have signs or show your colors, and now you can't even boo. What's next? Not allowing students to go to the games?

Marin County Athletic League Gym Rules

PLEASE:

- Welcome the visiting teams and officials with good sportsmanship and respect.
- Sit in the area designated for your school.
- Cheer enthusiastically for your school.
- Keep spirit traditions such as flags, mascots, signs in your own seating area.
- Reserve the front row of the student rooting section for the cheerleaders.

NO:

- Profanity.
- Insulting or antagonizing, opposing teams or fans.
- Costumes except for mascots.
- Body painting.
- Face painting except one small school logo or initials not to exceed 2 square inches in size.
- Artificial noisemakers (drums, cowbells, megaphones, clappers, etc.).
- Bare chests.
- Throwing things into or out of the crowd.
- Bringing balls or playing at halftime or between games.
- Re-entry into the gym after leaving.

A "Fans Yellow Card" may be given as a warning of the unacceptable behavior. School and athletic officials are authorized to eject either students or adults who act inappropriately.

First official Super Bowl commercial Top 5

By David Hoytt

I consider myself to be an avid football fan, even a connoisseur of the game.

That means that when Super Bowl time rolls around my butt is



always parked in the same couch with the same deliciously unhealthy snack foods in front of me whether it is my beloved 49ers who are playing or the Oakland Raiders and Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

However, sometimes the

game loses its mystique and we all know what the outcome will be after about a quarter-and-a-half.

That was the case this year, as the Raiders, on the grandest stage, showed the world that they were nothing but a bunch of pansies who are better off in a geriatric clinic than spending their last years on the football field being systematically dismantled.

So, how does one stay entertained when the "big game" is less than advertised?

Why, the commercials, of course.

Everyone knows that the advertisements airing during the Super Bowl are a chance for us all to sit back, relax, and be entertained by the antics of horses,

monkeys, celebrities, and even the occasional fart joke.

A majority of even the most intense football fans would rather take a pit stop during a Martin Gramatica PAT than during a new Matrix™ preview. It adds charm to the game that no other event in the world can emulate.

This year's crop, however, left something to be desired. A dependency of stale celebrities clutching to their last taste of fame (i.e. Willie Nelson, Ozzy Ozbourne and the Osmonds) made many fans cry more tears out of pity than the more welcome tears of laughter.

One reason for this disappointing collection of ads could be that there are virtually no more DOTCOM industries left, meaning no more quirky DOTCOM commercials, or any other of a host of theories.

We can't let this get us down! We must search the stormy skies

for a silver lining. Something that doesn't make us want to actually pick up a book or something out of sheer boredom.

Well, I have found five silver linings. The First Official Post Super Bowl Commercial Top Five List is presented for your enjoyment.

5) Tim McGraw=D.D.-Budweiser™

This choice, as you will see, is uncharacteristic of any of the other finalists. It features country superstar, Tim McGraw, as the designated driver for a group of bumbling idiots. One is particularly annoying and gets kicked out of the car with the punch line, "The great thing about being the designated driver is that you get the choice of who gets dropped off first." The comic value isn't tremendous and McGraw is a cocky pretty boy. However, as many of you may know, the Pony Express strongly endorses the designated driver policy, making this the emotional candidate. Remember, real friends don't let friends drive drunk.

4) "Alias"

I have never seen the hit, action-packed drama on ABC and before watching the Super Bowl I had no idea what it was about. Now following the game, I know even less. I did, however, learn one thing, which may mean that the ad did its job: Jennifer Garner is smokin' hot. Throughout the entire game, I probably saw about 8 commercials for Alias and don't remember one scene from the show. You know what I do remember. Garner got out of a swimming pool and began to disrobe immediately *on camera*. They say that sex sells and it may work. I will still probably never watch that show, but they did get me to put it in the Top 5 meaning that about 6 people will read me oogling over this bomb shell. Success.

3) Clown suit- Bud Light™

Bud Light will go down in the Pony Express Hall of Fame for consistently coming out with the funniest commercials but two beauties tie for the number three spot. First, a guy in a costume of a clown walking on its hands comes into a bar and asks for a Bud Light. He then proceeds to drink through the costume but, in this case, his head is where the clown's hind quarters are, making it appear that the clown is drinking the beer rectally. Everyone is disgusted and, to top it off, the clown asks for a hot dog (think about it) and is promptly denied. This ad gets the nod for pure comedy that's dripping with vulgar, sexual innuendo, which I have always been a sucker for.

The second successful Bud Light commercial featured a man

on the phone with a buddy who related that the former's girlfriend would end up looking like her mom, so he should check out the mom before making any decisions. When the girl's parents come over the mom seems HOT through the peep hole. However, what he doesn't see is that her hips and back side are so wide she can barely fit through the door. Bud again shows us their ability to put unexpected and equally hilarious twists into their commercials. Let's just hope they keep it coming.

2) Zebra reviewing the play-Budweiser™

Straight from the classic archives, Budweiser didn't abandon their football-playing Clydesdales. Instead they opened with them standing around with a ball at their feet and a scratching noise in the background. Then, the camera showed a zebra reviewing a replay under a hood. Then a cowboy tells his friend, "That ref's a jackass." To which the latter replies, "Actually, I think he's a zebra." The delicious play on words (Refs are often referred to as zebras) was hilarious and tasteful and left even the weakest fans smiling.

1) Terry Tate Office Linebacker-Reebok™

I'd like to describe this commercial in one imaginary word: FANTABULOUS. No English word can describe the hilarity of this ad. Something about an enormous linebacker laying vicious hits on co-workers will put a smile on anyone's face. Basically, the premise is that Terry Tate is a linebacker who was hired by a company as a "productivity tool" and constantly lays vicious hits for such offenses as not recycling, playing games, and chatting. The visual and audio effects of the ad are enough to vault it to numero uno, but that isn't event he best part.

For those of you curious about Tate, you can go onto www.reebok.com to read about his career and to watch additional footage. This footage, especially a 3.5 minute piece makes the commercial pale in comparison. This is definitely one for the ages.

There you have it. Among a sea of garbage these commercials give us a reason to keep watching the Super Bowl even when it features a group of whiney, wannabe-thug, Raiders.

We at the Pony Express hope that everyone enjoyed the Super Bowl and the commercials that went with it. So, until next time, remember it's not whether the commercial works; it's whether it's entertaining.

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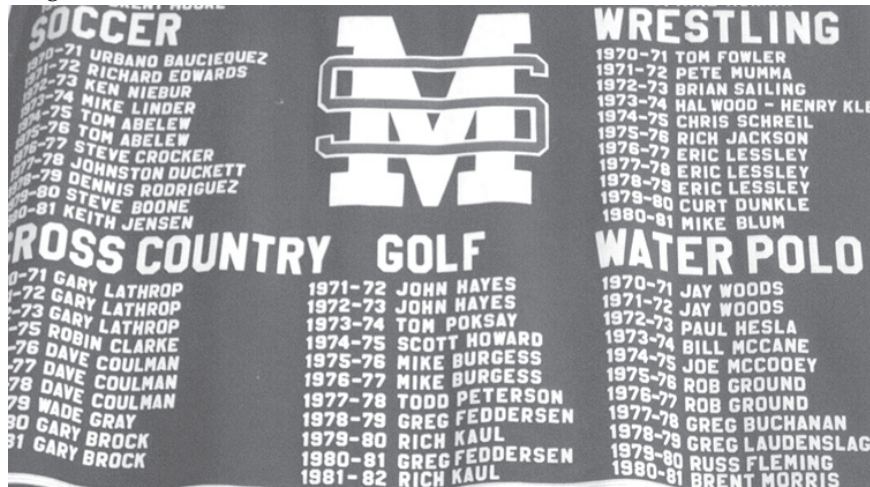
Gowns West

Special Occassion Gowns for the Most Demanding



Banner corruption*

By Bridget O'Connor and Christina Pelka



If people unfamiliar with San Marin walked into our gym, they might believe that our school has not been running for about thirteen years.

The gym wall is peppered with banners, there specifically to honor outstanding athletes of San Marin's past. However, no one cares about the far past, with the exception of your parents and Tom Zechlin, who has been rallying the troops with spirit and candy since log cabins were the architectural elite.

1983, 1992, Badminton? We might as well include Jousting and "Ancient Roman Gladiator of the Year" on the banners. Students go to the gym to escape history class, not to be surrounded by it.

"I mean it's coming at me from all angles," cried junior Loren Egide. "If we are going to include all those other sports, why don't we just have "Man of the Year," which I will unanimously win for the next two years?"

Updating the banners will take two weeks, at the most, even with minimal effort. Where are they anyway? How about the money earned at basketball games goes to separating the banners by sport and updating them?

Players who win the MVP award are not getting the recognition that they

have earned and deserve. What about Loren Egide? He has been breaking running records for years, and his achievements go unnoticed. "These babies better be updated so that the world will know the truth. Loren Egide led those football teams to victory-not that # 26. Who is that kid, anyway? What's his name, Nick?"

Athletic secretary Nancy Zanardi reports that a parent has volunteered to update the banners. "Our volunteer said that she will begin to work on them later this month." Hopefully the banners will be completed before basketball season is over. Many people attend the games, and the updated banners will help with the aesthetics of the gym.

In conclusion, updating the sports banners is very important to the enrichment of San Marin. It wouldn't be that difficult, we would do it-but our lives are far too busy. Being academic scholars, athletic superstars and social butterflies proves to be a hard life indeed! But seriously now kids, how do you expect to embrace the future if your past is forgotten? Sports banners are much more than just felt on felt, they are a way of life.

*the term corruption is used loosely. Corruption may or may not exist in San Marin.



College acceptances start slowly

When you hear from a college, even if you don't plan to attend, sign your name on the sheet in room 501 (Journalism) or the

College and Career Center and the Pony Express will be able to share your good news with the entire community.

Stephanie Alderson	University of Illinois
Nicole Allen	Sonoma State
Lisa Bandner	Dominican University, University of San Francisco
Brooke Barnecut	Chico State
Morgan Cain	Fresno State, Sacramento State
Andrina Carlsen	Stanislaus State University
Gina Cipollina	San Francisco State
Courtney Griffin	Bethel College
Rebecca Guthrie	University of Colorado, Boulder
Mike Gutierrez	Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
David Hoytt	University of Oregon, University of Arizona, Arizona State
Niki Kidd	University of Oregon, University of Washington
Rachel Klein	Arizona State University, University of Arizona
Laura Kopp	Antioch College
Ali Mafi	Whittier College
Niki Scioli	Sonoma State
Katrina Stafford	Sonoma State
Katie Standish	University of Oregon



Inside Track and Field

By Jamie Lummis

Spring is in the air and that can only mean one thing (to some!)— TRACK and FIELD.

But really, what is track and field? In all seriousness, where exactly do you put a shot put?

Is the pole vault really safe?

And, do field players really have to run?

For the novice, this springtime sport can be an intimidating and confusing event.

However, that shouldn't stop you from going out for the team! The following, hopefully, will help you gain a greater understanding of the true meaning of the sport.

Track Events

Sprints

For those of you football and basketball sprinters who are looking for a way to keep up the speed in the off season, sprinting is the event for you! The sprints included in this event are the 100 and 200-meter distances. Sprinters will not only enjoy the wonderful track. Hill/stair repeats, tricep dips and parachute sprints are just a taste of the variety of training techniques that sprinting has to offer.

Distance

Distance running in track and field consists of the one-mile and two-mile runs. However, these distances are small compared with the mileage that these runners put in each day. A typical workout consists of a three to five mile run, either by trail or by track. Although these distances seem ridiculous to most, these runners reap the reward of ending workout earlier than the other events.

Middle Distance

If sprinting is too short but five miles is painfully funny, then middle distance may be the running event for you. The 400 and 800 (once and twice around the track respectively) however, are considered by some to be the most difficult distance that track and field has to offer. Those who choose these events will enjoy stair and hill repeats as well as the ever-famous pyramid (a repeat of different distances around the track that build up to a certain distance and then builds back down).

Hurdles

For those who participated in track and field at the middle school level, hurdling is a new event that is worth a try. This challenging event is perfect for the ex-ballerinas and gymnasts. However, if you were not blessed with the leaping ability, have no fears for there are two different heights to choose from: high hurdles for

the daring and low hurdles for the not-so-brave. Hurdles are excellent for those who maybe want to sprint but feel that they are not quite "up to speed."

Relays

Relays are considered by some to be the most exciting event Track and Field has to offer. The 4x100 and 4x400 relays consist of four runners each. In the 4x100 relay, each runner runs one-quarter of the way around the track while each leg of the 4x400 runs a challenging one lap. The one downside of being part of a relay team is the time commitment-although a relay race opens the meet, it also closes the meet (around 5 hours after the first relays sprung from the blocks).

Field Events

Long Jump

Long jump is one of the most popular field events here at San Marin. If you secretly yearn for your childhood when you could play in the sandbox carefree, than this is an event you may want to consider taking up. One of the simplest field events to learn, long jump can easily be taken up as a secondary event. Long jumpers can look forward to doing many leg strengthening exercises such as box jumps and hill sprints.

Triple Jump

Triple Jump is a close relative to the Long Jump. However, it consists of a hop, skip and a jump into the pit. Although it is hard to visualize, this event is not very popular. Those who chose to take up this will most likely find themselves placing and scoring points for the team based solely on the lack of participants!

Pole Vault

Pole Vaulting, previously reserved for the daring, is now becoming a popular secondary event for many track athletes. This high-flying event is tricky but once perfected the results are inspiring. However, this event is rather competitive so slacking off is not an option.

Shot Put and Discus

These two closely related events are popular among our ex or off-season football players. Consisting of athletes throwing a ten-pound metal ball and/or a heavy round disc, it is no wonder why many consider these barbaric events. However, they become more meaningful if you look at them slightly differently. I mean, where else would you be allowed to throw things heavier than most people's heads?

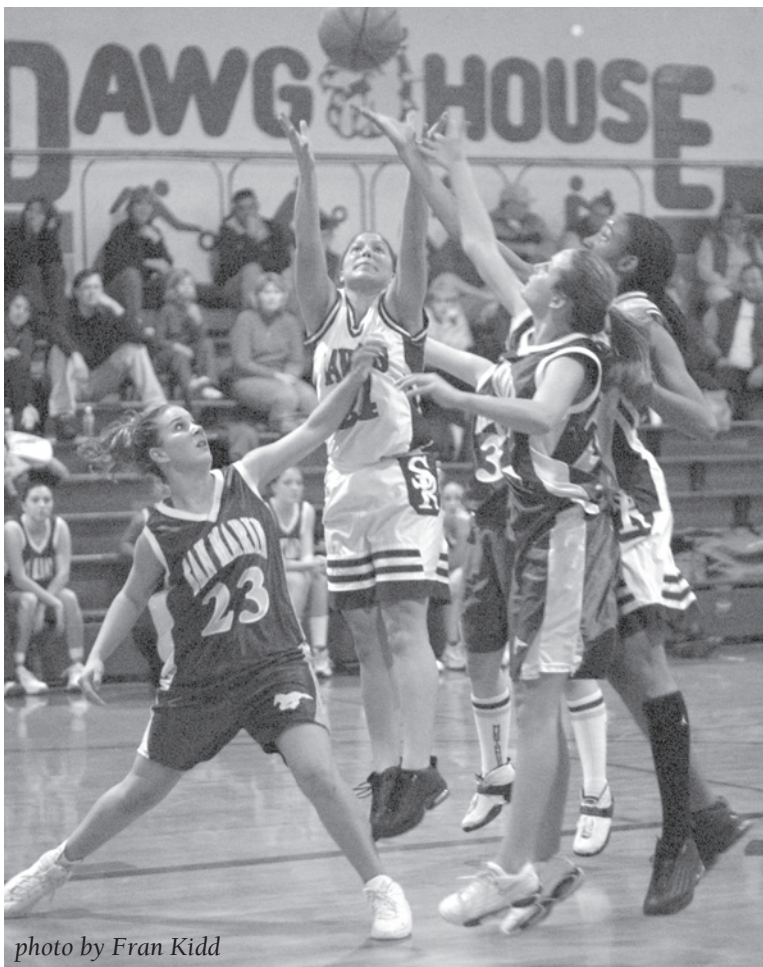


photo by Fran Kidd

Girls begin a new season

By Niki Kidd

As every Mustang knows, San Marin High School has a distinct odor to it. One that whips up from time to time to the dismay of many a teenager. This stench, terrible as it is, got a little worse the first two weeks of January. This is due in large part to the varsity girls' basketball team.

The Lady Mustangs just plain stunk. Losing their first two games of the regular season by a combined 44 points, the Mustangs had trouble finding bright spots to their season.

The dismal start is not entirely their fault, although it is a little perplexing. The first four teams they played were all likely playoff bound, giving them one of the toughest opening season schedules in MCAL. But what is so confusing about their poor performance is the fact that the team does have the skills necessary to be successful in the league.

"We have talent, but something is wrong," senior Megan Mallonee said. That "something" has yet to be determined, however it could be attributed to the Mustangs' horrendous shooting performances, lack of poise under pressure, nonexistent rebounding/boxing-out, or lack of teamwork on the offensive side of the ball.

And then the new season started. With a rousing postgame speech from the coaching staff after an embarrassing loss to Marin Catholic, the Mustangs were determined to solve all of their early season problems by working harder at practices.

This commitment has proved to be an amazing difference. To start their "new season," the Mustangs won their first three games, against Red-

wood, Terra Linda, and Tamalpais. They had poise against full court pressure; they began to play more like a team by passing more; and they were rebounding and boxing out like they hadn't done all season long.

Even with a heartbreaking double overtime loss against Novato on January 31st the Mustangs showed much growth from their early season struggles. The Mustangs battled back from numerous deficits, closing a lead in the second half that was ten points at one point. This heart and determination showed the new spirit of the Mustangs and represent the new atmosphere for the "new season."

For the Lady 'Stangs to continue their "new season" success, they will have to avoid their early season pitfalls. It's either that, or they will continue the tradition of the San Marin Smell.

Focus on winning

By Katie Winsor

The junior varsity girls basketball team is off to a rocky start this season.

"I expected the wins to come easier. The teams we've been playing have gotten really good," says sophomore Elena Miller. The girls have suffered several close losses, including their game against Redwood. Sophomore Denise Nilan put twelve points on the scoreboard with assists by sophomores Kelly Fitzpatrick and Lauren Candia. Going into overtime with a score of 34-34, Redwood scored after two min-

Boys rebounding after slow start

By Colin Dietz

A sign reading "0-4 Can't Take no More," a fan yelling "Get him a tampon," and two fans placing paper bags over their heads.

This summarizes the feeling of a 0-5 start to a season full of high expectations. With a new coach and talented players the Mustangs entered the season as a likely top 5 team but dropping the first five put them at the bottom with 0-5 Novato.

Their season opener against Justin Siena started with a bang but ended in disappointment. The Mustangs came out fired up, with the crowd into it, and were able to keep it close in the first half. Things changed quickly in the second half as the Braves went on to win 53-35.

The Mustangs were favored against San Rafael but fell to the Bulldogs 59-53, with only four players scoring.

Zach Bachmeier led the way with 24 points, followed by Paul Kirpes (13), Alex Kovaleff (11), and Scott Dumont (5). The Mustangs kept the score close throughout the game, but were unable to pull it out at the end. Against a tough Branson team the Mustangs once again lost 57-52 in a game that they could have easily won. Bachmeier's 20 points, however, were not enough.

The Mustangs went on to lose to first-place Marin Catholic 45-44. The Wildcats hit a shot with only a few seconds left to take the lead that the Mustangs had held for most of the game. The Mustangs were flat, and unable to stop Redwood's

top two players, as they were embarrassed 75-56 on their home court.

Brian Tuel was the leading scorer for the Mustangs with 17 points. The Mustangs, now 0-5, began to lose hope of a playoff run.

The players gathered after that fifth loss to discuss what was going on. The emphasis that came out of the group was team unity. "I

know we have the talent to go a ways, but we need to work on playing as a team," stated Senior Eric Mueller. Frustration had built among the players, and they were determined to turn their season around. "We're just going to take it one game at a time from here on out," commented Mueller.

The Mustangs, led by Bachmeier's 23 points, came out fired up, beating Tamalpais 53-46. Evenly distributed scoring, part of playing as a team, was a key in the victory as no other player scored in double digits. The defense also stepped up, holding Tam to 46 points on their court.

The Mustangs knew the Terra Linda game would be a dogfight to the end, and Dumont was ready for it. Dumont hit clutch free throws (4-5), two huge three point shots (one as the shot clock ran down), scored 16 points, and played superb defense in shutting

down the Trojan's top scorer.

The Mustangs pulled off the 70-67 victory in overtime, as Bachmeier finished with 26



photo by Fran Kidd

points.

Although an 0-7 Novato was coming into the Mustangs' house, everyone knew it would be a great game between cross-town rivals. Novato stunned the full crowd by taking a two-point lead into half-time. The Mustangs, however, were determined to keep their win streak alive, and simply dominated the Hornets in the second half, pulling off a 63-56 win. Bachmeier's 28 points were the most points scored in a single game in MCAL's this year.

Thanks to team unity, the Mustangs are now 3-5, and gaining more confidence as they go. "We are really starting to play as a team and gain confidence," commented Kirpes. The Mustangs playoff hopes stay alive as they continue to work hard and focus on each opponent. "Right now we are not worried about the playoffs, and instead we are playing in the moment with an emphasis on next play," said Kirpes.

Keeping the tradition alive

By Bret Pughe

As MCAL wrestling championships are rapidly approaching, the Mustang grapplers are gearing up for the final stretch of the season.

The team was sitting comfortably in second place in MCAL

when they faced off against an inexperienced Tamalpais squad in a dual meet.

Although they were forfeiting two weight classes and missing wrestlers due to injury, the Mustangs were stunned by an

unexpected loss to the Red Tailed Hawks for the first time in over fifteen years.

Junior Camillo Ardilla and sophomore Tyler Rushton pinned both their opponents in the loss.

However, the Mustangs rebounded with a dominating win over cross-town rival Novato. Junior Marshall McCollum, senior Max D'Orso, and freshman Paul Lillie all contributed important pins in the victory that moved the Mustangs to 3-2 overall.

The following weekend, the team traveled to Sacramento for the Asics Invitational Wrestling Tournament, competing against over sixty teams from around the state. Senior captain Derek Bosia compiled a 3-2 record and came up just short of receiving a medal at the prestigious tournament.

The Mustangs have three dual meets remaining that will lead them into the MCAL tournament on February 22 and the NCS meet on February 28.



photo by Fran Kidd

The NFL season in review

By Colin Dietz and Michael Lovejoy

Mishaps

Even though football is a team sport and supposedly there is no "I" in team, the Terrell Owens' of the world proved there is a "me" and it stands out loud and clear in the NFL.

Such individual glory overshadowed both team successes and failures. It was an interesting year, filled with excitement as players not only played the game but made it at times comical relief for the fans.

Terrell Owens seems to love the attention and proved that last years standing on the "star" at Dallas was not a one-time thing. Although he and Mariucci patched things up during the past off-season, Owens' mouth didn't close all year. It was, however, the Sharpie incident that still lingers in people's minds.

After scoring a touchdown against the Seattle Seahawks, he proceeded to pull a Sharpie out of his sock and sign the football for his friend in the stands. The NFL did not fine him for this, but rather for having his jersey untucked during the game. ESPN quoted Owens as saying, "Guys are beating their wives, getting DUIs and doing drugs, and I get national attention for a Sharpie?"

Randy Moss had another eventful year as his team went 6-10. He got into an argument with QB Daunte Culpepper on the sideline in the middle of a game, and later commented that he "takes plays off." After a game he was accused of hitting a traffic monitor with his car. With all this in one year, he still managed to be third in the league in receiving yards.

Rookie Jeremy Shockey apparently learned from the pros how to talk, because he was never short of controversy. His anti-gay comments saying that he hoped he didn't have any gays on his team because he had to shower with them, put him in the spotlight. During the playoff game with the 49ers he taunted one fan after scoring a touchdown and threw ice at two boys sitting in the first row behind the Giants' bench.

It was another exciting year

for fans beyond just the playing of the game. NFL players proved to make fools of themselves repeatedly and it has become expected at this point. As we look forward to next year, we know there will be those mishaps in the NFL that show the fans just how immature NFL players can be.

Individual Performances

Many individual performances both on offense and defense (special teams purposely left out) are worth recognition. After 15 years as a journeyman, Rich

and QB Matt Hasselbeck, who had several 400+ yard passing games down the stretch. The biggest surprise had to be Chad Pennington who turned the New York Jets from a 2-5 team to a 9-7 division champion. He led the league with a quarterback rating of 104.2, and had a great year after replacing Vinny Testaverde early in the season.

Running backs and wide receivers weren't willing to give all the glory to the quarterbacks. Ricky Williams led the league with 1,853 rushing yards, despite the Dolphins inability to make the playoffs. Priest Holmes ran for an incredible 1,615 yards and led the league with 2,287 total yards in only 14 games. Marvin Harrison set a NFL record with a ridiculous 143 receptions, and also led the league with 1,722 receiving yards.

Clinton Portis is the breakthrough rookie of the year. After acquiring the starting job for the Denver Broncos after three games, he went on to rush for 1,508 yards. Wide Receivers to watch breakthrough next year: Laveranues Coles (Jets), Koren Robinson (Seahawks), Tai Streets (49ers), Jerry Porter (Raiders), Javon Walker (Packers), and Joe Jurevicius (Buccaneers).

Although individual defensive stars are sometimes overlooked, a few were worthy of the spotlight this year. Jason Taylor was unreal for the Dolphins with 18.5 sacks for a total loss of 162.5 yards. During the season Derrick Brooks returned one fumble and three interceptions for touchdowns. Rod Woodson, the aging veteran for the Raiders, was tied with Brian Kelley of the Buccaneers with eight total interceptions.

Individual performances proved plentiful this year, tending at times to overshadow a team's performance. This individualism is no surprise since the athletes are paid depending on their individual performance.

Team Highlights

The St. Louis Rams, after being upset in last year's Super Bowl by the New England Patriots, were favored by many to make it to the Super Bowl this year. They stunned fans by quickly losing their first five games, with quarterback Kurt Warner getting injured in the fourth loss. When all hope was lost, Mark Bulger led the team to five straight wins. After more injuries, and two more quarterbacks, the Rams finished the season 7-9.

The Super Bowl champion Patriots had a disappointing year. Their playoff hopes remained alive up to the final week of the regular season. They did their job by beating the Miami Dolphins, but they also needed the New York Jets to lose to the Green Bay Packers. The Jets crushed the Packers 42-17, ending New England's season. The Packers, one of the best teams in football, were expected by many to be NFC Champion, but lost in the first round of the playoffs.

The Oakland Raiders, led by MVP Rich Gannon, began the season with four wins, followed by four losses, followed by five wins. They finished tied for the best record in the AFC. The Jets, after starting the season 1-4, finished by winning the division and making it to the division playoffs. The Tennessee Titans, who also started 1-4, won their division and made it to the AFC Championship game.

The Cleveland Browns' season started off badly, but ended in the first round of the playoffs. In the final seconds of their opening game against the Kansas City Chiefs, up by two, linebacker Dwayne Rudd thought he had sacked Chiefs quarterback Trent Green. In celebration, Rudd threw his helmet into the air, not realizing that Green had managed to lateral the ball to his lineman. Rudd was called for unsportsmanlike conduct, and the ball was moved 15 yards closer to the end zone. The Chiefs, with another chance, easily made a 30-yard field goal to win the game. The NFL gods later looked down upon the Browns when they beat the Jacksonville Jaguars in Week 14 on a 50+ yard Hail-Mary touchdown as time expired.

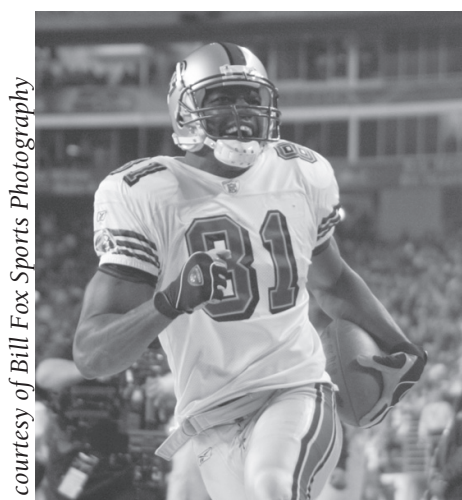
The New Orleans Saints, 9-4 with three games to go in the season, needed only one win to clinch a playoff spot. They then proceeded to lose to the Minnesota Vikings (6-10), the Cincinnati Bengals (2-14), and the Carolina Panthers (7-9).

Playoff Highlights

The first round of the playoffs saw stunning comebacks and stunning upsets. The Steelers, down by 17 points in the third quarter, came back late to beat the Cleveland Browns. Browns quarterback Kelly Holcomb, who threw for 429 yards, was unable to mount a comeback in the final seconds.

The New York Jets shocked the Indianapolis Colts shutting them out 41-0, dominating the entire game. The Green Bay Packers were likewise stunned by the Atlanta Falcons at Lambeau Field. With the Packers racked with injuries, Mike Vick ran over the defense. This was the first time the Packers lost a playoff game at home – ever.

The one game people will probably remember from the playoffs is the San Francisco 49ers' comeback over the New York Giants. Dominated by the Giants throughout the first half, many fans gave up all hope. Their amaz-



courtesy of Bill Fox Sports Photography

Terrell Owens



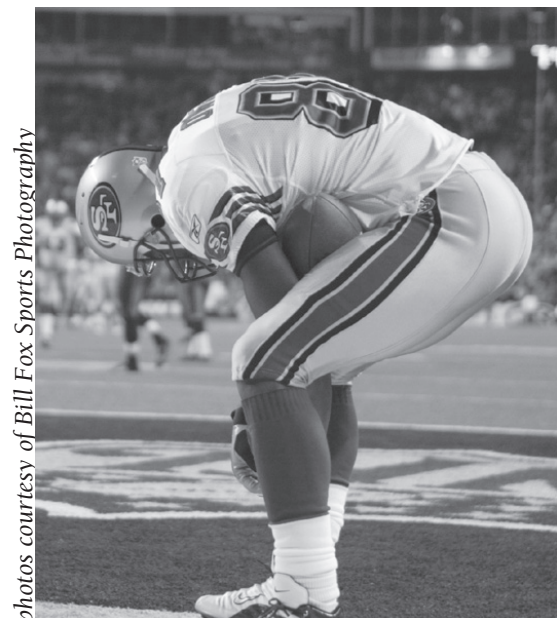
courtesy of Bill Fox Sports

Rookie Jeremy Shockey

ing comeback began with four minutes remaining in the third quarter. Trailing 38-14, 49ers quarterback Jeff Garcia led several quick drives that ended in touchdowns, with two 2-point conversions. Their comeback, the second largest in NFL playoff history, was aided by two important Giants miscues.

New York made two bad snaps on two field goal attempts in the fourth quarter. The first resulted in a wide miss. The second is history. Down by one point, the snap was so bad that the holder gave up on the field goal attempt and tossed the ball down the field. No one caught the ball, and officials called the Giants for illegal men down the field, and ruled the game over. To much controversy, the NFL issued a statement the next day saying that the referees made a mistake, and the Giants should have had another field goal opportunity.

The theory of defense winning games over offense proved true in Super Bowl XXXVII. The season's best offensive team, the Raiders, was blown out 48-21 by the best defense, the Buccaneers. Tampa Bay, led by Super Bowl MVP Dexter Jackson, held Oakland without a touchdown in the first half. League MVP Rich Gannon threw five interceptions.



photos courtesy of Bill Fox Sports Photography

Terrell Owens displays his penmanship after scoring a touchdown against the Seattle Seahawks.





Hey Baby! What's your sign?

By Alyssa, Challen, and Myra

Aries • March 21 - April 19

Rams possess irresistible passion and red-hot energy. The role of seducer comes to them easily, so it is often the Aries who initiates the relationship. Aries are adventurous, wildly flirtatious, and desire a partner who can match their wits. Red Hot Romance: Gemini, Sagittarius, Leo, Aquarius. Icy Encounter: Cancer, Capricorn.

Taurus • April 20 - May 20

Taurus enjoy the harmony and beauty in a relationship. They are sentimental, romantic and possessed with determination which consistently allows them to get what they want. Red Hot Romance: Cancer, Virgo, Capricorn, Pisces. Icy Encounter: Aquarius, Leo.

Gemini • May 21 - June 20

Gemini's are quick-witted and fun. They tend to jump from relationship to relationship, and will only settle when they find someone on their same intellectual level. But beware, they're quick to play mind games and somebody is bound to get hurt (but don't expect it to be them!) Red Hot Romance: Aries, Leo, Aquarius, Libra. Icy Encounter: Taurus, Virgo.

Cancer • June 21 - July 22

Cancers possess caring and devoted souls and can easily take the lead in romance. They are notorious for being strong-willed, persistent, and usually get their way. Although their moodiness may be a turnoff for some, others fall captive to their seductive ways. Red Hot Romance: Taurus, Scorpio, Pisces, Virgo. Icy Encounter: Aries, Sagittarius.

Leo • July 23 - August 22

Leos are extremely fun and social. They are convinced that the world revolves around them, so they vie for spotlight in all their relationships. Loyal and creative, a good time is always a guarantee. Red Hot Romance: Aries, Gemini, Libra, Aquarius. Icy Encounter: Capricorn, Cancer.

Virgo • August 23 - September 22

Problem solving and helping others are strengths Virgo's take pride in. They long for a deep connection and they don't waste time dating around. Communication is key to unlock a Virgo's sometimes shy and repressed nature. Red Hot Romance: Taurus, Capricorn, Cancer, Pisces. Icy Encounter: Gemini, Sagittarius.

Libra • September 23 - October 22

Libras shine in social situations and reel people in with their conversation skills. They crave love and acceptance from their peers, so it can be hard to resist them. A relationship with a Libra promises balance and harmony. Red Hot Romance: Leo, Libra, Aquarius, Gemini. Icy Encounter: Cancer, Capricorn.

Scorpio • October 23 - November 22

Scorpios are caring and devoted to their relationships. They use their raw energy, power, and strength to explore their partner's emotions. They are intuitive and like to get to the bottom of things, so there's no keeping secrets from them (but don't expect them to do the same!) Red Hot Romance: Cancer, Pisces, Capricorn, Taurus. Icy Encounter: Aquarius, Leo.

Sagittarius • November 23 - December 21

Sagittarians are truth seekers, focused intensely on learning about their lover. They tend to be flirtatious and very social. They're independent and love a little challenge to spice up their relationships. Red Hot Romance: Aries, Gemini, Leo, Aquarius. Icy Encounter: Cancer, Pisces

Capricorn • December 22 - January 19

Capricorns are ambitious and determined and are willing to do what it takes to get what they want. They are organized enough to craft a beautiful romance for that special someone. Social status is also important to Capricorn, so it's more than likely that the mating game will involve a healthy dose of glamour and dazzle. Red Hot Romance: Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn, Scorpio. Icy Encounter: Aries, Libra.

Aquarius • January 20 - February 18

The Aquarius is a caring and giving person who seeks common interests in relationships. They are captivated by a lover who shares their quest for a better world. Their flirtatious manner allows them to be comfortable in a group, but they value the rewards of a monogamous relationship. Red Hot Romance: Aries, Gemini, Leo, Aquarius. Icy Encounter: Taurus, Scorpio.

Pisces • February 19 - March 20

Loving and kind, a Pisces may be a little shy in the love department. Once you open them up, however, you will be guaranteed a selfless and intuitive partner. They seek a spiritual connection with someone who appreciates their dreamy nature. Red Hot Romance: Cancer, Scorpio, Capricorn, Taurus. Icy Encounter: Sagittarius, Pisces.

Long history behind Valentine's Day

By Rachel Oppenheimer

Every February, across the country, candy, flowers and gifts are exchanged between loved ones, all in the name of St. Valentine.

But who is this mysterious saint and why do we celebrate this holiday?

The history of Valentine's Day—and its patron saint—is shrouded in mystery. But we do know that February has long been a month of romance.

St. Valentine's Day, as we know it today, contains vestiges of both Christian and ancient Roman tradition.

So, who was Saint Valentine and how did he become associated with this ancient rite? Today, the Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyrs.

One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome.

According to one legend, Valentine actually sent the first 'valentine' greeting himself. While in

prison, it is believed that Valentine fell in love with a young girl who visited him in prison. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed 'From your Valentine,' an expression that is still in use today.

Although the truth behind the Valentine legend is murky, the story certainly emphasizes his appeal as a sympathetic, heroic, and, most importantly, romantic



figure. It's no surprise that by the Middle Ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints in England and France.

