



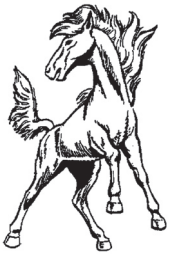
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Pony Express

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Who Stole the Mustang Spirit?

by Denise Nilan

For many, it is difficult to imagine a San Marin campus throbbing with school spirit. The class of 2005 and beyond must now confront the never-ending restrictions and regulations that suffocate school spirit. Despite multiple efforts from the leadership class and faculty, San Marin's student body is failing to unite behind their school colors.

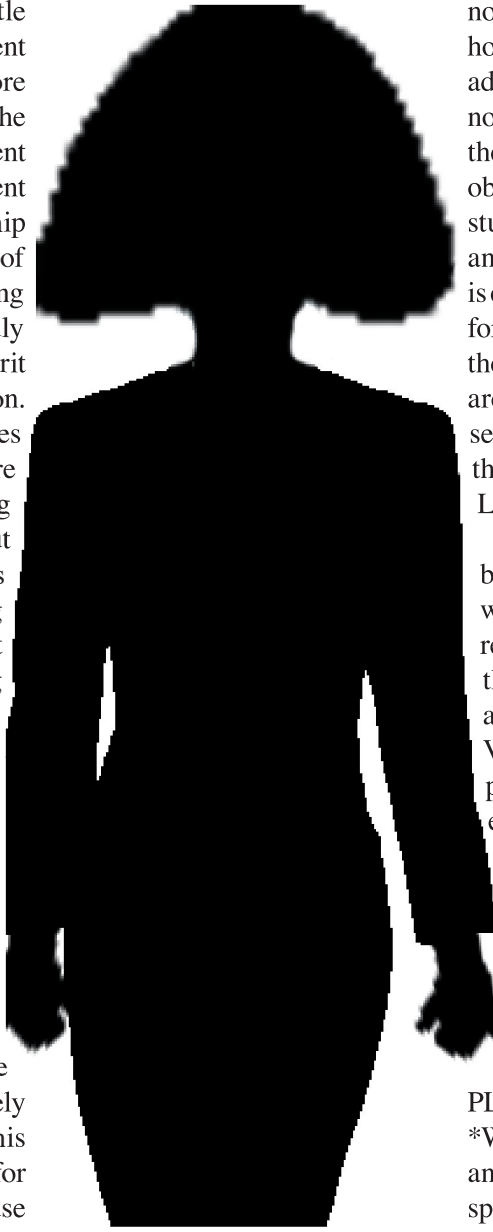
The major incident that permanently damaged San Marin spirit was the 'Yanger' incident, which occurred prior to the Andersen Administration. In 1998 students earned the reputation of a racist school after supposedly chanting the N-word at a black basketball player on the Tamalpais team. Only one student was punished and claimed to be chanting the players nickname, Yanger. This one student's action made its way to national news, and San Marin's new reputation was broadcast on CNN. Since then the enthusiasm of the Mustangs has been lacking and frustrating.

Today the leadership

class copes with the lack of school spirit with little response from the student body. The student store (located in the hall of the math building) is student body's only consistent connection to the leadership class. Their offerings of sugary snacks and Mustang merchandise are hardly enough to re-instill spirit among the student population. Where their success lies is in the rallies, which are overwhelmingly satisfying for the administration but often fail to meet student's standards. The no booing policy is the top complaint among students, something the leadership class cannot control but is frequently pressured to restrict.

The administration attempts to contain the student body as much as possible. At rallies teachers invade stands and sit among students in hopes to discourage booing and inappropriate behavior. Unfortunately for the administration, this only makes it awkward for the teachers. And because

of the high student to



teacher ratio, students do not censor themselves. At home basketball games the administration firmly stands, not facing the game, but facing the cheering stands. This obvious lack of faith in the student body is disappointing and humiliating. And while it is easy to blame a single person for these hated restrictions, all the schools in Marin County are suppressed by the same set of rules established by the Marin County Athletic League.

This upcoming basketball season means fans will again be corralled with restrictions, but hopefully this season fans can rally around our promising Varsity boys team. The players' work deserves the enthusiasm of the San Marin community. Athletes crave the support of their school, and feel it is time to chant as if it were 1997.

Marin County Athletic League Gym Rules

PLEASE:

*Welcome to visiting teams and officials with good sportsmanship and respect.

(That means no booing the opposing team or commenting about his or her hairstyles.)

*Sit in the area designated for you school.

(Or stand.)

*Cheer enthusiastically for your school.

*Keep spirit traditions such as flags, mascots, and signs in your own seating area.

(We can have flags?)

*Reserve the front row of the student rooting section for cheerleaders.

NO:

*Profanity

*Insulting or antagonizing officials, 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

Measure E

by Dina Rosenberg



For the past twelve years the Novato Unified School District, the largest district in Marin County, has been funded by "A+ for Kids," a special supplemental funding. Now that "A+ for kids" is expiring, the N.U.S.D. will be forced to make extreme adjustments in the budget. Measure E proposed extending the existing parcel tax, and increasing it from \$98 to \$185 per parcel for eight years with an exemption for senior citizens. Due to the

failure - by only 1.28% - of Measure E which would have generated \$1.7 million for schools, the school district will face difficult decisions concerning schools, teachers, and students.

Given the current state budget crisis, without a parcel tax Novato schools will be forced to make substantial cuts. There is a strong possibility that various schools may close, many teachers will be cut, and libraries, special assistants, staff members, and certain programs and courses may potentially all be eliminated. Measure E would not have only benefited the schools, but our entire community as well; excellent schools support

property value and attract families who are interested in higher quality schools. Had Measure E passed, it would have continued to fund library services, classroom technology, class size-reduction, counseling at the secondary level, and physical education and music programs at the elementary level. Because this measure is essential to the existence and the quality of Novato schools, it is necessary that it is reconsidered by Novato citizens

The Novato School Board feels as though Measure E did not pass because the public was not well informed regarding the necessity of these funds. "Citizens did

not completely understand the financial situation the district is in," stated San Marin teacher Lisa Kemp. Although Novato voters may have believed that raising our parcel tax from \$98 to \$185 was too much, Novato is actually still far behind other districts. Mill Valley has a parcel tax of \$387 and Tam High School's community recently raised theirs to \$200. Our community has let down every student and teacher in the Novato Unified School District and, due to the important role of this measure, it is critical that it be put on the ballot in March for a re-vote.

With the failure of this assessment, the resulting

impact on schools is expected to be dramatic. The district may be obligated to close one high school, one middle school, and one elementary school, which could possibly result in larger classes and less focus on individuals. "It will be extremely sad to witness the possible closing of various schools, and hopefully if the ballot passes in March it won't be necessary," explained San Marin student, Shaina Madfes. Novato schools could also feasibly lose fifty-two teachers, forcing some of our best faculty to take other positions. If this measure is not reconsidered, Novato schools, and our entire community, will be severely damaged.

Question Man

Collected by Denise Nilan

What was the worst holiday gift you've ever received?



Freshman, Nathan Jarrell -
"I got a Spanish to English dictionary in the fourth grade when I had no interest in Spanish."



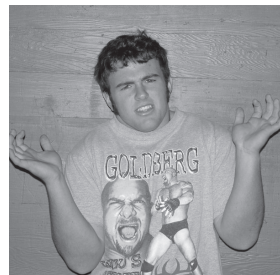
Freshman, Ayla Potter -
"My grandma gave me Barbie heads - just the heads. She's nuts."



Sophomore, Josh Boccaccio -
"I got a \$20.00 gift certificate to Big Lots."



Sophomore, Tiana Fields -
"My boyfriend gave me a picture of him with his ex-girlfriend cut out."



Junior, Marty Cunnie -
"I got the 2gether album from my sister."



Junior, Shannon Muha -
"I got a pair of Baby Phat jeans... they were too big for me."



Senior, Kristian Correnti -
"One time I got an IOU."



Senior, Ashley Colclough -
"Enz-dust." (Computer cleaner)

Workin' the Spirit Fingers

by Kristen D'Angelo

Ever since the dawn of man, or at least from the beginning of pom-poms and short skirts, cheerleading has been stereotyped as being the "sport" of choice for those select few who seem to have been blessed with a pile of rocks for brains, and fritter their days away fretting over their nails and boys. And while we all know that squads of San Marin's yesteryears weren't exactly exceptional, a small group of hard-working girls and three very dedicated coaches have been putting in the hours in attempt to reverse the negative opinion that has implemented itself in the Mustang population's mind.



For those of you who know me, you might be thinking, "Oh wow, a cheerleader writing an article about how great cheerleading is. How... lame!" Well, maybe it is. But before you write my opinion off as biased, I think it's necessary to inform everyone that I had never really cheered before going out for the basketball season team last November. The only other time in my life was when I was six, and, let's get real, the pom-pom was bigger than my head. I really don't think that experience counts. I honestly had the same thoughts as the majority of you. "Do cheerleaders actually do any work? Do they know what sweating is? Is it really that difficult?" I soon learned that the answer to all those questions was... yes.

Basketball season cheerleading last year was a monumental season. It was the first time a San Marin cheer squad competed. Going to competition meant a lot of work though. In addition to having to prep for cheering and performing halftime at the basketball games, we had to learn and master a whole routine, which included

stunts, a cheer, and two dances. Most teams begin preparing for competition in August or September, we did it all in two weeks. The team was putting in double and Saturday practices (cheerleading is allowed to because we're not considered a sport in MCAL rules). We were practicing four hours a day, six days a week for two weeks, while finding time to do our schoolwork, work after-school jobs... eat...sleep.

The Regional Competition was held in January in Antioch. We competed against a number of extremely talented teams, and weren't expecting to place. Imagine our surprise when San Marin Mustangs was announced in first place, securing a spot to compete in the Nationals Competition to be held at Disneyland in March. Our hard work had paid off.

The success at competition was only the beginning. This past summer our team competed at the UCA Cheer at UC Davis where we beat out 37 other teams to take second for our dance routine. We also accumulated eleven first place trophies and ribbons for spirit and dancing ability, stunting, to name a few. The most exciting award though was the offer to perform at the halftime of Pro-Bowl in Hawaii in February. Unfortunately, we won't be attending due to conflicting schedules and the cost.

Come January, your cheer team will be heading to Regional Competition again, with hopes of achieving the same success as last year. While you all are enjoying your winter break, we'll be here practicing. So even if the thought of cheerleaders still makes you cringe, we wouldn't mind if you left the New York Times at home on rally days from now on.

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The Pony Express is published monthly by the journalism class at San Marin High School. The Pony Express seeks to provide a public forum for student expression and encourages letters to the editors. No unsigned letters will be accepted; however the author's name may be withheld upon request.

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Saddam Trial: A Long Time in Coming

by Beth Sekishiro

Though the war in Iraq is a hot topic nationally and locally, there is scanty discussion on how to bring former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to justice. Captured December 13, 2003, he is sleighted to face an Iraqi court, albeit one organized by the Iraqi Governing Council. The Iraqi judges who try him will be assisted by

international advisors. Many critics question the validity of polarized figures', such as Saddam's vehement opponent Interim Prime Minister Salem Chalabi, choosing this panel. According to Iraqi Interim Defense Minister Hazim Shaalan, the trial will begin by the end of this year for war crimes and crimes against humanity; however,

myriad delays are possible. The road that led Hussein before the judicial panel is nearly as long as the list of charges he now faces.

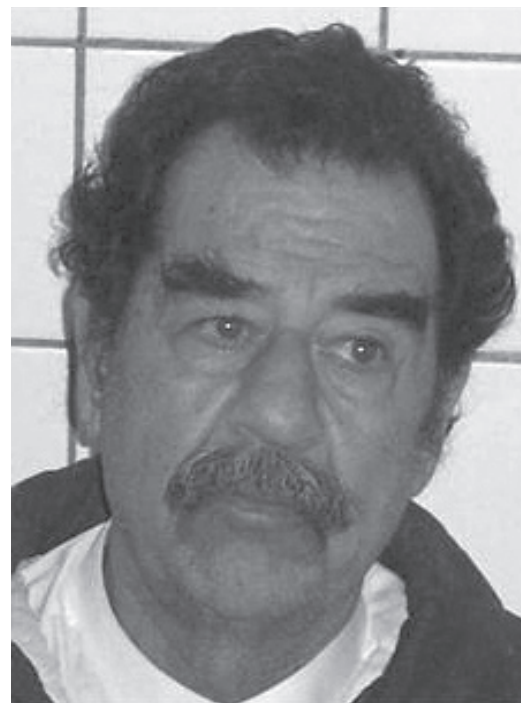
Hussein was raised in a small village northwest of Baghdad by poor parents. As a teen he immersed himself in politics, even participating in an attempt to assassinate then-Prime Minister of Iraq Abdul

Karim Kassim. He rose to the vice presidency in 1968; eleven years later, when the President resigned, Hussein was designated President.

Though many agree that Saddam's brutal abuses are undeniable, the former president claims just the opposite. When accused by an Iraqi judge of the invasion of Kuwait, Hussein responded, "I cannot believe you, an Iraqi, are charging me with this when you know Kuwait is part of Iraq."

The charges against Hussein are as follows:

- Killing of religious figures, 1974
- Killing of a Kurdish clan, 1983
- Killing political figures over 30-year rule
- Suppression of Kurdish and Shiite uprisings, 1991
- Anfal campaign against Kurds in northern Iraq, 1986-1988
- Gassing Kurds in northern Iraqi town of Halabja, 1988
- Invasion of Kuwait, 1990



Trouble In the Middle East

by Eric Eisberg & Paige Lehman

After the recent death of Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian territories are teetering on the edge of chaos. The stateless nation, which had achieved a degree of stability under the rule of Arafat, is faced with the difficult task of selecting a new ruler. As each faction attempts to fill the power void, the fate of the region hangs in the balance.

Former Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas is the most likely candidate for succession. Already, he has gained control of the Palestinian Liberation Organization and has significant authority over security and budget matters. And, because he now holds many of Arafat's former symbolic titles, he has asserted a great deal of authority over the troubled region. He also has the quiet support of much of the world, and is considered the most legitimate candidate for control. However, Marwan Barghout, who was convicted of masterminding attacks that killed Israelis and now serving five life sentences in prison, has gained popularity and is now very closely trailing Abbas.

has expressed concern that one of the more militant factions may come to power and obstruct the already troubled peace process. The biggest concern is the powerful group Hamas, which has been labeled a terrorist group by the U.S. and Israel, but is firmly in control of the city of Gaza. Arafat's Fatah party also has a worrisome militant wing, which could upset the peace process. Israel has declared on many occasions that they will not negotiate with terrorists. If either of these militant wings were to gain control, it could destroy the peace process altogether. However, the Israeli government's policies have often gotten in the way of peace talks as well. While Israel has been working with Britain in hopes of having peace talks in London with

the newly elected Palestinian leader, the Israeli government has already said that it will not work with Barghout if he is elected. Barghout vehemently denies all charges against him.

Just as the opinions of Arafat vary widely, the peace process is being approached at many different angles. Whether Arafat was a fearless leader or a ruthless terrorist, he brought a face to the Palestinian cause and created a united people. Without him, the Palestinians may suffer from inner turmoil at a time when their unity is more important than ever. Israel also needs to be willing to cooperate with the Palestinian people, not just moderate Palestinian officials. Peace will come to the Middle East, but only if all parties are willing.



Leukemia: The Epidemic

By Ben Sangster

A recent study by the National Health Department showed that the Bay Area has the highest rate of diagnosed cancer in the world. It has become a part of life in the Bay: if you don't know someone yet that has leukemia, you will.

Leukemia is cancer that originates in the bone marrow, the soft, spongy inner portion of certain bones, and in which the malignant cells are white blood cells (leukocytes). Acute myelogenous leukemia (AML) is a malignancy that arises in the granulocytes or monocytes, white blood cells that battle infectious agents throughout the body. Although the exact cause of AML is unknown, exposure to benzene and cigarettes smoking are linked to the disease. But AML can occur in all ages, but more often in older adults. With more than 10,000 new cases diagnosed annually, AML is the most common type of acute leukemia.

Patients with AML usually receive chemotherapy drugs immediately after diagnosis. Chemotherapy uses strong cancer drugs to kill leukemia cells. This first stage of treatment is called induction therapy. The goal is to achieve remission (no signs of leukemia cells) and to restore normal blood production. Drugs are used to kill the leukemia cells by stopping them from growing. Unfortunately, chemotherapy also kills normal cells, so AML patients receiving induction therapy may have side effects including nausea, tiredness, and higher risk of infections. This results in a loss of hair, among other things.

Symptoms result from the body's not producing enough healthy blood cells. Healthy bone marrow makes stem cells that grow into the three types of blood cells: red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets. An AML patient's bone marrow makes too many immature white blood cells, which build up in the marrow. At the same time, the marrow cannot grow enough normal red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets. Someone with too few red blood cells may feel tired, be short of breath, or look pale. Someone with too few normal white blood cells and too many leukemia cells may develop a lot of infections, like sore throats; experience pain in the bones or joints; and have a mild fever. Someone with too few platelets may bleed easily, bruise more easily than usual, develop pin-head-sized spots under the skin, or develop cuts that heal slowly. Some people with AML, however, do not notice any symptoms until it is too late.

Leukemia and other cancers have become an epidemic in the Bay Area. The counties around San Francisco have the highest rate of cancer discovery in California: 6 in every 100,000 people are diagnosed yearly. In an area with more than 7 million people, that's a lot of cases of cancer. Many students at San Marin have a parent or family friend who has been diagnosed with a cancer of some type. But every student, even those whose families have not yet been affected, should be aware of this disease. Because the odds show that, some day, every student here will know one of cancer's victims.

100 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

What is leukemia?

What causes leukemia?

What are the options available for the treatment of leukemia?

Can children go to school while on treatment?

What are the common reactions to being diagnosed with leukemia?

About Leukemia



The State Department

A Pleasant Odyssey in D.C.

by Marco Perez

My participation in the National Young Leaders Conference (NYLC) was a pleasant odyssey. As recommended by airport authorities, I arrived at the San Francisco International Airport at 9:40 PM (three hours before my departure time). After registering my big, fifty-pound baggage, and listening to my parents' routine lecture about drugs and stupid decisions, I proceeded to the security check before entering the waiting room. "Shoes, belt, jacket and everything possible must be taken off," demanded the personnel, annoying all the passengers for such an intrusive order.

Once in the airplane, I endured a tedious, never-ending flight, stopping only once in Houston, Texas. At 6:00 AM (4:00 AM in CA) down in our president's state, I was starving. However, only the restaurant of my nightmares was open. As my hunger became intolerable, I had to make the sacrifice of eating the repulsive, non-Mexican, Tex-Mex food in a place that resembles a nastier replica of *Taco Bell* (yes, that's possible).

After flying for another three hours, I arrived to Washington, D.C. I was surprised to come across so many students from all over the nation, from Alaska to Puerto Rico. I especially found it very amusing hearing all the different accents. The Southern accent and the Northeasterners' "wicked" always made my day. Once I settled down in the beautiful National 4-H Center, and clarifying that not all Californians surf, I had the opportunity to meet and develop friendship with many of the more than 300 participants to the NYLC.

Throughout the week my classmates and I

discovered the great advantage that the conference provides. As Kristy Len, a Faculty Advisor, asserts "The NYLC is a fantastic opportunity for students to develop their leadership skills, have an insight in politics and find out how our government really works." During the week my classmates and I participated in hypothetical simulations such as "If I were President," "Testing the Constitution" and "Model Congress." Student Ross Perry from MA asserted, "Every one of us had the opportunity to confront issues that occur daily in the three branches of our government, and really understand US politics."

Moreover, my classmates and I visited incredible sights in Washington, D.C., including the Supreme Court, Library of Congress, Floor of the House of Representatives, Press Room, Capitol Hill and the White House among others. Besides the numerous, honorable speakers, every participant had the chance to meet the senators and representative from their state. I was very pleased to meet Senator Boxer, Representative Woolsey and Senator Feinstein's staff, and discuss the different issues that occur in California.

Even though my days started at 6:00 AM (3:00 AM in CA) and ended at 12:00 AM, besides my horrible jet-lag and busy schedule, my participation in the NYLC has given me a life-changing experience. The NYLC offers a platform for students to develop a political career, adding to the multiple friendships and political lectures. In response to their help and support, I would like to thank my parents, teachers, Ms. Andersen and members of the PTA for sponsoring me and making this trip possible.

Teachers Crack Down on Calculator Games

by Paul Himmelstein

It's public knowledge that electronics are basically banned on campus. But what happens when a necessary tool is turned into contraband? Calculators are quickly becoming not only a necessity in the classroom, but primary entertainment for your average, bored-out-of-his-mind student.

The required calculator for classes beyond Geometry is a TI-83, and with its advanced applications

comes a very nifty ability. It can be turned into a ghetto Gameboy, and can feature such games as Fall-down, Mario, Block Dude, and Pong. But the teachers are becoming aware that their lovely tool is now an alternative to education.

Several incidents of confiscation have already been recorded. Of course, confiscation of a tool necessary for the class is just as unproductive, but the

Out of the Way, Skier!

By Geoff Elsmore and Katrina Richards

They're your average snowboarder's worst nightmare and have been dominating your local slopes ever since the first man put skis to snow. They're the older generation of snow lovers that are rockin' the tacky neon ski suits, snotty attitudes, and this notion of superiority over our generation's snowboarders. So you're up in Tahoe, Aspen, Mammoth, or wherever, and you're on the chair lift sitting next to an annoying skier mother who's attempting to find her demon children via walkie-talkie. DARLINGS!? ARE YOU THERE?! SWEETIES!? CAN YOU HEAR ME?! Obviously not. Not only is she annoying you with her screeching voice, but she's attempting to juggle her two poles and her walkie-talkie all at once, hitting you in the knees several times with her poles. It's a nuisance, but you stay chill by staring at your stomp-pad. Besides, you're getting ready to get off the chair.

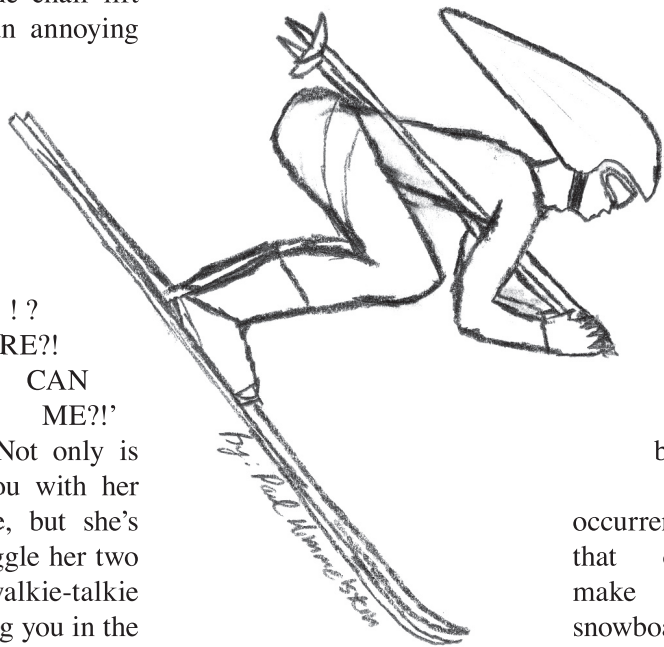
After the chair lift, you make your way over to a cleared area to strap your free foot into your binding. While doing this, you notice some of the skiers glaring in your direction. "Whatever," you say to yourself as you get up and gain speed down the hill. You're smoothly S-turning, minding your own business, when all of a sudden, those pathetic yuppie skiers that were glaring at you before decide to "rip it up" right in front of you, getting in your way and causing you to tumble 20 feet down the hill. By now, you're aggravated and just want to get away from them.

You stand back up and start going in the direction of the terrain park. "There won't be any Jonny Moseley wannabes there," you think. On your way, you need to pass across a Green Circle run, AKA easy cheese. But alas, it's an ocean of little brats learning how to ski. So, you're already heated after being cut off by some hotshot in a neon pink ski suit and

picnic table. "Skiers can't boardslide tables," you think. You pause making sure no one's in your way. When you're less than 10 feet away from your precious picnic table, you need to dig your blade deep into the snow to stop because yet again, those kamikaze skiers are out to get you. You're done. You only want to get to the lodge and kick it for a while until you're more relaxed.

So you're carelessly shreddin' down the mountain toward the lodge. You floor down the mountain, obviously cutting off some skiers. You arrive at the lodge, detach yourself from your board, and throw it on the board rack.

So maybe it's occurrences like these that cause skiers to make assumptions about snowboarders. Well, skiers, if you cut us off constantly, having some kind of idea that you're superior above us, you're not going to receive the greatest attitude. Snowboarders know that not all skiers act like this. And not all snowboarders are completely innocent. This is coming from snowboarders' perspectives who have had it with the stereotypical assumptions made by skiers. Skiers who know they make judgements about snowboarders should understand several things. While on the slopes, try to mind your own business, chill out, abstain from playing telephone with your walkie-talkies, cut people off, keep the glaring to a minimum, or charge through the terrain park like you own it. Because, reality check, you don't.



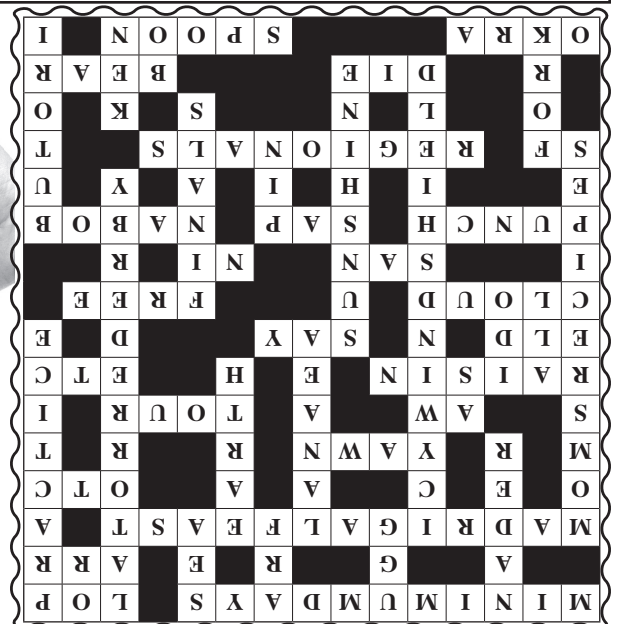
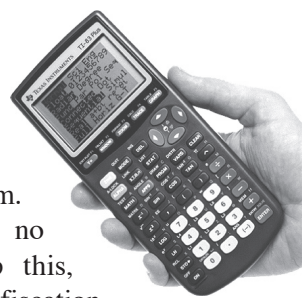
you just want to get to the half-pipe. You think you found a way through the ski demons, but they decide it would be super cool to occupy the entire width of the run. You're stuck behind them for 15 minutes, keeping a distance by losing speed, anxiously waiting to get the heck out of there.

You're finally entering the terrain park. There's a pretty righteous quarter pipe you'd like to tailgrab off of, so you start picking up speed, making sure no one's charging for the same thing. Suddenly, some crazy skier comes flying out of the forest in front of you, causing you to bail and eat some snow. You've just about had it and decide to get up and go toward the

teacher obviously prefers a dozing student to one utterly ignoring him.

There is no true way to stop this, other than confiscation. Unless students get craftier about their playtime, calculators will continue to be confiscated, and it could even lead to losing credit and strict punishment.

Avid gamers, your in-class gaming is coming to an end.



Small Town Fun: Things To Do Over The Break

by Kristen D'Angelo

Finals are over, projects turned in, and report cards are in the mail. It's Winter Break, two blissful weeks of no homework or tests. Yet, with so much free time, one is left to wonder: "What else is there to do in Novato besides hibernate in front of the T.V. for the next 336 hours until school starts again?"

1. Instead of cruisin' the Square or any of Novato's other "hip" hangouts, stay in for the night. Bring your posse, or significant other, over to the casa, build a roaring fire, make some hot chocolate, and break out the Christmas movies.

Recommendations: "It's a Wonderful Life," "A Christmas Carol," on the classic childhood cartoons "How the Grinch Stole Christmas," and "A Charlie Brown Christmas."

2. After continuously stuffing your face since Thanksgiving, a little exercise would feel good. Make it fun though. Get a large group of people together, make sure you're all wearing old clothes, and caravan over to one of Novato's fine fields (Pleasant Valley's a good one), and engage in a rousing game of mud football.

Disclaimer: There's a very good reason for why it's called *mud* football, you will get dirty.

3. "Chestnuts roasting on an open fire, Jack Frost nipping at your nose..." spare your

ears from my horrible singing, and go download an awesome Christmas mix to your I-pod. 4. Feel like living in a small town is the kiss of death? Lucky you we live a short, half-hour drive away from the "City on the Bay." Fill the car with your favorite people, and spend the day (or weekend) in San Francisco. The city offers a wealth of entertainment to choose from.

Suggestions: Union Square, Pier 39, and Fisherman's Wharf



5. December 25th signals the beginning of the after-Christmas sales. Empty the contents of all those Holiday cards (checks or cash anyone?) into your wallet and take advantage of all the awesome discounts the store will be offering.

Hint: The department stores (a.k.a. Nordstrom's, Macy's, etc.) tend to offer the largest price-cuts.

6. Did you wake up to rain pounding on your window? No worries, a day inside is the perfect opportunity to venture into the kitchen, (no, not to raid the pantry) and try your hand at cooking. Whip up some cookies or a cake, or be really ambitious and attempt to cook dinner for your family.

Love one of mom's recipes? Try and make it yourself.

7. Have you always wanted a white Christmas? Pack up your skis or snowboard, warmest clothes, and your best friends, and make the three-hour drive to Tahoe. With numerous ski resorts to choose from, a short trip makes for a fantastic weekend of days on the slopes and nights cuddling by the fire.

Can't make the trip? Bring the fun of snow into your house. Make snowballs out of ice shavings and store in your freezer, when ready, target practice on your evil neighbor... umm, maybe not.

8. Remember those nights when you were young, and you and your family would all pile in the car and drive around town looking at all the Christmas lights? Indulge in your childish side and make those rounds again. Be sure to make a stop at Devonshire Drive. With all the lights and decorations, it's by far one of Novato's most impressive.

9. The Holidays always mean that the theaters are bombarded with heart-warming Christmas movies. Spend the afternoon with the

family taking in one of these entertaining films that even Scrooge can't help but smile at.

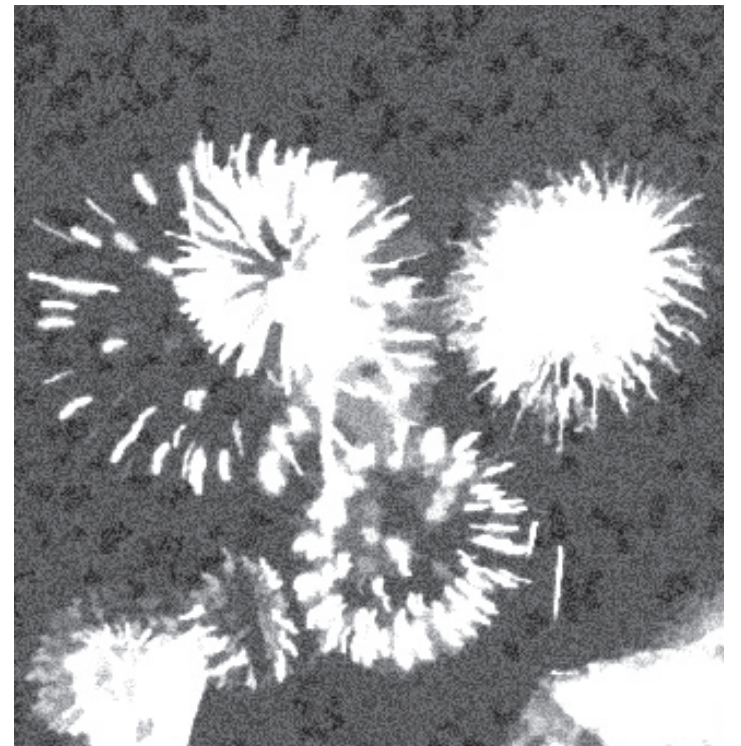
Don't know what to see? Check out Paige's awesome review of the Polar Express.

10. Last but not least, have fun, be safe, spend time with your family and friends, and be thankful that you have two weeks free of school.

New Year in San Francisco

by Briana McVay

Does your New Year's Eve consist of microwave popcorn and late night TV? Is your date for the evening Jay Leno? If you fit the above description and are looking for a new spice to New Year life, look no further. San Francisco is a notorious haven for New Year fun. From classy restaurants to massive rave parties, there is something for everybody. If you are now considering heading across the bridge, here are a few ideas to spice up the big night and cure you of your sad, couch-ridden existence.



Events:

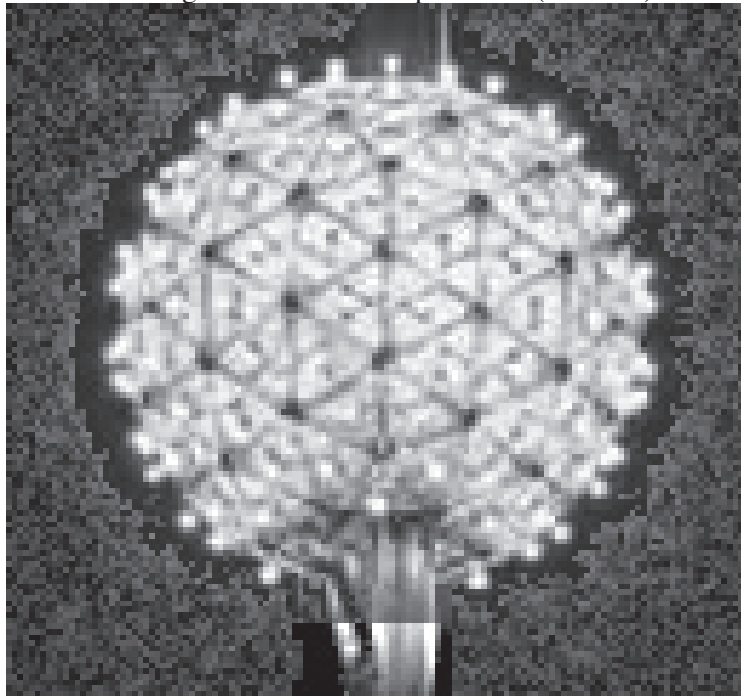
- Cool World Planet New Year '05
~The Cow Palace. Rave style mega party with a firework display.
- New Year's Aboard the USS Hornet
~USS Hornet, San Francisco. An evening of jazz and blues on the bay.

Restaurants:

- Grand Café
~501 Geary St., San Francisco. Celebrate with cancan dancers and traditional French music.
- One Market
~1 Market St., San Francisco. Includes a four-course meal with breath-taking views of fireworks.

Clubs:

- Club Six
~60 Six St., San Francisco. Live funk bands, DJ's, reggae and hip-hop. (\$20, 8pm~4am)
- The Endup
~401 Sixth St., San Francisco. House-music marathon from 10pm until early evening on Jan 1st.
- Kelly's Mission Rock
~817 China Basin, San Francisco. For the hip-hop fans. The huge bash runs from 8pm~6am. (\$35~100)





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December Days

by Alex Randall

- Hi Neighbor Month
- Safe Toy and Gift Month
- Bingo's Birthday Month
- National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month
- 1- World AIDS Day
- 2- National Fritters Day
- 3- National Roof-Over-Your-Head Day
- 4- National Cookie Day
- 5- Walt Disney's Birthday National Christmas Tree Lighting
- 6- St. Nicholas Day
- 7- Pearl Harbor Day Hanukkah starts at night
- 8- National Brownie Day
- 9- National Pastry Day
- 10- Human Rights Day
- 11- UNICEF anniversary
- 12- Poinsettia Day
- 13- National Cocoa Day Dick Van Dyke's Birthday
- 14- 1st Mini golf course opened
- 15- Underdog Day Bill of Rights Day National Lemon Cupcake Day
- 16- Beethoven's Birthday Boston Tea Party
- 17- Wright Brother's Day
- 18- Nutcracker First Performed Bake Cookies Day
- 19- National Oatmeal Muffin Day
- 20- Games Day Louisiana Purchase Edison 1st Publicly Demonstrated Light Bulb
- 21- First Day of Winter First Crossword Puzzle
- 22- National Date-Nut Bread Day
- 23- Roots Day Transistor Invented
- 24- Johnny Cruelle's Birthday (Creator of Raggedy Ann and Andy)
- 25- Christmas
- 26- Kwanzaa Begins National Candy Cane Day
- 27- National Fruitcake Day
- 28- National Chocolate Day Pledge of Allegiance Recognized
- 29- Pepper Pot Day
- 30- National Bicarbonate of Soda Day
- 31- New Year's Eve

Hanukkah

by Paige Lehman

Hanukkah is the Jewish version of Christmas, right? Actually, the celebration of Hanukkah in the U.S. is largely due to marketing tactics. In an effort to not leave anyone out of the holiday cheer (and shopping), the festival of lights has been blown up into a celebrate equal to Christmas, in which gift giving is the most important aspect. In reality, Hanukah is an important but smaller holiday in the Jewish religion. The eight days are to com-

memorate the rededication of the temple in Jerusalem in 165 B.C. Under the Syrian king Antiochus, Jews were forbidden to worship, and their temple was taken over to honor the Greek god Zeus. Under the command of Judah Maccabee, the Jews were able to

defeat the Greek army. When Maccabee and his army returned after victory, they found the temple in ruins. There was only enough oil to light the menorah for one day, but miraculously it stayed lit for eight days. Today the holiday is celebrated

with potato latkes, the dreidel game, and the lighting over the menorah over eight nights. While presents are exchanged on each of the eight nights, the focus of the holiday is to celebrate the history and resilience of the Jewish people. Hanukkah may be part of the whole holiday marketing scheme, but beyond the "Jewish Christmas" idea is an actual holiday with traditions reaching back thousands of years.



All I Want...

by Denise Nilan

Snowboarder's Survival Kit- complete with a lift pass, cool Burton gloves, wrap around shades to protect from the glaring snow, and a fix if kit for when those bindings break.



A Gift that Breaks a Sweat- Get your favorite athlete the perfect gift. Try a month membership to Marin Fitness, along with a colorful Nalgene water bottle, and trendy sweatbands.

Movie Date- Gift card to Blockbusters, (or NetFlicks an online service that allows you to rent movies over the internet and then snail-mails them to you.) a cozy blanket for two, a romantic

DVD like *The Notebook*, a gift certificate to China Village along with popcorn supplies and Junior Mints.

For Gadgets Guys and Gamer Geeks- For the friend that has everything and more look for newly released electronics. iPod's and Pendrives (portable hard drive). And for those gamers of course look for Halo 2 (assuming they don't already have it).

For Your Barbie Girl- Novato Tanning offers wonderful winter deals on tanning to keep that California glow in January. Don't forget to include a gift certificate to K's Nails to keep up those acrylics and a little bling bling from Claire's.

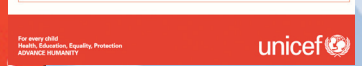
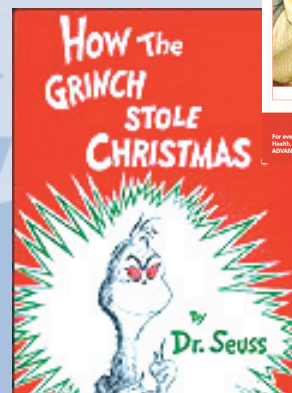
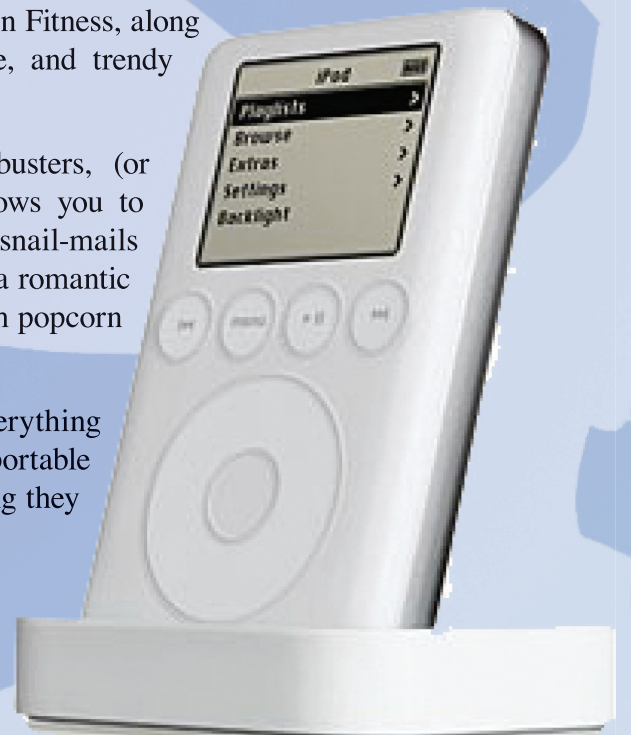


For your tie-dye and Birkenstock wearing friend- Incense is a natural gift to celebrate the winter solstice. Land of the Sun or anywhere in Berkeley can provide this and many other earth friendly gifts (like Bob Marley posters).

Feel good gifts- Give a friend or family member a priceless gift by donating to a charity or non-profit organization in their name. Go to www.unicefusa.org to order their catalogue or make a donation.

From the Teacher's Pet- Give the gift that will give you an A. A gift certificate to Starbucks or a classic coffee mug is the perfect way to say "thank you and grade my final nicely."

Tiny Tikes- The gift of knowledge is a wonderful thing to share with younger people. Excellent books to give are *The Polar Express*, *The Grinch That Stole Christmas* and *The Night Before Christmas*.



Christmas

by Paige Lehman

Like most holidays in the U.S., Christmas as we know it has largely been invented by marketing agencies. The traditional meaning of the holiday has been hijacked by consumerism and materialism, but the holiday of Christmas has undergone several transformations. While this latest trend of greed around the holidays is rather depressing, the history of Christmas shows it is an ever evolving holiday.

While millions of Christians observe the holiday as the birth of Jesus Christ, there is little Christianity in its customs and traditions. While many people do attend some sort of church service on Christmas or Christmas Eve, most of the holiday cheer actually comes from pagan European traditions long before the time of Christ. The Romans, before converting en masse to Christianity, honored their god Saturn with the festival of Saturnalia each December. During Saturnalia, homes were decorated with garlands and trees full of candles. The Celts celebrated December 25 as the birthday of a god born of a mortal mother. In the early days of Christianity there was no celebration

of Christmas, as there is no actual reference of Christ's birth date in the Bible. While historians now believe Jesus Christ was born in the spring, fourth century church officials decided to observe the holiday December 25, most likely in an attempt to convert and adsorb

since contributed largely to the holiday. Santa Claus himself was created by political cartoonist Thomas Nast, who drew him as a fat jolly man with a sleigh and a home in the North Pole. But the latest contribution to Christmas lore was from Robert L. May, Montgomery Ward

copy writer and inventor of Rudolph. The story of the red-nosed reindeer launched merchandise, television specials, and the overall consumer feel of the holiday.

And as gift

giving has become the main part of Christmas, it is being marketed more and more. As a result, the religious meaning of Christmas has been shoved aside. Many unreligious people (and even people who practice religions other than Christianity) celebrate Christmas, not as a religious holiday but rather an American one.

So, even though Christmas is a pagan winter festival adapted by Christians in an attempt to impose their religion on others and is now a product of a consumer economy, have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



pagan culture into Christianity. In the time after the fall of the Roman Empire, Christmas was the biggest party of the year. Peasants and nobles alike would attend long church services and then celebrate by getting drunk and creating mayhem.

Christmas experienced a second transformation beginning in the 19th century. The holiday had come a long way from its drunken medieval observance. Instead, families in the 1800s started celebrating it as a time for togetherness. Christmas trees and yule logs were once again put into use around th holidays. Even so, Christmas did not become an actual federal holiday in the U.S. until 1870. Americans have

Kwanza

by Paige Lehman

Kwanzaa is the least known of the December holidays, and also the least marketed. Kwanzaa is a relatively new holiday, created in 1966 by Dr. Maulena Karenga as a way to celebrate African-American culture. It has grown quickly, however, and it is estimated that 18 million people around the world will observe the

holiday this year. Kwanzaa is based on seven guiding principles: umoja (unity), kujichaagulia (self determination), ujima (collective work and responsibil-

ity), ujamaa (cooperative



The Polar Express

by Paige Thelen

Once a year Christmas comes around, bringing with it at least one sensational holiday flick to movie theaters

across the nation.

Two years ago, The Grinch, starring

Jim Carrey was the

"must see" holiday

movie, and last year

everyone wanted to watch Will

Farrell in tights in the clas-

sic Elf. This year, the

inspiring movie The Polar Express is allowing adults

and children to believe in the spirit of Christmas

once again.

Directed by Robert Zemeckis, the movie, originating from the book of the same name, tells a

story of a young boy on the verge of losing his

Christmas spirit. The boy is picked up by an "imaginary" train that takes him

to the North Pole to meet Santa Claus. On his journey to the North Pole, the

boy makes new friends and is faced with challenges that teach him the

joy and love the holidays bring. The coming-of-age

theme warms the heart and reveals the child still lurking within all of us.

With the talented Tom Hanks playing four roles

in the computer-generated motion picture and the new modern animation in which the characters actually look like their role-players, it is hard to lose interest.



The Polar Express is the holiday movie of the year, a "must-see" for the Christmas season, and an all around cheerful and warming story.

Rentable Holiday Movies:

Elf

The Grinch

The Nightmare before Christmas

The Santa Clause

The Nutcracker

I'll be home for Christmas

Bad Santa

8 Crazy Nights

Christmas Carol

Miracle on 34th Street

Scrooged

Jingle All the Way



economics), nia (purpose), kuumba (creativity), and imani (faith). Each principle has its own day of the holiday, and a candle is lit on the Kinara (similar to a menorah). Kwanzaa begins on

December 26, and is one of the few holidays that is celebrated by people of all kinds of religions and political views. While it is possible that Kwanzaa could somehow be commercialized as most other holidays have, at the moment it remains one of the last holidays in which the original meaning is still intact.

Holiday Travel 101

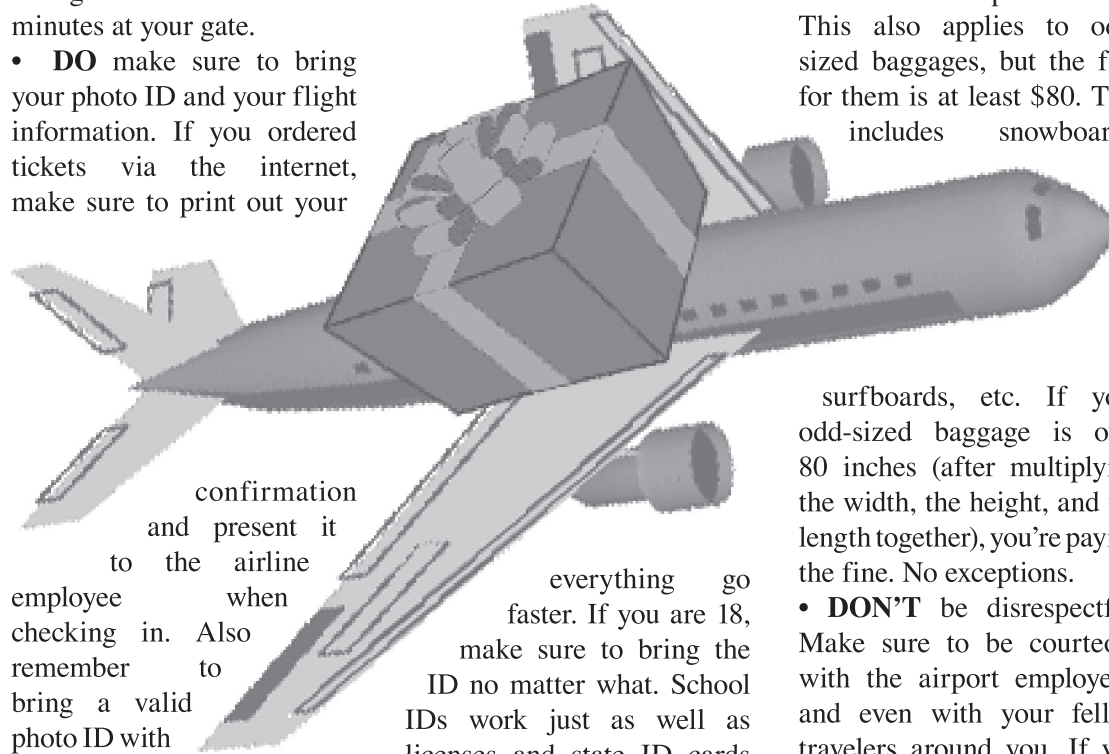
By Katrina Richards

The holiday season usually means one thing and it is not endless gifts or plates of food. Holidays are usually connected with traveling, but now with heightened security, post 9/11, it's a total hassle to make it through the airport. As if the airport during the holidays is not crowded enough, now there are cutthroat security checks, random bag searches, and German Shepherds with Air Marshals following your every move. Whether you're traveling to Aspen, Colorado for a snowboarding trip with a few friends, or traveling across the pond to England to have crumpets and tea on Christmas morning with your family, these tips will hopefully make your airport experience less hectic and relaxing.

- **DO** get to the airport at

least two hours early. With all the security one has to go through, it's best to be prepared, even if it means sitting around for an extra 45 minutes at your gate.

- **DO** make sure to bring your photo ID and your flight information. If you ordered tickets via the internet, make sure to print out your



confirmation and present it to the airline employee when checking in. Also remember to bring a valid photo ID with you. Usually,

if you are under the age of 18 and traveling with a parent or guardian, you don't need to bring an ID, but it makes

everything go faster. If you are 18, make sure to bring the ID no matter what. School IDs work just as well as licenses and state ID cards for minors.

- **DON'T** over-pack your bags! Remember that there's an annoying fee of at least \$50 every time your bag is over the 50-pound limit. This also applies to odd-sized baggages, but the fine for them is at least \$80. This includes snowboards,

surfboards, etc. If your odd-sized baggage is over 80 inches (after multiplying the width, the height, and the length together), you're paying the fine. No exceptions.

- **DON'T** be disrespectful. Make sure to be courteous with the airport employees, and even with your fellow travelers around you. If you start acting up in the airport,

with the zero-tolerance policy, you'll be escorted out.

- **DO** make sure to keep yourself occupied. Whether it's waiting for your flight to start boarding or you're already on board, make sure you have something to do. Bring your MP3 player or CD player along with a few extra batteries, because it sucks when your iPod dies on you in the middle of a flight to Australia. Magazines, books, and laptops are great too. You can even challenge the person next to you to a poker match for his Rolex if you bring a deck of cards. Just remember, no electronic devices during take-offs and landings.

- **DON'T** stress. Just chill out and remember that the majority of the people around you probably share the same annoyance of the airport that you do.

Wisdom Teeth: Ready?

by Joe Mertel

During a routine check up at my dentist I was told the dreadful line "I think it's time for you to get your wisdom teeth pulled." Right as I heard this I was shocked. After remembering all of the horrifying stories my friends told me, I asked my dentist if there was any way out of it, like leaving them in? He insisted it was necessary and wrote up the report for my appointment.

beginning of the operation. After breathing in the gas for about ten minutes my mind was spinning in circles and I got really happy. All I could do was laugh and laugh and I couldn't stop until they gave me the excruciating shots to numb my mouth. The shots were the only part of the operation I disliked. They hurt so much that I grasped the chair leaving finger marks in the arm rest. Fortunately,

around my house not feeling a thing. But, that didn't last long - once the gas and the numbness wore off, the pain started up. I was bleeding and rolling everywhere and kept on having to change my bloody pads in my mouth. The

next five days consisted of my icing my cheeks while my friends came over laughing at me calling me "chipmunk cheeks." I also spent most of my time playing PlayStation and taking a great deal of Vicodin in order to take the

pain away. (The Vicodin was the best part of the five days.) After five days of PlayStation, ice, Jamba Juice, and Vicodin, my pain was gone, thus ending my horrifying experience with wisdom teeth.



Open wide! Young teenager winces in pain while dentist attempts to pull a tooth.

The morning of the operation was horrible. On the car ride there, all I could think about was the pain I was going to endure, while all my mom could talk about was how she was going to pay for the operation. The office reeked of laughing gas, a sign that torture must lie in my future. The chair felt like a death bed, as I waited for Satan to take me to a better place. The dentist placed the laughing gas mask, which looked like an elephant trunk, over my nose, marking the

the rest of the operation was a breeze. A few times I randomly started cracking up, but other than that I did great. Once the dentist said I was all done I was angry because I was having a good time getting my teeth yanked out. Afterwards the dentist made me breath in oxygen through my nose in order to clear out the laughing gas.

Once I was at home I couldn't feel my mouth at all and I also couldn't talk. I was still drugged up from the operation so I was walking

The Gift of Ms. Gates

by Dan Saslow

Within each department at every school, there are always certain teachers and perfected curricula that stand out. One woman, in one room at the far end of campus, affects more students than any other department, let alone any other person, in the school.

Thousands of reeds have been moistened and thousands of ivory keys pounded upon under the instruction of Emily Gates. In fact, Gates has the largest class load of all the teachers in this school - classes including Concert Choir, Concert Band, Jazz Choir, Jazz Band, Independent Study Band, Show Choir, Men's Choir, and String Ensemble, as well as two musicals a year and work in other schools and benefits. She isn't even paid for a couple of her classes - so when asked how she manages such a schedule, she replied, "I want to do everything I can to provide for the motivated students out there." She also says that eating oranges everyday provides her with all the necessary energy for her saturated schedule.

Like the majority of students that pass through the doorway of her multi-leveled music room, her beginnings in music trace back to her grade school days, where she played piano and began clarinet in 3rd grade. She continued her studies into high school, where she sang in a trio of girls that performed and traveled with the school big band. When it came time to leave for college, her teacher suggested that she enter a liberal arts college for music, and "figuring that it was a good idea," Gates then applied and entered the prestigious Wittenberg University. In her junior year, her sorority won a singing contest, at which one of the judges asked her if she could teach at his middle school. When Gates told him she was just a junior, he said that he would wait.

For some years after graduation, she not only worked at Urbana Middle School, but also (after having a baby and leaving teaching) held a variety of jobs, from teaching leadership classes to working as an executive secretary. After moving to

California, she attended a Student Teacher conference, and from there was asked to work a full time job. She later began teaching music at Sinaloa Middle School here in Novato. No choir program existed at San Marin; she was distressed that choir students trained at Sinaloa had nowhere to learn in high school, and she was met only with rejection as the San Marin teacher refused to believe that establishing a choir would be successful. Gates then convinced the administration to allow her to set up an informal choir at San Marin, and soon enough, a large amount of students entered the choir and forced the creation of two different choirs. For the next 12 years, Gates worked with numerous bands teachers, all of which failed to commit or simply taught poorly. She eventually gave in to the administration's requests to teach the band class, without experience or confidence. It has been 9 years or so since then, and Ms. Gates has created an incredible selection of quality classes for a diverse body of students.

Geek's Paradise

by Paul Himmelstein



We all know of the endless entertainment that is Novato. That is, if you consider Slurpees, parking lots, and the occasional movie entertainment. Fortunately, as of May 25, 2004 there is an alternative to

shed light on your regularly scheduled doldrums. It is the Elite Center, a safe and fun environment where anyone can go to play his or her favorite online game. Located next to the Novato Library, the Center is a place

where Novato youth can fight side by side, head to head, or against people nationwide in over thirty games provided there.

"It's a great place to keep kids off the streets," says owner Ruth Collins. And it's true. With 720 registered users, the Elite Center is rapidly becoming a popular place to go with your friends.

The sixteen computers lined up for your entertainment can occasionally be packed with scrawny nerds or linemen. In case this interferes with the satisfaction of your blood thirst, you can consider calling ahead of time to reserve your groups spot, ensuring endless hours of strained eyes and seizures.

Some of the more popular games provided are *Gunbound*, *Day of Defeat*, and *Battlefield: Vietnam*. But the most popular game by far is *Counter Strike*. Junior Ian Bridgeman declares, "CS (Counter Strike) is the funnest game ever. I've played it forever, and I'm still having fun." In *Counter Strike*, people are grouped into two teams, Terrorists and Counter-terrorists. The goals of the teams vary with the level, but it generally consists of the Terrorists trying to blow something up and the Counter-terrorist preventing it. Other goals can include rescuing hostages or just defeating the opposition (in glorified sprays of blood, I might add).

So, you say you're interested now? Lucky for you, the sign-up process is simple enough for your pet chimpanzee. Walk in the door, talk to the Ruth at the front desk, and she will ask your name and the user I.D. you desire. At this point, she will give you a permission form for your parents (in case they find ruthless killing offensive) and inform you that you have two free hours of playtime as a newcomer. This, of course, is intended to get you addicted, but don't complain, because the rates are fairly cheap. Four dollars for one hour, eight for two hours, and they cut a deal at ten bucks for three hours.

Satisfied now? Instead of having a date with your couch, you can have it in one of their chairs with a group of your friends who have nothing better to do. But if you want to go on Saturday afternoon, call in advance, because some of the regulars there never leave.

Reviving the Renaissance

by Katt Knecht



Left to Right: Krystal Susmani, Natalie Ernst, Briana Kiler, Carrie "Lord of the Bassoon" Gratiot, Aaron Bae, Emma Gauci

Despite what you may think, the San Marin Student Center is actually a Renaissance banquet hall, filled with trees and an entire royal court. Or, at least it is from December 3rd-5th, when the music department hosts its annual Madrigal Feast, a night of Renaissance dinner and entertainment in celebration of the upcoming holiday season.

The Student Center

transforms a castle complete with a dining hall full of 10-foot evergreen trees and banners. Guests are greeted at the door by the town crier and the banquet hall full of peasants guiding Lords and Ladies (guests) to their seats; the traditional cries of Steve Kenyon will now be replaced with those of sophomore Josh Garcia Cotter. The dinner features a complete three-course meal, including

flaming pudding (yes, they really light it on fire), and a real seasoned boar's head. Of course, nothing tops the Wassail, the delicious hot cider served generously to each person.

The Renaissance-style feast is accompanied by entertainment provided exclusively by music students dressed as peasants. During the meal, different groups of students who are

independently organized sing for table and play games. Throughout the night, a play is performed starring the students and royal court members. And after the dinner, a full-length concert begins. The music is mostly holiday-related, preformed by both Jazz and Concert Choir. Chairs are pulled back as Show Choir dances and the audience members are pulled to the dance floor to burn off the calories from the dinner rolls piled onto their plates. As the tired and completely stuffed guests leave, they are serenaded with the tunes of *Silent Night* to follow them home and back into the 21st century.

Holiday Ski Chart

by Clint Potter

Over the winter-break hordes of Californians make the trip up to Tahoe. If you plan on joining the thousands of people there's a few things you should know: Whether you go for one day or one week here's some helpful facts that will assist you in deciding where to go.



	Drive Time (according to yahoo maps)	Lift Ticket/ Season pass price	# of lifts	# of terrain parks	Pros/Cons
Boreal	3hrs 38mins	\$36/ \$399	9	8	Cheap, good place to learn & make daytrips, gets crowded
Heavenly	2hrs 52mins	\$57/ \$299	29	4	Intermediate skiing, good scenery, variety of trails, snow gets icy fast
Kirkwood	3hrs	\$47/ \$319	12	3	Difficult runs, gets lots of snow, slow lifts
Sierra-at-Tahoe	2hrs 48mins	\$44/ \$259	12	5	Not very good terrain or runs, gets crowded
Sugar Bowl	2hrs 50mins	\$44/ \$299	13	2	Good deals w/ coupon, wide & various runs, good for all levels

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Girls Basketball Warms Up

by Allyson Walchli

As fall sports rapidly come to a close, the girls' basketball teams train for the winter season ahead. Many teams have been training and conditioning since summer, and this season is their chance to show just how far they have come. The girls possess true potential on all three levels this year, with a committed coaching staff and dedicated players. **John Franzack**, a two-year coaching veteran to San Marin, leads the 2004-2005 girls' varsity squad. Under Coach Franzack's strict commands, the basketball team prepares for an intense season. With an energetic and positive attitude, Coach Franzack maintains respect from all his varsity players. His ability to motivate and inspire the girls has made basketball one of the most appealing athletic programs offered at the high school level.

With seven returning varsity players and five additions, including two freshmen, **Kaitlyn Conroy** and **Leslie Witter**, the varsity squad is prepared to work as a team to defeat their rivals.

The varsity team is equipped with a strong defense, a quick offense, and speed to enable solid victories in every match. Veteran **Dana Sockolov** is op-

timistic about the upcoming season, "hopefully with the returning seven players and five new faces we will have an outstanding year." With a

positive attitude and strong mentality, the Mustangs have a chance at achieving an undefeated record.

Following in vari-

ty's shadow are the J.V. and freshmen squads. They have as much potential as varsity, if not more. With the guidance of the two-year J.V. head coach, **Sean Kenney**, the team is looking forward to an outstanding season. While only one freshman, **Melanie Gauci**, was promoted to J.V., many other underclassmen share equal talent. The remaining fifteen represent the freshman team under the leadership of **Fred Lucas**. Because all three levels possess power and determination, the Mustangs pose a major threat to all competition this year.



Varsity post player Ashley Colclough practices with teammates looking on.



Sophmores Kendall Joyce and Chelsea Bacon take a break from J.V practice.

Wrestlers Back On the Mats

By Pat Deshazo

Last season the San Marin wrestlers came in third place, making it their worst season in five years. But this year, they hope for much more than just a bronze. Even though three vital Mustang wrestlers graduated last year, they still have eight returning wrestlers from last year's starting lineup. Two returning wrestlers who dominated their way into the NCS championship last year are **Tyler Rushton** and **Barrett Taylor**. Rushton and Taylor are captains this year along with third year wrestlers **Kavon Banejad** and **Doug Collins**. "With fifteen new wrestlers on the

team we expect to make this into a rebuilding year," stated four-year veteran wrestler Tyler Rushton. "But most of all I have faith in my team and have a very good feeling that we'll be bringing home the pennant this year."

Some new faces who are expected to break the varsity line up are freshmen **Will Rushton**, **Theo Phan**, **Christian Gulley**, and **Brian Miller**. Other wrestlers who are expected to make an impact on the starting positions are returning juniors **Loney Nicol**, **Amir Momenzadeh**, **Paul Lillie**, and **Nicholas Basile**.

Hoop Dreams

by James Gramalia

The San Marin boys' basketball teams are all looking forward to having successful seasons. The boys' varsity team has only two returning starters from last year, **Joe Everly** and **Anthony Gonzalez**.

"We only have four returning starters, so we are going into the season with a fresh start," said Gonzalez. "We have a new philosophy - we have to out work the other teams instead of relying on raw talent." The loss of the six seniors, including **Zach Bachmeier** (San Marin's all-time leadscorer), will give the returning players the opportunity to step up and become leaders. Last year, juniors **Chris Dittman** and **Billy Nicolini** played on varsity, gaining them the

important experience needed to play this season at the varsity level. Although last year proved disappointing, the team hopes to look at past failures and grow from them. "We look good and hope

be proud of.

The J.V. team's outlook on this season is very optimistic. With a win over Marin Academy in their first game, they have already matched their win total from last season. With new coach Jeff O'Brien, the team is more focused, and will play up to its potential. Juniors **Martin Kilgariff** and **Danny Burns** will provide veteran leadership for a team made up of almost all sophomores.

The freshman team has high hopes going into their first season of high school basketball. They play well together, and have molded into a serious

group of players lead by **Mike Gonzalez** and **Greg Graniss**. With all the new talent, the boy's freshman team hopes to piece together a great season.



Freshman boys practice lay-ups,

to make the playoffs," said Dittman. They will be able to play up to, and even above their expectations, and give the students another team to

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After 13 Weeks in the NFL...

By Alex Randall

After kickoff in early September, the NFL is quickly approaching the last four weeks of the regular season, with numerous teams battling one another for playoff spots. In the AFC East, the reigning champion New England Patriots hold a 11-1 record, remaining 6-0 at home. The New York Jets nip at their heels with a record of 9-3.

The scheme in the AFC North is very similar. The Pittsburgh Steelers, led by rookie quarterback Ben Roethlisberger, sit up top with a record of 11-1, and are currently on a ten-game winning streak. The Baltimore Ravens, flying under the radar, hold strong with a 7-5 record, having allowed a mere 191 points

thus far.

In the AFC South, the Indianapolis Colts, led by the trio of QB Peyton Manning, RB Edgerrin James, and WR Marvin Harrison, have come off the first 13 weeks with a record of 9-3, having scored the most points in the league. With six wins and six losses, the Jacksonville Jaguars are still looming in the midst.

The AFC West holds two teams in the top spots separated by only two games, the Denver Broncos (7-5) and the San Diego Chargers (9-3). A major disappointment in this division this year is the performance of the Kansas City Chiefs, who made it to the AFC Championship last year with a record of 13-3. The Chiefs are now 4-8, finally winning a game this

past Sunday after flailing through a four-game losing streak.

In the NFC West, the Philadelphia Eagles, with the dangerous duo of Donovan McNabb and Terrell Owens at quarterback and wide receiver respectively, dominate their division with a record of 11-1, having won four straight coming off a loss to Pittsburgh. The N.Y. Giants, though with a dreary record of 5-7, could end up in the playoffs if a miracle occurs.

The NFC North, similar to the AFC West, contains two teams sharing the division throne. Both the Green Bay Packers and the Minnesota Vikings hold 7-5 records, but Green Bay seems only to gain momentum as

they enter Week 14 having won five out of their last six games. Chicago and Detroit both have records of 5-7, remaining in striking distance.

In the NFC South, the Atlanta Falcons, under the command of the amazing Michael Vick, lead the division with a 9-3 record. Only a streak of losses could prevent Atlanta from reaching the 2004 playoffs, possibly propelling forward the Tampa Bay Buccaneers or the Carolina Panthers, now with dismal record of 5-7. The New Orleans Saints stumbled out of the gates and currently hold a record of 4-8.

Lastly, the NFC West has not performed well this season, with the

Seattle Seahawks and the St. Louis Rams tied for first with records of 6-6. The 49ers are trudging through a rebuilding year, currently holding the worst record in the league at 1-11.

While playoff pictures are slowly becoming clear, these last four weeks could alter the fate of any team in the league.



AFC EAST

Team	Wins	Losses	Win %
New England	11	1	.917
N.Y. Jets	9	3	.750
Buffalo	6	6	.500
Miami	2	10	.167

AFC NORTH

Team	Wins	Losses	Win %
Pittsburgh	11	1	.917
Baltimore	7	5	.583
Cincinnati	6	6	.500
Cleveland	3	9	.250

AFC SOUTH

Team	Wins	Losses	Win %
Indianapolis	9	3	.750
Jacksonville	6	6	.500
Houston	5	7	.417
Tennessee	4	8	.333

AFC WEST

Team	Wins	Losses	Win %
San Diego	9	3	.750
Denver	7	5	.583
Kansas City	4	8	.333
Oakland	4	8	.333

NFC EAST

Team	Wins	Losses	Win %
Philadelphia	11	1	.917
N.Y. Giants	5	7	.417
Dallas	5	7	.417
Washington	4	8	.333

NFC NORTH

Team	Wins	Losses	Win %
Green Bay	7	5	.583
Minnesota	7	5	.583
Chicago	5	7	.417
Detroit	5	7	.417

NFC SOUTH

Team	Wins	Losses	Win %
Atlanta	9	3	.750
Carolina	5	7	.417
Tampa Bay	5	7	.417
New Orleans	4	8	.333

NFC WEST

Team	Wins	Losses	Win %
Seattle	6	6	.500
St. Louis	6	6	.500
Arizona	4	8	.333
San Francisco	1	11	.083

Fall Sports Awards

Women's Water Polo

Sportsmanship: Meg Crowley
Most Improved: Jenna Dawson
Most Valuable Player: Myra Perez

Men's Water Polo

Sportsmanship: Paul Lillie
Most Improved: Geoff Elsmore
Most Valuable Player: Matt Petty

Junior Varsity Soccer

Sportsmanship: Phil Bouriguette; Hunter Geison
Most Valuable Player: Loney Nicol

Varsity Soccer

Sportsmanship: Filli Ramirez
Most Improved: Alex DeConde
Most Valuable Player: Ian Walsh

Ladies Golf

Sportsmanship: Lauren Schwarze
Most Improved: Elena Miller
Most Valuable Player: Allison Green

Men's Cross-Country

Sportsmanship: Roger Klein
Most Improved: Michael Warner; Bryant Benter
Most Valuable Player: Casey Kasten

Women's Cross-Country

Sportsmanship: Madison Stenberg
Most Improved: Sophie Nguyen
Most Valuable Player: Briana Van Epps; Alison Greggor

Freshmen Volleyball

Sportsmanship: Aimee McEachern
Most Valuable Player: Sarah Greggor

Junior Varsity Volleyball

Sportsmanship: Caitlin Rugani
Most Valuable Player: Alyson Arnheiter

Varsity Volleyball

Sportsmanship: Becky Pelka
Most Improved: Becky Pelka
Most Valuable Player: Signy Toquinto; Megan Faherty

Ladies Tennis

Sportsmanship: Karen MacKintosh
Most Improved: Angela Shi
Most Valuable Player: Ayla Potter

Junior Varsity Cheer

Sportsmanship: Kim Reubens

Varsity Cheer

Sportsmanship: Nina Tran, Ashley Ng
Most Inspirational: Nina Tran
Most Valuable Player: Kristen Jones

Freshmen Football

Sportsmanship: Mike Gonzalez
Most Valuable Player: Travis Warren

Junior Varsity Football

Sportsmanship: Todd Burke
Most Valuable Player: Vince Ross

Varsity Football

Sportsmanship: Nick Basile; Greg Mercurio
Most Improved: Nic Banaugh
Most Valuable Player: Kristian Correnti

ODDS AND ENDS

Holiday Fun Facts

by Clint Potter

- Due to the time zones, Santa has 31 hours to deliver gifts! This means that he would have to visit 832 homes each second!
- According to a 1995 survey, 7 out of 10 British dogs get Christmas gifts from their doting owners.
- During the holiday buying season, Visa cards alone are used an average of 5,340 times every minute in the United States.
- It is not a sure thing that turkey was part of the 1st Thanksgiving Feast, but venison was definitely part of the meal.
- There are 16 correct ways to spell Hanukkah: Chanuccah, Channuka, Channukah, Chanuka, Chanukkah, Chanuko, Hannuka, Hannukah, Hanuka, Hanukkah, Hanukka, Hannukka, Kanukkah, Khannuka, Khannukah, Khanukkah
- The only work women are allowed to do during the time the menorah is lit is cook.
- Guatemalan adults do not exchange Christmas gifts until New Year's Day. Children get theirs (from the Christ Child) on Christmas morning.
- When visiting Finland, Santa leaves his sleigh behind and rides on a goat named Ukko. Finnish folklore says that Ukko is made of straw, but is strong enough to carry Santa Claus anyway.
- There are 364 gifts mentioned in "The Twelve Days of Christmas".
- America's official national Christmas tree is located in King's Canyon National Park in California. The tree, a giant sequoia called the "General Grant Tree", is over 90 meters (300 feet) high, and was made the official Christmas tree in 1925.
- Christmas has different meanings around the world; Christmas Eve in Japan is a good day to eat fried chicken and strawberry shortcake.

- Winter was a time of celebration to pre-Christian Romans and they decorated fir trees in honor of the Winter solstice.
- Kwanzaa is neither political nor religious and despite some misconceptions, is not a substitute for Christmas. It is simply a time of reaffirming African-American people, their ancestors and culture.

Crossword

by Beth Sekishiro and Dan Saslow

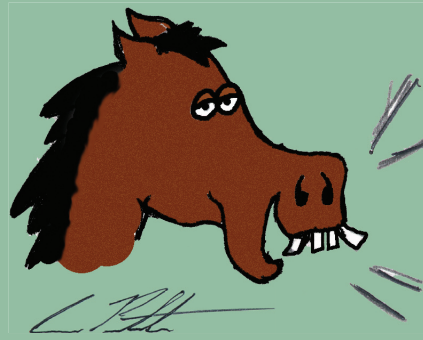
ACROSS

- Upcoming source of San Marin joy with 25-across
- Bunny variety
- Pirate exclamation
- Upcoming music department event
- Prilosec ____ (needs no prescription)
- Some classes make you do this
- Response to cuteness
- _____ de France
- A _____ in the Sun
- Latin phrase, "and the rest" – abbr.
- Classes helping those new to US
- Teacher Chris
- It warns of rain
- On December 17th, we'll be _____!
- Marin, Carlos,

- Francisco prefix
- Knights that say
- Dance drink
- Tree product/sentimental person
- Important person – sometimes natters
- Cheer team's January destination
- Singular dice
- Cal mascot
- Gumbo veggie
- Spork mother

DOWN

- Villain of Democrats in 2000 election
- Latest shoe trend
- What Odie might say
- Mediterranean or Baltic
- NUSD superintendent
- Dis __ Dat
- Daily school-sports duty
- Small Town Fun item #6
- Early morning winter driving hazard
- January Drama event
- Third Rock from the Sun
- Simile word
- "____ You Need Is Love"
- Groom's vow
- Florida – the _____ state
- Upcoming school nightmare
- Credit card number abbr.
- Ancient English teacher
- Spork father
- Teacher Feldman, Barbie's ex
- Derek, or Peep



Straight From the Horse's Mouth: A Little Gossip From Around the Stable

By Denise Nilan

- Plastered in the Novato Advance, a notorious football player receives a DUI
- Check how pure you are at Puritytest.net.
- Make friends with an Old Navy employ and receive a 20% card.
- Biology class endures frog dissection.
- Infamous dancing unit horrifies freshman. (Who doesn't love Cotton-Eyed-Joe?)
- Annual Cookie-Bake-Off earns students a huge amount of pocket-change.
- Ben Nelson completes his homemade guitar.
- Kaitlyn Conroy and Leslie Witter score coveted spots on the Varsity Basketball team as freshmen.
- New weekend hot spot is the IVC trail.
- Ms. Anderson's 6^o 'joke' about the new culinary class perplexes student body.
- Photo darkroom develops a mysterious odor.
- Chad Stuart, head Varsity basketball coach, sure to draw a female crowd at home games.
- Cannabis leaf replaces the '05 on the hill – very clever.
- Terra Linda beats Marin Catholic in NCS Championship: MC players reportedly in tears.
- Christen Inedlanger and Jeremy Shaver duke it out at break.
- On December 6, drug dogs search cars and send a student away in handcuffs.
- Starbucks brings back peppermint mochas for the holidays.
- Alexis Buescher, sick of high school boys, moves on the college men.
- Chutzpah Club's dreidel drive raises gelt (chocolate coins) for charity.

- Kwanzaa, means "first fruits of the harvest" in the African language and celebrates the 1st harvest of the year.
- It is important that the Kinara not be confused with the menorah. The Kinara holds seven candles to reflect the seven principles which are the foundation of Kwanzaa.

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