

## The flash seen around the world

**Andrew Kilgo**  
*Sports Editor*

Sunday's big game between the North Carolina Panthers and the New England Patriots was arguably one of the most entertaining Super Bowl games in the last 10 years. In the aftermath, however, fewer people are talking about how the Patriot's Adam Vinatieri kicked the winning field goal for the second time in three years than they are about the halftime show.

Controversy erupted following a halftime performance headlined by Janet Jackson. The show also featured artists Justin Timberlake, P. Diddy, Nelly and Kid Rock performing their various hit songs. The halftime show was produced by MTV and broadcast on CBS.

The high — or low point — depending on the opinion of the person watching, occurred while Timberlake and Jackson were performing a flirtatious duet to conclude the halftime show, with Timberlake singing, "Rock Your Body." When Timberlake got to the lyrics, "I'm gonna have you naked by the end of this song," he proceeded to rip a covering from Jackson's costume, revealing her breast, partially obscured only by a sun-shaped, metal nipple decoration.

This sad display by the artists

prompted CBS to quickly cut to commercials and to not mention the halftime performance at any point for the rest of the night. After the excitement-packed conclusion of the game, more media was focusing on the Jackson-Timberlake stunt than on the actions that took place on the field, which was the original source of entertainment.

In an interview, Timberlake blamed a "wardrobe malfunction," but Federal Communications Commission Chief Michael Powell called it "a classless, crass and deplorable stunt," after having watched the show from his home surrounded by his children.

Personally, I think that it was an attempt by Timberlake to try to upstage his former girlfriend Britney Spears, who locked lips with Madonna and received a decent amount of attention at a recent MTV awards show.

MTV and CBS both said the incident was "unrehearsed, unplanned, completely unintentional and was inconsistent with assurances we had about the content of the performance."

Joe Browne, NFL executive vice president, said earlier that it was "unlikely that MTV will produce another Super Bowl halftime." NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue called the conduct "offensive, embarrass-



Courtesy of www.drudgreport.com

**Janet Jackson and Justin Timberlake are pictured during the Super Bowl halftime show just after Timberlake pulled off a portion of material, exposing Jackson's breast.**

ing to us and our fans, and inappropriate."

According to the Federal Communications Commission, which supervises the content of broadcast television, channels cannot air obscene material at any time and cannot air indecent material between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. The FCC defines obscene material as describing sexual conduct "in a patently offensive way" and lacking "serious

literary, artistic, political or scientific value." Indecent material is not as offensive, but still contains references to sex or excretions.

In no way do I feel that the uncovering of Jackson will create a large number of problems with people who watched the performance -- it just was unnecessary, and it became larger than the game itself. It is sad that the two artists felt that they needed to add that to their performance to gather more media attention for their careers.

It should be noted that there have been very few instances in recent history of the FCC's investigating television of content violations. The target that gets the most attention is the radio.

Last month, the FCC proposed a \$755,000 fine against Clear Channel Communications for the "Bubba the Love Sponge" program that aired multiple times on four of its Florida radio stations.

The fine was a record for a single complaint. The largest cumulative fine for indecency was \$1.7 million, paid by Infinity Broadcasting in 1995 for various violations made by Howard Stern.

## Newton's Law: Face class-action if you miss class

Before we get started this week, friends, let me draw your attention to the lovely column title just suggested by one of my faithful readers (not you, Mom, it was my OTHER faithful reader). I think "Newton's Law" fits quite well because, after all, I've endured almost two decades of Fig Newton jokes, so I think it's time I start to profit from the name.

Today, we are going to discuss attendance in our college classes. This has special significance for me because I've recently had a bit of car trouble, and I've had to miss a good bit of class because of the slow nature of hitchhiking.

As my most recent highway patron dropped me off at the University of West Florida, I began to realize what a gross inequality exists in the college system. As we proceed, please keep in mind the cardinal rule that I will continue to refer back to during the column: You are paying for these courses.

Simple logic says that, barring government subsidies, scholarships, private grants, etc., you are paying for the buildings, the seats and even the teachers. You, the student, are paying for everything, at least in part.

Look at the well-trimmed lawns, the signs, the strange events sponsored by strange clubs you didn't know existed. You have helped pay for all of this.

Take some pride in your contribution! Is the parking here something, or what? Isn't that better than spending it on something silly like food, clothing or shelter?

The problem I have is that students can actually be penalized for not showing up to class. Every syllabus I have ever read said the same thing:

1. The instructor's contact information.
2. If you contact the instructor, he or she will bludgeon you with an urn containing the ashes of the last student to contact him or her.
3. After three unexcused absences, your grade will drop one letter for every following absence.

Does this seem fair to you? (Apart from the bludgeoning, I mean)

Your grade, the measurement of your mastery of a subject, can be altered if you miss more than three classes. You could be a rocket scientist and fail Introduction to Physics if NASA needed you more than three times in a semester.

To me, that sounds more like a jealous girlfriend or boyfriend. Miss a few days, and it's, "You don't spend enough time with me!"

It doesn't make sense.

In what other field does an employee (read: the instructors and the school) get to dictate the exact regulations for a service you are paying for? When was the last time the mailman complained because you put stamps on the letter, but didn't hand it to him personally?

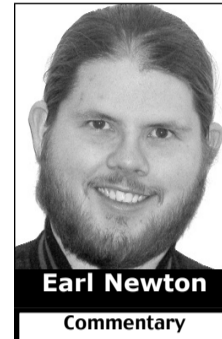
In fairness, let's examine the reverse. If students should be punished when they miss a class, shouldn't teachers receive the same? If an instructor misses a class, shouldn't he return a portion of the money you paid? Perhaps the University should reimburse you at the end of the semester.

Can you hear the mournful cries of accountants nationwide?

I think my point is clear. Something should be done while there's still time, before this practice spreads to other areas of commerce. If we are not careful, we may find ourselves in a situation like the one below:

Bag Boy: Hello, can I help you with your bags?  
Consumer Joe: Why, thank you. Here's \$5.  
Bag Boy: Uh-oh.  
Consumer Joe: What?  
Bag Boy: There are more than 20 items.  
Consumer: Er, what?  
Bag Boy: This is a 20-item line. That's a definite infraction.  
Consumer: Look, I paid you to —  
Bag Boy: I'm sorry, but I'm going to have to write you up. I warn you, your credit report may suffer.  
Consumer Joe: I'll just carry them myself then! Give me back the \$5.  
Bag Boy: I'm sorry, but you've passed the drop/add date for groceries. It was about three seconds ago.  
Consumer Joe: That's it! I'm going to talk to your manager!  
Bag Boy: Go ahead. I have tenure.

Questions? Comments? Send them to NewtonsLaw@southernronin.com.



**Earl Newton**  
Commentary

## Use your influence to protect environment

**Bryant J. Roberts**  
*Contributing Writer*

Drivers along Pensacola's Bayfront Parkway can now gaze at the Pensacola Bay area's own ecological reclamation project and feel a wonderful sense of accomplishment at the work that has been done.

Projects like Greenshores are success stories that we, as a community, can view with pride. This work demonstrates how, by acting on hopes and ideas, a small number of people make a difference on our quality of life here on the Gulf Coast.

But there is one major problem with this project. It has stopped.

While it is truly exciting that one-quarter of a mile of bay frontage has been altered to provide a habitat for marine life, we are still left with hundreds of miles of less than pristine shoreline. Years of commercial and recreational fishing, various forms of pollution and little interest on the part of local government or business to protect these valuable resources, has left our area's waterways in poor condition. A symbolic gesture will do little to alter

this long-term damage.

Fifty years ago, a child playing along any of Pensacola's expansive tidal zones encountered vast numbers of small schooling fish, crabs and shellfish. Few take the time to really look closely at these areas today, but those who do can see what amounts to a dead zone.

A hundred years ago, red snapper were caught in abundance in Pensacola Bay.

Where does one have to go to find these fish today? Only far out in the gulf, and only with sophisticated electronic gear can we find fish that are so few in number and small in size that it is hardly worth the effort.

Pensacola area fish markets once stocked large, fresh fish and seafood. Over the years, the same markets have seen size and variety decrease, with prices rising steadily higher.

The critical issue here, however, is not the price of seafood. The disaster looming on our horizon is nothing less than loss of the breeding population of fish in the local estuaries.

Although the fishing industry is regulated in an

attempt to ensure that this does not happen, a greater effort is essential in order to repopulate our bays and rivers if they are to provide adequately for the future.

To anyone fishing area waters throughout the last 20 or 30 years, it's obvious the government's attempts to maintain a healthy marine environment has failed.

Without more long-term, dedicated effort on the part of citizens and concerned groups, we will continue to see the degradation of waterways.

Operation Greenshores is a great start, but is only a beginning. It is incumbent on area politicians, commercial and recreational fishermen, educators and the general public to do more.

Educators need to seek funding to research various methods for repopulating local waters with fish. Local government should seek federal grant money to implement programs such as Greenshores.

And concerned citizens must keep up the pressure if results achieved. One phone call to a politician can go a long way. If you are that concerned citizen, make that call and make it now.

## Extreme Makeovers are becoming too extreme

**Megan Martinez**  
*Commentary Editor*

It seems as though every time you turn on the television, there is yet another extreme makeover special. With themes ranging from dramatic house makeovers to surgical modifications of people's bodies, extreme makeover shows have taken over television.

What is America's obsession with makeovers? Why does the American public trust their bodies and homes to a gang of self-proclaimed experts whose only credential is excessive self-confidence?

A lot of people are strangers to good taste, but now it seems more and more of these people are becoming self-aware, and are embracing their short-comings in order to have others tell them what to wear, buy and like.

This is a scary notion that has resulted in the public's paranoia of the government and instances of mass hysteria, but it is being completely forgotten by avid television watchers everywhere.

One of the most popular of these serial makeover shows is "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy." The show features an eclectic combination of five gay men who promise to deliver straight men from their style-deficient hell.

Each 'queer guy' specializes in a different area

of the social graces; from interior design to personal grooming.

The "fab five" arrive in time to transform the appearance, and home of their clueless straight male into a trendy and stylish man that his girlfriend will love.

Is it really better that this previously naive man now has a new style that was not of his own creation, and therefore can't truly call his own?

Taking self improvement a step further is "Extreme Makeover," a show that goes beyond the superficiality of hair and makeup, providing its subjects with plastic surgery to achieve the perfect self they always wanted.

Is it healthy to go to any lengths, including permanent ones, in order to alter your appearance? What is the mental state of someone who is seeking a dramatic overhaul in an effort to feel better about themselves?

Why are makeover shows suddenly so popular? Why is the general public so eager to have their lives revamped on television?

One has only to look at the turmoil that America is currently facing to understand why so many people are eager to focus on fixing superficial problems not their own.

What better way to feel better about what you look like or what you have, than by having some-

one else do all the decision making for you?

With the war in Iraq, many Americans feel helpless and feel a sense of accomplishment watching the fairy-tale endings of the stylistically challenged. But what happens when there is no longer anyone around to make style and home décor choices for you anymore?

How long will it be before you revert back to your favorite blue eye shadow with your bleached blond perm?

There are no quick fixes in life that do not require the individual to do extensive soul-searching and introspection.

Eating disorders and bad body-image are epidemic among today's teens and young adults. Shows like Extreme Makeover convey the message that in order to be attractive or stylish, you have to look a certain way, and there is no length too great to achieve that look.

This promotes ignoring the deeper issues that a nose job and a haircut can't fix.

Makeovers can be entertaining to watch, and provide viewers with style insights, but they can also overemphasize superficial elements too much.

There need to be more shows concerning the promotion of self-acceptance and originality, rather than on copying the societal image of perfection at any cost.

## VOYAGER

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