

Pigskin

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with Plaxico Burress looking at two years in the slammer, and Amani Toomer hooking up with the Kansas City Chiefs.

Contention runs deep in the East, and the team that can finish 5-1 in divisional tussles will have the upper hand. Wow, sounds like I know my stuff, doesn't it?

In the South, the defending titlists, the Carolina Panthers, are at the top of a very tough division. They had a 12-win regular season in '08, but turtled in their home playoff game against the Cards, losing 33-13. And the game wasn't even that close.

Jake Delhomme, who racked up a miserable six turnovers in the Arizona playoff

debacle, is back to guide the offense, which should feature standout wide receiver, Pro Bowler Steve Smith. Smith had to sit out the first two games of last season, suspended by Coach John Fox for stupidly punching then-teammate Ken Lucas in the grill. The Panthers need 16 regular-season games from Smith, who stretches the field for stud running back DeAngelo Williams, who broke out last season, leading the NFL with 20 TDs.

That's it for now. Trust me, the rest of the teams in the NFC will get their share of ink this season in this fine publication. Deserved or not.

Penguin

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wasn't really in it. I was hoping to coach baseball, which I had done as a walk-on at Mira Costa High for five years, and teach a little History or English. Actually was offered, mid-semester, a gig with Serra High in Gardena. Out of the blue. Think that the students have may run roughshod over a well-meaning teacher, so they were looking for someone, anyone. Now!

Shockingly, I chickened out, returning to do whatever it was I was doing at the time. The road not taken... Too late to look into being a teacher now? Lots of layoffs during this recession, but somewhere down the line, the hiring will commence, right?

But back to the Kennedy clan. *CNN* basically stopped covering whatever else passed for news after TK passed. As they should have. And you readers out there who think

that I am a lib-loving Kennedy-ite, yearning for the return of "Camelot," well, you can keep thinking whatever you want.

And yeah, I was around when Kennedy basically escaped scot-free after he was involved in, some say caused, the death of young Mary Jo Kopechne in the Chappaquiddick drowning of 1969. My view is that Kennedy, son of privilege, should have been locked up for a while.

Maybe for a good while. Sent to the big house. But, guess what, today as in '69, the golden rule seems to apply. He who has the gold, bootlegger's gold at that, rules. Get over it.

All right, I am sure that many, many important things occurred last week in the political arena. Which can all be addressed down the road. Goodbye, Mr. Kennedy... •

School Board

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which have been roundly criticized by educators throughout the country for imposing unrealistic expectations on individual schools.

"Our state testing scores are flat, yet the federal system shows an additional 500 schools are failing," complained Randy Dorn, the schools chief in Washington state, in a recent article published by the Othello Outlook newspaper "What is failing is No Child Left Behind. The law is completely unfair. While we know there is certainly room for improvement in our schools, it's a statistical guarantee in this law that all of our schools will soon be in federal improvement status. That's unrealistic."

Dr. Geoff Yantz, El Segundo's superintendent, mirrored the concerns of Dorn. "The way the test is formulated," he said, it's going to be a fundamental problem when the community is not meeting the growth targets. "My concern," added Funk, "is once these federal changes are fully in place, we won't see any progress." "A lot of folks are concerned about this," said Hickey, who suggested that if future evaluations factor in the "rigor" of California's testing process, the assessments might not be as stark as people think. Hickey also noted that although El Segundo's evaluation process includes standard tests like the STAR, it also assesses other areas of performance when determining a student's general progress.

Later in the meeting, Wilkin all educators should carefully watch the operations issue playing out in the L.A. Unified School District. She reported to the other board members that she had recently led a tour 1959 graduates through El Segundo High School. They, in turn, gave her an original set of student newspapers from that year, which, among other things, covered ways to maintain good posture, the latest school clean-up contests and dating tips --- specifically, how and why a guy needed to coordinate the colors of his date's dress with those he planned to wear to a dance. "Quite interesting," said Wilkin. Funk, fresh from a leadership training on the campus of U.C. Davis, extolled the virtues of

parent participation in schools. All parents, she said, should seriously consider joining their local parent-teacher-student associations, because the groups "benefit your child, supports the school...it supports the district and efficiently effects change in the schools. It helps all children."

Funk also said she hoped the state department of education would reconsider, and ease, its policies against on-campus filming. Yantz reported district enrollment appears "strong." On the other hand, he said, the district won't have an exact student count until the school session starts and his enrollment staff can weed through all the records requests from other districts where former students have moved. On top of that, he said, there are "hundreds and hundreds" of permit requests from out-of-area students wanting to attend El Segundo classes.

Yantz assured the board that he and his advisors are already developing a strategy to deal with what the so-called Swine Flu, or H1N1 virus, which health officials expect will sweep the country soon.

The board unanimously accepted the gifts of several community members, including: Juri F. Dell, who donated \$400.00 for preschool use; Jiehui Wang, who donated \$500.00 to the high school; and the Chevron Corporation, which donated \$2,500 to the middle school, high school, Richmond School and Center Street School respectively.

In her individual report, Coles asked her fellow board members, along with all others in the district, to remember Lynn Bryant, a teacher at Richmond Street Kinder, who died July 27 after a long battle with cancer. Bryant taught kindergarten in the district for 13 years. She reportedly had no qualms about sharing her interests and hobbies with her classes, especially if she thought the sharing would be beneficial. Bryant apparently led her students through yoga exercises to expel their energy.

One observer attended the board meeting. No one addressed the board during the public comment period. •

Saving

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Avoid "retail therapy." Before hitting the mall, shop your own closet for "had-to-have" outfits still on their original hangers. Check your pantry for duplicate products as well.

Save energy. Visit www.energystar.gov for tips on reducing home energy consumption and to learn about relevant rebates and tax credits.

Drive your car an extra couple of years - you'll save thousands of dollars on depre-

ciation and reduce your insurance premium.

For additional savings strategies, as well as links to other helpful sites, visit America Saves (www.americasaves.org). Another good resource is Practical Money Skills for Life, Visa Inc.'s free personal financial management program (www.practicalmoneyskills.com), where you'll find a comprehensive guide to saving, budgeting and much more. •

Opinion

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Critically, Obama's projections relative to job growth, economic recovery, and debt growth have been incredibly inaccurate. There can be no comfort in reliance on his judgment.

We may disagree on Obama's motivations for pursuing these goals, but the facts are beyond dispute. Let's for discussion purposes, ascribe the highest motives to Obama's actions. The danger then, lies in the question of what a less noble successor may do with such power. History has shown us repeatedly that it is unwise to surrender individual freedoms involving such broad and deep aspects of our society to any monopoly, bearing in mind

that the Federal Government is an unchallenged and unchallengeable monopoly. In the words of Nobel Prize winning economist Milton Friedman, "Concentrated power is not rendered harmless by the good intentions of those who create it."

In a free market, when a competitor errs, he pays a severe price in the marketplace. But when a monopolistic government errs, it is free to continue its disastrous course. George Washington himself warned that "Government is not reason. It is not eloquence...It is force. Like fire, it is a dangerous servant and fearful master." I hope you and I have found common ground. •

Frankly

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answer that she gave me. Cuz that didn't apply when Mom misplaced something. Someone had to have taken it, moved it. That is what she always said. And Mom knows best, so help me Robert Young!

Anyway, lost something recently, or so I thought, and guess what? Found it right where I left it. Mom always knows best, folks.

Speaking of losing it, whassup with Manny Ramirez? He seems to be a little "off" as your Dodgers enter the final throes of the regular season. Sure, the Blue Crew should be able to stave off the pesky Rockies and Giants with or without jolts from the bat of Man-Ram, but can they beat the Phillies or the Cardinals in the first round of the NL playoffs with a neutered Ramirez at the plate?

His act on defense and apparent indifference to playing left field energetically, is starting to wear thin on many Dodger fans. Ramirez was lambasted recently in the local papers by the "Letters to the Editor" crowd, who seemed ready to give up on the outfielder who they were nominating for sainthood earlier. Even after he had been fingered, twice, for

being a steroid cheat.

Dodger manager Joe Torre has expressed some mild concern. "Right now, he is a little out of whack," Torre said. Course, Ramirez could bounce back with a two-homer, five-RBI game, and all would again be rosy in Mannywood. To be continued...

And in Halo-land down South, the Angels made a nice acquisition of a starting pitcher, one who has already beaten the dreaded Boston Red Sox twice this season. In Fenway Park. Lefty Scott Kazmir was acquired from the Tampa Bay Rays for three prospects. Kazmir will slide into the starting rotation after John Lackey and Jered Weaver, and could be a key player in October when the Angels will again be pitted against the BoSox.

Finally, Sister Laura complained that she was *not* the winner of the Rockhead Award at the conclusion of our recent camping trip. She claims it was awarded, very late the final night of the excursion, to some Hawaiian member of the Plotnik clan. Okay, Laura. There you go. Anything to keep the peace in the family. •

Eagles

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starters Grant Palmer and Brice Savage, as well as newcomers Hunter Hovland and Max Mendoza.

With Quinones, you get a sure-handed receiver who runs great routes much like Post did for the past three years. Hovland gives his quarterback another tall target much like Schaffhauser did. Meanwhile, Palmer, Savage and Mendoza have the speed to get outside to stretch the field.

The tight ends for the Eagles aren't your typical big blocking athletes who are slow. No, the Eagles have at least two tight ends who will see plenty of passes coming their way. According to offensive coordinator Shevlin, the Eagles could have the best tight end in the area. Junior Nigel Nootbaar wasn't utilized much last year, but still averaged over 13 yards per catch which was second to Schaffhauser's 18.3 yards per catch last year. Nootbaar has good enough size for blocking purposes, but where he'll succeed is when Bundy is throwing passes his way. "He has ridiculous speed and great hands and he's tough to take down," said Shevlin. The other tight end who could see considerable action is Michael Rae. He too has good size, blocks well and has better than average speed for someone on the line. Rae should be another great option for Bundy to get the ball to this year.

It should be an interesting year for the Eagles, who were one of only five South Bay teams to win 10 or more games in 2008. The offense looks to be good enough to put up points like it did a year ago, but it all depends on the linemen and how their lack of experience plays into the mix. The Eagles aren't deep at any one position, but because the JV team has been eliminated they will have capable, if inexperienced, players to fill in if need be.

The Eagles play a scrimmage against Bay League power Peninsula on Saturday morning at 10 a.m. and then open up the season at West Torrance next Friday night, September 11, at 7 p.m.

Eagle News and Notes

Billy Traber had a brief stint with the Boston Red Sox as a reliever before being sent back down to their Triple-A affiliate Pawtucket. Traber has been thrust into a starting role for Pawtucket where he has a 2-4 record with a 5.44 ERA. Coming out of the bullpen seemed to be where he has had more success with his 5-3 record and an eye-popping 1.74 ERA in 31 games.

Robi Estrada (Class of 2006) has struggled a bit offensively and has seen his batting average dip to .230. But the second baseman for the Bowling Green Hot Rods is still one of the team's better defensive players. •