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**Merced
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United States

Probably the most famous tradition in the United States is the dropping of the New Year ball in Times Square, New York City, at 11:59 P.M. Thousands gather to watch the ball make its one-minute descent, arriving exactly at midnight. The tradition first began in 1907. The original ball was made of iron and wood; the current ball is made of Waterford Crystal, weighs 1,070 pounds, and is six feet in diameter. A traditional southern New Year's dish is Hoppin' John—black eyed peas and ham hocks. An old saying goes, "Eat peas on New Year's day to have plenty of everything the rest of the year."

Another American tradition is the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California. The Tournament of Roses parade that precedes the football game on New Year's day is made up of elaborate and inventive floats. The first parade was held in 1886.

New Years Traditions Around the World

A lot of people have New Year's traditions, like my friends and teachers. The Vice Principle of our school, Ms. Housley eats black eyed peas every year for good luck throughout the year. Megan from student org. has a Rook tournament (card game) every year.

Country and culture traditions of New Years:

Hogmanay (Scotland)

The birthplace of "Auld Lang Syne" is also the home of Hogmanay (hog-mah-NAY), the rousing Scottish New Year's celebration (the origins of the name are obscure). One of the traditions is "first-footing." Shortly after midnight on New Year's Eve, neighbors pay visits to each other and impart New Year's wishes. Traditionally, First Foots used to bring along a gift of coal for the fire, or shortbread. It is considered especially lucky if a tall, dark,

Greece

In Greece, New Year's day is also the Festival of St. Basil, one of the founders of Greek Orthodox Church. One of the traditional foods served is Vasilopitta, or St Basil's cake. A silver or gold coin is baked inside the cake. Whoever finds the coin in their piece of cake will be especially lucky during the coming year.

Widely Observed New Year Symbols and Traditions

and handsome man is the first to enter your house after the New Year is rung in. The Edinburgh Hogmanay celebration is the largest in the country, and consists of an all-night street party.

Oshogatsu (Japan)

The New Year is the most important holiday in Japan, and is a symbol of renewal. In December, various Bonenkai or "forget-the-year parties" are held to bid farewell to the problems and concerns of the past year and prepare for a new beginning. Misunderstandings and grudges are forgiven and houses are scrubbed. At midnight on Dec. 31, Buddhist temples strike their gongs 108 times, in an effort to expel 108 types of human weakness. New Year's day, it is a day of joy and no work is to be done. Children receive otoshidamas, small gifts with money inside. Sending New Year's cards is a

Resolutions: It is believed that the Babylonians were the first to make New Year's resolutions, and people all over the world have been breaking them ever since. The early Christians believed the first day of the New Year should be spent reflecting on past mistakes and resolving to improve oneself in the New Year.

Fireworks: Noisemaking and fireworks on New Year's Eve

popular tradition—if post-marked by a certain date, the Japanese post office guarantees delivery of all New Year's cards on Jan. 1.

Spain

The Spanish ritual on New Year's Eve is to eat twelve grapes at midnight. The tradition is meant to secure twelve happy months in the coming year.

The Netherlands

The Dutch burn bonfires of Christmas trees on the street and launch fireworks. The fires are meant to purge the old and welcome the new.

Another American tradition is the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California. The Tournament of Roses parade that precedes the football game on New Year's day is made up of elaborate and inventive floats. The first parade was held in 1886.

is believed to have originated in ancient times, when noise and fire were thought to dispel evil spirits and bring good luck. The Chinese are credited with inventing fireworks and use them to spectacular effect in their New Year's celebrations.

This shows the variety of culture, fun, and traditions of new years around the world.

Movie Reviews

P.S. I Love You

By Toni Foulks

P.S I Love You based on what really would happen, if someone that you loved were to pass away. That girl [Hillary Swank] went crazy in that movie, because her husband passed away, of a brain tumor. She isolated herself in her apartment, crying, and thinking of the memories she had of them, when he was alive. So what he did before he died, he had a trick up his sleeve, and it was to leave letters to give her clues. Each time she got a letter, she was so happy, and she would always look forward to the next one. It led her up to the end, to a beautiful house and a happy life. At the end she met a new man and had a new life. I thought the acting was somewhat good, but not all the way through the movie. I thought the movie was really sad, and they should make another movie continuing the story. I thought the movie should've left her a bunch of money and a bigger house.

I Am Legend

By Adriel Montemaya

I Am Legend, featuring Will Smith, is about the U.S. government making an experimental mistake, when their sole purpose was to cure cancer, which took its toll on the city. The effect of the disaster was the whole world, except for some selected few, getting infected with an airborne disease that caused the infected to become flesh eating vampires. Will Smith, a scientist, who lost his wife and daughter, thought he was the only human left on earth because he was immune to the disease and was struggling to find a cure for the infected and to survive with nothing but survival instincts and his dog, his only companion, and a couple of guns to support him. He never went outside after dark because the vampires could only come out at night and hunt. I liked I Am Legend, it



was a good movie. The acting in I Am Legend was also good. I didn't like the ending because Will Smith gives up his life when he easily could have prevented it, but over all, the movie in my eyes was a good choice. That's the review of I Am Legend.

My Trip to Mexico By Corey Avelos

The Gulf of Mexico

Corpus Christi beaches host many events on Corpus Christi Bay and the Gulf Coast; Wind Surfing, Sailing, Boat Racing, Fishing, etc. Corpus Christi area beaches are still capable of offering great; sport, recreation...and if you desire...privacy and seclusion!

JP Luby is renowned for Spring Break and is very popular with all age groups and families during the summer. The further south you travel on Padre Island, the greater the amount of seclusion.

Yes you can drive on Texas beaches. Your two wheel drive, vacation rental car will do just fine in most areas but, be sure to check local forecasts for beach driving conditions prior to taking your first drive along the Island's Gulf Coast. The Beaches in the Corpus Christi Area offer a great opportunity for shelling. While the most popular beaches are frequently picked clean, the more Southerly beaches do not have the same beach combing intensity as their Northern neighbors and you can frequently find great pieces. This is especially true of the areas South of Bob Hall Pier. However, no matter which beach you select...you just never know what the tides may bring in! They also have black sand at

the beach. I had a blast at the beach. The water was warm; I was in my boxers at the beach.

The Alamo

San Antonio is the number one tourist destination in the State and the Alamo the most visited historic site. Even if it's not the sole reason for visiting San Antonio, an effort should be made to see it before leaving town. The same goes for the Mission Trail. They are each important stops on the Texas Grand Tour.

Forgive us for not getting into the details of the events that took place here from February 23rd to March 6th 1836.

We will, however, wade into the Alamo's history before it became the symbol of Texas to the world.

The word Alamo is Spanish for Cottonwood and it is *believed by some* that the name originated from a nearby cluster of such trees.

During the Mexican War for Independence, Spanish troops occupied the buildings for several years and the soldiers were from a place called Alamo del Parras, Coahuila. This provided *another version* of the name's origin.

The cornerstone was set in place on May 8,

1744, although the "Mission" was founded years earlier. The Mission was formally called the San Antonio de Valero Mission and its primary purpose was to convert the Indians to Christianity and educate them.

The interiors of several buildings are filled with displays showing artifacts, weapons and diagrams of the fight. Tour guides can be heard explaining the history to their respective groups and if you wait long enough you can hear the story told in English, French, German, Spanish and even Vietnamese.

Japanese goldfish swim in the channels that once provided irrigation. Look for the stone marker inscribed with calligraphy - a gift from a Japanese professor who drew parallels between the Alamo's defense and defeat with a similar one-sided battle in Japanese history.



Sports Information and Reviews

The Top Five Basketball Teams

By: Robert Fuentes

As for those who don't know there are an eastern conference and a western conference. Each conference has so many players striving and working hard to being the best and make it to there playoffs. To make it to the championships, one team has to win from both conferences and play in the final game. Who will it be? No one has a clue. Each team is working really hard and coming closer and closer to the end. These are the top five teams in the Eastern Conference of the NBA.



Eastern Conference

Boston Celtics (29W-3L)

Detroit Pistons (26W-8L)

Orlando Magic (22W-14L)

Cleveland Cavaliers (18W-17L)

Washington Wizards (17W-16L)

The teams above work really hard and each having really good and great players. Each team records are well and have a very challenging road and a difficult competition to make it to the playoffs and to the championship game. Now to meet the Easter Conference is the Western Conference. Here are the top five teams in the Western Conference of the NBA.

Western Conference

Phoenix Suns (24W-10L)

San Antonio Spurs (23W-10L)

New Orleans Hornets (23W-11L)

Dallas Mavericks (23W-11L)

Los Angeles Lakers (22W-11L)

The teams above are very good indeed and well. The champions from last year, The San Antonio Spurs, are working hard to take again another championship. There is a lot to look forward to each team has these good days and bad days. Who will make it to the championship game? Who will make it to the playoffs? Right now every team is looking to be this years champion and is working hard to take it home.



Stone Ridge Christian Knights Varsity Basketball

Team Review

By Robert Fuentes

The Stone Ridge Christian Knights Basketball Team is a group of young Christian men with great talent. They use this to show the many people in the world, on how God works in their lives. The Knights are a well disciplined, creative, talented, and strong basketball team that started in the beginning and worked hard to get were there at now. The Knights are seen as a really good basketball team by many people, however many see our team as a giant family. Starting the beginning was a struggle. The team players for this year of 07-08 for the varsity basketball team are Matt Borges # 3, Nathan Beardsley # 12, Jeremy Heusler # 13, Antonio Foulks # 14, Nate Lee # 15, Tim Whitmyre # 20, Garrett Martin # 21, Allen Arzamendi # 22, Shawn Wheldon # 24, Bill Schill # 34, and ,myself,f Robert Fuentes # 1. In

our beginning struggle the team gets new players. These players don't attend to there school but play for there basketball team. The players are Robert Fuentes, myself, Antonio Foulks, Shawn Wheldon, and Allen Arzamendi, and Bill Schill. With last years team now varsity, this year, and now having new players the team has a full ten guys. Each one knowing how to play basket ball very well, and each one getting to know each other the pre season games begin. The Knights played the best teams in our preseason and lost badly, however once playing those teams we benefited a great deal. The sea- started weeks ago learning takes and coach, Mr. Flanagan,



son about 2 and with our mis- our teaching us and leading us, we've reached a 2W-1L. For our team it's looking very well. Each player plays at there best, and all of us supporting and working together as a team, there is expected more wins to come. With all the many struggles out of the way now, the team strives and perseveres even more to achieving what they want and to show what people don't really see. They want go to school as the new champions and they want to show how God is working in there lives from the beginning to the present and to the future.

Game Schedule

February 1 @ Mountain Oaks

February 5 vs. Don Pedro

February 8 @ Motherlode Christian

February 12 @ Sierra Ridge

February 15 vs. Tioga

All games are played at 7:30 pm

CAMP GREEN MEADOWS:

By Michelle Bullock



Green Meadows is an outdoor school that offers opportunities for students to learn valuable wilderness ethics as well as just experiencing the outdoors. The staff is made up of the Naturalists, all of whom have nature names such as Moose Chocolate, Ouzel, and Puma. The Naturalists teach classes, lead meal times, and organize basically everything. The teachers from the schools lead classes as well.

For the duties that the Naturalists and teachers do not perform, cabin leaders volunteer. Cabin leaders such as myself, are high school students looking for some extra credit or perhaps just a week away from school. Don't get me wrong, some of us were actually there to make a difference in the students lives. Cabin leader duties include being in the cabin with the kids at night, taking them to the restroom, leading a table at meal times, assisting teachers and Naturalists on classes, and any other task that may need doing. While performing these duties high school students learn valuable leadership skills and have the privilege of making a lasting impact on the 5th or 6th grade students.



I enjoyed helping in the dancing class most. It was a night class and it was indoors. A huge bonus because of the negative degree weather outside (it was snowing) so we got to warm up. Basically myself and my fellow cabin leaders stood in front of around fifty students and learned outrageous dances in three minutes, and then taught the dances to the kids. We had to be over the top crazy and get these 6th grade kids to really come out of their shells it was awesome. Helping teach this class totally promoted the phrase "fake it till you make it" which was a popular slogan that week.

Any student with a good grade point average willing to take a week of their time away from home and help make a wonderful experience for young kids can become a cabin leader. As well as making a huge impact on the kids and totally helping out the outdoor school, cabin leaders receive many hours of community service and an evaluation at the end of the week that can be used on job applications or similar opportunities. A schedule of dates and schools that are going to Camp Green Meadows is available upon request. Contact Sherry or Cindy if you are interested.

My Trip to Idaho

By Rochelle Miranda

Wow, I'm back! I just took a long trip to Idaho. This trip was so awesome, I was able to experience so many different things that I never have experienced before in my life. I never had traveled on a plane or bus alone. When I went up there my uncle took me from Atwater to Sacramento. From there I was put on a plane and flew for 5 hours and finally I was there. I landed in Boise, Idaho. On the way back I was on the bus for two days. It was kind of fun meeting new people and seeing things I have never seen. I was really jet lagged both ways. When I got there I felt like I didn't want to do anything. My cousins were dragging me everywhere to awesome waterfalls and many camping places. My family loves the outdoors. So we were all ways going places and exploring things. We went camping, fishing, swimming, had BBQ's, and many outdoors things like that. I loved it out there. There were many people that welcome you. The towns are so small that everyone knows everyone. I really liked it there but I am glad to be back here with my family. If I had a choice to go there or stay here, I would go there just because of all the wonderful sites.

