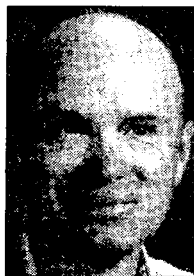


# The holidays mean cheer for all

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trivia that you may not have known. Before the playoffs were instituted, Flint Northern and Flint Central played each other in a football game at noon on Thanksgiving at Flint's Atwood Stadium. The series started in 1928 and lasted until 1976. The crowds were generally in the 10,000 range, but in 1950 the game attracted 20,600 spectators. You can read about

this series at [http://www.mhsaa.com/MHSAA\\_ARCHIVE/resources/library/fbfeast.pdf](http://www.mhsaa.com/MHSAA_ARCHIVE/resources/library/fbfeast.pdf).

After you read about the game's history, let me add a couple of little known tidbits. Flint Northern was the last high school in the state (perhaps even the entire country) to wear leather helmets. (Tom Jobson and Dave Brines will back me up on this.)

The helmets were red and gray leather, had a cross on the top just like the old Notre Dame helmets, and had almost no padding. I know this because I played junior football at Northern on Saturday mornings, and we had to wear the hand-me-down helmets. You can get an idea of the protective properties of one of those helmets if you put on a stocking cap and run head-first into a highway bridge abutment. This may explain why, to this day, I can't remember a simple

phone number. (Later I got a "real" helmet when I played at Flint St. Michael, but the thing had a face guard consisting of a 3-inch wide "see through" plastic bar. It was sort of like looking through a windshield smeared with Vaseline. Since I was a long snapper my view was not only wavy and distorted but also upside down. Now you understand this column better, eh?)

The Thanksgiving game also had an impact on the basketball programs at Northern and Central. Both teams often made deep runs in the state basketball playoffs despite having several losses on their records. The reason was that by the time the football players played the Thanksgiving game and then joined the basketball team, a few basketball games had already been lost by the second-string players.

Finally, with snow in the air now, you might be interested in watching the snow-making machines at Caberfae Peaks Ski Resort give an assist to Mother Nature. They have a new streaming webcam looking right up the Canyon trail on North Peak. It's at <http://caberfaepeaks.com/livecam.php>. You can watch snow being made around the clock, which I find fascinating. I even cued in the page on my iPhone so I can keep tabs. Very cool stuff, indeed.

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of salt, slam the two pieces together — voila! Wash that down with a glass of chocolate milk and life just does not get any better.

Speaking of eating a tiny bit too much during the holidays, good news comes from England. Researchers there studied more than 20,000 people and 12 genetic variants and found that physical activity can reduce the genetic tendency toward obesity by 40 percent. Being active for 30 minutes per day by doing something as simple as walking your dog can result in the benefits. Simply put by the experts, "Fat genes don't mean fat jeans."

Of course, eating too much turkey tends to make you want to nap. Did you know that, according to TV's Dr. Oz, 20 percent of us take five or more naps a month and 10 percent of us nap at work? Gee, considering the amount of time I was on hold the last time I called a tech support hotline, I would have guessed the napping-at-work percentage would be higher.

Many people take naps after watching too much football on television. I never had that problem as a kid because I was in the bleachers, in the freezing cold, watching high school football on Thanksgiving Day.

Here's a piece of Michigan high school football holiday

OK kidlings, the holidays are here so it's time to invoke a tradition here at the Neff Zone. All columns between now and the first of the new year will have an upbeat tone with (hopefully) some chuckles thrown in for good measure.

Let's start with the kids because they always seem to enjoy this season the most. If you need something to occupy their time, check out the special Neff Zone holidays Web page at [www.neffzone.com/holidays.htm](http://www.neffzone.com/holidays.htm). There you'll find all sorts of family-friendly games, quizzes, activities and holiday information. This should keep little nippers busy, and it's also a great time-waster for adults at work.

You may be doing some shopping while the kids are occupied with the holidays page, so you need to be aware of the latest buzz word. It seems that hot gifts for tech-savvy toddlers 4 and under are now smartphones, iPads and gift cards to iTunes so they can download their favorite apps. These kids are now known as "iTots." Get with the lingo you old fogey!

While you're spending time on the holidays page you may also be munching on some leftover turkey. As a public service I'm going to clue you in on a Neff family tradition that also happens to be the best sandwich in the history of the universe. Take two slices of bread, pile leftover turkey on one, slather the other with copious amounts of peanut butter, add a dash