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Super Bowl: Uniquely American – except the Roman numerals

By Ron Hart

The Super Bowl is one of those great annual events that is uniquely American – except for the Roman numerals. I think those still belong to the Vatican.

If you missed it, the final score was Saints, XXXI and Colts, XVII.

The Super Bowl represents what we Americans are all about: creative commercials occasionally interrupted by violence. During the six-hour broadcast, there were only 11 minutes of actual, live football action. Some of the commercial breaks were so long that, when we finally came back to the game, I had forgotten which teams were playing.

And what better Norman Rockwell-esque ritual could I have with my kids than to watch 20 erectile dysfunction commercials to every snap of the football? "Daddy, why are those people in bathtubs watching the sun set?" I just tell them the people lost their homes to foreclosure.

Football is a lot like sex: countless hours of advertising how good it will be with only 11 minutes of actual action. Then, for me, there is always that awkward moment at the end when my credit card is declined.

This year the only controversy was anti-gay forces preventing CBS from airing a gay dating ad in which two guys' hands touch while reaching for potato chips in a bowl. As any homophobe knows, that incidental contact is all it takes to turn you gay. The NFL is an organization where men in REALLY tight pants sweat while they Greco-Roman wrestle on the field and then all shower together after the game, but it wanted no part of such an ad.

It was estimated that Americans legally bet \$87 million on this year's Super Bowl. If you add the bookie action taken, I imagine the number would double. And if you take into account office pools and the like, we are probably talking about betting action close to half a billion dollars. I hear that Nancy Pelosi, who is probably trying to devise a way to tax office pools, participated in hers: she took Duke, Stanford, Memphis and Georgetown.

Obama did not attend the Super Bowl. That many Republicans drinking and congregating in a Southern city is not a place he'd want to be. But, realizing that he had not been on TV in two days, he did a pre-game interview with slow-pitch softball lobbyist Katie Couric. He called for greater multi-cultural understanding and sensitivity between the



Saints and the Colts so that this type of "violence" would not happen in the future. Then he preemptively blamed any injuries suffered during the game on George Bush.

Obama did invite Washington lawmakers to the White House to watch the game. But just when they were all getting along so well, there was that awkward moment when they couldn't muster the 60 Democrat votes needed to get a senator to pass the pretzels. The day was saved when Harry Reid made a \$300 billion deal with Ben Nelson (D-Nebraska) to make the Cornhuskers the next NFL expansion team if the players would agree to salary cuts. As we know, the "N" on the University of Nebraska football helmets stands for "knowledge."

Sadly, my buddy Peyton Manning did not win this year's Super Bowl. Maybe some day something will go Peyton's way in life. However, he did manage to film three commercials in the huddle during the third quarter for the only remaining companies out there which don't feature him as a spokesman.

Americans find comfort in football. In a country where most voters cannot tell you who is secretary of state, 95 per know that Peyton Manning quarterbacks the Indianapolis Colts. In "A Fan's Notes," Frederick Exley writes about the importance of football: "Why did football so bring me to life? I can't say precisely ... It smacked of something old, something traditional, something unclouded by legerdemain and subterfuge. I gave myself up to the Giants utterly. The recompense I gained was the feeling of being alive."

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LAKE BUENA VISTA, FL - FEBRUARY 08: In this handout photo provided by Disney, Super Bowl XLIV MVP Drew Brees joins Mickey Mouse in a celebratory parade in the Magic Kingdom on February 8, 2010 in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. Brees, the quarterback of the New Orleans Saints, is the latest celebrity to star in the "I'm Going to Disney World!" and "I'm Going to Disneyland" commercials which aired only hours after last night's NFL championship game ended. Brees led his team to a 31-17 victory over the AFC champion Indianapolis Colts in Super Bowl XLIV in Miami. (Photo by Gene Duncan/Disney via Getty Images)