

# Sports

## All-Mid-Valley football team

**Pete Martini and Gary Horowitz**  
Salem Statesman Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

There were great storylines this season for Mid-Valley football teams, but none better than Kennedy's ascent to the Class 2A state championship.

It was a story of perseverance.

After four games, the Trojans were 2-2 and coming off back-to-back lopsided defeats – 44-0 at home to Santiam and 44-7 at Sheridan.

But Kennedy made a few schematic adjustments defensively and didn't lose another game, culminating an 11-2 season with a 31-20 victory over Santiam in the state championship game.

The Trojans, who avenged the loss to Sheridan with a 27-6 victory in the rematch in the state quarterfinals, overcame adversity against Santiam.

Running back/linebacker Emorej Lynk had a monster first half with 140 yards rushing and two touchdowns, and a 45-yard touchdown pass as the Trojans took a 28-0 lead. But he was injured on the final play of the first half.

Lynk returned to the Trojans' sideline late in the third quarter on crutches with his right knee wrapped in ice and watched his teammates secure an emotional victory.

"We told the guys at halftime, 'This isn't the first time we've had some adversity this year,'" Kennedy coach Joe Panuke said. "It wasn't gonna be easy, (but) we're not just a one-man team."

It was a team victory for Kennedy, which fell short in four previous trips to the state championship game, most recently in 2015.

Santiam, which defeated defending state champion Monroe in the semifinals, lost in the state championship game for the second year in a row.

In 6A, McNary overcame a 0-5 start to win the Mountain Valley Conference championship and advanced to the state playoffs, led by running back/linebacker Junior Walling and quarterback Erik Barker.

MVC runner-up West Salem, whose brutal non-conference schedule included 6A championship game finalists Lake Oswego and Sheldon, came on strong at the end of the season. The Titans defeated Southridge in the first round of the state playoffs before taking defending state champion Clackamas to the wire in a 24-14 second-round defeat.

Four West Salem players – wide receiver Anthony Gould (Oregon State), quarterback/safety Simon Thompson (Utah State), linebacker Alex Hurlburt (Montana) and tight end/linebacker Micah Pugh (Air Force) – have made verbal commitments to continue their football careers in college next season.

Silverton overcame an early season injury to quarterback Levi Nielsen, who returned late in the campaign, to earn a share of the Mid-Willamette Conference crown by beating West Albany in the final regular season game on the Bulldogs' home field. West Albany won the rematch in the second round of the 5A state playoffs.

Not to be overlooked is St. Paul.



Kennedy celebrates following the Kennedy vs. Santiam OSAA Class 2A state championship football game at Cottage Grove High School in Cottage Grove on Nov. 24. Kennedy won the championship 31-20. ANNA REED/STATESMAN JOURNAL

The Buckaroos, who advanced to the 2A semifinals last season, made a smooth transition back to eight-man football in 1A and advanced to the state championship game. St Paul's unbeaten season came to an end with a 38-32 loss to Dufur, which won its fourth consecutive state title.

### All-Mid-Valley football – offense

**SIMON THOMPSON**  
**Position:** Quarterback  
**School:** West Salem  
**Year:** Senior

**Accomplishments:** Mountain Valley Conference Offensive Player of the Year. Thompson threw for 2,403 yards, 30 touchdowns and 12 interceptions. He also rushed for 571 yards and five touchdowns.

**JUNIOR WALLING**  
**Position:** Running back  
**School:** McNary  
**Year:** Junior

**Accomplishments:** First-team all-Mountain Valley Conference. He rushed for 1,005 yards and 12 touchdowns. He also had 91 receiving yards and two receiving touchdowns.

**HUNTER CHASE**  
**Position:** Running back  
**School:** Central  
**Year:** Senior

**Accomplishments:** First-team all-Mid-Willamette Conference. He had 1,143 rushing yards and 10 touchdowns.

**JUSTIN HERBERGER**

**Position:** Running back  
**School:** St. Paul  
**Year:** Senior  
**Accomplishments:** First-team all-Casco League. He rushed for 1,538 yards and 23 touchdowns. He also had 271 receiving yards and two receiving touchdowns.

**ANTHONY GOULD**  
**Position:** Wide receiver  
**School:** West Salem  
**Year:** Senior

**Accomplishments:** First-team all-Mountain Valley Conference. Gould had 1,009 receiving yards and 16 receiving touchdowns. He also rushed for 612 yards and six touchdowns, and added two touchdown returns on special teams.

**JESSE CABLE**  
**Position:** Wide receiver  
**School:** Central  
**Year:** Senior

**Accomplishments:** First-team all-Mid-Willamette Conference. He had 1,040 receiving yards and 15 touchdowns.

**MICHAEL RIDGWAY**  
**Position:** Offensive lineman  
**School:** McNary  
**Year:** Junior

**Accomplishments:** First-team all-Mountain Valley Conference; helped the Celtics win the Mountain Valley Conference championship.

**JOSHUA SCHMELTZER**  
**Position:** Offensive lineman  
**School:** McNary

**Year:** Senior  
**Accomplishments:** First-team all-Mountain Valley Conference; helped the Celtics win the Mountain Valley Conference championship.

**ASHTON ADAMS**  
**Position:** Offensive lineman  
**School:** South Salem  
**Year:** Senior

**Accomplishments:** First-team all-Mountain Valley Conference selection.

**ELI LARSON**  
**Position:** Offensive lineman  
**School:** Sprague  
**Year:** Senior

**Accomplishments:** First-team all-Mountain Valley Conference selection.

**ANDRE BEALL**  
**Position:** Offensive lineman  
**School:** North Salem  
**Year:** Senior

**Accomplishments:** First-team all-Mid-Willamette Conference selection.

**ANTHONY PUGH**  
**Position:** Defensive lineman  
**School:** West Salem  
**Year:** Sophomore

**Accomplishments:** First-team all-Mountain Valley Conference selection. He had 43 tackles, 10.5 tackles for a loss, four sacks, five quarterback contacts one pass deflected, one fumble recovery and one blocked kick.

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## Contemplating exchange between Homo interruptus



**Fishing**  
Henry Miller  
Guest columnist

"I like a good story well told. That is the reason I am sometimes forced to tell them myself." - Mark Twain.

That quote came to mind recently when I had several encounters with a couple of members of a subspecies of Homo sapiens that I've dubbed Homo interruptus repeatus.

The names are being withheld because the quotes are composites of several "conversations" during several encounters. And because I want to continue to be able to chew with my own teeth.

Here's a typical exchange using the acronyms HI and HI-2 for brevity's sake:  
HI: "So, Henry, gone fishin' lately?"  
Me: "Well, as a matter of fact, last weekend ..."

HI: "Yep, me and the family went over to the coast. Did pretty good on trout using worms and salmon eggs."

"Course it's nothing like when I used to go over there as a kid. Boy we really laid into them ... (five minutes later) ...

So, you doing anything this week?"  
Me: "Actually, if the weather holds, I was planning ..."

HI: "Oh man, I was hoping to go back to the coast. Thanksgiving is the traditional kickoff for winter-run steelhead fishing."

"But we've got family staying with us, and they don't fish. Don't know why my sister married a guy who doesn't fish but ... (five minutes later) ... So after they leave, I'm hoping to get out after that next storm when the river drops and clears."

At this point, HI-2 walks into the room.  
HI-2: "Hey, either of you two guys been fishing lately?"

Me: "I was just trying to explain to him that last weekend ..."

HI: "Like I was saying, me and the family went ..."

HI-2: "Boy, did you see how it's coming down sideways out there, like a cow on a flat rock. Bet nothing will be fishable for ..."

HI: "That's what I was just telling Henry, here ... Soon as the storm passes ..."

Me: "Actually, before it started raining ..."

HI-2: "Yea. This time of year you've got to take advantage of every ..."

HI: "The forecast says ..."

HI-2: "I'm going to be out of town next week ..."

About 10 minutes later with no openings for a complete sentence between the two of them, and me listening to the flying fragments like a verbal ping-pong match among a couple of world-class players ...

Me: "Wow, look at the time. I guess I better hit the road."

HI: "OK. Drive safe. See you next ..."

HI-2: "Now, like I was saying, I figure one, maybe two days after the rain quits. I'm ..."

Me, bolting for the door: "Nice talking to you both."

About a half-hour later, contemplating the previous disjointed, fragmented exchange, I began to wonder if maybe I, too, was devolving into a Homo interruptus repeatus myself.

And thinking about Mark Twain. Turkey whisperer II: Harry the mostly Jack Russell terrier has reprised his bravura performance as the Pied Piper of Meleagris gallopavo, commonly known as the wild turkey.

Harry, if you recall from a previous column, was an early fall hit with a roving band of the birds strolling on the greenway next to Salem Tennis & Swim Club that followed us for about a block.

At the time, Kay and I thought that Harry's turkey trot was a fluke. But during a recent walk in our neighborhood, we came across a similar flock of six of the perambulating butterballs (two males, four females) on the lawn of a house on Ewald Avenue a couple of blocks down from our destination, Hillview Park.

The excited Harry began his high-pitched yodel, usually a preamble to full-throated barking. The unfazed birds seemed to be attracted to the sound.

They strutted behind us, coming as close as about 8 feet away for about 40 feet up the road until they were distracted by some berries on a bush.

Two blocks up the street, the dog stopped looking back and keening for a taste of turkey.

Given his two performances as flock leader, I'm seriously considering using Harry, who apparently speaks fluent turkey, as a decoy during the spring season.

Henry Miller is a retired Statesman Journal outdoor columnist and outdoor writer. He can be reached via email at HenryMillerSJ@gmail.com