

"I heard a Coldplay song. I think it was 'Clocks,' and that was the song that really inspired me to play, and I was like, 'I could play that..'"
—Salvador Vargas, BC student who plays piano in Fireside Room



PHOTOS BY GREGORY D. COOK / THE RIP

Bakersfield College student Salvador Vargas plays the piano inside the BC Campus Center Fireside Room on Feb. 10. Vargas learns the music he plays by ear.

Musician hopes to achieve dreams

By Brian N. Willhite
Reporter

Passing through the corridor from Campus Center to the Free Speech area at Bakersfield College, you may hear someone playing a catchy, faithful rendition of a popular song on the piano in the Fireside Room. That someone is a student named Salvador Vargas, an aspiring musician looking for a way to incorporate music as the cornerstone in his life.

Growing up in a home filled with music and talent, Vargas learned early on in life that music was something he was interested in, though it wasn't until late in his teen years that he truly grasped how important music is to him — it's everything. So, for the last two years, he has dedicated himself to learning how to play the piano and finding his place in the music industry.

One of the challenges Vargas faces is that he currently doesn't read sheet music. Everything he plays he learns by ear, picking out the chord progressions and filling in the rest of the music from there based on what he hears, or wants to hear in the songs.

"I know the basics. I know chords and scales but if you put a simple, easy song in front of me to read, I probably can't do it. The reason why, I think, is because I'm so used to playing my way — which is free — and sheet music just kind of tells you what to play," said Vargas. He admits, however, that it would be beneficial for him to learn to sight read, even though he has a tough time doing it.

"I even took the keyboard class [at BC] but I couldn't do it, I had to withdraw. I don't want to say it was too easy, but for me, it was like going backward and I wasn't learning anything new," he said.

Part of what inspired Vargas in his youth to pursue music was his father. He was traveling musician who showed Vargas the joys of music through his own passion for it.

"I would go with him everywhere when he had



gigs — out of state — whatever — I would go with him and help him out and, little-by-little, I just started soaking up his knowledge and he would teach me a couple of things, too, but not too much. He didn't want to force me to play. He wanted me to do whatever I wanted," he said, thankful of his father's tutelage in his youth.

"I think back when I was a kid and all that time seeing my dad play, and seeing him perform, see him practice — it helped me out. I know how he plays. I didn't have to go on YouTube or nothing like that; it was just right there in front of me."

His father owned a music store a couple of years ago. Vargas would often go in to help out but found that he got bored standing around in the store and so, to pass the time, he would sit at the piano and try to play songs he heard playing on the radio.

"I heard a Coldplay song. I think it was 'Clocks,' and that was the song that really inspired me to play and I was like, 'I could play that.'" He then went home and downloaded the song and began learning to play it by listening to it all night long, figuring out the chord structure and dynamics of the piece.

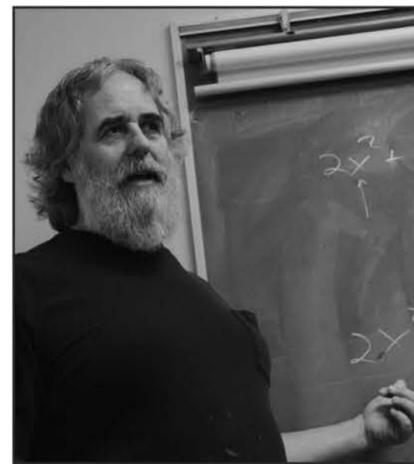
"Every song that I liked I tried to figure out or make my own stuff up and play all day basically, or whenever I could, and I've been playing ever since," he said.

Though music was a big part of his father's life, he has encouraged Vargas to pursue other career fields in order to obtain a steady job that isn't as unpredictable as the music industry. Because of this, Vargas is currently seeking a degree in architecture since he also has a passion for drawing, but says that his main interest is still music and he would like to pursue that option if he can find the right opportunity to present itself.

"I'm going to go for music. My dad might not encourage me to do that, but I'm going to do it because that's what I like. I can't express it but that's just me and I'm not going to change. If I fail, then 'oh well,' I guess I tried — I'm going to try and I'm not going to stop."

BC professor uses art to teach math

By Ryan George
Photographer



RYAN GEORGE / THE RIP

Rafael Espericueta explains an example written out on a chalkboard to one of his elementary algebra classes inside the Math and Science Building on Jan. 31.

Bakersfield College math professor Rafael Espericueta teaches more than just math. He experiments with turning mathematics into an art form.

"There are techniques to literally make visible the beauty of mathematics," Espericueta said.

Espericueta has been teaching at BC for 23 years. He graduated from UC Irvine with a bachelor's degree in Math in 1979, and later earned a master's. He then worked at UCI after graduating, spending four years as the senior programmer in their Brain-Imaging Lab. He also practices Zen, an ancient practice of meditation and took a trip to New Zealand's Hamilton Botanical Gardens "Zen Garden."

Espericueta designs his own art using fractals, which he says stems from "transitioning mathematics into visual forms. [My personal interest for fractal art] came out of frustration of only talking to mathematicians about math."

A mathematician named Benoit Mandelbrot originally conveyed fractal art. In 1979 he used pictures to illustrate complex mathematic equa-

tions. The first, titled the "Mandelbrot set," has the remarkable property that distorted copies of the whole appear at all levels of magnification" as stated in Espericueta's essay.

Espericueta says that he makes his fractal art by writing his own software programs using a combination of photos and Photoshop for interesting and unusual effects.

Espericueta states "the whole universe operates in much the same way [as fractals], where the 'simple algebraic formulas' are the laws of physics."

Espericueta also says that the universe is never ending, "so it's perhaps not so surprising that we find ourselves living in a giant fractal."



MARTIN CHANG / THE RIP

Will Yablum, a member of "The Movement" promotes his brand of "positive hip-hop" to a fellow Bakersfield College student Feb. 8.

Producer braves the music scene

By Kevin Foster
Reporter

Will Yablum is much more than just a Bakersfield College student.

Yablum is a promoter for a local rapper named Chris Clark, who goes by his stage name Nutzo.

Nutzo is the founder of a group called "The Movement."

"It's called 'The Movement' because we are trying to change the outlook of rap and hip-hop music. Nutzo doesn't rap about cars and money. Nutzo raps about his life and stuff he lives through," Yablum explained.

"I started 'The Movement' instead of signing with a record label because the rap game nowadays is full of producers looking for already made products. I want to start my own company and become a ready-made product," Nutzo said.

Yablum was going from foster home to foster home when he came across Nutzo.

"He was working at foster care and I was on probation. We became friends and now I'm his pro-

moter," Yablum said.

Nutzo said, "Will is my promoter because I see potential in him and he has the potential to do anything he wants. He has a few career opportunities, but he needs to find them."

Nutzo doesn't only rap around California. He also works at Foothill High School teaching second language learners how to speak English.

"I like that job because most of the teachers won't take time out of their day to actually teach the Hispanics and other second language learners how to speak English. Someone has to do it."

Both Yablum and Nutzo have some pretty high hopes about themselves and "The Movement."

"I see myself already on the top in 5-10 years from now," Nutzo said.

Nutzo wants to be like Dr. Dre and find someone himself.

"I'm not here to sign rappers to 'The Movement.' I am my own person and I will find someone myself," Nutzo said.

For people who want to find out where Nutzo is playing, contact Will Yablum.

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BC women start their year strong

By Kevin Foster
Reporter

There was a pitching duel on display at Bakersfield College on Feb. 12 between Jessica Simpson and Anissa Carrender.

The thing about that is they play on the same team.

Simpson started the day off with a complete game three hitter and retired 10 straight batters twice in the first game of a double header as BC (5-2) swept visiting El Camino (2-6).

Simpson allowed three of the first four batters she faced on base and after a meeting at the mound something seemed to change.

"[My teammates] reminded me what happened on the road when a lot of hits were hit off me and I didn't want a repeat of that, so I just did my best to buckle down," Simpson said.

Simpson retired 20 of the next 21 batters.

Carrender followed that performance with a complete game three hitter of her own, and at one point retired 12 batters in a row and had five strikeouts.

"After watching Jessica throw the first game I just went out there and hoped I could be as good as her," Carrender said. "I guess her and I were just in the zone."

Carrender started off rocky just like Simpson. Two of the first three batters reached base and after those only two more batters from El Camino got on base for the rest of the game.

Catcher Kara Frankhouser and Centerfielder Kaitlin Toerner both had three hits in the second game for the Renegades. First baseman Brandi Church went 3-4 with two doubles with three runs-batted-in on the day.

"I think it helped us that [El Camino] threw the same pitcher to start both games so the second game we knew what she was likely to throw because we talked in the dugout," Toerner said.

The sweep brings the Renegades home record to 4-0. The other two wins came against San Diego City College on Feb. 4 in a double header.

Brittney Messer ended both games with a walk off single and Danielle Ayler was the winning



JOE COTA / THE RIP

Jessica Simpson, starting pitcher for the Bakersfield College softball team, throws a pitch during Saturday's double-header game against El Camino College.

run on both of Messer's walk off hits.

The first walk off almost didn't happen. In the top of the seventh inning the Knights tied it up after Ayler dropped an infield fly ball that kept the inning alive only to be the game-winning run the next inning.

Ayler jokingly said that she dropped the ball on purpose so she could turn around and be a hero at the end.

The end of the second game also included a Knights comeback in the top of the seventh. Ashley Whitmore, who hit a home run in the first game, hit

a two run double to go up 4-3. Only for Ayler and Messer to win the game again.

"It was like déjà vu, it was kind of weird, but if I saw my pitch I was going to swing no matter what," Messer said about the second walk off.

It hasn't all been great for the

Renegades in the past week.

They lost the first game of the season on Feb. 8 to Fresno City College (7-2) and two days later lost on a walk off home run to College of Sequoias.

The next home game for the Renegades will be against Oxnard on Feb. 22.

BHS star on his way to quarterback for BC

By Zak S. Cowan
Sports Editor

Bakersfield College's football program is going through a regular transition phase, and 2011's team will start to take its shape over the next few months.

Head coach Jeff Chudy is intrigued by the potential of the incoming class of freshman, and is working hard to make sure that the process for local athletes to register at BC goes smooth for both parties.

Brian Burrell, a senior quarterback at Bakersfield High School, is expected to be at BC next semester.

Burrell threw for over 1,500 yards with 17 touchdowns and two interceptions, and rushed for 853 yards and 13 touchdowns during his senior season at BHS.

Burrell and his team also defeated Centennial quarterback and USC commit Cody Kessler in the Central Section Division I semifinal 37-20 last December. Burrell was responsible for five total touchdowns and nearly 400 yards in that game.

"I don't like to single anybody out ... but we're excited with the group of high school seniors right now," said Chudy. "We had the BHS guys up last week and we feel really good about the group of local talent."

"We've had quite a few schools come up and visit the campus," said Chudy. "In the good ol' days ... the counseling department was able to go down to the campuses and dial in all the high school seniors. So, we're having to do a lot of that on our own."

"We're fortunate that we've got somebody like [Elizabeth Ochoa, the educational adviser for the athletics department], who does a great job working with the high school senior student athletes."

More than 60 percent of last year's team was freshman, and that team made the playoffs on an 8-2 record only to lose to Mt. San Antonio College in the first round.

"[The incoming freshman] have some big shoes to fill with the class that came in before them," he said. "We've told them that 'hey, hopefully you guys will have the same kind

of work ethic of the guys that came in last year."

"Ninety percent of them played when those guys were seniors, so they understand that they have big shoes to fill."

Chudy is intent on making sure that there is competition at every position, and the local athlete pool is at the center of his attention.

The other thing Chudy and his staff are focused on is the turnover from a freshman-heavy team to a sophomore-deep team, and making sure that the sophomores departing have success after BC.

"In a perfect world you'd have more balance, but last year we had even more of a freshman-dominated team than most years," Chudy said. "So we didn't have as many sophomores leaving this year as we did the year previous."

The national signing day, a day when student athletes sign letters of intent to various Division I schools, took place on Feb. 2.

Of all the sophomores departing from BC, seven players have signed with Division I schools since national signing day, with kicker Josh Gallington expected to become the eighth when he signs with Northern Illinois.

"We've got to get our guys out of here," Chudy said of players moving up.

"It's a work in progress, [Gallington] didn't sign on the signing day for four-year colleges, but yet he's going to be signing a letter of intent probably next week."

"So [the sophomores] will still be being placed throughout the spring, so our goal is to get every guy that is a sophomore that has to continue playing a spot somewhere."

Former Renegade Banks stabbed

Washington Redskins wide receiver Brandon Banks, a Bakersfield College alumnus, was stabbed during an altercation early Saturday morning.

Banks is currently in a D.C. hospital and is expected to be out soon.

"He's recovering well, there's no damage and no residual effects, so it looks like he's going to make a full recovery and be just fine," Banks' agent James Gould said in a phone interview with the Washington Post.

Banks finished his rookie season with 1,155 returning yards and one touchdown.

Women's basketball

Paula Dahl, the head coach of the women's basketball team, has taken a leave of absence for the remainder of the season.

"I lost my father unexpectedly on Saturday afternoon. He was a wonderful man and I loved him very much," Dahl said in an e-mail to her health students. "Throughout my life I have followed in his footsteps and learned much of my teaching method from him."

Amanda Cady, a freshman guard, is confident in her and her team to play well and win out the season.

"I think it actually makes us play harder," Cady said. "Well, we've had other deaths on our team happen and it brings us more together."

Men's Basketball

With playoffs out of the picture for the Bakersfield College men's basketball team, the remaining five games on the schedule could be used for the experience.

The team not only is using it for the experience, but also has stretched the first three games into a three game win streak after defeating West L.A. 83-81,

College of the Canyons 86-79, and most recently at L.A. Valley 81-67.

The Renegades 10-15 overall (4-6 in Western State Conference Southern Division) were led by Cooper Damron with 21 points. Damron is averaging 11.7 points per game. The Renegades second leading scorer is Stevie Howard at 10.2 points per game.



GREGORY D. COOK / THE RIP

Paula Dahl coaches her team during a game against Citrus College on Jan. 29.

Tennis

In seven days, Bakersfield College's men's tennis team has played three games, and the season is off to a perfect start. BC remains undefeated as they started the season playing teams that Coach Rob Slaybaugh called "top ranked teams in the north."

BC played their first game against Fresno City College on Feb. 3, and although the team lost the first three singles matches, they won their last three singles matches and two out of three doubles matches. After the rough start to the game, BC won the match 5-4.

Two days later, BC played Sierra College, and the exact same lineup brought the team another win, this time with a 6-3 victory. Slaybaugh changed the team's lineup on Feb 10 for the game against College of the Sequoias, a team he calls "not as talented", and BC defeated COS 8-1.

In one week, the team goes up against Ventura, who won the state last year, and is always a "solid team" says Slaybaugh.

"I'd rather play in a tough

league and play tough teams every match, then a league with patsies," says Slaybaugh, "because that doesn't make the kids better."

Track and Field

The Bakersfield College men and women's track and field team is well into its season, and has competed in three meets so far.

BC will host College of the Sequoias and College of the Canyons on Friday Feb. 18 at 1 p.m.

Head coach Dave Frickel is working on the team's progression.

"We're getting better, people are improving on marks, and getting in better shape," Frickel said.

Sophomore Robby Harris likes the way him and his team has started off.

"We're looking pretty good, we have a lot of guys that are up to par in talent."

"I expect for us to have more people in state than we did last year."

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Baseball impresses after opening

By Julian Moore
Opinions Editor

The Bakersfield College baseball team opened the season with a 4-3 record with its most recent win, coming against Golden West College, 10-4. The game was a part of the College of Sequoias tournament that began Feb. 10.

Golden West led the game early, but the Renegades got their offense going in the middle of the game as they scored seven runs throughout the rest of the game giving them a comfortable lead. Sophomore Riley Showers had three RBI in the game on just two hits. David Pennington also brought a home run for the Renegades.

"This past weekend, we had three of our sophomore players really step up and carry a big load. Riley Showers had an outstanding weekend. He's somebody we look to. He's been here and has some experience," said head coach Tim Painton.

"David Pennington is playing with injuries. He's not even playing defense right now, but offensively he's been able to hit from the DH spot where he's provided the offense," Painton continued. "He has a leg problem that's been kind of nagging. He played through it at times opening weekend, he's being treated for it. So what we're able to get out of him are about three at-bats a game, then we have to pinch-run for him late in the game if it's close.

"He's the one player we have that played every day last year and has been through it so we're hoping to get him healthy this week.

"But those guys got going a bit in the second week of the

season."

Painton also spoke about freshman Philip Valos, who pitched four innings of relief in the game.

"He's a young man that should have great command of pitches and he didn't show that the first weekend. He walked people, got behind in counts, but against Golden West, he was able to come in and throw scoreless innings of relief and didn't walk anybody. And that was a major step for him and us because that's what he's going to be expected to do."

The Renegades previously lost two-of-three games to Marin, 6-5, and Allan Hancock 4-3, and picked up the shutout win against Hartnell, 6-0.

Before those games, BC went 2-1, losing by 13 during the opening game of their home tournament. The Renegades bounced back in the final two of the home stand against Golden West 4-2 and then held off Moorpark 12-11. Painton talked about the home tournament.

"I think we were extremely nervous opening night for whatever reason. We have a lot of new players in the program, first night out at home and we didn't perform. We didn't do anything well," he said. "Your goal going into a season is to get better each time you play and we're on that path. I think we've gotten better each time we've gone out. We are continuing to do more and more things well in each ball game. I think opening night was more about jitters and nerves than it was anything else."

Painton mentioned how the Renegades let Moorpark back into the game.

"There were some walks in there, a couple errors. Some of



GREGORY D. COOK / THE RIP

Bakersfield College second baseman Daniel Rueger tags out Rustler shortstop Eric Gonzalez at BC on Feb. 13.

the freshmen have had good days and bad days and that's going to happen at this level. Moorpark swung the bat extremely well and we knew going into the game they had a pretty good offense team and again your goal is to outscore your opponent and that's what we did so we'll take the win and move on

from there," Painton said. "By that game, I think fatigue had something to do with it, especially for us at home. You host a tournament; our guys are out there all day.

"You're there 14-15 hours a day and then you get on the field to play.

"But it also has something to

do with pitching staffs just being run down by the third game in the three days.

"We were fortunate to end up on the good end of a 12-11 game."

Up next for the Renegades is another home tournament beginning on Feb. 17 starting with Reedley.

Column

Keep the local kids

Open Mike | A column on the everyday happenings in sports.

The Bakersfield College men's basketball team has had an up-and-down season this year, with a lot more downs than ups. Over the years, head coach Rich Hughes has put together five of BC's best seasons with consecutive trips to the regional playoffs. But those numbers and past seasons don't mean anything this year.

Hughes and the Renegades have struggled mightily, with size and lack of defensive intensity being just two of the many problems.

Along with those problems, come the recruiting issues that are unique to Bakersfield. Whether it's at the Division I level at CSUB or at the JC level here at BC, it's hard to keep the talent in town – in town.

The players available follow a certain mold:

"Player 1" is a D1 prospect player from a Kern County High School within the past couple of years. Just about all of them left town to play for "the big boys." Taking their talents to schools like USC and UCLA down south and other Pac-10-12 schools up north, generally.

Then you have "Player 2" whose academic records are suspect, but their athletic potential and upside is so great, that D1 schools, such as Fresno State and others – generally out of state – like Utah, Utah State, Boise State, Nevada, and the rest of the WAC and Mountain West Conferences steal away.

And last, but certainly not least, is "Player 3" who, would nicely fill out a roster spot, on a D1 school's roster, but is usually immature, has way too many academic disturbances, and has way too many personal issues and or kids to count.

At BC, Hughes tries to get player three and turn him around and get him back on the right track as the player helps rack up the wins for the Renegades.

The problem is Hughes isn't getting those guys anymore. For years, Hughes has made it his business to get guys to commit to his program and for years it was going a lot smoother than it has in the past two years.

I've been to a fair share of high school basketball games this year and have seen Hughes out on the recruiting trail several times. So it's not a matter of hours put in.

The problem is more that local players aren't staying home. But why?

People throw out the fact that sometimes kids just want to get out of the town they grew up in. Another common reason is the lack of exposure kids feel they get here.

Here's a thought to local high school players: Maybe help build on to a team's history and prestige. Add to the tradition of players who played two solid years at BC and transferred out to a four-year school.

As far as exposure goes, the same way you were recruited by four-year schools will be the same way you can be looked at when you transfer out or at the next level. Scouts will find you. It's what they're paid to do.

Another benefit of staying home is that you get a closely-knit community behind you, and if players help build a stronger tradition with a program, the community will continue to show support.

With football, CSUB doesn't have a program so BC maintains a level of quality players, but still I really applaud kids like Bakersfield High's quarterback Brian Burrell for turning down several offers D1 four-year schools and deciding to come to BC and further his education and develop his talent under good coaches like Jeff Chudy and Carl Dean.

I just wish there were more athletes in sports like basketball that made a commitment to play at home.



Michael Morrow

BC students and teachers react to Packers' Super Bowl win

By Esteban Ramirez
Reporter

After every Super Bowl, people usually have different reactions to it.

This could be because they didn't like the game, the halftime show, commercials, or their favorite team lost.

This year was no different when the Green Bay Packers beat the Pittsburgh Steelers 31-25.

Kylan Love, 23, a Bakersfield College student said, "it

was a bad Super Bowl, it was garbage." He explained that he hated that the game started off slowly, but thought that the best part was when Pittsburgh started to lose.

Kylan also said he enjoyed the Doritos commercials, and was satisfied with the end result because he wanted Pittsburgh to lose.

Juliana Marin, a BC student, said, "it was a good game, the coaches and players were respectful to one another."

Marin hated that the Steelers

lost and said her favorite part was seeing two teams with so much on the line but yet were respectful to each other.

She also said she liked the commercials, especially the Doritos and Pepsi commercials. Marin was happy to see that both teams played well.

BC student Luke Gieser said, "it was the best Super Bowl I've seen in about five years." His favorite part was that it was intense because it looked like the Steelers were going to come back and win it but at the end

they couldn't pull it off."

Gieser also liked the play when Aaron Rodgers threw the first touchdown pass to Jordy Nelson.

"I liked the commercials but I didn't think the halftime show was good," Gieser said. "Even though I'm a Vikings fan I was happy with the end results because for this day I was rooting for the Packers."

Tim Bohan has been an Academic Development professor at BC for 15 years.

Bohan's reaction to the game

was that it was good because it lived up to his expectations. He said his favorite part was that every time the Packers tried to pull away, the Steelers answered back.

Bohan said that the halftime show and commercials were OK, but his favorite commercial was the Darth Vader car commercial. When asked if he was satisfied with the end result he said, "although I wasn't rooting for a team, I was happy to see that it ended up being a good game."

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Athlete, ex-marine returns to BC

By Michael Morrow
Reporter

Jeremy Staat is a new volunteer coach for the Bakersfield College Renegades, but is an old face in town. At age 34, Staat has done more in his lifetime than most people could only imagine doing. A former Driller, Renegade, Sun Devil and a member of four NFL teams, Staat's most important role in life may have come as a Marine.

Born and raised in Bakersfield, Staat went to Bakersfield High School and graduated in 1994. After BHS, Staat came to BC and starred in football and track and field, where to this day, he is a record-holder in field events.

Staat credits his time as a student-athlete at BC as one of the best times of his life because he believes you get a good education, and the experience is priceless. He also enjoyed the fact that he got the chance to play in front of friends and family at home.

"I spent two glorious years here at BC. Here in Bakersfield it's a great big little town and your only three or four people away from somebody that knows you," said Staat. "I've had a great experience here. I think Bakersfield is a great place to raise a family."

Staat also mentioned how anywhere he went there was always a connection to Bakersfield.

After graduating from BC with an A.A. in criminal justice, Staat transferred to Arizona State University.

"I spent two years at ASU and graduated with a degree in liberal studies. I was there in '96 and '97 and played in the Rose Bowl and played in the Sun Bowl. That's also where I met my good friend Pat Tillman as well," said Staat.

Tillman was an ASU teammate of Staat's and was drafted by the Arizona Cardinals. Tillman left the Cardinals at the completion of the season the year of the 9/11 in 2001 to enlist in the U.S. Army. Tillman was killed and later investigations proved friendly fire was the cause of death.

"To come into that program at the time I did, I can say it was definitely a blessing to be there at that time. To meet



Jeremy Staat sits above Memorial Stadium on Feb. 10.

RYAN GEORGE / THE RIP

the guys that I met because that core and that team with Pat Tillman, Jake Plummer, Juan Roque, Derek Smith, those guys were awesome individuals and to have a 12-1 season, playing in the Rose Bowl and being Pac-10 champions," said Staat. "We played in the Rose Bowl in 1997, we played against Ohio State and we lost in the last minute and 24 seconds for a national title. It was a heartbreaker, but then the next year we played in the Sun Bowl in El Paso and beat the tar out of Iowa. That was just an amazing experience for me."

After gaining multiple awards and accolades for the Sun Devils, Staat was drafted by the Pittsburgh Steelers and played three years at defensive tackle. After his time with the Steelers from 1998-2000, Staat bounced around the league landing in Seattle and Oakland before eventually ending up in St. Louis where he eventually retired.

Staat mentioned how his most memorable moment came not as a professional or at ASU, but rather at his old stomping grounds at BC.

"Out of the 15 years that I've played football, there's one memory that really stands out. It was when I caught a touchdown pass in the Potato Bowl down here my freshman year. I forgot who we were playing against, but it was the first touchdown I ever scored," he said. "I just remember that because when I crossed the end zone for my route and I caught the ball, I just remember getting hit in the back so hard that I thought 'I

don't know how these guys do it.'

"I remember my dad picking up grass and my mom picking up grass and putting it in their pockets because they were so excited because it was my first touchdown I'd ever scored. As an offensive lineman, you really don't get a chance to. That's actually one of the pinnacle moments of my football career - catching a pass in the Potato Bowl."

After retiring from the NFL, Staat went to the Arena Football League.

"I played one year in the AFL, the Arena Football League, because I figured I already had my retirement from the NFL and with another four years from the AFL, why not get two retirements?" he said. "That took a dramatic turn when Pat was killed on April 22, 2004. I said 'I'm done.' I hung it up and did some serious soul searching and joined the Marine Corps in December of 2005."

Staat was with the L.A. Avengers when he got the call from his mother.

"I got a phone call from my mom and she was very hysterical, upset and crying and I asked her what's going on and she said 'Patty's been killed.'" Staat said. "I tried to continue to hold myself together, so I went through meetings and tried to go through practice and about halfway through, one of the other players was kind of busting my chops a little bit, and I just lost it."

"I threw my helmet and just walked off the field. It was definitely a shocker, and it was the first time I've ever lost somebody that close to me and nobody ever wants to experience something like that."

Staat reflected on Tillman's life and what he meant to him as a friend.

"When you look back and you see how people have kind of glorified his life and his athletic accomplishments, it really makes me feel good inside that I was friends with him and that me and him had one of those open relationships where I could tell him exactly how I felt about where he stood and he could tell me the same," he said. "We didn't have any secrets and we were very straightforward with each other and it's good to see that people are remembering him for

what he did."

Staat looked back at how the cover up on Tillman's death left him feeling.

"I actually just watched the Pat Tillman story, his biography, just last week for the first time. I knew the gist of the story and what had taken place, but to see it unfold in that documentary was really hard to swallow," said Staat. "It really upset me to see how our politicians, the elected officials that we put in office, how they treated this. If they could do it to Pat Tillman, then they could do it to all of our veterans and the cover up was just a disgrace."

"When it comes to veterans, I take a lot of pride in being a veteran, but I take a lot of pride in protecting our veterans as well."

After Tillman's death, Staat decided to leave football and join the Marines.

"It was extremely difficult being in boot camp with kids who were 10 years younger than me because having been through some real life lessons and experienced a little bit of reality going in there and seeing these young men try to find their way was kind of difficult for me," said Staat. "I was kind of paying the price for their mistakes and for a while there it was hard for me to relate to these 18-19 year old kids who have really never accomplished anything more than just high school and heck, some of them didn't even accomplish that."

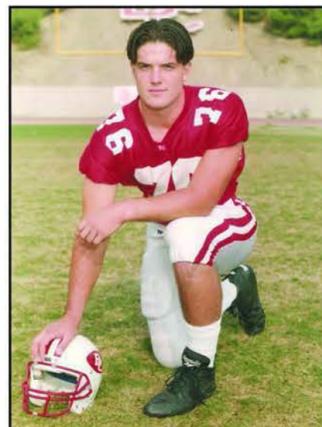
"To deal with them and to try and keep them motivated and tell them, this really isn't that bad, it really took a drain on me."

Staat left the Marine Corps in 2009 and also earned his master's degree from ASU in liberal studies that year.

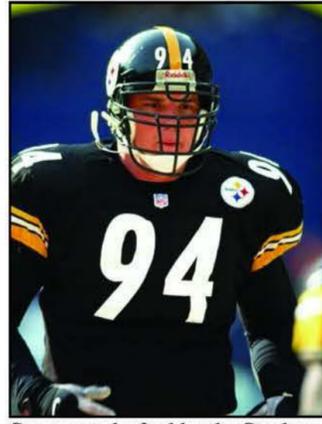
Now Staat has come full circle and is back in Bakersfield helping out with the Renegades.

"My biggest thing is just trying to show the guys that I've already been there, my season is already over with, what I want to instill in these young men is that education is first because no matter what, there is one thing no one can ever take away from them and that's their education."

Staat is also newly married. His wife, Janelle, is a current student at BC.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JEREMY STAAT
Jeremy Staat played football for the Renegades from 1994 - 1995.



Staat was drafted by the Steelers in 1998, playing there until 2000.



After leaving football, Staat joined the Marines in 2005.

Bakersfield College

SGA Elections

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March 2, 5:00 in the Campus Center

March 3, 5:00 at Delano in DST 102

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