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everywhere →

slide show →

itinerary/index →

roadies →

city
hot spots →

office pool →

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NFL ▼

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Game day: 49ers fans just as fanatical as other side of the Bay

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Dawn Reiss
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SAN FRANCISCO -- Frances Lindquist has a life size cardboard cut out of Joe Montana in her living room. It goes with the neon Coors Light 49ers sign in the window and the autographed No. 16 jersey that hangs framed over her fireplace mantel.

Even at the age of 62, Lindquist still loves the game as much as she did when she moved from San Diego to Petaluma, Calif., in 1978.

"It was the 49ers or the Raiders," she says. "The 49ers were terrible back then, but it was a no-brainer, the 49ers have more class."

While her and her late husband, Bruce, didn't have money to attend most games, she still rooted from the couch. She can remember seeing "The Catch" and watching Montana make the winning drive for San Francisco at Super Bowl XXIII.

To this day, Lindquist enjoys coming home from work and watching that Super Bowl video again. She even drove to the pro football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio to attend Montana's induction.

Being a 49ers fanatic has also caused some trouble. Dressed in 49ers gear, Lindquist feared for her life after watching San Francisco win against the Raiders at Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum.

"It was scary," she says. "We weren't allowed to go in certain bathrooms or leave the stadium after the game. Not even for a smoke. A security guard told me I could smoke in my seat as long as I promised I wouldn't leave the stadium."

While Montana has long since retired, Lindquist recently met him at a celebrity golf outing. Lindquist and her daughter, wearing a Montana jersey, were following Montana around the course when he asked what time it was.

"I almost fainted," she says. "He doesn't like to talk about himself, so we talked about everyday things, (his wife) Jennifer, their horses and his induction to the Hall of Fame; he even gave us a ride on his golf cart."

Part of Lindquist's love for football comes from her roots in Kansas. Growing up, she was one of seven girls. Her mother hated sports. Her father loved them and took Lindquist and her sisters to local sporting events. She loved every minute of it. As Lindquist raised her own family, she wanted them to be a part of athletics too.

"It wasn't always like this," says her second of five daughters, 34-year-old Doreen Thompson. "I moved away to Santa Barbara and when I came back the whole house was decorated with 49ers stuff. I couldn't understand their interest, but it was great to see mom and dad get into this."

It seems the whole family is swept up in 49ers fever, especially around Halloween. One year, the Lindquist sisters Diane and Jennifer dressed up as first down markers complete with orange faces and a chain linking them together.

Diane's husband dressed as a goalpost. His head was the camera and fans tried to kick field goals through the posts. Frances came to the game dressed as the ghost of Joe Montana to forever haunt Candlestick, Calif.

"It's not just about going to the stadium and seeing the game," says Diane. "I don't see my parents during the summer, but during football season, it's a family thing. These are the only four months out of the year that we really see each other."

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