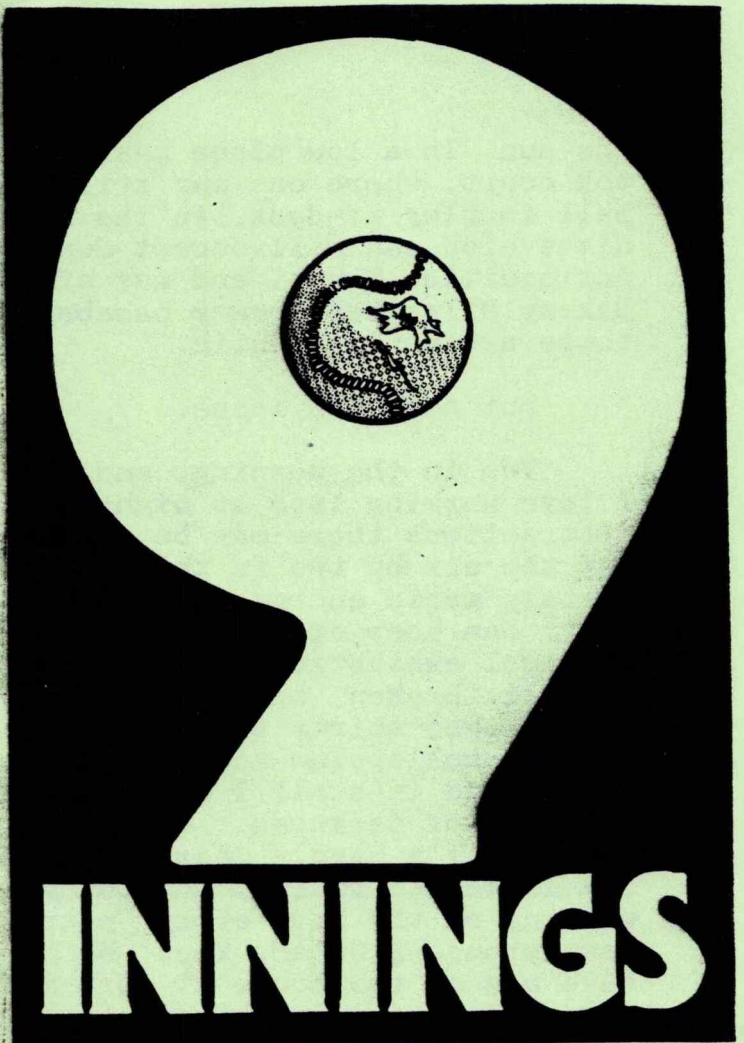


This is Nine Innings #6, brought to you by Andrew Hooper, of Smuttering Hall, 315 N. Ingersoll St., Madison, WI 53703, member fwa, with the usual yeoman assistance of Carol Root, who helped with layout and printing right after a 5 hour flight from Seattle, with enthusiasm. This fanzine is available for the usual, and for one dollar US if you can't loc or send a trade. Art Credit: illo on page 12 by Stu Shiffman; illos on pages 14 & 18 by Reed Waller. Rocketmen card on page 18 courtesy of Luke McGuff, who said he just had to send it to me. Other bits and pieces by random association; photo on page 17 depicts the author setting the North American for highest altitude spitball, at Hurricane Ridge in the Olympic range. Support Ditto III in Madison in 90; Madison fandom deserves a fanzine convention before we start hating each other! This is Drag Bunt Press Production # 59.

APRIL 10TH, 1989:

By this time, the limitations of the "Baseball as Dumbshow" format that I have been using in this zine are becoming painfully obvious. One opening day spent shivering on an aluminum plank is much like another; the last game of the season is always fraught with vain, filial misery, and the winter that follows is always difficult to endure. Once one has described these phenomena, there is probably little point in resurrecting them from season to season, and I find myself moved to venture into more and more rarified regions of tangent and digression to make the zine interesting to myself, let alone for the suffering multitudes in whose mailboxes the thing appears. Eventually, I will slip entirely away from the re-creation of an actual game, or even an imaginary one, wandering from the anticipation of a game directly and irrevocably into a convention report or book review or an uncertain Quevado translation of Browne's Urn Burial, and never return to the game again. Of course, this will be my downfall, as that certain special something leaves my work, never to return; I will plunge heartily into a self-destructive spiral of boozing and gum card speculation, and disappear into the Ecuadorian Jungle to do research on a script (the story of an itinerant utility infielder in search of a mystic visionary who can teach him to hit .300, to be titled "Aguayo: The Wrath of Lau"), for the experimental-children's-mime-theatre-for-the-deaf company that I plan to form in Quito. Thereafter, the only report of me will appear in the Baedeker for 1998: "At lost Tihuanoco, little remains save the arch of



the sun. In a low place nearby, there are the ruins of a pok-a-tok court, where one may still hear the ghostly thump of the ball in play at dusk. In the hut beside the ruin, a gaunt, disheveled man will accept donations for the Trans-Andean Antiquities Trust, and may offer to sell you vintage Gardner's Bakery Milwaukee Brewer baseball cards. Be aware that many of these are not authentic."

But not this issue.

Two in the morning, and I'm still up, rocking and rolling. I love working late at night like this, because whatever distractions there may be, most of them have gone to sleep or off the air by two in the morning; and I, still seized by a certain manic energy at being able to do pretty much whatever I want, can keep cruising along until daybreak if I want to. Physical exhaustion usually comes along all at once, when the spell is broken, and I look at the clock and think about getting up at seven-thirty the same morning. At that point, the eyelids turn to collapsium and groan shut like Imperial-built blast doors, and it's all I can do to lumber upstairs and splash into the lake of darkness.

But I'm hardly there yet. I haven't the luxury. I have a commission to finish, due today after three months of patient waiting on the part of my "patron," and I'm scheduled to leave town around 9:30 AM. Thus, No Sleep Til' Brooklyn, as it were. I have a good two hours of work still to go, and it doesn't get any easier once my vision starts to swim.

The work I'm doing is painting miniature gaming figures -- contorted, mutant lead soldiers -- for a novice painter who wants to put a large number of figures on his gaming table in a hurry. But, instead of investing the requisite time for such a venture, and it can take quite a long time, he has been commissioning me, and some other painters as well, to do a lot of the work for him. And since he isn't all that experienced with this sort of thing, he is naturally saving the easy ones for himself, while farming the really tough stuff out to the likes of me.

I'm not complaining, since I'm being very well-paid for my trouble, but it has been educational. I suppose it must be a nearly universal experience, discovering that nothing stays fun for very long when you're getting paid for it. Anyway, for nearly three months, I've sat on this little squadron of cavalry, racked with ennui at even the thought of finishing the smart green and gold color scheme I've picked out for them; and once again, I'm under the gun.

And man, these are some tough figures. They have some strange interlocking plates for armor, configured in an unpleasantly well-detailed floral pattern, and these odd winged helmets with full-face masks on them, that make them look like extras from a Crash Corrigan serial. Around the waist is some sort of kilt that looks almost Roman, studded leather straps over some discreetly ambiguous underpinnings, and capping the whole confused mess is the stylized hawk's head in relief on the



shields, that looks like something you'd see on one of the Lindesfarne gospels. And their mounts aren't much easier; they have a heavy series of plates around the head and face, with the rest of the body so heavily barded that only the tail, forelegs and hooves are visible at all, so that the impression is rather that of a pantomime horse. The skirts are so convoluted that any effort at painting heraldry is hopeless; that sort of thing is problematic at best when dealing with a 25mm tall figure, even when you're painting a relatively flat surface, like a banner or a shield-face. I have decided to give them a base of forest green and a dry-brushing of an irridescent mint green, that will hopefully look like silk.

So, all I have to do is paint all the little armored crannies on the horsemen, the (copiously exposed) flesh, do the wings, the boots, the kilts, the shield-backs, the shield faces, the swords in their scabbards, the jewels at the belts and gorgets, the long, flowing hair from under the helmets, their little goofy medieval knights at tournament lances, with pennants, the tooled-gilt saddles, bridles, bits and armor on the horses, the bases, then shade and highlight omnes, to create illusions of depth, fiddle with and touch up each step a dozen times, let the whole lot stand twenty minutes and then seal with spray dullcote, thus poisoning the already rank atmosphere of the ground floor and destroying the ozone layer in the process...

The last Smithereens song grinds away into the dawn twilight; in the middle distance, the sound of an incipient catfight makes me look up and notice: Somehow, it's gotten to be five in the morning. My entire skeletal structure is immediately and grossly altered into something shambling and high shouldered. I clean out my brushes and turn off everything I can find the switch for; the stairs loom like Anapurna, the dawn light glinting on the dust on the landing like snow, and outside the birds ratchet and scrape.

A little time passes. I dream the Floating Dream, which is archetypical enough to be embarrassing; how fortunate that Carrie is there to gently stab me awake only three and a half hours into it.

I am nearly sick enough to consider not going. Those of you who know me realize that in the past, no hangover, no malaria flare-up, no broken limb, no pulmonary embolism, has been sufficient to keep me from going to a major league baseball game. And these tickets -- a Christmas present from our friend Chris Bzdawka of Milwaukee -- have been sitting on my desk since late December. I took them out of their envelope almost daily during the long, sad slope of the winter, promising myself all the brats I could choke down if we could just make it to April...anyway, to consider not going at this juncture is a sign either that my faith is wavering badly, or that I am at death's door.

But Carrie points out that she has taken off a day of work to go to this silly game of baseball with me, as has Chris, as have I...we load the cooler into the trunk, grab some sodas, and away we go, stopping first to spill a thermos full of coffee all

over the kitchen and Carrie's good black jacket, and then to snarl at the fates and one another for ten minutes or so. We then stop off at Pegasus Games for a few seconds, long enough to give instructions for the disbursement of the figures I stayed up all night painting. I hate them even more in the daylight; thank god that's over with.

Shortly, we are humming along the highway in the trusty red Toyota, cranking the radio loud to try and keep awake. All the way to Milwaukee, we pass through intermittent squalls of snow and biting wind, and a strange dialogue ensues:

Me: Well, this doesn't look too good. Where would you want to go to lunch if the game were called off?

Carrie: Key West, I should think.

Me: Mmmm. Well, I don't think they would call off the game unless it were really hard to see, or the players started to get frostbite from the windchill, because they hardly want to give out 50,000 rainchecks.

Carrie : Snowchecks

Me: Yeah, snow checks. They must give out a lot of those in Toronto.

Carrie: They must give out a lot of them here.

Me: But this isn't so bad. A little snow is better than a little rain. You don't get as wet, so you can warmed up again more easily. And they'll be sure to have the proper sort of hot things for sale in the stands if it's snowing. If it's sunny and cold, they might still try to sell us beer instead.

Carrie: And wine coolers.

After about an hour of this, we reach the outskirts of Milwaukee proper, as we pass the crane-mounted Blau "Sudden Service" Plumbing sign. The traffic is quite stiff for 11 on a Monday morning; obviously, the majority of fans have decided to brave the cold as we are. Soon, the deep bowl of stadium looms before us; the parking lots are awash with fans, and the smoke of ten thousand barbecues hangs over the valley. A strong sense of *deja vu* creeps into the day at this point; I doubt it will leave us for the remainder of the zine.

We have to move right by the stadium, because we have to go into downtown Milwaukee to pick up Chris B. She lives in a marvelously decrepit apartment building known as "The Beaumont," lying in the shadow of a high rise dormitory for students at the Milwaukee School of Engineering; the only way I really know how to get there is to take the same route into town that the Badger Bus takes, and strike...uh...south...from there. But we find the place pretty much without incident. Chris is in the kitchen when we arrive, busily spilling a thermos full of coffee all over herself and cursing broadly. But even spilling coffee on herself and scrabbling around for a clean towel, Chris looks great; she's one of those people that always looks good. This is such an irritating gift that it's remarkable that it hasn't been bred out of the species through natural selection, as the vast majority of slob individuals get together and pole-axe the good-looking individuals. Clearly, I am only half awake; this is actually a treat of amazing proportions, going to a ball game



with two gorgeous babes, one of whom has the annoying trait of being able to look great on a morning when my eyes feel like I've poured a full Bloody Mary in each one.

But I digress, dangerously.

Of course, I have yet to make the cognitive leap that would allow me to sit down in a nice cafe (or even a MacDonal'd's) and have a leisurely breakfast or lunch before a ballgame. We are tailgating again. We are scheduled to meet Hope Kiefer and Karl Hailman at the speed pitch tent by 12:15 pm, and then to quickly sear some preserved animal flesh and guzzle down -- feh - - Pepsi products, so that we don't have the temptation to be taken for all we're worth buying stadium brats and suffer serious poisoning from over-exposure to the "secret stadium sauce."

Making this rendezvous is easy and difficult at the same time. We have plenty of time; but Chris insists that we head out through town, instead of on the highway, in order to avoid the massive traffic tie-up that is no doubt going to paralyze highways for twenty miles in every direction. I express scepticism at the likelihood of Woodstock-like conditions prevailing at a baseball game to be held in 33 degree fahrenheit weather, but of course, I'm not driving; and we have a casual tour of the great edifices of Milwaukee, the Zor Shrine, the Pabst Mansion, Marquette University, the Red Star Yeast factory and so forth. Eventually, we manage to take a wrong turn by communal action, and pass over the valley in which the stadium squats on a high altitude bridge designed to spare commuters the progression of coffin factories and slaughter-houses below. We get funneled into the stadium the back way, therefore, and shunted off into an auxillary parking lot next to a construction equipment depot. Thus, in addition to thousands of stereos in thousands of custom vans, each playing a different radio station, there is the distant diesel rumble of backhoes and road graders playing over all. Amazing, really; these people don't seem especially stupid; they don't seem likely to want to have a picnic in a cracked blacktop parking lot. Not anymore than we do anyway.

I leave Carrie and Chris with the charcoal, making guttural "Quest for Fire" noises, and strike out across the vast parking lot to find Hope and Karl.

It's a long walk, and it's made longer by the fact that I have to keep walking around people's picnics and coolers and card tables and grills...there is no set way in which to tailgate, so people just sprawl out wherever they want to. Several times, I wander into a box canyon composed of Ford Ranger Pickups and stereo speakers. I fear the worst at one point, when swirling smoke and Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" being played at Brain-curdling volume momentarily confuse me into thinking that I have reached the wrong end of one parking lot, and have been walking the wrong direction; but I recover my bearings by sighting along the huge penile speaker tower that sits in the center of the bleacher seats, and shortly, I have found Hope and Karl waiting patiently by the Juggs speed gun, watching drunken Frat Rats miss the back of the tent with their throws.

Hellos all around. We have a somewhat easier time getting back to the car, since the wind shifts and shows us a clear path alongside the fire lane.

When we get back, Carrie has the fire going very nicely, and our various Ballpark franks and Hogwursts are soon flung onto the grill. The brisk walk has gotten my appetite going nicely, and I eat three before we are through. We lean against the car in a number of interesting positions, watching the light snow flutter down. Oh yes, it has continued to snow on and off; a bank thermometer passed along the way has placed the temperature at 34 degrees, too low to play according to official American League policy. Karl and I theorize that some team flunkie has been sent out to the official press box thermometer with a bic lighter, with orders to see to it that the game is played. Few of those around us seem to mind the cold, and I hate to think of what they would turn their attentions to if there were no game today.

Karl makes the mistake of bringing up the Muskies opener from last April, which I covered in NI #3. Carrie's eyes roll passionately as she begins to tell the tale of the day once more, using words like "freezing," and "suffering" and "misery" in a rather inflammatory fashion. In order to forestall any sympathetic hypothermia this story might bring on, I suggest we clean up and head into the game; and that is what we do.

The cold is having one unwanted effect on me already; my hands are almost too numb to write. If I can't score the game, there's no way I can write a twenty page fanzine about the game, right? My complaints bring on a wave of speculation of just what I intend to write about the day, and I am forced to remind people of how seriously the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle should be taken in such a situation. The rest of the party concentrate on saying nothing quotable for the rest of the walk in.

We have bleacher tickets. Unfortunately, Karl and Hope's are some sections away from ours; as we make our way up to our seats, Carrie, Chris and I can see them huddling next to the bullpen, in a rather exposed section of the stands. The group behind them looks loud and rowdy; I hope that being able to see the pitchers warm up in the bullpen will be some compensation for this.

Not to say that we don't have an enthusiastic group surrounding us. The group to our front are all from Whitewater University, here to cheer on their band, which plays the National Anthem. Behind us is a large group of "guys" that seem to work in the same office or something; they have a set series of off-color references they begin to work through as soon as they sit down, and keep making jokes about President Mubarak. To the front and right are some guys that keep ducking under a raincoat together, and then emerging in a cloud of sweet-smelling smoke. Chris begins to inch a little closer to them, and smiles at them a lot. Shameless.

God, I'm so disorganized and confused! I haven't even mentioned which teams are playing yet! I work my crab-like hand over the scorecard recording the players identities and numbers; today we are to see the Brewers take on the Texas Rangers,



perennial also-rans of the Western Division, who are off to their best start ever. They will have an aged knuckle-ball pitcher on the mound today, name of Charlie Hough; Hough is a fine pitcher, with a lot of brains, but his knuckle-ball is one of those ultra-fluttery types, and his poor catchers always lead the league in passed balls. The Brewers will counter with a journeyman named Chris Bosio, and I can barely suppress a groan of anguish at his name. I acquired him for my fantasy league team last season, when he was riding a hot streak, and got a few good starts out of him; and then, he exploded. I left him in the line-up for a long time, as did the Brewers, figuring that he had to find whatever he was doing wrong eventually. But he never won again, for the rest of the season.

This year, he seems to be okay; the experience of last season seems to have made little impression on him, and it isn't hard to see why; looking at his portait, flashed up on the big scoreboard, his eyes have all the intelligence of a particularly dim dachshund. This guy is never going to be in danger of becoming what they call a head case.

We stand and try to sing the National Anthem, but the Whitewater band is facing toward the more expensive seats, and we can't hear them at all. Some of us keep trying to muddle through; other irreverant types to our rear begin singing "Oh, Canada," instead.

There is a lot of pregame folderol. A. Bartlett Giamatti, the new commissioner of baseball, a remarkably intelligent man who has unfortunately allowed someone to staple Don King's hairdo to his chin, throws out the first pitch. There is a smattering of boos. My butt hurts already.

In the first inning, the new look of the Rangers is obvious, with all the free-agents they have signed and players they have traded for in the game. The lead-off man is a good hitter by the name of Julio Franco, acquired from the Cleveland Indians. He seems to appreciate being released from the Cleveland chain gang, and takes a big cut at a 2-2 fastball; it goes deep, but stays in the park, and Robin Yount is there to rein it in in center. The next batter is Scott Fletcher, a shortstop of middling talent who is being paid an enormous amount to play for the Rangers this year. In fact, his contract is being pointed to by a number of pundits as evidence that the bad old days of unrestricted spending on free agents are coming back, but I see it as evidence that the Rangers would like to win it now, and they don't want to have to screw around finding a new shortstop in the process. Fletcher reaches out and singles to right.

The next hitter gives me one of those mixed emotional rushes. The player is Rafael Palmeiro, who you may remember me touting as the future pride of the Cubs in the last issue of NI. But baseball too is fickle, and Rafael was traded away to Texas for a bullpen closer. I still have him on my fantasy league team, though, and any performance he may turn in here will be worth points to me there. I'd like him to come up with no one on base and triple a few times, and then fail to score, or maybe get a bunch of points after the Brewers are ahead. But hell, I don't know what to root for.

Perhaps some portion of the spiritus mundi tunes in on my silent support of Palmeiro, and aids his swing; he is way out on his front foot for the third pitch from Bosio, but he gets all of the ball anyway; he hits one of those sharp homers that rise and fall in three seconds, barely making it over the wall. The fans boo, roundly, and the ball is tossed back on to the field. I can almost feel Karl's eyes making a distant accusation at me; yes, I secretly wanted that to happen. But I have no other players in the Rangers line-up, and they go out in order the rest of the inning. 2 to nothing, Rangers, but it could have been worse.

I am writing this the night before Corflu, hoping to have it to pass around at that fan mecca, and thus, I will not be as exhaustive in my consideration of the game as I would like to be. Nothing much happens until the bottom of the second, when the Brewers seem to have solved Hough's curveball; or perhaps the extremely cold and windy conditions keep his knuckler from performing as advertised. Whatever the reason, the Brewers tattoo him. Yount takes him to the wall, a loud, scary out; then Rob Deer, a power hitter the Brewers got for nothing from the California Angels, steps up and muscles one over the center field wall. Hough (Whose name can be easily preverted into "Hoguh" with a slip of the finger) is clearly shaken by this, and he starts to try and steer his pitches; never a good idea. A walk, a bunt, another walk, a single, another walk, another single; Hough is out of there, sent early to what I hope is a nice, hot shower. He didn't have it today, and in comes a muscular lad with no sleeves on, by the name of Brad Arnsberg. He puts down the side in good order from there, but the Brewers take the lead 4 to 2, and seem to have the game in hand.

A couple of uneventful innings later, Hope comes to visit us, looking longingly at the empty seats near us. She complains about the obnoxious group of fans sitting behind her and Karl; apparently, they have a lot of trouble keeping their beer in their cups, and are making life very difficult for the two of them. She wonders if she might be able to come sit with us if the people who are supposed to be in those seats never show; and we say of course she can, but we don't have anything to do with it. She is unhappy at this, apparently wanting to hear us say that we can all squeeze into our three seats, or that I would gladly beat up anybody that came along and demanded their rightful spot; desperate times breed desperate ideas.

Hey, this Arnsberg guy can pitch. He comes on like a hard guy with all this no sleeves in the snow crap, but his pitches have snap and motion to them; the Brewers can't seem to solve him, and he will eventually strike out 5 before he is done. Anyway, they don't seem to be very likely to score in the near future, and the lowbrow crowd around us becomes restive. Most of them have a favorite whipping boy on the Brewer roster that they will shout imprecations against. For many, it is the Brewers fine catcher BJ Surhoff, who is having his troubles at the plate. They ignore the excellent job he has been doing in calling and catching the game, but that is the manner of bleacher bums everywhere; they want power and volume and little else.



In the sixth, the Rangers come up with two more runs. Geno Petralli, the Ranger catcher nubs out an infield single, and then the Texas version of Goliath comes up, Pete Incaviglia. Bosio makes one mistake and hangs up a curve or a change-up, and the ball is shortly deposited in the seats to our left. Tie game.

While all this rages on, we find a lot of other things to talk about as is our wont. Chris is currently putting together materials for a feminist genzine she intends to publish, and is going great guns at it; she is currently hacking away in at least one fannish apa that I know of, and yet she clings rather precariously to the idea that she is not really a fan. This is a subject for some debate, I think; can one pub their ish and claim to remain truly aloof from the daily drudgery of fandom? I say no, but Chris is determined to try. Of course, living in Milwaukee, I can see where one would have the impulse to avoid getting caught up in fandom. Her address, in case any femme fen out there would like to contribute to her zine, is 1227 N. Milwaukee St. #22, Milwaukee, WI 53202. It would be nice if she could get in contact with a few more fans worth saving from a burning oil slick, and thus turn her impressions of the field around.

The innings that follow are a series of frustrations for the home town fans. The Brewers keep getting men into scoring position and failing to bring them home. By far the highlight of the game for most of the fans around us is dancing to the rock and roll songs that they play between innings. As the time slips away, we begin to see fans trickle out of the stands, as drunkenness and cold begin to affect them; for much of the game, snow continues to swirl prettily around the ball park, underscoring the football game atmosphere of the afternoon. In fact, at one point, a group of burly thugs begin passing a woman up toward the top of the bleachers, in true University of Wisconsin style. It is hard to concentrate on the game.

Hope and Karl are forced to stay where they are; whatever eventually befalls them, we don't know. Our section finally fills all the way up with drunks as well, and there's no point in their coming all the way over here, just to get more bruised and wet than they already are.

In the ninth inning, Texas musters another rally. They move their third baseman Steve Buchele to within ninety feet of home, but the Brewer pitcher, Paul Mirabella (Bosio was lifted at the start of the eighth, without a decision. I'm sure he would take that before a loss), hangs in there; he fights a long time with Julio Franco, who keeps slapping his best pitches foul and digging back in for another try. Finally, Franco lifts a fly ball to right field, where the wind pushes it around a little, but not so much that Rob Deer cannot catch up to it, and we go to the bottom of the ninth.

The big speakers blare out old BTO songs and Del Shannon's "Runaway." I am getting to the point where I cannot feel the tips of my fingers anymore, and hope desperately that we do not have to go into extra innings.

The Brewers manage to get a man on right away, as the veteran second baseman Jim Gantner pokes the ball into left

field, off the glove of Scott Fletcher. They give Fletcher an error on the play, but those are the breaks of being paid 1.2 million dollars a year; they expect you to earn it, and what level of play is worth 1.2 million dollars, anyway? The Rangers send to the bullpen for their closer, Jeff Russell.

Now here is a lesson for you all in how baseball works. See, the Rangers traded away their old closer, Mitch Williams, for Palmeiro. In order to do something like that, you have to assume that you can plug the hole you create in your line-up, otherwise, it doesn't help very much to get a new player to help you with your previously identified problem. Relief pitching is one area in which teams feel willing to speculate, because most relievers get two or three good years, and then the magic is gone. But a young outfielder can give you twenty years if everything works out. Thus, trading Williams for Palmeiro is a can't miss deal; a pitcher of Williams value can be developed in short order, and player of Palmeiro's talent is literally one person in a million.

So is it any surprise that Texas' supposed weakness becomes a strength? Russell has overpowering stuff, the sound of the ball in the glove is like a hammer hitting a nail. Robin Yount, arguably the only current Brewer who is going into the hall of fame, cannot hold up on a the straight change of speed pitch, and he strikes out sending us to the tenth.

Again, Plameiro comes up with one out. At this point, I am sending out all the negative vibes I can, hoping he will strike out, but Mirabella walks him on four pitches; Ruben Sierra, one of Karl's players, picks up on his uncontrollable positive vibrations and slaps the ball down the left field line. Palmeiro is no Speedy Gonzales at first base, but the ball rattles aorund in the corner for so long, he has no trouble scoring. The crowd lets out a collective boo/death rattle, and heads for the exits. The Brewers muddle around for a few more minutes, allowing the dwarfish Cecil Espy to single in Sierra, and the score is six to four. And poor Miralbella...he should have died hereafter. There would have been a time for such a word...tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow, creeps in it's petty race, down to the last out of the American League season. Will this loss mean anything in the long run? Will the collective ill-will of the fans, who boo roundly as the Brewers go out on six pitches in the bottom of tenth, be translated into a loss of revenue? Will the loss of the nail of this game lead to an even more convoluted and pretentious metaphor of doom and sorrow?

I am awakened from my musings by a scornful shower of cold Pepsi that makes my scoresheet smear and run. There is something painfully out of kilter here...perhaps I was never meant to write about this game, and should have let it all pass away into the anonimity of season statistics. As we walk away toward the distant pillar of smoke that indicates our parking lot, my memory of the game begins to grow dim and my disappointment slides into nothingness. At this point, only Chinese food will serve to redeem the day.

I could rattle on for some further pages here about the rest of the trip, and the guy we saw in the Chinese restaurant that looked just like Rick Pittino, but I would rather get to some of the many locs you have been sending me, you trufen you:



Mike Glicksohn  
508 Windermere  
Toronto ON M6S 3L6

October 28, 1988

Dear Andy,

Well, the doldrums are upon us again and there won't be any baseball on TV for almost half a year. And for the second year in a row a second-rate team has won the World Series (Although they did have the finest pitcher in baseball on their side, which explains a lot) so what's a fellow to do? Well, one possibility is "loc fanzines" and since the fourth NI is at hand and has at least a marginal connection to Toronto, I guess I may as well succumb to the temptation.

The Blue Jays season was pretty disappointing after the potential we all felt they had coming into this year. But even more frustrating is to realize that if they'd managed to turn around just three or four games when they had big leads and ended up losing, they'd have won the damn pennant. They were only two games behind Boston when it all wrapped up. Oh well, as Cub fans are used to saying, there's always next year.

I took in a few games down at the stadium (and because of construction strikes the opening day for the new Sky Dome should fall in a time period where I could actually get to the game without having to lie my way out of school so maybe I'll just this once get taken by the scalpers so I can be there for game one in the new Wonder Stadium) and finally lucked into a couple of decent seats late in the season. (Even when the Jays were perennial losers it was hard to get really good seats, primarily because there are so few of them in the stadium to begin with.) I got to see two games from behind home plate, just to the catcher's left. The first was in row 17, and next day, completely unexpected as a result of an early Sunday phone call, I was in row 8. The difference is almost literally indescribable. To actually see the curveball bite and fastball move and hear every swearword and shout of encouragement from the benches makes for a fabulous game. Next year, I'll be back to the distant seats and I'll have fun just being there but it'll be damn hard to go back now I know what the real seats are like...

...Tailgating seems to be an American cultural phenomenon. At least I'm not aware of it taking place in either of our professional stadiums or in any of our lesser leagues. Considering the quality of the food and the beer served at Exhibition Stadium, I'd say it was a damn fine idea, though! (The concepts of watching baseball and drinking Peach Schnapps

seem mutually contradictory to me, but perhaps this is another hangup...)

Unless I'm very much mistaken, the Toronto catcher who broke his leg at home plate was Buck Martinez, not Ernie Whitt. Whitt is just a big, strong, slow guy without no other excuse. (The play with Martinez was memorable for the fact that he tagged out two runners at home despite the broken leg: he tagged out the runner who broke his leg, then when a second runner tried to score while Martinez was writhing around on the ground, he managed to reach up and tag him out too. His career was more or less over, but it was a hell of a final play!) (Whitt broke ribs trying to break up a dp at second at the end of last year. Perhaps that caused your understandable American confusion?)

Regretfully, I've never made it to CORFLU. I did make it to the very first DITTO this fall, but being on the committee probably helped. It seemed to be successful and DITTO 2 will take place in San Francisco next year. If I can negotiate a ride to Minneapolis or find a cheap airfare maybe I'll try to take in CORFLU '89: it always sounds like a con I'm really sorry I missed.

Just wait until next year. And keep your eye on Fred McGriff!

(Mike is certainly correct in pointing out my confusion of Buck Martinez and Ernie Whitt. Seeing it may still have been enough to teach Witt a lesson, tho.)

Simba Blood  
1078 21st Ave. SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55414

May 13, 1988

...I thought your comments about Nevenah picking up some of Bill's interest in baseball reflecting a difference between men and women were very perceptive. I think this is something that most women are aware of, but not very many men. I've had a very hard time getting some men to admit that this even exists, and that it is gender-related. For a while, I thought it might be age-related, the older person's interests having more "weight" in the relationship, but Nevenah and Bill seem to contradict this...

(Nobody wants to be accused of cultural imperialism, Simba, especially on an interpersonal level, but most of us end up guilty of it at one time or another. I suppose relationships that work have a lot of healthy give and take in this area...I certainly hope my marriage does.)

Sarah Prince  
4 Assabet Dr.  
Northborough, MA 01532

June 12, 1988

I was not thinking of you and your fanzine when I accepted a free pair of baseball tickets at work, but it soon occurred to me that this flimsy idea would make as suitable a loc as many, at least to thanking you for sending me a second copy of NI at all (it was no surprise to get the first one piggy-backed on something from Jeanne) and perhaps making your new mailbox feel appreciated.

I am not in any way a baseball fan. Baseball is merely the most benign of the spectator sports (Although I have a little appreciation for basketball, having enjoyed playing it despite my height making me an obvious center (the only time I ever won a jump ball, I broke my glasses); I don't like small fast balls near my hands). The only baseball game I ever attended was a Reds game at old Crosley Field (Cincinatti) on a straight-A student giveaway (which I was not often eligible for; they must have excused the poor grade in handwriting which always marred my elementary school reports if nothing else did). The only time I entered the new Riverfront Stadium (which landed like a spaceship in downtown Cincinatti without the taxpayers' consent) was for a Pops concert with the warhorse 1812 Overture complete with fireworks. Ho, hum. I saw a lot of high school sports as a photographer, but (except for basketball) I felt lucky if I could just get a ball in the field of view; I was relieved to become a photo editor, so I could get a second pass for someone more interested in the sport, and I'd spend my time with the band, making candid portraits and crowd scenes.

(Obviously, all that refers to growing up in Cincinatti, Ohio; years and many moves later, I live in central Massachusetts -- a good hour from Boston, more closely identified with Worcester; Wormtown to Boston's Beantown.)

I recently got a job with a medium-small type-setting company that tries to provide friendly little benefits -- nifty T-shirts, etc. They have a season ticket to the Red Sox at Fenway Park; Possibly a gift from the paper distributor, since there was a pile of Sox promotional Sox season calendars with the paper company's name lying about. There was a lottery for employees choosing the most popular dates; I ignored the calendar marked with the reminder for a few weeks, then suddenly thought, it's free, why not try it? The only weekend tickets available were for September (I can't seriously contemplate spending several evening

hours in fearsome, distant Boston and going to work in the morning). I'll let you know if I have any suitably fannish reaction to the occasion.

So again, thanks, your zine is enjoyable enough for me to want, despite basic indifference to the purported subject.



Jeanne Mealy  
4517 Lyndale Ave. S  
Minneapolis MN 55409

October 28, 1988

This here's a brief comment on NI #4. I confess I didn't quite understand the cover, and fear that it's one of those "If you don't get it, I'm not going to lay it out for you" deals. Otherwise, kindly enlighten?

Amusing art credit (H. Andy Scissors).

As always the ramble through the game and the tangents discovered by your and your friends was a worthwhile vicarious trip. I really liked the agreemant you and Don reached on page three (never to be too dignified, old or serious to do dumb things). You left off the last part: "...that are such FUN." -- but that's okay, you'll get the hang it it.

Corflu comments: Yes, please do come. We'll waive the oath of loyalty for you, just this one time. Yer kiddin' -- there's "lumpy people from parts unknown that no one wanted to talk to at Corflu, the long recognized center of fannish suaveness? Mark me as "simply aghast".



(The cover was supposed to be a line-up card on the wall of the baseball dugout, Jeanne, and the point was to put faneds into the lineup in much the same fashion as I ram fandom and baseball together. Beyond that, I don't know what the point was either.)

Harry Warner Jr.      October 25th, 1988  
423 Summit Ave.  
Hagerstown, MD 21740

Dear Andy:

Five months and ten days to go until the first pitch of the new season. Thank goodness an issue of NI is at hand to distract me from that infinity of waiting. But what of tomorrow and all the days after tomorrow? I can hope you'll suddenly begin publishing daily but such a hope must go on file alongside other hopes such as Julie Andrews becoming my next door neighbor.

Ah well, at least 1989 isn't a leap year. Has any better test of a real baseball fan ever been devised than his hatred of leap years, because they create another 24 hours of delay between the end of one season and the start of the next?

Of course, I was delighted to read about your trip to County Stadium. It was intriguing to think how unaware you were when you wrote it that Milwaukee would make that dramatic effort to catch up in the final weeks of the season. But I think the media are still unaware that it happened. Day after Day, the newspapers and newscasters would run stories about the chances of the Tigers and the Yankees catching the Red Sox, and nobody seemed to notice the Brewers...

Your Corflu notes reinforce my belief that not everyone who goes to that con is a fanzine fan. Eventually, I suppose the fanzine fans will be in the minority at Corflu just as they are elsewhere. I wonder how long it will be a new con is created especially for non-fans, with just a few fans slipping in under false pretenses?

...NI was the first revelation I've received about the radar gun pitching opportunity for fans at major league ball parks. See, all knowledge is contained in fanzines, not in periodicals or books, which to the best of my knowledge have never publicized that innovation.

(Nice loc, Harry. I can't imagine CORFLU having a majority of non-fanzine fans, as it is almost entirely hrough fanzines that the convention is promoted. Some day, we must kidnap you and force you to attend.

As for the media not noticing the Brewers, well, what else is new?

I'm afraid its substantially more likely that Julie Andrews will move in next to you, than that I would ever consider going to a daily or even monthly schedule of pubbing this zine. (It takes a long time to produce.)

(I got this next piece from a fellow in West Virginia, who sent it before he had ever seen a copy of NI. Spike Vrusho also publishes a zine known as Murtaugh, which is oh-so-delicately unhinged -- you can write to him at 29 W. Moler, Columbus, OH 43207, where he has recently moved. Generally speaking this remains a perzine, but submissions of this length might appear in the lettercol if I like them.)

#### WATER THROUGH THE WINTER WHEEL

By Spike Vrusho

Charleston, WV -- In this northernmost city of the South Atlantic League, the skeletal front office staff of the Charleston Wheelers, the Cubs Class A team, splashes new paint on about 6,000 box seats. They also sell the Shoney's Trivia Quiz in the program and envision the new scoreboard out in left.

Connie Mack once admired Walt Powell Park for its mountain setting, and some of the prime Pittsburgh Pirate players of the 1970's toiled here once as Charlies. But the Charlies left in '84, and West Virginia was without baseball leadership. No more favorite son AAA. But the Wheelers rolled into town in 1987, in their Seattle Seahawks colors. They wowed few of the many fans that filled the old ballpark. One of the worst teams in the standings, yet the second best attendance figures in the league.

Now bread salesman arrive two abreast through the cold lobby door, hawking bun contracts and throwing fresh-baked to all, including the stadium cat known as Wrigley.

The hot stove banquet last week was semi-smash, with talk of the new stadium club, built along the blue box seats on the first base line; actually creating a high green seat view obstruction, but that will keep them talking.

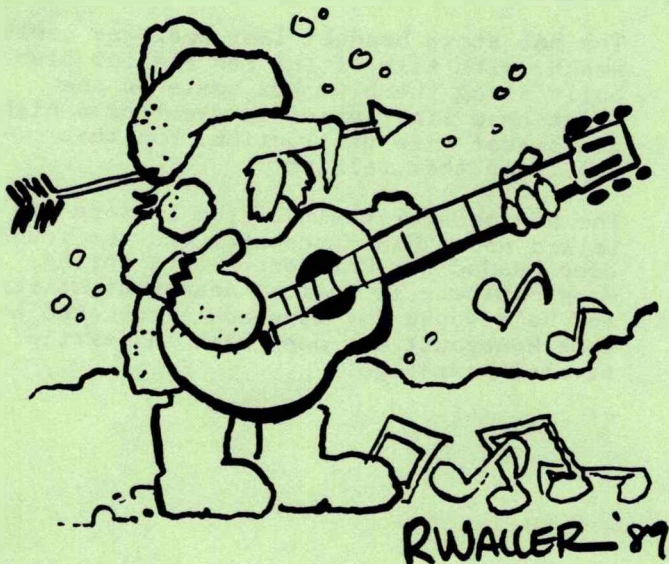
The new manager visited from Arizona and talked about his Studebaker and the young crop headed for Charleston this spring. Greg Mahlberg is full of desert night sky and he's bound for Appalachia now, and he took Honeycutt way deep back in Seattle several years ago.

There is paint everywhere and some days the season tickets go like pizzas and other days they stay around. Electric coil heaters don't promise much among nylon and thinner and ice craters in the parking lot. Let that "Bull Durham" front blow over -- the coal trains will roar through the holler in deep right regardless. We've got bric-a-brac ammo; bat pens, seat cushions, kid's batting gloves, key chains and pennants and the like. There's off-season cologne in the hallways and perfume in the ramps, and some boxes of Globe tickets arrived twenty days early. No more Charlies cigar or AAA clashes, just lots of Class A phantasms and a heap of Old El Paso products to be bought by the players, who start bouncing the checks in early August.

Zisk will keep the hitting in line if the club doesn't run out of fax paper before the S.A.L. home office does. Home opener tags the Fayetteville (N.C.) Generals -- Class A Detroit Tigers material. They got four stars on their hats and the Wheelers have a whisp of sternwheeler smoke on theirs. But like I said, no more Charlies cigar.

Gene Roof is managing the Generals, although he is not the G.M. That's Matt Perry. Generally, Roof is the general's Field Manager. Ol' G.C. ain't the G.M., he's the F.M. of the G's. And that's an order. (A jelly donut!?!)

But in the 40 year-old ballpark near the Kanawha river, there are throw rugs galore and a press box in the roof fit for Klaus Kinski. These Wheelers are on their way up a mountain with the help of thousands of West Virginians. Opera, however, just don't cut it with Bubba.



Tara Wayne  
1812-415 Willowdale Ave.  
Willowdale, ON M2N 5B4

Undated

Andrew,

When NI first appeared I thought it was a one-shot. It never occurred to me that the same idea could be used more than once. So I never put myself out to reply. (Shame, shame, I know; as if a solitary issue was less deserving of a reward.) Imagine my surprise then, when a second issue appeared. Then a third! Horrors, suppose he planned nine issues? I thought I'd better do something.

The problem with NI is that it is nine-tenths about baseball. Now I have nothing against baseball, but if the game were to vanish overnight, I'd never miss it. In fact, the world might be improved in one slight way. As a fan of bubble-gum cards, I never understood the fascination with baseball cards. One goof in striped pajamas with a wooden club looked exactly like the next one. What kid in his right mind found that more exciting than cards with pictures of the American civil war on them? Or pictures of exotic jet fighters from France and Britain? Or pictures of film monsters? And jazz stars? And science fiction! The only good thing I can say about baseball is that if it were to disappear from the face of the earth no good would come of it. Hockey and football would just expand to fill up the free time.

Which is not to say that my opinion of NI matches my opinion of the great American pastime. Between the seventh-inning stretches, RBI's and other inanities, you had occasional flashes of intelligibility. I wish there had been more of it, so I'd have more to comment on.

I guess that's the sort of welcome that young enthusiastic pubbers don't need, isn't it? I did like some of the turns of phrase in your second issue, when you discussed the dying breed of fanzine fans. Not knowing Richard Bergeron from Marcel Marceau does have a crazy rightness to it that makes sense in some way. And no one who has not been drained by the Ted White group mind can understand why there is no Ted White group mind to drain them. But that's about as much as you say about fandom that goes on for more than three lines in that issue.

Issue three is a little better...but oh lord you're talking about science fiction. Almost as bad as baseball in its own way. Later there's something about how Wiscon has changed. Never been to Wiscon, you know. As one who accepts the cause without passion, I wonder how long a convention COULD have gone on addressing the same feminist issues over and over? Unless



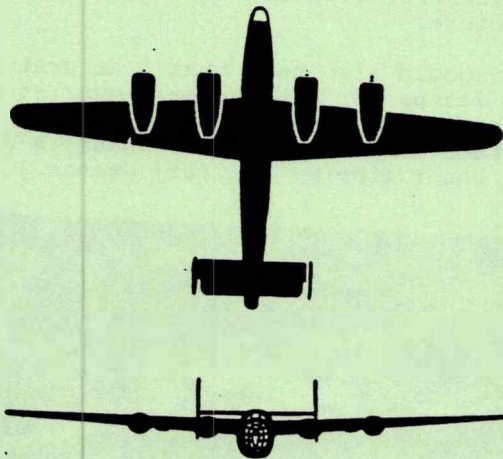
we're talking about a sexist Wiscon here, I don't see change as a problem. A non-sexist fandom wouldn't go around talking about women in science fiction all the time. It wouldn't be anything special. Hell, it ISN'T anything special anymore. There are just as many bad writers of SF and fantasy who are women as there are men. Just as many costumers who are male as female. And isn't fandom so much better for it?

Later still in the third issue; fanzine reviews. Here's something I can identify with. Interesting, too, how you score off of Ted and Ian at the same time. (Is that a double-header?) But what can I say?

Oh well, go out and win one for the gipper, or whatever it is sports fans say to encourage one another.

(Uhhhh...well. Thanks, I guess. I'll stay away from responding to your comments on baseball and the vaildity of directing this zine toward it; that remains non-negotiable. However, two things; I will not respond to little hooks and jabs with which people try to drag me into taking some stand or making some statemant about Topic A; and second, it strikes me as moronic to think that fandom has become non-sexist because there are more femme fans around and more women authors being published. As I have said before, with all of the conventions that cater to gun-toting armor-clad Pournelle afficianados, it seems only fair that there be at least one convention in the multitude that concerns itself with feminist ideals and attidtudes.

It is interesting to note, also, tha America has no monopoly on men who feel that the women's movement ought to be satisfied with what has already been achieved, which is a little depressing; after all, Canadians do not have the excuse of having been bored into submission by Reagan for the past eight years.)



David Emerson                      June 26, 1988  
1312 W. 32nd #104  
Minneapolis, MN 55408

Hooper --

Just received and read NI #4, and quite a delight it was. I amaze myself these days at how enthusiastic I get at most anything to do with baseball (chant, growing louder and faster: baseball, baseball, Baseball, BASEBALL, BASEBALL!!!) (ahem) since I was an avowed sports-hater just a few years ago. But now I find quite a lot of pleasure in just reading about the game, which I'm doing a lot of recently. Roger Angell was reccomended to me some time ago, so I picked up Late Innings and have been reading pieces from it now and then; but I tend to agree with a former roommate of mine who expressed a kind of puzzled not-quite-annoyance at the writing quality in the New Yorker (where Angell is published regularly), by observing that articles about subjects she wasn't interested in were so well-written that she found herself plowing all the way through them anyway, only to find that she knew more than she ever cared to about, say, the political machinations behind the creation of the Kennedy Center for the Arts. Roger Angell writes with that same kind of quality -- not exciting, but quietly, competent enough to keep you reading the detailed history of a particularly unimpressive baseball season of ten years ago.

Aside from Roger Angell, though, most of my baseball reading has been fiction -- W.P. Kinsella's Shoeless Joe. The Iowa Baseball Confederacy (novels) and The Further Adventures of Slugger McBat (short stories); Robert Coover's The Universal Baseball Association, J. Henry Waugh, Prop.; a new one I'm in the middle of at the moment, The Curious Case of Sidd Finch, by George Plimpton; and of course, Bernard Malamund's The Natural (with Robert Redford plastered all over the mass-market paperback).

So, NI, with its eight pages of baseball (baseball, Baseball, BASEBALL) (--quiet--) interspersed with ultrafannishness turns out to be, shall we say, just my cup of tea. It goes real well with the main bulk of my reading these days. You obviously know the feeling -- your description of how the tailgate scene fit so well with Lincoln's Dreams, your recent reading at the time, illustrates this effect perfectly. A few weeks ago I went to the Eric Clapton concert, and I noticed the feel -- not so much the content, or even the style, but the mood -- of the concert matched almost perfectly the feel of the book I was currently most involved with: Gene Wolfe's The Urth of the New Sun. Something about the



slow blues, the massive bass response, the intricacies of the guitar solos, the colors of the stage lights -- everything -- seemed to mesh seamlessly with the Byzantine far-future fantasy that Wolfe related in such darkly elegant prose. Later, I mentioned this to friends, who responded by noticing similar parallels in their own recent experience: Mitch Thornhill said that the Grateful Dead concerts in June went perfectly with John Crowley's Little, Big; and various people discussed whether the Pink Floyd concert had such a correspondence to Phillip K. Dick.

Well, anyway, where was I? Yes, your fanzine. Yes. Clever cover, too. I spent several minutes just reading the cover. It occurred to me that several very well-known and highly regarded fanwriters were not represented in the line-ups; this would have disturbed me, but I quickly realized that I was thinking of British and Australian fans, who would no doubt have shown up on a similar cricket roster, but who certainly had no business being on a baseball team, even in the imagination.

What ho. This has been the first loc I've written in years (truly) and it may be the last for years to come. I guess it just takes something as cosmic as baseball to re-awaken my Sense of Wonder.

(Wow! I'm flattered at having received such a great loc from someone that claims not to write them. A few other pieces of baseball oriented fiction that readers might like to check out: The Celebrant, by Eric Rolfe Greenberg, a novel paralleling the achievements of Christy Matthewson and the first quarter of the century; The Great American Novel, by Philip Roth, an indescribable novel that nearly achieves what its title proclaims; and The Dixie Association, by Donald Hays, a minor league fantasy that would appeal much to fans of Bull Durham.)

Eric Mayer  
279 Collingwood Dr.  
Rochester NY 14621

January 3rd, 1989

Dear Andrew,

Thanks for sending NI. Because you -- like me -- don't have a WAHF list, I can't recall whether I wrote of just thought about it. Sounds awful, but it's probably a commentary on how my mind works (or doesn't) that the physical act of typing out my thoughts (or not) doesn't stick in my memory at

all, whereas the thoughts I had formed, typing-ready, remain perfectly clear. Rather than repeat myself, I am sending along a Deja Vu -- hot off the press. I hope you will continue to stress baseball rather than fandom.

(Your vote is duly recorded. I'm still not organized enough to get together an IAHF list, but I'm still working at it.)

Jeanne Bowman  
PO Box 982  
Glen Ellen CA 95442

January 14, 1989

Thanks again for NI. My husband insisted on Xeroxing it and sending it to a Cub fan friend of ours in Florida. In fact, we sent \$1 & \$3 as well. I know she's gonna enjoy them, especially now the football game is getting so much media play in Miami. (I expect we hear no end of it from San Francisco radio stations.)

...Well, I also enjoyed your TAFF commentary. Finally, some life to the Luke McGuff portrait. I laughed at that snooty crack about Robert's blood pressure. He certainly could be considered a quintessential fan-as-dork-type caricature at times. Of course, that is coming from a typically loud and brassy, overwhelmingly socially graceless femme fan. I giggle. Robert is a good accountant too, but we will have to insist on liveliness in TAFF reports and auction. Yes, I will form a Glen Ellen committee to assure fandom Robert still breathes!! (His sense of wonder I believe to be horribly jaded -- I cannot forgive his saying the sight of the Golden Gate Bridge is boring. Sheesh, he really said that.) So he won't be much of a tourist. Serious conversationalist, yes, but perhaps too sercon to retain and report. But I digress (and be bitchy, my goodness) Thanks for fleshing out the McGuff picture.

(I should also note that I am grateful to Jeanne for sending me a quartet of plastic ballplayers from Archie McPhee's warehouse. They occupy a place of honor atop my monitor, Jeanne.)



B-24 LIBERATOR



Geri Sullivan                      January 6th, 1989  
Toad Hall  
3444 Blaisdell Ave. S  
Minneapolis, MN 55408-4315

Thanks so much for NI #5. I sat down and read it promptly, and was pleased with the gentle nostalgia trip it took me on. I think it was the context of attending a game with your father. I never attended any professional sporting event with my dad, however, my childhood memories of baseball center around summer afternoons spent watching my dad fix the car (and occasionally being of help by passing tools, but most likely asking questions and talking about stuff and most likely being a pest), while the Tigers game was broadcast on the radio. I don't remember that we ever talked about the a game, but I can still hear the announcers voices in my mind. Fixing cars and baseball are forever intertwined by fond memories. This was during AL Kaline's heyday. Years later I worked with Al's son Mark at Michigan State University's campus radio network. He was into sports broadcasting.

The adventures of parking near Wrigley field also brought a smile. Whenever I visit Chicago, Jack Targonski and I seem to drive past it several times. He lives "in the neighborhood"....

(Ah, yes, WJR, the 50,000 watt flagship station of the Detroit Tiger Baseball network. Jeez, you knew Al Kaline's kid? And I bet you never even managed to work him for one autograph, did you?)

Ruth Shields                      Jan 20, 1989  
1410 McDowell Rd.  
Jackson, MS 39204

...I have to admit that I skimmed your description of baseball plays, but I thouroughly enjoyed your comments about your day, your relationship with your father, and the fans and trappings of the game. You made the day live for me, and I feel like I know you, a little...

...Sorry this is so short; I'm in the midst of closing down my second-hand bookshop, and getting busier the closer I get to the end of the month. Not to mention depressed. But I wanted you to know how much I enjoyed your zine, and I knew if I waited for more time to write I might forget to do so...At any rate, I enjoyed reading it. Thanks.

David Singer                      May 3, 1988  
165 Westchester Dr.  
Los Gatos, CA 95032

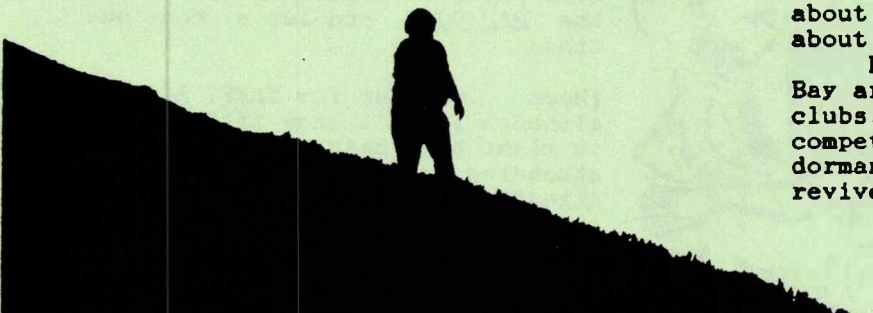
...There was a time, many years ago, when I was a real baseball nut. I'm not sure why; I lived in Richmond, Virginia, home of the Richmond Braves, AAA fram club of the Atlanta Braves perennial cellar dwellers of their respective leagues. But I enjoyed the game anyway; there was even a year when I tried listening to every A-Braves game and scoring it.

And then there was the Stratomatic period; I didn't actually own the game, but I played with a friend's copy fairly often. We even tried setting up a league, but with only two participants, it didn't last very long (And I think we both got very tired of rolling dice!)

Even my first serious computer program was baseball-related; I tried to simulate the game. But I was still learning FORTRAN at the time, and that took most of the effort; this was also before I had access to an interactive system, so I had to have the program punch out cards describing the game, then print them on an accounting machine. It was probably very similar to reading the wire sevice play-by-play of a game and trying to pretend you were really there; it required more of a suspension of disbelief than I could muster. Maybe if I had sound-effects, like the broadcasts of R-Braves away games...After a few weeks I retired the program and went on to other things.

After that, my interest in baseball waned; Troy, New York wasn't exactly a hotbed of baseball (the nearest AAA club was Rochester, and they were the hated Red Wings). Then I moved to South Florida, where we read about baseball every spring and forgot about it through the long, hot summer.

But now I'm in the San Francisco Bay area, home of two major league clubs, and they're both reasonably competetent this year. And my long-dormant interest for the game has revived, making NI more interesting



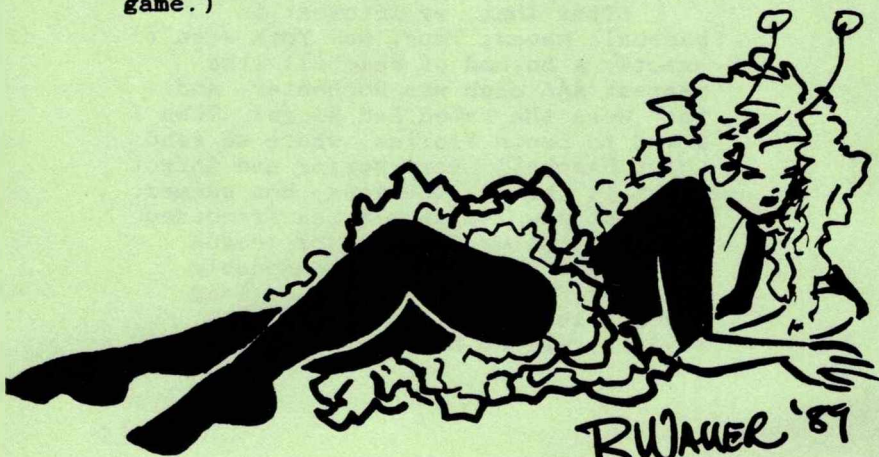


than it would have been a few years ago, when I would have probably glanced at it and tossed it on the shelf.

And that would have been a pity, because I enjoy the zine, and would have enjoyed it even if I ignored the baseball references; you write well, and interestingly. I felt as if I was at the game with you; it brought back memories of the last R-Braves game I attended, on a freezing April night in Richmond. It was Passover, so I didn't feel I should have anything they were selling in the refreshment stands; this kept me from drinking anything hot, which kept me from really enjoying the game. Baseball is a warm-weather game to me; I've never considered going to a night game at Candlestick for that reason. (I wish I were confident that the Bay Area would get its act together and build a stadium to keep the Giants; I thought San Jose had a chance last year, but then Her Highness, the Lord Mayoress of San Francisco, Diane Feinstein decided that those of us in the provinces weren't worthy of Major League Baseball and threatened to sue the Giants and San Jose if they kept negotiating. Now, San Francisco has a new mayor that takes a more regional view of things, but I don't think San Jose is as interested in getting the Giants as they were. And the recent election in east Palo Alto wasn't too hopeful for supporters of a new stadium there. But I haven't checked the papers since leaving for Corflu last week, so maybe there have been some hopeful developments. And Sacramento is only two hours away anyway...)

Well, this hasn't exactly been a letter of comment, but more of a reflection inspired by your zine; I hope you'll forgive the lapse, but talking, thinking, and reading baseball tends to send me off on tangents like this one. I look forward to the next Nine Innings -- see you at the game!

(Hey, Dave, No problem. I enjoy these little baseball travelogues that people send me, detailing their travails in the country of the game. See you at the game.)



91.

**Videoscope**

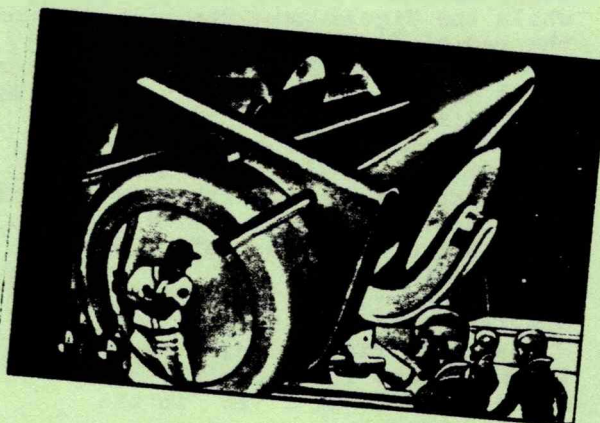
One day King Trunion took us to the brain people's observatory, where we saw a videoscope with which Krotonion astronomers often probe the Milky Way. The instrument had powers of magnification that cannot be expressed in Earthian terms. The King focused it on rays of earthlight that had traveled through space for eight years. The next moment we were looking at a baseball game that the Indians and White Sox had played eight years before.

*Continued on Card 92*



**JETS ☆ ROCKETS ☆  
SPACEMEN**

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Robert Lichtman  
PO Box 30  
Glen Ellen CA 95442

February 8, 1989

Dear Andrew,

This copy of TRAP DOOR #8 is gamely making its second trip to madison. You turned out to be one of those people who apparently managed to move just after I updated my mailing list. So it goes. Though I can't locate it tonight to comment on specifics, I was amused by your essay in support of Luke McGuff for TAFF. Since Oldpharts (me and John D. Berry) "swept" (to use a sports term, so you will Understand) the fan funds this time around. Let us hope that you won't have to be such a dodering relic of a former fannish era as either of us before you are able to go for your own trip. In the meantime, hope you find something of interest in the TRAP DOOR, and let's continue to trade.

(Hmmm...me, run for TAFF? A fun idea, although I don't know if I would want to right now, being locked into attending Eastercon. I would far rather attend Mexican, assuming there was one that year. By the way, congratulations. Hope you had a good time, in any event.)