

FROM THE BULLPEN

Official Publication of the
Hot Stove League
Eastern Nebraska Division
1989 Season

Edition No. 6
August 8, 1989

"It was like cherry-picking babies."

Shamu, 1989.

Dear Fellow Owners/Managers:

The above quote, so cogently articulated by the cerebral Shamu, rather succinctly summarizes the Summer Trip to Kansas City/Chicago/Milwaukee. Not that there would have been any alcohol involved. Of course, those of you who did not make the trip have got to be asking yourselves, what's the point, Shamu?

Although the trip is still fresh in most of our minds, I think a short recap is in order, so that non-attending League members may enjoy some vicarious pleasure, and so that we can keep things in historical perspective twenty years from now when our vivid imaginations have embellished the Trip into a series of events far removed from reality. So here goes.

Appropriately enough, the true genesis of the Trip was beautiful Council Bluffs, as Sandjigger entered a tavern there for the first time¹ to purchase some loudmouth soup for the journey down I-29 to McBlunder's. To the sober chauffeur of the I-29 caravan, it appeared that the boys (Shamu, Sandjigger and WhiteSot) were not in a festive mood, since the top beer drinker was only able to choke down seven beers during the trip to McBlunder's, and one of the riders (who shall remain nameless) is believed to have consumed no more than a six-pack. The years are obviously showing on these boys. In any event, after the Skipper masterfully picked his way through Kansas City to get to McBlunder's home, we were warmly welcomed by the hospitable McBlunder pair.

The beer was ice cold, and the plumpers hot and spicy at the ball game, so the rest of you would

¹In three hours.

not have enjoyed it very much. Very little beer was consumed at the game, and so it was decided that we should seek further liquid refreshment at Westport, over the strenuous objections of Sandjigger, who wanted to go home and play Trivial Pursuit, and Shamu, who wanted to pursue more groceries. After closing down Kelly's, a timely suggestion was made to close out the night with a nightcap at Lynn Dickey's (not Len Dawson's, Shamu), and we were lucky enough there to witness as fine an exhibit of rug-cutting as has ever been seen this side of the Mississippi. Fueled by his intake of -- by this time -- nineteen or twenty beers, Sandjigger stumbled into the cattle pen and wound up shaking his cake with a real stunner. Mr. Happy Feet showed as many moves as a monument, and predictably was alone again after just one dance.

After Dickey's, instinctively believing that he had not consumed enough alcohol, WhiteSot called for a round of French beer at the McBlunder Arms. Fortunately, McBlunder had not recently replenished his beer cellar, and the lone French ale was consumed by WhiteSot as he cleverly and in rapid fire manner disposed of his intoxicated foes in a spirited game of Spades (or was it Pitch, WhiteSot?).

Day Two of the Trip began in a typical fashion, with Sandjigger and Shamu up at five bells to click off an invigorating five mile run through the McBlunder neighborhood, followed by an hour of marine calisthenics, before winding down with stretching and meditation exercises performed to the solemn chanting of Sandjigger-authored haiku. WhiteSot likewise was able to hop out of bed with little or no demonstrable evidence of the previous evening's debauchery, and the happy group set out on the second leg of the Trip. U-Belly was pleased that we were all at the airport in a timely fashion, and Pipsqueak was just plain pleased to be along on his first HSL Trip.

After a fine flight to Chicago, and a snappy conversion from our air transportation to our luxury van, we proceeded on to Milwaukee to become weekend Cheeseheads. Some made the transition better than others.

I believe that all who were on the Trip will forever after recall Milwaukee with a certain amount of fondness, although we will all certainly have our own distinct memories. Sandjigger and WhiteSot will recall the acute reaction time of the beer vendors to their frequent requests for barley replenishments. McBlunder will fondly recall the banked surface of the Milwaukee interstate system, which allowed him to propel the death-van-from-hell at speeds eclipsing 110 miles per hour with a full coterie of drunken passengers and a snootful of beer on board. Crooked smiles will surely come to the faces of U-Belly and Pipsqueak as they fondly recall discovering that it was "seat cushion night" at Milwaukee Stadium. I of course will never forget meeting a very special and beautiful friend at Smug-gler's. And Shamu. A tear will form in Shamu's eye as he wistfully recalls capturing the cherished Mound Ball Award, enabling him to spend every waking moment of the remainder of the trip with his hand firmly clenching a Bratwurst (of course, Sandjigger spent a lot of time on the Trip with his hand around his bratwurst, but that's another story).

Obviously, the Summer Trip was a depraved, bacchanal event, for which we had all hoped.

There is much more to comment on about the Trip, but rather than discourse on the entire debauchuous story, a few more of the Trip highlights should suffice to recap this year's momentous occasion:

Trip Highlights

- Shamu's mastery at Mound Ball, and generous sharing of the proceeds from his winnings (Shamu returned from the trip with \$46, \$3 more than he had at the start of the trip).
- WhiteSot's perceptive bidding in a late night game of Spades.
- The Ranchhand Breakfast whipped up by Chef McBlunder (I guess you may have missed this portion of the trip, WhiteSot).
- Sandjigger's unabashed consumption of at least 20 beers per diem for three consecutive days (his drinking problem was deemed too great to be handled by Eppley Center).
- Pipsqueak's utterance of more than a single sentence in a 24-hour period.
- Shamu's ingestion of 47 Bratwurst dogs in 18 innings of ball in Milwaukee.
- Trouble-free hotel accommodations and ballgame tickets, courtesy of Skipper.
- The initiation of the Milwaukee Chapter of MAMM (Mothers Against Mobile McBlunders -- what good are banked highways if a raging drunk can't drive a loaded van at 110 miles per hour on them?)
- Sandjigger's spellbinding conversation with the dolls at Smuggler's, while smoking a cigarette and power-drinking from three longneck bottles of Miller Genuine Draft.
- Packy's (Shamu) constant continuous shuffling and reshuffling, packing and repacking, of his seven pairs of white nurse's shorts, five mesh Husker "shirts," and one pair (ugh) of socks and U-shorts in his Wendy's jazz bag.
- McBlunder's boastful pledge to jump into the icy Chicago River for payment of the amount of \$300, which was quickly offered up by his Hot Stove League "friends."
- Sandjigger's failed attempt to lure home (sans tonsils) the beauty of the bar

for a night of wicked pleasure and pheasant-grooming.

- Underbelly's spontaneous caterwauling at the puzzled and frightened patrons of Smuggler's.
- Sandjigger's viewing of Batman in his 13th, 14th and 15th states.

TRIP EPILOGUE

All in all, it was a good time for all. Next year's trip plans call for a journey to Arlington, Texas, to see the Rangers play, with the trip to coincide with a gigantic sports memorabilia collector's convention to be held in July in Arlington. Next year's trip will be planned and accommodated by Underbelly and Babytrumpetfish (maybe for once we can get "Mr. Golf" off the links and onto one of our summer trips).

TRADE TALK

With the August 1 deadline having come and gone, as you all will recall, we are each limited to two more trades involving a total of three players from now until September 1. On September 1, trading will cease, and each manager must inform Underbelly of his starting players. With the season hanging in the balance, make those trades count, boys.

SENATOR WATCH

Look out, Mudhens, Chiefs and Cubs! The Senators are on the move, destined to end the year on a positive note with a jump into eighth, seventh, or yes, even sixth place. The Mick's (Tettleton) untimely departure may slow down the Senatorial steamroller, but the momentum of this monster outfit is just too great to stop its upward movement.

Enjoy the enclosed photos and Dewars profile. Keep those cards and letters coming. Thanks again to McBlunder and spouse for putting us up at the Hotel McBlunder. The accommodations were fantastic, and the price was right.

THAT'S MY STORY AND I'M STICKING TO IT.

Skipper

Shamu: "Hey Cheesehead, are you going to eat all of that?"

Circa 2035: Baby Trumpetfish continues to blowoff the Summer Tripp and his three surviving HSL manager pals.

Sandjigger blows off steam after being turned down for a date for the eleventh consecutive time.

Shamu sleeps off his seven Bratwurst dogs as McBlunder expresses concern over the rapidly-depleting supply of brewskies.

Skipper chugs down another cold one to mourn another unsuccessful Mound Ball attempt.

Sandjigger springs out of the sack at dawn to run off the previous night's consumption of copious levels of alcohol.

Hat askew but boiler in full dress, Sandjigger leads the troops into battle.

His balance compromised by an inner ear infection (and 17 beers), Shamu stumbles from the Death Van.

"Anybody know where I can get a Brat and a Beer?"

"Td like to sleep here, fellas!"

Loaf and Stein rest up for another taxing night of debauchery.

Just another Saturday night for U-Belly and Pipsqueak.

Portrait of Sobriety.

A determined Shamu wolfs down his Mound Ball winnings.

"So it's my twelfth Brat. What's your point?"

Brewer Stadium: Heaven on Earth.

"Are we having fun yet?"

Forgetting that Magpie was not along on the trip, U-Belly feigns sleep.

"Damn," thinks McBlunder, "if I was piloting this train we'd be at Wrigley in no time."

WhiteSot strikes an unfamiliar pose.

"So I've had nine beers and it's only the third inning. What's your point?"

Shamu puffs out his 39 inch chest and 42 inch boiler.

"Bad Boy" U-Belly heads down for another beer.

"So we like to drink, is that so wrong?"

U-Belly reacts to McBlunder's challenge to step up the van speed to triple digits.

Realizing that his ale pail is down to 10 fluid ounces, Sandjigger whistles for another beer vendor.

DEWARS PROFILE II

JOHNNY "SANDJIGGER" THIELEN

Height: 5' 10" (with heels)

Weight: 195 (post-Trip)

Eyes: Beady

Hair: Evacuating

Last Seen: Grooming Pheasant in Milwaukee

Alcohol Intake: Plenty

Golf Handicap: Minimal Hand-Eye Coordination

Favorite Singing Group: Whitesnake

Proudest Achievement: Has seen Batman movie in 15 states

Philosophy: How does it affect me?

Ideal Weekend: Naked twister in the Pokonos with young deaf-mute wearing
top hat