

THE BELLYFLOP

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION
OF
THE TRIBE
Editor: Underbelly



2008 Season

Edition No. 17

July 15, 2008

Wonderful Crimson Chirper Jim, just lovely! I just hope the truant police at Ernst, Ernst & Ernst don't run you in for calling in sick for the two days it took you to come up with it.

What has come over the Blues? They're like a fighting sow with a new corn cob; you can't get within a couple hundred points of them without losing a finger.

I'm starting to question my ability to focus..... on anything. Growing up I always accepted "water boarding" as the norm in corrective child behavior motivation, now I'm beginning to wonder if ol' Vern might have held me under a little too long. Especially when it comes to making trades. I felt like the guy behind the counter at the gas station in No Country for Old Men, it literally came down to a coin flip with Scott, and I was just as nervous.

Scott: "What's the most you've ever lost in a coin flip?"

"Sir?"

"The most, what's the most you've ever lost in a coin flip?"

"I...I don't know....Ken Griffey Jr maybe...maybe a good pitcher, I.....I'm not sure."

"Call it."

"Well, I need to know what we're playing for."

"Everything."

"I didn't put anything up."

"You've been putting up with it every day of the year; you don't have a reliever, call it."

"Heads."

"Well done, you get Borowski."

"Shit."

"Don't put him in your minors, he's your lucky reliever or he'll just be like all the rest of them and be just a reliever. Whichis what he is."

And that's how I got Joe Borowski, it was over before I knew it, and it was just that creepy.

Scott, do you still have that CO2 compressed air cylinder with the cattle killer attachment? If you do I need to pay Mr. Borowski a visit. Oh what the hell, gas it up, I might as well visit my whole pitching staff.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

What is, in a name? This is a subject that has always fascinated me. It's something that I normally would bring up during lunch, where all the important issues of the day are discussed, dissected and rectified. Within the booths of Taco Inn, Taco Johns and Don and Millie's, deals are made; opinions are altered, secrets revealed and damn it! Things get done! If only the talking heads that run this country would take a few minutes of their day and sit in on one of our lunches, maybe we'd get this country straightened out. Just the other day while discussing the oil crisis, Scott boldly proclaimed that if Gilligan could make a radio out of coconuts we could come up with an alternative to oil. I didn't have the heart to tell him it was the professor, not Gilligan, who came up with the radio, but I like the way that boy thinks.

Getting back to my fascination with names, what is it about a name that defines you as a person? Every loving mother and father who has children doesn't set out to cripple their child by saddling them with a moniker that Casper Milquetoast would cringe at. Yet they do. We have a guy at work who

named his son Calvin, granted both mom and dad are a little off plumb, but surely they knew what lays in store for poor Calvin. We all know a Delbert or Herbert or Buehla or Seymour. How long do you suppose it takes for that baby to morph into his or her name? Are they doomed from the minute their name appears on a birth certificate or does it take some seasoning from their peers on the playground? A Delbert is going to be a Delbert, is it genetics or environment? (Sorry, I was back at Taco Johns there for a minute). What I'm getting at is, do you suppose I have unknowingly damned my own team by naming them the Tribe? Have they taken on the characteristics of their owner? I have already come to grips with the fact that when I die and go to heaven, God is going to shake his head and say "bare minimum, that's all I got from you isn't it? Bare minimum." Then I will have to bow my head and stare at my shoes, if we have shoes in heaven, and say "Sir, yes sir". Could my team be operating under the same restrictions? Have they endured the same uninvited obstacles that poor Calvin will face on a daily basis, through no fault of their own, simply because their owner is a "little off plumb" himself and "unaware" that he might have named them a goofy name?

So, what am I going to do about it? Change their name. Only, I'm not going to do it, that would defeat my purpose, I would be chasing my tail. I would still name them Clevis or Edgar and the wheels on the bus would go round and round. Johnny, you're going to do it and I will abide by whatever name you come up with. Bob's Daughters, The Fighting Mary Kay's, I don't care, I need some good luck and what better place to go than the source of all serendipity. I'm pretty easy to please, or fool if you wish, take Taco Johns for instance. I dare you to find one square inch of any of their entrée's that doesn't contain a potato tot. Now, as far as I know they don't even grow potatoes in Mexico and I don't think I have ever seen a potato in any other Mexican dish at any other Mexican restaurant, yet they have me convinced if I don't have some tater tots in my food I'm getting cheated. So there you go Johnny, the bar isn't set very high. I need a new name, help a brother out.

What I think I like best about my staff, is that nothing, and I mean nothing, affects them. I experimented with a strategy of just pitching them at home, to avoid the inevitable hoots and cat calls that normally follow a crappy pitcher, with the hope that the serenity and calm of familiar surroundings would prompt them to dig deep for that inner strength and self respect that powers each of us in our own daily lives. But alas, not even the sight of family and friends in the stands is enough to keep them from their twice a week pasting. From now on I plan on doing a little more research into their backgrounds. I think I drafted a bunch of Willards, Huberts and Myrons and they are going by their middle names to throw me off.

THE REFRIGERATOR

A *Bellyflop* just wouldn't be complete without a story.....and I have a million of them. This one revolves around my Father's Day present, a beer refrigerator. We just never seem to have enough room in our refrigerator for the daily staples in life, or hourly staples like beer. So, I hinted around that I would like to have a small refrigerator for the garage. We have a small garage and my request was met with some pretty stiff resistance the first 20 or 30 times I attempted to nominate it as a "must have" item, stating that I was more than willing to eliminate some of the other items in the garage that were potentially taking up its space, like the propane tank for the grill, a tool cabinet that I've never looked inside of, a girls bicycle and the such. Jody is pretty good about ignoring my "suggestions" with the hope they will just die a natural death by starvation of attention and this one was no different than all the others, so I decided to just lay low for a couple of months and attack it from a different angle.

About a month before Father's Day I commented on how packed the refrigerator was and that I didn't think the watermelon we had bought would fit. I didn't dare bring up beer, which she immediately would have picked up on, so I fumbled around a little and purposely dropped a jar of pickles on the floor and grumbled a little and jammed the watermelon in so that I knew the door wouldn't close and threw my hands in the air and gave up, like I've done a million times on chores I didn't want to do. As usual she came over rearranged a few things and got the door to close. But the seeds were planted that day and I watered the hell out of them. A month later it paid off! In my Father's Day card was the picture of a small refrigerator from Wal-Mart that she had to order because they don't carry it in the store. WOO HOO!! Jackpot, or so I thought.

On the purchase order receipt Wal-Mart said it would be shipped to our store within 7 to 10 days. After 2 weeks I e-mailed Wal-Mart and inquired about the whereabouts of my "highly anticipated" refrigerator. Well, there was some sort of a problem and they would check into it and get back to me; two days later I received an e-mail saying that they didn't know where it was and was unable to trace it. I immediately suspected sabotage....from our end, meaning Jody. I had this feeling she was killing two birds with one stone, she appeased me with a "picture" of a refrigerator and then killed the order before it could be shipped, kind of a win, win for her, but I'm no idiot, I didn't say that out loud. But, I have the memory of an elephant and Judy's, er, uh Jody's birthday is sometime in July....I think? Anyway, revenge is hell.

The next day I get a e-mail message telling me they are refunding my money at "my request" and they were sorry for the inconvenience; this was followed by a phone message from a customer service representative at Wal-Mart from their Bentonville Arkansas headquarters. Now, I'm not kidding when I say that I had to literally gather the family around the phone and get on our knees and get as close as we could to the answering machine so that we could understand her explanation for my missing refrigerator. After replaying it 8 or 9 times I did pick out that after they refund my money I could reorder the refrigerator again, which would be like yanking me out of line to get my car washed and giving me a refund and telling me if I still wanted to get my car washed I could get back in the line again. What the French toast? I couldn't get to the computer fast enough to e-mail them back. I told them that I never requested my money back and still don't have a clue as to what happened to my refrigerator and if I wanted someone to hold \$180 dollars of my money for 4 weeks for no apparent reason I could have just stashed it under my mattress. I did mention that their Arkansas customer service representative had a lovely speaking voice and that if she was explaining their store policies to the Hatfields and McCoys, she probably did a crackerjack of a job, but since I live North of the Mason Dixon line I would appreciate them e-mailing me an explanation as to what the Hell happened to my refrigerator!

So here we are, and I'm back to my old credo, "Wanting is better than having". I never got the refrigerator, even though it felt like I did..... for a while anyway, and now I don't want it anymore.

So, there you go, I just don't have the time to manage my team. I feel like I live in California, I have all these little fires popping up around me all the time and it just seems to take up all my time.

In closing I would also like to take the opportunity to wish one of our founding fathers a happy 50th birthday. There are unconfirmed reports coming out of Lake Powell Nevada that our proud Catholic is doing more than his fair share of being a supportive father of a Notre Dame student, by sporting his own version of the Golden Dome. I look forward to seeing his new "do" and let me be the first to say "You don't look anywhere near 50 years old!"

STANDINGS THROUGH WEEK 15

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|-------------------------|---------|
| 1. Kansas City Blues | 7685.30 |
| 2. West Des Moines Cubs | 7109.60 |

3.	Wahoos	6987.10
4.	Highlanders	6978.10
5.	Millard Monarchs	6962.10
6.	Lincoln Bears	6770.50
7.	Lincoln Chiefs	6604.20
8.	Omaha Bronx Bombers	6573.50
9.	Omaha Skipjacks	6467.90
10.	Redbirds	6314.60
11.	Detroit Tigers	6272.40
12.	Omaha Senators	6210.40
13.	Lincoln Tribe	6047.20