

FROM THE BULLPEN

2021 Campaign Edition No. 10 May 28, 2021

WEEK 7: BOMBERS EXPLODE; SKIPJACKS SAIL; BUMS BARREL ON

Brethren,

The story of Week 7 in the Hot Stove League was the eye-popping, jaw-dropping, knee-buckling 605.6 point total for the surging **Bombers**, who soared into 3rd place just 301.7 points behind the still-leading **Bums**. Riding the arms of Casey Mize (61.0), Spencer Turnbull (47.0) and Adbert Alzolay (36.0) and the hot bats of Miguel Sanó (51.1) and Adolis García (42.6), the **Bombers** have served notice that they are going to be in contention for a title the entire year. Not to be outdone, by much, the **Skipjacks** outfit put out the impressive total of 544.9 points for the week, muscling their way past the **Saints** into 2nd place, a mere 237.8 points behind the **Bums**.

At the other end of the rainbow, the **Tribe** could only muster up 270.3 points for the week, dropping Underbelly's squad into 7th place, one step closer to the dungeon.

Here are the standings from top to bottom through Week 7:

1	Bums	3811.9	-
2	Skipjacks	3574.1	237.8
3	Bombers	3510.2	301.7
4	Saints	3505.5	306.4
5	Cubs	3343.2	468.7
6	Tigers	3273.5	538.4

7	Tribe	3242.5	569.4
8	Redbirds	3188.6	623.3
9	Wahoos	3139.4	672.5
10	Senators	3131.5	680.4
11	Bears	3099.3	712.6
12	Monarchs	3080.2	731.7
13	Blues	2902.0	909.9

Here are the point totals for Week 7:

1	Bombers	605.6
2	Skipjacks	544.9
3	Bums	492.0
4	Blues	464.1
5	Tigers	421.4
6	Bears	401.8
7	Saints	391.1
8	Redbirds	372.2
9	Cubs	368.1
10	Wahoos	365.4
11	Senators	333.1
12	Monarchs	333.0
13	Tribe	270.3

And the rest:

TOP 25 PITCHERS

1.	Gerrit Cole	Bums	295.0
2.	Trevor Bauer	Tribe	282.0
3.	Kevin Gausman	Saints	258.0
4.	John Means	Cubs	240.0
5.	Tyler Glasnow	Bears	239.0
6.	Brandon Woodruff	Redbirds	235.0
7.	Shane Bieber	Bombers	234.0
8.	Jack Flaherty	Tigers	230.0
9.	Yu Darvish	Blues	230.0

10.	Max Scherzer	Tigers	226.0
11.	Kyle Gibson	Monarchs	220.0
12.	Walker Buehler	Skipjacks	217.0
13.	Julio Urías	Tigers	217.0
14.	Trevor Rogers	Bums	216.0
15.	Clayton Kershaw	Senators	214.0
16.	Zack Wheeler	Wahoos	211.0
17.	Carlos Rodón	Bums	203.0
18.	Jacob deGrom	Wahoos	199.0
19.	Anthony DeSclafani	Bombers	198.0
20.	Freddy Peralta	Senators	197.0
21.	Chris Bassitt	Tribe	197.0
22.	Aaron Civale	Monarchs	196.0
23.	Joe Musgrove	Bums	195.0
24.	Corbin Burnes	Redbirds	185.0
25.	Zack Greinke	Senators	177.0

WHO'S HOT--PITCHING

1.	Gerrit Cole	Bums	295.0
2.	Trevor Bauer	Tribe	282.0
3.	Kevin Gausman	Saints	258.0
4.	John Means	Cubs	240.0
5.	Tyler Glasnow	Bears	239.0
6.	Brandon Woodruff	Redbirds	235.0
7.	Shane Bieber	Bombers	234.0
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23.	Joe Musgrove	Bums	195.0
24.	Corbin Burnes	Redbirds	185.0
25.	Zack Greinke	Senators	177.0

WHO'S NOT--PITCHING

			1
1.	Chris Flexen	Tribe	-23.0
2.	Tyler Mahle	Saints	-17.0
3.	Sam Hentges	Bombers	-16.0
4.	Griffin Canning	Wahoos	-10.0
5.	Tyler Anderson	Bears	-10.0
6.	Justus Sheffield	Monarchs	-7.0
7.	Triston McKenzie	Tribe	-7.0
8.	Adrian Houser	Wahoos	-7.0
9.	Cole Irvin	Senators	-6.0
10.	Andrew Heaney	Bums	-5.0
11.	Logan Gilbert	Saints	-4.0
12.	Dylan Bundy	Saints	-3.0
13.	Eduardo Rodriguez	Cubs	-3.0
14.	Matthew Boyd	Senators	-3.0
15.	JT Brubaker	Bums	-3.0
16.	Jake Arrieta	Bears	-2.0
17.	Dylan Cease	Tribe	-2.0
18.	Tyler Glasnow	Bears	-2.0
19.	Jon Lester	Senators	-2.0

TOP 25 HITTERS

1.	Vladimir Guerrero Jr.	Blues	235.2
2.	J.D. Martinez	Blues	222.2
3.	Nick Castellanos	Cubs	216.9

4.	Ronald Acuña Jr.	Senators	213.8
5.	Xander Bogaerts	Senators	209.6
6.	Max Muncy	Wahoos	208.0
7.	Jesse Winker	Bums	207.7
8.	Rafael Devers	Saints	199.4
9.	Marcus Semien	Monarchs	197.7
10.	Kris Bryant	Tigers	197.1
11.	Shohei Ohtani (Batter)	Skipjacks	194.1
12.	Trey Mancini	Saints	185.3
13.	Yuli Gurriel	Bombers	183.4
14.	Aaron Judge	Bombers	183.3
15.	Trea Turner	Bums	182.5
16.	Mark Canha	Bums	180.5
17.	Austin Riley	Bears	180.4
18.	Jared Walsh	Senators	179.1
19.	José Ramírez	Cubs	178.9
20.	Carlos Santana	Tigers	178.3
21.	Mitch Haniger	Tigers	178.0
22.	Bo Bichette	Skipjacks	177.0
23.	Nolan Arenado	Tigers	176.4
24.	Freddie Freeman	Monarchs	175.6
25.	Adolis García	Bombers	172.9

WHO'S HOT--HITTING

1.	Austin Riley	Bears	67.9
2.	Fernando Tatis Jr.	Bears	66.9
3.	Jesse Winker	Bums	57.7
4.	Trey Mancini	Saints	52.7
5.	Miguel Sanó	Bombers	51.1

6.	Randy Arozarena	Bears	48.0
7.	Nick Castellanos	Cubs	45.5
8.	Marcus Semien	Monarchs	44.9
9.	Garrett Cooper	Bums	44.7
10.	Max Muncy	Wahoos	42.8
11.	Adolis García	Bombers	42.6
12.	Dansby Swanson	Tribe	40.8
13.	Vladimir Guerrero Jr.	Blues	39.8
14.	Kyle Schwarber	Wahoos	39.5
15.	Ramón Laureano	Cubs	39.0
16.	Gavin Lux	Blues	38.8
17.	Jake Cronenworth	Skipjacks	38.6
18.	Gleyber Torres	Bombers	38.1
19.	Ji-Man Choi	Skipjacks	36.6
20.	Ian Happ	Wahoos	36.0
21.	Brian Anderson	Senators	34.6
22.	Will Smith	Blues	34.1
23.	Mark Canha	Bums	34.0
24.	Ozzie Albies	Senators	33.1
25.	Joey Wendle	Bums	32.7

WHO'S NOT--HITTING

1.	Jesús Aguilar	Cubs	-4.7
2.	Justin Turner	Wahoos	-4.5
3.	Travis Shaw	Saints	-2.6
4.	Owen Miller	Skipjacks	-2.5
5.	Bryce Harper	Saints	-2.0
6.	Dylan Moore	Monarchs	-1.4
7.	Cavan Biggio	Bears	-1.0

8.	Pete Alonso	Skipjacks	-0.5
9.	Jorge Soler	Blues	-0.5

SKIP SEZ



For all of his whining and gnashing of teeth, PAwesome had the hot pitcher of the week in Zach Wheeler with 73.0 points. The **Wahoos** also had Max Muncy (42.8), Kyle Schwarber (39.5) and Ian Happ (36.0) on the Who's Hot-Hitting list, so how about closing the piehole already. Or as W.C. Fields might say, "Go away, kid--you bother me."



Pitching continues to reign supreme with the top five league point-getters all starting pitchers. Vlad, Jr. at 235.2 points, has surpassed J.T. Martinez (222.2) as the top-scoring hitter, finally reaching a potential that everyone has been talking about for these past few years.

KING OF THE ROAD

Now that the majority of the adult U.S. population is vaccinated and people are traveling again, most of us trial-lawyer types have resumed our prior practice of in-person depositions, and I for one couldn't be happier about it. Two weeks ago the job took me to New Jersey for a deposition; last week to Norfolk, Virginia; this week to Central Washington; and next week to Dallas, Texas. What can be better than being out on the open road?

Last week when I was out for a walk while in the shipyards along the Elizabeth River in Norfolk, I actually found myself singing giddily (to myself) Roger Miller's timeless hobo ballad *King of the Road*. Here are the words, so you can sing along out loud, not just in your head.

KING OF THE ROAD

Trailer for sale or rent Rooms to let, 50 cents No phone, no pool, no pets I ain't got no cigarettes

Ah, but two hours of pushing broom Buys a eight by 12 four-bit room I'm a man of means, by no means King of the road

THE ROAD

Third boxcar, midnight train Destination: Bangor, Maine Old worn out suit and shoes I don't pay no union dues

I smoke, old stogies I have found

Short, but not too big around I'm a man of means, by no means King of the road

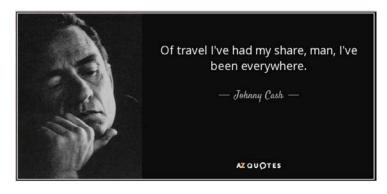
I know every engineer on every train
All of the children and all of their names
Every handout in every town
Every lock that ain't locked when no one's around

I sing, trailers for sale or rent Rooms to let, 50 cents No phone, no pool, no pets I ain't got no cigarettes

Ah, but two hours of pushing broom Buys an eight by 12 four-bit room I'm a man of means, by no means King of the road

Trailer for sale or rent
Rooms to let, 50 cents
No phone, no pool, no pets
I ain't got no cigarettes
Ah, but, two hours of pushing broom
Buys an eight by 12 four-bit room

On my trip this week to Central Washington--see below, if you can stomach it--I found myself singing (again, to myself) another famous travel ballad, the iconic *I've Been Everywhere*, written by Geoff Mack, recorded by many, my favorite version being the one sung by Johnny Cash. Again, just in case you want to sing along with the OI' Skipper, here are the words:



I'VE BEEN EVERYWHERE

I was totin' my pack along the dusty Winnemucca road, When along came a semi with a high an' canvas-covered load. "If you're goin' to Winnemucca, Mack, with me you can ride." And so I climbed into the cab and then I settled down inside. He asked me if I'd seen a road with so much dust and sand. And I said, "Listen, I've traveled every road in this here land!"

I've been everywhere, man.
I've been everywhere, man.
Crossed the desert's bare, man.
I've breathed the mountain air, man.
Of travel I've had my share, man.
I've been everywhere.

I've been to:

Reno¹, Chicago¹, Fargo¹, Minnesota¹, Buffalo¹, Toronto¹, Winslow¹, Sarasota¹, Wichita¹, Tulsa¹, Ottawa, Oklahoma¹, Tampa¹, Panama, Mattawa¹, La Paloma, Bangor, Baltimore¹, Salvador, Amarillo¹, Tocapillo, Baranquilla, and Perdilla, I'm a killer.

I've been to:

Boston¹, Charleston¹, Dayton¹, Louisiana¹, Washington¹, Houston¹, Kingston, Texarkana, Monterey, Faraday, Santa Fe¹, Tallapoosa, Glen Rock, Black Rock, Little Rock¹, Oskaloosa, Tennessee¹ to Tennesse Chicopee, Spirit Lake¹, Grand Lake, Devils Lake, Crater Lake, for Pete's sake.

I've been to:

Louisville¹, Nashville¹, Knoxville, Ombabika, Schefferville, Jacksonville¹, Waterville¹, Costa Rica¹, Pittsfield, Springfield¹, Bakersfield, Shreveport¹, Hackensack¹, Cadillac, Fond du Lac, Davenport¹, Idaho¹, Jellico, Argentina, Diamantina, Pasadena¹, Catalina, see what I mean-a.

I've been to:

Pittsburgh¹, Parkersburg, Gravelbourg, Colorado¹, Ellensburg, Rexburg, Vicksburg, Eldorado¹, Larimore, Atmore, Haverstraw, Chatanika, Chaska, Nebraska¹, Alaska¹, Opelika, Baraboo, Waterloo¹, Kalamazoo¹, Kansas City¹, Sioux City¹, Cedar City, Dodge City¹, what a pity.

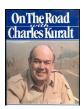
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¹ Been there, for the record, 46 out of 90 locations.

IN RE: CENTRAL WASHINGTON or ALL FOR THE WANT OF A BEAVER HANDLE

I'll try to spare you most of the grisly details, but my travel adventure this week was to Central Washington for the deposition of a client, a podiatrist, who got sacked from a temporary assignment at the Winnebago Indian Hospital in northeast Nebraska because of sterilization issues with the single, so-called "Beaver Handle" used to debride dead skin from the toes and feet of patients. Yes, you read that correctly. And because my client now lives and works in Chelan, Washington, I had the great good fortune to be able travel to this spectacularly beautiful part of the world which is the eastern slope of the majestic Cascade Mountain Range.

There's really no need to visit the topic of how my client did in testifying at his deposition, so instead let's examine some of the experiences and observations that this doozy of a junket afforded me, since it is, after all, all about me:

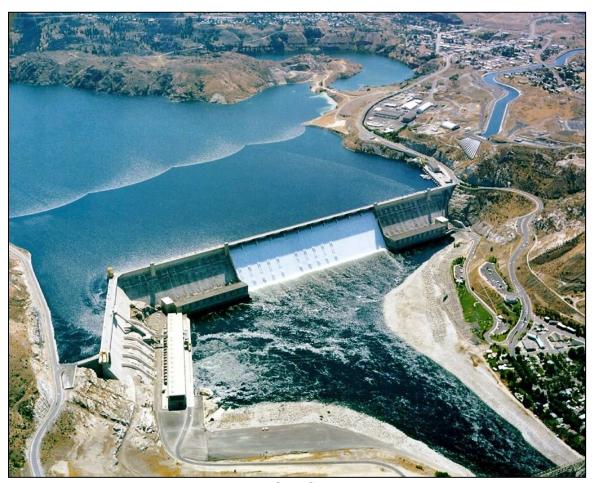


On Monday morning, I flew from Omaha to Spokane, the home of Gonzaga University, and a city I previously visited with HQ in 2013 in that year's State Capitol/Minor League Ballpark boondoggle. The High-A Spokane Indians were not in town this week, but this was not a particular buzzkill for me since I previously saw the Indians play there at Avista Stadium in 2013. From Spokane, I headed west on Highway 2 toward Chelan, a lovely drive through the vast fields of hay and barley and soybeans and cattle



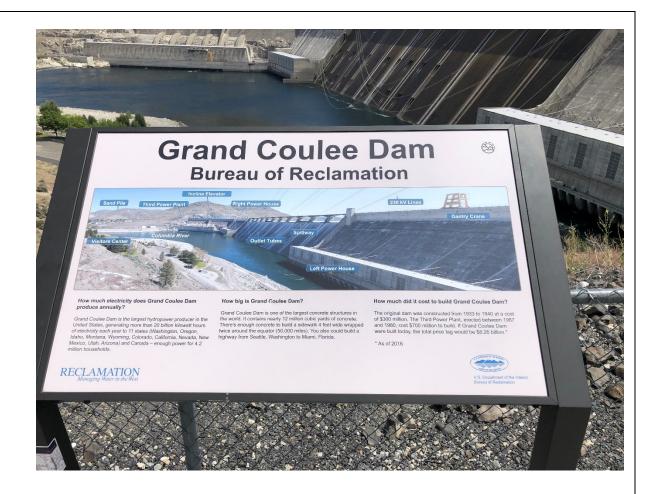
Rural Washington state

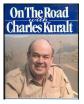
in this very rural part of Washington state. I took a short detour to the north and west on Highway 174 so I could see the Grand Coulee Dam, and taking this road less traveled was well worth the time and effort.



Grand Coulee Dam

The Grand Coulee Dam, completed in 1941 at a cost of \$300 million, is a mammoth structure and an incredible engineering feat. Designed to both tame the magnificent, roaring Columbia River and to provide an enormous amount (21 billion kilowatt hours, enough to furnish electricity to 2.3 million homes) of hydroelectrical power, it contains 12 million cubic yards of concrete, enough to pour a four-foot wide sidewalk that would encircle the world at the equator twice over. To build it today would cost more than 5.5 billion dollars.





Thanks to my superstar travel agent, I stayed at a very cool resort known as Campbell's on Lake Chelan, and my room on the top floor had a stellar view of Lake Chelan.

I had no idea what a resort venue Lake Chelan was² but apparently this is where a lot of affluent Seattle-ites and Tacoma-ites come for fun, sun and water sports in the summer.

² Indeed, I hadn't even heard of Chelan or Lake Chelan until about a month ago when the deposition request was made.



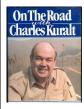
The view from my top-floor room



The town of Lake Chelan is very kitschy and touristy with lots of places to drink locally brewed beer and sip on wine from locally-produced grapes. There are a host of well-regarded vineyards in this area, including the Tsillan Cellars Winery where I met my podiatrist client for dinner.



Tsillan Cellars Winery



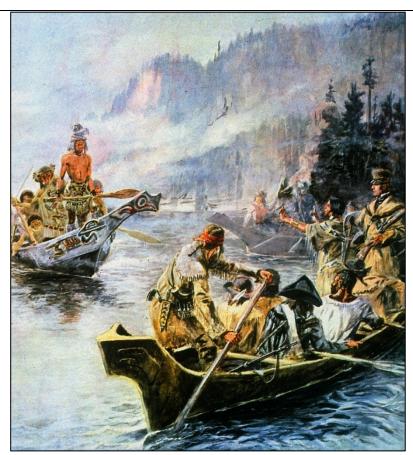
After my client's deposition ended midday on Tuesday, I blasted my way out of town before the authorities could stop me and headed south on Highway 97, toward Wenatchee, bound for the Tri-Cities³ area and the promise of minor league baseball. First things first, however, I was treated to one of the most beautiful drives I've ever been on as Highway 97 follows the Columbia River through some of the most beautiful landscape you will ever lay eyes on.



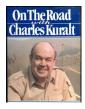
The Majestic Columbia River

While still magnificent and awesome to see and experience even after having been harnessed by a multitude of dams, one can only imagine what it looked like, what it sounded like, and what it rode like when Lewis and Clark & Company experienced it in October of 1805 while on their heady expedition.

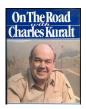
³ Richland, Pasco and Kennewick. And for the record, the only drivers I encountered during my brief visit here must have taken driver's training in Lincoln, Nebraska, where the term "sense of urgency" is not anywhere in the vocabulary.



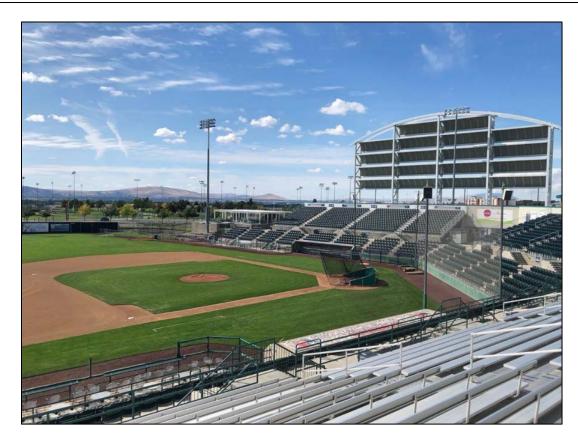
Lewis and Clark Expedition canoeing on the lower Columbia River; watercolor by Charles Russell, 1905



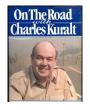
The next leg of my journey took me through the area known as *U.S. Department of Energy Hanford Site*, where the town of Hanford was relocated by the United States Government through the powers of eminent domain so that government scientists could make plutonium for the Manhattan Project. For more on this subject, see my book report on Michael Lewis' *The Fifth Risk* in *From the Bullpen*, Edition 16, 11/21/18. I had hoped to see for myself this area where some 53,000,000 gallons of radioactive waste is being stored in some 177 reportedly eroding tanks, but due to COVID-19, the visitor's center was closed. Just as well, HQ would not have approved if I had come back aglow and/or with a shrunken head. But damn it all, I wanted to see this fascinating place.



Once in the Tri-Cities area, I made my way over to Gesa Stadium, the home of the Tri-City Dust Devils, the High-A affiliate of the Los Angeles Angels, and checked into a Holiday Inn Express which is stumbling distance from the ballpark. A school night, maybe, but I had a powerful thirst for a few ballpark beers that needed to be indulged. Here is a look at Gesa Stadium.







Once at the ballpark for the game, I was instantly annoyed by their stupid rule that I had to purchase two tickets instead of one, as part of their ingenious scheme to create social distancing by making people buy tickets in pods of two, four or six. The thing is, this 3,654-person capacity stadium wasn't even 10% full as it was, and so was it really necessary for me to buy two tickets? Apparently so. Once inside, however, I was cheered to learn that since I am double vaccinated, I did not have to wear my mask inside the ballpark for the game.

But when I went up to the concession stand to purchase my first beer, dog and sack of nuts, I found that they were not selling salted nuts because of the supposed increased risk of transmission of COVID-19 associated with sharing a bag of nuts, I guess. I would like to see the CDC research on that stupid rule, but I didn't ask. Putting my curmudgeon face away, I went to my seats, drank my beer, ate my dog and enjoyed the heck out of a Dust Devils game against the Hillsboro Hops,⁴ won by the Hops by the score of 5-3.

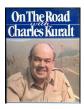


Whaddaya mean, no peanuts?

⁴ High-A West affiliate of the Arizona Diamondbacks.



Dusty, the cut-up Dust Devil mascot



On Wednesday morning, I got up and set my course for Walla Walla, Washington, just mainly because I liked the sound of it, and I wanted to be able to say that I have been to Walla Walla when I write my own version of the *I've Been Everywhere* song. The drive along Highway 12⁵ to get to Walla Walla is beautiful, and once one is in this lovely municipality, one wonders why it is such a well-kept secret. It is a beautiful, vibrant area, and about as green a place as I have ever been to, like a real-world Emerald City.

⁵ Other than having to go through the obvious redneck village of Dixie, where one knucklehead who lives along the highway flies a confederate flag. I mean, c'mon, dude.



East of Walla Walla

They have a very tall hotel building there named the Marcus Whitman, and it makes all of the other buildings in town seem quite short by comparison.



The Marcus Whitman

Walla Walla Fun Facts:



On September 1, 1836, Marcus Whitman arrived with his wife Narcissa Whitman. Here they established the Whitman Mission in an unsuccessful attempt to convert the local Walla Walla tribe to Christianity. Following a disease epidemic, both were killed in 1847 by Cayuse who thought that the missionaries were poisoning the native peoples. Whitman College was established in their honor.



Walla Walla was incorporated on January 11, 1862. As a result of a gold rush in Idaho, during this decade the city became the largest community in the territory of Washington, at one point slated to be the new state's capital. Following this period of rapid growth, agriculture became the city's primary industry. Baker Boyer Bank, the oldest bank in the state of Washington, was founded in Walla Walla in 1869.

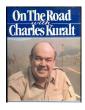


In 2001 Walla Walla was a Great American Main Street Award winner for the transformation and preservation of its once dilapidated main street. In July 2011, *USA Today* selected Walla Walla as the friendliest small city in the United States. Walla Walla was also named Friendliest Small Town in America the same year as part of Rand McNally's annual Best of the Road contest. In 2012 and 2013 Walla Walla was a runner-up in the best food category for the Best of the Road. Downtown Walla Walla was awarded a Great Places in America Great Neighborhood designation in 2012 by the American Planning Association.



Tourists to Walla Walla are often told that it is a "town so nice they named it twice." Some locals and Walla Walla natives often refer to the city in text form with "W2." Walla Walla is a Native American name that means "Place of Many Waters" because the original settlement was at the junction of the Snake and Columbia Rivers.

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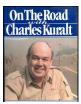


On my route from Walla Walla to Pullman, my GPS took me to Lewiston, Idaho, just across the border a mile or two, and this part of the road trip featured several encounters with the Snake River, which, I now know, is calling me back for a white water rafting trip. After reaching Lewiston, my drive wound up, up and up until I found a scenic lookout spot which provided a breathtaking view of Lewiston and the great river below.

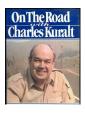


Overlooking Lewiston





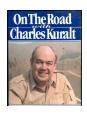
From Walla Walla I headed north and east toward Pullman, home of Washington State University. The drive through rural eastern Washington is a bit like driving through our sandhills on steroids, but every little town that I passed through seemed clean and prideful and a nice place to live. When Husker athletic director Bill Moos talked about being able to relate to Nebraska farmers and ranchers because this was what he did at WSU, he wasn't kidding. Life in these here parts is about as different as it can be from living in Seattle, a much bigger difference than, say, between Scottsbluff and Omaha.



Pullman is beautiful. I can see how they talked Mike Leach into staying for a while once they got him on campus. I have been on a lot of college campuses, but I don't know that I've been on any that were as beautiful from the standpoint of the elevated setting, the foliage, the buildings, the whole ball of wax.



Washington State University in Pullam



After visiting Wazzu, I drove the eight miles (that's right, eight miles) across the state border to the University of Idaho in Moscow, where an old friend of ours from our construction days at Cole Construction went to college. Although it's not as impressive a campus as WSU, it's beautiful in its own way, and I think anybody could be proud to say that they are a Vandal. I'd love to go back and spend a little more time there, to give it more than just a quick kick of the tires.

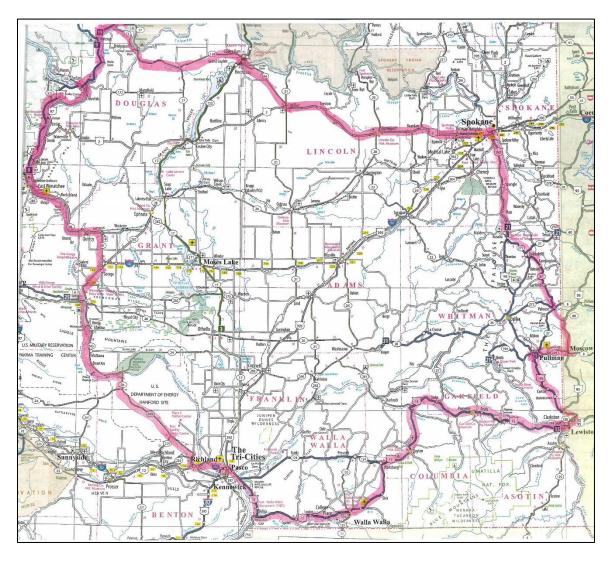


University of Idaho in Moscow

HOMEWARD BOUND

Since all good things must come to an end, after my visits to Pullman and Pasco, I headed north to Spokane for my flight home, encountering more remarkable rural scenery along the way, including the beautiful and bucolic Spokane Valley just to the south of the city. Unfortunately, my excessive dilly-dallying on the campuses of WSU and the University of Idaho did not leave me with enough time to visit the campus of Gonzaga--which will have to wait for a future trip.

Below is a map of my Washington state wanderings.



In closing out this issue of *The Bullpen*, I hope that each and every one of you has a superb Memorial Day Weekend.

Skipper

P.S. Oops! Almost forgot. Here is:

SKIP'S PIX 'N' PANZ, Part 3

TRIBE:

OVERVIEW: Shocking as it may seem, the **Tribe** has some of the best starting pitching in the league, thanks to Underbelly drafting Trevor Bauer in the 1st, Aaron Nola in the 2nd, and several other solid starters in later rounds. While U-Bob has a serviceable infield, the **Tribe** is underwhelming in the outfield and virtually AWOL at catcher.

FIRST AND WORST GAFFE: Wasting a 6th round pick on Michael Conforto was unfortu-

nate, to say the least.

SAVVIEST SELECTION: Snapping up Chris Bassitt in the 11th round was a stroke of

genius.

POF: Sorry to say, Robert, but the **Tribe** will not get a sniff at a

money finish this season--11th place.

Next issue, who knows?

