

IT'S THE  
9TH INNING!  
- WHO'S ON?

# OFFICIAL LINEUP CARD

VISITORS: Rookies of the Year

HOME: All Stars

NO.	NAME	POS.
9	McGuff	7
12	Gonzalez	5
7	D'Ammassa	8
20	Parsons	6
14	Hooper	3
19	Widner	9
6	Raymond	2
13	Sullivan	2
18	Peters	4
28	Krueger	P
4	Larsen	P

NO.	NAME	POS.
16	Glicksohn	8
25	Kaufman	4
1	Gomoll	3
12	Carol	5
<del>22</del>	<del>Carr</del>	<del>6</del>
29	Brandon	6
42	Lynch	9
5	Brown	7
33	Shiffman	2
39	Lichtman	P

## PLAYERS ON THE BENCH

13 SULLIVAN  
1 LEVY  
40 L. SMITH  
5 GUNDERLOY  
2 KOSBERG

## PITCHERS

36 UBELHOR  
19 SCHIMANSKI  
49 JUNTUNEN  
17 SOKOLA  
8 CUMMER  
22 VARSEN

## PLAYERS ON THE BENCH

31 FOSTER  
6 VIRZI  
14 GLYER  
18 STILES  
28 BRANDON

## PITCHERS

11 BUSHYAGER  
32 BOGGS  
27 SICLARI  
17 MUELLER  
35 HOFFMAN  
10 WHITE

Jeane Gomoll







May 22nd, 1988: These days, everything seems to involve a road trip. I go to collations hundreds of miles away, conventions on the left coast, even ball games halfway across the state. Every fanzine that arrives in the mail seems to have something to do with travel, from the baldly focused 1-94 to the coy and virginal Bruzzfuzzel News, which callously invites me to the no-doubt fabulous Swamp Con 8, April 21 -- 23, 1989. There's no mention of where the convention is to be held, but one presumes it's to be in Baton Rouge somewhere. The kicker is the price -- only five dollars through the first of July! Wow! Then I look at the list of guests, and I have my doubts. Steve Jackson is at the top of the list and George Alec Effinger at the bottom? But wait, there's two categories here, "guests" and "invited guests." Steve Jackson was not on the "invited guests" list, but Robert Adams was... what deep symbology can this entail? And then one has to realize the serious implications of reviewing fanzines in one's sleep in the first place...

The alarm summons me forth from this land of smudged and improperly addressed slumber with a sound like a microwave oven going off, one of the only things that has been clinically shown to be capable of actually waking me up. 8 AM? On a Sunday? This must be some kind of nightmare.

Of a sort, anyway. I'll spare the reader the details of the various galvanic processes I am forced to use to attain actual consciousness and keep it; but suffice to say after I get out of the bathroom, Carrie brings some portentous news with the glass of V-8 that I use like Tana leaves.

"There are people downstairs waiting for you."

I think, Of course! The gang! We're going to Milwaukee to see the Brewers play the Blue Jays! Nascent Fareds for me to inculcate with a proper respect for the ancients, not to mention the infield fly rule! Brute Pleasure in the broiling sun, to smell the sizzling flesh on a thousand grills, the deep horsey tang of Old Style Beer, the distant rumour of the Red Star Yeast Factory! And that's just one of the senses! We fans have five!

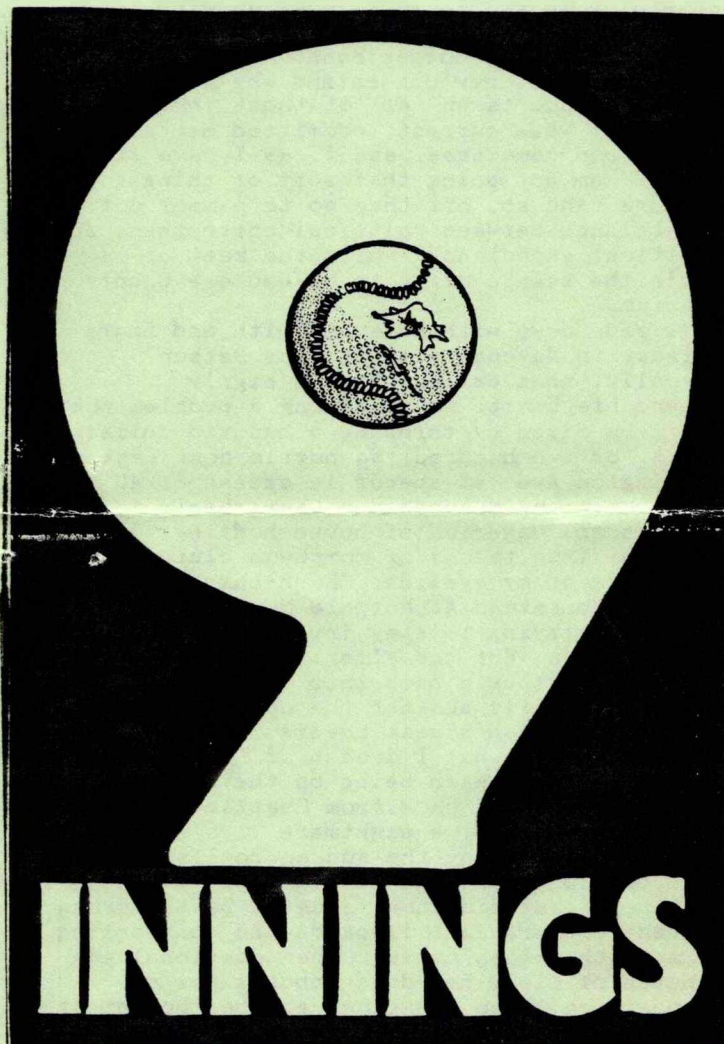
I spend quite a while at this, trying to convince myself that falling into bed and returning to sleep is not in fact the most honorable alternative in front of me.

Once downstairs, I see that the motley bunch are almost all here, but that we are of course still lacking the doughty Spike. Despite the fact that she and Hope Kiefer are the principle reason that we had to meet this early -- so that the two of them could go off with a few of the more presentable people and have a proper breakfast in a diner somewhere -- I knew better than to assume she would be there by 9 AM as advertised. Since last summer, when she left me sitting in a chair in the lobby of the Metropole Hotel for an hour and twenty minutes, I have learned to take advantage of the extra time our joint projects entail, and I've gotten a lot of reading done that I might otherwise have missed out on.

This is NINE INNINGS #4, subtitled "Where is everybody?" by Andy Hooper, now residing at 315 N. Ingersoll, Madison, WI, 53703. Member fwa. This is Drag Bunt Press Production #28, right from the heart of the heartland, copyright 1988, all rights removed. NI is available by editorial whim, or for loc, trade or \$1.00 American. Thanks to Carrie Root for all her help in the production of this zine.

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 Craig Smith: 8





But today, when Spike arrives, turns out there's a very good reason for her being late. Her brake lights don't work. Carrie and she swap fuses around, sort of poke at the wiring, and generally admit to being mystified. Spike says, "Well, I've been planing on getting a new car for a while now anyway." This seems a bit of an extreme reaction to having a glitch in the brake lights, but then again, one is probably more likely to find someone willing to sell one a new car than a mechanic at 9 AM on a Sunday morning.

What the hell is going on? I stumble, irreperably surly, from car to car, trying to figure out the plan. Ah, I see now. There are two factions here, one that wants to go eat in a diner in Lake Mills and one that wants to tailgate at the ballpark. Somehow this seems to have broken down along class lines, with the really worthwhile people going to the diner, or so the implication seems to stand. I wouldn't mind this if it weren't for the fact that it has been assumed that I want to join the group picnicking at the ballpark. I had actually been rather looking forward to some of those little link sausages that have been on the griddle since the Truman administration, but it is not to be. I scrounge around in the refrigerator for something to grill, and I come up with three left-over Oscar Mayer "Bun-Length" hot dogs, and couple of hamburger buns. Hoo-boy.

Actually, I now understand why this vile snub was undertaken. All of those invited to breakfast were current, committed members of the Wiscon committee, and I, as I have stated before, am not doing that sort of thing anymore. And so, off they go to hammer out the balance between political correctness and political expediency, while the rest of us begin the scenic drive to Milwaukee County Stadium.

I ride down with Nevenah Smith and Laura Spiess, in Nevenah's aging blue Datsun. Actually, that car has been a highly dependable beast, never having a problem that can't be fixed by throwing a hundred dollars at it, or two hundred. We hurtle down East Washington Ave. at speeds in excess of 40 m.p.h., and as Nevenah and Laura begin to discuss the vagaries of house-hunting, I can feel the iron talons of Morpheus clutching, once more at my eyelids. "Raph-humph, Charter street. Homestead Azphorphle Mexinnex snfx." I intone, trying to stay involved in the conversation. But the effort is wasted; I sink precipitously back into troubled sleep, sweating heavily against the near-virgin vinyl of Nevenah's seat covers.

Hard to say what I dreamt of. I believe it had a lot to do with being on the plane that flew Carrie and I back from Seattle a few weeks before. Yes, a nightmare.

I am awakened by the sudden collision of my brow ridges and the window pane. We are nearing the stadium now, judging by the urban landscape of radio billboards and contracting firms with polish names. The additional 45 minutes of sleep has done wonders for my disposition: I am chagrined at the thought of things I may have said while under the influence of half-consciousness. Have I been

buttonholing people and telling them what I really think of them? Ghu grant not. The world is full of enough meanness as it is, and I don't want to be left behind in Milwaukee.

We pay three dollars for parking and make our way into the north end lot at the stadium. Paul Seth Hoffman and his passengers are right behind us, having stuck to Nevenah's tail (figuratively) from the moment we swung out of the driveway at Blear House. And now we're there, directed by a guy with an orange vest and no teeth, into a parking spot right next to Paul. Nothing to do but break out the grill and start searing that meat.

There are a few other people here who have the same idea. In three directions, about as far as the eye can currently see, there are people setting up barbecues and picnic tables and folding chairs, playing endless games of no-quarter sheephead and skat, and chugging several thousand gallons of beer and peach-flavored schnapps. Makes me think of the people who wrote in with neo-prohibitionist commentary to Rune 76; yes, this might well be Harry Warner's closest approximation of the floor of Hell, laid out here below the brooding presence of Milwaukee County Stadium.

The custom of tailgateing before a ballgame seems something that is manifested in a lot of places around the country, but here in Wisconsin, people attack it with a suicidal vigor that is probably only matched by the denizens of the infield at the Indy 500. It's not all that uncommon for only half of a given party to be actual attending ticket-holders for the game that is our ostensible motivation for being there; the rest will sit in the broiling sun of the parking lot and listen to the thing on radio, guarding the cooler, guarding the grill.

Well, to each his own. We make our own entertainment. Carl Hailman and Don Helley and I compare notes about our teams in the Luke Appling League a convoluted and complicated fantasy baseball simulation I've been running since 1985. Trades are talked and dismissed, the various strengths up the middle of teams that only exist on paper, with names like "The Macon Whoopees," and "The Jupiter Beach Manatees." We pound down the Classic Coke, and eat our carbonized flesh with relish (and other condiments). Paul Hoffman keeps asking us how our players that really play for the Twins are doing; much like my own sectarian irrationality about the Tigers, Paul follows the Twins to the general exception of the rest of baseball. One imagines that, until the churlish invasion of the Cardinals last fall, the existence of the national league was only a vague story to him, a legend on par with "Here be Sea-Monsters."

At one point, I decide that I have to find a bathroom, and fast. It's a goodly hike to the facilities that the stadium thoughtfully provides, and when I come back out, I have little clue as to where we are parked. Confronted by the whole broiling spectacle, I am reminded of the book I have just finished, Connie Willis' Lincoln's Dreams. The field is obscured by the smoke of



a thousand barbecues as if by musketry, and the hubub of the throng is like a distant rumor of battle. A waking dream of the blood-spotted fields outside Sharpsburg, perhaps. I pick my way through the ranks of sprawling gluttons, wondering about my reaction to the book. I don't think it's a particularly good book, but it's not a bad book either. Mostly, I have trouble figuring out what it was about, which one might expect of a novel set on the quicksand of dream interpretation. If I have any resentment, it's this; no fair writing a book mostly about the civil war and expecting me to figure out what it's really about. The historical events that Ms. Willis likes to use as the backdrop for her stories are usually so engrossing that I forget what the point is.

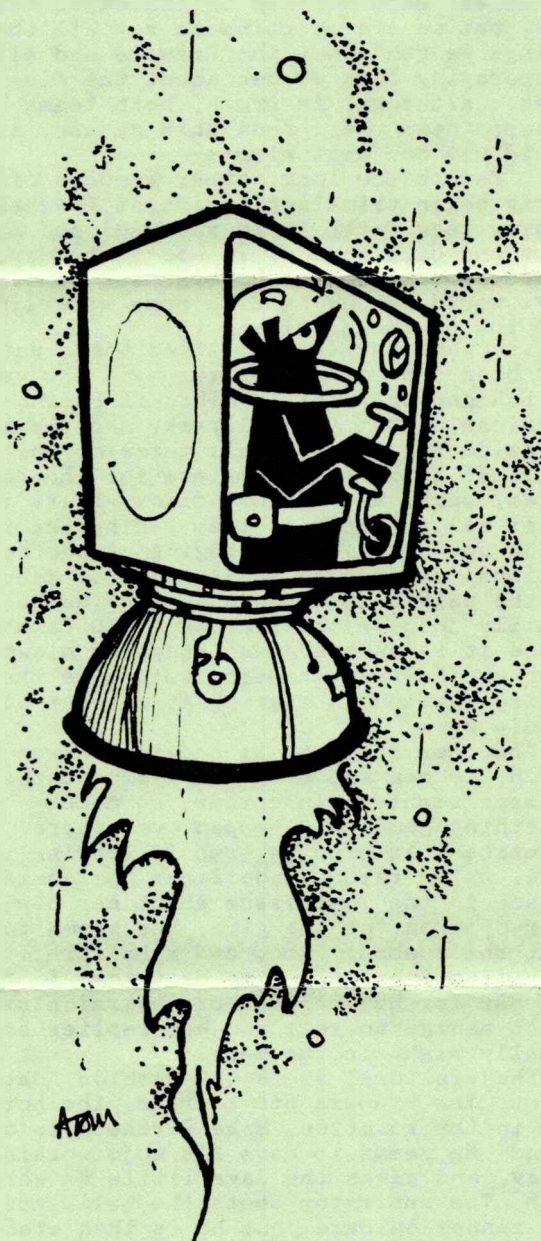
When I return to the car, I try to explain about how the smoke looks like musketry and the field is full of dead men in blue and butternut, and my friends regard me with much the same suspicious humour received by the protagonists of Lincoln's Dreams. Be careful who you tell your dreams to, folks.

Finally, we decide it's time to go on in and see the last of batting practice, as soon as we take a look at one last pre-game attraction.

Most ballparks have these things now; "Speed-Pitch" tents, where you pay a buck and get three throws into a painted catcher, while a radar gun measures how hard you can throw. Don and I are willing to swallow our pride enough to look like fools in front of all the little kids watching us, and we put down our buck and take our throws. I have done this before, and I'm beginning to get the idea about throwing hard off the back leg; I get my pitches up into the high fifties, about as hard as an aging pitcher's slowest knuckleball. Don has a little trouble finding the back of the tent with his pitch, and I don't remember if he cracked fifty miles or not. Doesn't matter. We wear foolish grins as we make our way to the main gate into the stadium, and we both agree: we never want to be too dignified or too old or too serious to do something that dumb.

Once inside the stadium, there's a different tone to the day. This is more serious business. We are about to see combat, to the death if necessary, between the noble Brewers and the hated Jays from north of the border.

We have, as is usual with this big a group getting tickets as late as we did for this game, nosebleed seats. Second deck jobs, but fortunately, we are close enough to the lip of the stands to see the big electronic scoreboard in center field, which is not always possible up here. (The fog can get pretty bad, too.) Carl and Don and I sprawl around the seats which we assume our group has reserved, and Carl and I immediately set about filling out our scorecards. Today, he has convinced me to use a new "simple" system devised by Bill James the statistician and his group, to score the game, and I am dubious. My previous system was arrived at after a decade of picking and choosinng the best notation I could derive from a dozen systems, and I am loathe to give it up; alas, I have left my own





scorecard back out in the car, and as I detailed in the last issue, there's little chance of my being satisfied to simply watch the game without creating some sort of record. I guess I'm going to spend the afternoon looking over his shoulder, to make sure I have things right.

We delight ourselves by picking out numbers in the crowd on the field and putting famous names on them, like Bell, Yount, Fernandez and Braggs. A certain amount of shameless hero-worship is indicated for this day, but we are at pains to say all the good things we can about the Brewers and all the disparaging ones we can about the Blue Jays...although, in truth, both teams have disappointed their fans this season, and both could use our best wishes.

Before too long, other members of the party begin trickling in, first Nevenah and Laura, then Patty Hario and Paul and Spike and Hope and Bill Bodden. It was to be expected, I guess, that Bodden, who organized this whole day, would be the last to come stumbling up to the row in the middle of the Polish national anthem, after three parties had been sent to search for him. Oh, yes, The Polish national Anthem. This is Polish-American day at the ballpark, and the same grizzled figure sings all three of the national anthems appropriate for the day: the Poles, ours, and the Canadians. There is, after all, a Canadian team taking the field. We do not join in the singing of the Polish national anthem, as we are wary of injuries to the palate, but Don and I at least, lustily join in the singing of "O Canada," since it is such a great song for blowhards like us. Halfway through, we notice that the entire section is staring at us, but we muddle on.

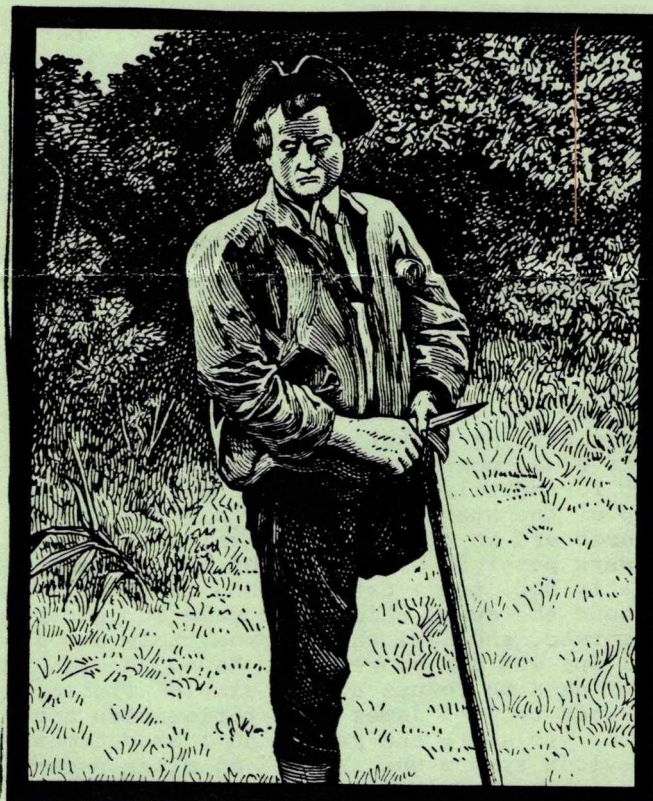
And then the game is underway. From our perch, we can see everything except the extreme right field corner; no doubt something good will happen over there. I notice that even Nevenah is scoring this game, which rather underlines the commentary I made in the last issue about her new-found appreciation for the game. She seems to know what she's about, too, and asks for clarifications only once or twice. In fact, I ask her for her opinion of several plays I don't manage to get, and her replies are usually right on the mark.

The visitors, as is the fashion, bat first. The Brewers 5th starter, the bottom man in the rotation, Mike Birkbeck is on the mound. He seems to have his mojo working today, and gives the Jays little to work with. The shortstop boots the ball, and lets one runner on base, but he is then erased on a double-play grounder, and we go to the bottom of the frame.

In the bottom of the first inning, the Blue Jays send out an aging ex-Baltimore Oriole to pitch, one Mike Flanagan. He's found something of a second life with the Blue Jays, after Baltimore had given his arm up for dead. But today, he has none of the control and location that have been his bread and butter for the last two years, and the Brewers pound him like a Flatworm. The first

two runners reach on a hit and an error, and then Glenn Braggs, a glowering black outfielder with upper arms that look like small hams, smacks a home run well into the left field stands, and the home team is up by 3 to nothing! Another man gets on, and the goat of just a few minutes ago, the melifluous Dale Sveum, who has so much trouble with his fielding at Shortstop, hits a triple into the right field gap, and another run comes in. That's all for poor Mike Flanagan, and in comes a fellow named Nunez, who shuts the door; but the home team has a four-run lead by the end of the first inning, so we had better find something else to talk about, hmmm?

Don, who has already taken steps to alter his brain chemistry, suggests I do the same; we find a proper venue, and discuss our upcoming trip to the north woods of Minnesota, the much-planned Wilderness One-Shot, a trip which I have been anticipating for going on two years now. The final personnel is pretty well set now, with me, Don, Steve Johnson, Patty Hario and Bill Farina, all Madison fen, ready to take off on the evening of June 16th. For those familiar with the canoe country of Northern Minnesota, we'll be leaving directly from Fall Lake landing outside Ely, traveling north to Lower Basswood Falls, and then turning back south, up the Horse river to Fourtown lake and then through a chain of small lakes back to Ely. For those who have no idea what I'm talking about, we'll be going out about 22 miles from the main route into the region, and then turning back and coming in the back door home again. We'll have five days to do the route,





which works out to only nine miles a day; not much to worry about, I hope.

Of course, it's important to note that we'll have some unusual cargo to haul over the portages along the way. I'm bringing Tom Quale's portable Olympia typewriter, so that we'll be able to link the One-shot and the wilderness... I was eventually forced to abandon the scheme of taking a mimeo onto the trail with us, but we'll still be composing most of the text of the fanzine there in the forest.

We've been conducting trials to see just how long it's been since any of us were in a canoe. The other night, I took out Don and Patty in the ferroconcrete canoe my father bought from Sears a few years back, and I found to my embarrassment that Don wasn't the only one who felt rusty on the water. Well, it's been a long time. I hope that both Roscoe and whatever Gods as guard the water will both be watching over our little band; we'll need all the help we can get.

Anyway, Don and I have lots of plans for fun things to do once we get up there. If you're not able, or not particularly keen to attend Fourth Street Fantasy in Minneapolis over that weekend, why not think of us? Just a hundred or so miles north, we'll be having FourtownCon One, on the shores of Fourtown Lake, the 19th of June. There will be another in a series of fanorama readings, we'll be discussing works of our favorite authors, and we'll drink Wyler's until we blow up. A good time for one and all.

The second inning came and went without much notice. After a four-run outburst, there's little to pick out of a 1-2-3 inning 'worth writing about. One of baseball's most difficult conundrums for the non-fan is the way in which the action ebbs and flows without apparent rhyme or reason. A pitcher will handcuff a hitter for three times up, and then suddenly the batter solves the pitcher's riddles, and hits him out. Or he learns what's a strike and what isn't, and he draws a free pass through a walk. Sometimes drawing that walk is an even better sight for one manager than a hit would have been, while the other will say he wishes the pitcher had grooved a fastball for a double than allow the hitter the single base awarded through the walk. Why? What allowed that hitter to figure out what eluded him on three previous trials? Finding out the answer to questions like these is what I imagine people will eventually point to as having been my true life's work. I love the question for its own sake; most people don't.

Before the third, Spike asks me about moving. I say the deal has been done for the house, and yes, the address provided with the last NI is the now-correct one. It's an unusual problem we have here with the house; more room than we know what to do with. This is not something I've had problems with in the past, and it will go well against my grain to have to spread my stuff all around the house to make it look like someone lives there. Carrie is ecstatic, of course; she's something of a closet knick-knack freak, and we will finally have the room we need to exhibit her collection of porcelain cats and



The Warrior Maid of Lyme Gelleau  
greeted by King Chuckles c.1611ing

to put the various Georgia O'Keeffe prints that have spent the last two years in mailing tubes, up on the walls.

This has been, however, a season full of moves. Hope and Richard Russell moved the same day, and Nevenah plans to move the day before we'll be getting the last of our furniture out of Blear House. Then Bodden plans to move in with Russell and Kiefer, and then Laura Spiess is getting a house in August... too much at once! Of course I blame Hope, since she was foolish enough to publish a new SF3 directory at the beginning of May.

The third inning sees Birkbeck lose his shutout. He allows a man to get as far as a second, then bears down, and gets the next two on strikeouts, not even letting them advance the runner to third, where he might be sacrificed home; but then a wild pitch lets the runner advance anyway, and then a solid hit by Rance Mullinicks (One of the better baseball names of the decade) makes the whole thing moot. Birkbeck seems to have the same problem as a lot of young pitchers; concentration. He gets two outs, then figures he's home free and makes a few pitches that he shouldn't try to sneak by, and that's all the hitters need. But then, when he's let the run score, he snaps back to reality and attacks the hitter with his best pitches. By and large, great pitchers arrive in the league knowing about this problem; merely adequate or successful pitchers learn about it as they go along.

The Brewers respond to this by floundering manfully after the junk Nunez throws, and we're one-third through this game.

Between innings three and four, the huge phallic speaker tower in center field spews out "La Bamba" at volume designed to drown



out airliner engines. In front of us, a whole section of the stands writhes and quivers in time to the music; the whole block has apparently been bought out by a fraternity at UW-Milwaukee, and they have taken great advantage of the opportunity to get well-greased before the game even started. At one point, two young men in Ocean Pacific shirts help an ample young woman out of her seat and up the aisle; as she passes, on feet that twist and wobble like shopping cart wheels, we can see that she's well beyond being drunk. Her eyes have the ill-focused look of someone going a quick three rounds with Mike Tyson, and I bet myself that when we see her again, she'll have this long, wet stain, all down the front of her blouse.

I look over at Don, and he too is watching this with a slow shake of his head. "Lucky we don't ever do anything like that, eh Don?" I ask. He laughs.

The top of the fourth is mercifully quick. Birkbeck pulls the string on a pitch that certain Canadians in the stands nearby allege may have been treated in a less-than-legal fashion. "Jeez," says Carl, "Can't these people see that Birkbeck has enough trouble getting an undoctored ball over the plate?" And it's true, he keeps running up long counts on each batter, 3 and 2 and then four or five foul balls before he retires them on a ball in the dirt. But try pointing that out to the partisans making the accusation. Now that the league has decided to make a big deal out of capturing and executing cheaters, the atmosphere in the ballpark has begun to resemble the HUAC hearings. All pitchers are guilty of balks and spitballs until proven innocent, and all bats are corked until cut in half.

Nevenah asks an innocent question: "Who did McGriff bounce out to last inning? I wasn't watching at the time." and this leads Carl and I and Patty to begin poring desperately over our boxes to figure out where the ground ball went. Why can't we just say "ground out" and let it go at that? I have no idea. Bill knows, but he just wandered off to get a hotdog. The Canadians have split our attention long enough to make us fall behind, and the bottom of the fourth is spent in desperately watching the lightning action as the Brewers hammer the ball into the ground and we deliberate as to who should be awarded the put-out from the previous inning. The Brewers make the third out, and we decide we have to have a decision now; we award it to Tony Fernandez the shortstop, on the grounds that the second baseman had handled the previous two balls, and it was his turn.

Trivia Time! Trivia Time! between innings, the huge glowing scoreboard, full four times the size of the modest one in Warner Park asks: "Who were the only two players to hit Major League home runs before their 20th birthday and after their fortieth? Answer next inning." We mull this over for a minute, and I think I have the answer; Pete Rose and Al Kaline. Bill refuses to agree with me, racking his brain for another possible answer; but before his folly in this cause can be revealed, the game starts up again. The Jays put together a threat, but the

lumbering Ernie Whitt, trying to score on fly ball to right, is cut down at the plate. He might have made a better job of it if he had slid in with a little authority, but two years ago, when catching himself, he was run over by both Don Baylor and Dave Winfield on the same play, breaking his leg very badly. Since then, he's acquired a little more perspective about these at-the-plate collisions, and he declines to plow B J Surhoff under at home, allowing us to write down a 9-2 double play. What ho.

The game's half done, fairly flying by. We get to talking about other stuff, just to avoid having to pay attention to the drunken throng before us, several of whom seem to want to be the second person to fall to their death from this very upper deck this season. Bill says, "I read what you wrote about Corflu in the apa."

"Oh," I reply.

"Sounds like it was a lot of fun."

"It was," I say. "You should go next year. It's only going to be up the road in Minneapolis."

We sit quietly for a moment, listening to Paul Hoffman hold forth on the superior qualities of Kirby Puckett.

"Minneapolis," says Bill. "I dunno."

"Oh, me either," I reply, "But there's gonna be a lot to do without making any obsequence to the superiority of Minneapolis fandom..."

"Ah," says Bill, "We won't be forced to sign an oath of loyalty or anything?"

"Not that I know of," I say.

We sit for another moment. The bottom of the fifth starts. Not much is happening. The crowd tries to do the wave, which we had a lot of fun with in the first, but interest has since waned.

"Yeah, I read your piece," he says, "and it seemed kind of vague to me. You must have been very busy all the time."

Which is a pretty perceptive observation. Corflu did have that kind of a frantic quality, as if people were overwhelmed by the volume of good conversation, and kept panicking as people came in and out of the room without ever saying hello, people that they hadn't seen since Yngvi sawed Courtney's Boat, or something like that. (Actually, I was finally enlightened as to the meaning of Courtney's boat and the story of Ned Hanlon and all that by buying a bunch of old DNQ's at the Corflu auction.)

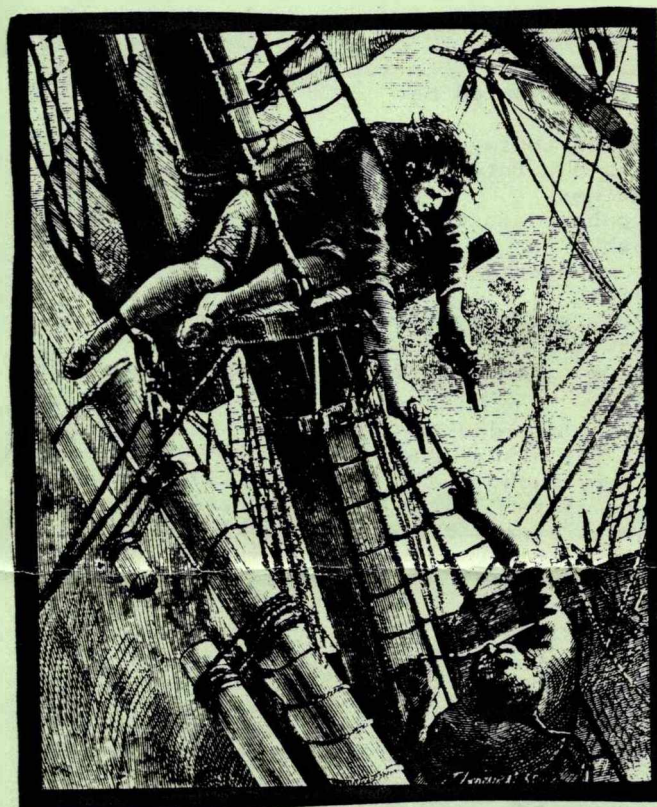
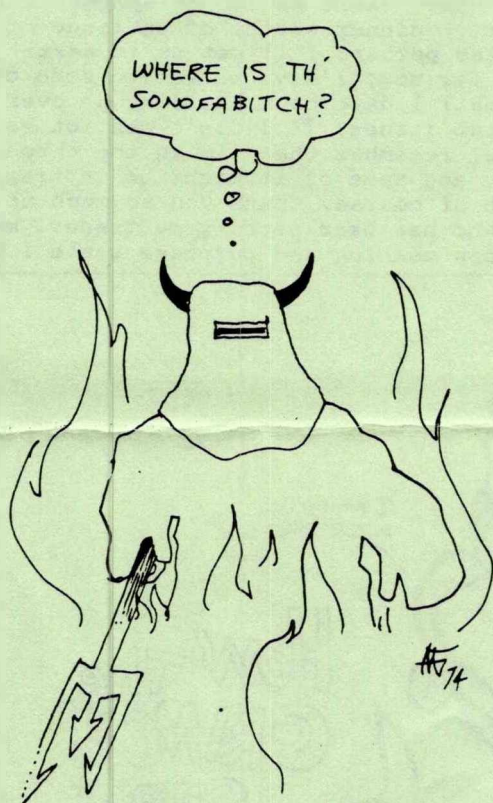
I was struck by a lot of things at Corflu. The way that certain constants exist at all convention. Even at Corflu, there were some lumpy people from parts unknown that no one wanted to talk to, and this at the convention where people are supposed to make friends to, the exclusion of pretty much everything else. Even with all the lectures I've had about not tying the epithet BNF to people over the last two years, there were a few people I just never got up the gumption to introduce myself to... Ted White, for example. I don't know what came over me, I just couldn't make my voice work and my hand go out... He always seemed to be hip deep in a conversation that, concerned threats to skiffy as we know it, and these hardly seemed opportune times to break in and ask if he had read the tawdry



little baseball-intensive fanzines I had been sending him. This phantom neo-hood sure is hard to shake.

And more than a few things happened that embarrassed me at Corflu. The only freebie sent by mail to the convention, for placement before the members, was a flyer for the upcoming Congenial One, proclaiming prominently at the bottom, "ANDY HOOPER, FAN GUEST OF HONOR." Every time someone came up to register at the table, they'd pick one of these up and ask, "Who's Andy Hooper?" I claimed to have no knowledge of the man whatsoever. Then there was my naivete in attempting to snap up one of the Hyphen's sent over the water by Walt Willis for an auction to befit a Chuch Harris fund, for less than thirty dollars. Whatever was I thinking? More money was spent on old zines there than is spent by the Burundian Military for a whole year.

Of course, that was the real opportunity available to a young fanzine fan at Corflu 5. There were many, many titles on sale at reasonable prices in the dealer's room, and one even received two zines with one's registration, with the promise of another to follow once the con was over. Perhaps listing off some of those would have convinced young Bill of his need to attend next year's



convention...

HA! BOOM! While I sit pondering the future of fandom. The Muscular Churl himself, Robin Yount, has banged a long drive off Nunez, and sent the ball into the seats. We're all standing, going Wooooo! Wooooo! waving our arms and generally acting goofy. The score goes up to 5 to 1, nothing to worry about. Don giggles merrily as the corruscating color dances before his eyes; I become even moodier and more introspective. The sixth inning flashes by without my notice, even though the Brewers scratch out yet another run. 6 to 1. People are beginning to leave, their taste for blood long since well-slaked.

And what were we talking about? Yes, fanzines. What a gargantuan heap confronted the casual observer of the proceedings!

Right in my registration packet, I found two veritable gems, The Portable Carl Brandon, and The Incomplete Terry Carr. Both, as the names imply, showcase Terry's work, and both have been taken from the original stencils wherever it was possible. Some of the material had never found any general distribution before, and I suppose this might have cut the sting of his absence a little; but many times during the weekend I saw fans reading these with a very faraway look in their eyes, and one had to wonder.

Of course, I was home for some time before I had a real opportunity to look at them. When I did, I was most pleased; they stand as probably the best convention publications I've ever seen. Anyway, I was cruising along having a fine old time snorting to myself in the corner, when I came across a piece of Carl Brandon's work entitled "The Detention Tales," being a fannish pastiche of



the Canterbury tales, or at least a start toward one. I had been thinking about a very similar project myself, but when stuff like this confronted me:

A fanned there was, a boy still in his teens who'd but lately encountered the world of fanzines. He pubbed amateur fiction and other such trash. And he dreamed of subs bringing in barrells of cash. He charged thirty-five cents for his zine, FAR-OUT STEF, Saying, "That's five cents cheaper than F&SF."

Well, I decided to abandon the project. I feel for his friends that obviously miss him so very much, and I know that I've lost a lot of pleasure I might have had reading both his fanwriting and his professional work, were he still with us...but personally, I'm just glad there are still a few subjects he didn't manage to get to before he died.

Both zines are available through the vestiges of the Corflu committee, via Serconia Press, PO Box 1786, Seattle, WA, 98117. It's two bucks for the Portable Carl Brandon and five for the Incomplete Terry Carr and both are well worth the expenditure.

Where the hell was I? The lights have begun to wink in and out on me now, and we seem to have reached all the way up to the bottom of the eighth, when the Brewers decide to scratch out one more run, bringing the toal up to seven to nothing. There are still over thirty thousand people in the stadium, relishing every moment of this inelegant drubbing, rising to give a hand to the injured Rick Leach, leaving the game after diving on his face after a ball, and that's a sure sign of a satiated crowd; Leach plays for the other team. Nevenah notes his exit

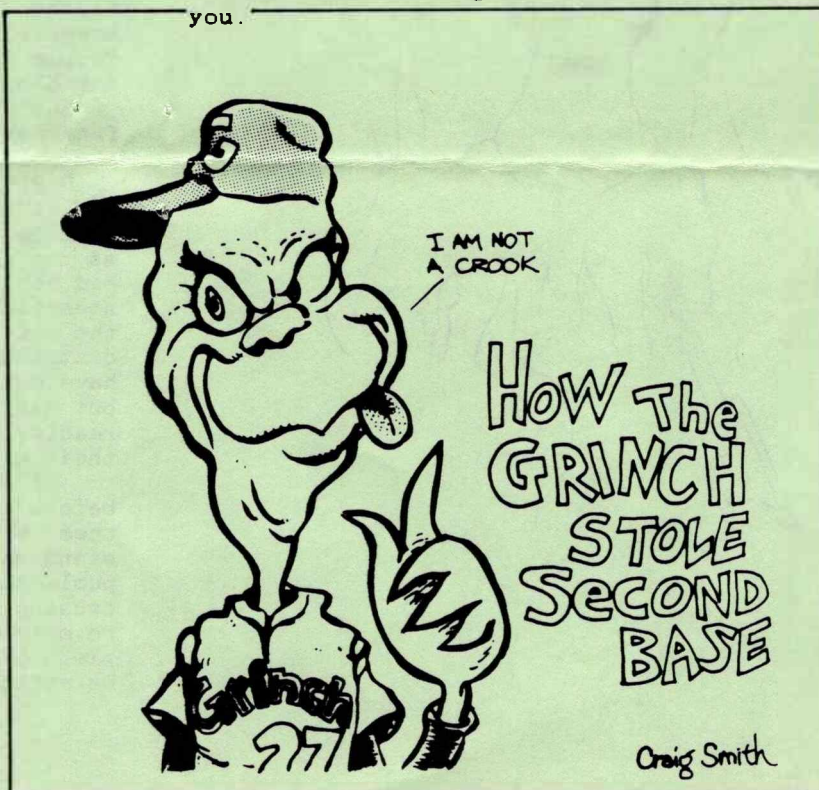
with satisfaction, marking it all down on her scorecard, which, I note, is a lot neater than mine is.

Before I leave the subject of fanzines altogether, I'll mention one other title I picked up at the convention, that being Pat Mueller's new zine Pirate Jenny. This is Pat's first post Texas-SFI zine, and one can see that many of the habits built up in editing a news-zine or clubzine die hard. This may be the slickest, best laid-out zine I've ever seen one editor turn out; and while it's a misnomer as always to attach a zine to the efforts of only one person, hers is the guding vision behind this project. Quite a first issue. Amusing fan writing by Dennis Virzi and Richard Brandt, and a particularly nice colored insert of Teddy Harvia's cartoons of life at Minicon 22. I look forward to much more where this came from. Available for \$3.00 US a pop, with subscription rates to be announced after the third issue, from 618 Westridge, Duncanville, TX, 75116.

And so, the day dwindled down in the west. A whole day spent doing nothing but sitting in the shade and occasionally howling. One of life's underappreciated plaasures. The highly effective Dan Plesac was brought in to pitch the top of the ninth inning, and while the Blue Jays banged out a few hits, just to show they weren't the wimps they appeared to be, they went down without scoring. Nothing left but to make our tottering way out of the stadium, and then to Pete Larsen's Old Wauwatosa home, where we fed on Spaghetti and each other, a dinner worthy of an issue of its own. And perhaps I'll get to it next time, but for now, I have to get to some of the kind mail I have been building up over the last two issues. If I don't mention your letter now, remember that I'm in the throes of moving, and some of it might be in transit still. And of course, thank you so much to everyone who has been sending me trades; my life has new meaning and purpose, since I met you.



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## EXTRA INNINGS:

Well, take note here, because this is about as close as I think I'll ever come to saying "why this is late." I rushed this thing together to take with me to X-con in Milwaukee last June, and it most certainly looked like it. I had been trying out different column widths and levels of reduction in an effort to find the best synthesis of saving space and causing eyestrain, and made a serious miscalculation or two, and thus found myself trying to paste up a zine without any margins whatever. A trying experience.

Then I had to drop everything to go north for a week.

And when I got back, I found that the disk containing file NI#4 had mysteriously acquired some bad sectors, and of course, I hadn't gotten around to making an archive copy of the thing before going to press. So for some time I was looking at one of two options; I could mail out the ghastly mutant zine I had handed out to the unsuspecting public at X-con (None of whom has sent me a loc yet, what a surprise) or I could retype the entire thing.

And then a bat got into my office and decided it wanted to be there more than I did; I took this as a significant event.

Of course. I managed to find a third choice: I did nothing. And about a week ago, a duplicate of the original text that I had used to paste the zine up surfaced, and thus I'm going to press, about sixty days later than intended. I want to thank Carrie Root for helping me with this whole process, especially the bat; Carrie has been a big part of all the zine's I've put out under my name in the last two years, and my failure to put her name in the credits up to now is pretty inexcusable, except for the fact that she always seems to be the one stepping in to help at the last minutes, after the zine's already printed. Thank you, Carrie, for everything.

So, how about some letters?

Georgie Schnobrich sez: "NI is fine fan writing, and I read each issue eagerly, even if it is (mostly) about baseball. This is a true test: If I'm in a room with a televised baseball game, I won't even glance at the screen. But I like your style and your pithy observations of people and phenomena and I even find a certain fascination with your baseball preoccupation. I don't understand it, but I hope that if I read enough issues of your zine, I'll understand what the attraction is. Mind you, you're dealing with the severely sports impaired, here, and baseball especially is...well, it's hard to pin it down.

It's not that I find baseball boring; (though I do!) I truly enjoy a number of equally boring things, like watching ballet barre warm-up classes or karate belt-tests, or long slow-moving subtitled European period films with personal juxtapositions in place of plot. I am capable of staggeringly boring activities myself. Can you imagine drawing Bucky Badger in frosting on 54



quarter sheet-cakes in one shot? When I illustrate velvet, I stipple it in, tuft by every damn tuft. I have read the Gormenghast trilogy! Boredom is no impediment..."

This is just about the archetypical NI letter of comment. Most people who have written express a sense of bewilderment over the way that something apparently having to do with one of the most boring things that they can imagine, commands their attention so completely. The answer, of course, is hypnotism..."It was much, much better than The Dillinger Relic...We'll read it again and again..."

Harry Warner wrote: "Your narrative of opening day in Madison was a delight until near the end when I had this awful fear you'd belied your title and weren't going to let us know how the game came out, as a result of the long digression into fanzine reviews. You realize, I suppose, that this is undoubtedly the most complete written account this particular minor league published anywhere, and a quarter century in the future, some biographer of a big major league star who was in the lineup for Madison or Beloit at the start of his career will find this article the only extensive account of how he looked and how he did on this particular date. (I'm tempted to think that this might be the most thorough account of any game below class AAA printed this season. But I suppose somewhere there must be a paper that runs more extensive stories about the local club than the press does in this part of the nation.)

Incidentally, Hagerstown got national publicity the other day for a minor league season long ago. Wille Mays was on a radio or television talk show and said Hagerstown was the worst of the cities where he played in the minor leagues. I don't doubt it. His first minor league game was in Hagerstown, I believe, although I might be remembering it wrong, and it could have been that he was the first black to play with whites in Hagerstown, or maybe it's both. In any event, I remember being in the newspaper office that night when the sports editor came back from covering the game and told us how a director of the newspaper company, occupying the newspaper box, had yelled loudly and audibly "Haul that nigger away and put a ballplayer in there," when Willie knocked the wind out of himself against the fence or making a diving play and appeared for a moment to be injured. I'm not sure if it would make Willie feel any better to know that I had troubles on race matters, too. I got bawled out repeatedly for breaking the unwritten law at the newspaper: blacks mustn't be mentioned in the news columns unless they are involved in a crime or have died..."

I also had similarly charming and intelligent loc's from Dave D'Amassa, Simba Blood, Kathleen Gallagher, Cathy Gilligan, Mike Glicksohn (Who wanted me to note that the author of The Last Deadloss Visions was Christopher Priest, not Mike...sorry if I gave the opposite impression last time, and sorry for whatever trouble it may have caused you, Mike.), Mike Gunderloy, Teddy Harvia, Tim Lane, Luke McGuff, Alexander Slate, Karen Trego, Kate Yule, and a number of members of the Turbo-Charged Party-Animal APA. Keep 'em coming, and I'll see you again in October.





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