

THE DRINK TANK 149
WRESTLING WITH ISSUES



So, this issue might end up being about creating another issue and the issues therein. Yes, I know that's confusing because who would want to read something about making something that you're going to have to read sometime anyhow? But, as The Drink Tank has always been about the little things in my life that get bumped up to bigger things (and the things in other people's lives that make me want to feature them in the pages of my life!) I figure I've gotta put this here. I will now pause and let those of you who want out of the endless loop to go and read eI or Prolapse or Askance.

Thanks for staying.

Anyhoo, the larger story this weekend was I got myself addicted to laying out The Drink Tank's Corset issue. I wasn't supposed to have much time to work on it. I was supposed to go over to The Lovely and Talented Linda's at noon on Saturday, but I had agreed to help out a film crew from Canada and they were only going to be in town for a couple of days and they called me Friday and said that Saturday would be the day. Those things happen once in a while. I try to minimize that in my life. They wouldn't be showing up until at least 2, so I woke up around 9 and started working on the Corset issue.

Now, I've not gotten too much material so far. There's a piece from



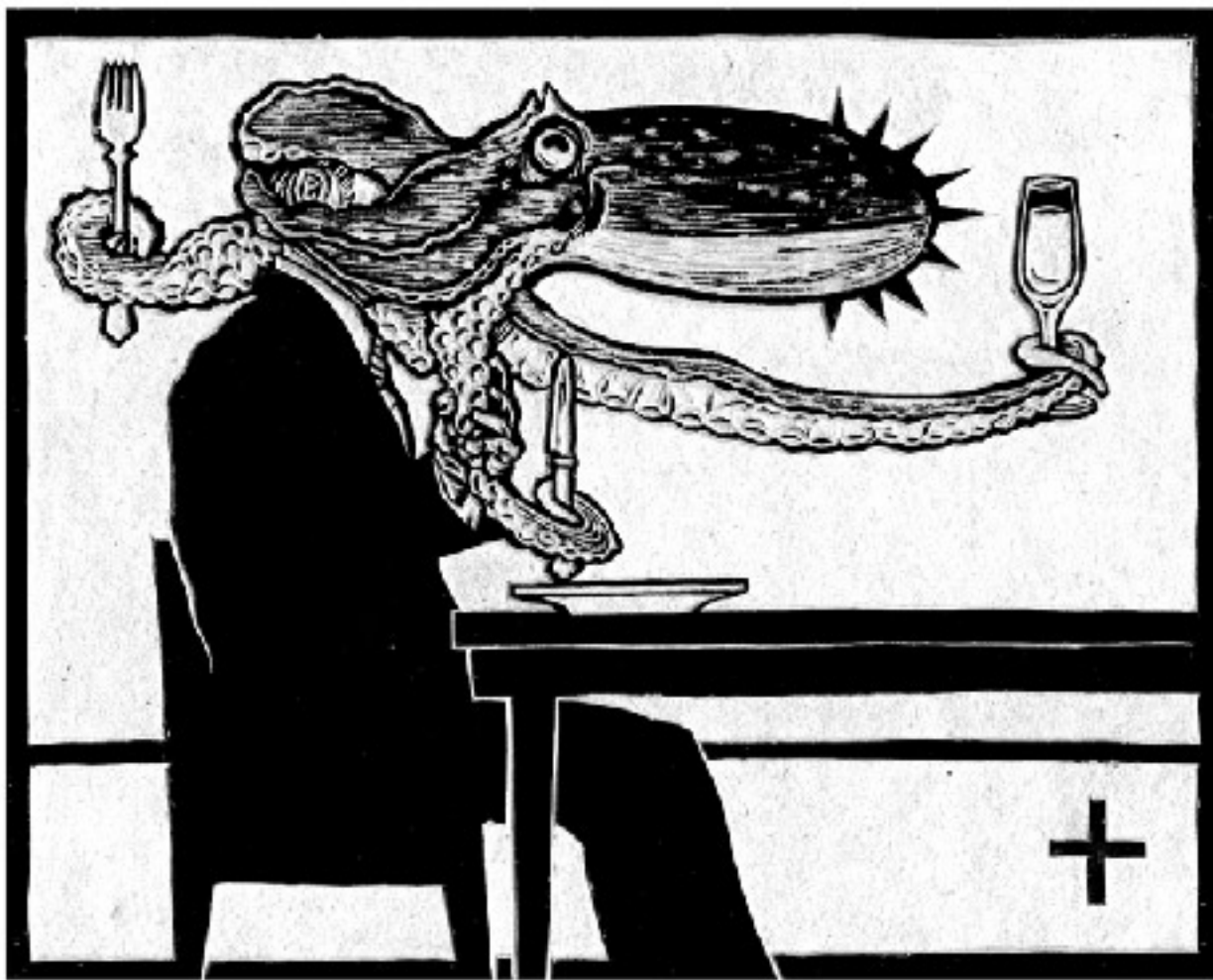
James, a piece from Jean Martin in her Drink Tank debut, I had a piece and a few friends sent art. I started a few weeks ago fiddling with the cover. I had thoughts of a different cover, but when I found the piece, I knew I would have to use it. It's a bit more peppery than my average Drink Tank cover, but I think it's muy cool. I had finished a page by the time I set things down (this was before Silicon, so about 3 weeks ago) and I was ready to work on it again. I started by laying in Jean's article.

Now, I don't know about you, but

I love Jack Avery's From Distant Shores. It's right up there with Plokta and Consonant Enigma for beauty of lay-out. He throws things together in such a way that the files are huge, but the effect is gorgeous. While I could never do a full zine like that, elements of Jack's design have started to creep their way into my brain and then onto the page of The Drink Tank. It started with the table of contents page.

What?!?!? I hear you cry. Table of Contents, for The Drink Tank? No such thing has ever happened! I don't normally like ToCs. I just don't. I think they're pointless since I'd really rather just jump straight into the content and go from there. Yes, I understand that drives some people crazy (LASFAPA and SNAPS folks don't seem to like that I skip the whole ToC and colophon thing) but I just don't like them. I have a photo that I think is fantastic and would lend itself to being the background for a ToC, so I did one. Yes, I felt a little dirty doing it, but it fit and I stand by it!

Next, I laid in various articles. I experimented a bit with those two. Layout's never been my strong suit, though I did a good job with the Cocktail issue (and in a lot of ways the Corset issue is an outgrowth of the Cocktail issue's layout) and the Winchester House issue (way back in June or July of 2005) worked for me. This one's gotta be really different. I fiddled with things, went out and started asking for more and more art



and folks started sending more and more stuff. Some of it was strange and even, dare I say...erotic. The concept of the Corset lends itself to that. M and SaBean both sent me articles, one of which I did some serious snipping to for length and other matters. I laid in James' article and Jean's and one of mine and that was that. I went and got ready to go in to work and then came back to the computer and

looked it over.

It almost looked like a respectable zine.

Well, it's hard to be respectable when you're dealing with corset images with obvious flashes of the more fun portions of the female human form. That said, the issue is more than just T&A. There's also real writing and fun to be had! I'm excited...and not like that!

The film crew that came was shooting a documentary about the history of the video game. Now, this is a topic that has been done nearly to death but these guys were shooting hot 35mm film. That's right, a film about technology shot on film. That's not done nearly as much anymore, but these guys were obviously rich kids who had the material and the money and put together a great crew. They kept asking the same questions and they shot a wonderful series of Nintendo games being played. I love Nintendo and they brought their set-up and we played Super Mario 3 and a little Duck Hunt. That was fun and I was better than I used to be at Duck Hunt. I must have played that for a thousand hours when I was a kid. They shot the PDP-1, the Pong Box, our various systems and they spent ages shooting the ComputerSpace game. I love that game too, and they wanted shots of it working, but the screen is busted so they got sound but no pictures. The sound rig these guys had would make Spielberg go 'where do they get such wonderful toys?' because they had a tiny sound system that picked up everything!

The best thing about my weekend was enjoying parties. The Lovely and Talented Linda and I went out a couple of times to enjoy some fine time with a few of her friends. We've pretty much met all of my friends and I'm behind in meeting her friends. These things happen. They're all lovely people and I was glad to have the chance to meet them.

>> smartism >>

The Computer History Museum has a tradition of selling out. That's not a bad thing, I fully support sell-outs, and this time I think it's one of the coolest selling outs we've ever done. It's the American intro event for the SmartCar!

I'm told that in Europe, the SmartCar isn't exactly a rare thing. It's a tiny car, two passenger, that's ideal for short-haul driving. It's light, agile enough and easy to park. The US has been slow to adopt the car, though I've seen some driving on US road for the last three

year. Manufactured by Mercedes, it's a car that gets great mileage in Europe because it's a light three cylinder.

In the US, not quite so perfect.

You see, we have rules about side-impact and the like. One of the ways in which the SmartCar was able to get so much out of its gas is that it was light



and in the US, you really can't be light unless you're also crash-resistant. There's something to be said for safety, and there's something to be said for gas mileage.

The variety of options they've got is pretty impressive. For the big American release, they've brought more than

30 of them to the museum (and more that are all around the BArea at various Whole Foods Markets) and the variety is great. They have typicals, the ones I've seen, a couple of prototypes, one that is one of only 2000 and a few others. It's a neat event.

The thing I would love about them is that they're not hard to drive, fit into every parking spot imaginable and are less fuel intensive. Supposedly they're 40+ miles to the gallon. My present

car is 30 or so, which is pretty good. The sad part is it's 40 to the gallon with a maximum capacity of 2 while my car still average 27+ with a full 4 people in it.

And here are some of the cars they're showing with a little bit of commentary from the folks who were talking about them!

A black Smart car is displayed in a museum setting. The car is a two-seater with a boxy, rounded design. It is parked on a circular white base. The interior is visible through the windows, showing orange seats. The car is positioned in front of a large window that looks out onto a green lawn and trees. The floor is a dark grey carpet.

**THIS IS THE CAR THE WORLD SHOULD HAVE
BEEN BUILDING ALL ALONG. PERFECT FOR
PEOPLE WHO DON'T GO ANYWHERE!
-ONE OF THE SMARTCAR PEOPLE**

Smart car: The Smart car is a small, two-seater car that was introduced in 1993. It is designed to be a simple, easy-to-drive car that can be used for short trips and errands. The car is known for its compact size and fuel efficiency.

1993



THIS ONE HAPPENS TO BE MY FAVOURITE. IT'S MADE FOR THE OUT-DOORS AND HAS NO ROOF! HOW BALLSY IS THAT?

smart crossblade Limited edition for unlimited fun

With the crossblade, smart presents the concept of reduction in a very radical form. Following the extremely positive response from the press and public at the 2001 Geneva Motor Show, smart decides to produce a limited series of 2,000 vehicles. All interior elements are water-resistant. There are channels in the floor and the instrument panel to allow rainwater to drain away in a controlled manner. Grip tape, normally used for skateboards, is used on the floor. A sturdy roll bar signals the high safety awareness of the smart crossblade concept.



2001





THIS STARTED OUT AS SOMETHING OF A GAG, BUT THEY TURNED IT INTO A REALLY STRONG LIMITED EDITION PRODUCT!

I would like to note that I am running this despite of the fact that Frank admits to being a fan of the hated NY Yankees.

A TRIP TO THE WORLD SERIES!

by Frank Wu!

When I was little, a trip to the World Series was as impossible as a trip to the Moon. I grew up in Connecticut, and the Yankees were my team. (This is actually revisionist history - the Yanks were my brother's team, mine only by association, but I adopted them as my own in the early nineties when they became good again.) The Yankees went to the World Series in 1976, 1977, 1978 and 1981 - when I was in middle and high school - and they won 2 out of 4.

Did we go to any of those games? Heck, no.

My cheapskate dad wouldn't even take us to a regular season game. (He wouldn't even pony up the \$2.50 to take us to the movies, but that's another, painful story.)

I'm 43 years old now, and I've never been to a World Series game. Sure, I've seen plenty of regular season action... at PacBell (or whatever it's called now) to see the Giants, at Milwaukee back when they were still in the American League, at Oakland to



root on the Yankees.

I regret not going to see the Giants play the Angels in the 2002 Series.

Dang. Someday I knew I'd go see the World Series.

This fall I was Artist Guest of Honor at MileHiCon in Denver. The invitation came a year ago, and as October approached, I realized that the convention would be the same weekend as the World Series. Hmmm. And the National League team was scheduled to host games three and

four, during the convention. Hmmm Hmmm. Denver's team, the Colorado Rockies, is in the National League. Hmmm. Hmmm. Hmmm.

Only the Rockies were completely out of it. A week left in the season, there were six teams in the National League vying for the four playoff spots. The Rockies were not one of those six. Suddenly, though, they won Every. Single. Game. They. Played. They literally came out of nowhere.

Mind you, I've never been a huge Rockies fan. I'm first a Yankees fan, then a baseball fan.

I've written elsewhere about the distinction between a Yankees and a baseball fan. Would I prefer that the Yankees win by any means necessary - short of better baseball through chemistry? Perhaps a Yankees victory might require a fan reaching over a fence to snag a ball, or Derek Jeter falling INTO the stands to snag a ball, or a catcher dropping a third strike, perhaps? Or am I a baseball fan, rooting not for MY team, but the BEST team? Kinda both. So many years it's easy to be both a baseball fan and a Yankees fan, because the Yanks seem so often to be able to drop the perfect bunt, to get the clutch hit, to shovel the ball to the catcher with a guy trying to score. How can you not be impressed by a Yankee pitching

a perfect game in the World Series, or hitting three home runs off three pitches, or golfing walk-off homeruns in extra innings?

So this year the Rockies - with all their victories - convinced me to expand my horizons, to not be just a Yankees fan, but a Baseball fan.

I didn't know much about the Rockies. Like most of America, I never heard of most of them. Partly because they don't get much press, partly because they're mostly young players.

Todd Helton I knew - because he'd come close to hitting .400 one year, a magnificent feat which hasn't happened since (anyone? anyone?) Ted Williams in 1941. Ted's achievement was so spectacular that Stephen Jay

Gould wore out three typewriters writing about it.

Nonetheless, this team of unknown players (who even knew that there was pro baseball in Denver?) won game after game and game, forcing a one-game playoff with the Padres, which the Rockies pushed to extra innings and won with a dramatic slide at the plate.

On their march through the end of the regular season and into the post-season, the Rox won 21 out of 22. Some blowouts, some squeakers. But they won with defense, with hitting, with pitching, with grit. It was impossible for the Baseball fan not to be impressed.

Suddenly, they were going to the

World Series, and I would be there, in the same town. Game 4 would be ideal - Sunday evening, after the convention was over (I couldn't sneak out on the Saturday night for Game 3 if I were Guest of Honor).

It was Sunday or nothing.

All I needed was a ticket.

I put a post on my blog - anybody wanna go to the World Series?

My pal, Scott James Magner, whom I'd known through Radcon and other conventions, piped up. He hadn't even thought of going until I said something. Three times in the past he'd had actual World Series tickets in his hand. They were for his home



B·A·S·E·B·A·L·L

team, the Seattle Mariners, for whom he had season tickets. Only thing was: they never made it that far.

When tickets went on sale online, both Scott and I were at our computers, furiously trying to get in. I was in a conference room at work, with five machines all going.

It was a crapshoot, of course, to get tickets online at face value (they ranged up to \$250 for seats behind home plate). The stadium holds some 50,000, with 30,000 taken by season ticket holders, plus an unknown number earmarked for corporate sponsors. With millions logging on, I put our odds at 10,000:1 against. But, well, Kirk and Spock beat worst odds than that.

Besides, baseball is full of superstitions. And the name of my conference room? The Denver conference room.

So we were online, trying to get tickets and then - boom! System crash. There were some 8.5 million hits to the Rockies website, and I alone (refreshing machines every 4 seconds for two hours) accounted for two thousand of those.

After the crash, they tried again to sell tickets online and we tried again to get them. And, what do ya know?



No dice.

No tickets.

No joy in Mudville.

Scott said, Don't worry, I have a back channel.

But I was worried. I really wanted to go. My birthday was the day after Game 4, and this would be an early present to myself.

I first checked the scalpers, but the \$250 tickets were already priced at five or six grand. For a family's trip to one game, you could buy a new car.

I checked craigslist.

That was interesting. Folks were offering all sorts of things in exchange for tickets.

One guy offered his Wii, full of games.

A woman offered her Gibson SG guitar, with amp and everything. (This is the kind of guitar I'd buy if I ever bought another one, the kind that Clapton used to record "Sunshine of Your Love.")

A chiropractor offered free care for a year.

A professional housepainter said he'd come over and professionally paint your house, for world series tickets.

There was some insanity on the other end, too.

One guy who's fallen into extra tickets said he'd given them to you for free - if you shaved your head. He wanted to see before, after and during photos. Good way to mess with people.

Another guy with an extra ticket was looking for a date. He wanted to see the girl's photo, though he made no offer of showing his own.

Well, I wasn't going to shave my head, but I checked my bank account. How much could I pony up?

I thought of the possibilities. If we got tickets for a game, any game, we might be able to trade them for Game 4 tickets. I re-counted my pennies.

But Scott James said, Chill, Chill, it'll be ok. I'll work my angles.

Somedays it's so hard to trust.

Days passed, tick tick tick. Still no World Series tickets. The scalping prices, and even the craigslist prices, were going up and up. I gave up hope and stopped checking.

I finished my paintings and packed my bags and got on a plane to go to Denver for the convention.

Still no tickets.

Then, as soon as I landed, a message from Scott.

A photo with a caption: "A thousand words."

A photo of two World Series tickets. For Game 4.

Scott James works for a subsidiary of a baseball card company. He got his boss in Seattle to contact someone high up in Boston, who got a peon to stick two tickets in an envelope and FedEx them to him in Seattle on Thursday, so he could get on a plane to Denver on Friday, so we could see the game on Sunday.

They were on the third deck, near first base. Not only tickets, but great tickets, and free great tickets.

Wow!

For the first time ever, I was



going to the World Series!

The game itself was amazing. Loud, even before it started. They were blasting eighties music. And my phone kept ringing. My dad, often-clueless, called. "I can't talk right now! I'm at the World Series!" "What?" "The World Series!" "What's that?" "Baseball! The most important baseball game of the year! You never took us." "You're watching TV?" "No, I'm in the stands, they're about to start!" "Oh, OK, give me a call when you can."

Funny man, my dad.

Yes, it was the most important game of the year.

Boston had won the first three, in best-of-seven. It was do or die for the Rockies.

There is something vitally important for the reader to understand at this point.

Baseball is a symbol for life.

You must understand this, or else my logorrhea is simply an exercise in time-wasting nonsense and futility, a pointless chasing after the wind.

Baseball teaches us about Redemption.

Glory. Redemption. And Honor.

Don Larsen will forever be remembered for being the one guy, the only guy, to ever pitch a perfect game in the World Series. No member of the other team - the best team the other League had to offer - reached base. No hits, no walks, no reaching first on an error, no fan interference, no blown calls. Nothing, no blemishes, only perfection. Only happened once. The most remarkable thing is that before and after that one afternoon of glory, Mr. Larsen was a mediocre pitcher.

But on one day: Glory, Redemption and Honor.

Bucky Dent? Nothing-hitting short stop, a little guy for a ball player. But on one day in 1978 he hit a home run that essentially sealed the fate of the Boston - he used his bat like a stake through the heart of Red Sox fans. Redemption.

This is what Alex Rodriguez failed to realize. He was shamed by the taunts of Yankees fans, who reminded

him that he could hit more home runs than any man alive - as long as they didn't matter. Regular season, sure, he's MVP. But come the post-season and his bat wilts, the pressure cooks him, and his batting average plummets below the Mendoza line. This is why I believe he turned down three more years of the Yankees' money - he didn't want the pressure. He wants to be on a mediocre team hitting as many meaningless homeruns as he wants, always able to blame his mediocre teammates for not going to the postseason. What a wuss.

A-Rod fails to remember that baseball is all about redemption.

All he has to do is go to the post-season, get a couple hits, pop a couple homeruns into Yankee Stadium's short right porch, and all will be forgotten. All will be forgiven.

Even though the Rockies had lost the first three games, all was not lost. They win the next, and the next, and then go to Boston and win two more, and they win it all. Sure, no team had ever come back from an 0-3 deficit in a best-of-seven series. Sure, the Rockies' hitters weren't hitting, the pitchers weren't pitching, and the defense would put to shame any colander, sieve or semi-permeable membrane.

But the greater the challenge,

the greater the Glory.

Heck, in the run-up to the World Series, the Rox had won four-games-in-a-row FIVE TIMES. They could do it again. Easy.

Glory. Redemption. Honor. All were within reach.

There are some powerful memories I'll take with me from being in the stands.

Near us were the cancer patients. One woman wore a hand-lettered shirt boasting, "I put off my chemotherapy to go to the World Series!" A little girl's shirt declared, "Cancer picked the wrong Rockies fan!" Kinda puts things in perspective.

A few rows ahead of us were Boston fans. College kids. Punks. Still gloating over Boston's surprise victory - after decades of humiliation - in 2004. They hadn't earned the right to root for Boston - hadn't lived through Boston's debacles in 1967, in 1975, in 1978, in 1986. They hadn't experienced Boston's long trek through the desert wilderness. And when Boston drew first blood in the first inning, after winning the first three games, their cockiness started the surrounding Rockies fans' blood a-boilin'. Even outnumbered 10 to 1 in the enemy stadium, they cheered obnoxiously and waved their annoying styrofoam fingers and whooped up every Boston



hit, and they started getting into it with the surrounding Rox fans. And we just wanted to kill them.

And so it became clear to me how sports riots start. (Luckily, they inexplicably left by the seventh inning, completely defusing the situation. I'm a mellow guy, but even I wanted to deck them.)

But Boston kept tacking on the runs. It was 3-0 in the bottom of the seventh.

The Rox had nine outs left to salvage the game, the season, to grab that last slice of Glory and Redemption.

I turned my brand-new Rockies cap inside.

It was rally cap time.

They'd given us rally towels to wave. (Luckily there were no rally monkeys like those annoying little homunculoids that helped Anaheim win in 2002.)

A rally cap, that's a baseball tradition (and I'm all about tradition, if you can't tell). The rally cap helped the Mets defeat Boston in 1986, and it would help the Rockies beat Boston now.

Scott James said it was too early - you couldn't do the rally cap until the eighth inning.

Was he insane? The Rockies had already stranded more guys on base than the entire crew of the starship Enterprise. We needed runs now. Now!

So I turned my cap inside out - as did some of the other Rockies fans - and right away, Brad Hawpe, in only his third full season in majors, hit a solo home run!

The roar was deafening, and we were now only behind 3-1. Within reach.



Then Boston scored again, but we got two. Helton scored on a home run from Garrett Atkins, also a young Turk, also in his third full season.

We were behind by only one run, bottom of the eighth, two outs left in the inning.

The tying run was at the plate.

Ground out to shortstop. Ouch.

The tying run's at the plate again.

It's hit hard - it's going, it's

going... Fly out to deep center. Dang it!!

OK, one more inning, three more chances. We can do it!

Boston doesn't score. Now the Rockies are up. We're only down by one. Bottom of the ninth.

The tying run's at the plate.

Ground out to second. Ooofff!

OK, still two outs. Mets were down to their last strike and they came back in 1986. Boston always (except 2004) blows it, like they did in 1967 and 1975 and 1986, they can blow it again now.

The tying run's at the plate.

Line out to deep left.

Last chance. Here we go. A new guy's at the plate. A pitch hitter. His batting average was higher than Todd Helton, higher than the two guys who'd already punched home runs. He was hitting an astonishing .625. Stick that in your frozen ear, Ted Williams.

Of course, he's the youngest of all the young Turks. He's only played in 7 games total. In his entire career. And the fate of the game, the team, the season, the World Series rests on his shoulders.

Here we go. Tying run at the

plate.

And... he swings and he... misses the ball completely. Strike three, you're out.

The Boston (bleeping) Red Sox win.

Players in red stream onto the field screaming.

How the heck did that happen?

Swept in the World Series?

Oh, man.

There was no Glory, no Redemption in Denver.

But there was Honor.

The Rockies fans weren't angry after the game. Not entirely disappointed.

They were proud of their team. From out of nowhere, when no one predicted it at all, even days before the end of the season, they forced their way into the playoffs. They'd reeled off 21 out of 22 wins. They'd played hard, ferociously, for a bunch of kids, and they'd earned their first trip to the World Series. Ever.

They'd played well. This game and game 2 were particularly hard-fought. They could have gone either way. And game 3 was close, until the

very end.

The Rockies had comported themselves with dignity.

They had earned Honor.

And I had seen it with my own eyes.



I love baseball. I've said that it's the Science Fiction of Sports and I damn well mean it. Think about it and it makes perfect sense. I love my Giants and I've got hope

for them. The Yankees are evil, if just because they're bullies. If Steinbrenner didn't own them I'd probably think they were OK, but he taints them.

Then again, I still kinda like the Raiders and they've got Al Davis. but I'm Mexican so that's in my blood.

You gotta love a good pitcher. People talk about mechanics and the calling of signals, but really the entire pitching concept is this: one guy staring at another and hoping he blinks. That's all there is to it! The pitcher tries to bore a hole in the batter and the batter tries to put the ball into play. No matter how a pitcher winds up, what arm angle they use, where the ball actually ends up, it is still mostly a mental game between the pitcher and the hitter until the ball either ends up in the catcher's mitt, in the field or in the hands of some lucky bleacher sitting fan.

That's all for this week. I dunno if there's gonna be an issue next week or not. I'm fairly certain the Corset issue will be the next one, but I'm still at least 10 days away from getting that one nailed down hard. It's not an easy issue, but that's because I don't want it to be an easy issue!