

editorial opinion

Sportcasters reluctant to tell tales on Tigers, Sox

"I was always told to cover the event, no matter what happens."

Those words of wisdom come from my colleague Eddie Edgar, a living legend in the world of sports reporting.

Known as The Stroller by Observer & Eccentric readers, Eddie worked for many years as a Free Press sports reporter and has attended Tiger baseball games for more than 50 years.

When it comes to being a journalist, Eddie has experience to back up the integrity of his opinions. The veteran reporter's reaction was to the poor coverage by Tiger broadcasters George Kell and Al Kaline during the disco riot at Chicago White Sox Comiskey Park last Thursday.

Sports fans have got to go with Eddie on this one. George and Al blew it.

YOU SEE, news is news, whether it happens at the ball park or at a city council meeting and must be covered as such. But through the years, baseball

clubs have managed to protect themselves from public scrutiny by hiring their own broadcasters.

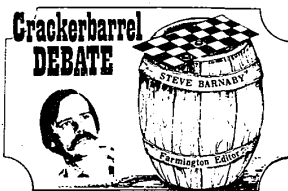
A few years back, the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) raised a stink about such practices and ruled that at least one person in the booth shouldn't be a public relations hack for the team.

Thus we have Al Kaline, whose paycheck is written by WDIV, the "we're for the Detroit Tigers winning the pennant" station.

The ruse is obvious. While Kaline's employment by WDIV meets the letter of the law, the spirit has been thwarted. Kaline and Kell are both former Tigers. Kaline's being objective about the Tigers is like the Pope putting down Christ.

To expect either Kell or Kaline to be objective observers of anything to do with baseball is expecting too much.

Combined with their baseball backgrounds is the fact that neither has an ounce of journalism experience. They just aren't trained to see a news story.



SO INSTEAD OF watching coverage of a news event, Tiger game viewers are submitted to a barrage of clichés and biased commentary on how the players, coaches and managers are doing their jobs. And make no mistake about it, the fans, through

their purchase of tickets, pay the salaries. They have a right to know what really is going on down on the field. They have a right to know if somebody blew a double play. Instead, they get excuses.

The Comiskey Park incident simply magnified a problem which exists season after season.

IT WAS OBVIOUS that neither Kaline nor Kell knew what to do when the trouble started. At one point, Kaline even had the audacity to suggest that they talk about the upcoming All Star game. Kell made it worse by questioning whether he could talk about much of anything because he was just too upset.

It wasn't until the whole incident almost was over that Kaline figured out that he should go down on the field and talk to the officials about what was happening.

Detroit fans were cheated out of fair coverage of a news story last Thursday night. As Al might put it, "No question about it, George."



Tim Richard

Carter's job monumental

The culture shock, arriving home from a vacation in Great Britain, wasn't driving on the right side of the road again instead of the left, or sipping coffee instead of tea for breakfast.

The culture shock started when I drove into the bank parking lot and realized what I already knew but had forgotten: in suburbia, banks aren't located in shopping centers or even adjacent to other buildings. Our bank buildings are all isolated. In Chipping Campden and Bath, I had cashed traveler's checks in banks next door to the shops we patronized, but in America a trip to the bank involved a special drive.

The culture shock continued at the fruit market. A day earlier, I had seen English housewives walking to the store with a market basket. But on this side of the Atlantic, my first view of commerce was a lone woman hopping into a van the size of a truck with one package of fruit.

THEN PRESIDENT Jimmy Carter came onto the tube Sunday night to say our nation was suffering a loss of self-confidence. The place to regain confidence, he said, was in national adoption of an energy policy that would a) reduce consumption of foreign oil and b) seek alternative sources of energy.

Great idea, I thought. But how, in the name of all that's green and pure in suburbia, do we apply it?

We could all save gasoline if City Hall told banks it would approve no more building permits for free-standing branch buildings, and banks would have to be in shopping centers. That would help us in the future, but what about the banks that are already standing?

As for shoppers who drive colossal vehicles to buy a bag of fruit, how do you rearrange entire suburban cities so that there are corner grocery stores? Making the next car a subcompact will help, but it's simply no solution to tell the lady to walk, because the distance is prohibitive for walking and there are no sidewalks.

Our towns have been "planned" — if you can call it planning — around taking separate auto trips to the bank, to retail stores, to specialty shops, to the lawyer, the doctor, the government office.

"THERE IS NO way to avoid sacrifice," said Carter, and he is absolutely correct.

We can get used to \$2.50 a gallon gasoline, as the British have done. We can get used to small cars that get 40 mpg, as the British have done. But how do you redesign an entire outer city that's built around a separate auto motion for every business transaction and 35-cent gasoline?

I doubt even now that most readers have any notion of how painful the readjustment is going to be.

A substantial proportion of our population needs big internal combustion engines the way a baby needs a pacifier.

CARTER IS also correct that the nation has lost its old ebullient self-confidence.

But I wonder if Carter realizes that self-confidence was undermined not by the energy crisis, not by Watergate, not by the loss of the Vietnam war.

Our self-confidence was shot when the late John F. Kennedy convinced us that "prestige" was a worthy national goal. The America of the 1950s and '60s was, to my knowledge, the only nation on the face of the earth which has ever gone up to peasants in other countries with questionnaires asking: "Do you like us a) very much, b) a little or c) not at all?"

Our teenage neurosis about being popular was pretty ingrained, as Kennedy the First demonstrated. If we can solve our monumental energy problems, we would have good reason to be cocky again.

Eccentricities



by HENRY M. HOGAN, JR.

Modernized proverbs

Honesty is the best policy, because being a good liar requires a good memory.

Idle hands receive unemployment compensation. In God we trust. All else pay cash.

He who laughs last probably didn't understand the joke.

If at first you don't succeed, read the directions.

People who live in glass houses shouldn't take showers in the daytime.

Give him a centimeter, and he'll take a kilometer.

SHOW ME a good loser, and I'll show you a loser. Nothing succeeds like being the son of the owner.

A little knowledge is a common thing at cocktail parties.

Do right and fear no man. Don't write and fear no woman.

If winning isn't important, why keep score?

Show me a child champion, and I'll show you a pushy parent.

A stitch in time saves embarrassment. Too many cooks crowd the kitchen. An ill wind blows, and environmentalists arise.

The early bird catches the worm, but who wants worms?

Behind every great man stands a surprised mother-in-law.

Don't judge a movie by its advertising.

BETTER LATE than never, says the IRS.

You can't teach an old dog new math.

A man's best friend is a 24-hour automatic bank teller.

When in doubt, call it out. All men are created equal, but some are more equal than others.

There's no fool like a young fool.

An apple a day keeps the doctor away. A garlic clove a day keeps everyone away.

All that glitters is usually too expensive. It is better to give and get a deduction.

Don't count your income before it's taxed.

A LITTLE BIT of politics goes a long way.

A watched pot encourages keeping the waist trim.

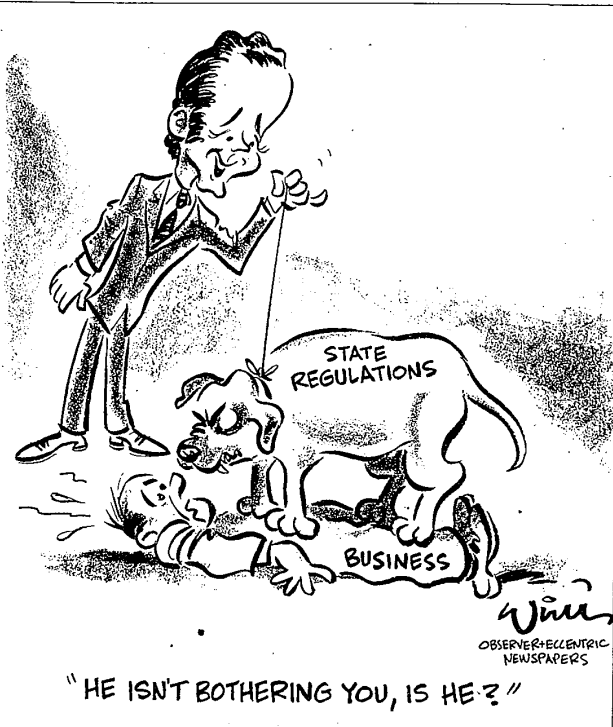
The best laid plans of mice and men often end up in a trap.

All's fair in love, war and filling out your income tax return.

The bigger they are, the more gas they use. Early to bed, early to rise sure cuts into your social life.

He who hesitates is liable to hear the driver behind him blowing his horn.

A bird in the hand can be messy.



By W.W. EDGAR

The Stroller Calling all psychologists

It might be well for the professors of psychology in the institutions of higher learning around the country to have their eyes and ears trained on Tiger Stadium these days.

No, not to watch the Tigers play ball. But the words and actions of Sparky Anderson, the manager brought in after the season started, are worthy of attention to those who study the actions of humans.

Sparky was brought here, so it was said, because he had the experience of managing pennant winners in the major leagues and because he had been hardened to the pressures of the game by managing teams to the championships in World Series play.

No one expected that he would toss aside the tradition of new managers taking hold of a team and predicting winners from the start. Instead, he used some of the greatest reverse psychology baseball ever has known.

NO SOONER had he taken charge that he issued a most peculiar statement.

"This isn't my team," he said, "so don't expect too much from it the rest of this year."

Strange words indeed from a man who was expected to instill a new spirit in the team.

In more than a half-century that The Stroller has been a denizen of the press box, he never had heard

anything like it. It was far different from the time in the early '30s when Mickey (Black Mike) Cochrane was brought here to rescue the faltering Tigers.

On his first day on the job, Mickey ignored the fact that the Tigers were a sixth-place club. He startled even the old timers in the Tiger front office when he rubbed his hands and, with a broad smile, said, "It's great to be with a champion."

Every day and in every city where the team went, Mickey repeated these words. It is history now that the team he took over won the pennant a year later and a World Series a year after that.

SPARKY EMPLOYED some more reverse psychology when he appeared before one of the luncheon clubs in the area and stated that the greatest mistake he made in his life was agreeing to take over the management of the Tigers in mid-season.

Can you imagine anything like that coming from a new manager?

He explained that he didn't know the players and their abilities and wouldn't until he had them in spring training. And he repeated, "Don't blame me for what happens this season. This isn't my club."

Then he started moving players around just as though it was spring training and his haste in changing pitchers cost the Tigers a few ball games. It was the same when he removed pitchers after they had done well for seven or eight innings. His answer was: "I wanted to find out how good our relief pitchers are."

Nothing like that ever had happened with the Tigers before and it caused more than a bit of hard feelings among the staff.

NEVER MIND that the Tigers were losing. Sparky claimed he was learning.

These statements and antics are all strange to the veteran followers of the team, and they are just sitting back waiting — waiting for Sparky's much-heralded spring training where he has promised to "teach the players how to field and run the bases."

They wouldn't be surprised if Sparky hasn't set a trap for himself when these same players will be "his" team.

It all adds up to a great lesson in psychology.

A Division of
Suburban Communications
Corporation

Philip H. Power
Chairman of the Board
(on leave of absence)

Richard D. Agnition
President
Chief Executive Officer

Farmington Observer

"Successor of the Farmington Enterprise"

Steve Barnaby

Editor

22352 Farmington Rd.

Farmington, MI 48034

(313) 477-5450

John Reddy, General Mgr.

Thomas A. Riordan, Executive Editor

George J. Hagan, Advertising Director, Fred J. Wright, Circulation Director