

Tiger PR man mixes hype

By JUDITH BERNE

"I could never stop for a hockey organization. I'd never stop being a fan."

That's what West Bloomfield resident Bob Miller says, in his first year as assistant public relations man for the Detroit Tigers.

"I loved baseball as much as I love hockey. I would become biased," the 22-year-old Miller explains. "Baseball fits perfectly."

Liking — but not loving — baseball allows Miller to perform his job without losing perspective, he believes.

Although many young baseball fans yearn for the opportunity to mingle with the players, tabulate baseball statistics and feed Tiger news to sports writers, Miller says "People glamorize it more than it actually is."

Still, he is thoroughly happy. "I hate using superlatives or absolutes," Miller says. "But I think it's one of the best jobs. You can't do much better."

MILLER INSISTS he was in the right place at the right time to tie down the Tiger post. But others say he made it happen.

He discovered the Tigers public relations office while still in high school when he went there to buy a poster of Al Kaline.

"I said 'Look at this place. I love it. I'd love to work here,'" he recalls.

He wrote Hal Middlesworth, then Tigers public relations head, expressing his interest in public relations. Middlesworth told him to come down and advised him on college preparation for a public relations career.

"The man has and will always have a lot of class," Miller says, recalling the

hour-long interview with Middlesworth.

Miller kept in touch with the Tiger PR boss. A note to him asking for summer employment three years ago apparently coincided with a new job created in the Tigers public relations office.

Miller was hired "at \$10 a game" to run the videotape machine to record material for TV's "This Week in Baseball."

He gradually asked for and got other duties such as keeping the official box score, feeding statistics into a computer, proof-reading press releases and handing them out to the media. He became part of the Tiger's summer-time staff.

"It wasn't what you'd call difficult work," he says. "I asked more and more questions to get experience."

THE ASSISTANT public relations job opened up last summer as Middlesworth announced his retirement and Dan Ewald took his place.

Miller had just graduated from the University of Michigan with a journalism degree and experience as sports editor of the student newspaper, The Michigan Daily.

"I waited all last summer for them to wade through the applications," Miller recalls, while carrying out his part-time Tiger duties. "My friends all had their jobs. I had been there for three full seasons and knew their entire system. But I had no professional experience."

He was hired Sept. 17. "It was 11 years to the date the Tigers won the pennant in 1968," Miller notes. "It was that '68 season that got me interested

in baseball. I just wasn't that way. I'd rather participate than watch."

Miller believes his journalism background fits in nicely with the conservative image of the Tiger organization.

"When I do my releases, I still try to be unbiased. I try to have interest, but not to be overbearing," he explains.

"The exclamation point might as well be off my typewriter; I never use it. I don't want to fall into the type of PR where everything is hype."

He admits to "a lot of contact with the players — almost more than I'd like. I'd like to avoid having to put them on the spot."

He acknowledges that "the Tigers go for a specific type of player who isn't flashy or extroverted," Miller confirms. "They don't want players who will dominate a team."

Although the team is currently holding down the American League cellar, Miller says he admires that the front office doesn't succumb to the pressures of the fans and press and pay a lot of money for a free agent "which would be so easy to do."

"History has proven if you get a lot of free agents, you get a lot of dissension on a team."

WHEN A TRADE comes up, such as Tuesday's announced Jason Thompson-Al Cowens deal, Miller is charged with feeding the factual information to the media.

He has batting averages, personal statistics and details of the trade at hand. "Any interpretive questions go to Campbell (Tiger General Manager Jim Campbell)," Miller reports. "I don't mean to minimize my job, but who cares what the assistant PR director thinks?"

Miller says he enjoys all aspects of his job equally from the paperwork to watching Tiger hitters park balls in the stands.

"I was born in Detroit. I've always lived in the area. I love the organization I work for," he says.

"I always joke about it — someday I'd like to own the team."



MILLER: "I don't want to fall into the trap of PR that everything is hype. The exclamation point might as well be off my typewriter; I never use it."

Area deacons among those ordained May 31



MICHAEL KAZER



JOHN HENRY WEST

Two deacons serving in Farmington area Roman Catholic parishes will be among those ordained to the priesthood on May 31 in Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, Detroit.

Deacon Michael Kazer, 27 and Deacon John Henry West, 27 will celebrate masses in Oakland county shortly after their ordination.

Kazer will celebrate Mass at 1 p.m., June 1 in Our Lady of Sorrows Roman Catholic Church, Farmington.

West's celebrations of thanksgiving will take place at 11 a.m., June 8 in St. Isidor parish, Mount Clemens; at 5 p.m., June 14 in St. Gerald parish, Farmington and at 11:30 a.m., June 22 in St. Clement of Rome, Romeo.

Kazer, the son of Mrs. Betty Kazer and the late Thomas Kazer served his deacon internship at Our Lady of Sorrows under the supervision of its pastor, the Rev. Kean Cronin from May 1979-80.

He attended grammar school at St. Valentine grade school, Redford Township. Kazer attended Catholic Central High School, Detroit until his graduation in 1971. He earned a bachelors from Sacred Heart Seminary in 1975.

In 1980, he received his master of divinity from St. John's Provincial Seminary, Plymouth.

HE TAUGHT religious education classes at St. Edith Roman Catholic Church, Livonia from 1975-80. During

the summers of 1976 and 1977 he was a staff member of St. Edith's Summer Days Program, a day camp for the parish's children and teens.

West is the son of Edmund G. and Maxine E. West of Romeo. They are members of the newly formed Saints John and Paul Parish, Washington, Mich.

West attended Croswell Elementary School and St. Clement of Rome Elementary School in Romeo. He graduated from Sacred Heart Seminary High School in Detroit and earned a bachelors at Sacred Heart Seminary College. He earned his masters at the University of Detroit and his master of divinity at St. John Provincial Seminary, Plymouth.

His internship was served at St. Gerald Roman Catholic Church, Farmington Hills under the supervision of the Rev. Maufice C. Decker.

He is a part-time theology instructor at Catholic Central High School, Redford Township.

He was director of the summer bible school from 1969-77 at St. Clement of Rome and St. Isidore parishes. He also worked for the Catholic Information Center, Detroit and as an advocate for boys at the St. Francis Home for Boys, Detroit.

He was a chaplain assistant at the Wayne County Youth Home from 1975-77 and a chaplain intern at C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

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