

# STREET SCENE

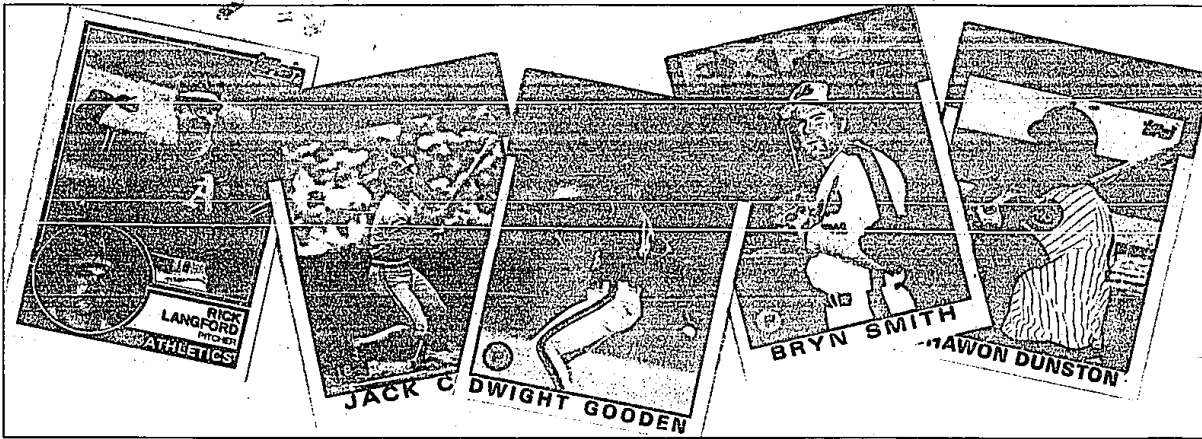
Inside **S**

## Stratford on the fly

Hey Bob Uecker, we're really in the front row. Street Scene writer Carolyn DeMarco recently visited the Stratford Festival in Ontario and provides some helpful tips on how to get the best seats and hotel accommodations without so much as a reservation. For more information, please turn to Page D6.

The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers

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# Rotisserie Leagues: Baseball by numbers

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

The postman doesn't ring twice at the O'Connor household. He calls more than Los Angeles Dodger manager Tommy Lasorda phones for pizza.

"It's Steve," says the wife, flinging the receiver at her couch-bound husband.

"Steve" is Steve Smith of Wayne, a postal carrier by day, is the owner and general manager of the Wayne Newton's, a member of the Immigrant Rotisserie Baseball League.

He phones under the general pretense of friendly conversation. You know, like "how's the wife?"

Then comes the needle that cuts like a sword, the ultimate dig, the

massive object that sticks in your craw like a lump of coal. "How's your team?" he asks.

Understand, Steve Smith is no dummy. He knows full well how the beleaguered Berville Batmen are doing. We're in the hurt bucket, the basement, last place, Rotisserie League hell.

You see, Steve Smith is concerned. He cares. He wants to help me.

He wants Tony Gwynn. Steve Smith uses the strategy of attrition. He figures he can wear me down with numerous phone calls, perhaps catch me at a vulnerable moment, like while I'm watching the "Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling." And I'll fork over the All-Star San Diego centerfielder for two bullpen catchers and a third

base coach to be named later.

NO WAY, Jose.

Such is the madness inspired by the latest craze, called Rotisserie League Baseball. What is Rotisserie Baseball you may ask?

Some 500,000 to 750,000 people are estimated to be participating in the game, which involves owning your own major league team. Some present Rotisserie League owners include New York governor Mario Cuomo, David Eisenhower and Bryant Gumbel.

The game is simple in theory. You construct a team of 23 actual players in the major leagues.

Based on their performances, you are rated in categories, such as batting average, stolen bases, home

runs, earned run average, runs batted in, pitcher's wins, hit/walk ratio and saves. You can make trades and you even have a farm system.

"It's a way to own your own major league team without paying \$50 million," said Glen Waggoner, who co-edited the book on the game "Rotisserie League Baseball" (Bantam). "It's for anyone who has sat in the bleachers and watched a million dollar slugger not run out a pop fly and said to themselves, 'If I run this team I'd get that bum out of here.' If you own your own team, you can get that bum out of there."

Rotisserie League baseball gets you thinking like a general manager. You start to take a liking to fat Cuban cigars, plaid polyester pants and green golf shirts.

A Rotisserie League owner scours the daily box scores religiously, watches the Atlanta Braves and Chicago Cubs on cable TV (though scientific studies indicate enduring thousands of "Holy Cows!" from Harry Carey over a period of time causes laboratory mice to eat their young) and develops a keen sense about the ability of phenoms named Juan out of countries with military-backed regimes.

THE ROTISSERIE owner laughs. He cries. He swears, especially when Jack Clark strikes out with the bases loaded. Wives and girlfriends become co-dependents, spending moonlit nights with their lovers on the front porch listening to the Cincinnati Reds game on the radio.

"When one of my pitchers gets bombed, I'm miserable for the whole day," said Keith Stone, 25, of Westland and owner of the Keystone Cops in the Lower Great Lakes Baseball Union. "Likewise when they pitch a shutout, I'm ecstatic."

Stone is commissioner of the Lower Great Lakes Baseball Union and a rabid baseball fan. The nine-team league is made up of college friends and serves as a social outlet.

There is a golf outing and a league party at the end of the season. Trophies are handed out, including the "Donkey's Ass" to the last place finisher. The difficult part is trying to explain the game to people who are unfamiliar with it.

"It's getting better," Stone said. "People are beginning to hear about it. Before when you told people you're in a Rotisserie league, they thought you were going out in the backyard and cooking some chicken."

In Rotisserie League Baseball, you play chicken. It's called making trades, certainly one of the more attractive features of the game. Every owner can tell you their best swap . . . and their worst.

FRANCIS WHITE, 36, of Southfield names his best trade without hesitation: Minnesota Twins third baseman Gary Gaetti for Seattle Mariners Ken Griffey Jr. and Erik Hanson along with Texas Rangers Bobby Whitte. White's philosophy is to trade experience for youth.

"I'm willing to sacrifice a year to build for the following year," said White, who is an associate professor of psychiatry at Lafayette Clinic in Detroit.

Other people's motives in trade situations can be less than pure.

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## A look at the Bad News Batmen

### BERVILLE BATMEN — Larry O'Connor, general manager

Jack Clark, 1B: He looks like Paul Bunyon, but he's hitting like Tom Thumb.

Jeff Treadway, 2B: Pete Rose said you can bet this guy will be the Cincinnati Reds' second baseman of the future, which is why Treadway is playing in Atlanta.

Stawon Dunston, SS: He has an Uzi for an arm, but a cap gun for a bat.

Matt Williams, 3B: The Giants told him he'd hit 20 home runs and knock in 60 RBIs . . . except he'd be doing it in Phoenix (the minors).

Darrell Evans, 1B-3B: Sure, he's sentimental choice. My heart tells me that there was no one else available.

Rey Quinones, 2B-SS: This year, he went from the Mariners to the Pirates. On the Batmen, he should feel at home on another sinking ship.

Bruce Benedict, C: Heard ole' Bruce say once that sportswriters were the lowest life forms on earth. Ya, about as low as his batting average.

Rick Dempsey, Utility: This guy is great at entertaining fans during rain delays with belly sliding across tarpaulins. He's equally humorous swinging a bat.

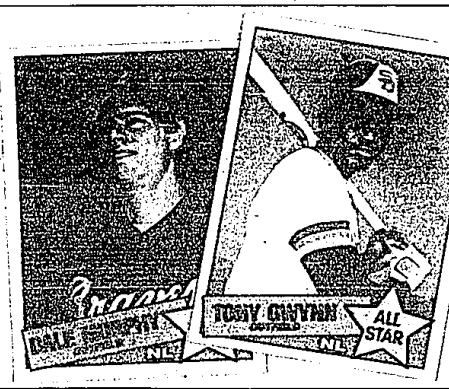
Dale Murphy, OF: He's such a clean, cut All-American guy, signing autographs for everyone and participating in numerous civic functions. Well, we don't care if he joins Hell's Angels and kicks sand in Girl Scouts' faces. We want home runs.

Tony Gwynn, OF: He does it all. He hits, runs and fields better than anyone. He even accomplishes something previously deemed impossible — he looks good in a Padres uniform.

Randy Ready, OF: Another Philly phenom, which means he's probably better at the race track than at the ball park.

Dion James, OF: Atlanta Braves are like orphans at Christmas, you can't leave without taking a couple home with you.

Bob Derrler, OF: He's a former Cub, which already makes him suspect.



## Warp Factor

Karlos Barney



Foley unwittingly accepts a job at millennium wage.

## The rock'n'roll lovers' lanes

By Larry O'Connor  
staff writer

"Just give us some of that rock'n'roll music. Any old way you chose it. It's got a back beat you can't hide. Especially when those old pins begin to fly."

Bowling to the sounds of Depeche Mode or The Cure isn't that somewhat akin to dancing to Bach?

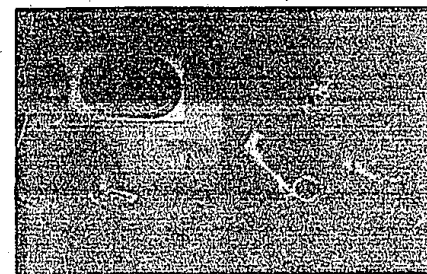
At the Garden Bowl, a venerable bowling center in Detroit, the beat of the drum has to compete with the crash of the pins. The "Rock'n'Bowl" features live local bands on Thursday nights while on Fridays and Saturdays people can roll for strikes while a deejay spins some tunes.

The interesting mix of sport and music brings out an equally diverse audience. Needless to say, this is not a stop on the Professional Bowlers Association Tour.

Otherwise, Kim Gruely of Farmington and her friends wouldn't be dancing in one of the lanes after

tossing one in a series of well-placed gutterballs. A veteran of the bowling center, perhaps?

"No," said Gruely, 16, a student at Livonia Ladywood, "but I'm in second place."



SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer

J.D. Lamb and his band provides the sounds for people to bowl to at "Rock'n'Bowl," which takes place on Thursdays at Garden Bowl in Detroit.

Compared to the rest of her mates, that's not saying much. Mario Meszina, 16, of Plymouth, Lesley Woodbeck, 16, of Livonia, along with Chris Whiteford, 19, of Southfield and Darren Macca, 19, of Farmington Hills are not exactly setting the Garden Bowl on fire with their stellar performance at the lanes.

ONE MEMBER of the party slowly approaches the lane and carefully eyes the pins before launching a bending shot that creeps over to the gutter. The person after her repeats the process.

At the lane next to them, a person is drawing cartoons on the score table projection on the wall.

Peggy Goodwin just smiles. The idea of bringing live rock'n'roll and bowling was hers and owner Dave Zalana.

"They get out there and they bowl and they dance," said Goodwin, who is promotions director for the Garden Bowl and the neighboring Majestic Theatre. "They can get silly at

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