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For the past 10 years Rip Collins of Livonia has been running a special "household" — the visitors' clubhouse at Tiger Stadium. He

wears his Boston Red Sox cap — a gift from the Soxos trainer — no matter what team happens to be in town.

Rip's Roost

Area resident keeps house for Tigers

By Richard Loch
staff writer

RIP COLLINS of Livonia compares his job to that of a homemaker.

But the people who visit his "house" are just passing through, and some of them earn millions of dollars a year.

Collins is the visitors' clubhouse manager at Tiger Stadium, a job he's held since 1974.

"I do the same things your mother would do," said Collins, chomping on a cigar in a very unmotherly fashion. "I

prepare the food, wash clothes, clean up the place.

"The way some of the guys act and live here I imagine their mother would be glad to see them leave home."

Catering to the pampered egos of modern ballplayers may have its share of frustrations. But Collins, who got his first Tiger Stadium job as a batboy in 1933, loves his work nonetheless.

"This job is so good they're going to have to carry me out of here," said Collins, who retired from his career as a U.S. Marines aviation officer and pilot 17 years ago.

"It's good for me. I'm retired and I

do what I want to do. I've spent most of life in locker rooms, outside of being in the service."

IT'S THE people he meets who make the job fun, he said.

Throughout the season, all the players in the American League — except the Tigers — pass through the front door to Rip's Roost, as a sign above the door identifies the clubhouse.

Some have become good friends, such as Buddy Bell of the Texas Rangers, George Frazier of the Cleveland Indians, Carlton Fisk of the Chicago White Sox, and Bob Stanley, Jerry Remy and Dwight Evans of the Boston Red Sox.

Others, such as mercurial California Angels slugger Reggie Jackson and teammate Rod Carew, have had their differences with Collins and his clubhouse crew. But Collins said his relationship with the two Angels more or less has been patched up.

"Reggie can be a super guy," Collins said. "He's just very moody."

he has to do for the players, providing a post-game meal is the one he likes least.

"The worst part of the job is the spread," Collins said. "I do more running around with that than with anything else."

Sometimes his wife, Kathy, cooks the meals; other times he orders them from a catering firm.

"I asked the players how come we have to feed them, and they say it's because they play at night, and after the game nothing's open," Collins said. "But basketball teams and hockey teams play at night."

"I had Jimmy Rutherford and Dale McCourt from the Red Wings here, and they were amazed. I think all they have is pop in their clubhouse."

ANY HOMEMAKER who's had to put up with destructive children around the house can readily empathize with Collins. Ballplayers like to take their frustrations on the nearest inanimate object, which usually is some part of the dugout, clubhouse, or tunnel leading to the field.

Please turn to Page 11

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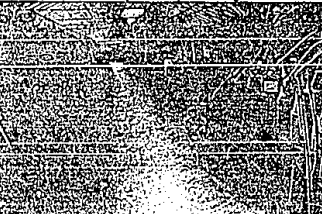
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