

Ernie fields questions on baseball, personalities

Ernie Harwell fields some questions about baseball and some of the personalities he's worked with through the years.

Why he doesn't criticize high-salaried ball players:

"What I'm concerned about is what happens on the field. I'm doing play by play. The money is something that is out of my control and out of my picture. As far as not being critical of the players, I think baseball is the kind of game where you don't have to beat a dead horse, so to speak.

"If a shortstop makes four or five errors a game everybody knows he's not playing well. You can just say that's his fifth error. I don't try to hide anything. I don't want to say, 'How can a guy be that bad?' Everybody has a bad day, including me."

Tiger Stadium:

"I think Mr. Hitch has the right idea. He's looking at all of his options. He's putting money into Tiger Stadium and seeing what kind of reaction he'll get from the fans, whether or not they want to keep it. Or, he can look at the option of building another stadium."

Best field manager:

"Sparky's probably as good a manager as I've seen. Leo Durocher, when he was with the Giants, he did an excellent job. Leo was expressive and he had a hot temper and had strong opinions about everything. He didn't mind fighting. He was a reasonable kind of guy. I liked Leo."



Ernie's insight: Ernie Harwell, who'll be back as the Detroit Tiger broadcaster this season, fields questions in his Farmington Hills living room.

Marge Schott:

"It's a shame that thing happened. I guess she had to be punished. It just points out that baseball is a microcosm of the outside world. There's preju-



dice everywhere. She just made the mistake of expressing it, and it cost her."

Red Barber:

"Red was a real pioneer in our business. We all



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LEMIREX

owe a great debt to him. He was a perfectionist and if you worked for him he demanded you do your very best. If you didn't, he'd be a little short with you. But it was probably good for us that he was that way."

Harwell from page 1A

He's back. To legions of radio listeners, that's all that matters.

"I've been surprised people cared that much about a guy just losing his job," Harwell said. "At the time, I didn't think I'd ever be back. I had no inkling they would have a change in ownership. I just thought it was over."

Simplicity, perhaps, but Harwell also speaks to perspective.

After more than 50 years of broadcasting baseball, he can put the game and life into proper view.

His narrative holds the game timeless in the living room setting. Stories range from receding a memorable interview with Connie Mack, calling the shot heard around the world in '61 (the Bobby Thomson home run) to the calamity of Disco Demolition Night in '79.

Game will endure

Such reminiscences belie today's news of multi-million dollar salaries and inflated egos. Fret not, Harwell reassures, baseball will endure.

"I had a quote I saw the other day. The person said, 'Baseball players aren't what they used to be. They don't get out and hustle like they used to and they don't play when they are injured.'"

"... it was from 1901."

The unassuming Harwell won't tell you he's written two books, "Tuned to Baseball" and "Diamond Gems," which has been reissued in paperback. Or that he co-authored a song in 1972, "Move Over Babe (Here Comes Henry)" with then Detroit Tiger pitcher Bill Slayback.

'All the media had been good to me when things were going good. If I ran and hid when things weren't going too good, it wouldn't be the right thing to do.'

Ernie Harwell

Or that he's in six halls of fame, including the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y.

Lulu Harwell will, though.

The two have been married for 51 years. And it shows.

She walks in and casually flips her husband the newspaper across the room. Ernie makes a deft left-handed grab. Willie Mays would not put his signature on.

"I told them you were at the beauty parlor," Ernie says, introducing Lulu to the guests.

"Com'on dear, let's see what they did to you. You escaped without any damage, did you?"

"Just monetarily," she replies.

Longtime Hills residents

The Harwells have lived in Farmington Hills more than 10 years. Their home borders the scenic splendor of Heritage Park.

Ernie said he enjoys the vast openness of the area not to mention the easy access to the ball park.

This winter the Harwells did their usual traveling. They went to the Greek Islands and Germany.

After a one-year hiatus, they're

making their annual trek to Florida for spring training.

"I missed being in spring training," he said. "That's a lot of fun. It's always the nicest time of year."

"Everyone is optimistic. Everybody is going to win the pennant. The pitchers are going to win 20 games; the hitters are going to hit .300 and the announcers are not going to make any mistakes ... All of those fairy tales."

Harwell should know something about fairy tales.

A week after Monaghan sold the team to Mike Ilitch, contact was made to bring Harwell back.

He'll broadcast this year and then move into a yet-to-be defined public relations role.

"They'll have me doing something to keep me off the streets," he said.

Last season, Harwell did the Saturday game of the week for CBS Radio. He also broadcast 14 California Angels games.

Harwell said he kept tabs on the Tigers, the team he'd broadcast and traveled with since 1960.

Though support was overwhelming, some criticized Harwell on how he handled the announcement of the firing. He doesn't bear any malice.

"It didn't hurt me," he said. "I understand people have different opinions. They only way I could do it is handle it the best way I thought I could ... I had no control over what happened after that."

"All the media had been good to me when things were going good. If I ran and hid when things weren't going too good, it wouldn't be the right thing to do."



SHARON LEMIREX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Happy together: Ernie and Lulu Harwell are still smiling together after 51 years of marriage.

POLICE/FIRE CALLS

Listed below are some of the Farmington area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week.

AUTO THEFT

A 1985 black GMC Jimmy worth \$7,500 was stolen from a residence on Halsted in Farmington Hills on Feb. 16.

Farmington Hills Police recovered a 1984 Chevy van parked in a lot on 12 Mile in Farmington Hills on Feb. 17.

BREAK-INS

A speaker worth \$10 was stolen

after windows were smashed on a 1987 Pontiac Bonneville on Tredwell in Farmington Hills Feb. 16 or 17, causing \$400 in damage.

THEFTS

Two Dewalts saws valued at \$300 were stolen from the back of a blue 1978 Ford van parked on Renselaar in Farmington Hills Feb. 17 or 18.

ASSAULT

Police arrested a Farmington Hills man for assault and battery after his wife reported that he had hit her and barricaded himself in the bedroom of their Eastfield

home with several rifles Feb. 18. Police convinced the 43-year-old man to come out of the bedroom. He is also wanted on a warrant from West Bloomfield.

THEFTS

Two 15-year-old boys told Farmington Public Safety officers they were assaulted by a 31-year-old man Feb. 27 at the Farmington Civic Theatre. The two said they went to the restroom when they were confronted by the man, who complained about disruptive behavior during the movie. The teenagers said the man struck one of them with an open hand and pushed the other in the back. The man denies making any physical contact.

BAD CHECKS

A check for camera equipment worth \$1,208.51 written at Grand Photography Center on Fr/Slop River on Jan. 13 was returned with insufficient funds. The store has the social security and driver's license numbers and plans to prosecute the Detroit man who wrote the check.

Man charged with more break-ins

Nathen Howard Rostron, 34, of Detroit, faces an preliminary exam Wednesday on four additional counts of breaking and entering in Farmington's 47th District Court.

Rostron has already been charged with two counts of breaking and entering in Farmington Hills and faces additional charges

in Livonia and Southfield.

Police are seeking another Detroit man, 17-year-old Mark Gonzales, in connection with the break-ins. Gonzales, who showed up with Rostron for an arraignment on similar charges in West Bloomfield, is still at large, police said.

Oratorical contest open to 16, under

An oratorical contest open to all Farmington-area youngsters age 16 and under will be held at 7:30 a.m. Wednesdays, Feb. 24 and March 3, at the Farmington Elks Club, Orchard Lake Road, south of 10 Mile.

The subject of this year's contest, sponsored by the Optimist Club of Farmington/Farmington Hills, is: "I can make a difference." Contestants must speak on the subject

for no more than five minutes. Scoring will be based on material organization, delivery and presentation and overall effectiveness.

Medallions will be awarded to the first- and second-place winners and runners-up. In addition, the first-place winner will be eligible for future competition with a top prize of \$1,500 scholarship.

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