

THE IDLE AMERICAN

A Different Drummer...

Commentary by Dr. Don Newbury

Column #871 for Release Saturday, January 25, 2020, or Later

I'm glad Sisters Maggie Hession and Frances Evans--who proudly beat a drum for the Texas Rangers from reserved seats 15 rows behind home plate--didn't live to see it.

The Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word were welcomed, unlike the Houston garbage can beater who has been "drummed out of the corps." The guy with a different beat there is a link in the chain exposing the ugly underbelly of highest level cheating.

Baseball's integrity could go the way of some boxing bouts--hopefully confined to years gone by--where winners were known before combatants put on their gloves....

Unless you've been living under a rock, you are aware of headlines and broadcasts blaring about charges that many Houston Astros' home wins during the past two seasons have been tainted.

Uncovered has been a videographer in centerfield who has sharply focused the camera's lens on visiting catchers, ostensibly to "catch" signs intended for pitchers' use only.

Signs, they say, were electronically transmitted immediately to the "drummer" in the tunnel near the Astros' dug-out. In turn, he beat on a garbage can, conveying auditory signals to batters concerning types of upcoming pitches. In short, batters were forewarned about what kind of pitches to expect....

Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred has mounted a vigorous investigation, brandishing a terrible swift sword. His swath so far has resulted in immediate dismissals of three field managers, as well as one general manager.

It's a particularly sad day for players who were NOT "in the know" about the matter. Or, did any NOT KNOW?

Whatever the case, the investigation is not over, and may lead to uncovering other fiendish sports plots in our "gotta-get-the-edge" world. To date, this is professional sports' darkest hour, right alongside a few other sporting events which were either "fixed," or where playing fields were greatly tilted to benefit a team or individual....

Media--both social and "antisocial"--are having a field day. One cartoonist sketched an Astro with the words "Houston Asterisks" emblazoned across his chest. A church marquee read, "We had a clever sign, but the Astros stole it."

I can offer few suggestions to major league baseball, or to any other leagues. Oh, there is one idea. Maybe increased security should be switched from fan entries to the gates where players and other baseball personnel enter.

I am reminded of the guy who is always certain that the government “gets things backward.” The graybeard is particularly on guard against “them northerners,” a term applied even to folks from the “near north” in Oklahoma. Years ago, when federal troops were sent to the Rio Grande to thwart entry attempted by swimmers, he quickly criticized the government. “Our threat isn’t from the south,” he contended, “It’s from the north. The troops are guarding the wrong river.”...

The drumbeats in Houston don’t seem distant. They likely are everywhere. More than baseball is tainted. Fans aren’t likely to “blackball” the sport, however, and hopefully the sound of drums won’t cause us to wonder if signals are being sent.

I’d rather think of the blessed sisters. They did all the “nun things,” but usually were at Rangers games to offer drum beats of cheer and goodwill. Remembered is their trip to New York City when the Rangers successfully took down the Yankees, ultimately claiming the American League pennant. Also recalled is their visit to fantasy spring training in Florida, and their drums autographed by all the Rangers.

Their lives lined up with the late sportswriter Grantland Rice’s sports poem: “When One Great Scorer comes to mark against your name, He marks not that you won or lost, but how you played the game.” Sister Frances died at age 90, Sister Maggie at 85. Their obituaries included “crossing home plate.” En route, they lived life well. May they rest in peace, oblivious to the ugliness involving a misguided Houston can-banger and his pals....

***Dr. Newbury is a former educator who “commits speeches” round about.
Comments/inquiries to: newbury@speakerdoc.com. Phone: 817-447-3872. Web site: www.speakerdoc.com Twitter: @donnewbury. Facebook: don newbury.***