

# Some Events are More Important Than the Box Scores!

By Duane Plank

Spent a recent evening watching the Angels drop a midseason contest to the Texas Rangers. No big deal. The Halos seem to have righted the ship, and actually overtook the Texans, posting a two-and-a-half game lead at one time.

Near the end of the game, the crawl on the bottom of the screen alerted viewers to stay tuned for an update on the recovery of Jon Wilhite. You remember Jon, right? He was the only survivor riding in the demolished Mitsubishi involved in the horrific accident that killed Angel pitcher Nick Adenhardt and two others in early April.

Hadn't heard much about Wilhite in the last couple of months. Seems that most in the media had moved on. Par for the course. But it was fantastic to see that Jon was out of the hospital, working on his rehabilitation. Walking up the dugout steps at Anaheim Stadium to shake hands with and hug Manger Mike Scioscia and some of Adenhardt's teammates.

Amazing. According to published reports, Wilhite suffered what was termed an "internal decapitation," the complete severing of the skull from the spinal column. So to see him up and about a few months after the crash... well, it seemed to me to be a medical miracle.

Continued success to Jon and his family as the recovery continues. The Wilhite family, case you didn't know it, has been involved in Manhattan Beach Little League baseball for at least 40 years. I used to own Jon's uncle Jerry whenever he tried to slip some of the slop he threw as a young pitcher by me as we made our way up the youth baseball food chain, by the way.

The free agency period has kicked in for both the NBA and the NHL. Most of the local interest has been centered on the question of what will the Lakers do? Justifiably so. The Purple and Gold reign supreme on the old fan-o-meter in our neck of the woods. And while the media talkers opine about the loss of Ariza, or the signability of Odom, and Brown, how many of you out there were overwhelmed by what the local hockey teams did to strengthen their teams?

Okay, so you probably weren't buoyed by the same-old-same-old inactivity exhibited by the L.A. Kings? July 1 kicked off the free agent frenzy, and, per usual, the Kings were standing on the sidelines, holding onto their wallet. GM Dean Lombardi said that he was ready to make attractive offers to and hopefully sign an impact goal scorer like Marian Hossa or Marian Gaborik. Or someone named Marian.

Anyway, who am I to say that the Kings didn't make bona fide offers to the Marians, or to other free agents like Mike Knuble and Martin Havlat? Notice that all of the guys just mentioned have first names starting with "M"? Makes an old-time King fan remember a time some moons ago when the team actually did make a big splash, signing another "M" guy.

Detroit Red Wing star Marcel Dionne was pried out of hockey town way back in 1975 by then-Kings owner Jack Kent Cooke, who reached into his wallet and rewarded the

high-scoring center with a \$300,000 per year, multi-year contract. At the time, the most lucrative contract in the game of pond shinny.

Dionne rewarded Cooke's largesse with 11 high-scoring seasons, but as a team, the Kings could never get over the hump in the Stanley Cup playoffs, engaging in some riveting playoff series with the Boston Bruins, but coming out on the losing end.

Dionne, who was enshrined in the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1992, was traded to the New York Rangers in 1987 after he complained to management about the direction of the team. But it was fun while it lasted, watching Marcel, Dave Taylor and Charlie Simmer team to form the "Triple Crown Line," terrorizing opponents blue liners and goaltenders.

And speaking of the Rangers, they weren't afraid to spend a little cash last week, inking the ex-Minnesota Wild forward Gaborik to a tidy five-year, \$37.5 million deal. But that signing paled to the chunk of change that the resurgent Chicago Blackhawks bestowed upon Hossa.

The going-for-the-Cup Hawks lured Hossa to the Windy City with a 12-year, \$62.4 million deal. And the Kings were left in the penalty box. Again.

For the record, the other two forwards on the Kings wish list, Mike Knuble and Martin Havlat, are also off the free agent market. Knuble, a hard-working winger, departed Philadelphia, signing with the Washington Capitals for two years, and Havlat will be cashing in on his six-year, \$30-million contract with the Minnesota Wild.

The Kings did sign a player in the first couple days a free agency. Hearts be still, King fans, but you now have ex-Penguin defenseman Rob Scuderi to cheer or boo this season. And maybe for the three seasons after that.

Don't know of Scuderi, even though I follow the NHL more than the average guy, I assume. May have to check in with local Pittsburgh fan LJ, who is still probably a bit bleary-eyed from the Stanley Cup celebration that she hosted in her neck of the woods after the Pens upset the Red Wings.

But doing a little research, it plays out that Scuderi is a left-handed shooting blue liner who has shown a penchant for blocking shots. And had a plus-minus of 23 last season, which I challenge any of you out there to explain to me. I know what it means, and it is a darn good thing. And goal-scoring winger Ryan Smyth was acquired in a trade from Colorado, so I will give Lombardi kudos for not giving up the fight.

The Anaheim Ducks didn't do much in the initial stage of free agency, but they did resign veteran defenseman Scott Niedermayer to a one-year deal, which allowed the Duckies to trade the highly-paid Chris Pronger to the Philadelphia Flyers for some good, young talent and a few choice draft picks.

As for the Lakers and their acquisition of Ron Artest after deciding to not open the vault for free agent role player Trevor Ariza, well RJ the Golfer liked the exchange of players with Houston. So there!



## Penguin

from page 5

Good for us, we all know that the mass transit system in our neck of the woods leaves a lot to be desired. Or pretty much sucks, depending on your viewpoint. I know that I, like many South Bay residents, jump in my car if I have to travel across the street. Don't consider using the mass transit options, either because they are unknown to me or

are inconvenient. Probably because they are inconvenient to me.

Wanted to close with some more good news on the employment front. Another near 500,000 jobs were lost in June, as the unemployment level nationally climbed near the 10 percent level. I just hope that we have hit the bottom of this abyss.

## Antiques

from front page

To cater to the growing consignment crowd, Studio Antiques has become an official eBay drop-off shop where anyone can bring in an item to sell. An eBay seller for 10 years (under the seller ID "Gimpler," named after a fictional superhero Martin concocted while telling bedtime stories to his son Luke when the now-15-year-old was a tot), Martin explained that the arrangement works out well for both parties and has become a saving grace for the business. "We get 35 to 50 percent and there are some eBay and Paypal fees for the customer, but going through us eliminates a lot of time and headache," he said. Martin is also currently updating his website (www.studioantiques.com) to make it more user-friendly and to take further advantage of the growing online shopping movement.

A native of Bournemouth, England—a seaside resort in the south of the UK—Martin's love of antiques started as a kid when he "collected things" as a hobby. "I had a museum in my bedroom and would talk to teachers about antiques when I was 10," he recalled. "My Uncle Harry would take me to museUltimately Martin went into the aerospace industry, doing contract work in several countries, including Israel and Germany, before landing a position at Northrop-Grumman and eventually settling in El Segundo. "But I never stopped collecting and then one day, I decided I had enough and bought a frame store on Richmond Street that eventually became Studio Antiques," he said. That was over 20 years ago. Aside

from getting married and raising a son in town, Martin has become a well-known community figure. He serves as membership coordinator for the El Segundo Kiwanis Club, has coached AYSO soccer for 14 years, and even co-hosted (with Sally, who is also involved in several local groups, including the Downtown El Segundo Committee and the Cable Advisory Committee) a local cable program called *The Old Stuff Show*, where people would bring in their collectibles for appraisal. "We hope to do some more shows in the future," Martin said. "Now with one less store to worry about, maybe we'll have some time."

Despite the ups and downs and pressures of running a business during difficult financial times, Martin still enjoys coming to work. "In the long term, the move will be beneficial and will allow us to make better use of our resources," he said. "You don't want to be wasteful nowadays. Being born just after World War II as I was and living in a government subsidy home, it's instinctively bred into your brain because you didn't have anything."

While he doesn't have quite the foot traffic he used to, Martin does retain a loyal following from a customer base that will always appreciate the quality of a fine antique. "People like to wander around and reminisce," he said. Meanwhile younger people are coming in for old furniture. They're getting solid wood and not particle board—things that are well made and in great condition. Great quality is something you can't alwa."

Studio Antiques' moving sale will continue through July 22.

## Food

### APPETIZER: BAKED POTATO SOUP

#### Ingredients

- 4 - 5 baking potatoes
- 2 cups water
- 1 quart milk
- One half cup celery
- One quarter cup butter
- One half cup sour cream
- One third cup bacon, cooked and crumbled
- One third cup green onion, chopped
- 2 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 Tbsp. fresh parsley or dill, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

Place potatoes in the oven and cook for about 1 hour at 350 degrees. Meanwhile heat water in a large saucepan and add chopped celery to the water and simmer until celery is tender.

When potatoes are fully cooked, slice down the center and scoop out pulp of each potato and add to celery and water. Add milk, butter, sour cream, bacon, green onions, 1 cup of the cheddar cheese, parsley or dill and salt and pepper. Allow mixture to simmer over low-medium heat until it thickens. Serve hot with cheddar cheese sprinkled on top. Courtesy Arcamax.com •



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