

We usher in the weekend with Moot Points, and this weeks column is just further evidence that Hiko is wired a little different from the rest of us. In it, he touches on talking sports with real old guys, drinking beer while walking on the treadmill, the movie Robocop, and taking notes at meetings at work. It's the weekend baby! Go TRIBE!



OR

The End Is Near

I was over at my grandmother's for dinner the other night, and her husband, Merle, was watching TV, something about toasters, which must have been fascinating to him, but less than enthralling for yours truly. Bored almost to the point of sticking a finger in my eye just for something to do, I decided I should attempt to pursue a conversational topic. Usually, there's not a plethora of things to talk about with Merle, other than to perhaps hear him recount his WWII experiences in the Battle of the Bulge.

(Which I've done multiple times, and will continue to do multiple times, because

it's a helluva story.)

So I figured that I could converse with him about baseball, since it's about the only thing he still likes – other than toasters.

Hiko: *So, Merle, you sad that baseball season's over?*

Merle (confused): *Baseball season isn't over.*

Hiko: *Yeah it is. Baseball season ends the day that Training Camp starts. Has for years.*

Merle: *No, it doesn't. Baseball season goes on for another couple months.*

Hiko (narrowing eyes suspiciously): *Are you sure? I could've sworn that baseball just stops when football begins.*

Merle: *No! There's a game on tonight – see?*

He showed me the TV Guide that says Indians-Rangers.

Hiko: *No, I don't think that's baseball. That's probably the Arena League or Professional Croquet. That's the Boise Indians versus the Tallahassee Rangers.*

Merle (getting exasperated): *No, that's baseball!*

Hiko (shaking head): *Nope. Can't be. Everyone knows that baseball just stops the second football begins. It just ceases to exist. Its purpose is to get us from the end of basketball season to the beginning of football season, and that's all. I'm positive that the season is over. You must be losing it, dude. Time to stick you in a nursing home.*

Merle (incredulous): *There's no way baseball is over! They haven't even started the playoffs yet!*

Hiko: *I'm pretty sure the World Series game is next week. Tuesday probably. I can't say for absolute certain, but I think there's just one game. I can only remember there ever being one game in the World Series, like last year when Kansas City beat Buffalo for the National Title.*

Merle pauses, in total shock.

Merle: *Boy. What in THE hell is the matter with you?*

***The other day, I participated in what can only be described as an Act of Futility.

I walked on the treadmill – while drinking beer.

For every calorie I lost, I tossed it back in. I emerged from the session completely unchanged, except for a nice little buzz.

I recommend it to my fellow beer addicts everywhere. It's Light Light Beer.

***Let me tell you about my love for the movie *Robocop*.

I was at Giant Eagle the other night, and what should I see on the DVD discount rack for \$7.99? That's right – our boy *Robocop*. Widescreen, even.

My eagerness to purchase the DVD was acute, tackling an old man carrying a toaster (probably Merle) and tazing some bratty kid just because they were in front of me in line. I hopped in my car, peeled across some grass, and headed for home.

I hadn't seen it in many years, and it was just as good as I remember. What a high quality flick. I watched that movie probably more than any other during High School. I used to drive home from school – my parents were both still at work –

pop that movie in, boil myself a dozen pierogies, and have a good ol' time until my friends would stop by with warm beer, which we would use to chase the shots of a mixture of a little bit of everything from my parents' liquor cabinet.

Did watching it take me back to those times, you ask? No. Because those times were stupid.

***In our bi-weekly group meetings at work, we each have to take turns taking notes, then e-mailing those notes out to all attendees once the meeting is adjourned. There are 8 people in my group, so that means that we must take our turn once every 8 weeks.

Sadly, this Wednesday, it was my turn. I hate taking notes. It's the only time I'm forced to pay attention. No one in my group but myself is located in the state of Ohio, so I attend the meetings via teleconference, and if we are broaching a particularly boring topic, I can zone out or play Free Cell or screw around online.

After being nominated for note taking by my boss, Hilda, I decided to instill in her the belief that it would be A-OK if I never took notes again. Here they are:

Welcome

Today's meeting kicked off with a bang as we were serenaded by the invigorating pseudo-techno melodies of Hold. Once the meeting was logged on to the teleconference system, pleasantries were exchanged, and old friendships and

enmities were renewed. Hilda called the meeting to order, the rest of the participants sighed and awaited their doom, and silence descended upon the throng.

Mid Year Self Assessments

Hilda stated that she would like us to update her on the status of our achieving the goals for 2007 that we listed on our Year End Reviews. Tragically, this particular group appears to be without goals – a bunch of aimless ne'er-do-wells, if you will - for none of us seem to remember what our aforementioned goals might be. I believe mine involved skydiving, a 30 inch steak, and a hooker named Donna, but that could be for something else. In response to this mass lobotomy, Hilda irritably agreed to send out a copy of our Year End goals to each of us as a reminder that we do matter and that life is not a shallow farce.

Tonto stated that he could not know if his goals were being met, as he had not been told that he had angered any co-workers, but could not ensure that this was indeed the case, for he is a brash and heartless fellow. And apparently one of his goals for this year was to have less voodoo dolls made in his likeness. He also humbly requested a full dossier on his supposed indiscretions.

Lucas became suspicious of the whole topic, feeling that any goal discussion on his part might incriminate him in some way. Everyone else maintained a vigilant silence.

In summary, Hilda will send out our goals to us, which are due back to her by Friday, August 3rd, at some undetermined time of that day, unless one would

prefer to wait for the Year End Goal Template to fill out, which she will provide to each group member whenever she damn well pleases, and would then be due by Friday, August 10th.

Translation – it's due on Friday, August 10th, and may or may not be completed in a 10 minute span on the afternoon of that day. Personally, I would never do that, no, never never, but the rest of y'all is slackers.

Documentation on Processes

There is a great need for us to have our processes documented, so that a backup can perform all required tasks should an individual be out, sick, on vacation, or asked to leave, then decapitated and dumped in the river. There is a great sense of nervousness on the line as this request is made – each person feels that their ability to remain un-fireable is lost if other people can easily replace them with the directions that they themselves have so thoughtfully provided! Tension fills the air. It is thick, palpable. Can you sense it? Who will be the first to speak?

Once each team member has effectively signed their own death warrant, that documentation should be forwarded to Hilda so that she can forward it to LJ's group for info-mapping, and from there it can be sent to HR so they can begin the cancellation of Christmas bonuses. And Christmas.

Training Opportunities

It seems that Ira would like some SAS and Business Objects training. Hilda very carefully explained that if there were a vast business need for the training, and the training was cheap, and if the training could take place in the team member's backyard, and if there were a significant tax writeoff involved, and if the team member were willing to part with their spare kidney, then maybe – just maybe – that training could be arranged. You see, the budget for training that used to exist just isn't there any longer. Toner cartridges have gotten ridiculously expensive. You're lucky they can still afford to pay your salary.

Closing

Robocop is a very entertaining movie. Cheese is better when it doesn't contain toenails. It would be cool if I could get some x-ray glasses so I could look at people's souls.

And I probably won't be taking notes again for quite some time.

Notice the subtle hint at the end?

Hilda has not spoken to me since I distributed the notes. I jokingly e-mailed her and asked if she were mad at me. She replied that I needed to hurry up and finish my Process Documentation.

Yipes.

Moot Points

Thursday, August 02 2007 7:00 PM -

Next time, I think I'll not *just assume* that my boss will get my jokes...

***It *WOULD* be cool if I could get some x-ray glasses so I could look at people's souls. Anyone know where I can find a pair?