

# Mule Kicks

By Stew (Mule) Thornley

## Introducing: William Stixrud

William J. Stixrud, the newest member of the Halsey Hall Chapter, has some notable sports lineage in a family that can trace its Twin Cities' roots to just before the Civil War. William's grandfather, William J. Champion, Sr., was a lifelong sports fan and a member of the Kent Athletic Club in St. Paul in the early 20th century; William's father, Robert L. Stixrud, Sr., was a great sports fan who worked at Nicollet Park in 1933, the year Joe Hauser hit 69 home runs for the Millers. William's cousin is Dave Mona, who provided our chapter with valuable public-relations advice at the time we organized in 1985.

William loves many types of sports, especially baseball, but says his greatest athletic talent lies in bowling. He bowled on the University of Minnesota Intercollegiate team before graduating in 1982 and still holds a 187 average.

The first major-league game William attended was a memorable one, a rain-delayed extra-inning affair finally won by the Twins in the last of the tenth on a home run by Bob Allison. Another top baseball thrill of William's was attending the 1987 playoff opener in which Gary Gaetti hit two home runs.

William is a Revenue Examiner for the Telephone Taxpayer Assistance Unit of the Minnesota Department of Revenue. He is single with hobbies that include model railroading and photography as well as playing guitar and home recording.

William's address and phone number are 6700 Pleasant Avenue S., Richfield, Minnesota 55423-2351, 612-869-4892

## Cow Chips

**Charlie Rekela** recently finished ninth in a spelling bee (out of 21 competitors). Charlie successfully spelled "chieftain," a word his editor father, **George**, flubbed. . . **Bob and Mary Tholkes** went to Iowa City in search of information on the elusive **Andy Nelson**. While in the area, they visited the Amana Colonies and had lunch at **Bill Zuber's** restaurant. . . **Lee Temanson** is working at 3M in Maplewood on a temporary assignment. . . **Alden Mead** is mourning the switch of the Class A baseball team in Savannah, Georgia, from a Cardinal to a Dodger affiliation. He also says, "Say hello to all the gang, and tell them that, even in exile, I enjoy reading of their feats in *The Holy Cow*."

## Rockwell Revealed

If you're as dense as I am, you may have wondered about Norman Rockwell's famous painting, *Bottom of the Sixth*, which adorned the cover of Saturday Evening Post on April 23, 1949.

Even though the Dodgers are trailing in the sixth inning (an official game), the Brooklyn manager appears to be in glee over the rain that could prevent further play. I posed this question on SABR's

Internet List-serv and received several simple explanations (along with a more complicated one). A number of respondents pointed out that the Dodger manager is actually indicating clearing skies while the Pirate manager is doing his best to look chilled and convince the umpires that the game should be called.

Jeff Drummond had a more intriguing interpretation. He cited Rule 4.11(d) that was in effect until 1980 and stated that if a visiting team tied the score or took the lead during an uncompleted inning of an official game, the score would revert back to the last completed inning. Since Brooklyn, the home team, surrendered the lead in the top of the sixth, Drummond explains, a rainout would erase the uncompleted sixth inning and give the Bums a five-inning victory. "It was one of baseball's dumber rules and Rockwell captured it beautifully," says Drummond. "Today, however, it's just a historical curiosity." (Note: This would be a heckuva explanation except that Pittsburgh took its 1-0 lead with a run in the top of the second.)

On the subject of Rule 4.11(d), has anyone else ever attended a game in which it was applied? I saw this happen at an Astros-Cardinals game at Busch Stadium in 1975. Houston took a 4-3 lead in the top of the 11th when Cliff Johnson homered off Bob Gibson. With two out in the last of the 11th, the game was called because of rain; with the score reverting to the tenth inning, the game ended as a 3-3 tie. Not only did this probably cost Houston a victory, it wiped out Johnson's home run. It was the sixth-straight game in which he had homered. Instead of being within two games of the record (then held by only Dale Long), his streak was ended.

I'd be interested in hearing from others who have attended games in which unusual events have occurred. Please send them to Mule Kicks, c/o Mule Thornley at 1082 Lovell Avenue, Roseville, Minnesota 55113-4419.



## Party on March 30

Many thanks to those who helped Brenda and me move last month. We will be having a housewarming party (and everyone in the Chapter is invited) on Saturday, March 30 (which is Paul Rittenhouse's birthday) at 7 p.m. Soda and munchies will be provided, but if you desire any mood-altering substances, you'll have to bring your own. We're at 1082 Lovell Avenue (Grandview Townhomes on northeast corner of Lexington Avenue and Highway 36 in Roseville), phone 415-0791. (You'd be best off parking in the daycare center just down the street.) No housewarming gifts, please.