With snow still on the ground here in C-Town, it's hard to believe that opening day is a mere five days away. This is the time of year where everyone is making their predictions, and Paulie C is no different. However, the manner in which he attacks his season preview certainly is. In his latest, Paulie goes Nostradamus on the Cleveland Indians 2008 season in this truly enjoyable read.

Given that this is the time that most season predictions are made and my abhorrence for writers and experts simply listing what order the teams will finish in, who will win what awards, blah, blah, blah - let's go in a different direction and take a look at the 2008 season for *your* Cleveland Indians unfold before our very eyes:

April 2nd vs. Chicago

In just the second game of the year, Grady Sizemore belts 2 HR to start off his 2008 season in style, helping the Tribe take the first two games of the series. When it's all said and done, Sizemore will finish with 35 HR and 39 SB, joining the 35-35 club (if there even is a 35-35 club) in the final game of the season by hitting his 35th jack against these same White Sox in Chicago. Sizemore's 2008 will be viewed as his true "breakout" season, eclipsing his superb 2006 in terms of productivity and potential. The young CF will again capture the Gold Glove and finish 3rd in the AL MVP race, leaving Curtis Granderson (who struggles all season with finger problems) in his dust for the mantle of "Best CF in the AL". Sizemore's 2008, and subsequent years, make the question of "Grady or Grandy" between the two look in retrospect like a comparison of Travis Hafner and Ben Broussard, circa Spring Training 2004.

April 16th vs. Detroit

David Dellucci strikes out with the bases loaded in the 9th inning against Detroit closer Todd Jones, causing a split of the 2-game series as the Tribe falls to the Motor City Kitties. Early returns (an OPS under .650 through mid-May facing only RHP) on Dellucci are not encouraging, leading the traffic on the new fan-created website http://www.losethelooch.com/ to explode. In an unrelated matter, Ben Francisco receives an invitation to receive a key to the city from Buffalo mayor Byron Brown.

April 19th vs. Minnesota

Pronk, with ol' man Hafner in the stands at the Metrodome wearing his John

Deere cap and overalls, hammers out 3 HR against Twins' pitching. If the (very) early OPS over .900 hadn't served notice that our old dear friend Pronk was back from a yearlong sabbatical, this particular afternoon in the Twin Cities verifies his return. The offensive explosion gets Hafner started on his way to a 33 HR, 125 RBI season with an OPS that hovers around .975 all year, providing an anchor for the Tribe lineup and putting any concerns about the Tribe's DH possessing "old player skills" to bed.

April 24th

Dreadfully ineffective in his few appearances (even against LH hitters), newly acquired LHP Craig Breslow is released as the Indians cut ties with Aaron Fultz's de facto replacement after Breslow incredibly has yet to retire a LH batter in 9 attempts. Breslow, conceding that his future may be brighter elsewhere, "falls back" on his molecular biophysics and biochemistry degree from Yale. In Breslow's place as the second LHP out of the bullpen, the club promotes Rich Rundles, who started the season logging innings at the back end of the Buffalo bullpen. Rundles will be seen intermittently for the Tribe for the next two months, mainly in mop-up duty, until the Indians make a move to add a LHP from outside of the organization to fill the void created by their internal candidates' limitations.

May 4th

Rafael Betancourt is placed on the DL with a "tired arm" after a win against the Royals during which he labors to retire the bottom of the Kansas City order in the 8th. The injury results in Jensen Lewis, Rafael Perez, and Masa Kobayashi taking turns setting up JoeBo as Senor Slo-Mo rests his weary wing. As the relievers sort themselves out appearance by appearance, Perez struggles to retire RH batters in the 8th inning, while Kobayashi finds a fair amount of success despite allowing an uncomfortable amount of baserunners in his outings. The revelation is Jensen Lewis, with his fastball touching the low-90s again and deceiving batters with his herky-jerky motion, who shines in his newly found role as primary set-up man, posting a WHIP under 1.00 and averaging nearly two K's per inning. When Betancourt returns, he will be slotted in the 7th inning role to become comfortable again, but won't move any further back in the bullpen until mid-July.

May 11th vs. Toronto

Franklin Gutierrez is slotted into the #2 hole as the RH bat to separate Grady Sizemore and Travis Hafner after a brief and unsuccessful rotation of Michaels (whose performance, to this point, has merited a "meh") and Dellucci (whose performance to date falls into the "ugh" category). Batting 2nd, Gutz gets on base three times against Blue Jay hurlers, scoring all three times to help the Tribe eke out the Jays by a final tally of 6-5. Frank the Tank parlays his early success against both LHP and RHP into a permanent spot at the top of the lineup, en route to posting a 20 HR / 20 SB season while seemingly getting to every ball lofted towards RF and conjuring up images of Vlad Guerrero (in his prime) gunning down baserunners at will.

May 17th vs. Cincinnati

Jorge Julio (who makes the 25-man roster out of Spring Training ahead of Tom Mastny after being added to the spot on the 40-man roster vacated by Aaron Fultz on the last day in Winter Haven) runs his scoreless streak to 18 innings, pitching the 6th inning in an 8-7 victory over the Reds. Julio will work his way up the ladder of Wedge's progression of relievers until mid-June when Julio faces off with his old teammates from Colorado. With Colorado hitters aware of Julio tipping his pitches, he is blasted to the tune of 5 ER in 1/3 of an inning. His confidence shattered and with opposing teams having the tape of the Rockies' game on file, Julio slips precipitously down the bullpen ladder until he is replaced by RHP Jeff Stevens when rosters expand. Stevens will perform admirably for the Tribe in his few appearances late in the season, but will be distracted by the audible murmuring from the fans at Progressive Field, hearing the words "Brandon" and "Phillips" over and over again every time he toes the rubber.

May 23rd

As the team returns to Cleveland in 2nd place in the Central, David Dellucci is placed on the DL (while sitting on a sub-.240 batting average with no power to speak of) with the hamstring problems that have plagued him throughout the season. Ironically (or maybe not so ironically), Dellucci's trip to the DL coincides almost exactly with Shin-Soo Choo's readiness to emerge from his rehab stints in Akron and Buffalo to assume the role of LH portion of the newly named LF platoon, Michoo...Gesundheit. Dellucci will remain on the DL for the remainder of the season and will be released by the club after the 2008 season as the hamstring injury he suffered in 2007 robs him of any remaining speed or power.

June 3rd vs. Texas

After another absolutely horrific start, this time against the Rangers (2 IP, 9 R, 8 ER, 10 H, 5 BB, 0 K), Cliff Lee is placed on revocable waivers for the purposes of sending him to Buffalo as his freefall as a viable MLB starter simply can not find a bottom in an Indians' uniform. The pitching-starved St. Louis Cardinals place a waiver claim on Lee, beginning trade negotiations between the two clubs to allow Lee to join the National League Central.

June 5th vs. Texas

Andy Marte drives in 4 RBI on a hot summer night, continuing the success he experienced during a hot month of May. The Atomic Wedgie announces that Marte has "forced himself into the lineup" by posting an OPS of .825 with 6 HR in his limited at-bats to date as he seems to finally be on his way to establishing himself as a viable everyday 3B. Marte's ascension to the regular 3B job sends Casey Blake to LF to join the BLC in a platoon now affectionately known as Blachoo. With Blake locked into LF, the Indians finalize the player exchange that has been discussed for the last few days, resulting in Lee, Jason Michaels, and minor league IF Jared Goedert being traded to the Cardinals for minor league C Bryan Anderson, RHP Anthony Reyes (immediately sent to Buffalo in an attempt to resuscitate his now-floundering career), and LH reliever Tyler Johnson, who promptly puts a firm hold on the role of second LHP out of the bullpen. The Ben Francisco Treat is recalled from Buffalo to replace Michaels on the roster to fill the role as the 4th OF, cutting short the ceremony being held in Dunn Tire Park to retire Francisco's jersey just as the Canisius Pep Band begins playing the Rice-A-Roni Theme Song.

June 6th vs. Detroit

A ball off of the bat of Magglio Ordonez strikes C.C. Sabathia's left hand as he reaches his bare hand in an attempt to field the ball. Though X-Rays and MRI's reveal no breaks or structural damage to the hand, Sabathia has enough trouble gripping the ball properly that he is placed on the DL for a stint that robs him of five starts as he rests and rehabs the injury. After his 2nd rehab start in Akron (which is cut short as the left hand remains tender), Sabathia orders his agents to return to the contract table with Indians' Assistant GM Chris Antonetti with the directive to "get something done...NOW". As the two parties come close to an agreement, Sabathia's 3rd rehab start in Akron results in C.C. pitching

3 innings of shutout ball, needing only 30 pitches to do so. Buoyed by the confidence of the start and with his hand apparently fully healed, Sabathia instructs his agents to once again back away from the negotiating table with the alleged agreed-upon deal destined to live only in lore.

June 8th vs. Detroit

Aaron Laffey, in his first start since replacing Cliff Lee as the 5th starter goes eight strong innings against the potent Detroit lineup, inducing five double plays and walking only 1 of the notoriously patient Tiger hitters. Jensen Lewis comes on to work a 1-2-3 ninth inning in a non-save situation to secure the 6-1 victory, pulling the Indians to within two games of the AL Central-leading Tigers.

June 17th vs. Colorado

In his second start in place of C.C., Atom Miller pitches a complete game shutout against the Rox, the most notable of four sparkling outings for the young fireballing Texan. Matt Holliday is quoted that Miller's stuff is some of the best he's seen all year and that the sky is the limit for young Atom. A mere week and a half later, Miller's final outing is cut short by tenderness in his right elbow which eventually leads to the decision in September that the Tommy John surgery that has looked inevitable for Miller is finally the only option, setting his development with the Indians back another 18 months.

June 26th vs. San Francisco

Jake Westbrook goes all nine innings against the Giants, giving up an astonishing 14 hits...but only one run, perhaps aided by the seemingly impossible 8 GIDP that the geriatric Giants put on the board. Amazingly, the outing constitutes one of Westbrook's worst of the season as he goes a long way to establishing himself as a viable #2 pitcher, posting a sub-3.75 ERA and an improved K rate. Westbrook will finish the season 2nd on the team in victories with a new career high of 17 victories, second only to Fausto Carmona's repeat of 19 wins and just ahead of Sabathia's injury-shortened total of 16.

July 6th vs. Minnesota

Asdrubal Cabrera, subbing for a resting Peralta at SS, turns an unassisted Triple Play against the Twins. An obviously excited Mike Hegan, announcing the play

from the booth for WTAM, finds himself rushed to the hospital immediately following the game with what Doctors term an "accelerated heartbeat". When asked about the play, Cabrera comments that "at least I'm contributing in the field", a self-deprecating reference to Cabrera's sophomore "slump" that has seen him hover around the .260 mark with reduced OBP and OPS from his 2007 totals. The numbers steadily improve throughout the course of the season as he adjusts to MLB pitching and, even at their lowest points, look positively Ruthian compared to Josh Barfield's 2007 contribution from 2B.

July 13th vs. Tampa Bay

After three consecutive blown saves against the Rays and with the All-Star Break looming, Eric Wedge announces that The Big Borowski will share closing opportunities with new super set-up man Jensen Lewis. It proves to be the first step towards the realignment of the Tribe bullpen for the stretch run, with Lewis closing, Betancourt (healthy again and effective) setting him up, and Masa Kobayashi and Rafael Perez sharing 7th inning duties. Borowski eventually finds himself relegated to middle relief, fighting for appearances with RHP Jorge Julio and LHP Tyler Henderson.

July 15th vs. National League

Victor Martinez strokes a HR in the All-Star Game, clinching the game and World Series home field advantage for the AL, surprising many who have watched Vic's power numbers take a sharp downturn as he enters at the All-Star Break with only 4 HR. While his other statistics have remained in line with his steady-as-a-rock 2007, Victor cannot seem to put many balls over the fence. Victor, when pressed too many innings behind the dish in in 2008 are having an effect on his legs, refuses to blame Wedge's apparent hesitance to use Kelly Shoppach with the regularity that he had a year before for his drastically diminished power deflecting questions from reporters by pointing out that he holds the team lead in doubles.

July 31st

Amidst a flurry of rumors that send Braves 1B Mark Teixiera to Cleveland for a package allegedly involving Ryan Garko, Chuck Lofgren, Wes Hodges, and Nick Weglarz, the Indians decide not to adopt the "rent-a-slugger" strategy by passing on Teixiera, scheduled to hit the FA market after the season, to their

lineup. As the Rumor Mill keeps spinning, reports that Oakland GM Billy Beane is seen around A's offices wearing a shirt reading "Asdrubal or Bust" offer a glimpse into the apparent sticking point in the Indians' attempts to fortify their bullpen with Oakland closer Huston Street. Moments away from the Trade Deadline passing, the A's agree to a deal with the Tigers sending Street to the Motor City in exchange for 3B Brandon Inge (with the Tigers agreeing to pay nearly all of the money owed to Inge over the final 2 ½ years left on his contract), RHP Yorman Bazardo, minor league SS Cale Iorg. Tigers' GM Dave Dombrowski defends the further strip-mining of the Detroit farm system in favor of his "win-now" approach by stating that "can't miss" 19-year-old RHP Rick Porcello remains in the Tigers' organization. Dombrowski omits the fact that Porcello will be pitching to Lance Parrish, resigned by the Tigers to "flesh out" their minor league roster despite recently turning 50, and that Porcello will be asked to play CF on his days off.

August 8th vs. Toronto

Perhaps distracted by his name constantly coming up in trade talks, Garko goes 0 for 4, pushing his month-long slump into dangerous territory as continues to struggle to produce extra-base hits, with an OBP almost impossibly higher (.335) than his SLG (.360), as Jordan Brown continues his quest in Buffalo for a third straight MVP season. Garko is moved further down in the order as the ever-steady Jhonny Peralta, quietly on his way to a 25 HR, 85 RBI season with an OPS of .850, is moved permanently into the #5 hole to protect Victor. The move turns out to have the same effect as Peralta's move to the #3 hole in 2005 as the offense finds its groove, allowing the team to win 15 of their next 18 games, finally moving ahead of the aging-before-our-very eyes Tigers fill their DL with guaranteed annual salaries.

August 15th vs. Los Angeles of Anaheim in Orange County situated in the State of California

In the 3rd inning, Mike Scoscia calls home plate umpire John Hirschbeck's attention to the right hip of Paul Byrd which, according to Scoscia, is the location for the foreign substance that Byrd is using on the ball in his start against the Angels. As Byrd's former manager, Scoscia denies that he has knowledge of this being part of Byrd's routine and simply states, "look, the guy had nothing left in the tank when he left here after 2005...suddenly, three years later he's sitting on an ERA under 4.00 with 12 wins...c'mon, something's gotta give."

Hirschbeck finds what he calls a "sticky paste" on Byrd's right hip, later identified by MLB officials as Fixodent. Byrd claims that his dentist made the recommendation to him to counteract the hip pain that he inexplicably saw the dentist about. When asked why the Fixodent was mixed with a grey dye to make it blend in with his road uniform, Byrd comments that "those were the dentist's orders...who am I to question my dentist if he tells me something is going to help me." MLB officials, while disappointed by Byrd's actions, make no official ruling on the incident despite Byrd's ejection from the game, citing a lack of evidence. After the incident, Byrd's effectiveness wanes as he limps to the end of the season, finishing with an ERA of 4.87.

August 21st vs. Kansas City

In a bizarre turn of events, Eric Wedge is rushed to MetroHealth hospital after his face is inexplicably frozen in the middle of one of his facial tics when Jeff Datz slaps the manager on the back after a Kelly Shoppach game-winning HR. While his face doesn't freeze in the same horrifying manner as the two little girls from "One Crazy Summer", it is enough to keep Wedge in the hospital, away from any cameras, while doctors run tests to determine what exactly has happened to Wedge's face. While delivering Wedge's breakfast a few mornings later, MetroHealth employee Jamal Whitney tells Wedge that the same thing happened to his cousin Ray Ray on Christmas morning. "It's real easy to fix", says Jamal before slapping the Tribe skipper on the back, unfreezing Wedge's previously distorted face. Hearing of the news, *The New England Journal of Medicine*
dispatches a staff writer to interview Wedge and head trainer Lonnie Soloff with the intention of attempting to explain the unusual sequence by following the team for a few days. The piece is never written though as the writer, a graduate of UMass, is no longer able to be in the presence of the rest of the Cleveland writers after being asked for the 75th time in two days by Plain Dealer writer Bill Livingston if he knew that Julius Erving was also a UMass graduate.

August 30th vs. Seattle

Casey Blake, settling nicely into his dual role as ½ of the LF platoon and as the super-utility player at 3B and 1B, falls a single short of hitting for the cycle in an 11-4 win over the Mariners. Blake's HR constitutes his 15th of the season as he and Shin-Soo Choo have combined to form a formidable platoon arrangement. The Indians entertain the idea of acquiring former Indian Brian Giles from San

Diego, who is available after clearing revocable waivers, to replace Choo as the LH portion of the LF platoon, but The BLC's resounding success against RHP (posting an OPS near .900 against RHP) and his play while patrolling LF, which earns him the nickname "The Korean Cannon" from the unimaginative beat writers, gives the Tribe pause as they decide to "ride the horses that got them here". Due to the success of Blachoo in LF and Frank the Tank in RF, The Ben Francisco Treat languishes on the bench. Francisco's continued omission from the everyday lineup causes the second-most debated position battle in Cleveland just behind another bonfire of a debate that will be doused in gasoline after Derek Anderson throws 4 INT in a Browns' victory during their first game on September 7th.

September 11th vs. Baltimore

In an unprecedented move, the Orioles take a page out of Little League baseball and ask if any of the Indians can suit up for their team as it seems that a group of 15 Orioles players thought that their 4-game series with Cleveland only consisted of 3 games and decided to charter a boat to go fishing on the Chesapeake Bay on what they thought to be an off-day before the Twins arrived in town. As the MLB checks the official rulebook on what the Orioles can do (delaying the game a full 90 minutes), disaster is averted when the Orioles players, contacted on their boat, arrive to Camden Yards in time to finally take the field for a 18-3 rout at the hands of the Erie Warriors. Ironically, the slip-up by the players coincides with the annual "Free the Birds" demonstration, when frustrated Baltimore fans walk out of a game en masse to protest Peter Angelos' ownership and mismanagement of the franchise.

September 17th vs. Minnesota

Using another sterling performance from Fausto, dropping his season ERA to 2.98, the Indians clinch the AL Central with a win over the Twins coupled with a Tigers' loss. The Tigers' September record slips to 5-10 after being swept in Arlington by the Rangers, putting into jeopardy the Wild Card berth that seemed to be a more formality a few short weeks before. Commenting on Carmona's outing, Michael Cuddyer says that he had just received a text from Torii Hunter after Hunter sees the game highlights on "Baseball Tonight" sending his sympathy and telling Cuddyer which bar to go to in an attempt to "drink Carmona out of your head".

September 24th vs. Boston

In a thrilling battle, the Red Sox edge the Indians 2-0 to ensure themselves of the best record in the AL, ostensibly winning home field advantage for the playoffs. Josh Beckett pitches a complete game shutout for the BoSox, netting him his 23rd win of the season as he outduels C.C. Sabathia, who also goes the distance in a losing effort. The one unearned run allowed by Sabathia pushes his final ERA total to 3.17, dropping him to 4th in the AL, behind Seattle's Erik Bedard, Carmona, and Beckett. After the game, when asked by Boston reporters if the game was a preview of a potential ALCS rematch for the Tribe and Sawx, Beckett replies, "sure, and I'll shut them out every time I face them just like I did today." The Indians contact Beckett's ex-girlfriend Alyssa Milano about potentially throwing out the first pitch in the ALCS, if it should come to that.

September 28th vs. Chicago

Putting a nice bookend to the start of the season, Grady Sizemore swats another HR against the White Sox, running his season total to 35. The 7th inning HR puts the 9-2 game out of reach for the White Sox, who find themselves in 4th place in the AL Central, besting only the Minnesota Twins in the standings and looking up at the (gasp) Kansas City Royals. The victory for the Indians marks the 95th time the team has tallied a W on the season as they prepare themselves for their looming ALDS match-up against the AL Wild Card Toronto Blue Jays.

ALDS Game 3 vs. Toronto

Jake Westbrook goes the distance to clinch a series sweep against the Blue Jays, following the lead of Game 1 starter Fausto Carmona and Game 2 starter C.C. Sabathia as the Tribe starters log an astonishing 25 innings, surrendering only 3 runs in the series. The Indians' hitters, frustrated by the talented Blue Jay rotation as well as the bullpen fortified by the late-season acquisitions of RHP David Weathers and LHP Damaso Marte, are able to cobble together 7 total runs in the three games - enough to sweep the Blue Jays and wait for the winner of the Red Sox-Mariners match-up.

ALCS Game 1 vs. Boston

The Red Sox, fresh off a 3-1 series win in which they finally got to Seattle Cy Young Award winner Erik Bedard in the 9th inning of Game 4 after Bedard strung

together 17 scoreless innings to that point to clinch the series, play host to the rested Tribe. FOX executives are already hyping up the potential Red Sox-Cubs World Series as the Cubs head to Arizona for Game 1 of the NLCS. As the game starts, it becomes apparent that the Indians are still haunted by the ALCS of 2007 watching the Red Sox race out to a 4-1 lead in the 7th. With Josh Beckett cruising, Terry Francona pulls him to play match-up baseball until the lead can be handed to Papelbon. In the bottom of the 8th, Franklin Gutierrez plates two with a triple to RF, tying the game. A wild pitch is uncorked by Manny Delcarmen, allowing Gutz to race home with the go-ahead run as the Indians steal Game 1, thanks to Game 1 starter Carmona and the bullpen snuffing out multiple Red Sox rallies. Beckett stews after the game, saying he could have thrown all nine and given the Red Sox an early series lead.

ALCS Game 4 vs. Boston

With the Indians up 2-1 and Aaron Laffey getting the nod over Paul Byrd for Game 4, the Indians find themselves on the short end of a 5-4 game heading into the bottom of the 9th inning. Leading off the 9th, Casey Blake laces a liner to LF for a single. Grady Sizemore, torching Red Sox pitching to this point, is unable to advance the runner as he strikes out. Franklin Gutierrez lofts a high fly ball to the LF corner, which Manny Ramirez slides for, making the impossible circus catch. Blake, standing on 1st at the time of the catch, is able to barely beat Ramirez's throw to the outfield to stand at second base with two outs. Papelbon runs the count full on Hafner, perhaps with the idea of walking Hafner to get to Martinez, then offers up the payoff pitch, which Hafner blasts into right center. Blake, off with contact, hits third base as Jacoby Ellsbury relays the ball to Dustin Pedroia. As Blake rounds third, waved home emphatically by Joel Skinner, he pulls up slightly grabbing the back of his leg. With Blake slowed, Pedroia's relay to Jason Varitek beats Blake, who attempts to slide under the tag despite what is later confirmed as a strained hamstring that will ostensibly finish his season. Varitek's block of the plate is perfect and Blake is called out as Pedroia rushes to gloat over an obviously injured Blake. In the postgame press conference, Wedge defends Skinner's decision to send Blake to tie the game with Martinez due up next, saying "stop...go...with Skins, he's damned if he does, damned if he doesn't".

ALCS Game 7 vs. Boston

After another win in a game started by Fausto and another loss in a game started

by C.C., the Indians head into Game 7 with Jake Westbrook slated to face Josh Beckett, pitching his third game of the series on short rest. Wedge's lineup card contains a surprise as Ben Francisco is slated to face Beckett in place of the injured Blake and Choo, who would generally face the RHP Beckett. Wedge's inclusion of Francisco in the lineup proves to be providential as the Frisco Kid steps to the plate in the 9th, facing Papelbon with Peralta on second base, with the Tribe down 1-0 in what has been a superb pitcher's duel between Westbrook and Beckett. Francisco strokes a belt-high 2-0 fastball deep into the Boston night over the Green Monster and into Red Sox lore, joining Bucky Bleepin' Dent and Aaron Bleepin' Boone as enemies of Red Sox Nation. The Indians immediately put out requests for clay models of the bronze Ben Francisco statue that will find a home in the plaza. The Red Sox, however, refuse to give up - suddenly getting to Westbrook as their grounders find the holes. With the bases loaded and one out, Wedge finally makes the call to the bullpen to summon Jensen Lewis to face Manny Ramirez, striding from the on-deck circle as Fenway shakes. With the infield in, Manny blasts the first pitch down the LF line, over the Monster...but just foul. Lewis settles down to even the count at 2-2 when Manny laces a shot between SS and 3B. In what many fans will recall as the only time that they see him dive for a ball to his right, Jhonny Peralta snags the ball out of mid-air, races to his feet and fires it to Victor Martinez, who whips the ball to Ryan Garko at first to complete the series-ending double play. In a silent Fenway Park, the Indians celebrate their first berth to the World Series in 11 years and watch the ALCS MVP trophy be awarded to Jake Westbrook.

World Series Game 1 vs. Arizona

Juan Lara throws out the 1st pitch in Game 1 of the World Series, then retires to the Dolan's private box, where he watches his best friend Fausto Carmona twirl 8 innings of shutout baseball, scattering 4 hits while striking out 8 against the young and impatient Diamondbacks' lineup. Despite Carmona only throwing 70 pitches in the 4-0 win, Wedge allows Jensen Lewis to pitch the 9th inning, explaining that he wanted Lewis to get out any extra adrenaline he may have for the Series in a non-save situation. The game is notable not only for the Tribe victory, but also for the FOX announcers' insistence on mentioning the two Championship Series losers, the Red Sox and Cubs, at every possible moment during the contest. While neither overtly mentions the recent column from Bill Simmons, just posted on ESPN.com that the Red Sox and Cubs should play each other despite the results of the ALCS and NLCS because "that's what America wants to see", it is obvious that Joe Buck and Tim McCarver have been instructed by

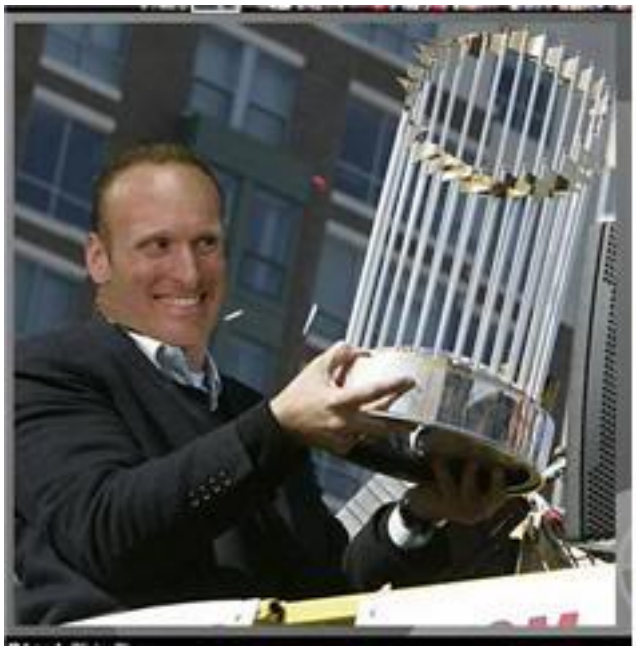
the FOX bigwigs (beside themselves that they have an Arizona-Cleveland match-up when a Red Sox-Cubs battle was so close) to try to keep the nation interested by talking about the Tribe and Snakes as infrequently as possible during the series.

World Series Game 6 vs. Arizona

With Fausto and Westbrook continuing their dominance of the post-season (each is 1-0 in the ALDS, 2-0 in the ALCS, and 1-0 in the WS for a total of 8 Tribe victories) and the Indians nearly stealing Game 5 from Arizona thanks to Paul Byrd contributing five innings of shutout baseball after relieving an obviously nervous Aaron Laffey, but with a late Tribe rally coming up just short, the Indians hand the Game 6 ball to C.C. Sabathia. Sabathia's 2008 postseason has mirrored his 2007 playoff success, which is to say there has been little success at all as he has yet to start a game that the Indians have won since the Tribe took Game 2 of the ALDS against the Blue Jays. Sabathia, squaring off against Arizona's Dan Haren, goes 7 strong innings, finally getting a lead to The Fist of Iron (Rafael Perez), The Fist of Steel (Rafael Betancourt), and The Fist of Fury (Jensen Lewis) who lock down the Diamondback hitters, preserving the trophy-clinching 6-2 lead. Jensen Lewis becomes the latest in a now-suddenly long line of young relievers to record the final out of a World Series game (joining Jenks, Wainwright, Papelbon) as the Indians storm out of the dugout led by Sabathia (in what will be his last moments in an Tribe uniform) to mob Lewis and World Series MVP Grady Sizemore, who squeezed the final out of the season off of the bat of Chris Young in shallow center field.
The Indians and their fans, after 60 years of waiting, celebrate their World Series win.

Celebration on Public Square

Finally, with all of the champagne sprayed and the ghosts exorcised, the World Champion Indians return to Cleveland to mobs of people meeting them at the airport. A celebration and parade kicks off in downtown Cleveland, where this glorious sight can be seen (photoshop courtesy of reader Joshua Whitman):



A boy can dream...can't he?