Love it or hate it, the Coco Crisp debacle is over. Following an offseason of failure on the free agent market, Mark Shapiro finally found the front page of ESPN.com and did so via the trade route.

The best third base prospect in baseball was too much for a stingy organization weak at the corners to pass up. When the dust settled, however, the 2006 Indians as of today are not as good as the 2006 Indians as of a week ago. And… the 2006 Indians as of a week ago were not as good as the 2005 Indians.

So… where should the organization go from here? We all know there is money allocated to the 2006 payroll that has not been spent. Offers to Hoffman, Garciaparra, and Ryan that were not taken indicate somewhere in the neighborhood of $4-5 million still in Larry Dolan's pocket. In addition, the team saved $3-4 million in the Crisp trade.

We also know that the Larry Dolan and Mark Shapiro combo, while careful not to overtip at Bob Evans, is not afraid to overpay on one-year deals. Therefore the rumors of a possible Jake Westbrook for oft-injured Austin Kearns trade while acquiring Jeff Weaver to a one-year deal via free agency fit.

Mark Shapiro should learn from his mistakes following the Robbie Alomar trade. Shapiro, who otherwise has done A+ work as GM of the Tribe, felt obligated to provide Alomar's replacement as soon as possible. He bid with himself and offered Ricky Gutierrez a ridiculous 3-year deal to solve his second base problem within a week.

Shapiro needs to replace Crisp with someone other than Jason Michaels. Shapiro DOES NOT have to do that today. With its found monies, the Tribe should sign Weaver on a one-year deal similar to Kevin Millwood… and wait. Sometime between now and Opening Day, you will get a better offer for Westbrook. And in the slim chance you do not, you have greatly improved your rotation with money you were already going to spend. More importantly, to maintain Shapiro's "payroll flexibility", that money is off the books at the end of 2006.