The holidays have passed and the New Year is upon us as the North Coast's wintry grip starts to squeeze a collective populace that has no football to watch, presides over a basketball team with the NBA's worst record, and is in the midst of a "Rebuild/Reload/Whatever" at the corner of Carnegie and Ontario. While it already seems like months since we've seen the sun and long for the warmer, brighter days of Spring and the promise that it brings with it, it does become difficult to have that optimism translate to Cleveland sports. Making it worse is the tone taken by those who are largely responsible for the coverage of those sports as, just for today's example, the city's last major paper uses 238 words to announce that Jordan Brown has been removed from the 40-man roster, but uses a ¼ of them to drop this snide bit of "commentary" just to editorialize the Tribe's off-season in a largely unjustified setting:

The Indians designated him for assignment to make room for outfielder Austin Kearns, the only big-league free agent the Indians have signed this winter. If that's discouraging, look at it this way. The Indians are paying Kearns $1.3 million. At this time last year, the only big-league free agent they'd signed was Mike Redmond for $850,000. The Tribe is on a spending spree.

Anyone got a towel to dry that last line off…it's dripping with unmerited sarcasm.
And the flames of discontent are unnecessarily fanned higher (while the position that the Indians are approaching the off-season exactly as they should is ignored) as that little aside was in the body of a piece announcing the removal of a 27-year-old player from the 40-man roster, a player that is likely to stay in the organization because (this being the first time he's been designated for assignment) Brown remains in the Tribe organization if he clears waivers, which is likely. Brown being removed is really a non-story (so apparently the PD beat writer took the opportunity to take a swipe at the

organization) as he has fallen far enough on the depth chart at enough positions that he's likely never going to see his way back to Cleveland, unless something goes horribly wrong in the next couple of years…even worse than 2010.

Between the troika a Sizemore, Brantley, and Choo with Kearns in the outfield and Zeke Carrera on the 40-man giving the Indians 5-man depth (and…um, Trevor Crowe…you're next on this DFA thing as Zeke's presence makes you more than expendable), Hafner, LaPorta, Duncan, Weglarz, and Goedert all on the 40-man roster, the LH Brown – who is a man without a position and has yet to display much more than a high BA in the upper levels of the Minors – was simply the odd man out. An argument could be made that Brown should have stuck around ahead of Duncan or Goedert, but I'd take both of those players as RH compliments to Hafner or as insurance against MaTola starting slowly again over keeping Brown on the 40-man.

As I said, the Brown DFA is largely a non-story (despite the fact that I just spent all of that time on it) and with that finally out of the way and me off of my little MSM soapbox, let's get going on a Lazy Sunday that features some of the best Indians' writers out there (and I would encourage you to click on the links provided as I may be utilizing particular assertions or paragraphs from some of these pieces, but all merit a look of their own volition) all somehow hitting on the same topic…well, kind of.

That topic is one that hasn't gone unnoticed here as the amount of pieces written in this space that play off of an "Arms Race" or "Arms Debate" or "Bearing Arms" are nearly too many to count (and please note the new "Stockpiling Arms" in today's title as I may have finally exhausted every pun involving "Arms" in military terms), but that doesn't mean that there isn't new ground to tread upon and lots of tremendous articles to get us there.

Besides, it is Sunday and what else are you going to do this today look up Pat Shurmur's underwhelming resume online again?

Unless you really plan to, let's get it going…
Back in the saddle after the holidays, Anthony Castrovince starts it off by reviewing the returns for CC and Cliff, taking into consideration the timeframe of when the players should be contributing at the MLB level saying that "it's not all that unreasonable to suggest that 2011, three years removed from the trade, is a time when LaPorta and Brantley ought to prove their long-term value" and taking

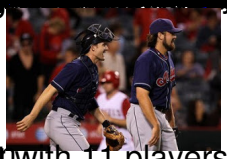
it further that “we’ll know a lot more about the Lee trade after 2011, when we get a full-season look at Carrasco in the rotation and we have more definitive answers on whether Jason Donald is a full-time second baseman and Lou Marson, playing in a backup role behind the dish, can hit in the bigs.”

The timeframe that AC points out is more than valid, particularly considering where the players acquired were in their advanced stages development as (most notably) LaPorta, Brantley, Carrasco, Donald, and Marson all arrived to the Indians playing at AA or above. That being said, AC is absolutely correct in asserting that 2011 is a huge year for the evaluation of these trades and while final judgment on either trade at the end of 2011 will still be too early (remember how long it took a certain Arkansan to turn into Clifton Phifer), the performance of the players acquired in the CC and Lee deals (as well as the Victor deal, as all 3 pitchers acquired from the Red Sox arrived at a level of AA or higher) in the coming year will begin to determine not only whether those deals will be viewed as boons or busts, but more importantly, the performance of the players acquired will determine how close/far away the Indians are from legitimately competing.

While the trades of CC, Lee, and Victor find themselves under scrutiny entering the season, WFNY’s Jon Steiner takes a fascinating look back at what the Indians targeted – specifically in the Lee and Martinez deals – in that they added a number of potential impact arms, something that is not always easy to do on the trade market, as Steiner points out with the help of some fascinating charts and lists.

Steiner defends the arms acquired, calling the manner in which they added players resembling “a buckshot approach” and finishes the piece with a challenge to find that one trade whose return looks better that has happened in recent years that looks better than the arms netted for Cliff and Vic because high-impact, young pitching generally isn’t traded:
The deck is stacked, especially when it comes to pitching, and you get what you can, not what you deserve. Or, to put it another way: where are all these impact pitchers that have been acquired via trade? If the market doesn’t deliver them up, it’s hard to fault the organization for not acquiring them.
So if you think we could have gotten more, you’ll have to show me a team that did get more.

[redacted]



[redacted] with 11 players acquired and 9 of them being pitchers? [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]