I'll admit that when I read the first paragraph of the article on the Indians by Jerry Crasnick of ESPN, I expected another pity party.

"As Boston teams continue to pile up victories every spring, summer, fall and winter, some poor city has to look on in envy and despair. No location plays the role of beleaguered doormat with the reliability of Cleveland -- which only has license to celebrate in movies like 'Major League' or 'Hot Tub Time Machine.'"

If the national media isn't throwing sympathy our way, most of the local media is bashing our franchise with small jabs of displeasure and, despite being the most in-the-know people around the team, quips of ignorance.

I ask you this question as devoted fans of the Cleveland Indians. Whether you agree or disagree about Dolan, or Shapiro, or Acta, or Wedge, or Antonettti, or Hafner, or Sizemore, or Snow Days, or whatever, you clearly love this team. You wouldn't agree or disagree with any of the hot topics if you didn't care.

So answer this question to yourself.

Do you want the sympathy? Or is it better than nothing? Or is it better than the hate? Not to rehash something that Paul Cousineau already covered (most excellently, by the by), there's something that I feel needs to be said, relating to the Crasnick piece.

As fans you have a right to be pissed. As fan-writers and bloggers here on The Cleveland Fan, we share that right, mostly because we are an extension of your voice.

The Beacon Journal, the Plain Dealer, all the local newspapers and Indians.com are not your voice. Some give you outlets to share your voice, but that isn't what they are there for. They are there to inform you.

National outlets like ESPN, likewise are not your voice, not my voice and they do not even hold the same job description as the local media. In a way, some of them are there to inform and judge, but on a larger scale. The minute details get lost in the sand when they inform.

I guess that brings me to this point. This is what the world views Cleveland as. Not just the Indians, not just the sports teams but even the city. As if all the members of our family came down with the flu at the same time. Feel sorry for the sick.

It is pretty easy for Jerry Crasnick to sit there and talk about how the Indians are just in line with the rest of the Cleveland teams and the entire city. He pretty much dubs Cleveland the city of disappointment. How could you not? No LeBron, the Browns fire another coach, the Indians still suck and the city is in bad shape economically (what city isn't though?).

However like a true baseball man in some fashion, Crasnick backs up his baseball points and puts somewhat of a positive spin on the story that makes to tolerable. He sprinkles in a little bit of that hope that we wake up with every morning, helping us find just another little clean spot on our towel that we can use to wipe away smudges. He's helping us find the littler glimmers of hope, even if he's letting a little salt into the wounds at the same time.

The overall point of his story though is tried and true of most. The Cleveland Indians have no money.

In a scary way, Crasnick gets it. I'm not sure Crasnick knows he gets it, but he is conveying the point that some of our local scribes seem to miss. The Cleveland Indians indeed have no money, but strangely, that may be just how they like it.

Well, not so much like it. But if you don't know or understand by now, you probably never will.

Now is not the time to spend. Sure, not having any money is a convenient reason to point to in regards to just $1.3 million being handed out in major league money. But what good does spending any more money do for this particular team?

"If the alternative is overpaying for a 'bridge' guy like Pedro Feliz or Jorge Cantu, the Indians would rather open the season with Jayson Nix or Jason Donald until Chisenhall is ready to make the jump from Triple-A Columbus."

Granted if there was some extra cash lying around, the Indians may decide to use it on a stop-gap player at third base or an arm in the rotation, because they know if that player has success, they could just dump him for more prospect ammunition.

But the name of the game is progress and with so many positions on the diamond in need of progress, that is the focal point of this club. We need progress from Brantley, LaPorta, Carrasco, Masterson and others, not to spend money on alternatives.

The theme of this offseason seems to be pointing at the Indians and laughing at the lack of money they have. That's just within the fan base. If it is not that, it would be the national media looking at the Indians and simply shaking their heads.

Oh, poor you.

You either feel slighted by the lack of recognition or grim by the sympathetic look if you are given the time of day.

Let's step back for a second though. Does this even matter? Who cares what one guy on ESPN thinks? What does it matter if Baseball Tonight spends one minute or six minutes on the Indians? Hey let's do a show where we mention all 30 teams, but the Indians and Royals and Nationals, yeah let's briefly throw in a note and still spend 15 minutes on the Yankees.

I guess in the grand scheme of things, it really matters none.

I will readily admit that I've scoffed at the notion that the media mistreats Cleveland. Not being directly from Cleveland and only liking one of their sports team, I sided with the outsiders despite being closer to the insiders.

But I have grown to recognize the slight disrespect. I think for the most part, it grows into more of a hyperbole than it really is.

This disrespect, this look that the national media and all have towards the Indians and the city of Cleveland; it's cultivated by the insiders. We create it with the constant cries of "there's always next year," only to follow that statement with a breath of laughter that suggests we've said that statement before and have no sincerity what-so-ever.

The local media piles on and makes it far worse than it is. They hyper-activate the hyperbole by piecing together agendas into information. The "Dolan is cheap" song and dance may be performed by some of the fans, but make no mistake, it is the journalists covering the team that write the lyrics, compose the music and produce the choreography.

In that regard, it is refreshing to see someone in the national media get it somewhat right, even if that wasn't his goal and even if he slighted us a little bit. You may get lost on your way there without a map, but if you make it, that's all that counts.

We still have a misconception out there that needs cleared up though.

The Indians winter of disconnection from the Hot Stove has nothing to do with the echoing despair that runs throughout the city with another losing football season and one of the worst teams in the NBA.

The Cleveland Indians are not failing because they are in Cleveland or because they have no money. Well, from a baseball perspective, they are, but there isn't some "ring of horror" around the city's sports teams.

In fact, I'd argue that while the results on the field and in the standings are not present, they aren't failing quite like the other sports teams are.

Yes, you have to be impressed with the direction the Browns are headed with a stable football mind leading the way. But the Indians have had that for a decade now. You may not like Mark Shapiro, but he got the job done once and now his protégé is on the brink of doing it again, as far away as it looks.

There is no despair in Progressive Field because there is hope for a future. There is no spending because, and I will say this again, there is no need to spend.

A simple understanding would do. We don't need the pity or the ignorance. Let us have our hope and excitement as the time nears. Just understand what position our team is in and let us be.

But while we are on the discussion of "the position our team is in," we might as well take another media piece to task.

Yet his time with a shifted focus on the New York Times and an entry in their baseball blog by Tyler Kepner. I've never heard of Mr. Kepner and it would appear as if he covers baseball on

more of a national scale for the Times.

Kepner tries holding the stance that Major League Baseball actually has more playoff parity and a better chance to compete for a championship than the National Football League.

Excuse me?

"But (and you knew that was coming), it's in baseball, not the N.F.L., that teams have a better chance to compete for the championship."

Yeah, that is exactly what he said. He takes a logical approach and one that is supported by statistics, but this is a tired argument that has many points beyond percentages he fails to address.

"In the N.F.L., 24 of 32 teams have made the playoffs over the past five seasons. That's 75 percent. In baseball, 22 of 30 have made the playoffs in the same time span. That's 73.3 percent, despite the fact that the N.F.L. awards 12 playoff spots each season, and baseball – for now, anyway – awards only eight."

How many of those teams in the past five years have made it once or twice?

Out of the 22 teams that have made the playoffs, 12 of them have only gone once in the past five seasons, that's well over half. Four more have only been there twice. The other six have been there at least three times or more.

And in the NFL?

Only six teams have been there just once in the past five seasons, while all other 18 teams

have visited the playoffs at least twice and only one team, Indianapolis has been there all five years.

Sure, those numbers would suggest that there is some parity in baseball if a good portion of their teams are making it to the playoffs with only eight spots available each year.

But to suggest that it is easier to compete for a championship? A lot of baseball teams are running up hill against the wind.

That's where I have a problem. Yes the NFL has four extra playoff spots, but that just makes it easier for any team to compete for a championship. Look at Seattle taking down the defending Super Bowl champion Saints in the first round. They sneaked in by virtue of a horrible division and are in the second round.

The MLB only has eight spots and three out of those five years, six of those have gone to the same teams. There is no parity in that. Oh wow, Cleveland got in one year and so did Arizona. They both went to the League Championship Series; both were on the brink of a World Series.

Where are they both now?

I'm not suggesting we add more playoff spots either, I like things the way they are.

But last year the St. Louis Rams were picking first overall. This year they missed the playoffs by one game. Of course it was the aforementioned horrible division that allowed them to do so, but if you saw the Rams last season and then again this year, you would know how far they've come. That's after a year in which they picked second too.

How about the Tampa Bay Buccaneers? Again, you have a team picking in the top three, contending for a playoff spot this season. The Kansas City Chiefs are credited with two playoff appearances. One from this season and another from the start of the period we are counting.

They've been to hell and back in a matter of five years. That is the definition of parity. A team can deconstruct and reconstruct in a matter of years.

The Indians spent the better part of the 2000's constructing for one playoff run in 2007 and had to deconstruct shortly after.

And you want to call that a reasonable shot at a championship? Once, maybe, yeah.

How many times have the Washington Nationals picked in the top ten these past five seasons?

The answer is four and the lone year they didn't, they still were not in the playoffs.

When will they reasonably compete for a playoff spot? In two or three years, if that? Especially with Philadelphia in their division, who have just assembled a foursome that some contend will obliterate the earth's core? What I'm simply saying is, don't make the argument. I'm not saying things in the MLB need to change to be more like the NFL, I'm just saying don't try and make this argument.

This is the argument that guys like Michael Weiner of the MLB Players Association try to make. They say that the MLB provides a reasonable opportunity for teams to compete for a championship on a consistent basis by evidence of these silly percentages that are in line with the NFL and other leagues.

Then they flaunt a team that has never made it to the World Series and a team that hasn't won a World Series in forever in our faces and say this is even more evidence as to how competitive it is. They are quick to point out that the Yankees have only won the World Series once in the past decade or whatever. Or...whatever.

I say, how come it has taken the Giants so long to win a World Series if it's so damn competitive. How come this is the first time Texas has ever been to a World Series?

You have your Pittsburgh Pirates and your Detroit Lions in every sport, teams that are stuck in motion, spinning their wheels because they go through periods where they have no clue how to hire personnel. For them, those periods are rather extended.

You can't drum up a statistic like this one and expect us to buy into it without any logical reasoning behind it. So what if the MLB sends just as many different teams to the postseason in the past five seasons?

When you send the Yankees and Red Sox every single year, it doesn't do a whole lot for your case of competitiveness. We know that just like the Yankees did the year after they missed, the Red Sox will be right back into the thick of things.

With the additions they were able to make, how could they not?

Our money-starved Indians, well, they couldn't exactly afford Adrian Gonzalez.

It may seem like contradictory to the whining and self-pity that I denied earlier, but it wouldn't be needed if arguments like these were shelved.

I guess you can count on a New York media type to try and justify it all.

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You can follow Nino on Twitter @ TheTribeDaily where he is watching the days drop off the calender under that glorious day in baseball. You can also follow his

blog on Facebook

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