We're doing things little different on the final Monday Morning Rundown of the season. Not your usual weekend's worth of game recaps.

[WHAT A WEEKEND]

Say what you want about the Cleveland Indians organization, but there are a few things that you can always count on them to be and do.

They always not only treat their players with class, they know how to honor them. They know how to throw a celebration. They don't go over the top or do things that seem excessive and they do not do the celebration song and dance often. So when they do decide to do something for someone or something, it always means something.

And whatever they do. It is always fitting. Essentially, they turned this weekend into a celebration of two people who are really special to the franchise and its history. The pre-kickoff to all of it was the Omar Vizquel/**Jim Thome** meeting at home plate to exchange lineup cards, with Friday bringing the festivities.

Friday was Jim Thome's day . Simple as that. And does this guy have a knack for when to celebrate or what? The guy gets a statue in Heritage Park and to celebrate he hits a home run into Heritage Park. The man is unconscious sometimes. He has his biggest hits as if they were scripted in a storybook.

The statue. The statue is perfect. Putting it right where he hit his longest home run. How many guys get a freakin' statue? You gotta be real special to get that.

"That's surreal," he said. "Statues, that's as good as it gets. I'm speechless on that one, I really am."

The whole idea of this being possible did not seem like a reality to Thome, maybe because it wasn't. I mean when you think about it, every time Thome's name came up, it was pretty clear it was just dreaming from the typical fan. "Let's bring back the old days!" type of a mentality. The reality is that Travis Hafner takes up the DH spot and bringing Thome back, it would just clog up the roster and payroll.

But this was the perfect storm of events. Hafner's injury and the Twins falling out of contention. Again, it's storybook...

"I always wondered what it would be like," he said. "I never really knew if it was going to happen, to be honest. I kind of envisioned it, but until it happened, I never really put it into realization."

It happened and it was memorable. That's for sure. The statute will be of Thome and his signature batting pose, which to me is perfect. To get a statue you need to not only have that type of meaning and historic presence with a team, but you have to be iconic. That pose, that pose is iconic in a sense. It's something everyone can look at and say, "Yeah, that's Jim

Thome."

The guy is going into the Hall of Fame and he's going in as an Indian. This final run here solidified his standing with the club and really, it probably opened up Thome's eyes as to how missed he really was. There was genuine pain when the guy left. So much so I think that is why some people decided to boo him whenever he returned. They felt hurt that he left.

The fact that someone ever booed him in Cleveland. Can't understand why.

"The way he carries himself is like everybody else," Alomar said, "like a normal person. He doesn't act like he's above anybody. It shows young players that you don't have to be this different type of guy to be a star player."

Thome is the guy that every player should aspire to be like as a person. He's humble and he's genuinely someone that you can get behind. Why he was ever booed is beyond me. There's people that ended on a bad note that you boo when they return because it's fun and games.

You don't boo Jim Thome. He did not leave for all the wrong reasons.

But enough about that. It was a weekend to cheer Thome and that is exactly what was done. So many people flocked to the park, which was good to hear. It was an occasion that old and young could go to and hopefully there were young people who never got to see Jim Thome in an Indians uniform in person see what so many people did and appreciated a decade ago.

And yesterday, if it was the end, and it likely was, at least for Thome as a member of the Indians. It was one heck of a fitting end . A home run could have been the only thing that was more perfect, but you take what you get.

Like I said, the Indians don't go over the top, so when they do something special, it really is special. If it was Manny Acta's idea, and it sounds like it was, it was brilliant.

Acta pinch-hit for Shelley Duncan and drew a walk. His last at-bat in Progressive Field, the park he hit so many home runs at, and even walked to first base so many times at. Then he stayed in the game.

Thome hasn't picked up a glove since 2007. But on Sunday, he trotted out to third base with Jack Hannahan's glove and played one pitch at the position he started at back in 1991 when he first started. 20 years ago he played third base for the Indians and yesterday, he did it again.

"To get that opportunity to go back out there, it felt really good," Thome said. "Just like old times."

Chisenhall shifted to left field, Thome played third base for one pitch and then exited. What a great idea by Acta. Joe Smith threw an inside strike, not doing what Acta asked him to do, just at the oft chance someone did hit Thome a grounder.

But if he did, so what? Thome says he would have made the play. I mean, he's got Jack Hannahan's glove after all. Gardenhire joked that he wanted Trevor Plouffe to bunt the ball

down the third base line so they could be entertained. I'm sure that would have been fun to see.

But one pitch, one last trot back to the dugout and of course, one last curtain call.

Thome says he hasn't decided on this being it. If it is, he's going out in a way that everyone will remember and everyone will say is perfect. The only other ending that could top this one is a World Series, of course.. But he always has a one-in-thirty chance to do that every year, so you have to wonder if he's still in on that opportunity

It may just be a love of the game thing too. As he said, he loves to play. Right now he has his percentages higher towards coming back and if I had to put money down on it, I think he'll be back. This all feels like it is a retirement celebration, but it isn't. It's a celebration of Jim Thome being a member of the Cleveland Indians organization and there is likely no better opportunity to do it than now.

Thome will likely be back and he'll likely be back in Progressive Field at some point. It probably won't be with the Indians, but with Chief Wahoo on his head and Indians across his chest, you had to do what you did.

And to that end... How about him greeting fans as they enter the ballpark on Sunday? I mean, really? Some players at his stature may say "No, I'm too old for that, I'd rather not be out there." He could say that and the team wouldn't bat an eyelash. But no, he's out there with the rest of his teammates greeting fans and making memories for people.

Thanks to Jim for this ending to the season most of all. It's something joyful rather than somber. When we look back at how this season ended, we won't look back at a faltering team down the stretch that lost out to a hot Tiger team. We'll look back and remember that we celebrated Jim Thome the right way.

On Saturday the Indians also paid tribute to Mike Hegan, who is stepping away from the radio broadcast booth after this season. Hegan has been a long time member of the organization, either doing radio or television work for the club, most recently strictly radio. He's been giving way to Jim Rosenhaus lately in-game for a few innings and even for some full games.

Hegan was a player for the Indians way back when and will remain as an ambassador with the organization, doing special appearances and guest spots.

[PLAYING GAMES]

Not a bad weekend for the Indians in terms of winning either. The Tribe took three out of four, including a sweep of the double header on Saturday and are now a game above .500. Just one win against Detroit will notch them a .500 record, but I think we would all like a series win to end the season on a good note in terms of performance. Cleveland is three games up on the White Sox (sitting at 77-82 and unable to finish at a .500 record) so with one win they also claim sole possession of second.

It would also be good to finish at or above .500 for the simple fact of the AL Central. Wouldn't it look really bad if this division had four teams that finished below the even mark? I think it would. Save some face for the division at least.

It all started on Friday... We talked about the Thome celebration, before the game and during the game of course
. It was Carlos Santana who threw the ultimate party for Thome though by hitting the walkoff shot in the ninth inning. Credit the offense for battling back. It was a battle early, Masterson

didn't have it with the six walks, but the Indians battled the Twins step for step with the offense. Aside from Perez's run in the seventh, the mafia did their job and Chris got himself a win for a solid ninth.

Oh and hey Matt LaPorta, what is he doing here?

The fight wasn't over, the Indians supported **David Huff** big time in the first game of Saturday and that is a start he needed. With Gomez pitching so well, David needed to go out one last time and show he was still an option too. Huff didn't get the win, but he gave up just two runs off eight eights, but no walks. He also struck out seven. He got big hits from Jason Kipnis and the Hawkman.

Oh and hey Matt LaPorta, what is he doing here?

In game two, Mitch Talbot struggled in the opportunity he had to put his name into the rotation race. Who knows if the Indians will attempt to put him back into that race come next season, but he certainly didn't make a good case to be there.

Still the Indians battled back. One again getting some huge hits from **Shelley Duncan**, who has just been on fire this month, as well as Santana and Chisenhall. Done bigger than Duncan's double in t he seventh though that pushed across the tying and go-ahead runs.

When all was said and done, Zach Putnam won the first game and Nick Hagadone won the second, both rookies getting their first major league wins of their career. Congrats to them.

And of course yesterday the Tribe fell 6-4 in extra innings and it spoiled what was ultimately a fantastic weekend. It would have made it 100 percent perfect, but you can't have it all of course. Three our of four is not bad with a team that just shut down half it's roster and has freaking Mitch Talbot getting called up to make one start.

"We had a lot of fun here this year," Indians outfielder Shelley Duncan said. "I think we gave some momentum to the fans for next year. That's what I think came out of it. You could tell that it's like we rebonded with Cleveland.

"They've been missing out on a lot of stuff. A lot of it came back. Sometimes that's the key ingredient in putting together a winning team -- having that home city with you. I think a lot of it will carry over to next year."

We're bringing back Shelley Duncan next year, right? Duncan was at it once again, going 2-for-3 before being lifted for Thome. He hit his 11th home run of the season and knocked in his

22nd RBI of the month. That's 22 of 46, nearly half of his entire total for the season. Just incredible.

Duncan, Santana, and the two youngsters have really turned things up these past few weeks. Jason Donald, who had two hits on Sunday is hitting .354 in the month with a .391 on-base percentage. And Chisenhall who was 1-for-4 with a pair of RBI has a hit in every game he's played in except two going back to September 7th.

The young guys are showing us a lot of promise and making me feel even more better than I already felt about next year. Three more wins? Yes? Go for it.

[RANDOM RUNDOWN]

You really hope **Trevor Crowe** didn't do anything serious on Saturday. In the first game of the double header, Crowe made a dive at a ball and injured his left shoulder, not the same one that cost him most of the season. Crowe is done for the season.

"He was uncomfortable out there, and as soon as he came in, he was checked out by our medical staff," Tribe manager Manny Acta said. "He's getting some tests done right now, but he's gone, like a chicken through the corn."

Like a chicken through the corn? It must be the end of the season...

Crowe isn't the only one done, so is **Grady Sizemore**, who the Indians have just shut down . Nothing is wrong, they just don't want him to get hurt again. Man this team really is snake-bitten from all the injuries. I should probably take the rest of the week off before I get hurt and am rendered useless for 2012.

To get Mitch Talbot on the roster, the Indians moved Shin-Soo Choo to the 60 Day Disabled List and they also transferred Josh Tomlin to make room for **Jerad Head**, who was called up with Crowe and Sizemore done. Speaking of roster moves, I updated all my roster boards, which were nearly a month out of date, and everything is correct.

Would it surprise you if the Indians shut down **Asdrubal Cabrera** too at this point? Cabrera go t hit on the elbow on Friday
and he left the game on Saturday. Cabrera was unsure of his status for today's game, which basically means, he is unsure about even playing in this final series against Detroit.

Very humorous "wrap-up" sort of a post over at Big League Stew on the Indians 2011 season.

At the request of Cole Cook, I've added his blog as a permanent friend link on the side of the blog. Seriously, go read that. And if you haven't read anything he's posted yet, start with The Questionnaire.

According to MLBTR the Indians drew nearly half a million more fans this year than last year. Winning and a month of Jim Thome really didn't help all that much, did it? Still, it's good to see more fans in the seats. The Indians need that.

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You can read more Morning Rundown and other features on Nino's blog, The Tribe Daily .

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