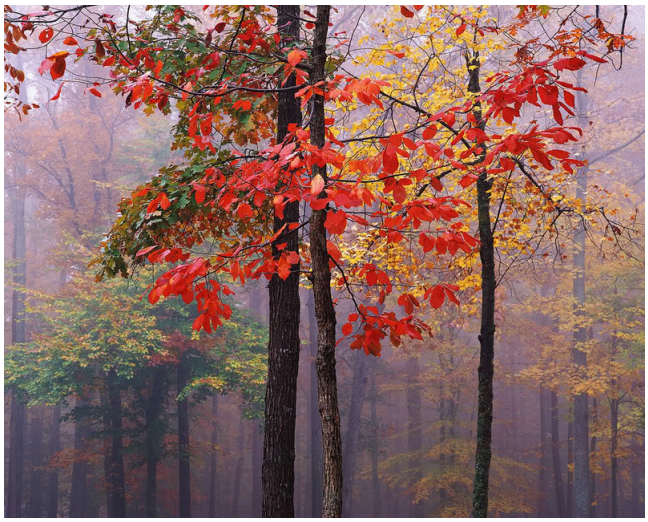
Saturdays in the fall. The feeling you get the day of a big game. Tailgating in the Muni Lot on Sunday mornings. Being out on the golf course with friends, cold beer, and good cigars. A stiff drink after a hard day at the office. These are the finer things in life, and I write about these experiences as well as some of my other favorites in my latest column.



**Saturdays in the fall.**

The fall weather in northeast Ohio is spectacular. Temperatures in the sixties, the leaves changing colors, a brisk bite to the air ... but not cold enough where you need a coat or sweater. And 20 televised college football games on the tube from noon to midnight. I love Saturdays in the fall, and have my own ritual for them.

I wake up at the crack of dawn to get any tasks for the day done and out of the way. Grab some breakfast, take a shower … and get my homemade sauce started around 9 AM, giving it ample time to cook all day, spreading its sweet aroma through every square inch of my house. I then spend the next couple hours finishing up my research of the weeks slate of college football games online, finalizing my wagers for the day … with ESPN Gameday as my backdrop. Just before kickoff, I make my homemade meatballs, which fester in the slow cooking sauce all day when done. By noon, I'm saddled up on my couch with a meatball sandwich and a glass of red wine for the start of the action.

Next comes the bribe of the wife. After reminding her of all the chores I knocked out early that morning, and also that I've been slaving away at our dinner since 9 AM … I think of some things we need for around the house, and urge my wife to head over to the mall for the day. If I'm lucky, she'll take the kids and won't shake me down for my credit card. But if I need to use the plastic as a negotiating chip, I'm not afraid to. You just can't put a price tag on peace and quiet on a Saturday afternoon in the fall.

I then proceed to eat, drink, and watch college football for 12 hours straight. Lather, rinse, repeat next Saturday.

**The feeling you get before a big game.**

From the second you wake up, to the closing moments of the pre-game show … it's all you can think about. There's a big game tonight.

You can't focus on your daily tasks at the workplace, and you take a little extra longer lunch to try and make the day go by faster. You find yourself nervously scanning the internet all day for new stories and conversation about the game. You've played out what needs to happen for your team to win a thousand times in your head. And every conversation you have with every person you come in contact with that day is either about the game, or morphs into a conversation about the game.

It's a nervous excitement that dominates your day. And you love every second of it.

**Waking up, thinking it's Monday morning, then realizing it's Sunday and you can go back to sleep.**

We've all done this. You wake up on a Sunday morning, and are fully convinced it's Monday. Immediately, your thoughts turn to the dreadful start of the work week, and the steps you must undertake as a responsible adult to get out of the bed, into the shower, and eventually out the door.

Then it hits you. It's Sunday, not Monday! I get to go back to sleep! And get nagged all day by my wife instead of my boss!

**Sunday morning tailgating.**

There's nothing quite like tailgating early on a Sunday morning before a NFL game.

There's just something about eating red meat, drinking beer, and barking at other grown men at 7 AM on a Sunday morning in the middle of a parking lot in sub-zero temperatures that makes you feel alive.

Driving to the tailgate, you're leery of the Browns chances. After seven or eight beers and enough trans fat laden food to stop a man half your size dead in his tracks … not only are you convinced the Browns will win, but you are positive it will be by double digits in a dominating performance. And you're willing to verbally dehumanize any fans of the opposing team that have the balls to walk within 40 yards of your tailgate.

**Winning a bet on a last second shot, touchdown, field goal, or home run.**

By themselves, sports are exciting, exhilarating, and pretty much run my life. But gambling on them just heightens the thrill of watching a big game and makes previously unwatchable games enthralling. Nothing on TV? Not excited about the Braves/Marlins game on TBS? Throw $50 on the game and you've got three hours of fun ahead of you.

I love to gamble. And as a gambler, there's no better feeling than winning a wager or a fantasy sports game on a last second shot, touchdown, field goal, or home run. For my money, there's no better non-chemically induced rush in life.

Making the feeling even more enjoyable is when the play that wins you your bet is completely meaningless to the outcome of the actual game itself. My favorite way to win a bet is when you've got a team in a basketball game +8 points, and they hit a meaningless 26 foot three ball with two seconds left to lose 88-81.

**Taking the first sip of your favorite beverage after a hard day at work.**

I'm no alcoholic, but taking the edge off after a tough day at the office is a really nice feeling.

For me, it’s a nice stiff Absolut & soda at a bar or restaurant after work with clients. Maybe an ice cold Dortmunder Gold poured into my favorite frosted mug at home. Within seconds, the stressors of the work day evaporate as you put your feet up and enjoy your favorite beverage after a long day at the job. Driving home, all you could think about was work. It occupied your every thought. Ten minutes later, cocktail in hand, those worries are erased … and for some reason, you’re glazed over, laughing outwardly at commercials that would have annoyed you ten minutes earlier.

**Being out on the golf course early on a weekend morning.**

I love to golf, and genuinely feel sorry for those who don’t play the sport.

Leaving aside the fact that it's a great sport ... it’s also a great opportunity to get together with your friends. And we all know that gets tougher after tying the knot. Have a buddy you haven’t seen for a while and want to catch up with? Spend five hours on the golf course with him. It’s also the ideal place to cut a business deal. Again, spending a day on the golf course with clients or vendors provides the perfect atmosphere and ample time to close on any type of deal, or talk through whatever business dealings may have brought you to the course in the first place.

And for me, there’s no better feeling than being out on the golf course early on a weekend morning. We have gorgeous summer weather here in northeast ohio, and the golf course is such a peaceful and tranquil place. Being out on the course in the morning with a whole round, and the whole day ahead of you is really a great feeling.

**Sitting on the edge of your seat during a classic movie or TV show.**

The term “sitting on the edge of your seat” is used ad nausea when describing anxious moments. But when a movie truly moves me to the edge of my seat, it’s a great feeling.

Think about the first time you saw “Major League”. The opening scene of “Saving Private Ryan”. The final battle scene in the final movie of the “Lord of the Rings” trilogy. When Jodie Foster entered Buffalo Bill’s house at the end of “Silence of the Lambs”.

I could go on and on. You get the picture.

**When the crowd takes over and starts singing the lyrics of a great song at a concert.**

Like most people, I love live music and getting a chance to see my favorite bands perform in person. And to me, one of the coolest feelings in life is when the crowd takes over for the singer and finishes off the lyrics to a great song for them.