This column will be a reader-driven Q&A, where you email me questions and I answer them the best I can. I will answer questions on any and all topics: Cleveland sports as the root (since that is what this site is all about), but also non-Cleveland sports topics, pop culture, health and fitness, food and wine, relationships, career advice... you name it, I'll try to tackle it. You can ask me for advice, my informed opinion, or whatever lies in between.

So who the hell am I? I'm just some derelict Swerb found on the blogosphere, having published material on at least three different sites. He made me an offer I couldn't refuse, and now I'm here.

Is there any hope for the Browns? –Tom C.

No, there is no hope for the Browns. Not now, not ever. The “Factory of Sadness” should have a sign that says “Abandon all hope ye who enter here” on the home locker room.

Overly pessimistic? Maybe. We do have some nice players in Joe Thomas, Josh Cribbs, Joe Haden, Ahtyba Rubin, Phil Taylor, Jabaal Sheard, Alex Mack, and Chris Gocong. Yes, I omitted D'Qwell Jackson, who despite a remarkable and inspiring comeback from his injuries is more a Wali “gets a lot of tackles because they run at him a lot” Ranier type than an impact player who can give us a credible run defense. I also omitted Ward, who clearly improves our run D but I think has issues in coverage. Anyway, Tom Heckert seems to draft well, and with Mike Holmgren committing to a stability of coaching and system, you’d think that given enough time we’d be able to build a contender around this solid nucleus.

And you’d be wrong.

The grim reality of the situation is that the Browns can at best be the third most well managed franchise in the division. Pittsburgh has been a consistent winner for decades because they have a system to groom players into roles in a consistent offensive and defensive philosophy that flat out works. Baltimore (spits on sidewalk as he utters that cursed city's name) has figured this out too, and nobody drafts better than Ozzie Newsome, who I really want to hate now, but I still remember how awesome he was when he was one of the good guys, when we actually had hope. We can imitate their methods all we want, but we're 10 years behind them, and don't have the top to bottom front office talent they do. It's a fact. And this fact won't change until, at the earliest, the Grim Reaper harvests his twin brother Dick Lebeau from the coaching box in the ketchup palace. Throw in the fact that Cincinnati has a ton of talent from seeming centuries of drafting high (talent Cleveland has somehow deftly managed to avoid accumulating), and a wealth of picks from Oakland in that joke of a deal for Carson Palmer, and they'll be formidable for years despite the imbecilic mismanagement of Mike Brown. There just isn't a lot of room for hope.

Let's also remember that curses are real, and this franchise is cursed.

I'm not talking about voodoo shit where I believe some witch doctor in Haiti has a doll of Moses Cleveland and sticks him with pins every year (although, let's be honest, that wouldn't surprise anyone, would it?). Curses perpetuate when people believe in them. To put it another way, losing begets losing. You lose enough, you become a loser. Losing is the norm, the expected result, and no longer a mortal wound from which you seek immediate remedy. The Browns are losers. Josh Cribbs is the only guy that seems to give a fuck that the Browns are losing, and plays like his dreads are on fire every time the ball is in play. This is a curse, which is very real. This curse keeps Cleveland as the butt of jokes and keeps talent from coming here, and keeps talent from staying here. It is hard to break this curse, especially as it has lasted so long.

And what of the "Factory of Sadness" itself? If Cleveland tried to build a more generic soul-sucking stadium, they couldn't. The old Stadium was like the Chiefs' team bus in Slap Shot – it looked mean, and visitors felt unwelcome. That translated to the field. Now, it's like a Ritz Carlton for piss and black wearing douchebags, and there is no energy or life in the place. Ever. Even on the rare occasions the team on the field is actually firing on all cylinders. Okay, both cylinders.

Look, I'll continue to root hard and bleed orange and brown for 16 Sundays a year hoping I'm wrong. But I'm not.

I enjoy a nice bottle of wine, but have to admit I know nothing about it. I'm completely intimidated by the whole process. How can I learn more about wine? Do you have suggestions for good inexpensive bottles? – George M

A wine store can be like an NFL defense. The goal is to avoid it being a Dick Lebeau version, where you get the wine equivalent of a helmet-to-helmet hit from James Harrison (and a similar next day feeling).

Unfortunately, you're Colt McCoy, and you have Pat Shurmur coaching and coordinating you. You enter the store, get the deer-in-headlights look at the wine case, and check down to the beer. Ah, good ol Dortmunder. Nothing wrong with Dortmunder, mind you, but you are going to have to go downfield eventually to win.

While you're doing this, there is a person there who really could help you. He (or she) loves wine, is very knowledgeable, and has taken the job in the wine store wearing that cheap ugly polo shirt just for the opportunity to help you. He loves people, and had dreams of inspiring neophytes like yourself to get to know wine, and love it, which is why he took the job. But sadly the wine store has become his own personal factory of sadness, as he watches customer after customer check down to beer, or just pick up some crap bottle of plonk like Yellowtail or White Zinfandel. He is Josh Cribbs. All he wants is for you to win, so find a way to get him the ball.

Go to a shop and make a rapport with your neighborhood Cribbs. Have him pick things out for you, come back, share your experiences, and eventually you'll become knowledgeable. And Cribbs will be a happier and more satisfied human knowing he's helping you.

Those guys don't judge you. They know you don't know crap, that's why they took the job. Don't pretend to know what you don't know, ask, and you'll be rewarded.

Note this advice applies to the wine store of life as well, but that's a rant for a different question…

Can the Cavs make the playoffs this year? – Eddy R

Can they? Absolutely. There are two teams that are good in the East (Miami, Chicago), four that may be okay (Atlanta, Boston, New York, and Orlando) and then a giant Filet O' Feh sandwich for the final two spots. Some .400 team is going to sneak in the back door, and it could very well be the Cavs.

But good Lord son, why the hell would you want that to happen?

A playoff victory at this time sentences the Cavs to the world of playoff mediocrity until the next time we have to rebuild. We need ping pong balls, and more playmakers, preferably ones that can shoot better than 29.6% from the field (as the Cavs did in their last game). Playoffs now would mask the gaping holes in this franchise between its current state, a state of consistent competitiveness, and the even wider gap to becoming an elite team. Which is the goal: eliteness. I'm tired of the sympathy handjob from Mary Jane Rottencrotch. I want to fuck the prom queen.

Plus, the first round matchup would undoubtedly be against the Heat, and the ESPN spin machine would love nothing better than to pound *that* storyline into the ground. And then Lebron and his band of bitches would treat the Cavs like Ned Beatty in Deliverance in front of a national TV audience, and I most certainly do NOT want to squeal like a pig in front of the free world. Again.

Let's hope the Pacers, Philly, and Milwaukee play well enough so we just miss this year, shed Jamison's carcinogenic contract and defense, add some talent, and then make a run at a 4 seed in 2013.

Controversy again surrounds the BCS. The major bowl ratings are down, and the "national championship" game features a team, Alabama, that many think should not be there. Also, with the scandal at Ohio State, the NCAA's rules on amateurism seem petty and out of date – you can get a DUI, sell drugs, or commit rape, and only be suspended a game or two, but if you sell your own shirt, your school winds up on probation. How would you fix college football? -Anonymous

Honest answer on the NCAA: I wouldn't do a thing.

Universities are a major business, and football is a cash cow for them. They all have one goal in mind: making money. The education of our youth, the advancement of future generations, blah blah blah, that's all bullshit. Football is a fundraiser to support a massive business, and they will do everything they can to protect that revenue.

The NCAA is a cartel that works in the best interests of the Universities. Do they exploit student athletes for gain? You bet they do, just like Nike exploits (okay lawyers, *allegedly exploited in the past*) child labor to make $200 shoes. And the BCS is a sub-cartel within the big cartel of the NCAA that protects the interests of the big moneymakers within the system to guarantee they get their unfair share of the pie.

Whining about it is no good for anyone. The product is enjoyed by the consumers who pump billions into the system (the fans) and the players benefit from a free education, great life for four years, and a ticket to a multi-million dollar a year job. You think Andrew Luck felt so exploited when he turned down the millions he could have made as the #1 pick in the draft to attend school for another year? Nope.

Think of the NCAA like a massive party. Everyone that goes has a rocking time, meets tons of insanely attractive members of the opposite sex who are just looking for a good time, drinks to their heart's content, and, well, add any other sort of debauchery you care to add. But there are rules. Simple rules – use a coaster when drinking. Don't walk on the rugs in your shoes. Stuff like that. And they only play Nickelback, and only serve Natty Light.

You could bitch about the disgusting beer and worse music (which is the BCS bowl system), or you could just get drunk on whatever they're serving and deal with the music because you are at the most epic party ever! And if you get thrown out because you didn't use a coaster, and then complain that Billy Bob puked all over the very same end table, but was only set outside to sober up for a bit… well, you didn't follow the rules. Simple rules. No reason to bitch. And could we really send Billy Bob home in that condition? That would be bad for everyone. Follow the rules and nobody gets hurt.

They’re running a business. You’re not changing it, and they’re not changing it. Respect that, stop bitching, and enjoy the show they put on.