

Dear Reader:

I always view the arrival of each new issue of *Elysian Fields Quarterly* with great excitement. Even though I've previously edited the material, proofread the articles, and examined a preview copy of the issue—there is still a sense of wonder when the finished product is in my hands. And it never fails to amaze me that I play a role in helping some of the best writing on baseball make it into print every year.

Of course, publishing *EFQ* is also a lot of hard work, a lot of long hours, and a lot of lost sleep. I have remained dedicated to this little journal in spite of those sacrifices because of the hope (as I noted in a letter to subscribers four years ago) that “someday a firestorm of excitement about the journal would light up the prairie, that all those pundits and personalities and sportswriters across the land would finally take notice of this wonderful little magazine that’s edgy, entertaining, rebellious, contrarian, nostalgic—and mostly just damn good writing about baseball.”

Unfortunately, none of those goals have been realized, and after eleven years at the helm of *EFQ*, eleven years sacrificing income and sleep, eleven years of giving the journal every spare moment that I’ve had, it’s time for a break—time to reassess where *EFQ* has been and where it might go in the future. Mostly, it’s a time to catch my breath.

As such, *EFQ* will be on hiatus during 2009—what I’d like to think of as a temporary sabbatical from publishing.

It is my hope that by taking the time in the coming year to thoughtfully explore all options for the journal—whether that involves becoming a nonprofit, taking on a business partner, or some other ownership arrangement—I can find a way to resume publishing in 2010 that does not require the stress that keeping *EFQ* alive the past several years has entailed. Part of that process will include determining if *EFQ* still matters to enough people—and whether we can recruit a solid core of “ambassadors” willing to preach the gospel to others. But it also depends on our ability to attract and retain long-term subscribers, something that we have not had much luck with previously.

The truth is that if you combine former subscribers with current ones, we’d count more than seven thousand individuals among our active readers, a number that would easily provide the kind of financial support needed to hire staff, delegate many of the publishing chores, develop a significant presence on the Web, and pursue a comprehensive marketing strategy rather than just an occasional mailing. Of course, no magazine can achieve a hundred percent renewal rate, but if *EFQ* cannot expand on its narrow base to build a cult-like following that includes the same kind of dedication that people give to their baseball teams and political parties, there seems little point in trying to re-start the journal a year from now.

In spite of these challenges, I believe that a sustainable future is possible for *EFQ*, whether I continue to be involved with the journal or not. A number of influential, successful people have been (or remain) readers of the journal, and if there is a desire among these folks to provide the financial backing necessary to make *EFQ* viable, the obstacles of the past several years could disappear overnight. Similarly, if each of our current subscribers reached out to three friends, relatives, or colleagues, our subscriber base would include more than five thousand individuals and institutions—a number that would open up many possibilities for marketing and distribution.

How can you help determine *EFQ*’s future? Check out the options on the next page of this letter. And please contact me at any time with your thoughts, questions, or concerns. Thank you for your support.

(Please send email to info@efqreview.com or mail responses to me care of Elysian Fields Quarterly, P.O. Box 14385, St. Paul, MN 55114.)

Dear Tom:

Yes! I want to see *EFQ* become a sustainable publication! To help you try to return to production in 2010, I pledge to do the following:

Recruit ____ new subscribers to *EFQ* among my baseball friends and colleagues

Become an ambassador for *EFQ* and promote the journal to local media, reviewers, writers I know, bookstores, libraries, my doctors' and dentists' offices, literary baseball fans, and anyone else whom I think would be interested.

Make a one-time contribution of \$ _____

Provide annual support in the amount of \$ _____

(Please do not send money at this time—we are only seeking pledges of support.)

I am a baseball fan and don't want to be without literary writing on baseball in 2009. Please apply the balance of my subscription to an equivalent number of back issues of your choosing.

(To determine how many issues due you on your subscription, please use the following formula: If your address label has an expiration code of 25/4, you are owed one issue; 26/1, two issues, 26/2, three issues, 26/3, four issues; 26/4, five issues; etc.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone No. (____) _____

Email address _____

Sorry, but I don't wish any back issues or to remain "invested" in *EFQ* at this time. Please send me a refund* of the unused portion of my subscription (or issue a refund to my credit card account).

*All refunds will be prorated according to the original subscription price. If a refund is desired, we will do our best to process the request in a timely manner, but your patience while awaiting a refund will be greatly appreciated.

All the best,

Tom Goldstein
Editor & Publisher