

Ring's Reflections

by Bob Ring

Making the Boston Scene

Honoring the name of this column, here are a few reflections from Pat's and my recent trip to Boston:

Scene 1

Here I am surrounded by 37,066 raucous people. The scene is Fenway Park, the oldest major league baseball park still in use and the home of the Boston Red Sox. There are 100th birthday signs all over the stadium. My hand-surgeon son David has treated me to a ballgame, my first ever at Fenway Park. We are seated in left-field box seats, just a short ball toss from the famous 37-foot left-field wall, the Green Monster.

The afternoon weather is perfect. I'm wearing my new Red Sox cap, purchased just before the game while touring around the stadium. We also stopped to thumb through some historical photographs of the ballpark, including some of the Green Monster before it was painted green in 1947.

During the game, foul balls keep landing over and around us but not close enough to catch. The Red Sox didn't win, but what a wonderful experience!

Scene 2

I'm in another crowd, this time about 5,000 people, attending my grandson Clinton's late afternoon high school graduation. The site is Boston's harbor-side Bank of America Pavilion, a huge tent-like structure with permanent seats and three sides open to the warm spring air.

Because my son David and his wife Cinta won an auction, we have first-row seats alongside the school orchestra in front of a huge stage filled with dignitaries and the school chorus. Besides Pat and me, my son David, his wife Cinta, and my granddaughter Laila, our family delegation includes Cinta's mother Mariacinta, and my son the Navy Captain, John, and his wife Cat, who flew up the previous day from Durham, North Carolina after attending another high school graduation.

My grandson is one of 382 students graduating from Boston Latin School, the oldest public school in America that saw its first students in 1635. Unbelievable! The school has been housed in at least six different buildings since 1635, the current school house having opened in 1922.

The graduation ceremony takes two hours, but is very well organized and conducted. That shouldn't be surprising I guess; they've had about 375 years of practice!

We use the unfamiliar "burst mode" on our camera to ensure getting a good photo of Clinton as he crosses the stage to get his diploma. We end up with a photo for each year of the school's existence.

Scene 3

We have trooped a couple of blocks down the street to a high-end waterfront steak house for a celebratory post-graduation dinner. The weather has turned windy and icy, maybe just below 70 degrees. Pat borrows my sport coat for the walk and orders hot coffee immediately after entering the restaurant.

Our table is right next to the bar; it sounds like all 5,000 graduation attendees have followed us to the restaurant.

This an eating place of excesses. My son John orders the house special, a trio of filet mignons. The final excess of the meal is the bill ... Well, maybe it's worth it every 375 years or so.

Scene 4

Pat and I are on our way back to Tucson, changing planes at Midway Airport in Chicago. We are eating dinner in Harry Caray's (deceased famed Cubs broadcaster) Restaurant. We had to climb over people and suitcases to reach our tiny table for two along one wall.

While eating our burgers and drinking our beer, we look at all the Cubs memorabilia filling the walls and display cabinets. For some reason Pat is particularly interested in a baseball jersey with the name "Wood" on it.

Scene 5

Our plane lands in Tucson in the early evening. The pilot reports that the temperature is 105 degrees. It's great to be home!



My son and I took a pre-game tour of Fenway Park. (Courtesy of David Ring)



Boston's Bank of America Pavilion is filled with Boston Latin graduates and their guests. (Courtesy of Bob Ring)



*Pat was fascinated by former Cubs all-star pitcher Kerry Wood's jersey displayed at Harry Caray's Restaurant at Midway Airport in Chicago.
(Courtesy of Pat Wood)*