

A fan for all seasons

BY SARA BURROWS

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Once again, the Chicago Cubs ended their baseball season on a dismal note.

But at Northbrook's Glen Oaks Nursing & Rehabilitation Centre, William Steffy, who at 93 is too young to recall the Cubs' last World Series pennant, remains a steadfast fan. All season, he'd listen to every game he could. "When I go to bed at night, I think about tomorrow, when they're going to play."

"They get along with each other," he says.

"Some teams, the players don't get along because someone wants to be the big shot, you know. But not the Cubs. It's a team effort with them. That's what Lou (Pinella, Cubs manager) says."

"He's a gigantic Cubs fan," says John Corso, assistant administrator at Glen Oaks. "He was sad when they lost, but for him, I think the rule is: 'There's always next year.'"

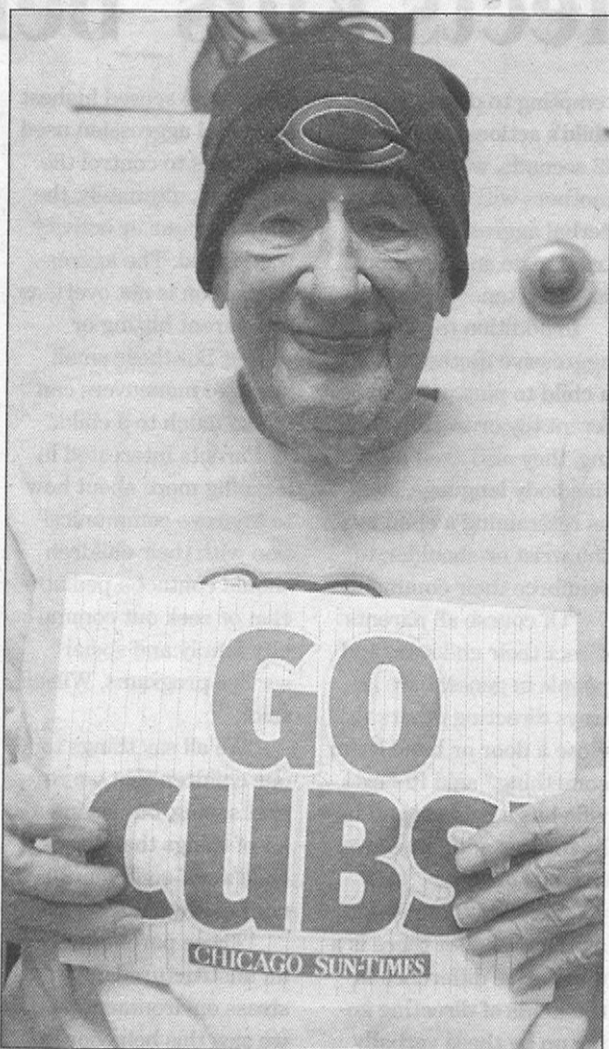
No doubt.

Steffy, has been a Cubs fan for the last 40 years, long enough to develop a rueful philosophy of Cubs baseball. Speaking before the three game loss, Steffy noted that if the Cubs went down again, "it won't be only me who feels badly. It will be hundreds of people. I think Chicago will be a sad city for a long time."

Discovering Cubs

Originally from Pontiac, Mich., Steffy moved to the Chicago area as a young man. It was a nephew, who died recently who turned Steffy into a Cubs fan. "He'd take me out to dinner, then we'd go back to my place and talk about the Cubs," Steffy recalls.

That nephew also took Steffy to the only Wrigley game he ever attended. "It



RUTHIE HAUGE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

William Steffy, 93, has been a Cubs fan for much of his life, also cheers for the Bears.

was a cool day, and I didn't bring a coat, so I couldn't wait for the game to be over. But they did win that day," he recalls.

These days, Steffy often enjoys listening to Cubs and other sports on the radio. He's a fan of Pat Hughes, the Cubs announcer. "He talks about the game so you can see it," says Steffy. "You can see in your mind how they're playing."

Dissenting voice

He also watches games on TV and mentions that there's at least one non-believer in the Cubs in his group.

"He'll holler out, 'Oh, your Cubs ain't so great after all,'" says Steffy. "I'm sitting there and he knows I hear him!"

Generally in good humor, Steffy doesn't mind the ribbing.

Mary Roman, a licensed clinical social work

at Evanston's Mather Pavilion says that kind of banter is good for everyone. "Sports serves as a focus for social interaction," she notes. "It links people."

She added that spectator sports are another good way to keep in touch with the world, especially for folks who can't get out much.

Steffy agrees. All summer he said, he'd go to bed every night and "think about tomorrow when they were going to play again."

But as the season turns to football, Steffy puts his Cubs on hold for another year. He's got other teams to attend to. "I like other sports too. I like hockey and soccer," he says. "And to tell you the truth, I like the Chicago Bears. I like them a lot. I don't play favorites."

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