

Jeff Smith

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August, the St. Louis Cardinals baseball fans repeatedly gave a standing ovation to the visiting San Diego Padres' Tony Gwynn in his quest for 3,000 hits. They cheered just as hard for Gwynn as they did for their own hometown boy, Mark McGwire.

But even then, the truth comes out. McGwire wasn't a St. Louis boy for most of his career. He belonged to the Oakland Athletics.

Just as the Rams do not belong to St. Louis.

In fact, I tend to side with the Tennessee Titans because at least they had the common decency to let the Oilers nickname stay in Houston. I feel for those Houston fans just as much, though. Yes, they were recently awarded an expansion franchise that will debut in 2002, but how hard must it feel to watch a team that you loved, simply move away and three years later land in the Super Bowl.

Maybe I feel sorry for these cities because I know what it's like to root for a team that goes nowhere. And I know how it feels to see your team finally make it to the big stage, even if for only one year. It's vindication for all of those long hours of dedication you put forth to the team when you probably should have been doing homework.

Did St. Louis and Tennessee fans feel that way this past weekend? No.

It was as if they were Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz and simply clicked their ruby red slippers three times and said, "There's no place like the Super Bowl. There's no

place like the Super Bowl. There's no place like the Super Bowl."

And ... poof! They're there.

The only problem is that it was the fans in Los Angeles and Houston who had to suffer through all of the flying monkeys and had to battle off the Wicked Witch of the West.

They were the ones who braved the Land of Oz, but never got to experience "home."

To keep the Oz theme, it was as if Mr. Adams and Ms. Frontiere caused a giant tornado in the city and stole their teams, left them spinning around in oblivion with fans of the many other defunct pro franchises of the past.

Georgia Frontiere is the perfect fit to play the "Wicked Witch." She has married several times, and it was her marriage to Los Angeles Rams' owner Carroll Rosenbloom that led to her current status. She took control of the team in 1979 when Rosenbloom died from drowning, and at the time, it was suspected that maybe she played a part in that.

Of course, all is forgotten, and she is being proclaimed the savior of St. Louis. The Rams motto this week has been taking "Georgia to Georgia!" As in the Georgia Dome in which they will play Sunday.

But it is hard for me to fall for all of this.

When asked after the game if she felt at all bad about the fans in Southern California, Georgia had this to say:

"Oh yes," she told the L.A. Times. "But the fans there can still watch on TV. They were watching on TV and not coming to the games anyway."

That's a low blow, sister. It may

be true, but it doesn't deny the fact that there are still die-hard Rams fans in L.A. that have to sit there and take it.

Houston and L.A. fans are in an unusual situation this week. On one hand, they want to root against the teams that left them in the cold. But on the other, the memories are strong and feelings run deep for their beloved franchises.

I don't think Georgia Frontiere and Bud Adams really care much about the past as they bask in the media blitz.

You know, the more I think about it, Georgia Frontiere deserves to be cast as a different role in the Wizard of Oz for what she did to the true Ram fans.

The Tin Man, because she is truly heartless.

Jeff Smith is a sports reporter for the Oregon Daily Emerald.

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