



STEVE STINSON/RT&WN

Many fans called; 1 wins Series trip

There were two tickets to the sixth and seventh game of the World Series, just two. There were two airplane tickets to New York, just two.

But every baseball fan in Roanoke had a shot at them. So shoot we did.



BRIAN O'NEILL

The WROV baseball trivial contest began Monday at 6 a.m. and didn't end until 5 p.m. Thursday. Every hour, at about 20 minutes past the hour, the disc jockey would ask the 10th caller a baseball question.

After 75 questions in four days, the station had only 20 correct answers to pick from. The winner would be selected in a

lottery late Thursday afternoon.

It had been a long week. The baseball questions weren't simple things like "What is Yogi's last name?" or "What base is between first and third?"

They were questions like: "Who has managed four different clubs to divisional championships?"

Only a baseball fan would know that was Billy Martin.

Mike "Mookie" Bell, operations director for WROV, wanted it that way. He's an old Mets fan from New Jersey. He figured if he couldn't have the station's tickets, he'd make darn sure a baseball fan would get them.

Only baseball junkies need call

That was good. But of course, you had to be lucky, too. Countless baseball junkies called WROV furiously all week, only to get busy signals or

(missing line here)

Number Nine. Try again."

The callers would hang up and say those things managers say when an umpire blows a call.

I know. I was one of those guys.

But then a couple of friends had a run of luck late Wednesday night, each answering a question correctly. I nailed that Billy Martin question a little after 1 a.m. Thursday.

All day Thursday I'd tune in the radio and listen to people miss questions.

My friends and I, each trying to increase our chances to get to the World Series, entered negotiations that would have wearied and embarrassed Reagan and Gorbachev. But a little before 5 p.m., we came to something like a deal.

We pooled our chances. It looked like I had three chances in 20 of sitting in Shea Stadium Saturday night.

Two names other than my own would make me a winner, too. Better odds than anyone, I thought.

Then a guy at WROV reached in a hat and pulled out a piece of paper that said Scott Klein of Salem was the winner.

I'd never heard of the bum.

Mets fan had some divine help

I've since called him. And after hearing his story, I know now that if we had 19 chances and Klein only one, he still would have won. And should have won.

Scott Klein, 32, is a painting contractor. But more importantly, he is the grandson of Harry Klein.

Harry Klein died at 87 on April 15. At his funeral, a Jewish service on Long Island, Scott Klein and his relatives wore Mets caps instead of yarmulkes. Harry Klein was buried with a Mets cap in the casket.

Almost as soon as the funeral ended, the Mets went on an 11-game winning streak. They went on to win 108 games and lose 54 this season, one of the best records in baseball history.

They had trouble in the playoffs against the Astros. But every time they'd get in a jam, Scott Klein said, he'd go off in a corner and pray to his grandfather.

The Mets would come from behind to win.

"It was outrageous," Klein said.

Just before WROV afternoon news anchor Jim Davis reached into the cardboard box to pick a name, "I asked him one more favor. That was for Jim Davis to pick my name."

He did. You can't beat a guy like that. For the heck of it, disc jockey Bruce Jacobson picked a name right after Klein's. It was one of my three.

It's better this way.

Klein believes his grandfather is now "heaven's athletic director." He knows what has happened. And his grandson would not sell his tickets for any amount of money.

"Now I know, I just know, he's going wild up there."

Mr. Klein, your grandson will be flying up to New York today or tomorrow. But you went even further for those tickets. You deserved them.

Enjoy.