

Baseball fanatics hit 5 cities over 4 days

By Jim Andrews

The Pittsburgh Press

Fanatic: A person possessed by an excessive zeal for and uncritical attachment to a cause or position.

It was their fanaticism over baseball that inspired Randy Reynolds and three of his friends to take on a mission many would call inordinate, even irrational.

Reynolds and company visited five stadiums in the last four days, including Three Rivers.

These dedicated fans worship at the altar of Major League baseball.

Reynolds, 30, of Pennsylvania Village, an accountant with Touche Ross and Co.; Carnegie-Mellon University computer science lecturer Jacobo Carrasquel, 31, of Shadyside; and two Philadelphia men, Dave Keim and Steve McKenzie, settled into their box seats at Three Rivers yesterday, marking the end of their auto odyssey.

The group left Pittsburgh at 1 p.m. Thursday, reaching Cleveland Municipal Stadium in time to watch the Indians and the Boston Red Sox take batting practice. After spending the night near Toledo, Ohio, the men headed for Sheffield and Addison streets in Chicago for a 3 p.m. Friday game between the Cubs and the Cincinnati Reds at Wrigley Field.

They had to leave that one a little early in order to make the 90-minute trip up Interstate 94 to Milwaukee County Stadium and a 7:35 p.m. meeting between the Brewers and

Kansas City Royals.

A long drive around Lake Michigan on Saturday ended with a game between the Tigers and Seattle Mariners in Detroit.

The trip was completed when the self-described motley crew cruised back here yesterday for the 1:35 p.m. matchup between the Pirates and Atlanta Braves.

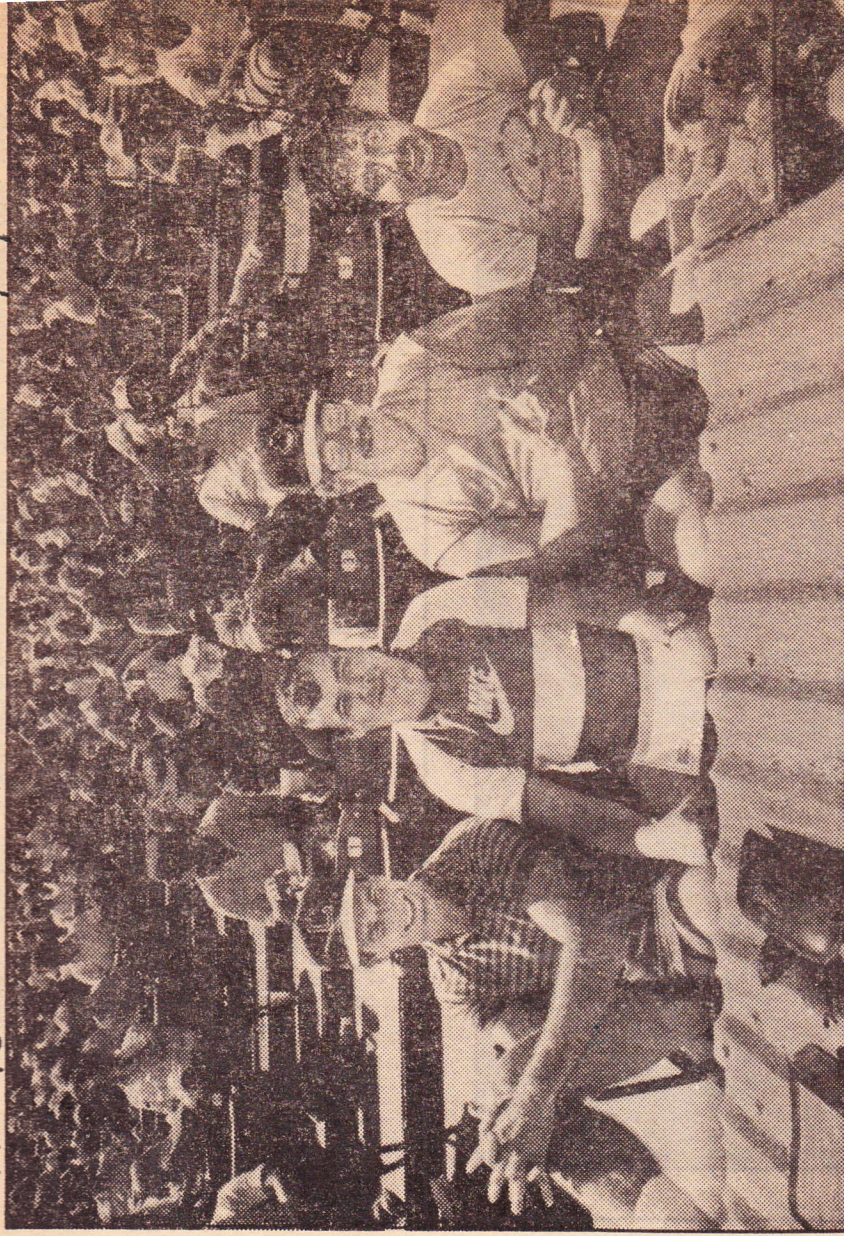
The four ran into one problem, though. After the game in Detroit, they could not find a motel room. And, after trying in vain to find lodging between there and Toledo, simply gave up and drove to Pittsburgh. Here, they stayed in Reynolds' home.

With all that baseball crammed into the long weekend, the stretches between cities were probably moments of quiet reflection, enjoying the Midwest scenery and idle conversation.

"Actually we open the 'Baseball Register' and banter questions back and forth about players' stats," Reynolds said. "All we ever talk about is baseball."

The fans said they went to the games in five different cities not only to watch good baseball, but also to see the different stadiums and meet fans.

"Three Rivers Stadium is the first we've seen that has no real grass," Keim said yesterday afternoon, as he and his companions watched the game. "We don't like it. We like older stadiums. The new ones are all the same, like the ones in Cincinnati and



Finishing their four-day baseball trip at Three Rivers Stadium are Randy Reynolds, left, Steve McKenzie, Dave Keim and Jacobo Carrasquel.

Vince Musi/The Pittsburgh Press

Philadelphia."

Reynolds and Carrasquel, a Venezuelan native, discovered their common interest when introduced by a friend. Reynolds has known Keim and McKenzie since 1973, when, as a teenager in Philadelphia, he joined a group which plays a simulated baseball game in which major leaguers are "drafted" and "managed" through a complete season with their actual performances deciding how

the "team" does.

The four played some of their series while in the car, Reynolds noted. They made a similar trip last year, visiting Toronto, Cleveland and Detroit. Reynolds said he had to talk the other three out of making an unscheduled stop for a minor league game in Buffalo, N.Y.

The pilgrimage to the baseball shrines, said Keim, was a "cheap

vacation."

It cost them \$150 apiece — excluding souvenirs.

The four had no plans to recruit more fans. "The logistics will be very difficult," said Reynolds, adding he and the others started coordinating the trip as soon as the game schedules came out in April.

(Staff writer M.X. Pei contributed to this report.)