



Eric Evaluates

by Eric Blair



There are peaks and troughs in every sport as far as fan numbers go. The same applies to anything that requires attention from others such as newspaper sales, restaurant popularity and of course hits on a webpage.

To that end a message to my fans over on the moderating staff at Sumo Talk: "chin up lads, things will get better." You will one day have more than six hits during a basho. More than three posts a month from non-staff.

It is common knowledge (and if it isn't when it appears here, on the most widely read sumo column in cyberspace, it soon most certainly will be) that the rats are deserting ST in droves, and it is but a bare half dozen posters keeping the AED machine in its box.

"Ghost town," "haunted house," "desert island" and such similar concepts come to mind when my own finger clicks on ST each month to contribute around 10% of the monthly hits and read the three or four posts contributed over the same period. So, in recognition of all the effort those posters go to, thanks for keeping the hope alive that one day there will be something worthy of contributing to sumo-wise. (Yes, in pretending Sumo Forum does not exist I am attempting to make you feel better. SML? Never heard of it!)

As a wise man with no hair once said (nope, this does not mean yourself Number One EB fan from the sheep farm up on't dale, or at least not the "wise" bit) - all long journeys start with single step. You have taken that step. Now it is time to take another, go forth and

demonstrate even the teeniest bit of relevance in the online world of sumo coverage. As such, my suggestions on how to approach and achieve such a momentous undertaking are as follows.

First, eat a hearty breakfast every day. It will set you up for the challenges ahead.

Second, maintain proper bodily cleanliness. As they say, cleanliness is next to Ericness! Brush those pearly whites, shower every month whether you need to or not, and even if you do hail from an unimportant wannabe EU nation the Ruskies were glad to get rid of. Don't forget to wash your hair too (if applicable) and dry it well – apply elastic band if necessary.

Thirdly, learn English. Books such as Eric's Guide to English usage for Advanced Learners, Intermediate Students, Beginners, and Americans are all great resources, as is Eric's Guide to Easy-to-Remember English for Those from Sister Marrying States Still Learning there are Other Nations beyond Canada and Mexico. (Nice large pics and simple text with limited confusing punctuation such as apostrophes, commas etc – these will be added in the sequel). This literary gem is currently being proofread by a target reader in a "community" at an undisclosed island location in Japan, lest our buddies at SML fast approaching the coffin get hold of it and claim it as having been done back in the days when sumo was better – the so-called Rose-Tint Era.

Most importantly though is the

ability to actually know what you are writing about. To this end Eric suggests actually "learning" about the sport. Perhaps even "viewing" a few bouts on the Internet might help. "Watching" live TV coverage of the basho should help you to comprehend the basics. And, just to throw this one out there for consideration, perhaps even going to a basho might be nice.

Of course it would be a tad difficult to achieve these goals all at once, particularly if you live in faraway spots such as Kanagawa and the Kansai region. A little persistence is the key here (which is why I told you to eat your breakfast, if you recall?) but these goals really are not that distant a dream. You can do it ST lads – and Si. Really you can. Fear not the big city and the likelihood that you may be laughed at if you try and talk sumo with more experienced folk such as my five year old. He is forgiving of beginners (although I must admit we do laugh in private at the attempts of in-depth discussion we have seen thus far on the ghost site).

So lads, and fair pony-tailed one, come on! Guts pose neh and anything is possible. Of course, if all this still isn't enough you could always check the "other" forum, the one with a heartbeat and members who have "seen" the sport for tips on access to your bread and butter. And who knows, you may then get "visitors" to your site not there having followed the "date fat Japanese men" google ad you always seem to have on your top page, or as a result of it being lunchtime at the spam generating factories of eastern Europe.