



Wrigley Regulars: Finding Community in the Bleachers

Holly Swyers

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Wrigley Regulars: Finding Community in the Bleachers Holly Swyers

Holly Swyers turns to the bleachers of Chicago's iconic Wrigley Field in this unique exploration of the ways people craft a feeling of community under almost any conditions. "Wrigley Regulars" examines various components of community through the lens of "the regulars," a group of diehard Chicago Cubs fans who loyally populate the bleachers at Wrigley Field. In a time when many communities are perceived as either short-lived or disintegrating, the Wrigley regulars have formed their own thriving set of pregame rituals, ballpark traditions, and social hierarchies. Swyers examines the conditions, practices, and behaviors that help create and sustain the experience of community. At Wrigley Field, these practices can include the simple acts of scorecard-keeping and gathering at the same location before each game or insisting on elaborate rules of ticket distribution and seating arrangements, as well as more symbolic behaviors and superstitions that link the regulars to each other. A bleacher regular herself, Swyers uses a qualitative approach to define community as the ways in which people arrive at an awareness of themselves as a group with a particular relationship to the larger world. The case of the regulars offers a challenge to the claim that community is eroding in an increasingly fragmented and technologically driven culture, suggesting instead that our notions of where we find community and how we express it are changing.

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