Letter to the Editor

“THUNDER-STICKS ARE FUN, BUT . . .”

To the Editor:

I became concerned about the “thunder-sticks” that are given out free at the Anaheim Angels’ baseball games when one of my sons complained of ringing in his ears after a play-off game (his seat was behind home plate). A few days later I went to a game (Angels vs. Twins) and, of course, took our earplugs. During most of the game we were unable to converse over the noise without yelling directly into each other’s ears, and the earplugs greatly helped our comfort level. In our area I noticed one other person with ear protection.

The thunder-sticks are inflatable tubes, 2 feet long and 2? inches wide. When they are hit together, the sound level is 107-110dBspl at a distance of 18 inches. I was interested in what the noise levels would be with 45,000 fans using thunder-sticks. I was unable to get tickets for the World Series, but my son did. Using a Radio Shack digital sound level meter he recorded the following levels as he sat in section 405, seat 17 (3rd base side in left field) at game 6 on October 26, 2002 (measurements are in spl, A scale):

- Four jets fly-over = maxed out the meter at 120dB+
- Cheering and thunder-sticks after big plays = 107dB
- PA system from speakers at the top of the stadium = 104dB
- Sustained averages throughout game = 94-98dB
- Cheering and thunder-sticks on the last out of 9th inning = 114dB

I am an exuberant fan and the thunder-sticks are fun, but I am concerned about the sustained noise levels at the stadium, and the naiveté of the general public. I offered a set of earplugs to a small boy who sat with his fingers in his ears during most of the game, but his grandfather replied, “No, he’ll be just fine!”

I suggest that either thunder-sticks be eliminated or be accompanied with a set of earplugs.

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