Longtime boxing scribe Jeff Jowett turns up at the most unusual fight venues. He is the first to admit that he'd much rather see a fight in a small hotel ballroom than a glittering casino or even at Madison Square Garden. Having been on the scene since the mid-seventies, he has no shortage of exposure to any of them.

"I really started traveling to shows in the late seventies," said the 62-year-old Jowett, who markets electrical meters around the world by day and works as an amateur referee and renowned reporter for Boxing Digest, among other publications, by night.

"I had always gone to fights before then, but the late seventies casino boom really got me going. As exciting as Atlantic City was in the early days, I enjoyed the Embassy Hall in North Bergen (New Jersey) and the CYC (Christian Youth Center) in Scranton (Pennsylvania) even more. Matches that were equally bad turned out good because of the crowd involvement."

Most of the fighters that were Jowett's favorites are long forgotten by all but the most diehard aficionados. He loved guys like Conrad Tooker, Pat Murphy, Georgie Cahill, Philadelphia Ray Staples, and Dave Morine, all of whom went nowhere but into Jowett's well-kept notebooks that signify his decades long love affair with the sweet science.

"Staples fought Joe Frazier and had a thunderous left hook, but he threw it from the floor," said Jowett. "Morine was a classy stylist."

Although they had seen each other at fights over the years, Jowett hooked up with Jeff "KO JO" Obermayer in the summer of 1979. They started traveling together when Frank Gelb ran a summer series in Atlantic City, from which both lived in close proximity. .

"That's when all hell broke loose," joked Obermayer, as they sat next to each other at a recent show in North Bergen, New Jersey. "We were like ying and yang but were kindred spirits. Opposites attract, and we are opposite in every possible way."

"Jack's a sex addict, and I can't get any," jokes Jowett, who Obermayer admiringly refers to as Jowett Boy. (Obermayer also affectionately calls Eric Bottjer, the matchmaker for Don King Promotions, "The Creep," and ShoBox announcer Steve Farhood "Steve Fuh-huud" because of Lebanese heritage).

"I'm hyperactive and he's cool, calm and collected," added Obermayer. "I'm the hare and he's the tortoise. He's the steadying influence, but I'm the brains of the operation."

Whenever the two travel together—which is often—it is the now retired Obermayer who books the room, secures the press credentials, and arranges the travel itinerary, which seems to always include a stop at a classic old diner, which both ying and yang have a passion for. Including a recent trip to Wyoming, the dynamic duo has traveled to 23 states together.

Because Jowett travels so much on his own for business, he often finds himself in out of the way venues in even further out of the way states, He remembers driving for hours from Los Angeles to a tiny show in Chula Vista, California, which he reported on in Boxing Digest. “It was the most obscure place I’ve ever been,” he said. “And I’ve been to some pretty obscure places.”

One night he was on business in Dallas when he heard about a Spanish show being put on in Sundance Square, an outdoor arena a few hours away. He raced to the scene and was able to see the first fight from the parking lot. He remembers that onetime New York sensation Brian Adams was on the show.

Another night he left Chicago for Sharkey’s Billiards in Glendale Heights, Illinois. He took two trains and a bus to get to the venue, not realizing that all the mass transit had stopped running before the show was over. Miraculously, the one person he knew in the arena, matchmaker Jack Cowan, drove him back to the Windy City.

“There were only fours and sixes (round fights) on the show and I still couldn’t get there quick enough,” said Jowett.

He also loves the intimacy of the Avalon Hotel in Erie, Pennsylvania. The one show a year put on there, Jowett says “is a gem.” The York Hall in London, according to Jowett, is akin to the Blue Horizon in Philadelphia.

Other favorites include the Colonie Coliseum in Latham, New York, and the Old Alhambra in Philadelphia. In all of those arenas, as well as the Scranton CYC, Jowett says he saw explosive riots that proceeded the boxing matches.

“The intimacy of the atmosphere, the immediacy of the crowd, the ad-lib type way the shows were put together all contributed to the unpredictability of the crowd,” said Jowett. “It’s not fun when you are in the middle of a riot, but they make for good conversation later.”

A graduate of Gettysburg College, Jowett lives in Collegeville, Pennsylvania. He regularly judges amateur shows at the collegiate and the military level. The purity of those idealistic young fighters is a joy to behold for him.

However, Jowett’s favorite fighter of all time is current trainer George Benton of Philadelphia. “He was the greatest stylist I ever saw,” said Jowett. “He could stand in front of his opponent’s face – be just six inches away – and the guy wouldn’t be able to hit him. Meanwhile, he’d be beating your face at will.”

Jowett is not usually so appreciative of light punchers like Benton, who campaigned from 1949-70 and retired with a record of 61-13-1 (36 KOs). But, Jowett says, although Benton was “a consummate boxer, he would stay flat-footed, in your face, and still hit and not get it. He could block punches, slip punches and counterpunch. Nobody was ever quite that good. George was never dull, and it’s hard to compare him to anyone.”