

# PostCARDS from HOLLYWOOD

A heart-to-heart with entertainment industry stars and insiders who are citizens of Cardinal Nation

Ellie Kemper is used to exciting summers.

Last year saw the release of the Academy Award-nominated film “Bridesmaids,” in which she played sweet and proper Becca.

This summer she planned her dream wedding to writer Michael Koman, whom she met when she did acting bits on “Late Night with Conan O’Brien.” (He was a writer for the show.)

Shortly after the honeymoon, she’ll return to the set of NBC’s “The Office,” where the 32-year-old actress plays cheerful receptionist Erin Hannon. The hit comedy returns for its ninth and potentially final season.

A busy life, for sure, but Kemper remains a loyal fan of the Cardinals. Although born in Kansas City, Kemper considers herself a lifelong St. Louisan since moving to the suburb of Ladue at age 5. Need further proof? She still has her 314 cellphone number (“I won’t change it!” she says), and she talks sports whenever possible with fellow St. Louisan Jon Hamm.

Living in Hollywood these days, Kemper still considers herself a Midwest girl. Naturally, she bonded with fellow St. Louisan Jessica Radloff, who covers entertainment for *Glamour Magazine*, over a spirited discussion on the Cardinals, comedy, and a potential guest-star role for a popular left fielder.

**We met at the People’s Choice Awards in January, when I interviewed you for *Glamour*. We bonded over St. Louis and the Cardinals, and then had a full-on conversation on the red carpet at the Critic’s Choice Movie Awards. I’m calling us the Red Carpet Redbirds.**

**Kemper:** I love that nickname! It was so refreshing to talk sports.

**Do you find it rare to talk baseball with girlfriends out here?**

**Kemper:** None of my girlfriends are



Kemper, who grew up in the St. Louis suburb of Ladue rooting for Ozzie and Albert and Tony, is still all about the Redbirds – even on the red carpet.

interested in baseball. My sister, Carrie (a writer on “The Office”), and I love “A League of Their Own,” but in terms of actual baseball, no. I think with Los Angeles fans, it just doesn’t come up that much.

**When certain people find out how much I love baseball, they say, rather snobbishly, “Why?” Since you’re so good at comedy, what would your comeback be?**

**Kemper:** Here are my three responses: 1) Because I am awesome. 2) Because the

Cardinals are awesome. 3) Game 6 of the 2011 World Series, babe.

**Comedy does come from truth, after all.**

**Kemper:** We are so lucky because St. Louis is such a good baseball town, and it’s not unusual to be such a big fan. In fact, when I’m not keeping up with the Cardinals and I go home, I feel like the outcast because everyone knows what’s going on. Aren’t we so lucky that we’re part of a city that loves its baseball team? It’s such a great feeling.

**You bought your wedding gown in St. Louis for your July 7 wedding, which made us wonder: If you could have invited any Cardinals players, past or present, who would they be and why?**

**Kemper:** It would be so much fun if the Cardinals showed up. (laughs) Albert Pujols is my first choice, because in college my roommate and I had a life-size poster of him in our room. I sort of feel like he’s my friend, so of course I have to invite him. My other pick is Ozzie Smith, just because he’s Ozzie Smith. He’s just a classic, and who wouldn’t want Ozzie Smith with them anywhere? He could do backflips at the party. My wedding would be more than complete.

**“The Office” is full of St. Louis natives, from Jenna Fischer to Phyllis Smith. What was it like during the playoffs last year?**

**Kemper:** Jenna was still on maternity leave, but I remember we were filming the pool party episode – at night, and on location – something that is very rare for us. Phyllis is the biggest fan of all. I love it too, but she takes it to another level. So she was glued to the radio because we didn’t have any TVs around.

She kept going into the van between scenes to listen to the game and became my update. The playoffs were so exciting. Man, woman or child, it doesn’t matter where your allegiances lie, everyone wanted to hear what was going on. (laughs) I remember that week specifically because we were like, “Where is the television? We need to be watching this most exciting game of all time!” Which was (World Series) Game 6.

**But thank goodness for your sister, Carrie, who was recording the game.**

**Kemper:** We got to watch it later that weekend. Carrie wrote the Halloween

episode of “The Office,” so we went to her house that weekend to watch the episode, and then after that, we re-watched Game 6 of the World Series. It was just as exciting even though we knew the outcome. If every game were like that – well, you can’t have the blood pressure for that – but when a game is as exciting and as terrifying and as edge-of-your-seat as that one was, it’s so great.

**Matt Holliday told me last year that he’s a huge fan of “The Office.” What are the odds we could get him for a walk-on role?**

**Kemper:** No! Are you kidding? Oh, my gosh! OK, I need to put on my writer’s cap: I think he should be a romantic foil for someone. He wouldn’t play himself, but he should play a super-hot delivery guy who comes to Dunder-Mifflin and Pam flips out when he shows up. He comes in, and is so clearly the hottest man any of the ladies in “The Office” have seen by far ... this athletic, strong delivery man. He should have a temporary romance with Phyllis’ character. Although technically Phyllis is married, but there’s a connection. We have to make that happen.

**Which Cardinal do you think has the best comedic timing?**

**Kemper:** I just saw a video of David Freese on the Mr. Freeze ride at Six Flags with one of the guys from “Phillips & Company” on Y98 in St. Louis. David was so funny. He’s like, “There’s an art to this. You have to put your hands up, otherwise you’re going to get sick.” I don’t know any of the guys outside of the baseball context, but he just seems like he’d be game for anything and so hilarious.

**Your sister can write it.**

**Kemper:** Yes, exactly. We need someone to script this thing out.



The consummate fan, Kemper was only too eager to gear up for the 2011 run that enabled the club to flag down its 11th world title.

**How did you get hooked as a Cardinals fan?**

**Kemper:** At first it was just the in-the-shell peanuts and hot dogs. What girl could resist? Then, it was the pure excitement of being in a packed stadium with basically 40,000 of my closest St. Louis friends cheering for the same team. Ozzie Smith doing backflips didn’t hurt, either. And I would spend the entire week when I was younger picking out exactly what red outfit I would wear.

**How much Cardinals gear do you have? Do you ever wear it around LA?**

**Kemper:** I have a totally perfect oversized Cardinals T-shirt that I wear as pajamas pretty frequently and I have a great regular-sized Cardinals T-shirt that is fantastic for working out.

### How do you keep up with the Cardinals now?

**Kemper:** Most of my updates come from Phyllis when we are filming. She'll fill me in on anything I missed – in the hair and makeup trailer the next morning.

### How often do you get to Dodger Stadium to see the Cardinals?

**Kemper:** I have to admit that I haven't yet been to Dodger Stadium. It has nothing to do with the Cardinals and everything to do with being a bad driver. 