

SABR BALLPARKS COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

June 2003

c SABR Ballparks Committee 2003

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COORS FIELD BALLPARK BRAINTRUST FEATURED AT SABR BALLPARKS COMMITTEE MEETING, Saturday, July 12, in Denver.

The annual SABR meeting in Denver will feature a special panel to follow our Ballparks Committee Annual Business Meeting. Our committee will gather on Saturday at 10:00 am and attempt to do it work efficiently, and we will then yield to an interesting panel of the following Coors Field officials:

Kevin Kahn, Vice President of Ballparks Operations

Dave Moore, Director of Coors Field Development

Mark Razum, Head Groundskeeper at Coors Field

We thank Paul Parker of the Denver Coordinating Committee for putting this panel together, and he has kindly agreed to moderate. Look for the location in your program at the convention.

Also, there may be some form of "media event" at the site of old Mile High Stadium, now a parking lot for the new football stadium, Invesco Field Mile High Stadium hosted both AAA and major league ball, setting a variety of attendance records in that huge facility. The site is a short distance from the SABR hotels, but it isn't a particularly convenient walk, so watch for a flyer or other announcement at the meeting that will note the date/time of an announcement to mark the site and recall the other sites of professional baseball in the City of Denver.

I look forward to seeing you in the Mile High City with a variety of handouts and materials for both our veteran members and any prospective committee members.

I RESOURCE NOTES

For those of you researching ballparks of the late 1800s and early 1900s, we remind you of the famed Sandborn Insurance maps that cover virtually every community in the nation from the post Civil War era to the WWII period. Drawn in great detail, the Sandborn maps cover streets and buildings in a fashion that provides the most minute details of construction, scale, building materials, etc. Many local libraries carry them and the Library of Congress has close to a complete set. If you can not find that elusive ballpark, try a Sandborn map.

Also, "Historic Panoramic Maps," a booklet of "Museum Quality Reproductions of Historic Maps and Panoramic Photos from the Library of Congress," is available Historic Panoramic Maps, 322 Mall Blvd. #322,

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Monroeville, PA 15146. (412) 291-1198. Try them on line at www.historicpanoramicmaps.com. They have hundreds of selections, including a 1914 photo of Fenway Park during the World Series, a 1913 wide angle shot of the Polo Grounds, and shots of other parks in Detroit, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Boston.

Also, we have the updated (as of 2-12-03) Published Baseball Stadium Books & Booklets, courtesy of Dave Mitchell, twenty-nine pages of every major and minor book, pamphlet, and publication that covers ballparks in some form. A copy will run \$3.50 for printing/postage.

II BOOKS & PUBLICATIONS

The 2003 season has brought a wide selection of books, including many with a full or partial ballparks theme. Here are some and we welcome any review or comment of any length we can print for our committee members:

Tiger Stadium by Irwin Cohen, Arcadia Press, \$19.99, this press puts out a long line of great photo-rich local history books. Irwin wrote a history of Detroit a few years ago.

“Echoes of Sportsman’s Park” by Bud Kane of the St. Louis Browns Historical Society, no price available, write the Society at PO Box 16271, St. Louis, MO 63105. Thanks to Bud for donating a copy of the 20-page booklet to our Committee

Legends by the Lake, the Cleveland Browns at Municipal Stadium, by John Keim, 298 pages with 77 illustrations. May be more football than Indians, but seems to be a good stadium book. Available for \$19.95 in pb and \$35.95 in hc from www.uakron.edu/uapress.

Roadside Baseball: A Guide to Baseball Shrines Across America, by Chris Epting of SABR and our committee. This book has received a tremendous marketing campaign and covers all types of ballparks places, including current and lost ballparks. I would welcome a committee member’s review. Listed at \$19.95 and available everywhere.

The First World Series and Baseball Fanatics, by Roger Abrams, Northeastern University Press, \$26.95, the story of the 1903 Boston-Pittsburgh series with information about the game and the communities that shaped it. Cover photo of long lost Huntington Avenue Grounds, now, a part of Northeastern University. 190 pages with illustrations.

When Boston Won the World Series (1903), by Bob Ryan, another telling of the first AL-NL championship series as we mark its centennial. \$18.95, 192 pages with illustrations.

Take Me Out to the Cubs Game, ed. John Skipper, a selection of essays covering the losing years at Wrigley, with ex-players and managers noting “the difficulties of life at Wrigley Field.” pb \$29.95 by McFarland.

Autumn Glory by Louis Masur, yet another book on the 1903 Series. No indication on its ballparks content, but if anyone has read it, let us know. \$23.00, illustrations, Hill & Wang.

Boston’s Fenway by Anthony M. Sammarco, another Arcadia production on both the city neighborhood, the Fenway and the park that took the name. 128 pgs, pb \$19.99

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Baseball in Columbus and Baseball In Indianapolis, both by Arcadia, both 128 pgs, and both \$19.99. James Tootle authored Columbus and W. C. Madden wrote Indianapolis. 200 illustrations in each.

Baseball and Richmond, 1884-2000 might have some ballparks information. Written by W. Harrison Daniel and Scott P. Mayer; published by McFarland. 184 pgs, pb \$ 24.95

Mud Hen Memories by John O'Brien, Jerry DeBruin, and committee member John Husman. BWD Publishing 244 pgs, \$19.95. More on the 1965-2000 era, but the early days are covered too.

Echoes From Lane Field, by Bill Swank, Turner, 204 pgs, pb \$34.95, This may have some coverage of the famed San Diego ballpark.

The Pawtucket Red Sox, David Borges, Arcadia, "more than 200 rare photos," 128 pages, pb \$19.95. Could have some shots of McCoy Stadium, one of the older minor league parks still in use.

Ballparks, Then and Now, by Eric Enders, is a coffee table style book, more valuable for the classic photos than the text. Several good shots of the early 1900s parks. I got my copy at \$19.95 at a used bookstore. Published by Thunder Bay Press in San Diego, 5880 Oberlin Drive, 92121. 160 pages hc.

It's Hardly Sportin' Stadiums, Neighborhoods, and the New Chicago, by Costas Spirou and Larry Bennett, focuses on the plans for the new Comiskey, the United Center, and lighting at Wrigley Field, with a look toward the "vital aspects of urban development." 224 pgs pb \$28.50 www.niu.edu/univ_press. Northern Illinois University Press, 310 Fifth Street, DeKalb, IL 60115-2854 ph (815) 753-1075 fax (815) 753-1845.

If you see or hear of a new book on ballparks, send me the information. Again, we welcome a short review on any of the above titles or others you discover. Many of the above titles were listed in The Scholar's Bookshelf publication of 110 Melrich Road, Cranbury, NJ 08512, in which SABR members receive a 10% discount.

II EXHIBITS

AUSTIN: If you get to the capital city of Texas, be sure to drop by the Bob Bullock Museum of Texas History and see the new display on Texas baseball history that features a section on Texas League ballparks. "Play Ball" will be open until January 4, 2004. Many Texas SABR members had a hand in the creation of this great display that covers the rich baseball history of the Lone Star State. The museum is located just a few blocks west of I-35 in downtown Austin, near the State Capital. www.thestoryoftexas.com

CINCINNATI: Helen Miller kindly sent us news of a special display of baseball material of her late husband Dick that ran at the city's public library in the spring. "America's Love Affair With Baseball" featured Dick's great collection that covered both the game and the home team Reds.

NEW YORK: The American Folk Art Museum at 45 West 53rd Street (212) 265-1040 opened "The Perfect Game: America Looks at Baseball," a "multi faceted exhibition that illuminates more than 150 years of America's favorite pastime." The exhibit has a wide range of folk art items with a baseball theme and runs until February 1, 2004. www.folkartmuseum.org.

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We welcome any news of any exhibit or display with baseball & ballpark themes.

III PRESERVATION

CHICAGO: This spring the Chicago Landmarks Commission issued a recommendation that landmark status be given to Wrigley Field, effectively preserving the 1914 ballpark for the future. The team cited its need to maintain and change the park as necessary within its historic fabric to remain competitive. A hearing was held in March, and one of those testifying was John Pastier of our committee. The Landmark Commission issued a new recommendation to preserve Wrigley's manual scoreboard, outfield walls and ivy, brick wall, exterior marquee, and the open, uninterrupted sweep of the grandstands and bleachers. The Cubs may approve—or at least not object—to this report. For a copy of the May 3, 2003 story in Preservation Online, see their web site at www.nationaltrust.org/magazine/archives/arch_story050903p.htm. Or ask me for a copy.

SAN DIEGO: Congratulations to local SABR folks in the Ted Williams Chapter and residents who marked the site of the PCL park, Lane Field (1936-1957) with a plaque on March 30. Bob Boynton of our committee notes that the plaque was posted at the NW corner of Broadway & Pacific Hwy, adjacent to where the Lane Field RF corner was located. I have a copy of the marker text from Bob's e-mail.

BIRMINGHAM: Work continues to preserve, restore, and use the famed Rickwood Field of that community, the 1910 ballpark that has hosted so many games in Alabama. The Friends of Rickwood welcome your support and invite you to join: 2100 Morris Avenue, Birmingham, AL 35203 1 800 RICKWOOD. Their next big project is to renovate the home team locker room.

NEW YORK: Congratulations and Thank You to many of our SABR members in NYC for their work in getting Consolidated Edison to save the OF wall from old Washington Park, the pre-Ebbets Field home of the Dodgers and the home of the borough's FL franchise. Our committee lent some support ten to fifteen years ago when this issue came up. A local committee was working on getting a pamphlet printed on the history of this important ballpark. Our thanks to Evelyn Begley of SABR for keeping us informed.

PITTSFIELD: Home of Wahconah Park, and have you been reading about the efforts of former ML pitcher and author Jim Bouton to save this park and baseball for this western Massachusetts community. One of the older, extant minor league parks, and one of the few that "faces the wrong way" re the sun, Wahconah has become a personal cause of Jim Bouton, who has written a book on the subject. Phil Bergen of SABR was working with local folks to get a state historical marker for the site. The site has hosted games for a century; the 1910s ballpark was renovated in full in the 1950s.

BOSTON: Your chairman was not as horrified at the Left Field Monster seats as he expected to be. Indeed, it has infused some new life and cash to Fenway. As Fenway historians know, expansion beyond the LF wall was a Yawkey thought in his early ownership years, but he passed after a lack of city cooperation. Meanwhile, the Save Fenway Park crew continues to do good work and push a plan to maintain and expand the park in place without losing its soul. The Sox restored the LF scoreboard to its original pre-1976 length too. And ballpark doyen, Janet Marie Smith, was brought on board to help the Sox in their Fenway plans. The Save Fenway Park newsletter is worth the membership; contact them at PO Box 873, Boston, MA 02103 (617) 367-3771 www.SaveFenwayPark.org.

BOSTON: and let us not forget the NL cousins cross town, as it is the 50th anniversary of their leaving town (well, they were playing in Florida at spring training in March of 1953 when the Milwaukee announcement came) The Boston Braves Historical Society (BBHA) PO Box 5668, Marlborough, MA 01752, has a great

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newsletter that covers all things Boston Braves, an interesting list of materials for sale, and an annual reunion to mark the team, the park, and their contributions to the Boston Baseball Scene. A new postcard by the BBHA marks the 55th anniversary of the 1948 World Series. If you get to Boston for the first time, be sure to see the plaque our Committee, SABR, the New England Sports Museum, and Boston University created at the park site, now BU Nickerson Field.

DETROIT: Tiger Stadium sits and rots, or so says Mudville Magazine, the Voice of Baseball, in its May 25, 2003 on-line issue. Plans have been hatched to turn the venerable stadium into everything from housing to a museum to a trade show center. Some Tiger fantasy camp games have been played on site as well as a few exhibition games with area college talent. Peter C. Riley, according to Mudville, has been trying to get an independent league team for Tiger Stadium, but has received little enthusiasm or cooperation from the City of Detroit or the Tigers. If you can't get this piece at mudvillemagazine.com, send \$1.00 for copying/postage and I will send it to you.

Preservation of old parks and well as markers for the remains or sites of old ballparks is a priority for the Committee. If you have a project or suggestion, contact us. We evaluate each project on its merits and lend support if all parties (local group, individual, & property owner) can agree to the ways/means of a marker. In most cases, a simple marker does not affect the property owner's rights.

IV BALLPARKS STUFF

The tangible property of ballparks seems to increase in value every year. After all, no one is making any more Polo Grounds seats (at least, we hope not).

1. "George Tahan's mini-seats do double duty," SCD, by Paul Ferrante, 2 pgs 2003 issue, story of fellow who makes mini-versions of classic stadia seats.
2. The Phillies plan to auction off a wide range of items from Veterans Stadium after the team finishes its last season. Collectibles will include seats, lockers, signs, dugout benches, and pieces of the artificial turf. Will the Vet attract collectors? Stay tuned.

V RESEARCH REQUESTS

We welcome research requests from both SABR members and anybody else. If our committee files don't have something of assistance, we post the request in the newsletter while referring the person to others. A few of these requests may be a bit dated, but it is helpful to know what people are thinking and seeking.

Joseph McCauley is writing a new book on Ebbets Field. E-mail paulmcall@comcast.net

Ross Sackett of 468 Harvard St, Fontana, WI 31235-1414, notes that WPA/CCC parks would be a great research project. Contact him if you have any suggestions

Rex Hamann, 14201 Crosstown Blvd., NW, Andover, MN 55304, is putting together a major profile of Ballparks of the AA for his American Association Almanac newsletter. E-mail pureout@msn.com. He is especially interested in information for Indianapolis, Louisville, & Kansas City. He needs specific data on the ballparks of those cities, including location, construction, wall heights, sight lines, sound system, lighting, etc.

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Ray Hawkins of 1428 Oakwood Road, Coatesville, PA 19320 hawkinsray@yahoo.com, was seeking information of Philadelphia's pre-Shibe parks. We sent him a big package, but if you have some thoughts, contact him.

Clark Spencer of the Miami Herald (954) 224-0407 cspencer@herald.com was researching Mose Solomon of the Class C Hutchinson, KS team of the Southwestern League of 1923. He was seeking details and a photo of Gano Park of that city, which was probably torn down in the 1930s.

Scott Hannig of Pastimes Scoreboards manufactures miniature replicas of old baseball scoreboards, "working clock and all." He has a web site: www.pastimesscoreboards.com. He seeks information on the scoreboards of the classic MLB ballparks for future projects, including a new book. His e-mail is PTSB101@aol.com.

Martyn Buisman of the Netherlands was researching Candlestick Park for a project. We sent him as package of general materials, but he might be intrigued with any personal stories about that interesting ballpark. E-mail him at martyn88@yahoo.com.

Seeking photos of Sulphur Dell. E-mail Fred at bluetowes@comcast.net

Dustin Carmichael at Kansas State University (316) 250-3157 was seeking data for a project to predict fan attendance over recent years. His e-mail may be more current at dkc7621@ksu.edu.

Jeff McCord of Becker & Mayer Books e-mailed us recently and announced that they are "producing a book on the histories of baseball stadiums." He was especially interested in the blueprints of the original parks. We sent him to both Osborn and that New York company that bought the collection. If you have anything additional to share, contact him at jeffmccord@beckermayer.com.

Scott Kent was researching the locations of all pre-1900 NL parks of defunct teams like Hartford, CT. We sent him a few references; if you have information, e-mail him at snvinct@msn.com (860) 223-2744

John Holway seeks a photo of Griffith Stadium, looking from the grandstand to the OF to illustrate a narrative of Ted Williams and a home run over the CF fence in 1960. jholway@starpower.net.

Paul Wendt was researching the Worcester, MA ballpark of the 1870s and 1880s. We have a two-page summary from Bill Ballou. If you want a copy, let me know. If you have additional information, contact Paul at pgw@theworld.com.

Eric and Wendy Pastore have an ambitious project: "to catch every single standing professional park in digital photography in the world." Their web site is www.digitalballparks.com; their e-mail is admin@digitalballparks.com. Yahoo rated their web page as one of the twenty best in the world. They are hunting every ballpark in creation that hosted a professional team, and they make trips to catch these parks before they are lost. For example, they took a special trip last winter to catch Knoxville's Bill Meyer Stadium before it was torn down. So, if you have some suggested parks that they need to "capture," let them know. And check out the web site.

Tim Gay was a new member of SABR in February and he was researching Dunn Field in Cleveland relating to his project on Tris Speaker. If you have anything to contribute, contact him at Viennatriplea@aol.com

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Tim Wiles at the Baseball Hall of Fame asked about hitters' backgrounds, as to when they became mandatory or universal in big league parks. He noted the Reds painting a CF wall black at their park in 1895. Any thoughts? E-mail at twiles@baseballhalloffame.org and let us know if you do.

Lyle Spatz of SABR says that when Larry McPhail took over the Yankees in 1945, he painted the seats pea green. Lyle wants to know what color they were previously. lspatz@att.net. Let us know too.

Raymond Fullerton at e-mail of bartayne@netscape.net had a graduate school writing assignment, and he chose to answer this question: "what impact have the retro ballparks in Arlington, Baltimore, and Cleveland had on attendance vs. the respective teams' former stadiums.

Rudy Marzano at 1233 Woods End Road, Point Pleasant, NJ 08742, is researching OF walls and their padding for a book he is writing on ballparks. (732) 899-9352.

Thomas Wojtkun was researching Cleveland parks before Municipal. We sent him the usual information from the standard sources. If you have any thoughts, reach him at 1080 Rosalie Avenue, Lakewood, OH 44107 tmwojtkun@cox.net

John Holway says thank you to our Committee and B. V. Powers who assisted him with his question on the Comiskey Park roof from our last newsletter: 74 feet.

Harry Swanson of 275 Springdale Drive, Ronkonkoma, NY 11779 HS34578@aol.com seeks photos of the construction of Yankee Stadium of the early 1920s. He is also interested in photos of the various additions/reconstructions of 1928, 1937, 1945, and 1975.

Len Martin of Point Four Ltd., 920 William Pitt Way, Pittsburgh, PA 15238, seeks blue prints of Yankee Stadium for their next project. They did model books of Forbes and Fenway.

Andy Giegerich of the Portland Tribune was doing a story in February regarding the upgrading of an AAA ballpark to MLB status. We sent him some material on Omaha's Rosenblatt Stadium as an example of a park that has been continually improved and enlarged in recent years. Portland has been mentioned as a future MLB site for one of the under-performing teams.

A Japanese production company in NYC called months ago for information on Yankee Stadium. We sent some material and advised them over the phone. No word as to what happened.

VI HOW BIG IS YOUR MLB PARK

With the new parks of recent years, the trend is toward smaller parks. Here is how they rank, largest to smallest in both leagues.

American League/2003 Ballpark Capacity

New York	57,478	Oakland	43,662	League Average in 2003: 45,661
Toronto	50,516	Cleveland	43,368	League Average in 1975: 49,177
Texas	49,115	Kansas City	40,785	
Minnesota	48,678	Detroit	40,120	Difference: -3516 or 7.15%
Baltimore	48,190	Boston	33,991	
Seattle	47,447			1975 levels figured with Milwaukee

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Chicago 47,098
Anaheim 45,030
Tampa Bay 43,772

Sources: The Ballparks and AL/NL Box Scores

National League Ballpark Capacity

San Diego 66,307
Philadelphia 62,418
New York 56,749
Los Angeles 56,000
Colorado 50,449
St. Louis 50,354
Atlanta 50,091
Arizona 49,033
Montreal 46,338
Cincinnati 42,263
Milwaukee 41,900
San Francisco 41,503
Houston 45,011
Chicago 39,241
Pittsburgh 37,898
Florida 36,331

League Average in 2003: 47,989

League Average in 1975: 49,195

Difference: -1196 or 2.4%

Note: 2003 does not include San Juan (18,200)

Source: The Ballparks and AL & NL Box Scores

MLB Average Capacity: 46,902 (30 teams) in 2003

MLB Average Capacity: 49,186 (24 teams) in 1975

Difference: -2284 or 4.6%

Of course, several parks have artificial capacities as they restrict whole sections and rarely use them: Florida and Oakland are two good examples. Still, the trend is for smaller parks, and Philadelphia will shrink from 62,418 to a little over 41,000 in 2004. San Diego will also downsize, and it is doubtful that new parks in New York, St. Louis, or Minnesota would ever bust 50,000.

Just a thought: if every park sold out every game this year (and if Montreal were playing all of its games in Canada), then MLB would draw 113,973,075 people, not including standing room.

VII ATTENDANCE NOTES

Scanning the box scores for the April-June period of the season, I caught 39 posted crowds under 10,000 and these teams had them: Montreal and Tampa Bay tied at 13; Florida at 6; Detroit had 2; and one each for Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Chicago (AL), Oakland, & Kansas City. The smallest posted crowd seemed to be San Diego at Montreal on May 11 with 5111 hardy souls present.

- * An April 12 crowd of 25,197 was the smallest in the 642-game history of Coors Field
- * The first ten games at Milwaukee saw a 30% decline from 2002
- * MLB attendance for April was down 4.9% from 26,217/game to 24,920. It was cold and wet in the East.
- * April 3 was a bad day: Comerica's worst turnout of 8,862 and Camden Yards worst at 18,470.
- * Ghost of Tiger Stadium: Comerica pulled 31,281 avg in 2000, 24,016 in 2001, and 18,795 in 2002.
- * MLB attendance for first third of season down 4.6%; 2002 was down 6.3% from 2001
- * Minor League ball hot in April: up 5.3% over 2002. 2003 game avg of 3358.
- * Turner Field season attendance has declined for five straight years. 3.4 million to 2.6 million

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* Rockies attendance has fallen six straight years: 1997-2002 from 3.89 million to 2.74 million.

* Minor League ball's 176 teams drew 38,639,142 in 2002, third best after 1949 and 2001

* Twenty of thirty MLB teams had attendance drops in 2002 from 2001.

* Angels match 1983 record by making 1 million at gate in 29th home date

VIII MISCELLANEOUS MAJOR LEAGUE NOTES AND ARTICLES

1. 113 year old Cubs fan recalls 1908 Championship, but doubts team will win another, St. Louis Post Dispatch, 2-9-03. (2 pgs)
2. Two fans criss-cross country over nearly five years and catch games at every ballpark, football stadium, basketball & hockey arena, SI, 1-27-03 (1 pg) 121 teams/102 venues/49 cities/4 sports
3. Fantasy Baseball ranks the top five hitters parks: Coors, Kauffman, Minute Maid, Bank One, & The Ballpark in Arlington; the top five pitchers parks: Dodger Stadium, Pac Bell, Qualcomm, Safeco, & Comerica. TSN 3-3-03
4. "New parks, old problems" in TSN, 2-10-03 finally notes that new facilities do not guarantee success on field. (1 pg) See Detroit, Milwaukee, and Pittsburgh!
5. "Ballparks Let Fans Order Food From Seats by Using Cell Phone," WSJ, 6-4-03 (3 pgs)
6. Who caught the wrong caption of the famed 1959 Al Smith beer bath photo at Comiskey in a 4-7-03 SI article. They put him in "LA!" Your chairman pointed this out in a letter that was not published.
7. So, where do the Expos play in 2004; now it seems they will stay in a split home system, but Portland wants them, and efforts continue in D. C. and No. Virginia
8. Tigers claim longest stretch at spring training site: Lakeland, FL, since 1934, except for 3 WWII years.
9. Arizona Light Rail system to serve Bank One Ballpark, Civil Engineering, Jan/03 (1 pg)
10. USA Today Sports Weekly writer Paul White played "free agent" to find the ultimate baseball experience and the six finalists were: Fenway, Wrigley, Jacobs, Coors, Busch, and Pac Bell.
11. The Rockies have scored at least one run in 296 games at Coors, a record. Elias Sports Bureau says the old record was the Boston Braves in 1892-96 at the South End Grounds. USA Spts Wkly, April 23, 2003
12. Ageless Jesse Orosco has pitched in 39 MLB parks; the record is 43 by Mike Jackson.
13. Nine foot statue of Warren Spahn to be placed outside Turner Field. USA Spts Wkly, Jan 29, 2003
14. Guaranteed foul ball in Milwaukee with purchase of \$36 ticket you will get a ball used in practice or during the game. USA Spts Wkly, June 4, 2003
15. Surprise: visiting pitchers have highest ERA at Coors at 7.04; The Ballpark in Arlington is second at 6.40 and SkyDome is posting a site batting avg. of .297 and a total ERA of 6.04, second in the majors TSN 6-9-03

VIII MINOR LEAGUE NOTES

- Another minor park in Dallas/Fort Worth; this one in Frisco opened this season. Dallas Morning News, 3-31-03 (2 pgs) Also in the area, the new LeGrave Field in Fort Worth, built on the site of the old park, has restored the original dugouts and fans can see a game from them!
- Newsweek and the NY Times have done stories on Jim Bouton and his efforts to save Wahconah
- Park in Pittsfield, MA. 5-5-03 and 4-10-03 3 pgs total.

IX NEWS OF THE PAST

- "Griffith Stadium gaining popularity," SCD, by Paul Ferrante, 2003 (2 pgs)
- "The Odessa Oilers," (Texas) story on West Texas League city in the 50s by Richard Crimmins, Permian Basin Historical Annual, December/01 9 pgs.

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X MAJOR LEAGUE BALLPARK NEWS NOTES

San Juan For this season, Hiram Bithorn Stadium will be the smallest capacity for the Expos at 18,000. It also is the coziest with OF foul lines at 315/318 and the power alleys at 338 or 360 (USA Today Sports Weekly has cited two numbers). The 40-year old facility had \$2.5 million in work in preparation for this year's games. Shades of the team's past as their old Jarry Park barely sat 28,000.

San Diego Controversy still follows this downtown ballpark project as the public park beyond the OF seems to be shrinking from its original 3 acres to just half that as of April/2003. One old building (Western Metal Building) is incorporated into the OF section while a second (Showley Brothers Candy Factory) is being moved 200 feet away from the park site.. Scheduled for April/2004 opening, it will be called Petco Park, after the national chain of pet supply stores (insert your joke here). Visit the Padres web site at PADRES.COM for more details. Up to twenty pages of local magazine/newspaper pieces available. Expected capacity at 46,000.

Houston From energy to orange juice... the place is now called Minute Maid Park. The facility received an Award of Merit for "Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement/2001." A piece in the LA Times last year documented substantial downtown development and increased night life thanks to the park, noting that the city's core used to empty out at 5 pm and stay dead. Opponents of the public money for the park note that it is a "zero sum" game of transferred economic activity. Houston's Lance Berkman hit the longest home run at Minute Maid on June 14 at 464 feet. Up to eight pages of misc. clippings.

Philadelphia The new park will be called Citizens Bank Park. Opening Day is scheduled for April/2004. The new OF dimensions will mirror the Vet, but a series of twists and turns/angles will break up the Vet's symmetrical feel. From LF the distances run 329, 369, 385, 381, 409, 401, 398, 369, and 330 in RF. A series of OF walls that vary from 6 feet to 19 feet high vary the scene while the Vet's fences are all 12 feet. Not too many folks are shedding tears at its impending demise. The new football stadium Lincoln Financial Field, will open to the south of the ballpark.

Denver An advocacy group sued the Colorado Rockies on January 6, noting that the wheelchair accessible seats at Coors Field cost more than seats with similar views.

Atlanta Southern Living one-page profile notes Turner Field museum that outlines 131 years of Braves history.

Milwaukee "Little Miller Park," the small, kid-scale ballpark built outside the major league facility, was constructed by the same firm that built County Stadium in the 1950s, Hunzinger Construction. USA BB Weekly, August 14, 2002 (1 pg)

Chicago Goodbye Comiskey...the naming rights were sold to US Cellular. The Illinois State Sports Authority grabbed \$68 million over 20 years. Last summer the White Sox sponsored a White Sox Sleepover whereby fans for \$250 could spend the night at Comiskey. Fans watched a Saturday night game, stayed over, and caught a game on Sunday. SI 6-17-02 (1 pg). Remember John Candy having a night picnic at the original Comiskey Park in "Only the Lonely?"

Toronto The SARS scare did not help the Blue Jays slumping attendance at SkyDome, but 48,907 folks attended an April 29 game, lured by \$1 ticket prices. The mayor of Toronto issued a ringing endorsement for the team by saying, "I am going to the Jays game, although I don't believe they are going very far."

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Seattle Last year the Mariners responded to complaints about the hitting background beyond the CF wall by planting twenty-six cedars in front of that region. Then, they took them out and painted the area a deep green. Anyone know what it looks like now?

San Francisco Shades of old Comiskey, the Giants built a special RF screened section in which fans could watch three innings at a time for free, even during the 2002 World Series. AP story of 10-24-02 notes the other “free seats” at current/past MLB parks, including Coogan’s Bluff, subway platforms, Shibe Park and Wrigley’s nearby homes. (1 pg)

Boston The new seats on top of the Left Field wall have created quite a media blitz. We have articles from the NY Times, Boston Globe, SI, CSM, TSN, and more. Also, we have the three-part series in SCD by Paul Ferrante on “The Future of Fenway.” Twelve pages in all.

Pittsburgh The new PNC park may be financially positive and aesthetically pleasing, but it hasn’t helped the team on the field. The 2001 team went 62-100 and the 2002 club climbed to 72-90, and as of late June the 2003 team was 33-44. In keeping with a trend to memorialize famed players with sculpture, a twelve-foot bronze statue of Willie Stargell was placed in front of the new park. Who has a list of the parks and players before them in statues?

Cincinnati USA Today Spts Weekly had a short note about three fellows (91, 93, & 95) who had been watching Cincinnati baseball since the days of Redland Field. They liked the Great American Ballpark. Local architects and architecture teachers weren’t as positive, citing its “buffet style” approach to putting the place together. Our committee was cited too in a local piece. Early returns indicated that it could be a hitters’ park, with balls flying out to right-center field. Dimensions are from Left to Right: 328, 379, 404, 370, & 325. The “Gap,” an opening along the third base side, allows the fans a view of downtown Cincinnati and outsiders a view of the game from Sycamore Street. The former park, Riverfront Stadium, was brought down with 1400 pounds of explosives in 37 seconds on Sunday, December 29. We have a two-page review of the new place by Jack Carlson, who also sent much material for our files.

Late notice: Ron Selter invites Denver attendees to catch his presentation on “Ballparks Dimensions and Batting” in Room A-B on Thursday of the convention weekend at 1:00 pm.

CLOSING REMARKS

We appreciate the notes, letters, e-mails, and materials sent by members and friends. Keep them coming! This newsletter will be sent—we hope—by e-mail to SABR Ballparks Committee members having e-mail accounts registered with the home office in Cleveland. If you receive this by e-mail and want it in paper form to your address, let me know by any means convenient to you. I will bring extra copies to the Denver meeting. Copies of items from this newsletter with postage run about 10 cents/page.

We will have a post-convention newsletter sometime in late July or early August to review the meeting and lay out plans for new committee projects, new assignments, requests for assistance, and general requests for opinions on a wide range of tasks that we could—and should—be tackling. If any of you wish to take on the Committee Newsletter, let me know as I need to spend some more time on administration for the committee, getting some publishing projects and research tasks moved forward, etc. Perhaps someone could take the newsletter and help move our Committee ahead. THANKS; See you in Denver!!