

SABR Ballparks Committee Newsletter

September/October 1991

Robert F. Bluthardt      Committee Chairman  
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I NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following people to the committee:

Charles Camp 15 No. Beaumont Avenue Catonsville, MD 21228	Post 1950 parks of all leagues; Cleve. Municipal & Memorial Std/Balt. Ponce De Leon Park, Atlanta; Ballpark architecture; teaching a baseball course at Johns Hopkins in spring-1992
Richard "Skip" Jennings 427 E. 57th Street Savannah, GA 31405	All parks of post-1900 era; Savannah's Grayson Std., wishes to do full history of Savannah's three main parks; extensive photo collection of major/minor pks.
Earl E. Santee 323 West 8th Street Suite 700 Kansas City, MO 64105	All post 1920 parks of all leagues; Colt Stadium & San Francisco parks; interested in history of temporary facilities and park site selection; has extensive info on stadia politics, codes, finances, and arch. & suburban/urban history.
John Husman 5911 Jeffrey Lane Sylvania, OH 43560	Swayne Field in Toledo; wants to have marker for the remaining parts of this park and Driving Park in Worcester, MA. Any info on Swayne Park appreciated.

Please contact any of these gentlemen if you see common interests or areas where you can advise or assist.

- II MEMORIAL STADIUM in Baltimore went out in fine fashion as did Comiskey a year before. We received some materials on the last game and the new park at Camden Yards---our thanks to the contributors. Lyle Spatz, chairman of the SABR Records Committee, attended the last game and called it "an unforgettable experience." Did anyone else get to the last game? How about a short report for the next newsletter? The "marketing" of a ballpark's last days has taken on a certain style. Remember the Comiskey final days? The contrast with some of the situations in the 1950s---different times and factors considered---is quite intriguing. Regarding the Baltimore finish, did you receive your color brochure with products from the "Season to remember Collection?" If not, let me know and I will send you a copy.
- III LAST DAYS OF COMISKEY & MEMORIAL STADIUM was the topic of research and some future writing by David Zuchowski, RD #1, Box 123, Fredericktown, PA 15333. No word on the project as yet. If you have something to add, drop him a line. If you have seen something in print, let us know!
- IV GOODBYE TO MCCORMICK FIELD in Asheville, NC Several committee members have kept us posted on the last days of this 1924 minor league facility that will be totally rebuilt on the same site for the 1992 season. Thanks to Charles Wilson (who attended the last game in September) and Jim Brown for their materials. SEND \$1.00 for a selection of items.
- V RAY MEDEIROS, a loyal member of this committee and quite the photo collector and post card collector/producer, was profiled in a recent newspaper article in his state. Send 85¢ for a copy. Congratulations Ray!

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- VI USA TODAY quotes the committee in a story of September 25, 1991, on the last game at Memorial Stadium and the fan response to the loss of certain parks. See a SASE of 29¢ for the story.
- VII HURRICANE BOB that lashed the east coast did minor damage to Fenway Park according to a Boston Herald article of August 20. Veteran groundskeeper Joe Mooney noted that the park crew had ample warning and kept all drains open and several of the large doors open to improve air flow through the park. A 1985 summer storm blew several doors in. Mooney also said that there was no danger to the LF screen as "a strong wind blows right through it." The storm did rip up the canopy over the LF sky boxes, damaged part of the roof, and dumped some water in a few luxury boxes. Pre-World War II fans in Boston will recall the 1938 game at Braves Field that was played during a hurricane!
- VIII DALLAS BAPTIST UNIVERSITY, proud of its championship baseball team, is getting ambitious by planning a "classic style" ballpark on its campus. Committee chair Bob Bluthardt gave a talk at the campus to interested students and university officials on the history of ballparks on Wednesday, October 30. The small park (1200-1400 seats) will feature a brick exterior and an outfield backdrop of trees very similar to McCormick Field. For a copy of the program brochure, send a 29¢ SASE. No copying charge.
- IX TEXAS RANGERS on that same day (October 30) had their groundbreaking ceremony for their future new home. For some articles on the award winning architect, some general park plans, and related items, send 75¢ for postage/copying. Weather conditions for the activities were not favorable: 45 degrees, cloudy, and a heavy mist.
- X QUILT TO HONOR THE 1941 Baseball season and achievements of Ted Williams (battling .406) and DiMaggio (56-game hitting streak) is a project of Barbara Dannenfelse of PO Box 65, Stillwater, NJ 07875. Barbara was seeking info on the ca. 1941 RF wall and facade of Yankee Stadium. If you have any thoughts, please contact
- XI CITY BASEBALL MAGIC, the committee funded pamphlet on how to build a better ballpark, closed out its books and paid back almost half of the money to the original nineteen investors. For the record, the loyalists were:
- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Steve Bennett | John Lobingier  |
| John Pastier  | Barry Evans     |
| Dick Johnson  | Bob Littlejohn  |
| Bruce Kuklick | Keith Danish    |
| Bob Bluthardt | Chris Jennison  |
| Frank Phelps  | Phil Lowry      |
| John Brooks   | Joe Favano      |
| Mike Frank    | David Pietrusza |
| Mike Dempsey  | Francis Kinlaw  |
|               | Kyle Johnson    |

A second printing of the booklet was done by the Minneapolis Review of Baseball. To obtain a copy, contact Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 2460 Kerper Blvd., Dubuque, IA 52004-0539. Cost was \$5.95. Postage/handling may be extra.

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- XII BRUCE HELLERSTEIN, an active member of this committee, has been profiled in the Denver Post and he has worked with an artist to produce a "proposed urban ballpark at 20th and Blake Streets." While the painting is not to scale, it does feature some of the classic themes many ballpark fans would like to see in new construction. Send 85¢ for copies of both items.
- XIII RAISING FUNDS FOR BALLPARK PLAQUES is a for-profit service proposed by Bill Harrington of 322 S. County Road, #12, Palm Beach, FL 33480. Bill and a local group had some success in raising both funds and fan appreciation for Connie Mack Field (the site, that is). If you have any thoughts to offer, contact Bill or send 50¢ for a copy of his proposal. The Ballparks Committee makes no endorsement of this proposed service.
- XIV HAPPY 65th ANNIVERSARY TO BOWMAN FIELD in Williamsport, PA Send a SASE of 29¢ for a copy of a one-page summary of the field.
- XV BALLPARK DIMENSIONS OVER TIME, a proposed project of Rocco Del Sesto, has some fascinating possibilities. By placing the old and newer outlines for certain long-lived parks, a very clear understanding of park development is achieved. Rocco has used Total Baseball and Green Cathedrals for reference. If you have other materials or thoughts to offer, please contact him at 341 S. Center Street, La Grange, OH 44050. For a copy of his preliminary drawing of Fenway 1912-present, send a SASE of 29¢ to the committee.
- XVI INLAND ARCHITECT of September/October, 1991, features articles on ballparks by Phil Bess and John Pastier of our committee. To get a copy, contact the publication at PO Box 10394, Chicago, IL 60610 (312) 321-0583. No info on exact cost plus shipping at this time, so you may want to call first.
- XVII CONGRATULATIONS to committee member Marc Okkonen on the publication and positive reviews of his book on baseball uniforms. Even if you don't buy it, check it out at any major bookstore. It is quite a colorful and informative book.
- XVIII WASHINGTON DC BALLPARK image for 1901-03 was discovered by Marc Okkonen. He was quite surprised to find it as "virtually nothing exists to document this structure which was dismantled and re-assembled at the Griffith Stadium site in 1904." For a copy, send a SASE of 29¢. Our thanks to Marc for sending this to us.
- XIX POLO GROUNDS came back in the news for a few days in early October as that famed home run ("The Giants win the pennant!") of October 3, 1951 had its 40th anniversary. Sports Illustrated in its 9-16-91 issue had a fine article on the two main players in the drama: Ralph Branca and Bobby Thomson. While the LF line at the Polo Grounds was a short 279 feet away, the pennant-winning home run had plenty on it to reach more distant points.
- XX NEW MILWAUKEE BALLPARK reports the 8-23-91 Milwaukee Journal in underway with preliminary road engineering and environmental impact statement work. The site near the current County Stadium on the parking lot near center field will have a new facility by 1995.
- XXI OUT OF COUNTY STADIUM Cecil Fielder did this first-time trick for the Tigers with a 470-foot shot on September 21.

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XXII RESEARCH PROJECTS Please contact these people if you can assist.

1. Jeff Suntala, 5861 Lotusdale, Parma Heights, OH 44130

He is an illustrator conducting research for a painting of Cleveland's League Park. No additional info on the date he is portraying. He requests any pictorial references.

2. Terry Frasca-Reid, 143 Albany Street #421, Cambridge, MA 02139

He is researching for his master's thesis in urban planning. His topic examines the effect of ballparks on the urban landscape.

3. Dan Chorst, RUO 5927, PO Box 5063, New Brunswick, NJ 08903-5063

A student at Rutgers University, Dan is working on his History Departmental Honors Thesis. He is examining "the changing patterns of Major League ballpark design due to the transition from private (team) ownership of baseball facilities to municipal proprietorship of them." He will use New York and Philadelphia as examples with Shibe Park and Veteran Stadium; Ebbets Field and Shea Stadium. For a full summary of his project with his sources/resources, send 60¢ to the committee.

XXIII TURNAROUND IN KNOXVILLE with team and the ballpark. Bill Meyer Stadium will be renovated and the team (AA Toronto Affiliate in the Southern League) will stay. Bill Troy had asked for assistance from this committee and he thanks those who offered advice or materials. For a copy of some articles that cover the rebuilding of the park and franchise, send 85¢.

XXIV TORONTO REPORT Committee member Don Lancaster visited Toronto recently and noted that the SkyDome tour is \$.8.00 Canadian. It includes a film on the construction, views of the field, and a view from the press box. The time is tak is 1½ hours. The souvenir shop and McDonald's at the stadium are open daily. The shop had SkyDome, The Complete Story, \$12.95 (Canadian), published by Sun Controlled Ventures, Inc. Distributed by Irving Weisdorf & Co., Ltd., 2801 John Street, Markham, Ontario L3B 1B4. It is 96 pages and answers many questions about the Dome. The ISBN # is 0-919233-35-X. Also, Like No Other in the World The Story of Toronto's Skydome by Mike Filey is published by the same Sun Controlled Ventures, Inc. Distribution is by Penguin Books Canada, 2801 John Str Markham, Ontario L3R 1B4. Cost is \$35.95 (Canadian); ISBN # 0-919233-31-7. Do notes that "this is an excellent book on the history of Toronto ballparks, the construction of the Dome and opening games." Many photos, including long-gone Toronto parks, are included. It also includes photos of the architects' model for the finalists in the competition.

XXV BALTIMORE MAPS that include info and maps of Memorial Stadium were given to the committee by Dick Kaufman. We have six available for the postage of 52¢. First come-first served!

XXVI BALTIMORE'S 1992 Ticket brochure is quite sharp, featuring the new park and some illustrations. Call (301) 243-9800 to get a copy.

XXVII CHINA BASIN project in San Francisco, a proposed ballpark for that city, was a project of Lee Murray for his thesis at college. He kindly donated a copy for our committee.

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- XXVII LEGENDS magazine had a piece on SABR and our committee in its September/October issue. Has anyone seen this? If so, please send along a copy of the article or info/address on how to get a copy. We have received several letters referring to this article.
- XXVIII MOVE ON CLEVELAND's new park from Evan Meyer and F. David Gill. For a sampling of news clips, send \$1.50.
- XXIX ASTRODOME/Houston Astros info brochure for SASE of 29¢. I saw my first game in the dome last September. Even with 12,000 fans present, it sounded pretty lonely in the upper levels!
- XXX PROBLEMS IN MONTREAL with Olympic Stadium. A fifty-plus ton concrete non-structural beam fell to the ground at 7:45 am. The exterior beam dropped to an open concrete surface where visitors can be found. The Expos were forced to take the rest of their 1991 homegames on the road. In 1986 a fire caused other problems in the complex. Send a 29¢ SASE for the various summaries.
- XXXI ADDRESS CHANGES:  
Chris Nichol, 437 Brook Ridge, Doraville, GA 30340  
Steve Nadel, 2833 Zulette Avenue, 2nd Floor, Bronx, NY 10461  
✱ Phil Lowry, 1901 Minnehaha Ave. South, #104, Minneapolis, MN 55404  
Dominick Denaro, 57 Hawthorne Cir., So, Burlington, VT 05403  
Ethan Casey, 2235 Wabash, Detroit, MI 48216
- XXXII GRIFFITH STADIUM had its 30th anniversary of abandonment and committee member Gordon Thomas wrote a piece for possible publication.
- XXXIII SEVEN JAPANESE PARKS Send \$1.00 for postage and copying. The copies may be a little light, but they are decent overhead shots of seven large parks in Japan.
- XXXIV ODDS-N-ENDS The Blue Jays broke the 4-million mark on annual attendance in 1991 and the Dodgers used to break the 3-million mark regularly...what team broke the 2-million mark first? ..... St. Louis will move in the Busch Stadium fences for 1992: power alleys go from 383 to 375 and centerfield from 414 to 402..... a Boston-Cleveland game of 9-9-91 drew 1,695, one of the lower crowds of recent memory..... The Sporting News "Answer Man" section recently had the question of players homering in all AL & NL parks they played in and Harry Heilmann (Detroit, Cin. 1914-32), Jeff Heath (Cleve., Wash., St. Louis AL, Bos. NL 1936-49) and John Mize (St. Louis NL, New York AL 1936-53) were the only three. It also noted that Frank Robinson and Rusty Staub share the record for homering in the most parks, 32..... Mel Ott hit 324 or 63% of his home runs at the home Polo Grounds; what player has a higher home run % at home? ..... a 9-30-91 story in the Sporting News noted an increased problem with "no shows" at games, especially in the NL where a system of counting those who actually attend a game (vs. the AL system of total tickets sold) indicates rates of 10-15% no shows..... a recent book list had Green Cathedrals and the Durso: Yankee Stadium books for under \$10, but both were snapped up within a day of the catalog being received.

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- XXXV NEW PARK FOR PITTSBURGH? Mayor Sophie Masloff surprised the entire city with a proposal for a \$130 million, open air, natural grass park to replace Three Rivers Stadium. The 40,000-seat facility would be in the "classical" style with an open center field that would look to the city's downtown. Don Lancaster has sent our files copies of the major Pittsburgh daily papers stories on the big proposal. For a sampling, send \$1.50
- XXXVI PADDED WALLS IN CINCINNATI came too late to help the Phillies Lennie Dykstra who fractured a collarbone in a collision with right center field wall. Shad of Fred Lynn in Boston at the 1975 World Series. Concrete walls have been a problem at ballparks for years. Ted Williams busted his elbow at an All-Star game at Comiskey; more than a few outfielders took a crash against the concrete walls at Ebbets Field,...
- XXXVII TIGER STADIUM update... Committee member Ethan <sup>Cozy</sup> has written a lengthy rebuttal to the August Sporting News article on the park and it will run in a future edition of the Minneapolis Review of Baseball issue (by the way, MRB is taking a new name, something like Elysian Field Quarterly). ... The September issue of the Fan Club newsletter reported that a coalition was launching a petition drive to block any new stadium project.... The National Trust for Historic Preservation declared Tiger Stadium as one of the nation's endangered historic places.....
- XXXVIII THANKS to J. Lohingier for his generous contribution to the postal budget fund.
- XXXIX DAILY SPORTS LISTS are sought and published by a features syndicate that contacted our committee recently. Karl A. Van Asselt, Associate editor, Sports Features Syndicate, PO Box 430, Durham, NH 03824, is seeking "fresh, generally clever material for our daily Sports Lists." Some examples include: Most times on Sports Illustrated cover; % of team players in NFL with a college degree; Projected records of Ted Williams without five years military service, etc. If you have something to submit, especially in the realm of ballparks, contact Karl. Payment was listed at \$5/published list.
- XL GREEN CATHEDRALS, second edition, is moving along well in the publication process and is still scheduled for a 1992 early release (March). No word yet on projected price.
- XLI CORRESPONDENCE remains high for September/October: 63 letters and cards received and 80 sent out. If we owe you a letter, have faith!

Our thanks to all members of this committee who stay in touch and send materials for the files. A few of you have been silent for quite some time. If you wish to be removed from the mailing list, please let us know. Otherwise, stay in touch!

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Articles: Postage is 29¢ for the first four pages and 23¢ for each four pages in addition.

Copying is 6¢/page. Anything extra goes to our postage fund to cover committee correspondence.

Please make all checks to Bob Bluthardt. Stamps are acceptable as payment for small amounts.

1. LA Coliseum Will Get Facelift, LA Times, 9-25-91 4 pgs.
2. Edgy over Bird's new nest, Providence Journal-Bulletin, 9-24-91
3. A look of the past; A look to the future, (Camden Yards/Balt.) no source/date 1
4. Frederick, MD Keys, A-ball, several articles, 2 pgs.
5. Orioles old park will be missed; but new park should be special Phila Daily News, 6-19-91 4 pgs.
6. Fuming Fenway, Boston Globe, 7-8-91 3 pgs.
7. Building of a Stadium, Syracuse Chiefs Program, 1991, 6 pgs.
8. Rickwood Field, AP article, misc. papers 1 pg.
9. Beer system goes high-tech at new ballpark (Balt.), Balt. Sun, 7-21-91 1 pg.
10. The good, the bad, and the awful AAA parks, Columbus (OH) Dispatch, 8-22-91 1 p.
11. Gateway Models Unveiled, Indians Fan Newsletter, Sept/91, 3 pgs
12. Leaving Their Nest (Balt.), Newsday, 10-6-91, 2 pgs.
13. History of the Bullpen, Bulls Illustrated, July/August 1991, 2 pgs.
14. Stadiums ding home runs, Grains, 9/23-10/6, 2 pgs
15. LA Coliseum: The Dodgers Hectic Home, Sat. Evening Post, 4-18-59, 7 pgs.
16. Name That Stadium, Wash. Post editorial on Baltimore, 8-22-91, 1 pg.
17. New stadium goes too far with short-fly rule (Comiskey), Balt. Sun, 7-24-91, 2
18. Ashville Tourists program sections, 1991, 4 pages
19. Info on Omaha's Rosenblatt Stadium, June 1991, no source, 2 pgs.
20. A stadium name that will please almost everyone (Balt.) 7-7-91
21. In planning for a new Tiger Stadium, don't forget Corktown, Mexicantown, Del. Free Press, 9-19-91 1 pg.

Thanks to the many people who sent material: Jim Sumner, Paul Shapiro, Gordon Thomas, Charles Wilson, Jim Brown, Don Lancaster, Bruce Hellerstein, David Pietrusza, Ralph Graber, Gary Coleman, Gordon Smith, Lyle Spata, Jim Hitz, Chris Jennison, Francis Kinlaw, Galen Wiser, and John Gullfoyle