

SABR BALLPARKS COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

March-April, 1990

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I CITY BASEBALL MAGIC Since our last report in early March, we have continued to have good sales of the committee's publication. As of May 5, we have fewer than 30 copies left for sale. There may be a few copies for sale in Cleveland at the convention, but don't take a chance if you want one. A separate memo will be going out to our original contributors as they stand to receive a share of the funds left over after all our bills are paid.

Among the more interesting people/places that have bought a copy over the last few months:

Jack Brimeyer, asst. Mng. Editor, Peoria Journal-Star
Michael Kent, Controller, Phila. Phillies
Peter Freiberg, Architecture writer, Washington, D.C.
City Manager, City of Pensacola, Florida
Jerry Cohen, Ebbets Field Flannels, Seattle, WA

We have now sold 254 copies.

II ROOSEVELT STADIUM MARKER People in the NJ-NYC-CT area should keep an eye open for any announcement about the marker that will be unveiled on the site of Roosevelt Stadium where a major housing development is being finished. The K. Hovnanian Companies of Red Bank, NJ, hope to have some type of unveiling by the end of this month. After five years of correspondence with the company about the possibility of a marker for the site, William Bogdon of the company called and asked for a proposed text for a marker as soon as could be done. Using our files on the park, a text was done and sent back to NJ and it looks like they will have the marker ready by Memorial Day. If you would like a copy of what I sent, send me a 25 cent SASE. A letter of thanks to the company recognizing their good will and support couldn't hurt. Address it to:

Mr. William Bogdon
Project Director
K. Hovnanian Companies
10 Highway 35
PO Box 500
Red Bank, NJ 07701

III GRIFFITH STADIUM PLAQUE Gordon Thomas reports of yet another encouraging lead in our goal of a proper marker for the baseball history that took place at Washington's Griffith Stadium. Gordon hopes to get the assistance of the DC Baseball Commission. To help Gordon or to get more info, write him at 3000 No. Edison Street, Arlington, VA 22207.

IV ANNIVERSARIES Houston's Astrodome celebrates its 25th this season. And in Boston, it was 75 years ago (August 18) that Braves Field opened for business. On the sadder side, it was 30 years ago that the wrecking ball destroyed Ebbets Field. Any more noteworthy anniversaries for 1990?

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V BALLPARKS PHOTO DISPLAY, our annual display of photos of parks, is coordinated by Joe Favano, and he requests any and all pictures you might want to display at the Cleveland meeting. Contact him at 21 Roosevelt Avenue, Old Greenwich, CT 06870.

VI EBBETS FIELD MODEL After tackling Yankee Stadium, Brad Merilla has moved to the National League to build a replica of the Dodger park. If you have advice to lend, contact Brad at PO Box 993, Shelter Island, NY 11964.

VII NEW MEMBERS Welcome to two new members of our committee:

Eliot Knispel
50 Grant Street
Farmingdale, NY 11735

Interested in both major leagues and times from late 19th c. to 1950; special interest in Palace of the Fans (Cin.), Washington Pk (Brklyn), Baker Bowl in Phila., and Lakefront Park, Chicago. Studies ballpark construction and changes to parks over time. Looking for photos on the rotunda and famed chandelier of Ebbets Field.

Jerry Cohen
117 W. Denny Way #214
Seattle, WA

Interested in all leagues; special int. with Negro Lg. Late 19th c to 1950. Seattle's Sick Stadium Is working with local people in attempts to get a classic park built for the Seattle Mariners.

VIII TEN OLDEST MINOR LEAGUE PARKS? Check your May 7 Sporting News and on page 28 in a small box was a list of what was believed to be the ten oldest active minor league parks. The SABR office received a research request from the Sporting News and it was passed along to me. A check of our files and some suggested resources confirmed a few of the more obvious choices. Check the list here and see if you agree--if not, let me know.

IX LA COLISEUM THREATENED? So what, you might say, but don't forget that the Dodgers used this place for several years before moving to "Chavez Ravine-Dodger Stadium." A recent Preservation News issue noted that the landmark arena did not have a secure future.

X THE BUILDING OF CANDLESTICK PARK, by Joe Figone of the Dept. of Health and Physical Education, Humbolt State University, Arcata, CA 95521-4957. He is looking for publishing possibilities? Any ideas? Please contact him.

Minor League Relics

With Dudley Field in El Paso, Tex., scheduled to be replaced May 22, the following are believed to be the 10 oldest ball parks still in use in the minor leagues:

1. Kenosha, Wis.: Simmons Field, opened in 1921.
2. Asheville, N.C.: McCormick Field, 1924.
3. Johnson City, Tenn.: Howard Johnson Field, 1926.

4. Greensboro, N.C.: War Memorial Stadium, 1927.
5. Rochester, N.Y.: Silver Stadium, 1929.
6. Chattanooga, Tenn.: Engel Stadium, 1930.
7. Indianapolis: Bush Stadium, 1931.
8. Little Rock, Ark.: Ray Winder Field, 1932.
9. Salem, Va.: Municipal Stadium, 1932.
10. Davenport, Ia.: O'Donnell Stadium, 1934.

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- XI A JOURNAL OF COMISKEY PARK is the project of Doug Bukowski, and he claims that he will tell the whole story of the park's unfortunate and controversial demise. He is looking for information about the park's architect, Z. T. Davis, and he needs on photos of Comiskey, "the older, the better." If you can assist, please contact him at 922 So, Kenilworth, Oak Park, IL 60304.
- XII RIVERFRONT STADIUM, an ongoing history=research project of Todd Vigorito. He is especially interested in the factors that led to the abandonment of Crosley and the building of Riverfront Stadium. If you can help, contact him at 42 Crescent Avenue, N. Attleboro, MA 02670.
- XIII BALLPARK MANAGEMENT info is needed by John H. Bowers, 13328 Hidden Drive, Silver Spring, MD 20904. Specifically, he needs:
- info on the ownership of each current park
 - leasing arrangement if applicable for each park
 - concessions/maintenance arrangements for each park
 - trends over the last decade for the above and the funding/building of ballparks
- XIV REPLACING MCCORMICK FIELD is a distinct possibility in Asheville, NC, reports committee member Charles Wilson, and plans have already been drawn for a new facility by HOK that incorporate some of the classic features that committee members have been pushing for years. As you know from item VIII, McCormick is near the top in longevity in minor league facilities, but as Charles reports, it's in very poor shape and baseball might leave the area without some action. To quote him, "local management asked for, and I believe received, a rendering of an old ballpark to be built in the 1990s. It's cozy; it's still in the city; it's asymmetrical almost to a fault; it looks like something Phil Bess would include in a book. And it's gonna cost somebody \$5 million."
- Adjusted figures put the cost at 3.6 to 5 million. The local county does not have that type of money. If anyone has any thoughts about how to "creatively finance" a new park, contact Charles at 30 Turnberry Drive, Arden, NC 28704.
- We are encouraging the destruction of such a long-lived facility, but reports of the park's condition give it a season or two more at best without radical surgery. Any thoughts? If you have visited the park, do you favor renovation?
- XV NEW PARK FOR RANGERS Dallas leaders continue to talk of a new downtown ballpark for the Texas Rangers who now play between the two cities of Dallas and Fort Worth. The club owns the Arlington facility and could make quite a profit with the sale of the site. Some local writers have called for a traditional park; civic leaders want the new park--of whatever form--downtown for economic rejuvenation. We'll keep you posted. An early April proposal came up with another approach, a Meadowsland-type complex seven miles west of downtown Dallas.

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XVI BASEBALL IN MIAMI? As the Florida forces push for major league baseball, Miami is making some noise. Maybe you saw the Sports Illustrated "Scorecard" piece of February 19 that noted the creation of an "Orange Monster" wall in the Orange Bowl to accommodate baseball for the Carribean Baseball Series. the 32-foot wall was a scant 250 feet from the plate! Meanwhile, owners of Joe Robbie Stadium (home of the NFL Dolphins) have made changes to the place to support baseball. Expected dimensions would be LF 335, CF 410, RF 345, alleys at 380 & 385. For an exhibition game between Baltimore and the NY Yankees, the LF line was 272 ft.

XVII SUNCOAST DOME is open, but no baseball yet. Thanks to John Pyros for a package of clippings. For a selection of info on the new facility and possible home for major league baseball, send a 45¢ SASE. For your info, here is how the place stacks up against current baseball parks:

Comparing major-league parks

How the Suncoast Dome compares to other major-league stadiums in seating and dimensions in feet from home to left, center and right field:

Stadium	City	Team	LF	CF	RF	Seating
Suncoast Dome	St. Petersburg	—	338	408	338	43,000
Memorial Stadium	Baltimore	Orioles	309	405	309	54,017
Fenway Park	Boston	Red Sox	315	420	302	34,182
Anaheim Stadium	Anaheim, Calif.	Angels	333	404	333	64,593
Comiskey Park	Chicago	White Sox	347	409	347	43,931
Cleveland Stadium	Cleveland	Indians	320	400	320	74,483
Tiger Stadium	Detroit	Tigers	340	440	325	52,416
Royals Stadium	Kansas City	Royals	330	410	330	40,625
County Stadium	Milwaukee	Brewers	315	402	315	53,192
Metrodome	Minneapolis	Twins	343	408	327	55,883
Yankee Stadium	New York	Yankees	318	408	314	57,545

Oakland Coliseum	Oakland, Calif.	Athletics	330	400	330	49,219
Kingdome	Seattle	Mariners	316	410	316	58,150
Arlington Stadium	Arlington, Texas	Rangers	330	400	330	43,508
SkyDome	Toronto	Blue Jays	330	400	330	53,000
Atlanta-Fulton Co.	Atlanta	Braves	330	402	330	52,007
Wrigley Field	Chicago	Cubs	355	400	353	39,012
Riverfront Stadium	Cincinnati	Reds	330	404	330	52,392
Astrodome	Houston	Astros	330	400	330	45,000
Dodger Stadium	Los Angeles	Dodgers	330	400	330	56,000
Olympic Stadium	Montreal	Expos	325	404	325	59,893
Shea Stadium	New York	Mets	338	410	338	55,601
Veterans Stadium	Philadelphia	Phillies	330	408	330	62,382
Three Rivers Stad.	Pittsburgh	Pirates	335	400	335	58,729
Busch Stadium	St. Louis	Cardinals	330	414	330	54,224
Jack Murphy Stad.	San Diego	Padres	330	405	330	59,022
Candlestick Park	San Francisco	Giants	335	400	335	58,000

XVIII NEW RESEARCH RESOURCE, a bibliography of material: "A Major League Baseball Stadium: Marketing and Siting Considerations." by Edward Duensing. Available from Vance Bibliographies for \$5.00 (postage included). Contact Vance Biblios at PO Box 229, Monticello, IL 61856. Ask for work # P2602. Our thanks to the Bibliography Committee for the lead.

XIX BOOK DISCOUNT available on David Pietrusza's work, Baseball's Canadian-American League, A History of its Inception, Participants, Locales, Statistics, Demise, Legacy, 1936-1951. David tells us that the book will have a chapter on the league's parks. The regular price is \$35. Contact Dave and get it for \$25 plus \$2 postage. His address: 611 Sanders Avenue, Scotia, NY 12302.

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XX TIGER STADIUM The preservation group's work continues in Detroit, and their latest contribution to the effort is the unveiling of the "Cochrane Plan," a well-researched and professionally done plan to renovate Tiger Stadium, serve the club's stated demands, and preserve this classic park for the 21st century. Several members of our committee have asked if we can do anything to support this effort. You can do any of the following:

- join the organization at PO Box 441426, Detroit, MI 48244
- participate in the postcard campaign; sample enclosed
- buy a history of the park from the organization; it's a good piece of work at a low price (\$3 or two for \$5).
- participate in the second annual "Tiger Stadium Fan Club Hug" on June 10, 1990

We thank the Fan Club for their generous donation of a copy of the "Cochrane Plan" to our committee files.

XXI NEW BALLPARK IN SPRINGFIELD, MO? This major Southwest MO city is seeking to build a minor league park of 6500 seats, able to be expanded to 12,000. Thanks to Mike Dempsey for the news clips.

XXII CHANGE OF ADDRESS for

Alex Bensky now at 20417 Gardendale, Detroit, MI 48221
Frank Helmimsky now at 814 Harcourt Rd. Grosse Pt. Farms, MI 48230

XXIII THE FRONT OF BRAVES FIELD in 1948, the year of the pennant,..... Who knows what it looked like? Pete Nichypor, 101 Front Street, #2, Exeter, NH 03833, is making a model of the place and he has it nearly complete except for the front. We had nothing major to offer from the committee files. Help him out if you have any info. For a quick reference tip, call him at (603) 772-3935. And let me know too for the next time!

XXIV MEMORIAL STADIUM in Baltimore will not be lost entirely reports Gordon Thomas. A February 13 letter he received from a club official states that they are videotaping the inside and outside of the park with the hopes of producing a history of the team and stadium. Also, team officials seem very interested in the concept of a park/team museum or display area in the new facility. A pat on the back to Gordon for encouraging the Orioles on this issue.

XXV COOPERATIVE VENTURES? The Statistical Analysis Committee noted in their March-90 newsletter that "it would be interesting if some cross-committee research projects got started." What do you think? Contact me or Don Coffin of the Stat. Com at Indiana Univ. NW, 3400 Broadway, Gary, IN 46408

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XXVI FROM THE FILES From a variety of sharp-eyed folks, we received these items

- a) "Love and Death at the Astrodome" by Larry McMurtry
- b) "How the Oakland Coliseum Will Change" SF Chronicle 3-17-90
- c) "Maybe Lunkhead Park" (on Baltimore) NY Times 3-14-90
- d) "Should Balt. Park Honor A Yankee Hero?" NY Times 2-26-90
- e) "New Old Stadium; Architects Propose
Renovation; Tigers Rejeet it" Detroit Free Press ca. 3/90
- f) "Constructive Ideas on New Park for Tigers" Detroit Free Press or
News ca. 4-90
- g) "Scenic Asheville Setting has Rich Baseball Past" no source
- h) "Asheville baseball franchise at the crossroads" Blue Ridge Business,
March-1990

25 cents for one (except #a for 45 cents). or two articles.
45 cents for three or four; a dollar and five cents for the bunch!

XXVII NEW BALLPARK FOR CLEVELAND? So suggested a Sporting News note of April 10. A 45,000 seat facility, expandable to 75,000 for football. And a 20,000 arena as part of a 340 million dollar complex. If you have any info, please send it for the files.

XXVIII YANKEE STADIUM, its effect on the neighborhood in the Bronx and vice versa is the subject of Matthew Kachur, a PhD candidate at CCNY in Manhattan. He can be reached at (212) 627-2433 by night and (212) 475-2263, ext. 115 by day. This graduate school paper seeks to go beyond the nostalgia phase of Yankee Stadium and examine its relationship with the South Bronx area, especially the years of site preparation, construction, and early use, say 1920-1930. His address is 231 West 15th Street, Apt. 4B, NYC, NY 10011. This sounds like some very good research, so help him out if you have any material.

XXIX CLEVELAND MEETING/BALLPARKS COMMITTEE GATHERING Our annual committee meeting has been shifted to Friday morning, July 26, 9-10 am. Our original choice of a Saturday time put us next to the trolley tour that would include a look at League Park, so I took the Friday slot. We hope that many of you will be able to attend. We share the slot with the Umpires & Rules Committee.

I am still needing slides of Cleveland ballparks for my talk. If you can assist, please let me know. I can have copies made here or I will pay or trade for slides. Thanks.

Let me know if you have a ballparks-related talk on the program so we can profile it in the May-June newsletter.

That should do it for now. The newsletter always needs material, information, resources, and your activities on ballparks, so keep the letters coming.



The Cochrane Plan

For Saving Tiger Stadium

Historic Tiger Stadium can be saved. The Cochrane Plan provides a way to preserve, expand and update the best fans' park in baseball.

A new park would cost at least \$180 million. The Cochrane Plan would renovate Tiger Stadium for only \$26 million. Here's how:

- ◆ **Additions to the stadium** along Cochrane and Michigan would create space for vastly expanded concourses, concessions, rest rooms, clubhouses, offices, elevators, dining areas and storage space.
- ◆ **A new third deck** would hold 73 luxury boxes for 1,200 patrons, most likely eliminating the need for many of the upper deck posts.
- ◆ **Seats in the upper and lower deck** would not be disturbed. Fans would still be closer to the field than at any other park. The Tigers also would get a Hall of Fame museum and marketing building and a bigger ticket office.

All this could be done over two years while the Tigers continued to

play home games at Michigan and Trumbull. The Cochrane Plan meets the needs of fans and the ball club. It was produced by architects John and Judy Davids for the Tiger Stadium Fan Club, and has been endorsed by prominent architects and experts and by Tiger Hall of Fame broadcaster Ernie Harwell.

Baseball fans don't want a new stadium. Taxpayers won't pay for a new stadium. The Cochrane Plan shows we don't need a new stadium.

It would make good business sense for the Tigers to adopt the Cochrane Plan. It would keep their customers happy at far lower cost than a new stadium.

The renovated Tiger Stadium would be a first-class tourist attraction for Detroit and Michigan, like Wrigley Field in Chicago and Fenway Park in Boston.

But Tom Monaghan and the Tigers need a little convincing from the people whose opinions really count — their customers. Fans have to make it

clear that we won't support a new stadium, whether it's built in Detroit or elsewhere.

That's why the Tiger Stadium Fan Club has launched a postcard campaign to get this message to Monaghan.

To join the effort, just tear off and fill out the attached card, affix 25 cents postage, and mail it to the fan club. We'll collect the cards and deliver them to Mr. Monaghan.

You can also show your support for the Cochrane Plan by joining in the second Tiger Stadium Hug. We'll circle the stadium at noon on Sunday, June 10, prior to the Tigers-Mariners game.

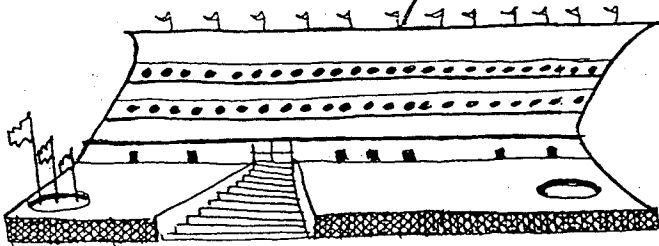
If you want to join the Tiger Stadium Fan Club and stay up to date on the hug and our efforts to save Tiger Stadium, fill out the membership/order form on the reverse side, sign the postcard, and mail it all to the fan club. We'll put you on our mailing list.

With your support, the Cochrane Plan can become reality and the Tigers can be safe at home for years to come.

Dear Mr. Monaghan:

If you build this:

\$180 MILLION
OR MORE

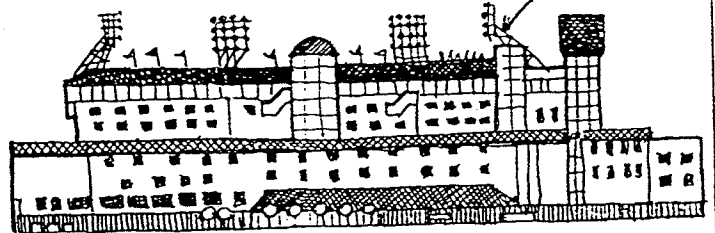


Plastic New Park

- I'll stay away
- You'll go into debt
- You'll be the goat

If you adopt this plan
and save Tiger Stadium:

\$26 MILLION



The Cochrane Plan

- I'll keep coming
- You'll save money
- You'll be a hero

I support the Cochrane Plan

signed _____

Membership, Volunteer and Order Form

The Tiger Stadium Fan Club, a non-profit Michigan corporation, is fighting to keep baseball available to the average fan. Join us. All proceeds will aid the effort to preserve Tiger Stadium.

Membership

All members get a bumper sticker and our newsletter.

- \$10 Bleacher Member
- \$25 Grandstand Member (free book)
- \$50 Reserved Member (free book and posters)

\$100 Box Seat Member (free book, posters, and a T-shirt. Specify size: _____)

Other: _____ (No one will be turned down because of an inability to pay)

Additional Merchandise

- The Cochrane Plan: The Book. Own the renovation plan that will save Tiger Stadium. Handsome, bound 11-inch-by-17-inch book contains detailed architectural drawings and analysis. \$20.
- Briggs Stadium lithograph. William A. Moss's recreation of the famous corner circa 1959. Limited edition, unframed, signed and numbered, 30 inches by 24 inches. \$100.
- "Save Tiger Stadium" sweatshirts. Orange and white lettering on navy blue. \$18 for adult sizes, \$15 for children's sizes. Specify size: small medium large extra large child 6-8 child 10-12
- Official fan club T-shirts (white only). \$8. Specify size: small medium large extra large
- "Save Tiger Stadium" bumper stickers. \$1.
- "Tiger Stadium: Where Baseball Belongs." The best Tiger Stadium history ever published. \$3 each, 2/\$5.
- Tiger Stadium note cards, featuring the boy in the bleachers. \$12.50 a dozen.

Posters at \$3 each, 2 for \$5:

"Help Keep the Tigers in their Natural Habitat"

"Don't Let Them Make the Biggest Error in Baseball"

Postage & Handling: Orders under \$10 add \$1; \$10-\$19.99, add \$2; Orders over \$20, add \$3. Total enclosed: _____

Member Information

Name _____

Phone _____ (w) _____ (h)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Volunteer

I can volunteer some time. Please call me.

My area of expertise is: _____

Send this form to Tiger Stadium Fan Club, Box 441426, Detroit, MI 48244-1426. Phone: (313)-964-5991

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

USE
25¢
POSTAGE

TIGER STADIUM FAN CLUB
P.O. BOX 441426
DETROIT, MI 48244-1426