

SABR BALLPARKS COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

January - May, 1999

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I. NEW MEMBERS

1. Mark Sternman Fenway Park; Parks as part of urban history;
18 Center Street #106
Cambridge, MA 02139
2. Phil Henderson Majors; Pre 1900 thru 1950; Architecture; photos; statistics/effect of
224 Moonglow park on game.
El Paso, TX 79912
3. John Odell All VA parks; 1900-1950 era; cataloging all VA parks and would appreciate assistance.
505 So. Veitch Street
Arlington, VA 22204
4. Blair Robinson Rickwood, League, Shibe, Forbes, Ebbets, ... Has web site of photos of current/former parks at www.mindspring.com/nblairs/baseball.html
3433 Keswick Drive
Chamblee, GA 30341

We welcome these members to our Committee. Please contact them if you see areas of common interest.

II SABR GOES TO SUNNY ARIZONA

It just hit 100 yesterday in San Angelo, and that reminds me that we will soon meet in sunny Arizona! Our Committee meeting will take place on Thursday afternoon at 4, and we have at least an hour, plus additional time since we are the last meeting in the time slot. We will keep the meeting informal, so if you have an issue to discuss, just show up! If you have something on your mind and do not plan to attend, contact me and I will see that the matter is raised at the meeting. We hope to have our Committee Table and volunteers are welcome to see me at the Convention to take a shift.

III ARTICLES OF THE PAST

1. Seating/Park diagram for Forbes Field for 1927 World Series, Pitts. Press, 10-3-27 (1 pg)
2. Toledo Professional Ballparks with dates & locations (1 pg)
3. "New Additions to Local Fan Palace..." Cleve. News, 2-15-06 (1 pg)
4. "Auld Lang Syne, Da Bums Go West," NY Daily News, 9-24-98 (1 pg)
5. "Harkening Back to Connie Mack," Phila. Inquirer, 2-14-99 (3 pgs)

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6. Impressions of Brush Stadium (Polo Grounds) and John McGraw's prediction on future stadia, Spinks Sport Stories, ca 1921 (1 pg)
7. "Memories & Scores of First NL Game Played in Present Parks," NL Hist/75th Anniv. 1950 (1 pg)
8. Aerial photo of Fenway Park and neighborhood, 1939, BU Bridge, 4-23-99 (1 pg) Not much has changed about the park, except for a few more open lots in '39, and the Turnpike was then the railroad. This is a good view to contrast with current team plans for a new park.
9. Brooklyn protests NY plan to play in Ridgewood Park, 1-7-04, NY Journal, (1 pg)
10. "The First Domed Stadium," summary of the 'obsolete' Astrodome, Ambassador, 4/99 (1 pg)
11. "The Stadium Shuffle," musings on Seattle parks past/present/future, The Grand Salami, 4/99 (3 pgs)
12. "Seeking the Soul of the City's Summer," fans walk about NYC and discover ballparks/baseball heritage. Some good illustrations; NY Times, 5-9-99 (5 pgs)

IV BUSINESS/POLITICS/ARCHITECTURE

1. Overview of all concessions/prices for all major league sports in US & Canada, Street & Smith Sports Business Journal, Nov 9-15, 1998 (2 pgs)
2. "All Stars, Top... Designers Invade the Turf of Pro Stadium Specialists," Architecture, 11/98 (2 pgs)
3. "The Future Generation of Sports Stadia," Facility Mngtr., 11/12-98 (4 pgs)
4. Index to status of all major lg. facilities, Facility Mngtr., 11/12-98 (2 pgs)
5. "Playing Hardball, How Major League Sports Teams are Ripping Off American Cities," Architecture, 11/98 (4 pgs); written by Peter Richmond who did a book on Camden Yards
6. An interesting comment in TSN, "New Stadium Panacea in Question: The latest surge in baseball salaries has left one of the industry's most sacred assumptions in doubt. A new stadium may no longer be enough to change the fortunes of a small-revenue team." 1-4-99
7. Special Bulletin by PA State Rep. Samuel E. Rohrer, "No to Stadium Funding. The State may have the power, but not the right." (2 pgs). In PA, his view did not prevail.
8. "Baseball Windfall, Bisons win, city loses on stadium lease," Buffalo News, 3-15-99, (6 pgs). Attendance-based lease payments leave city short; owner now glad he did not go big league; city "development" from project questioned.
9. "New Fleece on Life," writer warns of any new stadia deals in NYC, NY Daily News, 3-21-99 (1pg)
10. "Tax Dodger, Murdoch looks to Native Americans for subsidy," NY Daily News, 4-4-99 (1 pg) Moving Vero Beach facility to AZ? FL gov. vetoed aid for Vero Beach and the casino licenses for funding the AZ facility plans may not be renewed past 2003. LA spring training move may be off. Several pages of TSN and BB America articles.
11. Study shows Vet. Stad. concessions cheat fans with high prices/lousy food, Daily News, 2-2-99 (1 pg)
12. More on the naming game: several articles on Yankee Stadium being up for grabs, Pilot/North America Park up for another name; review and reactions of last summer's naming of Pittsburgh's PNC Park (7 pgs)
13. From the SABR-L wire, Sen. Arlen Specter of PA introduces a bill requiring ML Baseball and NFL teams to pay at least 50% of stadium construction costs!
14. "Fields of dreams," building parks without tax dollars, Phila Daily News, 1-29-99 (3 pgs)
15. "Stadiums: Beasts of burden," Phila. Inquirer, 1-6-99 (3 pgs)

COPIES OF ANY AVAILABLE MATERIAL can be had for 12 cents/page and that includes postage. Payment can be sent in cash, checks (made out to Bob Bluthardt in name only) or stamps. Extra donations always welcome for the postage fund. If you order a bunch of articles, just send a photocopy of the newsletter page with your selections circled or highlighted. Thank you.

V BOOKS & STUFF

1. "Take your seat at Ebbets Field," restoring old wooden seats, SCD, 3-26-99 (2 pgs)
2. Congratulations to Committee member Chris Holaday whose book on Professional Baseball in NC appeared in the McFarland catalog, PO Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640 \$35, 264 pgs.
3. "Saving Your Seat," Polo Grounds seats restored, SCD, 3-12-99 (2 pgs)
4. "The Flatbush Faithful," a newsletter about the Brooklyn Dodgers, is available from 11 Rudolf Lane, Norwalk, CT 06851. Twelve issues a year/\$19.95 Our Committee and the "Faithful" will exchange newsletters. Profits from this publication go to "worthy baseball endeavors."
5. Dan Bonk calls our attention to Forbes Field note cards now available with six color view of this classic park. Packages of twelve available for \$10. Contact Dan at sdonk@msn.com or write him at 417 Fairborough Ct., Corapolis, PA 15108-3481 for ordering details. \$2 added for shipping too.
6. Check out our Committee members Paul Munsey & Cory Suppes with their expanding & improving web site: www.ballparks.com, noted in Sports Illustrated
7. Thanks to Dick Johnson we have a copy of Fenway, A Biography in Words and Pictures, an excellent 'coffee table' book. 144 pages, Houghton-Mifflin, \$30 Color shots and some vintage b/w views.
8. Fenway Saved by Bill Nowlin & Mike Ross, 192 pages, \$29.95, Sports Publishing, Inc. Has anyone seen this book?
9. Yet another Fenway book, Our House: A Day at Fenway Park by Curt Smith, Masters Press, \$30 Any early reports?
10. Thanks to Steve Carroll we have some photos of Portland, ME and other minor lg. parks. He also sent us three color shots of Sicks Seattle Stadium. Steve notes that there are several sources for Sicks photos: Seattle's Keystone Sports Memorabilia at 534 Queen Anne Ave. N, Seattle, WA 98109; also, Drew Edwards or Jennifer Mullen at 206 285-9277.
11. Don Lancaster tells us of several new and future ballparks publications: The Astros have one on the Astrodome for \$18.95 by Craig & Katherine Doherty, but it is "written on a sixth grade level." The Diamonds Commemorative book set goes for \$55 with one book on the building of the new park. He also reports a new book: Home of the Game: The Story of Camden Yards by Thom Loverro. And Don says that you can get four b/w 11/14 photos of Forbes Field for \$14.54 by phone at 412 263-1641; e-mail at www.post-gazette.com or mail at PG Store, PO Box 476, Pitts, PA 15230. Thanks Don! We welcome any news on ballparks books, materials, and photos.

VI RESEARCH NOTES & REQUESTS

1. Tom Owens of 1001 West Boone Street, Marshalltown, IA 50158-2412 p/f (515) 753-8566, has a new project "to compile a book which would include the childhood memories of fans who attended their first-ever games at notable parks." Tom has written a number of books and articles on baseball, including a profile on this Committee several years ago. If this project succeeds, Tom has suggested that a portion of the book proceeds be given to our Committee to help suitable marker projects for forgotten parks. Contact Tom if you have an interest in this project; also, I have a copy of his letter available.
2. Ray Miller at 62 Green Street, Bath, ME, 04530 says he has completed a draft of his Braves Field article. If you are an expert on the old Wigwam, contact Ray. Publishing possibilities are also being explored.

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3. John Holway wrote recently to seek information about the layout of Navin Field in the mid-1930s. He kindly sent us a few photo copies of aerial view from local newspapers. (2pgs). John was especially interested in the layout of the bleachers in 1935. Write him at 5511 Callender, Springfield, VA 22151 if you have special info on that park.
4. Greetings come from Professor Gail Rowe of the University of Northern Colorado. Professor Rowe had requested info on the old South End Grounds and we erred in calling the professor a "she." Let our official record show that Professor Rowe is a "he!"
5. David Timmons of 18 General Pulaski Drive, Salem, NH 03079, seeks information and illustrations on the Huntington Avenue Grounds, home of the Red Sox of the American League before 1912. David is building a model of the park and would appreciate any assistance. We have already sent a big packet of info from our Committee files.
6. Our thanks to Chris Reed of Los Angeles who sent us a copy of the article he wrote on old Wrigley Field in that city. Chris writes for Street Zebra Los Angeles. Our Committee files helped the piece. Copy available. (1 pg) Published in April/99.
7. Dick Johnson of the Sports Museum in Boston is putting the final touches on a book on the Red Sox and wondered if anyone knows just who was really first with their opening game: Boston at Fenway Park or Detroit at Navin Field on April 20, 1912? Both would be in the same time zone... so who was first, even if by a few minutes. Both parks had games previous to the "official" opening, but the 4-20-1912 game is the big event. If you have any idea, contact Dick at 10 Wildwood, Milton, MA 02186.
8. Mark Baker at WHYI in Philadelphia called a while back asking about the exact location on the Negro Leagues park in that city called Penmar Park. Green Cathedrals lists it at 44th & Parkside, but that may not be accurate. New info may be too late for Mark's purposes, but let me know if you have any information. Mark's number is (215) 928-2448. His fax is (215) 351-0512.
9. Bruce Hellerstein called to seek illustrations of Yankee Stadium before the 1970s renovation. He is especially interested in the classic facade. Contact him at (303) 694-1400 by day or 790-4171 in the evening.
10. Bob Bochar contacted us to ask about special celebrations for the five parks to be abandoned this season. Contact him at 2810 B So. Abingdon Street, Arlington, VA 22201 if you have information.
11. Frank D'Amico has kindly provided us with a start list to all WPA parks in the nation. He lists twenty-four parks from the 1935-1943 era. Copy is enclosed with this newsletter. If you have comments, additions or corrections, contact Frank at the address provided. We would need to determine just how many parks of that era were WPA funded--and how many are surviving and in use.
12. Carl Bonk contacted the Committee this spring and asked for any information about the ballpark dimensions for the old Texas-NM League of the late 40s and early 50s. Contact him at 2926 Carroll Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44113, if you have some suggestions.
13. Ballpark artist Bill Feldman at 2140 East 5th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11223, is working on a new painting of the Houston Astrodome and seeks photos that show the current CF region. He would be very interested in a photo of Biggio or Bagwell at bat. Bill kindly sent us a copy of his Babe Ruth "called shot" painting/Wrigley Field.

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14. David Figns of 6560 Break of Day Road, Victor, NY 14564, is a student at SUNY/Brockport, and he is doing a study "examining the factors relating to the decline of Major League Baseball pitching performances over the last 30 years." Certainly, ballpark dimension changes will be one of the factors. If you have any opinions or information to share, please contact him. He plans a Fall/99 thesis project. Six pages of a project summary and related material available--no charge.
15. Alexander Pollock of the Planning Department of the City of Detroit called and asked if there were any cases of other ballparks being rehabbed for alternative uses? If you have thoughts on Tiger Stadium and its future, call him at 313 224-1325. Also, Alexander is giving a talk to the ALSD (Association of Luxury Suite Directors) on June 21. If you would like to review his materials, we have twenty pages available, including his models/designs for sports facilities.
16. Home Run, a new quarterly magazine, will be doing a major article on the new parks being built. They also plan a piece on Ebbets Field. If you want more information about the publications or have info to share on the two projects noted, contact Norm Coleman, PO Box 1577, El Granada, CA 94018 . Also, 1-888-231-2572 and fax at 650 726-7405.

VII MINOR LEAGUE NOTES/ARTICLES/NEWS

1. Ongoing saga of churchgoers' discount at Hagerstown, MD ballpark. Good profile of team & park, NY Times, 5-2-99, (1 pg)
2. Renovations done at Akron's Firestone Stadium, Beacon-Journal, 5-10-99 (4 pgs). Original \$1 mil. budget expanded to \$3.6 million! Stadium is 70 years old.
3. I keep seeing ads for a minor league trip to experience "Baseball in Quebec" and the 1938 Quebec City ballpark. Anyone seen this Northern League park?
4. Louisville's Slugger Field will be "intimate" or so says a BB America piece of May 3-16. The team will leave 33,500 seat Cardinal Stadium (largest capacity in the minors) move to 13,500 seat Slugger Field on the riverfront in 2000. Shades of Baltimore: an 1880s freight depot has been incorporated in the ballpark. The old AAA park was built in 1956.
5. Another good piece on a West Texas landmark, Kokernot Field in Alpine, TX. Boston Globe of 3-21-99 (2 pg). Well worth a short detour from the interstate if you are driving out that way. Red Sox Class D teams played there from 1959-61 and the local college team now uses the field. Park builder, Herbert Kokernot, Jr, was a wealthy area rancher who enjoyed bringing in various major leaguers to entertain and delight fans.
6. McCoy Stadium in Pawtucket, RI, the oldest AAA park (1942), has been expanded and thoroughly improved with a \$16 million facelift, bringing capacity from 7002 to 10031. Thanks to area newspaper writer and Committee member Charles Bakst for a wonderful selection of articles and information. Up to 30 pages available. SABR had its 1984 meeting at Brown University and took in an evening game at McCoy.
7. A new ballpark for once-mighty minor league town, Newark, NJ, will anchor other downtown development projects. Newark Star-Ledger, 2-28-99 (4 pgs)
8. A new stadium for the Mud Hens and Toledo? Skeldon Stadium (1965) isn't anyone's favorite, but a tax proposal for a new facility was defeated by voters in May. A March 19 meeting/symposium was held at the University of Toledo College of Law. (3 pgs).
9. Dayton will get a Class A minor league facility seating about 7500 (plus 2100 on the grassy slopes) by 2000 with a near \$30 million project announced in March. The park will be just a block from the city's downtown rivers. (5 pgs)

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10. Construction delays postponed the opening of the Somerset, NJ ballpark, and a new date of June 7 was scheduled. Star-Ledger article of March/99 has good aerial photo. (1 pg)
11. Texon, Texas was a booming oil field company town before WWII and it had some talented semi-pro baseball. Up to fifty pages on the team, community, and related history.
12. The Lehigh Valley Steam will use Rochester, NY as a model for their new stadium. The front of the new stadium will look like a railroad depot in keeping with the local rail heritage and the team's name. Also, an Easton, PA company has been given its first stadium contract for the new park that will seat 6000. Local press release & Soccer America pieces, (3 pgs).
13. Profile of Scottsdale, AZ Stadium, 1992 team program (2 pgs)
14. Misc. news, stadia notes, and area baseball history from the Oklahoma RedHawks program. Its new ballpark in the Bricktown section of the city is very impressive and has shades of Forbes Field and Griffith Stadium in the grandstand layout. Your chairman & family enjoyed a July/98 game there despite game-time temps at 104--and a night contest at that!
15. Memphis will wait another year to occupy AutoZone Park, but the downtown facility will be worth the extra year, so say the locals. The 14,000 seat facility will cover 14 acres and include a museum, 1500 club seats, 48 corporate suites, a picnic terrace, and open air concourse. (3 pgs)
16. Bring back the Cats to Fort Worth! Local efforts may result in an independent league team and ballpark erected on the site of old LeGrave Field, between the downtown and the Stockyards on Main Street. Committee member Joe Dulle is heavily involved and has generously provided us with a draft of the project and much positive--and some negative--press. (17 pgs).
17. Reading, PA ranked number 3 in minor league baseball cities, so says Baseball America. Three pages of local articles. Top five were Rochester, NY; Durham, NC; Reading, PA; Buffalo, NY; and Indianapolis, IN. The survey covered 158 National Association cities.
18. An April 12 Times-Picayune piece noted that the home of the Zephyrs may get a corporate name (1 pg).
19. Preview of the Islip, Long Island Ducks ballpark, NY Newsday, 4-30-99. The Suffolk County facility will cost nearly \$19 million and have even dimensions at 325 for LF & RF and 400 to CF. Seats 6000.
20. They opened the Atlantic City facility on May 20 with a loss. The stadium seats 5900 and cost \$11.5 million, raised from the city and the Casino Reinvention Development Authority. Phila papers, (3 pgs)
21. New stadium opening for the NY-Penn league team in Niles, OH, and our man in OH, Fred Schuld, scouted the project, sending us photos and promotional material. The Mahoning Valley Scrappers will play in a park near a shopping mall, and Fred suggests that this could be a new way to have the whole family take an outing, even in different locations! (4 pgs)
22. Seventy-five year old Tinker Field may see its minor league team move. Will the Orlando Rays move to a Disney facility? BB America May 17-30 (1 pg)
23. More improvements at Omaha's Rosenblatt Stadium. A \$4.7 million facelift helped the entrance and plaza areas. Of course, the ongoing effort to keep the College World Series is an incentive, but the AAA PCL Golden Spikes will enjoy the changes too.
24. Cedar Rapids, IA team wants a new facility to replace the 50-year old Veterans Memorial Stadium, but an earlier tax increase was defeated. Now the team is looking at a \$8 million state grant and raising \$3 million locally in private support.
25. Round Rock, TX is off to a fast start as it expects a new team & park for the 2000 season. Already, 2000 season ticket packets have been sold for the \$14.5 million/7700 seat ballpark, located to the north of booming Austin, TX. A rivalry with Texas League franchise San Antonio has already been developed with a May series between the Jackson Generals (the future team for Round Rock) and San Antonio at a college facility in Austin. Hall of Famer Nolan Ryan leads the group that purchased the Jackson, MS franchise for Round Rock.
26. Improvements are sought by the Ravens for New Haven's Yale Field, a 1927 classic that needs some updating to stay current with league/ NA specs.

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27. The Shreveport, LA Fairgrounds Field received \$1 million in field, press box, and other improvements.
28. Columbus, OH (AAA) Cooper Stadium goes back to grass! Two "carpets" lasted eleven years each after the stadium welcomed minor league ball back to the city in 1976.
29. Knoxville, TN, has another old park in danger. Plans have been made to build a 6000 seat facility in Sevier County, off Interstate 40. A "make it or break it" season ticket drive netted 2000 packages sold by the deadline, with 60% of the packages sold to residents in Sevier County.
30. The Carolina Mudcats rebuilt its "minimalist" aluminum seat ballpark with \$15 million and turned it into a 4500 seat park for 1999 and 6000 seats for 2000. A restaurant and 18-20 skyboxes will be added.
31. Seventy-two year old Billy Herbert Field may be on borrowed time as the Stockton Ports (CA) hope to have a new park in the next year or two. A city-funded market study was underway and the team paid for an environmental impact study and a preliminary design for a new park.
32. Fresno, CA will leave the local university park for a new downtown ballpark after this season.
33. Chattanooga's Engel Stadium, one of the oldest minor league parks, may have but a few years left as plans are being made for a new 6000-seat park in the city's downtown. In exchange for the land, team owner Frank Burke offered to finance the park himself for \$9 million. A drive to sell 1800 season packages by February 3 was met with a week to spare, even though the team had never had 1000 season ticket holders. The new stadium would be close to the city's Tennessee River.
34. Profile of 1925 Lanphier Park (born as Reservoir Park) in Springfield, IL , local paper (2 pgs)

VIII MARKERS/DISPLAYS/PRESERVATION

1. Mike Dempsey is working with some local folks to get another reminder of Hartford's Bulkeley Stadium created. A marker is attached to the wall of the nursing home occupying the site. Mike would like to locate and paint the home plate location in the home's parking lot.
2. Good Bye Memorial Stadium-Baltimore. Plans to save all or part of the former Orioles home park fell short. The local housing commissioner announced that the stadium will be razed to make way for a 446-unit senior housing development (and how many parks do we know have left the stage that way!) A 2-16-99 Baltimore Sun article shows the top three plans for the site, including those that incorporated the existing stadium. (2 pgs).
3. Harry Caray lives again outside Wrigley Field with a big statue, and there was some controversy as fans were adding a can of Bud to Harry's hand. Has anyone kept track of how many statues we have outside major league parks?
4. Save another wall! The OF wall over which Hank Aaron's record-breaking 715th home run flew, has been preserved in the parking lot for the new facility.
5. The New Haven Ravens have announced plans to create a museum to display the preserve the history of their home, Yale Field, a classic 1927 facility.
6. Committee member Dan Bonk was among the SABR members involved in the marker to note the site of the first World Series in Pittsburgh. (1 pg)
7. The Brooklyn Dodgers Fan Club newsletter notes that a playground next to the Con Ed plant, once part of Washington Park, may be replaced by a homeless facility. This land, like the Con Ed plant, once made up Washington Park, the pre-Ebbets home of the Dodgers, and home to Brooklyn's Federal League entry.
8. The Save Fenway Park group had a presentation by Charles Hagenah on May 13, outlining the feasibility of renovating the classic ballyard. Visit the organization's web site at www.SaveFenwayPark.com.

IX MISCELLANEOUS MAJOR LEAGUE NEWS NOTES

1. Several members including John Pastier have noted that the loss of five parks in 1999 (Detroit, Milwaukee, Houston, Seattle, & San Francisco) may be a new "mortality" precedent. John's one page comments available. Also, we have several articles that outline the last notes of the five parks and the expected arrangements for the new parks. Sources include BB America (1 pg) Seattle Times (3 pgs), Newsday (2 pgs), and MLB web page (6 pgs)
2. Happy Twentieth Anniversary to Disco Demolition Night, that fated evening promotion at old Comiskey Park. Mike Veeck, son of the legendary Bill Veeck, recalls the exact moment as July 12, 1979, 8:23 pm. Were any of our Committee members present?
3. Joe Adcock passed away in May; Joe was the only man to clear the 83 foot roof at Ebbets Field, taking a 555-600 foot drive in 1956. Joe was also one of four to reach the CF bleachers with a home run; the others were Hank Aaron, Lou Brock, and Luke Easter.
4. Care to rent Dodger Stadium for a company event, softball game, wedding, etc? \$75,000 SI 5-3-99
5. Lee Grissom died on October 4, 1998. He was one of the two Reds players who rode the boat across the high waters at old Crosley Field after the big flood in 1937.
6. "Jacobs Field, Think you know it all," Plain Dealer Sunday Magazine, 4-4-99 (5 pgs)
7. Quick Stats Department: An overview of the age of all MLB parks shows some interesting trends. From 1920 (10.4 yrs) to 1960 (37.3 yrs) the parks steadily age, then they decline and despite a rise here and there, will level off at 23.2 years for the end of the 2000 season.

X THANKS TO ALL who sent the usually fine selection of articles, programs, photos, materials, and other paper that joyfully clutters the chairman's study. A few special thanks go to:

1. Jeff Samoray for the two copies of the opening day special programs on Tiger Stadium
2. Bruce Genther for a generous postage donation and photos of his latest model of Fenway Park.
3. Jim Nitz for a copy of the Milwaukee History Journal with his article on Bochart Field
4. Stephen Carroll for photos of various minor league parks
5. Joe Gusky for some wide-angle shots of various minor league parks.
6. Paul Ferrante for his sending of copies of research materials on the Polo Grounds.
7. Bob Boynton for sending our Committee library three ballparks books.

And among the more frequent correspondents we have had for the first half of 1999, we salute Lile Anderson, Bob Boynton, Steve Csik, Dick Clark, Ken Carrano, Steve Carroll, Mike Dempsey, Keith Danish, Mike Frank, Dick Kaufman, Don Lancaster, Ev Parker, Fred Schuld, & Kevin Tulley.

XI STADIAPLEX '99

From long-time postcard collector and ballparks historian, Ray Medeiros, we have news of the annual gathering :

"In recent years, ballparks aficionados have met annually in places like Chicago, Cleveland, and Los Angeles (Anaheim) to swap, buy, sell, and see postcards and photographs of their favorite ballpark. This year's site will be Fenway Park, Boston, on Thursday, August 19. That's right-- Fenway Park! (Ray says that the team provided a room at the park at no charge)

If you would like to join the group for a great day at the ballpark, here's what is planned for the day: 10 am, the Stadium Postcard Exhibition opens (the gang calls it StadiaPlex '99) and it runs

until 5 pm. At 1 pm there will be a special tour of Fenway for those signing up (\$12). At 5 pm, the Red Sox will provide a buffet for \$12. At 6:05 pm, the Sox take on the Oakland A's---tickets costs \$24. During the day there will be rare and wonderful postcards of old ballparks on display.

Good news: admission to Stadiaplex '99 is free. For details and to reserve tickets, contact Alan Walters (781) 237-2223; 15 Windsor Road, Wellesley Hills, MA 02481. Get your reservations in early, especially for the game as the Sox need a headcount.

XII ATTENDANCE & OTHER NUMBERS

1. Opening Day crowds were at their usual levels, but there were a few interesting stats. In the AL, Toronto and Chicago had poor first game turnouts. In the NL, only Philadelphia had a poor opener. For the season's second game, AL teams dropped back by 18,683 from the opening day levels while the NL teams dropped a whopping 24,622 from game one levels. Only Cleveland managed to draw more for its second game of the season, finding an extra 126 fans. See the enclosed statistical sheet.
2. For the first two months of the season, there were forty-one sub-10,000 crowds: twenty-three in the NL and eighteen in the AL. The sub-10,000 club includes: Montreal (21), Oakland (11), Minn. (4), Chicago AL (3), San Francisco (1) & Florida (1). In addition to leading MLB in this dubious stat, the Expos logged the first two months' smallest crowd with 4998 souls watching Phila. on May 18.
3. St. Louis had an increase of 25% in pre-season sales as of Feb/99 despite a 12% price hike (SI 2-22)
4. The White Sox are down to 8,000 in season tickets from 18,000 in 1994.
5. Several clubs, including the Twins, could draw fewer than one million in 1999, but at least the Twins have the lowest average ticket price at \$8.22 (SI 3-29)
6. The Kingdome's last opening day wasn't a sellout for the first time in five years.
7. A crowd of 20,310 for a Jays-A's game on May 6 was the smallest in SkyDome history, and it was the lowest for a Toronto game since a 4-27-88 game at old Exhibition Stadium.
8. Three teams in baseball have never drawn 2-million in the 90s: Milwaukee, Montreal, & Detroit. Meanwhile, not counting TB and AZ, four teams in the 90s have never drawn fewer than 2-million in the 90s: Toronto, LA, Baltimore, & Colorado.
9. The Diamondbacks season ticket base has shrunk to about 26,000, down from 36,000 in '98.
10. Despite the early season bouts of poor weather and other factors that limit the first two months of the season, MLB attendance was averaging about 26,000/game as of June 6, down from 30,000/game for all of 1998. An enclosed sheet outlines the thirty clubs and their attendance for the first two months of the season. If two-million/year is the minimal sign of good financial health, at least a third of MLB will not make that level. At least two teams may not hit one-million.
11. Interleague play has produced some exciting match-ups, but in some cities the response has been poor. As of the afternoon games of June 6, interleague games drew 34,294, up 32% from regular season contests. More in our next newsletter.

XIII PARK DIMENSIONS

Our Committee has been asked to work with the Total Baseball people to keep tabs on any changes in ballpark dimensions from year to year. This would include increase/decrease of foul territory, changes to foul lines or other OF dimensions, OF walls raised, lowered, etc. In a reciprocal agreement reviewed and approved by the SABR office, we would provide assistance in return for access to some of their materials. Does anyone have any changes in MLB parks to report? The only one I have read about for 1999 is the Angels bringing in their fences nine feet to please Mo Vaughan. We will eventually need a designated spotter for each of the thirty ballparks. If you visit a park often enough--or keep close tabs

on a facility, let me know and we will pull together a list. Thanks.

On a similar note: TSN reported in its 5-24-99 issue that Juan Gonzalez wants the team to pull in its fences, especially reducing the 390 LCF power alley at the Ballpark in Arlington.

And in another related piece, we have a page from the SABR-L wire on some discussion on field/OF dimensions and game effects.

XIV MAJOR LEAGUE NEWS NOTES

MONTREAL Here is a city that needs help--any kind of help! A March/99 poll in one of the city's newspapers revealed that nearly 55% of Quebec citizens opposed a government, interest-free loan to help build a new downtown park. A SI story of 4-12-99 noted that the provincial government would offer \$8 million/year for twenty years to help build a park while Labatt said it would pay \$100 million to get its name on the new park while luxury suite orders now stand at \$40 million. Perhaps the future will be in Montreal. Better be quick---the team is drawing less than 10,000/game consistently.

SAN FRANCISCO With the new park the home dugout will move from first to third base. As of mid-March, 75% of the superstructure and 60% of the overall foundation was complete.

FLORIDA Commodities trader John Henry was approved to by the club from Wayne Huizenga. The hopes for a new park by 2002 or later seem far-fetched. MLB moved the 2000 All-Star Game from Florida to Atlanta, upsetting the team and its new owner. MLB officials said the decision was not to punish Florida but showcase a new park in Atlanta.

WASHINGTON A March 1-7 Street & Smith Sportsbusiness Journal piece noted that the city had a \$330 million stadium plan ready and just needed a team. The plan called for a stadium in the center city just to the east of Mount Vernon Square. A assessment by the Journal said the plan was "riddled" with dubious assumptions." SI noted that the city "struck out" in a spring two-game exhibition series that was poorly attended at a poorly prepared RFK Stadium. (2 pgs)

HOUSTON A January report noted that the project was twenty days behind schedule. Your chairman's home city is making the structural steel for the 42,000 seat park (2 pgs-San Angelo paper). Enron Corporation has paid \$100 over thirty years for the naming rights.

ST. LOUIS The Cardinals have increased the pressure and stories in their request for a new stadium. By the beginning of the next millennia, they would have the third oldest park in the NL behind Wrigley While the teams draws very well, Busch does lack some of the money-making extras of the newer facilities. Plus, maintenance of the aging facility is a concern. Including the newest renovations and repairs, the Cards expect a \$4 million loss in 1999. The team hopes for a new park no later than 2004. Ten pages of local articles. Of all the circular concrete facilities of the 1960-75 era, Busch does remain the more attractive, especially since they switched back to grass.

LOS ANGELES Changes for Dodger Stadium will not be as drastic as first feared, but at least thirty luxury suites will be added for the 2000 season. Other renovations and extra seats could reduce that vast foul territory, altering a pitchers' paradise! Home plate could be seventeen feet closer to the back-stop. Meanwhile, the plans to abandon Vero Beach for AZ are in limbo with less certain incentives in the new place and some financial incentives being given in the old.

NEW YORK Maybe George will stay in the Bronx! A NY Times article of 4-9-99 noted that Steinbrenner had "publicly expressed interest" in staying in the team's long-time borough home. But, he has called for substantial government investment to create a new facility within a "baseball village." Meanwhile, no news from the Mets who continue to push for their modern Ebbets Field clone in the parking lot of Shea Stadium. A 45,000 seat facility could cost upward of \$650-750 million. If government support is forthcoming, a new NL park could be a reality by 2003.

MILWAUKEE Extremes of winter weather delayed the raising of the roof, but as of February the new park was half-done in month 28 of the 42-month project. The team has been marketing a "Bringing Down the House" campaign to mark the last season of County Stadium (1953-1999). We have a four-page newsletter outlining all the details of the new facility that will seat 43,000 and have dimensions of 342 to LF, 374 to LCF, 400 to CF, 378 to RCF and 345 to RF. Also, ten pages of local stories of the construction over the core winter months.

OAKLAND The team extended its lease for another three seasons to 2004. After the SABR tour of the facility last year, I can't say I was all that impressed with the Coliseum as a baseball venue.

TORONTO The Jays signed a new ten-year lease at SkyDome.

DETROIT Cleveland fans unable to get seats to see their team have been driving to Detroit for the Indians-Tigers series! The impending loss of the Tigers may threaten the economic health of its Corktown neighborhood. The new facility will have just 15,000 seats in the upper deck, the smallest in baseball (not counting single-decked Fenway, of course). Just as well as the computer renderings of the new place show a second deck that is pushed way back. We have many pages of the memories of local fans as the old park has its final opening day. Also, an interesting piece on a female groundskeeper. And a few pieces by those not so well disposed to the old lady at Michigan and Trumbull. Ask for the small packet (15 pages) or the large one (30 pages) of local sources.

SAN DIEGO One local paper noted that "Building a ballpark isn't a pretty process," and a May release of an impact report noted the increase of traffic and noise to the downtown section. The city got the "green light" to start in late March, and the proposed home plate will be near the current intersection of Eighth Avenue and L Street with the OF pointing north. An April-2002 opening day is still the goal. The loss of several key players in the off-season brought out severe critics. We have several pages of the park designs and plans as of February. Ten pages in all from the local papers.

BOSTON The Red Sox have revealed their plans for a new Fenway Park, built across the street from the existing 1912 yard, costing nearly \$500 million. The preliminary sketches show an updated Fenway with the same OF dimensions and distinctive field shape. Committee member Charles Bakst sent us his article from the Providence Journal-Bulletin, approving the entire concept. (2 pgs). The Save Fenway Park! Preservation organization is pushing officials and the public to consider a renovated Fenway that would enlarge the ballpark to 44,000, with all the current necessities of luxury boxes, club seating, etc. A March 17, 1999 Boston Herald special report noted some irregular practices within the Yawkey estate administered by team president John Harrington. In a March 18 Boston Globe story, he noted that he had no plans to sell the club anytime soon. (6 pgs) The neighborhood, of course, isn't too thrilled with the idea of a bigger Fenway as the current one creates much congestion. Interesting how two folks can view the same place differently: one TSN writer called the place a jewel while another in a separate article called it "aging.... decrepit."

SEATTLE The total cost is up to \$517 million, thus the locals aren't too pleased with the naming rights being given away--and at somewhat of a bargain according to a local story of May 4. Safeco gets 20 years of name recognition for \$40 million. Lile Anderson reports that two OF changes were made from the original design to accommodate local talent: outfield walls were lowered to eight feet, making more spectacular catches possible; and the LCF corner now checks in at 400 rather than 420. Lile has sent several sets of color and b/w photos for our files..thanks! We have about ten pages of material from local papers that outline the new park's features as the mid-July opening approaches. Committee member John Pastier was quoted in the April 1 Seattle Post-Intelligencer: "The architects overall did a very good job. It's a very nice looking stadium. It's well above the average for these recent ballparks."

Listed capacity of 45,600, down from 58,801 at the Kingdome.

PITTSBURGH The state came through with its money in early February and the team had a major groundbreaking ceremony on April 7. PNC park will seat 38,127, and other than an earlier Montreal proposed park, it will be the smallest new facility in the majors. Up to 15 pages of local papers with newest design and groundbreaking ceremonies.

PHILADELPHIA The same state money that will help baseball & football in Pittsburgh will also support new facilities for the Quaker City teams. The Eagles want to stay near the existing Veterans Stadium, but the mayor and team officials favor an inner city site. Committee member Ken Tulley sent us a photo study of the various downtown sites. We have up to 15 pages of local stories that outline the Broad and Spring Garden site with some preliminary renderings of what the new Phillies home could look like by 2002. The baseball vs. football needs are interesting to watch, and this city provides a test case of the potential urban relationship of a ballpark to a city while a football stadium can be just any facility in an open parking lot.

XV MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

1. Last month Tom Goldstein at Elysian Fields Quarterly called and notes that they might be reprinting City Baseball Magic (CBM). First published by our Committee ten years ago, this publication summarized the case for the urban ballpark, a building/design style that has been used in nearly all the baseball construction of the past decade. The booklet was reprinted by the company that bought out the old Minneapolis Review of Baseball, the organization that helped our Committee publish CBM back in 1988. Now, it could be updated and made available again. Tom generously offered to give a percentage of the sales to our Committee for our future projects and we thank EFQ for their generous offer. Committee member Phil Bess wrote City Baseball Magic and we look forward to seeing those classic viewpoints again in print.
2. Mike Dempsey reviewed the parks of the Cape Cod League and found them lacking. "The great mystique of the League has been lost by me."

That will wrap-up this issue. The next issue will go out in September. Many thanks for your donations of materials. We welcome written submissions such a book reviews, impressions/reviews of ballparks, research hints, summaries of any ballparks research, and general news notes.

Don't forget to renew your SABR membership! See you in Arizona!

ANSWERS TO THE BALLPARK TRIVIA QUIZ

1. San Diego Padres
2. Seattle Mariners
3. Florida Marlins
4. Tiger Stadium
5. Cleveland Municipal Stadium
6. Memorial Stadium
7. 1943 AAGPBL All Star Game played with portable lights.
8. Cinergy Field in Cincinnati
9. Oriole Park at Camden Yards
10. Ebbets Field
11. New York Yankees for Roy Campanella Benefit Night
12. Shibe Park
13. Forbes Field
14. Sportsman's Park-1946
15. Memorial Stadium
16. Forbes Field-1921
17. League Park-1920-Elmer Smith
18. Polo Grounds
19. Ebbets Field-1939
20. Atlanta Fulton County Stadium
21. Griffith Stadium
22. Mickey Mantle
23. Wrigley Field-Chicago
24. Wrigley Field-Los Angeles
25. Forbes Field
26. The wooden chairs were for the Cubs games. The metal chairs were for Bears games. The metal chairs were narrower, allowing the Bears to squeeze two extra chairs into each box.
27. Miller Huggins
28. Roger Maris
29. Pope Paul VI
30. Pope John Paul II

OUR THANKS TO BARRY EVANS FOR PROVIDING THIS QUIZ.

ATTENDANCE REPORT As of May 30, 1999

<u>American League</u>	<u>1999 Game Average</u>	<u>'99 Projected</u>	<u>'98 Actual</u>	<u>Potential Difference</u>
1. Cleveland	43,997	3,563,757	3,467,299	+ 96,458
2. Baltimore	40,909	3,313,629	3,685,194	- 371,565
3. New York	36,723	2,974,563	2,949,734	+ 24,829
4. Texas	34,604	2,802,924	2,927,409	- 124,485
5. Anaheim	29,710	2,406,510	2,519,210	- 112,700
6. Boston	27,790	2,250,990	2,343,947	- 92,957
7. Seattle	27,099	2,195,019	2,644,168	- 449,149
8. Toronto	25,196	2,040,876	2,454,303	- 413,427
9. Tampa Bay	19,406	1,571,886	2,406,023	- 834,137
10. Detroit	18,814	1,523,934	1,409,391	+ 114,543
11. Kansas City	18,685	1,528,065	1,494,875	+ 33,190
12. Minnesota	15,183	1,229,823	1,165,980	+ 63,843
13. Oakland	14,666	1,187,946	1,232,239	- 44,293
14. Chicago	14,513	1,175,553	1,391,146	- 215,593
League Average	26,131			

ATTENDANCE REPORT As of May 30, 1999

<u>National League</u>	<u>1999 Game Average</u>	<u>'99 Projected</u>	<u>'98 Actual</u>	<u>Potential Difference</u>
1. Colorado	42,305	3,426,705	3,698,723	- 272,018
2. St. Louis	40,570	3,286,170	3,195,651	+ 90,519
3. Los Angeles	40,004	3,240,324	3,089,222	+ 151,102
4. Atlanta	39,333	3,185,973	3,361,350	- 175,377
5. Arizona	34,853	2,823,093	3,615,158	- 792,065
6. Chicago	33,971	2,751,651	2,622,800	+ 128,851
7. San Diego	33,032	2,675,592	2,555,901	+ 119,691
8. New York	27,476	2,222,556	2,287,932	- 65,366
9. Houston	27,106	2,195,586	2,450,451	- 254,865
10. Cincinnati	20,533	1,663,173	1,793,679	- 130,506
11. Philadelphia	19,402	1,571,562	1,715,702	- 144,140
12. San Francisco	19,297	1,563,057	1,925,634	- 362,577
13. Pittsburgh	19,227	1,557,387	1,560,950	- 3,563
14. Milwaukee	18,860	1,527,660	1,811,548	- 283,888
15. Florida	17,428	1,411,668	1,750,386	- 338,716
16. Montreal	9,305	753,705	914,909	- 161,204

League Average: 26,986

Information courtesy of Frank D'Amico.

The following ballparks were built during the WPA years (1935-1943):

Ballpark	Location	Year Built	USA indicated by Boyd's
McCoy Stadium	Pawtucket, RI	1942	No
Hi Corbett Field	Tucson, AZ	1937	No
Tinker Field	Orlando, FL	1936	No
Sam Lynn Ballpark	Bakersfield, CA	1941	No
Municipal Stadium	San Jose, CA	1941	No
Fiscalini Field*	San Bernardino, CA	1935	Yes
City Stadium	Lynchburg, VA	1939	Yes
Durham Athletic Park**	Durham, NC	1926 (1939)	No
Grant Field	Dunedin, FL	1939	No
Riverview Stadium	Clinton, IA	1935-1937	No
College Park	Charleston, SC	1940	No
Grayson Stadium	Savannah, GA	1941	No
Gunn Field	Elmira, NY	1939	Yes
Dwyer Field	Batavia, NY	1939	No
College Stadium	Jamestown, NY	1941	No
Sal Maglie Stadium***	Niagara Falls, NY	1932	Yes
Vince Genna Stadium	Bend, OR	1940s	No
Civic Stadium	Eugene, OR	1935	Yes
Bowen Field	Bluefield, WV	1939	No
Burlington Athletic Sta. #	Burlington, NC	NA	No
Kindrick Field	Helena, MI	1939	Yes
Municipal Stadium	Hagerstown, MD	1930s	NA
Roosevelt Stadium	Jersey City, NJ	1937	NA
Doubleday Field	Cooperstown, NY	1938-1939	NA

* Originally called Ferris Hill

** May have been remodeled in 1939 with WPA funding

*** Boyd's says 1932, but WPA years were 1935-1943

Originally built in Danville, VA, either in 1930s or 1940s

P.S. If you're not familiar with Boyd's, they publish a magazine-style listing of each season's major and minor league ballparks/stadia.

OPENING DAY & NEXT GAME CROWDS

1999

<u>American League</u>					<u>National League</u>				
	Capacity	Game 1	Game 2	+/-		Capacity	Game 1	Game 2	+/-
Cleveland	42,865	42,798	49,926	+ 126	Colorado	50,200	48,073	40,027	-8046
Baltimore	48,876	46,733	42,284	-4449	Arizona	48,500	46,929	31,197	-15,032
Boston	33,871	31,874	22,461	-9413	Chicago	38,884	39,092	23,788	-15,304
Tampa Bay	45,200	40,425	28,522	-11,903	St. Louis	49,676	47,806	31,381	-16,425
Toronto	51,000	37,160	23,710	-13,450	Atlanta	50,528	47,522	29,183	-18,339
Chicago	44,321	26,243	11,908	-14,335	Los Angeles	56,000	53,109	33,139	-19,970
New York	57,545	56,583	42,058	-14,525	Florida	40,585	38,983	18,075	-20,908
Anaheim	45,090	39,936	25,084	-14,852	Philadelphia	62,363	37,582	16,287	-21,295
Texas	49,166	46,650	28,329	-18,321	Milwaukee	53,192	55,770	33,479	-22,291
Kansas City	40,625	40,257	13,903	-26,354	Houston	54,370	51,668	23,381	-28,287
Oakland	43,021	46,380	15,579	-30,801	San Diego	66,307	61,247	32,751	-28,496
Seattle	58,801	51,656	20,435	-31,221	Montreal	46,500	43,198	12,386	-30,812
Detroit	46,945	47,945	12,263	-35,682	Pittsburgh	48,044	43,405	10,051	-32,994
Minnesota	48,678	45,601	9,220	-36,381	New York	55,777	52,052	15,729	-36,323
<u>Average</u>	46,854			-18,683	Cincinnati	52,953	55,112	17,310	-37,802
					San Francisco	46,510	57,430	15,795	-41,635
					<u>Average</u>	51,274			-24,622