

SABR Ballparks Committee Newsletter

January/February 1991

Robert F. Bluthardt Committee Chairman
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Best wishes to one and all for 1991!

I NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Jim Brown
875 William Blvd. #2001
Ridgeland, MS 39157

Jim, a professor at Tougaloo College, has a longstanding interest in minor lg. parks and spring training sites. His leagues of interest: Southern Assoc, Cotton States Lg, Florida State Lg. He has quite a photo collection.

Greg McFarlane
1808-44 St. Joseph St.
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M4Y 2W4

Greg has broad interest in all levels and parks. He is planning a cross-country trip to visit dozens of parks and hopes to publish his experiences. He has access to "the 38 libraries of the campus of N. America's 5th largest university."

Robert Carr
1083 Summit Avenue
Lakewood, OH 44107

Bob is a long-time SABR member and has a special interest in the new Cleve. ball-park project. In his words, "what would Ballparks Committee people like to see inside & out, on the field, in & under the stands, if they could build a park the way it ought to be!"

David Wright
195 Laursen Dr.
Syracuse, NY 13205

An avid model maker, David is interested in Wrigley, Fenway, and the NYC parks, and Tiger Stad.; collects old photos & cards; would like to see group trips to see some of the old parks.

Richard Beahrs
20 Beach Drive
Darien, CT 06820

Dick notes that California and Pitts. are of interest as well as the Negro Lg. parks. Interests in park architecture, photos, city planning/urban history. He is co-chmn of the Class A San Jose Giants

Jay Gauthreaux
1945 Concord Road
Gretna, LA 70056

All eras and levels interest Jay; has a photo collection; interest in relationship of parks and game development.

Bill Albach
#4 McKibbin
Springfield, IL 62707

Bill lists the NL and St. Louis, Pitts, and NYC as his interests. We also thank him for his postage fund contribution!

We welcome these six gentlemen and ask our fellow committee members to contact them if they see mutual interests.

Note to All Members: I have re-typed the mailing list, so if your address is incorrect on the mailing label, drop me a postcard and I'll make any corrections.

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- II ARLINGTON VOTES YES for the funding of a new Texas Rangers park by a 65% majority. A record number of voters turned out for this issue that will see a $\frac{1}{2}\%$ increase in the local sales tax. The tax revenue would be a part of the funds (\$165 million needed) to build a park. Preliminary drawings have been shown, but no final plans are set. Texas universities were involved with a design contest for the new park. (BP Newsletter, #5, Nov-Dec/1990).
- III BALLPARKS PHOTO CONTEST Thanks to Joe Favano, we have the guidelines for the first contest that we hope will be an annual affair. The rules are enclosed. Contact Joe if you have any questions. Good Luck!
- IV BASEBALL IN ACADEMIA Baseball was the main topic at the annual meeting of the Illinois State Historical Society last spring. And a panel on baseball in Texas will take place at the annual meeting of the Texas State Historical Association. A SASE of 29¢ for the extra materials describing the meetings/panels.
- V BASEBALL EXHIBIT is now in place at the Dallas Historical Society, located at Hall of State in Fair Park, in the shadow of the Cotton Bowl. "Grand Slam, the Legends and Lore of Texas Baseball" will be on display until June 16. Admission is \$2 for adults and \$1 for children. A SASE for a story about the exhibit opening.
- VI GRIFFITH STADIUM PLAQUE project continues under Gordon Thomas. With a change in leadership at Howard University (owners of the site of the old park), Gordon is trying again. For more info--and to see if you can help with this worthy effort to remember a park that served all of Washington, D.C.-- contact Gordon at 3000 No. Edison Street, Arlington, VA 22207.
- VII LA COLISEUM SAVED While not a pure ballpark, it was good enough for the Dodgers after Brooklyn and before Chavez Ravine! In danger of being bulldozed, it now will be rehabbed for Al Davis and his LA Raiders. Seating will be reduced from 92,500 to 85,000 for USC games and 70,000 for Raiders contests. Club seats and luxury boxes will be added and the running track will be eliminated.
- VIII ASTROTURF INFO Thanks to John Pastier the Astroturf Industries, Inc. of Dalton, GA, sent the committee a full info packet. For a selection of the "propaganda," send a 49¢ or 69¢ SASE, depending on how much you want.
- IX COLOR OF YANKEE STADIUM SEAT? Sally Smith of 6291 Lakewood Road, Parker, CO, 80134 (303) 840-9704, called recently. She has what she believes to be an original Stadium seat (1923-60) and wants to know what color it was at opening day-1923. Contact her if you can help.

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- X BALLPARKS OF NY STATE is the topic for David Pietrusza. He will be speaking at the Amsterdam, NY, Free Library, Church Street, Amsterdam, NY, 7 pm, Monday, February 18, 1991.
- XI DALLAS-FORT WORTH CHAPTER of SABR organized at a special meeting of January 8 at the Texas Rangers Stadium Club in Arlington. Over fifty SABR members and interested people came. Many new members to SABR were made; Bob Bluthardt gave a short talk on what makes a good ballpark; and a few "City Baseball Magic" copies were sold. Contact Howard Green at (817) 535-0058 for info on the next meeting on Tuesday, February 12.
- XII BALLPARKS IN MEDIA David Pietrusza reports that the demise of Comiskey Park was on the December 16, 1990 episode of the Fox network's "American Chronicles." According to David it was "short on facts but . . . an interesting piece of photo journalism." Thanks to Barry Evans for some information about a film that was done in Comiskey, a low budget "art" film. And Fenway is again the site for a movie. For info on the Fenway and Comiskey movie news, send a 29¢ SASE. And speaking of Comiskey again, how many of you have read of the bullet holes seen in the upper deck seats of the new facility?
- XIII HISTORY OF FENWAY PARK book by David Donaldson is moving along. He is hard at work looking for photos; needs more info on the May-1926 grandstand fire; and can't find a copy of the mortgage the Yankees held on Fenway. If you can assist or have advice, contact David at 41 Lynmoor Street, Milford, CT
- XIV SUNCOAST DOME REPORT by Joe Favano is available for a SASE of one stamp. Joe notes that the place does have obstructed view seats for some events. Also, a news clippings notes that the dome's mammoth columns are sinking, but a \$230,000 repair job should take care of it. The St. Petersburg facility awaits a possible major league baseball franchise.
- XV FENCE MOVING The Indians are moving the Cleveland Stadium fences in 10-15 feet as reported in several publications. Bill Livingston of the Plain-Dealer called to check into some related issues of ballparks and teams changing the park conditions to help the home club. A single-stamp SASE for the story. Also, Seattle Mariners are moving their fences out for 1991. The short (362) Left-center fence will check in at 381 feet for the coming season. The 324 left field pole will also increase to 336.
- XVI MEMORIAL STADIUM/BALTIMORE Gordon Thomas reports that work is progressing on a "coffee table" style book on this soon-to-be-abandoned park. For a SASE of one stamp I have Bruce Genther's outline. Also, Gordon has been writing various sports writers and officials in the area to see what can and must be done to save all or part of the park as a public facility/memorial. Another SASE for his letter and a quick history of the park. Write Gordon if you can assist. See item VI.

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XVII BALLPARKS TRAVEL From time to time, committee members ask about organizing trips with like-minded ballparks fans. A soon-to-be committee member, Cherie D. Miller, 1965 Cheremoya Avenue, Hollywood, CA 90068-3521, has asked the same thing. Your committee chairman can not provide travel arrangements, but he will provide the updated membership list to anyone at any time and let them organize something.

XVIII DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO BALLPARK? Despite many rejected plans and a few refused bond issues, the Downtown Ballpark Boosters Club for San Francisco continues the fight. The organization president, Dan Woodhead, contacted our committee for help and a major packet of info was sent to CA State Senator Quentin L. Kopp, a legislator identified with the cause. If you would like to add your assistance or advice--especially on the issue of private financing---contact Dan at 1550 Bay Street, #204, SF, CA 94123. (415) 931-7682.

XIX MISC. BALLPARK ITEMS

Fenway Park: John Holway wants to know how far the RF roof is from home plate. Seems that he is trying to pinpoint the distance of home runs by Yaz and Ted Williams (his was foul). If you have suggestions, contact John at 6 Kennedy, Alexandria, VA 22305.

Polo Grounds New committee member Jay Gauthreaux wants to know if there is a marker for this uptown Manhattan ballpark, gone since the mid-60s and replaced by high-rise housing. See his address on page one of this newsletter.

Sportsman's Park in St. Louis.... Larry Ritter sees some discrepancies in dates for the erection of the outfield bleachers. Some sources say 1909; others 1926. He is also seeking interior shots of the place. Contact him at 171 W. 73rd Street, NYC 10023

Old Orchard Beach.... Dan Pulubniak reports that The Ballpark, once hailed as a jewel of AAA level baseball, now hosts rock concerts and little else. No talk he says of trying to land another team for this Maine community.

XX CONGRATULATIONS go Ethan Casey for his lengthy study of the San Francisco situation (BRJ Vo. 19). Ethan is now working on a major piece on the Tiger Stadium issue, the fight to save it, the fan club, Tom Monaghan, and all the rest. If you have info to share; and if you have access to a copy of Pizza Tiger (Monaghan's book), then contact Ethan at 2614 Garfield Street, NW, Wash., D.C. 20008.

XXI PARK CHANGES in Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. The Pirates want to add 300 seats at Three Rivers Stadium resulting in reduced foul territory. The Reds fear that a boost in capacity at Riverfront (for the Bengals' benefit) would ruin the ambience with an extra tier of seats. The Riverfront plan is part of a city "Year 2000" outline.

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XXII NEW CLEVELAND PARK is making news and thanks to committee members F. David Gill and Evan Meyer, we have a good file of news. The bonds sold quickly, and a good thing too as the tax-free deadline was December 31, 1990. One bank repackaged the bonds in smaller "minibonds" that were snapped up in hours by people looking for just the right Christmas present. David was critical of the site plan that put a parking facility between the park and nearby development. For a copy of the Plain-Dealer story and some comments on the park to be by David and Evan, send a one-stamp SASE.

XXIII CITY BASEBALL MAGIC REPORT We continue to receive requests and letters that refer to our committee's publication. A professor at the University of Miami called as he is teaching an architecture course with an emphasis on ballparks. He is using the CBM publication. Lee Murray from Montana State University in Bozeman called as he is designing his own ballpark with a look toward the San Francisco situation. Several colleges have been teaching courses in architecture and design with ballparks as the study object. Most have used the CBM booklet.

I have delayed "closing the books" on the project finances as we still have a few copies left. Once the final ones are reserved for our committee files, I will tally the income and expenses and send checks to our original investors.

XXIV OTHER NEWS NOTES

Joe Bowman, the losing pitcher for the first night game in major league ball, died on November 22. The Sporting News obit noted that Joe thought that "the lights were not as good as they are today."

Facade of Yankee Stadium, the "old" Stadium, was burned for the most part, but John Guilfoyle reports that a 16 foot piece of it may still exist in Brooklyn. John says that the new facade is a copy in concrete. John also says that his Yankee newsletter is free for the March-90 issue only; other copies are \$1.00 each.

Ross Bartow notes that our committee helps him a good deal in the course he teaches on stadium/arena management at the University of Tampa. Thanks John!

New park for Milwaukee says the Sporting News (1-14-91) to be built on a site near current County Stadium. Milwaukee area members are asked to contribute any info for our files. The park is scheduled for opening day-1993.

McCormick Field in Ashville, NC, a 66-year old park, the last wooden facility of its age in use in minor league ball, will undergo a \$2.5 million facelift.

LATE NEWS NOTE: The 1-27-91 Baltimore Sun reports that the Maryland Stadium Authority is considering the building of a multi-story office structure on the south end of the B & O Warehouse, seriously altering the overall design of the project. A 29¢ SASE for the details. Thanks to Bruce Genther for the news note.

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XXV NL EXPANSION CITIES NAMED By now most of you know that the National League named Buffalo, Denver, Washington, Miami, Orlando, and Tampa-St. Petersburg as their six finalists for expansion franchises. For ballparks students this is a mixed blessing with a decent park in Buffalo, a possibly decent one in Denver, talks of a new facility or a rehabbed RFK Stadium in Washington, a dome in Tampa-St. Petersburg, a rehabbed/adjusted Joe Robbie Stadium in Miami, and who knows what in Orlando. Committee members are asked to keep alert to any developments in their area for any of these six cities. Side notes: half of the six sites are in Florida, not big surprise. Did you read Steve Wulf's January 14 article in Sports Illustrated, "You Aren't My Sunshine: Baseball should forget about expanding to Fla." There all sorts of rumors floating about as to what two cities will get the nod. I'll take a guess at Denver and Tampa/St. Petersburg.

XXVI BALLPARK ANNIVERSARIES in 1991 include the Cubs 75th of using Wrigley Field (The FL Chicago Whales had the place from 1914 to 1915). Wade Stadium in Duluth is having its 50th and committee member Todd Klatt is working to save that park. Anaheim Stadium (Angels) and Atlanta Stadium (Braves) have their 25th anniversary marks this spring. The home club lost both games in 1966 at Opening Day! The Red Sox left the Huntington Avenue Grounds 80 years ago on October 7, 1911. A day earlier the Reds left Redland Field that would reopen next season in larger fashion and be renamed Crosley Field in the 1930s. The Tigers left Bennett Park in 1911 but did not have farther to travel for opening day in 1912 as Navin Field opened on the same site, now known as Tiger Stadium. The Dodgers last used the LA Coliseum in 1961, thirty years ago. The third of the four Polo Grounds facilities opened a century ago in 1891. A twentieth anniversary for Veterans Stadium in Phila. A 25th anniversary for Busch Stadium in St. Louis. And a 20th anniv. for the last regular season Senator/major league game (regular season) for RFK Stadium in 1971.

I am sure that there are many more anniversaries of park openings, closing, etc. Submit your own for the next newsletter.

XXVII SKYDOME DEBT It may be an engineering marvel, but it's bleeding red ink! The facility fell short last year in generating enough revenue for expenses and bond repayment. See the clipping section for more info.

XXVIII HARWELL RELEASE Several committee members have written asking about our involvement in protesting the treatment of long-time Tiger broadcaster, Ernie Harwell. While Ernie isn't a ballpark, he certainly qualifies as an institution in Detroit. Members interested in expressing their feelings should contact the Tiger Stadium Fan Club, PO Box 441426, Detroit, MI 48244-1426.

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XXIX COMISKEY PARK (the real one) Our thanks to those of you who sent letters of support for its preservation/marker program to the Illinois State Historical Society. I hope to be visiting with Society officials in mid-February while in the area. If you want to see Comiskey remembered, send a note to that effect to Mr. Michael Devine, Director, Illinois State Historical Society, Old State Capitol, Springfield, IL 62701. If writing letters is a chore and you want to splurge on a phone call, try (217) 782-4286. If Mr. Devine is unavailable, try Mr. Jeffrey Allen of the Historical Markers Program. The Society has kindly answered my last letter and I look forward to meeting with them.

XXX 1990 REPORT ON CAMDEN YARDS PROJECT, from "Opening Day," the newsletter of the Maryland Stadium Authority:

The 1990 calendar year has been one of remarkable progress and accomplishment for the Maryland Stadium Authority. Each month saw more headway being made toward completion of the baseball park for Opening Day 1992.

- The Camden Yards site was acquired, businesses relocated and demolition completed.
- Final design of the new ballpark was completed.
- Excavation of the majority of the site was completed; caissons were installed; major utilities were relocated.
- Foundation concrete beams and foundations were poured; contracts for precast and architectural precast concrete were awarded and work begun.
- The contract for the fabrication of the steel superstructure was awarded and erection of the steel begun.
- Main stadium construction contract awarded and work begun.
- The sod for the playing field was planted and is growing.

- Work has begun on the restoration of the Warehouse.
- Historical site documentation was performed and the site of the Ruth Saloon was uncovered. Findings were shared with the public via site visits and "Student Press Days."
- Efforts to inform the public were expanded through media briefings, "Wednesdays at UMBC," informative brochures and fact sheets and the "VANPLAN" which brought the model and other information on the project to citizens throughout Maryland.
- Design of enhanced accessibility features in the new ballpark was completed and special seating for fans in wheelchairs was developed.
- Highway access, mass transit and parking strategies were developed and implementation begun.
- Interest payments of nearly \$13 million on outstanding bonds and notes were made.
- Contract awarded for architectural design for the Camden Station restoration.

XXXI SABR Board and Council of Committee Meeting takes place on the weekend of February 8-10, 1991, in Chicago. About half of the committee chairs will be gathering to discuss and draft new guidelines on committee operations. Peter Bjarkman, chair of the Latin American Committee is organizing the meeting. I have submitted a three-page memo on some of the issues regarding committees that I felt SABR should examine. A copy is available to any SABR Ballparks Committee member at no charge. I will postpone any survey of the membership until I hear what the meeting in Chicago proposes. Meanwhile, if you have any thoughts on this committee or SABR committees in general, you are urged to contact me or Peter. His address is PO Box 2199, West Lafayette, IN 47906.

XXXII MAILING LIST We now have over 90 committee members with a mailing list of 110. This runs into some serious money for newsletter costs. If you do not want to receive this newsletter, just let me know and you can save our committee some money. If we have not heard from you in a year or more, send a card, letter, or whatever to tell what you are doing. Inactive or excessively quiet members may be dropped from the list. Thanks!

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Available articles: Our great thanks to committee and SABR members who have sent the committee files so many good things. Contributors have included: Mike Welsh, Tony Formo, Bill Watterson, Francis Kinlaw, Charles Goslow, Mike Frank, Barry Evans, Corey Seeman, Joe Favano, F. David Gill, Evan Meyer, John Guilfoyle, Bob Carr, Roy Flemming. (Sorry if I left anyone out), Gordon Thomas

- a) "Diamond in the Round: Astrodome turns 25, Cite, Spring/90 (5 pgs)
- b) "Rounding the Bases," Seattle Times/Post Intelligencer, 4-7-85, baseball in Seattle in the 30s-60s, (3 pgs)
- c) "Unused Site Riles Neighbors," Seattle Times, 11-26-??, site of Sick's Stadium, (2 pgs)
- d) "Field of Dreams," Architecture Record, 11/89 (Buffalo), (4 pgs)
- e) "Minn. Town Betting on Major League Shopping," Wash. Post, 12-30-90, site of Metropolitan Stadium (1 pg)
- f) Old Comiskey Park Nostalgia Kit, no date/publication (1 pg)
- g) Worcester Baseball in the 1880s, The Whistleblower, May/June/July/Sept/ 1990 (7 pgs)
- h) Misc. clips on McCormick Field, Ashville, NC Summer-1990, (9 pgs)
- i) Yankee Stadium promotional brochure, 1923, White Const. Co., (7 pgs)
- j) Chicago Historical Soc. exhibit, Chi. Sun-Times, 12-21,90, (1 pg)
- k) "SkyDebt," Toronto Sunday Sun, 12-9-90, (3 pgs)
"Why SkyDebt?" Hamilton Spectator, 10-19-90
- l) Miami's push for baseball, St. Petersburg Times, 12-26-90 (3 pgs)

Cost for articles: 6 cents per page plus postage of 1 stamp per four pages. Anything extra goes to the postage fund.

SABR BALLPARK PHOTO CONTEST

(sorry for the small print; we'll reprint it in the Mar/Apr issue)

SABR BALLPARK PHOTO CONTEST

Contest Criteria: To capture the essence of the ballpark as well as the category among the list below.

General guidelines:

Photos must be received at 21 Roosevelt Avenue, Old Greenwich, CT 06870 by May 15, 1991. Photos need not be taken in 1991 but must be taken by entrant. No magazine photos, no postcards. The photo subject to be the ballpark in question. No player action shots.

General Photo Criteria:

Black and White or Color. Size: 3 1/2" by 5" to not larger than 4" by 6". Number of photos: no limit to categories entered but no more than 2 photos per category. Each photo must be designated to a category by the entrant. All entries will become property of SABR's Ballpark Committee Photo Collection

Who is eligible: Any current member of SABR. Also, all photos donated to the Ballpark Committee collection since the 1990 National Convention in Cleveland.

Categories:

Best Exterior Ballpark View,
Best Interior View of the Field,
Best Interior View of the stands,
Best Upper Deck view (Major League stadium)
Best Evening photo,
Best Minor League,
Best Major League.

Category winners will be displayed at the 1992 National Convention in New York City.

A Best Photo in contest will be chosen from among category winners.

Prizes:

To be announced later. Will be awarded at the National Convention in New York City.