

Outside the Lines

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SABR Business of Baseball Committee Newsletter

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Chairman's Note

New Vice-Chair, and More Writers, Needed. Vice Chair Claudia Perry is stepping down. Any Committee member interested in filling the position should get in touch with me at the address above. Preference will be given to those willing to write for the newsletter on a regular basis, particularly about historic matters. As **Andy McCue** said in reviewing the Committee for the SABR Board:

My only complaint is that the committee is too much a creature of the chair. His work is excellent, but touches on only a portion of the issues which this committee could be working on. In addition, if job or other considerations should cause him to cut back on his activities, or have to resign the chairmanship, this committee would flounder. I would like to see him find a way to introduce other projects under the committee umbrella. There are possibilities for cooperation with the 19th Century Committee (salaries and expenses then), Ballparks (the financing of stadiums past and present) and other committees. A project such as tracing the history (and expansion) of front-office functions from the National Association to the present would be very worthwhile. Unfortunately, as all SABR committee chairs learn, the number and quality of projects is in direct relationship to the number, quality and commitment of the volunteers who come forward.

If you have an interest in writing or researching about any of the topics mentioned in Andy's comment, or any other topic relating to the business of baseball *please* come forward!

Have you renewed your SABR membership for 2003? If not, you can do so by mail or online at www.sabr.org. For non-members, subscriptions to this newsletter are available for \$10/year.

Convention update. SABR 33, to be held at the Denver Marriott City Center from July 10-13, will feature a number of events of special interest to Business of Baseball Committee members. Our Committee meeting, tentatively scheduled for 1:00 p.m. Friday, July 11, will be followed by a panel on "Baseball in 2020" featuring Gary Gillette, William B. Gould IV, Leonard Koppett and **Andrew Zimbalist**. A panel on "Publicly Funded Stadiums and Economic Development" is scheduled for Saturday afternoon.

In addition, the Western Economic Association is meeting at the nearby Adam's Mark Hotel from July 12-14. SABR members are welcome to attend WEA's sports economics sessions, and WEA members are welcome to attend the Business of Baseball Committee meeting. Although the WEA schedule has not been finalized, the list of proposed sessions sent by **Larry Hadley** includes a number of papers of interest to Committee members, including "The Attendance Demand of Major League Baseball"; "Revenue, Population, and Competitive Balance in Major League Baseball"; "The Behavior of Major League Arbitrators, 1979-2001"; "Do New Major League Ballparks Pay for Themselves?"; and a panel discussion on "The 2002 Major League Baseball Labor Dispute." More details in the Spring newsletter.

Eighth Annual Business of Baseball Committee Survey

Thanks to this year's 39 participants: **Marshall Adesman, Leon Battista, Gene Carney, Tim Cashion, Aaron Cohen, Bob Costas, Frank Cunliffe, Bill Felber, Eugene Freedman, Steve Friedman, Steve Gietschier, Bill Gilbert, Mary Groebner, Jahn Hakes, Sean Lahman, John Matthew, Andy McCue, Thomas Mueller, Tony Nazzario, Rod Nelson, David Nieporent, Mark Pankin, Doug Pappas, Mark Pattison, Rodger Payne, Mark Peel, Tim Phares, Mike Rice, Dave Rich, Christian Ruzich, Rick Salamon, Dale Schneider, Joe Sheehan, Rich Sheehan, Harry Swanson, Peter Topkis, Ted Turocy, Jerry Wachs** and **Mike Webber**.

Question 1. Rate the new CBA on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being a total win for the players and 7 a total win for

the owners.

Average: 4.89

Responses:

2: 1 vote
 2.5: 1 vote
 3: 4 votes
 4: 7 votes
 5: 16 votes
 5.5: 2 votes
 6: 5 votes
 6.5: 1 vote
 7: 2 votes

Leon Batista: "A 2.5. The players gave up some items, but yielded very little ground. They gained much in public relations by avoiding a strike."

David Nieporent: "7. The owners didn't get a hard salary cap, but they got everything they could realistically expect to get, and they did it without losing a single day to a work stoppage."

Doug Pappas: "4. That grade is an average. In absolute terms, the CBA was a 5, but based on the way the parties actually negotiated it's more like a 3. The big fight was over the luxury tax, which as adopted will have minimal effect on payroll. The real downward pressure on salaries will come from greater revenue sharing, coupled with the lack of any requirement that recipients reinvest the money in their club -- but the MLBPA never really fought the former and blocked all efforts to impose the latter."

Mark Peel: "On the whole, I'd rank it as a 4; while the owners plainly got more of what they wanted in the final agreement, arbitration and free agency weren't diluted and will ensure that player salaries remain high. If further experience shows that the new tactics of non-tendering arbitration-eligible players actually succeeds in driving down the average salary (or at least increases the standard deviation of salaries), I would move it up to a 5."

Dale Schneider: "5. The owners got the overall course of CBAs in the future on the track they want. Ultimately, I believe they still want to break the union and impose a hard cap, but at least they got smart enough to know they couldn't get there in one shot."

Rich Sheehan: "6. Virtually every previous negotiation in the Miller Era Onward has been a 1 or at worst 2 for the players. With that background, I have to rate this negotiation a 6 (well, maybe a 5). But when you look at what the owners wanted -- and Selig's success in keeping the owners quiet beforehand -- including contraction, a salary cap, a worldwide draft, a stiff luxury tax, then you could rate this as maybe a 3 or even a 2 for players."

Question 2. What one provision would you most like to add to, or change in, the new CBA?

Leon Batista: "Elimination of all 'luxury taxes.' The owners are serial spenders and want the players to solve their addiction to paying higher and higher salaries for those with marginal talent. Their cry of 'stop me before I spend again' is not believable."

Gene Carney: "Get rid of arbitration."

Tim Cashion: "Cap on draft and other amateur bonuses."

Aaron Cohen: "Random steroid testing throughout the offseason and season -- imitate the NFL's program."

Bill Felber: "This is dreamland since nobody is even suggesting it, but I'd like to see the players and owners agree to a process by which the commissioner was mutually appointed and given dictatorial powers to act in the game's best interests. (There are certain things I hope to live long enough to see -- the Cubs in the World Series, this one and Salma Hayek expressing an interest in me are probably three of the least likely, but I must live in hope.)"

Eugene Freedman: "Require all clubs to share revenue based upon market size/per capita income, rather than net revenues. Money to be disbursed equally among the teams. This would require teams to

maximize income, rather than to reduce it, especially for the teams closest to the mean."

Steve Friedman: "A minimum and a maximum salary cap."

Steve Gietschier: "I like the CBA as it is. Remember, a collective bargaining agreement is an agreement between the two parties. If they both like it enough to sign it, the public, even the fans, have very little room to complain."

Bill Gilbert: "Strong drug testing program."

Mary Groebner: "Get rid of interleague play."

Jahn Hakes: "A salary floor for the teams receiving shares of the luxury tax receipts or local revenue redistribution."

Sean Lahman: "Require all foreign players to submit to the amateur draft under the same rules currently in effect for US-born players."

John Matthew: "There needs to be a worldwide draft. Now, unless you are the Yankees/Red Sox/Dodgers, you cannot afford players from Asia."

Andy McCue: "I would remove continuance of interleague play. Generally felt this CBA was yet another band-aid rather than true reform, but realistically can't expect much else."

Thomas Mueller: "More revenue sharing."

Tony Nazzario: "Owners who receive money from revenue sharing should be required to spend 70-80% of the funds they receive on player salaries. A prime example of the abuse that the CBA does not prevent is that this year, while receiving revenue sharing money, Kansas City will reduce payroll."

Rod Nelson: "Length of contract."

David Nieporent: "Eliminate the 'luxury tax.'"

Mark Pankin: "Require revenue sharing recipients to use money to improve teams by some combination of increases in payroll, minor league operations, scouting offset by decreases in other baseball operations."

Doug Pappas: "A minimum 'baseball operations budget' for all clubs receiving revenue sharing. A minimum payroll requirement is too crude -- trading expensive veterans for prospects is the best strategy for a bad team to adopt -- but the money should be reinvested somewhere on the baseball side of the organization: players, draft picks, coaches, trainers, scouts, equipment."

Mark Pattison: "MLB's right to contract following the 2006 season."

Mark Peel: "Half of all revenues derived from each game should be paid into the revenue sharing fund and divided equally among all teams."

Tim Phares: "If there is going to be a luxury tax, teams should be required to spend their revenue-sharing money on player payroll. In exchange, much steeper sharing of revenues should be implemented -- such as 1/3 of gate receipts and 1/2 of local TV. Also, abolish the DH at a date certain 5-7 years down the road, but compensate the players by agreeing to expand by two teams in the same year."

Mike Rice: "A drug testing policy with some teeth. This includes steroids."

Christian Ruzich: "Institution of a worldwide draft."

Rick Salamon: "Since this is a fantasy question, how about no multi-year contracts?"

Dale Schneider: "Luxury tax is still too high to make much of a difference for most teams. Length of agreement. I hope (I know I'm hopelessly naive) that they can extend it before its completion. How about an assured six or seven years of labor peace? Tougher steroid testing. The current system seems to be PR BS."

Joe Sheehan: "Connect revenue sharing to market size, not actual revenues."

Rich Sheehan: "There should be a real franchise minimum payroll. Why should Steinbrenner and the Yankees work like dogs for the best cable TV deal and then have to share the revenue with some unimaginative and unmotivated owner in, say, Milwaukee when the owner in Milwaukee is just going to put the money in his (or her) pocket rather than put the money into the franchise? As much as I hate the Yankees as a Red Sox fan, I must admit that at least they have a true commitment to winning, something I cannot say about many MLB franchises."

Harry Swanson: "Revenue and luxury tax money should be earmarked for player salaries/development."

Peter Topkis: "There are several provisions that are too political and lack any business sense. I think that Selig still has too much financial control, but I'm honestly not sure if that is part of the CBA or the owners' own foolishness."

Ted Turocy: "A worldwide amateur draft."

Jerry Wachs: "Hard cap with increased revenue sharing."

Mike Webber: "More extensive revenue sharing."

Question 3. The CBA assigned draft-related issues to a joint committee. Which of the following changes, if any, will eventually be adopted?

- a. *Allowing teams to trade draft picks: 29 Yes, 10 No*
- b. *Expanding the draft to include foreign players: 29 Yes, 10 No*
- c. *Eliminating compensation picks for teams which lose free agents: 11 Yes, 28 No*
- d. *Adding compensation picks for teams which fail to sign high-round draft picks: 12 Yes, 27 No.*

Andy McCue: "A, b, c. All of these being issues the non-proposing side doesn't care about particularly. I would argue that (a) will be destructive, leading to poorly managed franchises trading away part of their future for the Tyler Houstons of the world. It also won't stop the Yankees from ignoring the draft and buying whatever they need."

Joe Sheehan: "B, for certain. D might, because the union can sell out amateurs the way the NBA players did. A and C are less likely."

Question 4. According to the MLBPA, the average player salary in 2002 was \$2,295,649, up 7.3% from 2001.

- a. *What will the average salary be in 2003? [Note: where a range was given, I used the midpoint.]*

Average: \$2,287,089 (down 0.4%). (High: \$2,850,000; low: \$2,000,000.)

David Nieporent: "\$2.2M. There were an awful lot of NRIs and players only getting one or two offers. Still, arbitration ensures that people like Greg Maddux can't get screwed."

Mark Pattison: "\$2.3 million -- a slight rise attributable almost entirely to the minimum salary being hiked from \$200,000 to \$300,000 this year."

Rich Sheehan: "\$2.2M. The measured decrease will likely be relatively small given the large number of multiyear contracts and the increased salaries built into many of those contracts. Thus, the drop in the mean salary from approximately \$2.3M to \$2.2M will reflect a much more substantial fall in the salary of anyone with the misfortune of having to renegotiate this year."

- b. *What would it have been if the old CBA were still in place?*

Average: \$2,545,667 (up 10.9%). (High: \$3,125,000; low: \$2,000,000.)

Bill Felber: "The average salary will be roughly the same in 2003...right about \$2.3 million. I don't think it would have varied much under the old CBA. This is because the driving force either way is business economics. I am amused at the shots fired across the bow by the Players Association concerning collusion. The market works in both directions. It flows and it ebbs. This year it is ebbing. Here in the real world, we call that natural. Look at the economy...it stinks."

Tony Nazzario: "When judging salaries, you have to use the median number, not the mean. The use of average salary when there is such a wide range of salaries is extremely deceiving and using 'average salary' is just feeding the beast that says that all ball players are overpaid. 'Average salary' is an 'owner's number' and this committee, especially (a group that is expected to go beyond generalities and give greater insight than the 'regular' press) should *lead the fight* to use the median salary as the standard measure of salaries, and salary increase. There are all too many players making less than \$1 million to continue to use average salaries as a guide."

Ted Turocy: "Theory: most of the cost-consciousness we're seeing this winter would have happened even with an unchanged CBA. A combination of a weak economy with teams locked into expensive, inflexible long-term contracts is a killer regardless of the rules of the game."

Question 5. Here are the ten highest 2002 payrolls, as calculated for luxury tax purposes.

New York (A)	\$175,327,055
Texas	\$130,622,297
Los Angeles	\$120,009,194
Arizona	\$114,324,396
Boston	\$113,795,076
Atlanta	\$110,769,808
New York (N)	\$109,916,503
Seattle	\$100,044,597
San Francisco	\$ 96,222,368
St. Louis	\$ 96,112,859

- a. How many teams will end up paying the 2003 luxury tax, which applies to payrolls in excess of \$117 million?

Average: 3.51 teams

Responses:

1 team:	3 votes
2 teams:	9 votes
3 teams:	4 votes
4 teams:	14 votes
5 teams:	4 votes
6 teams:	2 votes
9 teams:	1 vote

Tim Phares: "One -- the Yankees. That's the entire design of the system. If anyone else pays, the system failed."

- b. The luxury tax threshold rises to \$120.5 million in 2004, \$128 million in 2005 and \$136.5 million in 2006. However, clubs exceeding the 2006 threshold will only be taxed if they had also exceeded the threshold in a previous year. How many teams will end up paying luxury tax in 2006?

Average: 3.11 teams

Responses:

0 teams:	2 votes
1 team:	13 votes
2 teams:	3 votes
3 teams:	4 votes
4 teams:	4 votes
5 teams:	5 votes
6 teams:	3 votes
7 teams:	1 vote
15 teams:	1 vote

Mary Groebner: "Three. Steinbrenner and Hicks can't control themselves, and Colangelo will try but not quite make it."

Rich Sheehan: "I think ultimately only the Yankees are going to be paying this tax. I think you're going to see smarter GMs over the next couple of years, beginning the season with payrolls of \$10-\$20M under the threshold and thus with the ability to pick up talent early in the season from the teams that give up early."

Question 6. Where will the Expos pay the majority of their 2004 home games?

- a. Montreal – **13 votes**
- b. RFK Stadium, Washington, D.C. – **20 votes**
- c. Puerto Rico – **1 vote**
- d. Other (specify) – **4 votes**

Leon Batista: "ABM, anyplace but Montreal. This is the best thing for baseball, the fans (are there any actually in Montreal?), and for the business of the game."

Steve Gietschier: "RFK, although I was there two years ago for a World Cup qualifying match, and the place will need a lot of work."

Jahn Hakes: All of the above. I think they're going to be the 2004 equivalent of Bingo Long's Traveling All-Stars and Motor Kings. They might even work in a few games in Portland or Buffalo or Monterrey, as MLB tries to entice cities to 'try out' for the majors. I have no prediction of whether or not each game will begin with the Expos starter offering an 'Invite Pitch' to the visitors."

Mark Pankin: "My guess is Portland, OR, but Montreal is also a possibility if baseball can't get the stadium deal it wants. It would make the most sense for the team to move to the Washington area, which means baseball won't do that."

Question 7. Where will the Expos call home in 2007?

- a. Montreal – **2 votes**
- b. Washington, D.C. – **13 votes**
- c. Northern Virginia – **15 votes**
- d. Portland, Oregon – **2.5 votes**
- e. Charlotte, North Carolina – **3.5 votes**
- f. Puerto Rico – **0 votes**
- g. Other (specify) – **1 vote** [unspecified]
- h. Nowhere – they will have been contracted after the 2006 season - **1 vote**

Tim Phares: "B. And after DC, the owners should add a third team in the New York area."

Rich Sheehan: "B. But if MLB was as innovative as the NBA or the NFL, they would break ground in Mexico City, stock the franchise with as many Mexican players as possible, work on a national contract with Mexican TV, play in the biggest stadium they could find."

BONUS QUESTION: Testifying before Congress in November 2000, Commissioner Selig asserted, "At the start of spring training, there no longer exists hope and faith for the fans of more than half of our 30 clubs."

- a. Name the sixteen clubs *LEAST* likely to make the playoffs in 2003.

From the 29 valid responses which listed 16 teams:

- 0 votes: Anaheim, Arizona, Atlanta, Boston, New York Yankees, Oakland
- 1 vote: Minnesota, Philadelphia, St. Louis
- 2 votes: Houston
- 3 votes: San Francisco
- 5 votes: Chicago White Sox
- 7 votes: Los Angeles, Seattle
- 17 votes: New York Mets
- 25 votes: Chicago Cubs
- 26 votes: Cincinnati
- 27 votes: Montreal
- 28 votes: Baltimore, Detroit, Florida, Milwaukee, San Diego, Texas
- 29 votes: Cleveland, Colorado, Kansas City, Pittsburgh, Tampa Bay, Toronto

- b. Of these clubs, identify the ones whose fans really should have "no hope and faith" of making the playoffs in 2003.

0 votes:	Anaheim, Arizona, Atlanta, Boston, Chicago White Sox, Houston, Los Angeles, Minnesota, New York Yankees, Oakland, Philadelphia, St. Louis, San Francisco, Seattle
1 vote:	Cincinnati
2 votes:	New York Mets
5 votes:	Chicago Cubs
8 votes:	Cleveland, Texas
10 votes:	Toronto
12 votes:	San Diego
14 votes:	Colorado
15 votes:	Montreal
17 votes:	Florida
20 votes:	Baltimore
25 votes:	Milwaukee, Pittsburgh
27 votes:	Detroit, Tampa Bay
28 votes:	Kansas City

Mark Pankin: "What is and was quite bothersome about his remarks is the implication that the only reason to root for and follow a team is because they have a chance for the post-season. I guess that shows that we need a commissioner who is first a fan. The next logical step is to expand the playoffs to 16 teams like hockey and basketball, and if that doesn't fool enough people, how about giving 8 teams a first-round bye and having a preliminary round in which the next 16 teams play for the 8 spots against the 8 receiving byes. With only 6 teams not making the post-season, even the Devil Rays will be in contention for most of the season! However, I suspect that will not bring new droves to the groves of Tropicana."

Rich Sheehan: "It's ironic that Selig would make that comment as the effective owner of the Brewers. Realistically, I don't think the Brewers have any chance this year. However, as an owner, you have to sell hope if you want to sell tickets and you want to make money. When you say that half the franchises shouldn't have hope, then how do you expect to sell tickets? And if you don't sell tickets, how do you expect to make money?"

The View from Japan, by Yoshihiro Koda

Last October, I visited the United States to attend a friend's wedding. It was a good occasion for me to watch American baseball. I attended the second game of the NLCS in St. Louis, and watched more post season games on TV. Some issues impressed me during my stay in the U.S.

The first issue was the number of walks provided to Barry Bonds. As you know, many American sluggers have been playing in the Japanese leagues. I have read that some of them have complained that no strikes were pitched to them when they were in good condition. They described Japanese hurlers as "chicken" and complained that such a situation had never happened in the U.S. because booing fans would never allow it. American baseball players know the shame. But during the games I watched, most of the pitchers facing Barry Bonds avoided throwing strikes to him. An American boy who was watching the game on TV with me muttered, "It's too dangerous to pitch a strike to Bonds."

The second issue was also related to Bonds. As you know, he raises both of his arms at home plate when he hit a home run. In my experience, Japanese players have usually shown more joy than their American counterparts when they hit home runs, as by raising their fist, doing "Banzai," and so on. Some American players who have played in Japan complained that such actions insult the pitchers against whom the home runs are hit. They said that if American players did this at any time except when they hit a game-winning home run, they would be hit by a pitch during their next at bat. But Barry Bonds was not hit by a pitch during the at bat after he hit a home run and raised his arms toward the sky at the home plate.

The third issue was the cheering style of the Anaheim Angel fans. They made noises with their "thunder sticks" during almost every Angel at-bat. This resembled situations seen in Japanese stadiums for a long time, though on a more organized basis. The phenomenon has never been welcomed by all Japanese fans and commentators, some of whom have complained, "Since American fans know baseball better than their Japanese counterparts, they only make noise during the really exciting situations. Japanese fans should follow their example."

Some Japanese may say that every moment of the postseason games are really exciting. Personally,

I don't like a constantly noisy stadium, but I guess that the Japanese fans who like making nonstop noise may feel that by doing so, they are sharing the game with the players. Angel fans have showed me that some American fans might feel the same way.

I am curious whether these observations are due to a change in style or philosophy in American fans, or whether I just had never noticed them before. I welcome any suggestions from readers. I can be contacted at koda@jmcti.or.jp.

The 2003 Hall of Fame Veterans Committee Vote, by **Doug Pappas**

In August 2001, the National Baseball Hall of Fame overhauled the Veterans Committee and its voting procedures. Of particular interest to this Committee are the changes affecting the ballot for managers, umpires and executives. As the players' ballot has been argued to death elsewhere, this article will concentrate on the non-players in general, and the owners/executives in particular.

The former 15-member Veterans Committee met once a year. Only those attending the meeting were eligible to vote, and vote totals were never released. The new system expanded the Veterans Committee to include all living Hall of Famers; all living recipients of the Ford C. Frick Award (broadcasters); all living recipients of the J.G. Taylor Spink Award (writers); and two members of the former Veterans Committee whose terms would not expire before 2003, Ken Coleman and John McHale. The new Committee, which for 2003 contained 85 eligible voters, would cast two separate ballots by mail: one for up to 10 of the 26 players ultimately selected for the Players Ballot, the other for up to 10 of the 15 managers, umpires and executives chosen for the Composite Ballot.

To qualify for the Composite Ballot, a nominee had to have been retired from baseball for five years. This waiting period was reduced to six months for candidates over 65. The rules expressly provided that those who both played and served as a manager or executive would appear on only one of the two ballots, but should be judged by their total contribution, and that "voting shall be based upon the individual's record, ability, integrity, sportsmanship, character and contribution to the game."

The process of creating the ballot began with a 10-member Historical Overview Committee appointed by the Baseball Writers' Association of America's Board of Directors. The Committee (Bob Elliott, Steve Hirdt, Rick Hummel, Moss Klein, Bill Madden, Ken Nigro, Jack O'Connell, Nick Peters, Tracy Ringolsby and Dave Van Dyck) took the first cut at reducing the pool of eligible candidates, compiling lists of 200 players and 60 non-players potentially worthy of consideration.

The original list of 60 managers, umpires and executives included 17 managers or coaches (Roger Craig, Charlie Dressen, Fred Haney, Whitey Herzog, Ralph Houk, Fred Hutchinson, Billy Martin, Gene Mauch, Danny Murtaugh, Steve O'Neill, Paul Richards, Billy Southworth, George Stallings, Chuck Tanner, Birdie Tebbetts, Patsy Tebeau and Dick Williams); 10 umpires (Bill Dinneen, Larry Goetz, Doug Harvey, Hank O'Day, Steve Palermo, Babe Pinelli, Beans Reardon, Cy Rigler, Bill Summers and Lee Weyer) and 33 executives.

The 33 executives can be further subdivided into 17 who were primarily owners or owner/GMs (Gene Autry, Sam Breadon, Charles Bronfman, Gussie Busch, George W. Bush, Barney Dreyfuss, John Fetzer, Charles O. Finley, John Galbreath, Calvin Griffith, Ewing Kauffman, Walter O'Malley, Joan Payson, Alfred Reach, Ben Shibe, Charles Somers, Chris Von Der Ahe and Phil Wrigley); nine who were primarily GMs (Buzzie Bavasi, Harry Dalton, Bob Howsam, Frank Lane, Paul Owens, Gabe Paul, John A.R. (Robert) Quinn, Bill Rigney and Cedric Tallis); five who were primarily major league officials (Chub Feeney, Garry Herrmann, John Heydler, Bowie Kuhn and Bill White), and one who was a labor leader (Marvin Miller).

On balance, the list of 60 looks solid. The candidates presented by the Historical Overview Committee span more than a century of Major League Baseball, from the 1880s through the 1990s. Although it would be easy to trim a dozen names from this roster, the only real clinker is George W. Bush, whose nine years as an owner of the Texas Rangers hardly qualify him for induction. Indeed, under the Hall of Fame's rules Bush shouldn't even have been considered: Bush didn't officially sell the Rangers until June 1998, less than five years before the election.

A BBWAA Screening Committee consisting of two writers from each major league city (four from two-club cities) then pared the original list of 60 down to a final 15. These included four managers (Herzog, Martin, Richards and Williams); four owners (Busch, Finley, O'Malley and Wrigley); three general managers (Bavasi, Dalton and Paul); two league officials (Kuhn and White); one umpire (Harvey) and one labor leader (Miller).

At this stage of the process, unfortunately, the Screening Committee functioned much like the old Veterans Committee, with a marked bias toward the writers' contemporaries. All of the fifteen finalists were

active in 1976 or thereafter. It's difficult, verging on the impossible, to come up with any other explanation for preferring Phil Wrigley or Harry Dalton to Barney Dreyfuss or Garry Herrmann -- and if the beer money Gussie Busch brought to MLB was a factor in his nomination, what about Charles Somers, who bankrolled half the American League in 1901?

The fifteen names on the final list were then submitted to the 85-member electorate. With 79 of the 85 voting on the composite ballot, 60 votes were needed to elect any candidate. None of the fifteen received the necessary votes. Indeed, none came close, with only umpire Doug Harvey winning even a majority. **Marvin Miller** failed to become the first recipient of this newsletter elected to the Hall of Fame, while Buzzie Bavasi did become the first person known to have received votes for the Hall of Fame while a dues-paying member of SABR.

The totals:

Doug Harvey: 48 votes
Walter O'Malley: 38 votes
Marvin Miller: 35 votes
Buzzie Bavasi: 34 votes
Dick Williams: 33 votes
Whitey Herzog: 25 votes
Billy Martin: 22 votes
Bill White: 22 votes
Bowie Kuhn: 20 votes
Gabe Paul: 13 votes
Gussie Busch: 11 votes
Paul Richards: 10 votes
Charles O. Finley: 9 votes
Phil Wrigley: 9 votes
Harry Dalton: 6 votes.

The average voter cast 4.24 of a possible 10 Yes votes.

Doug Harvey was a deserving candidate. Anyone who umpired for more than 30 years, earning so much respect that the players nicknamed him "God," has my vote. So does Walter O'Malley, clearly the strongest of the owner nominees. How could the old Veterans Committee have inducted Tom Yawkey but not O'Malley? And how could Marvin Miller receive fewer than half the votes -- even being left off the ballots cast by a number of modern Hall of Famers who owe their entire standard of living to Miller? (Meanwhile, Miller's nemesis Bowie Kuhn received 20 votes. Voting for Kuhn but not Miller is like voting for the Washington Generals but not the Harlem Globetrotters.)

After just one election, it is already clear that the structure of the Composite Ballot must be overhauled. Although the Players Ballot similarly failed to produce an inductee, there is a fundamental difference between the two ballots. All of the candidates on the Players Ballot have already been reviewed and rejected by the regular BBWAA electorate, but for candidates on the Composite Ballot, the Veterans Committee is their only chance for induction. The current Veterans Committee is unlikely ever to elect a candidate from the Composite Ballot. Marvin Miller probably stands the best chance, but not until the players, writers and broadcasters whose careers predate free agency leave the electorate. Since members of the current Veterans Committee serve for life, that may not happen until about 2020...the year Miller will turn 103.

The Composite Ballot also suffers from a lack of historical perspective. Although the Historical Overview Committee did a fine job of presenting a field of candidates, the writers on the Screening Committee devalued all contributions occurring before their own era -- and even if they hadn't, the electorate as currently constituted will never muster a three-fourths majority for any pre-1970 candidate. Fixing this would require two significant changes.

First, the two-stage process of creating a ballot should be reduced to one. Let the Historical Overview Committee prepare a ballot with 25 or 30 names, to be presented directly to the voters with no winnowing from a Screening Committee. Second, limit the Composite Ballot to voters willing to study the qualifications of the candidates -- and to put them in the context of the Hall of Fame as it currently exists. That doesn't mean lowering the standard to that of the worst inductees, but neither does it mean allowing current Hall of Famers to impose an artificially high standard on those deemed worthy of joining them.

Since 1960 the Hall of Fame has inducted eleven "pioneers or executives": Branch Rickey (1967), Ford Frick (1970), George Weiss (1971), Will Harridge (1972), Larry MacPhail (1978), Warren Giles (1979), Tom Yawkey (1980), Happy Chandler (1982), Bill Veeck (1991), William Hulbert (1995) and Lee MacPhail (1978). Hulbert's induction was the long-overdue correction of a mistake made in 1937, when the Hall erroneously credited Morgan Bulkeley with founding the National League. Rickey, Weiss, Larry MacPhail, Chandler and Veeck were inducted primarily for their accomplishments, while for Frick, Harridge, Giles, Yawkey and Lee MacPhail, election to the Hall of Fame was baseball's version of a super-gold watch presented for long and meritorious service.

Among the leading votegetters, Marvin Miller is in Branch Rickey's class as a nominee: if he's not in, something is seriously wrong with the category, the electorate or both. Walter O'Malley's not far behind. Depending how much credit for the Dodgers' success one gives to O'Malley, Buzzie Bavasi is either George Weiss or, at worst, on a level with Giles and Lee MacPhail. As MLB's first African-American league president, Bill White earns symbolic points, but like Happy Chandler, his candidacy for the Hall ultimately hinges on the value one places on symbolism. Bowie Kuhn and Ford Frick are quite comparable -- Kuhn served longer as Commissioner, but without Frick's prior years as a league president. And although he languished toward the bottom of the ballot, Charles O. Finley has much more in common with Bill Veeck than many of Veeck's admirers would care to admit.

Reggie Jackson recently told Bill Madden of the *New York Daily News*, "I just feel the Hall of Fame itself should be for only players. The executives, managers, umpires and the others should be separate." That's not Reggie's decision to make, any more than an MVP voter should be free to disregard the explicit directive that pitchers are eligible for the award. A properly redesigned Veterans Committee would require its electorate -- whether players, writers, broadcasters, executives or some combination thereof -- to study the historical record before voting, and would provide that electorate with a ballot designed to present the best possible cross-section of nominees from all eras of baseball history.

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