

# THE "HOLY COW"

NEWSLETTER OF THE HALSEY HALL CHAPTER,  
SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN BASEBALL RESEARCH

*Halsey Hall*

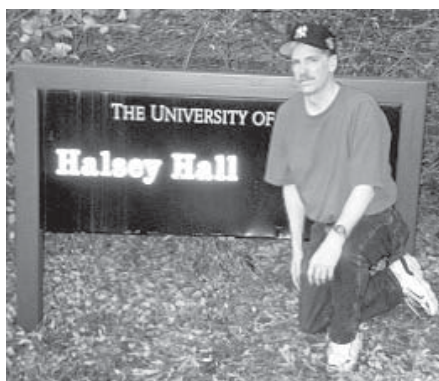
December 2001

## Janzen on the Slab



Jerry Janzen took the mound at an abandoned Tiger Stadium last month, thanks to a friendly stadium employee who allowed Janzen—along with fellow chapter members George Rekela, Paul Rittenhouse, and your scribe—to frolic on the field. After the Tiger Stadium visit, the group went to the Lindell AC, site of the 1969 fight between Billy Martin and Dave Boswell.

A week later, a member had the chance to pose by our chapter's namesake at the University of Iowa.



## Hot Stove Saturday Mid-Morning

The next Hot Stove Saturday Morning—December 1 at the Baker's Square at 66<sup>th</sup> and Xerxes in Richfield—will begin at 9:30 a.m.

All chapter members and guests are invited for a morning of baseball talk.

## Contraction Reaction

In the wake of news that the Minnesota Twins might be eliminated, a number of Halsey Hall Chapter members offered their thoughts on Bud Selig, Carl Pohlad, and the subject of contraction.

**Deano Thilgen:** "I have been trying to come up with a reply, but because the situation is so illogical I cannot come up with a logical response. It almost seems like the 2001 Twins went against all that major league baseball (MLB) has been saying . . . that you gotta have a new baseball-only ballpark to be competitive. If they were to go on being competitive in an old stadium that lacks key revenue sources with a ridiculously low payroll, would other cities like Detroit start asking questions? Wouldn't it be in MLB's best interest to just get rid of the Twins and not take that risk?"

**Mark Johnson (who attended the November 18 rally in the Metrodome parking lot):** "I call it subtraction (rather than contraction) and see the irony of this being announced on Walter Johnson's birthdate. I am still in denial but am also looking ahead and can picture AAA baseball in the dome in 2002 or 2003. The rally was exciting (even Terry Ryan and Dave St. Peter were there), but it seemed to review the past like a funeral reviewal.

"Other thoughts: Doesn't it seem that rallies often attract people (protesters) who you don't often attend games but just like rallies? The weather definitely did cut attendance, and I was even tempted to stay home.

"A new stadium would not be all roses and cream. There will be no \$99 or even \$149 season tickets, tickets will be expensive (ouch), and sellouts may be commonplace."

**Tracy Tool:** "The proposed folding of the Twins is symptomatic of the ills of baseball the business. The owners have failed to exercise reasonable control over their own behavior and cannot develop reasonable standards governing revenues, spending, community responsibility, and the many other issues they confront."

**Pete Hepokoski:** "Expansion diluted baseball. Contraction is reverse expansion. In general, I favor contraction. That said, I would rather have a team here in Minnesota than not. But NEVER at the expense of putting up public money to build facilities for a business that pays such outrageous salaries and then claims it needs government help. I am proud of Minnesota's refusal to give in. We just built them a park 20 years ago, and another park is no assurance that there won't be more demands later. Just because 12 or so other cities have succumbed to this pressure does not mean they were right. I love the sport of baseball but detest its financial structure. Let's continue to say NO."

**Jeff Brubaker:** "The main reason Bud Selig thinks the Twins should be contracted is that they don't draw enough attendance to create enough revenue, but EVEN without a new stadium, the Twins' attendance increased dramatically, because they were playing well. It shows that there are lots of fans still interested here, and that contraction at THIS point in time is a very dimwitted move."

**Contraction—Continued on next page**

## Contraction—continued

**Alan Holst:** “The Twins made a profit this year, yet the richest owner in baseball says he can’t compete in a market that set a league attendance record barely a decade ago, as part of an industry that has more than a billion dollars of annual operating capital AFTER paying all player salaries, all while benefiting from a monopoly that is granted an anti-trust exemption and public financing of EVERY ONE of their places of business. So Carl Pohlad’s buddy, who defines conflict of interest by simultaneously owning a team and acting as commissioner, conspires to double the sale price of Ebenezer Pohlad’s team. Bud and Carl should be arrested on criminal fraud charges.

“On the day he announced his contraction plans, Selig responded to a reporter’s comment by saying that he did not understand why the reporter would suggest that it was a sad day for baseball. Apparently the used-car salesman was not moved in the slightest by the loss of an original American League franchise, with two world titles in its current location and a storied history in both the heartland and the national capitol, depriving an entire region of the national pastime that it has supported at the highest levels of competition for more than a century, and the children of all ages who grew up, or could have grown up, loving the game. Do we want this man running baseball?

“This is nothing but labor calumny. Rather than attempt real revenue sharing (like those noted liberal commies who own NFL teams), the trolls who run baseball prefer blackmailing communities into forking over even more tax dollars at a time when the nation’s already threatened economy struggles with the aftermath of September 11. If we are going to slash welfare benefits at a time when millions of people are losing their jobs, we should start with white-collar welfare for robber barons.

“Freud might have been pleased that baseball owners validate his controversial death wish theory every five years. Unfortunately, the real patients in this assisted suicide did not consent.”

**Rich Cohen:** “Regarding the matter of greedy owners, lets not forget Cal Griffith’s often-stated reasons for why he moved the team out of Washington: ‘Black people don’t buy tickets.’ What goes around comes around.”

**Dave Hahn:** “The rough business of baseball has always been a contrast to the beauty of the game, and we destroyed much of that beauty by bringing it indoors. You could see it coming.”

**Brenda Himrich:** “I agree with the judge who said that major league baseball cannot have it both ways—either they are a sport for public benefit or they are a big business and have to operate by the rules of big business, including anti-trust laws.”

## Next HCE Coming in January

The next *Holy Cow Extra*, coming out in January, will focus on statistics with contributions by Alden Mead, Glenn Gostick, Bob Kapla, Pete Hepokoski, Jim Wyman, and Dan Levitt.

**Marc Hugunin:** “First, MLB gets its economic house in order—meaningful revenue sharing, salary caps, whatever. Second, Minnesota provides public financing for new Twins stadium. In that order.”

**Bob Evans:** “After getting over the initial shock following Selig’s announcement (outrage, how can they do this, etc.), the sinking pessimism of the realization that they probably can do it sank in. What would it be like to live in an area with no major league team? After all, I’ve never lived anywhere that didn’t have one, two, or three teams. And what about this area, now my adopted home? There has been major or at least high minor league baseball played in the Twin Cities since the last part of the century before last, and now it would be gone. A franchise that traces its lineage back to the founding teams of the American League extinguished, without an heir. Everyone who lives here will be the poorer for their going, even the least-interested non-fan. Yet, the whole thing boils down to a matter of money, and this thing couldn’t have been scripted to occur at a worse time fiscally. I don’t know what will happen, but I fear mightily that every effort will be too little, too late, and that summer may never be the same again.”

**Ray Luurs:** “I think it would be wrong to contract the Twins. There are far worse teams operated by far worse owners who have run their teams into financial ruin. If they really want to contract, how about the cities with two teams? Of course, since contraction is about not being economical viable, how about contracting the team that spends the most and has the least to show for it? Like the Red Sox.”

**John Hagemann:** “From the distance, it appears to me that sportswriter Arthur Daley was right when he observed that baseball must be a great sport to survive the people who run it. Who but a bunch of greedy idiots would pay Carl Pohlad \$250 million for a franchise that *Forbes* magazine has valued at \$95 million?

“That said, I would attend more Twins games if they played on grass in the sunshine, as God intended. Of all the MLB parks, the Metrodome is the only football stadium into which a baseball field has been forced. But I gather from the comments of other chapter members, the chances of the Twins getting a new stadium have evaporated.

“Those are my comments for the time of year, of which Rogers Hornsby said ‘I just stare out the window, waiting for spring.’”

## Still More Contraction Reaction

**George Rekele:** “Unfortunately, major league baseball sees the success of the Minnesota Wild as part of the blueprint for folding the Twins. After Minnesota—the so-called ‘State of Hockey’—lost the North Stars, it was forced to build a new arena in order to get back into the National Hockey League (NHL) game with an expansion team (which, to date, is ‘wildly’ successful). [NHL Commissioner] Gary Bettman told St. Paul that the old Civic Center wouldn’t do, so now we have the XCEL Center. Major league baseball wants our market empty, so it can be used to threaten other cities, much in the same manner as the threat of moving Tampa was held over the heads of many MLB teams (including the Twins).

It is interesting to me that the voters of Wayne County, Michigan, passed a stadium referendum by 68 percent (yes) to 32 percent (no). Are we that much more intelligent than the voters of nearby Michigan, or are we just bullheaded? Also, it is not essential to MLB’s financial stability to trim two teams. Schedules can be worked out so that no one in the National League (where Montreal resides) is idle more than one day in succession. It might cost more, but not that much.

**Alden Mead (who lived in Minneapolis for many years and now lives in Savannah, Georgia):** “I think it would be a pity if the Twins were to fold; they were a part of my life, and the life of a place I love, for too long a time. Pohlad’s behavior (as reported here in *Baseball Weekly*) of actually using his friendship with Selig to encourage being bought out so he can get more than anyone is willing to offer seems to border on the reprehensible. There must be a lot of people in Minnesota who would gladly lynch him.

“On the other hand, from the viewpoint of MLB, the Minnesota franchise has been a problem for years: Fair-weather fans who come in droves to see good teams but who desert in every dry spell; and a refusal to finance a new stadium. Of course, one can argue that building a stadium with tax money makes no sense, but the fact remains that some places have done it, and MLB naturally prefers that. The way baseball now operates, with huge revenues (or huge charity on the part of the owner) being necessary in order to compete, such considerations inevitably play a role.”

**Seth C. “Dr. Fan” Hawkins:** “To those who lament the ‘stealing’ of the Twins, remember that the team was originally stolen from Washington, D. C. It’s not that the team is indigenous to the Twin Cities.

“Even with an oligopoly, an organization has the same right to close outlets it deems unprofitable, just as a chain has a right to close stores.

“My analysis is that the Twin Cities may not be a major league market. I’ve encountered so many expressions that the minor leagues or parkboard/recreation baseball is somehow preferable to major league baseball. I would expect this attitude from a small town, but this is out of place in a metropolitan area of this size.

“And those who want a referendum for a new stadium are asking people whose major economic decision is buying a lottery ticket, people who can’t even balance their checkbook, to vote on whether we should have a major league stadium paid for. They’re not capable of understanding of how a stadium can be structured to pay for itself.”

## Events and Happenings

The Field of Dreams Chapter in Iowa will be holding a regional meeting in conjunction with the Iowa Cubs’ FanFest on January 11 or January 12. SABR visitors from other chapters are invited. Anyone wanting to attend the meeting or give a research presentation may contact R. J. Lesch at 515-991-4858 or via e-mail at [rjlesch\\_usa@yahoo.com](mailto:rjlesch_usa@yahoo.com).

Bob May, a SABR member in Texas, has formed a group called Baseball Fans Unite with the purpose of having a voice in the labor negotiations between major league players and owners as well as on the issue of contraction. For more information, visit the group’s web site at <http://www.baseballfansunite.org> or contact Bob at 972-772-8853 or [bmay@baseballfansunite.org](mailto:bmay@baseballfansunite.org).

## Cow Chips

**Ned Ribback** had a letter published in the December 2001 *Baseball Digest*, asking about the official scorers who credited **Harry Walker** with a double in the seventh game of the 1946 World Series. (The scorers were **Leo MacDonnell** of Detroit, **Jack Malaney** of Boston, and **Martin “Mike” Haley** of St. Louis.)

## Ballpark Calendars Available

Dr. Seth Hawkins has a pair of 2002 Bill Goff Ballpark Calendars available at a discounted price on a first-come, first-served basis. Call Seth at 651-225-1505 if you are interested. The calendars are \$10 each if picked up at his home in St. Paul, \$13 if they are to be mailed.

### December Birthdays

9—Alden Mead (also Old Hoss Radbourn, Joe Kelley, Dick Butkus, and Donny Osmond)

20—Julio Becquer (also Gabby Hartnett, Branch Rickey, Cecil Cooper, Harry Stovey, Fred Merkle, Spud Davis, Oscar Gamble, and George Pipgras)

24—David Trombley (also Jamey Wright, Howard Hughes, and Kit Carson)

29—Fred Souba (also Devon White, Jaret Wright, Andrew Johnson, Mary Tyler Moore, and Woodrow Wilson)

## Directory Update

E-mail address for Bob Evans:  
feldgrau1418@uswest.net

New address and phone number for Edwin C. "Ned"  
Ribback: 9818 Cavell Circle, Bloomington, Minnesota  
55438-1982, 952-942-8795

## Calendar

December 1

Hot Stove Saturday Mid-Morning,  
9:30 a.m., Baker's Square,  
Sixty-Sixth and Xerxes, Richfield

### Halsey Hall Chapter

*Board of Directors 2001-02*

President—Cary Smith    Treasurer—Kevin Hennessy

Vice President—Ray Luurs    Secretary—Rich Arpi

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Webmaster—Deano Thilgen

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*Holy Cow Extra* Editor—Bob Tholkes

Please direct news about chapter events, about yourself, or about other chapter members to  
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<http://halseyhall.org>



Halsey Hall Chapter—SABR

*The Holy Cow!*

Stew Thornley, Editor

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