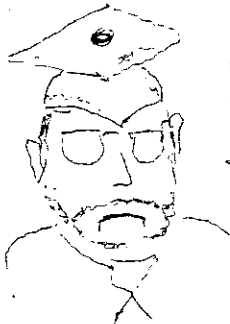


The Devil Advocates ~

DR. SETH C. HAWKINS IS
MADDER THAN HELL !!!



GET READY
BELOW: 201
STATE
LEGISLATORS
HAVE JUST WON
A SCHOLARSHIP
TO HADES!

SPORTS ECONOMICS - F
ETHICS + RESPONSIBILITY - F

November 1, 1997

Mexican Holiday: The Day of the Dead (now apt)

You all failed. You should be ashamed of yourselves. Major League Baseball is gone from the Twin Cities, and I have no evidence that a single member of this SABR chapter did one useful thing to prevent this calamity. In fact, some of you, and you know who you are, so get ready for eternal damnation, are serpentine collaborationist traitors who opposed public funding for a new stadium. You should kill yourselves, but have the decency to resign from the chapter first. I failed too: the team is leaving and it isn't being sold to the folks in Monterrey. Oh well, I'll get them the Astros.

Here, in no particular order, are ten issues that the ignorant legislators and citizens of Minnesota failed to comprehend:

1. It is unfair restraint of trade to require a MLB owner to build his own stadium. If he does, he no longer has complete freedom to sell the team, for in selling it to a new owner who will move the team, the stadium property becomes potentially worthless. But if a government entity builds and owns the stadium (as has been the case in MLB since Dodger Stadium was built), the stadium still has value, as the government will be impelled to go out and get another team.

2. Government spending is not a cafeteria in which the voters get to choose what they want. If you don't like MLB, shut up (not only because your values and thinking are prima facie impaired): my tax dollar pays for all sorts of useless things, like the damn fool Boundary Waters Canoe Area, various stage and opera companies, park and rec centers, social workers and other meddling compassion fascists. The tradeoff is that I endure all of these wastes of money, and liberal do-gooders put up with the ballpark.

3. "We shouldn't reward a bad owner by giving him a new stadium." Sigh. Yes, he's a senile idiot, but . . . a. we'll be rid of him soon anyway, because he'll be dead; b. he's not inherent: he can be pressured out; the point is to have MLB, no matter whom the owner; c. neither Pohlad nor a new owner would own the ballpark anyway, so we're not giving anybody anything.

4. "We shouldn't reward millionaire owners and athletes." First of all, no one but a millionaire has the available capital to take the risk of buying a MLB club, so there aren't any other kind of owners, and you wouldn't want someone who wasn't economically successful owning a ball club anyway. And only a few of the players are "millionaires"; those who are, are for a very short time in the working life of an adult human, yet to hear the blue-collar bleat, you'd think that all the ballplayers had inherited wealth. Yes, it is stunning that a rookie makes over \$100G a year, but they are, by definition, the 700 best in their field. The 700th highest-paid physician, CEO, real estate agent [I will NOT call them what they insist, and I sure won't accept their demand to capitalize the "r"], singer, college president [fill in titles of many other professions] is making a lot more than the rookie ballplayer. But you try to hit a round ball going 90+ mph with a cylindrical piece of wood, or keep the best in the business from doing so: it's a skill worth the bucks. And a ballplayer, at the MLB level, is doing a lot more for history and culture than Wayne Newton, Ted Kennedy, or any rich proctologist (at least the ballplayers only spit and scratch). And folks, no

matter how many MLB players get paid how much, the best located (and thus most "expensive") seat at a MLB game is LESS than the cheapest nosebleed upper-deck obstructed-view perch at one of the other three sports. And no one forces people to waste money on beer and bad food. No one has a right to cheap parking: take the bus. The same nitwits who whine about walking two blocks from a parking lot to a ballpark will, sheep-like, walk a mile in a shopping mall lot.

And of course, by failing to "reward millionaire owners and athletes," you are actually punishing every kid and adult who just might like to see a MLB game, including the Blue Jays fans from Manitoba and Saskatchewan, whom you are additionally preventing from bringing \$1.4 million (US) into the Minnesota economy. Smart.

5. A bad team doesn't deserve a new stadium." Look, you fools, by the time the park is built, it might not be a bad team anymore. Baseball teams' fortunes rise and fall precipitously in five-year spans. Sometimes a new park generates capital to build a better team, as in Cleveland. It's not like sixty years ago, when the Yankees were always good, and the Browns always bad. Besides, only half the teams can be winning at any one time. Think! Be objective and enjoy the visiting teams.

6. Journalists publicized, and legislators fell for, grievously flawed studies done by charlatans who began with their "minds" made up, and then skewed the "research" to fit the niche made by the axe they had to grind, the ones who propagated the lie that MLB teams, and new stadiums, do not have a significant economic impact. You will note that none of these studies were done by Nobel Prize winners or other well-known economists. They were all hack professors from minor-league pseudoversities, who are jealous of athletes who are famous and who earn more than they do. Although there are some, you don't need a major economic study to see the economic gains, the revitalization that a new MLB park brings: just walk around Denver, Cleveland, Baltimore, Toronto, and elsewhere; often in parts of town you'd formerly have been prudent to tour in an armored personnel carrier.

7. One of the few sound principles of urban planning is that you correct the mistakes of the past. And replacing the Metrodome would sure exemplify that premise. No matter how badly the Twins perform, they should not have to endure the legacy of the most inept period in architectural history. Visiting teams have justifiably griped for years. True baseball fans should not have to endure such a horrid facility. You know, if the opera company were screaming in a Quonset Hut, or if the wholly superfluous SPCO had to use a big, ugly tent with bad acoustics, you could bet there would be a major scandal, and public money would be available faster than the shortest measurable unit of time (between a traffic light turning green in Manhattan and the cab driver behind you blowing his horn). And don't talk to me about "wonderful old Metropolitan Stadium." It was a tricked-up minor league dump that would by now be condemned (and not just verbally).

8. This is a republic, not a democracy. Read the Constitution, or that insipid proof that there is prayer in the schools, the Pledge of Allegiance [a democracy is a system in which three wolves and a sheep vote on what to have for dinner]. Thus, elected officials are entrusted with preventing the will of the ignorant masses from becoming reality, and instead doing what is best for them. Since the voters are too lame-brained to understand the economic and cultural advantages of using their tax dollars to build a stadium, legislators are supposed to pass laws mandating such use.

9. Lots of businesses get subsidies in the form of "infrastructure." Airlines pay rent, but are not required to build their own airports. Maybe we should give the fake clergything Rask a complete list of private companies that are routinely subsidized, for then she would expire of radical indignation.

10. You've seen all of those studies about the most desirable cities in which to live (they overemphasize the damndest things, like health care and theatres). Well, there are plenty of folks whose decision to relocate is influenced by easy access to major league sports. If a large market like the Twin Cities has a major league baseball team and lets it go, it is guilty of fraud in enticing folks like your humble columnist to live here for that reason, and then letting the team leave. Surely I can find an attorney who wishes to break new ground . . . although it really isn't, for it is with this argument that Seattle got its present team. Well, precedent's already established! Hello, Miles Lord? Do I have a harm for you to litigate!

Dammit, we should have kidnapped legislators and killed one of them a day until they voted the stadium. Since we would have had to execute a few to demonstrate seriousness of intent, there'd have been the collateral benefit of giving a free one-way tour of the Edmund Fitzgerald to Marty, Pappas, and that awful strident woman in the Mill City who wanted twelve-year-olds to vote. Or maybe we could have done it all non-violently by kidnapping Charlie Berg and raising \$411 million by threatening to return him unharmed.