

FROM THE BULLPEN



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Brethren:

A brief note from the desk of the editor to help usher HSL members into the holiday season. Not a great deal to pass along to you, but one matter of utmost importance is the **Winter Meeting** tentatively set for **January 21**. Mark your calendars, postpone the Caribbean cruise, get a sitter for the kids, and a date for your wife, if you must, but be sure to be present for the fun, festivities, frivolities, fellowship, and Shamu's* favorite members of the "F" family, *free food*.

After covering the usual Winter Meeting topics, crowning Shamu,* paying off Shamu* and Magpie-Curby, cursing the owners and players, etc., we will of course run through a couple rounds of the time-honored mock draft (if Possum says he's taking Paul O'Neill as the 4th pick overall in the draft, that's who he's taking, *damn it*), and cap off the meeting by listening to Underbelly's mesmerizing speech from the Great Fantasy lecture series, which he calls: *Whi Marije Won't Chainge Me -- Mi Life in the Kaptin's Chare*. Assuming that Jody lets him attend.

Depending on how long the Winter Meeting lasts, our group temperament, the condition of the roads, and other factors which are difficult to predict at this time, the Hot Stove Leaguers who do in fact paddle their own canoes will contin-

ue the merriment by congregating together for a Racers game, a trip to the West Dodge ballet (see you there, Magpie), and/or a junket to Onawa/Sloan to pay homage to the Indians (beads for cash and free booze, what a deal!).

If any League member has a conflict on January 21, get out of it. But if you can't, let me know ASAP. January 21 is not yet carved in stone, but we are about ready to put chisel to granite.

MANAGER OF THE DECADE: THE DEBATE CONTINUES

The last issue of *From the Bullpen* sparked a mild amount of controversy among League members, concerning the suggestion that Magpie-Curby might have a claim to Manager of the Decade in the Hot Stove League. As B.T.¹ might put it, I may have opened up a real can of Pandora's boxed worms. No sooner had the last edition of *FTB* hit the streets than I received a phone call from the excitable Possum. It took me a while to figure out who was on the other end of the line, since when I picked up the phone there

was no salutation from or identification by Brother Possum, but just a steady stream of words, evidently linked together by some common thread, although difficult to identify. After I was able to determine that I had Possum on the other end of the line, ranting and raving about how his formula for determining the Manager of the Decade yielded quite different results, I advised Possum to put a sock in it, save his breath, and put it down on paper for distribution via *FTB*. Possum promised to crank out one of his infamous Possumetric proof theorems, through which he is uncannily able to prove through statistical analysis that the world is flat, that Hitler is still living in Uruguay, and that he (Possum, not Hitler) is the HSL Manager of the Decade. Unfortunately, Possum failed to keep his word on providing the Possum theorem, so I am unable to share it with you in this issue of *FTB*.

"EVERYBODY WINS AT WIN-A-VEGAS"

That was the chant as we rocketed home from our HSL subjunket to Sloan on November 13 (our lucky number) laughing, counting our winnings, and toasting each other's success. Come to think of it, though, Itchie was awfully

¹ The King of the Mixed Metaphor.

quiet on the ride home. Probably busy thinking up alibis for the Thielen Comptroller.

For those of you who were unable to make it, Big Guy, Shamu,* Itchie, Skipper and One-Way Tony (who is aggressively vying to replace Possum in the HSL) all ventured to the Reservation Sunday before last to partake of the inimitable hospitality of our Native American friends. What began as a possible trip to Ames, Iowa, to see the Huskers play the Cyclones, with a backup game plan to go to Kansas City to see Joe Montana take on the first-place San Diego Chargers, ended up being a frenzied gambling session at Win-A-Vegas. The trip organizer, Big Guy, reported that this was the only way to sink the hook on a certain crimson-hued flounder.

Remarkably, 80% of our quintet came home from Win-A-Vegas fat and happy, although only 40% of us headed north in that condition. Only poor Itchie came home with empty pockets and a heavy heart, having been taken to the cleaners by our friendly hosts. Actually, Itchie was more than holding his own at the blackjack table, when he heard the "call of the wild" -- the unmistakable victory howl of One-Way Tony, piercing the casino air and emanating from the craps table. Unable to resist the call, Itchie cashed in his winnings at the blackjack table, and proceeded to the craps table to do his part to make amends for the beads-for-Manhattan travesty.

There is more to tell, but you get the idea. Mark your calendar to hit the cash box 7 or 8 days in a row (to account for the \$200 daily maximum) in advance of the January 21 Winter Meeting, so that you will be well-funded for the trip north. If you are questioned by your spouse, just remember to utter HSL the party line, "Everybody wins at Win-A-Vegas." Except for you, Itchie. For you, the traditional bold-faced lie may be your best bet.

HOUSEKEEPING

I was recently advised by Big Guy, the conduit for Magpie-Curby, that my suggested system of remuneration (see Edition No. 23) for this year's top finishers was contrary to past practice. It had been my suggestion that the 6th through 12th place teams each make payment of \$100 to Shamu,* resulting in net payment of \$700 to our champion, together with the return of his own \$100 entry fee, for a total of \$800; and that the 4th and 5th place teams make payment to the 2nd place finisher, Magpie-Curby, resulting in a net payment of \$200 to Magpie-Curby, together with the return of his \$100 entry fee, for a total payment of \$300; with the 3rd place finisher, B.T., keeping his own money. Big Guy advised me that in the past, our system has been a 60% payout to the 1st place team, 30% to the 2nd place team, and 10% to 3rd place. With 12 teams in the League, this would result in a total payment of \$620 to Shamu* (\$720 minus 100), \$260 to Magpie-Curby (\$360 minus 100), and \$20 to B.T. (\$120 minus 100). So, under my suggested remuneration, Magpie-Curby came up short \$60, B.T. came up short \$20, and Shamu* profited by \$80 extra.

Rather than try to sort this little nightmare out right now, I suggest that we revisit this issue at the Winter Meeting on January 21. Bring your checkbook, and we'll do the rest.

THANKS!

To all of you who so promptly and generously responded to my spouse's entreaty for donations for the Adopt-A-Family program, many thanks. Your unbridled generosity has allowed Cheryl to purchase a handsome new piece of leather for a little boy in North Omaha, and a brand spanking new Red Rider BeeBee gun for Little Bob in South Lincoln. Pat yourselves on the backs, and don't forget to take that IRS deduction.

Seriously, thanks for your generosity.

Enough for now. Best wishes for a happy and fattening Thanksgiving holiday for all of you.

Skipper