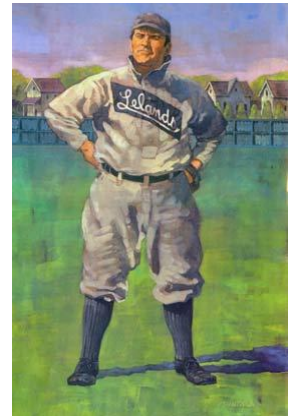


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# FROM THE BULLPEN

## Official Publication of the Hot Stove League Eastern Nebraska Division



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2001 Season

Edition No. 2

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### POSSUM SAVES FAMILY OF 12 FROM GAS EXPLOSION

#### UNLIKELY HERO CLINGING TO LIFE IN INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

The above is the *minimum* event/excuse that will be necessary for Possum to avoid immediate and irrevocable expulsion from the Eastern Nebraska Hot Stove League after he flabbergasted and insulted league members, spouses, and host and hostess, Mr. and Mrs. Mouse, by being a brazen no-show at his own league victory celebration.

Defending champion Itchie, normally not one to speak up on such occasions, expressed the collective outrage of all those in attendance at the February 17 fete: "I say we string the \*&@#S#% up by his thumbs, and then take turns beating him like a piñata with aluminum baseball bats."

Most of the others present thought that this would be letting the disgusting weasel off far too lightly, and that a harsher penalty needed to be fashioned to meet the exigencies of the situation. Alternative sanction proposals ranged from (1) tying Possum to a stake, smearing peanut butter on his entire body, and letting loose a cavalcade of hungry red army ants, New York City sewer rats, and various and sundry other vermin; to (2) banishment from the league and the permanent expunging of all references to him on the Cup, on league records, and in any past or future issues of *From the Bullpen*. Big Guy was appointed to convene a sub rosa committee to undergo a study to insure that the punishment matches the crime.

### THANKS, MIKE AND BRENDA

In spite of Possum's incredibly rude but obviously telling absence, a good time was had by all in attendance, and many kudos and thanks to Mike and Brenda for being such splendid hosts. And although it will ultimately come out of Possum's pocket, many thanks to B.T.<sup>1</sup> for taking the time to design and print up the Wahoos championship shirts, in light of Possum's abdication of this responsibility and pleasure.

And now, for your reading pleasure, U-Belly's:

#### Top Ten Potential Sanctions for Possum's Mother of All Gaffes

10. Mandatory surgical extraction of laugh box to prevent embarrassing scenes at HSL luncheons.
9. Has to provide all of the beer at this year's Draft to help quash coup attempt by Sideshow Twice-Cooked Tony, who is offering 100% ring-spun cotton Jacquard polos with tipped colors and cuffs, with a five-button reinforced placket with taped colors, with our respective team logos embroidered on them, as a token of his appreciation to be allowed into the Hot Stove League .... if by some small chance one current member should be voted out.
8. Must fess up to Tracy and finally explain to her that the three hours each year that he can't account for are actually spent with eleven other guys screwing off on a Saturday afternoon, and not devoted to sculpting a marble monument of his in-laws.

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<sup>1</sup> Especially considering all of the help he received from Possum in designing his own commemorative shirt.

7. Has to quit using hokey “dinner party” excuse and upgrade to “sick relative” excuse when sniveling out of his next HSL commitment.
6. Must accept 2000 Hensley Muelen rookie cards in lieu of the \$800 cash payment for winning the league.
5. Has to explain to Mouse’s youngest kid how come Uncle Ted can’t figure out how to use the redial button on his phone.
4. Must allocate exact same amount of time studying for this year’s Draft as he did contemplating our lavish HSL championship season gifts.
3. Forced to change team name to the Wahoo Wussies.
2. Must eat leftovers at Mouse’s house after school for the entire month of March.

And the number 1 potential sanction for Possum’s Mother of all Gaffes:

1. Can’t be surprised if he hears eleven of the worst excuses imaginable on Draft Day as to why none of us remembered to bring our payoff money.

And while we’re at it, take a look at:

### **U-Bob’s Top Ten Uses For and/or Reasons He Likes and/or Comments About His 4x HSL Championship Wearing Apparel**

10. Snazzy Chiefs logo adds to regal look of tarp covering our woodpile.
9. Kids like to use Skipjacks polo as a trampoline, but the numerous embroidered advertising logos cause occasional rug burns.
8. When the Senators polo is stretched out over the property, the house, pool and connecting garage are barely visible during enemy air raids.
7. On Halloween, I like to wear one of the shirts and a long wig and go as Cousin It.
6. Just love the feel of tucking a shirt into my socks.

5. My daughter likes to put one on and pretend it’s her wedding gown, complete with the 15-foot train.
4. The shirts are multi-seasonal, and I can wear them in the winter with the sleeves down as a long-sleeved shirt, or I can roll them up in the summer and use them as a short-sleeved nightshirt that sleeps a family of 5.
3. I tried to give mine to Shamu, but he said they’re a little bit snug in the armpit area.
2. Pocket holds a 12-pack and a carton of smokes.
1. I DON’T WEAR A @\$@%\$#! QUADRUPLE-X EXTRA LARGE SHIRT, DAMN IT!

### **MOCK DRAFT**

As is customary at our Winter Meeting, in addition to paying homage to our League Champion and presenting him with The Cup, which of course couldn’t happen this year because of Possum’s loathsome misdeeds, we gathered for a mock draft in preparation for Holy Day on March 24. I share the results with you here, *sans* the five picks that were selected for Possum, since one of his potential penalties is the expungement of all references to him in perpetuity. Thought I might as well save the ink.

It will be interesting to hear whether any of you like your quintet in the sober light of day.

	1	2	3	4	5
Ted	--	--	--	--	--
Mitch	A-Rod	Griffey	Schilling	O.Herman	Durham
Itchie	RJ	Bagwell	Rivera	Leiter	Ordonez
Jim	K.Brown	Bonds	Colon	Glaus	Kendall
DDE	I-Rod	Kent	Green	Hoffman	Fred Garcia
Blongo	Jeter	McGwire	Hudson	Erstad	Damon
Scott	Piazza	Walker	F.Thomas	Wood	Scheffy
Big Guy	Garcia	Delgado	Park	Hampton	Larkin
Mouse	Mussina	Sosa	Kile	Belle	Suzukii
Bob	Helton	Vladdy	Palmeiro	Edmonds	Finley
Chuck	Maddux	Smoltz	Benitez	Giambi	Cirillo
Denny	MannyR.	Bernie	Millwood	Thome	Juan Gonz.

### **THE TRIP**

As you may recall from the last issue of *From the Bullpen*, I set forth a number of weekend dates that the Milwaukee Brewers will be playing at home in their new Green Cathedral this summer, and asked for input and thoughts regarding same. Judging by the responses, or lack thereof, all of you are available on all weekends listed for this summer, save for Mouse who is available for one-half of one of

these baker's dozen weekends, owing to his incredible social schedule. So what's a fella to do?

Answering my own rhetorical question, I say, he should pick a date and run with it. So I will:

### **August 4-5, the visiting Atlanta Braves in town**

That said, is there anyone, anyone, who wants to go on this year's trip, and has the requisite kitchen pass to go on this year's trip, who *can't* make it to Milwaukee on August 4-5, 2001? Let me know now, or forever hold your peace.

On the other side of the coin, how many of you can and will be going to Milwaukee with me on August 4-5 to see the Braves? Please let me know as soon as possible, so we can begin making airline and hotel arrangements. Itchie wants me to be in charge again, due to the surfeit of information that I put out last year, and the detailed itineraries that were circulated months in advance of our departure date. You know how Mr. Snug Underwear likes to have his travel plans carved in bedrock, as opposed to flying by the seat of his pants like most of the rest of us.

### **EXPANSION A NO GO**

It looks like league expansion to 15 is a no-go. Although many people were in favor of taking on *any* new member to replace the low-down, no-good, no-showing Possum, nobody was really in favor of expanding our league. The fear, of course, is that we might lose some of our special bonds if we were to open the league up to new members. Plus, it will make it harder for any of the twelve of us to win the title, and as several of you are acutely aware, it's damned hard enough the way it is. You gettin' my drift, there, Tire-biter? How about you, McMouse? You listening, U-Bob? Anyone home, SloPay? I didn't think so.

In any event, the consensus clearly was to continue with our hallowed league in its present twelve-team forum. So be it.

### **PEPPER**

- Congrats to Tirebiter, who recently celebrated his 37<sup>th</sup> birthday (February 11) by promising himself that he would catch another perch or two for his

Fishing Monstrosity wall art<sup>2</sup> in his office. Our only under-40 member of the HSL is growing up. Too bad his baseball IQ isn't keeping pace.

- All of you probably know about the death of Eddie Matthews, former slugging star third baseman of the Boston, Atlanta and Milwaukee Braves. Did you read that his health took a turn for the worse a couple of years ago when he was crushed between a cruise ship and a dock while attempting to deboard a cruise ship, resulting in a crushed pelvis from which he did not ever really recover. Now *that's* a lawsuit that I would like to handle. Interesting that Eddie's best year was in 1953, when at age 21 he cracked out 49 homers, had 135 RBIs and batted .302. While the next ten years of his career were All-Star caliber, he never quite reached the same statistical levels that he reached when only a pup of 21. A nifty little piece of trivia is that Matthews was the only player to play for the Braves in all three of the aforementioned cities.
- RIP also to Bill Rigney, who passed away just the other day. I remember Rigney as the pilot of the California Angels, and probably a couple of other teams, but I did not remember that he was the first manager of the San Francisco Giants after they moved west from the Polo Grounds in 1958.
- Perhaps you saw in the paper that George Steinbrenner has given Darryl Strawberry a job counseling young players about the pitfalls of drug and alcohol use, and other issues confronting young ballplayers, even as Darryl is on probation for getting drugged up and arrested for illicit drug use and solicitation of prostitution. Now *that's* a good choice for a role model. What's next, George? Hiring Steve Howe as Morals Coach for young relievers in the Yankee farm system?

### **OPENING DAY**

You are all officially invited to join B.T. and myself for our Opening Day junket to San Francisco, where we will see our first-ever game in PacBell Park. Joe Jackson Ernst will be in attendance with his Old Man, and B.T. is bringing Sam and Eli to the Big Show. We're leaving on Sunday morning, April 1, and returning on Tuesday, April 3. If any of you would like to come along, with or without children, the more the merrier.

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<sup>2</sup> Using the loosest of all possible interpretations of the word.

That will do it for this week. Until next issue, I  
remain your

Skipper