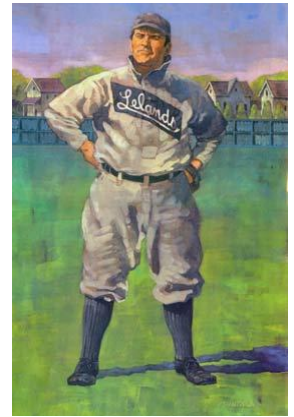

FROM THE BULLPEN

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Season 2001

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WAHOOS AMBUSH SENATORS, ASSUME LEAGUE LEAD

Whoa. Did anyone get the license number of the steamroller that just rolled by? In a turn of events reminiscent of 1999, the **Wahoos** used a stellar 399-point week in concert with a league-worst 237-point week for the **Senators** to rocket past the Kings of Capitol Hill and assume the league lead by a healthy margin of 118 points. Through twelve weeks, the **Wahoos** now lead the HSL race with 4519 points, as compared with the 4401 point total of the **Senators**. I can only hope that this isn't the beginning of the end for the **Senators**, as in 1999 when McBlunder's **Blues** roared past just before the All-Star break and never looked back.

Speaking of the **Blues**, these pesky little cretins are still in 3rd place with a total of 4020 points, but only a single point ahead of the surging 4th place **Reds** and only 12 points ahead of the **Cubs*** and the suddenly reinvigorated **Pirates**, both of whom have 4008.

After the **Cubs*** and **Pirates**, there is a bit of a separation from the 7th place **Skipjacks**, who with 3916 points are the leaders of the Lower Division. Big deal. Close behind with 3905 are the **Tigers**, followed by the 9th place **Tribe** with 3864, the 10th place **Redbirds** with 3834, and then the 11th place **Bombers** with 3687. The **Chiefs** continue to bring up the rear with 3484 points, but have narrowed the gap considerably on the **Bombers**, and are now just 203 points out of 11th place.

The standings through twelve weeks are as follows:

Week 12 Standings

1.	Wahoos	4519
2.	Senators	4401
3.	Blues	4020
4.	Reds	4019
5.	Cubs*	4008
6.(t)	Pirates	4008
7.	Skipjacks	3916
8.	Tigers	3905
9.	Tribe	3864
10.	Redbirds	3834
11.	Bombers	3687
12.	Chiefs	3484

The point totals during Week 12 were as follows:

Week 12 Totals

1.	Pirates	419
2.	Reds	417
3.	Tigers	406
4.	Wahoos	399
5.	Cubs	389
6.	Chiefs	373
7.	Blues	371
8.	Skipjacks	342
9.	Bombers	309
10.	Tribe	304
11.	Redbirds	282
12.	Senators	237

The league MVP for the year is, ugh, Luis Gonzalez, who has overtaken Bonds with his 481 points. Most people don't realize that this pencil-necked geek is also almost on pace to beat McGwire's home run record, sitting with 32 (I think) with two weeks before the All-Star break. Now

that's a name synonymous with home run power: *Luis Gonzalez*. Sheesh. What gives?

Randy Johnson has overtaken his teammate, Curt Schilling, as the Cy Young of the year with 344 points. So quit yer bellyaching, Itchie. The guy's doing what he's supposed to be doing.

The top hitting team in the league is still the **Wahoos**, with 2900 points, just ahead of the **Pirates'** total of 2871 and the **Reds'** 2821. The **Bombers** have taken over the distinction of having the worst hitting team from the **Chiefs**, with a total of 2184 to the **Chiefs'** 2263. Boy, Mouse, I giftwrap the top RBI man in the Majors for you, Manny Ramirez, and you still can't figure out how to get hitting points. Pretty sad.

The top pitching team in the league is still the **Senators** with 1826, although my squad has given up some ground to the **Wahoos** staff, which now has 1619. The **Bombers**, of all teams, now have the third best pitching staff with 1502, followed by the **Skip-jacks** with 1494. The **Pirates** have the feeblest staff with 1137 pitching points, just behind the **Reds'** 1198.

FOUL TIPS

- Itchie finally returned from his month-long (or so it seemed) vacation (NOT) to Wally World with the family, no doubt looking tan, fit and relaxed. With the family vacation out of the way, he's already planning a relaxing little getaway just for himself, possibly at a stamping or scrapbooking get-together with a few close friends to help him get in touch with his feelings. Or maybe to Windsor with Tony to try to get in touch with an entirely different set of feelings.

- For those of you who enjoyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, our league's own pyrotechnics expert, one U-Bob¹ reportedly has put together an inventory of explosives for this year's July 4th celebration that will have the Grucci Brothers running for cover. If you live within a 50-mile radius of the Hurlbut testing grounds, wear your ear plugs and find a lead shield to cower behind.

- I see that the **Senators'** team batting average has dipped down below .300 for the first time all year, at .299. Perhaps I was a bit unrealistic to think that the **Senatros** could hit at a collective .310 the entire year, but you just never know.

¹ Or maybe we should start calling him *U-Bomb*, or perhaps *Uni-Bobber*.

- The **Wahoos** continue to be on course to shatter the home run ceiling with a total of 163 through 12 weeks. This figures out to better than 13 home runs per week, and projects to about 350 for the year, just a smidge over the cap. So why are the **Wahoos** blowing off my doors in the *projected points* category as well?

- I don't have a problem with Pedro having a great year. He's supposed to. I do have a problem with Bret Boone being on pace to hit 50 homers and garner 150 RBIs. This is *bool-sheet*, my friends.

- I have a problem with Kip Wells throwing two-hitters, and with Julian Tavares even pitching in the majors. I've got no problem with Tony Armas, Jr. getting lit up like a Roman candle, however.

- Does Itchie really have Chris Stynes as his only starting second baseman, and Rondell White in the starting lineup? Must be typos.

- While the **Wahoos** and the **Senators** have dropped out of the national BJFB team rankings, the **Senators** continue to lead the Bill James Nation in pitching wins with 61. However, while my lead in this category was something like seven or eight wins over the next best team, this gap has narrowed considerably. With Itchie's accursed jinx on Aaron Sele and Curt Schilling, I may soon drop off the leaderboard altogether.

- With a team ERA of 3.56 and a total of 60 quality starts, I imagine that Possum is less than happy about having only 45 pitching wins, particularly when the **Senators** have 61 Ws with a higher ERA (3.86) and one fewer (59) Q6 starts. As was well put by Jimmy Durante: *Them's the breaks, kid*. Get over it.

- I'd like to know who was so darned hot for the **Pirates** last week, to lead them to their league-best 419 points. Must have been some of his young pitchers. I don't think that it was Carlos Delgado, whose torrid start this season was evidently interrupted by his finally having gained an understanding of what is meant by "guaranteed contract." Put a fork in him, SloPay. He's destined for a life centered around Schlitz malt liquor and Kools.

NICKS OF TIME

Baseball nicknames. In no other sport are nicknames such a large part of the game. Sadly, except for Chris Ber-

man – who is not really a moniker artist so much as a punster – there would be very few new baseball nicknames being tossed around in today’s game. Hopefully, it’s not a lost art, but merely one in need of some revival.

I must have at least three or four different books with nothing but baseball and/or sports nicknames. I’d be happy to loan any of them to any of you at any time, but assuming that you don’t have the time or gumption to read them, let me give you Skipper’s *Reader’s Digest* version of the great baseball nicknames of all time. I don’t know that you’ve all heard of all of them, but my guess is that all of you have heard of most of them, and a few of you have probably heard of all of them. Anyway, here goes.

**Splendid Sobriquets –
Skipper’s All-Time Favorites**

Hammerin’ Hank	Henry Aaron
Old Pete	Grover Cleveland Alexander
Whitey Put-Put The Cornhusker Express	Richie Ashburn
Yogi	Lawrence Peter Berra
The Duke of Tralee	Roger Bresnahan
Dizzy Dean	Paul Dean
Oil Can	Dennis Boyd
Three-Finger	Mordecai Brown
Bullet Joe Bush	Joe Bush
Wahoo Sam	Sam Crawford
The Yankee Clipper The Dago Joltin’ Joe	Joe DiMaggio
Double XX The Beast The Maryland Broadback	Jimmy Foxx
The Fordham Flash	Frankie Frisch
The Iron Horse	Lou Gehrig
Mudcat	Jim Grant
Lefty	Robert Grove
Eyechart	Doug Gwosdz
The Rajah	Rogers Hornsby
The Capitol Punisher	Frank Howard
Catfish	Jim Hunter
Mealticket	Carl Hubbell
Shoeless	Joe Jackson
Big Train	Walter Johnson

King Kong	Charlie Keller
Killer	Harman Killebrew
El Presidente	Dennis Martinez
The Mick The Commerce Comet	Mickey Mantle
The Wild Horse of the Osage	Pepper Martin
Big Six Mattie	Christy Mathewson
The Say Hey Kid	Willie Mays
Stretch	Willie McCovey
Sudden Sam	Sam McDowell
Duckie	Joe Medwick
Vinegar Bend	Wilmer Mizell
The Man	Stan Musial
Blue Moon	John Odom
Schoolboy	Lynwood Rowe
The Sultan of Swat Babe The Bambino	George Herman Ruth
Red	Albert Fred Schoendienst
Country	Enos Slaughter
Duke	Ed Snider
Dr. Strangelove	Dick Stuart
The Gray Eagle	Tris Speaker
Pie Traynor	Harold Traynor
Dazzy	Clarence Vance
The Flying Dutchman	Honus Wagner
Little Poison	Lloyd Waner
Big Poison	Paul Waner
The Splendid Splinter The Kid Teddy Ballgame	Ted Williams ²
Smokey Joe	Joe Wood

Here’s my All Time Top 10 by position:

² Note that most of the Truly Great Ones have more than one nickname.

**The Yankee
Clipper**
**The
Splendid
Splinter**
**Sultan of
Swat**

**The Flying
Dutchman**
**The
Rajah**
**Pie
Traynor**
**Meal Ticket
Big Train
Dizzy Dean
Lefty**
**The Iron
Horse**
**Reliever:
The Mad
Hungarian**
Yogi

NICKNAMES FROM THE '60s, '70s AND '80s

Most of the really great nicknames seem to have been developed in the '20s, '30s, '40s and '50s, with not a lot of really catchy ones coined during the '60s, '70s and '80s. Some of those that come to mind for players that we grew up with are:

Lefty	Steve Carlton
The Penguin	Ron Cey
Dutch	Darren Daulton
Nails	Lenny Dykstra
Hit Man	Mike Easler
The Roadrunner	Ralph Garr
Goose	Rich Gossage
Louisiana Lightning	Ron Guidry
The Terminator	Tom Henke
Mr. October	Reggie Jackson
Ho-Jo	Howard Johnson
The Bull	Greg Luzinski
Sparky	Albert Walter Lyle
Maz	Bill Mazerowski
Knucksie	Phil Niekro
The Cobra	Dave Parker
The Red Rooster	Doug Rader
Hoover	Brooks Robinson
Charlie Hustle	Pete Rose
The Ryan Express	Nolan Ryan
Pops	Willie Stargell
The Toy Cannon	Jimmy Wynn

CURRENT NICKNAMES

In my opinion, there is a dearth of cool nicknames for today's crop of players. A few that pass muster with me are:

Roger "*The Rocket*" Clemens
Randy "*Big Unit*" Johnson
Ivan "*Pudge*" Rodriguez
Big Cat – Andres Galarraga
Crimedog – Fred McGriff
El Duque – Orlando Hernandez
Frank "*Big Hurt*" Thomas
Jeff "*Bags*" Bagwell

SANS SOBRIQUET

It strikes me as odd that so many great players, many current but some past, did not have any nicknames, or at least none that really stuck. Here are a few current or soon-to-be Hall of Famers who have no enduring nicknames:

Johnny Bench
Wade Boggs
Barry Bonds
George Brett
Jose Canseco
Darryl Evans
Bob Gibson
Ken Griffey, Jr. (you can't count "Junior" – no originality whatsoever)
Tony Gwynn
Keith Hernandez
Roger Maris
Mark McGwire (I don't count "Big Mac")
Paul Molitor
Mel Ott
Jim Palmer
Mike Piazza
Cal Ripken
Alex Rodriguez (I don't count A-Rod. See Junior, above.)
Ryne Sandberg (I don't count "Ryno")
Tom Seaver (okay, maybe I should count "Tom Terrific," but it's pretty weak)
Robin Yount

The list could go on and on. Or have I missed some nicknames that this last group have actually been bestowed with, but I just don't remember? I'm sure Big Guy will let me know if it is so.

ANSWER TO LAST WEEK'S QUIZ

What is meant by a "Peggy Lee fastball"? This is a self-deprecating term coined by former Phillies reliever Tug McGraw a number of years ago, alluding to Peggy Lee's famous musical recording, "Is That All There Is?" Love it. Turns out that a similar term was invented many many years ago, in 1907, when Detroit pitcher Eddie Siever came up with the description of a "Lady Godiva" pitch. You guessed it. It had *nothing on it*.

LISTEN CAREFULLY, CLASS

As all of you no doubt realize, this season is the 100th anniversary of the start of the American League, which began play with the 1901 season. Prior to that, the teams that ended up forming the American League were known as the American Association.

Coincidentally, it is also the 125th anniversary of the formation of the National League.

And now for this week's quiz questions:

1. Which current team is the only major league organization that has fielded a team each and every year from the start of the National League in 1876 to the present, all 125 years? (Hint: This doesn't necessarily mean the team has been in the same city all 125 years, and/or that it has had the same team nickname all 125 years, but merely that it has been a continuous organization the entire time.)
2. In honor of the 100th anniversary of the first World Series, held in the fall of 1901, name the two (2) teams that played in the first-ever World Series between the champions of the National League and the pennant winner of the American League, and for a bonus point, name the number of games won by each team and the star player for each team.

E-mail me at dernst@gphlawfirm.com if you think you have the correct answer to any of the above questions. Answers in the next issue of *From the Bullpen*.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

In one of Tom Shattell's articles the other day, he mentioned the possibility of a late-season division race between the Central Division-leading Cubs and the St. Louis Cardinals, and the excitement of these two going head-to-head with Sosa and McGwire hitting long home runs in the heat of battle. Shattell's comment was something like, "Could there be anything better than ..."

Yes. I've thought of something that would be better. How about a World Series between the Chicago Cubs and the Boston Red Sox, arguably the two most bejinxed and beleaguered franchises of the post-World War I era. While the odds of both of them making it to the playoffs in the same year are remote, and getting past the likes of the Yankees, Mariners and Braves in the playoffs even more unlikely, consider that the Cubs are now in first place in their division by 5 games, and have a solid pitching staff, and that the Red Sox are at or near the lead of their division and seem to have the hitting this year (with Mouse's Manny Ramirez leading the way) that they have lacked in the past, if only Pedro's bad wing heals up. In other words, at this point in time it looks like both teams could make the playoffs, and at that point, anything can happen.

Not to preach to the choir, but as baseball fans, you would have to root for this type of dream matchup to occur. I'm sure that at least some of you realize that the Red Sox have not won the World Series since Red Sox owner Harry Frazee brought about the curse of the Bambino by selling the Sultan of Swat to the Yankees after the 1918 season, at which time the fortunes of these two clubs were diametrically reversed. The Yankees had never before won as much as an American League pennant until Babe became a Yankee, and the Red Sox haven't won a World Series since that 1918 season when Babe pitched his way to a 13 and 7 record and led the league with 11 home runs.

Not only have the poor Beantowners not won the World Series since 1918, but the baseball gods have cruelly teased them by allowing them to make it into the Series in 1946, 1967, 1975 and 1986, only to lose on each occasion *in seven games*. The last go-round, of course, was the most cruel and painful of all, with Billy Buck's egregious fielding error allowing the Mets to complete their Game Six comeback and then to take the Series in seven.

The Cubs, on the other hand, haven't even had a sniff since World War II. The last time that the Cubs won a pennant and made the Series was 1945, when they were bested by the Detroit Tigers in seven games. The Cubs had their

last legitimate shot to make it to the Series in 1984, when they took a two-games-to-none lead in the then-five game National League division series against the San Diego Padres, only to lose three straight in San Diego, which then went on to get trashed 4 games to 1 in the World Series by the Detroit Tigers.

The last time that the Cubs *won* the World Series was in 1908, 91 years ago.

So if the Cubs and the Red Sox could somehow make it to this year's World Series³, we would be guaranteed to end a string of futility of either 82 years (Red Sox) or 92 years (Cubs). That, my amigos, is something worth cheering for.

Next week: *The Seventh Inning Stretch*.

The Skipper

³ The Red Sox and Cubs have in fact played in a World Series together, in 1918 when the Ruth-led Red Sox beat the Cubs 4 games to 2, with Ruth pitching a classic 1-0 shutout over Hippo Vaughn of the Cubs in the Series opener. Wow.