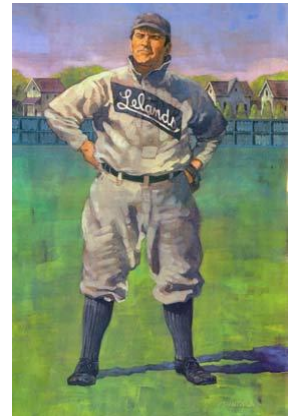


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# FROM THE BULLPEN

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Dear Brethren:

### HOLIDAY LUNCH - WEDNESDAY

Just a short reminder that we will meet on Wednesday at Trovato's for our annual holiday lunch, those of us who are able to attend. Big Guy has reserved the opulent "Wine Room" at Trovato's at 11:45 a.m. See you there.

### IT'S MY PARTY AND I'LL ...

We all felt like crying at Itchie's party on Friday last to celebrate the **Senators'** glorious 2001 campaign, as the Buffaloes trounced our Huskers and dashed our Rose Bowl hopes. How in blue blazes one of the top-ranked defenses in the country could give up 62 points to a mediocre team that earlier got whupped by Texas is beyond me. I scratch my head when I think about the Black Shirts giving up six touchdowns to a third string half-back, who does not appear to be all that incredibly fast, on what looked like the most basic of running plays. Even John Kruk<sup>1</sup> could have run to daylight through those holes. Sheesh.

Anyway, I appreciated the Thielens making their lovely home available for this party, and for dishing out the free chow and beer. For those of you who didn't make it, we had an ad hoc vote to determine the best HSL manager of all-time, and the Skipper won, to no great surprise.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Who could never beat me in a footrace, by the way.

<sup>2</sup> It's true. Of course, the vote took place after Mouse left, before Big Guy arrived, while B.T. was in the can, while Shamu\* was ear-deep in the crockpot, and while Itchie was upstairs trying to lay the groundwork with Anne for a post-party trip to the boats. But it was unanimous.

Actually, while nobody has come out and verbalized it, the clear undercurrent of the league seems to be that while the 2001 **Senators** may not have been the best *team* of all-time, the management of the team — in the face of some incredible competition from two very cagey contending managers — may just have been the best that this proud old league has ever seen. If my take on things is right, this is the unspoken message being sent by my beloved peers.

Those of you who didn't make it to the party and didn't get your treasured **Senators'** championship wearing apparel, you will have to make other arrangements to stop by my house or office, kiss my ring and chant, "*Senators rule,*" and slip me a little something to make up for the snubbing and the inconvenience.

Thanks again to Itchie and his lovely and gracious spouse for hosting the get-together. Next time, though, let's make sure the Huskers are playing Troy State or Baylor or Notre Dame, or some other patsy.

### TOP TEN REASONS THE SENATORS WON

I have given considerable thought to why it is that the **Senators** won the league in 2001, despite drafting out of the five-hole and picking a team on Draft Day that looked like it was no better than a third- or maybe second-place team. Here's what I came up with:

### TOP TEN REASONS WHY SKIPPER'S SENATORS WON

10. Drank one less beer per round than Tirebiter on Draft Day.

9. Keen baseball mind just keeps getting keener.
8. Cutting edge draft philosophy (draft great pitchers early, then take hitters about to have career years).
7. Had gut feeling Phil Nevin would bag turkey on next-to-last day of season.
6. Internet purchase of Pedro and Nomar voodoo dolls.
5. Milwaukee plus Mouse plus nineteen (19) beers.
4. Possum's finger getting stuck to panic button for two weeks.
3. Persuaded B.T. to take year off to eliminate my only real competition.
2. Unprecedented support from spousal unit (Yep. That's really it.).

**AND THE NO. 1 REASON THAT THE SENATORS WON THE HSL CHAMPIONSHIP:**

1. **IT WAS JUST FLAT-ASS LUCK!**<sup>3</sup>

**PEPPER**

◆ You could hardly argue with Bonds as the NL MVP this year. In fact, it's almost a travesty that the two knotheades in Chicago voted for Sammy Sosa instead of Bonds, given what Bonds did. While Bonds did lead the Majors in RBI with 160, which was remarkable given the anemic Cubs lineup hitting around him, the Cubs didn't win their division, Sosa didn't set any new records, and there was really no justification for voting Sammy No. 1 and Bonds No. 2 that I can think of. In any event, four MVP awards is quite an accomplishment, particularly when you consider that you should probably have at least a fifth award instead of the one that went to Terry Pendleton way back when.

◆ Unlike the National League selection, I was somewhat surprised that Ichiro won the AL MVP in addition to the Rookie of the Year award. I mean, the guy can't even speak English. Moreover, Ichiro didn't even score in the top twenty under the HSL system, while Giambi finished eighth among hitters with 728 points.

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<sup>3</sup> NOT.

Giambi also led his team to the playoffs, while an argument can be made that Bret Boone was the heart and soul of the 2001 Mariners team. Anyway, should be some good grist for winter-time discussion.

◆ In terms of the Cy Young winners, you can't argue with Randy Johnson winning his fourth and Roger Clemens winning his sixth. We are indeed lucky to be baseball fans in an era in which these two incredible moundsmen are playing.

◆ Is it just me, or does anyone else think that "announcer" (this may be giving him too much credit) Gary Danielson is a total jerk and goofball? The guy lives to tear down our beloved Huskers, not only during the game with Colorado, but also during Colorado's game with Texas. He couldn't say enough bad things about Eric Crouch during the NU/CU game, and then he acts like he's his big buddy when he interviews him over the phone during the CU/Texas game. This guy seems to have a deep-seated hatred of Nebraska. He must have played for some patsy whom the Cornhuskers drubbed before he went on to his NFL career.

**ALL-TIME SCORERS**

Many of you may know or suspect that Barry Bonds set a new HSL record for most points by an individual player, at least since we have been under the Bill James system beginning in 1993. What an absolutely incredible year he had. But how many of you realize that Randy Johnson just set a new HSL record for most pitching points in a season? RJ's total of 747 points, not including bonus points, was one better than Clemens' total of 746 points in 1997.

Feast your eyes on these numbers, and we'll talk more about them later.

I provide you here the Top 15 individual HSL performances since 1993, hitting and pitching:

**HITTING**

<u>Player</u>	<u>Points/PPG</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Team/Rnd Drafted</u>
1. Bonds	923/6.0	2001	WaJax (3)
2. Sosa	897/5.6	2001	TriBombs
3. ARod	871/5.4	2001	Reds (1)
4. Walker	862/5.6	1997	Redbirds (3)
5. Helton	859/5.4	2000	Wahoos (4)

6. Gonzo	846/5.2	2001	Cubs*
7. ARod	844/5.7	2000	Tigers (1)
8. McGwire	843/5.4	1998	Tigers (3)
9. ARod	834/5.7	1996	Chiefs (16)
10. Helton	829/5.2	2001	Senators (1)
11. Sosa	814/5.1	1998	Bombers (7)
12. Bonds	802/5.0	1993	Senators (1)
13. Burks	797/5.1	1997	Cubs* (16)
14. Alomar	797/5.0	1999	Senators (4)
15. Kent	795/5.0	2000	Wahoos (7)
16. Jeter	790.5.0	1999	Trirates (1)
17. Piazza	785/5.2	1997	Reds (1)

5. Pedro	724/23.3	1999	Bombers (1/7)
6. Pedro	706/22.8	1997	Reds (5)
7. Smoltz	687/19.6	1996	Red Sox (4)
8. Schilling	681/19.4	2001	Senators (3)
9. Brown	681/18.9	1998	Tribe (1/10)
10. Maddux	677/24.1	1995	Skipjacks (1/6)
11. Johnson	669/19.1	1998	Senators (1/1)
12. Maddux	647/19.0	1998	Senators (1/1)
13. Johnson	635/21.2	1995	Reds (2)
14. Clemens	628/19.0	1998	Blues (2)
15. Brown	610/19.0	1996	Tribe (9)

<u>Player</u>	<u>Points/ PPG</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Team/Rnd Drafted</u>
1. Johnson	747/21.3	2001	SkiHoos (1/1)
2. Clemens	746/21.9	1997	Red Sox (5)
3. Johnson	738.21.1	1999	Tigers (1/6)
4. Pedro	731/25.2	2000	Skipjacks (1/1)

Skipper