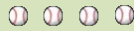


NEBRASKA HOT STOVE LEAGUE



SEASON XXXVII



2020 HSL Champion
West Des Moines Cubs
Manager: Shamu

400

FROM THE BULLPEN

2021 Campaign

Edition No. 28

December 30, 2021

Good Christian¹ Men, Rejoice! As we celebrated the Christmas holiday this past weekend, and look forward to the New Year, *FTB*² wishes you all glad tidings of comfort and joy, quality time with your family and loved ones, prosperity, and not least of all, peace.

WINTER MEETING

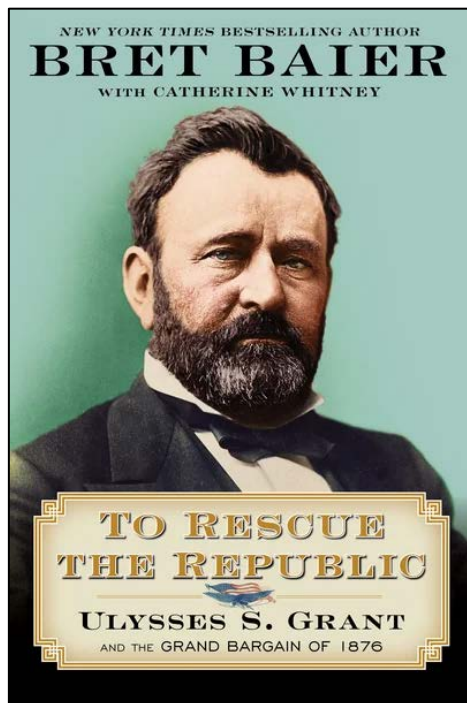
Tricko has announced that the HSL Winter Meeting is a go for **Saturday, January 22, 2022**. The evening will begin with dinner at a restaurant called Beacon Hill in Aksarben Village at 5:30 p.m. This will be followed by a UNO hockey game against Minnesota Duluth at Baxter Arena starting at 7:00 p.m. that evening. Mitch has secured the club section for this game that we all so richly deserve, and so that we can conduct any necessary league business that night while also enjoying the hockey.

Should be fun. See you all there, if not before.

¹ At least I think all of you are Christians, still. I know JT was fooling around with the Islamic faith for a while there, but I've heard that he has come back into the fold.

² The final *FTB* with the Cubs' championship masthead/logo.

BOOK REPORT:
***To Rescue the Republic:
Ulysses S. Grant, the Fragile Union,
and the Crisis of 1876***



I recently finished reading the above-entitled book by Fox newscaster Bret Baier, co-authored by Catherine Whitney. It is a well-researched and well-written book, and at only 337 pages, eminently readable.

The introduction to the book by Baier centered on the Insurrection of January 6, 2021, as Baier broadcast that day following the former POTUS's rant to "Stop the Steal," and Baier explained to his audience that there was zero chance that Vice President Pence could overturn the results of the election during the certification progress in Congress. Baier indicated that at that same time, he was putting his finishing touches on this book about Grant. He compared the "moment" to Grant's heroism in his final days as president when he rose to the challenge of preserving the Republic during the contested election of 1876, when violence threatened to once again catapult the nation to the point of war. The book details the election between Republican Rutherford B. Hayes and Democrat Samuel Tilden, and the threatened constitutional crisis that was ultimately resolved by the agreement to appoint a commission to decide the contested presidency.

There were a number of things about Ulysses Grant that I learned from this book that I did not previously know, which I share with you here:

- Grant was born in Ohio in 1822, the son of an Abolitionist tanner.
- A West Point graduate, it had been Grant's preference to attend the Naval Academy. He later served in the Mexican-American War.
- Grant was not the towering figure of his Confederate counterpart, Robert E. Lee: he stood only 5-foot-8 and reportedly weighed only 135 pounds, dripping wet.
- As President, Grant boldly took on the extremely difficult and divisive task of Reconstruction, and aggressively took on the Ku Klux Klan, which was borne out of the South's desire to defy Reconstruction.

- After two terms in office, Grant declined to run for a third term, and instead went on a multi-year hero's tour of Europe. When he returned, he was talked into running for a third term as President, but was defeated in his party's primary.
- After his presidency, Grant first became wealthy through access to some sweetheart investments, and then lost everything when he was swindled by a business associate. Only the writing of his memoirs, published by Mark Twain, allowed his wife to live comfortably after his death.

If anyone would like to borrow my copy of *To Rescue the Republic*, I will gladly oblige.

I rate it as: ★★ ★

IN PRAISE OF *TED LASSO*

Hey wankers, if any of you have not yet tuned in on Apple Prime to watch *Ted Lasso*, do yourself a favor and do so. It will probably end up being the best body of work of Jason Sudeikis' life. Although a soccer fan I am decidedly not, it is an extremely well-written, funny and heartwarming series. I commend it to you highly.

NOT HERE, NOR THERE

The other night I was shooting the breeze with Will and an advertisement for a Post Malone concert was on the television. Showing my lack of cultural awareness, I asked Will if Post Malone was a person or a band and what kind of music he/they play. I learned that Post Malone is a solo artist, and a rapper. Again demonstrating my lack of cultural sensitivity, I offered that I thought Eminem was the only Caucasian rapper who enjoyed commercial success, and learned otherwise. I also professed to Will my at least mild surprise that this performer didn't go by *Lil Post Malone*, since having Lil as part of one's rapper handle seemed to be a prerequisite. I mean, we have *Lil Wayne*, *Lil Mas*, *Lil Yachty*, *Lil Pump*, *Lil Kim*, *Lil Dicky*, *Lil Baby*, *Lil Peep*, *Lil Scrappy*, *Lil Bowwow*, *Lil Keke* and *Lil Skies*,³ among the many.

Come to think of it, the more I say these names out loud, the more I like the sound of the *Lil* handle. From now on, please refer to me as *Lil Skipper*.

According to the internet, rap started in the 1970s. I have a distinct memory of *my friend Bob (pause) from Lincoln--as Robert is known in my extended family--making the bold statement in the very early years of rap that the artists "better make a lot of money while they can,"* or words to that effect, because "it'll be dead in no time," or words to that effect. Great call, Nostradamus.

³ According to the internet, there are something like 582 performers who go by *Lil something*. It's a wonder that guys like Ice T and Flavor Flav ever got their careers off the ground.

On a final note, since I detest rap--I don't even think it deserves to be called *music*, because it is anything *but* music--I do believe that this is the only time that rap has been discussed in any detail in *From the Bullpen*. Don't look for it to become a regular feature.

SIDEBAR: HEARD ON NPR

I heard on the car radio yesterday that the Taliban has an outfit known as the *Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice*, and that they have implemented a new rule which requires all Afghani women traveling 45 miles or more to be accompanied by a male. Sounds about right, coming from these enlightened thugs.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

As I was searching through photographs at home last month while working on a Christmas gift notebook of family vacations for my kids, I found these two wonderful pictures from the HSL archives, one from Bob's wedding in 1994, and the other from B.T.'s early days as a Kansas City Chiefs fan in 1997. Nice fit, BT.





* * * * *

That's it for this issue, lads. Wishing you all the happiest of New Years, and the best of luck in the 2022 HSL campaign. See you in three weeks.

Skipper

