

# THE FRONT OFFICE

## OPINION PAGE

### So You Think You Need An Agent????



**T**he baseball strike has made me think that every working person should have an agent. These calculator-toting arbitrators of salaries and incentives would make sure we all get our "fair share," plus 10 percent for their trouble. They'd cover up all our financial weaknesses, such as team spirit, fan appreciation, and love of

sports. These traits make us wimps at the bargaining table.

Major League baseball is a business, not a pastime. Stadiums used to be called ballparks, bleacher seats were two bucks, players hung out after games to autograph baseballs on the edge of the grass diamonds. The very same attributes that make minor league ball so popular today made the Big Leagues what they were before the '60s.

Owners of minor league clubs expect to make a profit too. Those billboards on the outfield fence cost advertisers something. The pop, beer, hot dogs, peanuts and pretzels generate a profit. The hats, miniature bats, and banners also produce a chunk of revenue.

Somebody has to stick around the park after games and count the cash. No star player gets a percentage when the crowd goes over 3,000. There's no carpet on the floor of the locker room or on the field outside. And, it's not unusual for the backup catcher to be the groundskeeper too.

Maybe I'm completely naive, but I think some of today's owners still love the game and aren't as greedy as the agents (not the players) seem to think. These owners don't flinch when their groundskeepers ask for a better mower, modern irrigation system, or association dues. They recognize the field as a critical part of the sport. The smell of grass is vital to the atmosphere of the ball park. The firmness and stability of the skinned areas have a major impact on the confidence of the players. Better fields mean better action.

Baseball has always benefitted from having stars on the roster. But at some point, the fans stopped making players stars. They were replaced by agents who claimed to know what fans thought. Owners listened to the agents rather than the fans. That's when baseball turned into a bidding war and forgot about the fans.

On second thought, I don't think agents are what working people need. I'd rather keep the 10 percent and just enjoy the game.

*Bruce F. Shank*

# EVENTS

## CALENDAR

### OCTOBER

**5-6** Southern California Turfgrass Expo. Orange County Fairgrounds, Costa Mesa, CA. Contact: (619) 723-0947.

**10-13** Northwest Turf Conference. Seaside, OR. Contact: (206) 754-0825.

**12** Southern California Regional STMA Institute and Trade Show. UCLA Campus, Los Angeles, CA. Contact Steve Guise, (714) 578-0215.

**13** The First Urban Integrated Pest Management Conference. Royal Plaza Motel, Marlborough, MA. Contact Allen Christensen, (617) 565-0895.

**13-15** Annual Convention and Exposition sponsored by the Texas Turf Irrigation Association. Arlington, TX. Contact: (214) 424-8098.

### NOVEMBER

**6-9** International Irrigation Exposition. Atlanta, GA. Contact: Irrigation Association, (703) 573-3551.

**7-9** Kentucky Turfgrass Conference. Louisville, KY. Contact Dr. Dwight G. Barkley, (606) 622-2228.

**8-11** Forty-Ninth Annual Oklahoma Turf Conference. Oklahoma City, OK. Contact Tonya Murray, (918) 251-4868.

**8-11** New York Turf & Grounds Exposition. Rochester Riverside Convention Center, Rochester, NY. Contact: (518) 783-1229.

**13-17** PLCAA Annual Conference and Green Industry Expo (GIE). St. Louis, MO. Contact for PLCAA, Carol Mocer, (404) 977-5222. Fax: (404) 578-6071. Contact for GIE, Eleanor Ellison, (404) 973-2019.