

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

So You Think You Need An Agent????



The 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.

EVENTS

13-19 Ninth Annual Pacific Southwest Maintenance Management School. UCLA Conference Center, Lake Arrowhead, CA. Fee is \$610 and includes instruction, course materials, reference notebook, all meals and housing for the full five-day program. For information, call (800) 796-NRPA.

18-20 National Golf Foundation Golf Summit '94. Scottsdale, AZ. Contact: (407) 744-6006.

28-30 North Central Turf Expo. St. Charles, IL. Contact: (312) 616-0800.

DECEMBER

30-1 Rocky Mountain Turf Conference. Colorado Convention Center, Denver, CO. Contact: (303) 688-3440.

5-7 Texas Turfgrass Association Conference and Show. Fort Worth, TX. Contact Shirley Duble, (409) 693-1656.

6-8 Twenty-Fifth Annual Georgia Turfgrass Conference and Show. Georgia International Convention Center, College Park, GA. Contact Douglas Moody, (404) 975-4123. Fax (404) 975-4044.

6-9 1994 Ohio Turfgrass Foundation Conference and Show. Columbus Convention Center, Columbus, OH. Contact: (614) 261-6750.

7-9 New Jersey Turfgrass Expo. Atlantic City, NJ. Contact: (908) 932-9271.

13-15 Missouri Lawn and Turf Conference. Columbia, MO. Contact: (314) 882-4087.

JANUARY 1995

9-20 Tenth Annual Cornell Turfgrass Short Course. Ithaca, NY. Contact: (607) 255-1789.

Send announcements of your events two months in advance to: Editor, **sportsTURF magazine**, 68-860 Perez Road, Suite J, Cathedral City, CA 92234. Fax (619) 770-8019.

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