

Realignment not good for baseball

By PATRICK BRANNAN

Baseball fans, a dark day is upon us! Our great sport is about to enter a time of extreme change. The owners and players are more than likely going to unite and change the course of baseball history.

"The baseball team owners want to change baseball in a way that is making many baseball purists scream foul. The owners voted 27-1 recently to approve a plan that would bring realignment and expanded playoffs to major

U.S. should remove troops from Somalia

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ests in Somalia, and is losing lives to the fight. A complete withdrawal could be completed in less than a week if we set our efforts toward that end. In the interest of sparing American soldiers, this should be our next step.

When President Clinton was elected, he claimed he would never lead the U.S. into a war without public support or clear objectives, in criticism of the Vietnam War. This is just another of his promises broken. He also claimed that the fall of the Soviet Union would mean the dawn of peace in the world, in kind of an "end of history" theory.

Clearly, he was wrong. Had he listened to any of the major spokesmen from the defense sector, he would have known of threats to peace worldwide, including some who might even threaten the U.S. Somalia, though, is not among these. We have no good reason to be there, and should pull out now.

Some good might come out of this. President Clinton might find that military policy should not be decided by the desire to look trendy. He has chosen the least experienced of the Chiefs of Staff to succeed Colin Powell as Chairman because he was of Polish ancestry, regardless of merit. He rejected a list of Pentagon nominees for appointments because they didn't have enough women, again without checking qualifications.

Perhaps Clinton will learn that the military is not an instrument for social experimentation. It is a complex organization in which every decision affects the life or death of every soldier, sailor, airman, or marine. Then again, he has yet to learn much.

league baseball. Under the plan, both the National and American Leagues would be divided into three divisions. Each division winner and the team with the next best record in the league would make the playoffs. This would expand the number of teams in post season play from four to eight.

There is only one reason the owners want this plan — money. The easy place to get the money is from the television networks. These networks are willing to pay large amounts of money to have the rights to the sport. Therefore, the owners will do whatever it takes to land a large television contract.

The owners are trying to plead that they are going broke and the economic state of baseball is in dire need of repair. That is true. However, in what was supposed to be a winter of salary cuts because of the economic scare, the owners spent more than \$250 million on free agents, according to a *Sporting News* article. Also, the amount of money that the owners are making is supposed to be shrinking, but the numbers still show that no one is losing money. According to the same article, in 1991 the San Francisco Giants had the lowest level of profit — \$14.85 million. The New York Mets took a \$58.91 million profit to the bank.

The owners also claim that attendance is dropping, but according to *USA Today* attendance figures throughout the season, I see no indication of this fact. In fact, baseball attendance has risen this year. You can even remove the two expansion teams, Colorado

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and Miami, and the attendance is still higher than last year.

This past year saw the Baltimore Orioles break the record for the most consecutive sellouts, at about 70, early in the season. They closed out with another 50 to 60 more. Also the Colorado Rockies broke the all-time attendance record as they drew about 4.5 million fans at home.

The owners claim that the new plan will add excitement to the season. I don't see how you could get more exciting than this past year. In both leagues, the races were exciting well into the months of August and September. The American League East saw one of the tightest pennant races in history until the Blue Jays pulled away in mid-September. The National League West was decided on the final day of the season.

In an ABC "Nightline" show earlier this summer, I remember them interviewing Tommy Lasorda, Bob Costas, and the Rockies owner. Two of the three were against the realignment and expanded playoff plans, with the owner not really giving a definite answer. I still have not heard one announcer — and believe me, I watch or listen to a lot of baseball — speak positively about this plan. Everyone I hear or talk to says that the whole point of playing 162 games is to determine which are the best teams.

What baseball needs is a number of things. First, the sport needs a true commissioner, someone

who is separated and free from control by the owners and the players. Then the sport needs a revenue-sharing plan. The fact that in 1991 the difference in profit made by the teams was \$44 million is a big problem. A salary cap could also be worked in but is not really needed if a good revenue-sharing plan is enacted.

Baseball does not need to realign. The idea of realignment won't solve the real issue facing baseball. Expansion and realignment is not the right solution. In fact, I would not be surprised if it caused more trouble. Baseball is exciting as it is. The fans are still there and the fan base is growing, so why mess with baseball?

Final moments

I sat on the edge
 Holding his hands
 Praying the pain would cease
 For him, every day is a torture
 How I wish his life would see peace
 I felt his bony fingers grip
 and squeeze my bitter, nervous hands
 And he asked me, "What have I done to feel this hurt
 my soul bear not to stand?"
 He closed his eyes and breathed a sigh
 and tears began to flow
 His love, his pain, his agonizing thoughts
 I am too ignorant of to know
 As I rose to leave the room
 he reached for me again
 And then I heard those painful words,
 "Please ask God for this to end."
 So I got down on my knees
 and bowed my head: "Dear Lord up above
 Please bring peace and serenity
 to this friend I love."
 And he grabbed my hand, this friend of mine
 and said a brief good-bye.
 And he closed his eyes and dropped my hand
 At last the storm does lie.

This poem is dedicated to all those who have been subject to the AIDS virus, either directly or indirectly

— Angela Boone

Driving in England was traumatic

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lights where someone stops so others can go, at a roundabout everyone enters a circle and exits where he needs to. I couldn't think quickly enough to read signs and adapt. I had read about roundabouts and been warned about them, but suddenly I didn't know what to do. I froze. I panicked. I cut across all traffic and exited somewhere.

In the country, the roads are narrow and banked on both sides by tall hedges. I crept from magnificent cathedral towns to literary figures' houses to pubs as slowly as I dared, British drivers

impatiently honking behind me. My friend will always remember a particular haytruck outside of Sydling St. Nicholas and the hedge leaves I shaved off on her side trying to miss it. I'll never take driving for granted again.

My favorite memory is Glastonbury, a place of Celtic pagan stories, King Arthur's Avalon, and ancient Christian worship. We trudged up a steep green hill to a 500-foot stone tower which hovers far above the village. It was a cool, whispy morning, only a few tourists huffing and puffing our ways to the top.

I was congratulating myself for having reached the summit, feel-

ing that sense of power which a height can give me, just coming around the last bend, when I came face to face with a cow gently chewing her cud. I laughed at my foolish pride, but as the view of the villages and the ghostly ruins of the old cathedral appeared out of the morning mists, I was struck

dumb with joy for what human beings have done to frame our experiences while living on earth.

In fact, time and time again in England, whether in cathedrals or museums or gardens, I couldn't help but feel humbled by humanity's constant desire to create monuments to our creativity.

Correction

In the Oct. 4 issue of *The Decree*, the lead story indicated that a fine for a broken window was applied to all South Hall residents. In fact, the vandal was identified and the community damage penalty was not applied. The reporter noted this, but the information was omitted through an editing error. The *Decree* regrets the error and any confusion it caused.