

# To dome or not to dome in Baltimore

By PATRICK BRANNAN

As a former resident of the state of Maryland and the city of Baltimore, I've been following the proposed move of the Cleveland Browns to Baltimore. It just keeps getting weirder every day.

Recently the NFL voted to allow Art Modell to move his team to Baltimore. But the team's name and colors must remain behind in Cleveland. Which leads me to wonder what exactly is Modell moving?

More than that, since Cleveland won the rights for the Browns' name and colors to remain behind, does this give Baltimore the right to take the Colts and their colors away from Indianapolis? More than that, would

Baltimore want them?

Now that the deal is done, Baltimore must begin to construct a new stadium. I was impressed with an article in the Jan. 22 issue of *Newsweek* where columnist George Will took up this issue.

The sad fact of sports in the '90's is that the average fan is building the stadiums, or arenas, which are equipped with luxury suites for rich fans to buy, so the rich owners can pay the rich players.

In the deal which Modell signed to bring the "Somethings" to Baltimore, he gets the following "perks":

- A \$200 million stadium with 108 luxury boxes and 7,500 club seats.
- \$75 million in "personal seat

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licenses."

- Pay a minimal rent while taking all revenues from ticket sales, concessions, parking, and stadium advertising.

- When the stadium is used for non-Brown-related events, Modell will get 10 percent of the management fee and 50 percent of the profits.

When that is all totaled, estimates show that the teams' value will rise by \$60 million and that an annual profit of \$30 million is nearly unavoidable.

But what does the average taxpayer in Baltimore or Maryland

get out of the deal? Well, that's hard to tell. You have to weed through a lot of political mumbo-jumbo.

Reports show that the "Somethings" will bring \$123 million annually into the local economy. Yet that seems to be a little high as it assumes 20 percent of people attending games will spend a night in a hotel. Baltimore is "sandwiched" between NFL cities like Washington (soon to be Maryland), Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh, so where are these overnight fans going to come from?

Reports say the new stadium will create 1,400 full-time jobs. Yet with the cost of the project in the neighborhood of \$200 to \$250 million, is it worth it?

The trend over the past few years in building new stadiums and arenas is to put them downtown. Baltimore led the way with the building of Oriole Park at Camden Yards and from that success many cities are following Baltimore's lead.

But the numbers are a little different for baseball. The Orioles play 81 home games a year, even more if you make the post-season. They have averaged 45,036 in the new stadium, bringing roughly 3.5 million people into a commercially revitalized section of the city.

So spending \$200 to \$300 million on a baseball stadium is different.

A football team plays at least 10 home games. Then what else can the stadium be used for? If it's an open-air stadium, not much. Sure, you can put in some college games, or hold outdoor concerts during the summer, but you are still quite limited.

Even though I hate AstroTurf what Maryland should do is build a domed stadium which could be used for more events year round.

A city like Baltimore with a domed stadium could attract all kinds of large events. Not only could the stadium be the home of "Somethings," but many of the smaller sports teams, like hockey, indoor soccer, and lacrosse, could make the stadium their home.

The NBA could come back to town if it wanted. Even more, the NCAA Final Four could be hosted in Baltimore.

Large conventions could also be attracted. Who knows, maybe one of the political parties would bring their convention to town.

Spending \$250 million on a football-only open-air stadium really doesn't make all that much sense. Therefore, the question is: To dome or not to dome?

(Patrick Brannan, a Wesleyan graduate and last year's Decree editor, is now a sports writer with the Rocky Mount Telegram.)

## GOP offers poor alternatives to Clinton

By GRANT LONG

With all the candidates out there running for the presidency today, it must be hard to decide who to vote for.

On the Democratic side of the coin, it looks like Bill Clinton will once again be the party's candidate for President. The Republicans, on the other hand, have numerous candidates in the presidential race.

As of Feb. 12, the GOP had nine candidates in the race. Bob Dole won the Iowa primary and the next day the field dropped down to eight after Texas Senator Phil Gramm dropped out. But the Iowa primary also gave life to the campaigns of Lamar Alexander and Pat Buchanan. With his victory in Iowa, most Republicans would vote for Dole for president, but is he the right candidate to vote for?

Before we look at Dole, let's examine the rest of the field. Morry Taylor, Richard Lugar, Alan Keyes, and Bob Dornan do not have a snowball's chance in hell of winning the nomination for the presidency. As a matter of fact, most Americans did not care about them before they got in the race, and they do not care now. These are the people who are in the race to prove a point or get a little publicity for their future endeavors. That only leaves Steve Forbes, Dole, Alexander, and Buchanan.

Even though Steve Forbes was doing well in political polls in January, he has fallen more recently. Most Americans know Steve Forbes, who proposed the

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flat tax, and many started to listen to his rhetoric. Forbes has proposed a flat tax between 15 and 17 percent, but even though this would decrease taxes for all Americans, it would also add \$210 billion a year to the deficit, which is already \$5 trillion. This tax would also shift the tax burden to the middle class. American can forget about even trying to pay the national debt. This would also lead to the government's cutting funding to just about every government program.

Forbes also said that his tax would solve all of America's racial problems. I think that I speak for everyone when I say that it will take more than a tax adjustment to correct all of America's racial problems. Most people do not realize that Forbes is a businessman, not a politician, and is not good for government. Forbes knows very little about government and is very disillusioned about what is going on in America. Steve Forbes should just stick to something that he is good at, like publishing.

In every election since 1988, there has always been a candidate who is tried to carry on all the policies of Ronald Reagan. In 1988 and 1992 it was Bush; now it's Pat Buchanan. In this election Buchanan is trying to come off as the most conservative candidate, and it is working. He won in Louisiana with it and finished

second in Iowa, and is quickly coming up through the field.

But if Buchanan were elected president, he would probably continue all of Ronald Reagan's economic policies. This would be a bad thing because it was these policies that put America in bad financial standing during the 80's and early 90's. If "Reaganomics" are allowed to continue, this will widen the gap between rich and poor, and be very harmful to those who rely on government programs to survive. Pat Buchanan only has the interest of the rich and upper middle class in mind.

In most presidential races there is always one candidate who usually has a real grass roots campaign, and this year it is Lamar Alexander. Besides touring the country and giving away his ugly red and black lumberjacks, Alexander claims he is the candidate of the people. In 1985, when Alexander was governor of Tennessee, he wanted to attract more industry to his state and eventually drew General Motors and Saturn Division there. Some may say this was a good move that brought more industry to Tennessee, but at the cost of millions of tax dollars. The only way GM would move there is if it only had to pay a partial share of its property taxes. GM also moved to Tennessee because of its right-to-work laws and to pay its employees lower wages. This only proves that Alexander has only business interests in mind and will cave into their interests than the interest of the people.

This only leaves Bob Dole,

son running for the presidency. I also want to add that Bob Dole is a World War II veteran. Bob Dole is out of touch with the times. We are talking about someone who grew up in the mid to late 1930's; voting for Dole would be like voting for your grandfather.

Besides that, Dole is gutless. All throughout the campaign he has never taken a clear stance on many issues and would rather be popular in the polls than take a stand that might bring him a little criticism. When it comes down to it, Dole is a sniveling, whining coward. If he is elected, then this country is going to be in real trouble. Do we as Americans want a coward in the White House? All I can say is that we can blame this on the people of Kansas who send Dole back to the Senate every six years.

Even though the Republican Party has numerous candidates in the presidential race, it still is not clear which one is the best candidate to vote for. As we see, the pretenders are quickly being separated from the contenders. No one quite knows who will represent the Republican Party in November, but none of the above mentioned candidates are worthy of the job.

Bill Clinton may not be the best president in American history, but he is getting better at the job every day. At this critical point in our nation's history, we need a leader who is ready to take charge and not someone who is just learning the job. There are really no great leaders out there, but we should stick with someone who has four years of experience.

Steve Forbes, who proposed the... who I might add is the oldest per... has four years of experience.

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