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**5 April 2018**

I started [*my involvement with the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame*] from zero. I started in my back yard and a few other back yards, and people's houses, where I met Bob Barney. I met Bob Barney in a social way: he was a friend of a friend. Bob the incredible margarita maker. Bob was talking about this research, the discovery, and the possibilities. I think it went on for two years, and finally another friend nudged me on the side, and said "I think you need to sit down and talk with this guy". So we talked, and that's when we decided to call a meeting at what is now called Customs House (Sir Joe's at the time). Dick [*MacPherson*] was there. We had 35-40 people. From that came the Bid Committee, and the thing moved forward.

There was no formal instrument, no RFP, for example. There was a dance, a political dance. It became a formal thing because we pushed the agenda. Simply put, in the end we were better resourced and better organized than any of the other groups. I think we were quiet steps that nobody heard coming, and when they realized that it was a march, it was possibly too late. I think Guelph made a valiant attempt. It got to the point where I don't think they could say no to us. That's what I'm saying. We weren't responding to anything.

When we called our evening meeting downtown, there was nothing going on. The table was flat, the agenda was at zero. To our understanding, there was a storage room in Toronto that basically was the Baseball Hall of Fame, and it had had a sad trajectory to that point; it was at the CNE, it was here, it was proposed there, and to be quite blunt our understanding was there was a security issue. And the faster that we moved the better.

I mean, at the beginning they didn't know we existed until we made our contacts. Right in the beginning, Bob and I got together, and before we even put our Bid Committee through the first meeting, I said to Bob "I'll only do this [*serve as Committee chair*] if you're along for the ride." He said, "I'll do whatever you want." I said "All I want you to do is to be the 'true guy', the guy who gets up and puts our perspective in a serious way, and gives us legs to pull this thing into St.

Marys.” Because right from the start, St. Marys? And Bob was saying we could do it down at Trout Creek, down where the waterworks are; it’s kind of a natural amphitheatre. And all I’m thinking is parking, and parking neighbour complaints.

So we held this meeting. Everyone was a Blue Jays fan back in ’91, ’92, ’93; Dick [*was onside*] right from the very, very beginning. A few of my buddies really weren’t that interested other than “Bob’s talking to you and you’d better start listening; I think he’s got something that he’s pretty serious about”. At that point, in my recollection, is when I went to Dick, and Dick of course is the baseball guy; he’s the Blue Jays guy. He was totally onside. And Dick is politically correct. I don’t know if it was before the meeting or after the meeting I asked Dick...they asked me to chair the Bid Committee and I asked Dick to be the spokesman for the group. Because Dick is a wonderful spokesman, and to be quite blunt I wanted to focus not on my moving mouth but on action: I wanted to get everybody, the full committee, going. We had an amazing committee. People came out of the woodwork from everywhere to help.

So Bob would have contact with his contacts, there was contact through contacts. They [*the Hall of Fame Board in Toronto*] were aware, because we were starting to ask questions like who actually has this? Well, there is a Board. When are they meeting? Well, the problem was they weren’t meeting. They weren’t doing their due diligence as far as Board actions, annual meetings, governance. It was a mess, and we knew that. It was just time to chop chop; let’s get this thing going. So we pushed the agenda. We went down to the Convention Centre, to some sort of big Blue Jays thing going on. We put a booth on, and made our presence known. Not the fact that we were the Baseball Hall of Fame, but that we were the Bid Committee from St. Marys trying to get the Baseball Hall of Fame located up here, and this is why. For instance, one of the first things I did as chair of the Committee was go to the Rotary Club in St. Marys, and they cracked us a cheque for \$20,000. [*Dick MacPherson recalls instead a line of credit for \$10,000. The Hall of Fame’s records show a total Rotary pledge of \$100,000 in 1995, the final payment of which was made in 2001.*] That gave us some funds for Art [*Lierman*], our design stuff. And for Peter Tillman, that was the guy from London; Tillman is a generational architectural family, but Peter calls himself a designer. Peter did the Hockey Hall of Fame, and whatever the thing on top of the CNE is,

the tower there. And he had some different ideas, like batting nerf balls into the quarry.

So right at the beginning, I'd have to say there was zero, zero, zero. There was nothing happening in Toronto, to my understanding. They could talk all they want about what it was they were doing, but there was a problem. And I'd have to say that it was like walking into an auction sale, or a pilfering kind of situation. And that was one of the first things we did when we got it, was get the stuff and turn it over to Charlie [*Hammond*]: he finds the spot, he gets the truck, he does the move.

What we did, as a Committee, is we delegated, and one of the first committees we set out was a Site Committee. And I think Art was on that, there was a bunch of them on that committee. Sorry, I forgot all about this. One of the first things I did was pull in my buddy Fred McLean, the facilitator from London, and he set us up with a stakeholder review: this is where we want to go, and what we want to achieve. It's got to be kicking around some place. But that gave us our blueprint to help move forward. One of the things was if we're going to talk big talk, we need a big site. Or we need some sort of a site. There had been all kinds of conversation about the waterworks, but no, that's not going to happen. Or what else was there? There was Teeder Kennedy, the Maple Leafs ex-captain's horse stable up here where the car wash is. That was discussed, but the person that owned it wanted money; that was one of the biggest problems. And they came along with the site above the quarry, the 32 acres, and everybody's like "Ding, ding, ding". That's where we bring in John Harlton. John believes in the volunteer aspect of life. He came in and said "I'll do this for a year." He was phenomenal. He's the one who brought Tom Valcke in, and Tom is one of the best marketing people I've ever run across in my life, but needs the guy with the proverbial broom around behind him to clean up the mess.

So I don't think we really started with the idea of just a Museum. In my experience, from having done dozens of stakeholder reviews, people have some sort of conclusion in mind about what's going to happen, but that never does. You have to let the group flow, and that's what the facilitator does, is bring all these ideas together. And all of a sudden, it's like "We need a site! And we've got some bigger ideas." Because we went to Cooperstown, and Cooperstown is a static site

with no stadium. They don't even own the stadium. But they have this gas tank of financing that's pouring into them. We realized right from the beginning that we wouldn't be the "No Hit Room" Museum. We had a 32-acre site, and it had to be outdoor-oriented, the ball diamonds, the campus concept. There'd be tree identification, and educational aspects. The Superintendent of Education for Perth County had a committee and they put together an educational plan for us. It was phenomenal. So when we went in, all my expectation was that my job was to gain the bid, to get designated or anointed as the location of the Baseball Hall of Fame. That was my total goal. And through the facilitation and stuff all these little committees were set up, and they all marched forward. The Site Committee was phenomenal; I'd never even thought about the site, even though I used to play there as a kid. The Site Committee came up with it, and that's when we brought in Art, and the tree identification, all the green stuff that we went through down there.

So truly, there was nothing in the beginning. Do people in Toronto even know where St. Marys is? If anybody says they were talking about this any time before that, are you kidding? It would be Beachville, and it's Bob Barney. That's the only person on this planet, in his research. And Bob talks about it in a social setting: What are you up to, Bob? "Well, I'm doing this really interesting research down in Beachville (spelled with an a)". And that's the whole origin of this, of the Baseball Hall of Fame [*in St. Marys*], was Bob Barney. We didn't have anything without Bob Barney. And Bob saw me as the guy to pass off to, and I said we have to have a partnership here to get ourselves through this. It was a great partnership.

There were at least five of us that had to go down to Toronto for the presentation. It was the more the merrier. It was a small boardroom. It was at Citadel Assurance, and I think Bill Gleed said we're only making sandwiches for five. The mayor [*Jamie Hahn*] was there, Dick, myself, Charlie, Bob Barney; there were at least one or two other people. Somebody in the Museum has pictures; there are pictures of the presentation. A lot of that was Mike Thompson; Mike might have been down there. Mike was, I'm pretty sure, the Presentation Chair. Mike was the highlighter guy. He knew how to run the slides and stuff like that; he was suit and tie, is what I'm saying. He could talk Toronto. I think Rob Staffen was the Fundraising Chair. He was pretty phenomenal, too: did the Baptist preacher

approach. The church burns down, the Baptist preacher says “I’ll put \$150,000 into the new church”, and everybody in the congregation says “We only make \$35,000 a year”, but he has a plan. And the plan is for him to create a model of a perfect fundraising. And what happens is you bring a central committee together, you have a Pitch Committee, and it’s a one-cheque gift from the entire Committee, they take that amount of money, and you have a goal in mind. I think we raised \$400,000. Whatever we raised, you go from the Fundraising Committee to the Committee as a whole and you have a town presentation up at the Pyramid [*then Community*] Centre, and it was probably one of the best presentations I’ve ever seen. Rick Horst, the Presbyterian minister, is probably the best orator I’ve ever seen. Standing orator; he’s not a jump down into the aisles and pews and point up at the bell guy. He’s a PhD in Oratory from the University of Chicago. We knew we were there for the record, and he did the whole analogy to the baseball game: this is the team we’ve got. And he pulled everybody in. And then of course Bob got up, and Art. Art did a huge amount of work, especially at the beginning. Probably the site today is not quite what Art had in mind; it isn’t what I had in mind. But Art was phenomenal. The whole group was phenomenal. You get that picture and look at it; it was really a multi-talented group. And I don’t even think John Harlton was in that group, because he came in later, and said I want to get involved. That was the nice thing about that group, people said they wanted to get involved.

Once we had won the bid, it came time to actually move the stuff somewhere. I delegate. Charlie dealt with the whole thing. But my understanding, based on my faulty memory, is that we assumed there was one location [*in Toronto, from which we needed to move*], but there might have ended up being a second or third. There was one central source. But some stuff was in people’s basements or something, I don’t know. Charlie’s the guy to ask.

John Harlton got involved when it was time to actually start the groundwork on the diamonds. He was instrumental in that. John’s an action guy. He’s a farm boy, so he knows how to use equipment. He runs the animal shelter for the City of London, which is a big operation; his son does now. John’s a promise keeper, a Christian man of action. He’s a lot like me: a bigger thinker, and more careless with details. It was presumed that the Museum itself would go into the older stone building up at the site.

During the transition period we had one Board that consisted of both Toronto people and St. Marys people, split right down the middle. There was some tension between the Toronto people and the St. Marys. The A personality here, I offended somebody somehow. I'm the only person in St. Marys that doesn't have a hidden agenda; take me as you get me. And Bill Gleed at a Board meeting accused me of getting kickbacks from Peter Tillman, the architect. This was an open meeting, and I looked around the room and wondered if it was something I'd said. "Oh, you know Bill, he just gets a little carried away sometimes. Sorry." Doug Kelcher was the Board chair. He was sports urbane. He was a marketing guy. He was a fair and good chair in a lot of ways, but he sat around and listened to Bill Gleed. We got Doug through Chris West, because Chris used to be coached by him in baseball back in Oshawa. So there's all these connections.

But back to the tensions for a minute. There were concerns raised early on by the Toronto people that the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame might be becoming the St. Marys Baseball Hall of Fame. But I've sat on a number of national boards, and I've chaired national boards; on some boards the Executive Director sends up the material, research or whatever, and you've got an agenda list with action, motion, and you go down this list, check, check. Committee reports, there's some action on the Committee and stuff like that. But you've got to have doers. And honestly I didn't see doers in Toronto. And the other thing is, the Toronto group said "We're going to raise all this money." And when I looked at the money that we raised within the community, right off, for a community of 6,000 people it was big money. And there were never any of them that said "Wow"; a few said, "That's interesting." But we talked about this: it was almost as if we needed a working committee, because there were always things to do. It was infiltrating into the St. Marys side, too. There were people there ready to make motions, and pass things, and nod their heads or shake their heads, whatever, but to put the money on the table was another matter.

Our committee set-up was remarkable. We must have had 11 committees, with 4 people each on them. Things were going. Our meetings used the big square table at the Westover [*Inn*]; that's where our meetings were. That was part of the problem, again, and why I brought the facilitator in right in the first place. You had a group of 30 to 40 people that were keen to go, and they had to be organized.

We all know about volunteers. If you call on your volunteers, and don't overuse them, they'll come back again and again. I mean, the Induction is just phenomenal, the number of people in the community who come out and help. It may be that half the town doesn't care any more, or doesn't care as much as it used to. Well, it'd be a perfect place if they got rid of half the people, I always say. I appreciate people that choose St. Marys as a place to live, and there's a balance here, as in any community. There's a local balance.

We contacted Don McDougall to involve him with the Hall at one point, but more as a patron than as an active member of the Board. Don is a big guy, the big guy contact. The epitome of that is probably Tony Little. The idea right from the start, and this is John Harlton, was to have these champions, financial champions, donor champions. We approached a few people, and Don McDougall was definitely a choice. That was a name, a Champion, not a Champion of the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame. Michael Meighen was a good example of that. You might get Michael Meighen on a committee in a figurative sense, but you're not going to get him as an active community member. We got that. And maybe that was the problem with the original Toronto portion of the Board: they all thought they were Michael Meighen on the Board and making these God-like decisions when it wasn't a site, then it was a site, it was a gravel pit, it was leased, or whatever. There was a lot of complications going on, elements of trust, which for Toronto people wasn't huge.

About the Board, part of the problem there is the lawyers. Too many lawyers. Back to Tony: Tony was good because if you needed to talk to whomever, Tony could call up and make the contact. So he was great. He asked a lot of difficult questions. One of the problems when we came on was governance. It was basically to the point where, if you don't give this to us we're going to legally take it from you. Because you really don't have any rights. We're just being civil here, and going through helping with your process. So I guess the whole operation resets. I think we were small-town courteous to these people, but...There were a couple of really nice guys on the [Toronto] Board, but I don't think there were any doers.

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The current Board seemed to be caught flat-footed when their request to the Town for funding was turned down. But that was clear that was going to come. They weren't reading the tea leaves. The Museum needs to be in the downtown. I'm a small town expert. We love small towns! Go to the Berkshires, and the Museums are right in the town. The Massachusetts Museum of Modern Art is in an old factory (like basically at the Opera House). We proposed all those things.

There is no question that Baseball Canada should be here. It should have been here years ago. It should be here. Period. Period. Period. Put the Baseball Canada office in the same space as the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame administrative office, in the same building downtown. Share the office infrastructure.

But about the Town contributing financially to the Hall. Look, we started off with the Induction with Terry Puhl and a buggy ride to the Pyramid [*Community*] Centre, and it was fun. People were close to the side and could see what was going on: "This is the future". Then they did it at Westover, which did not go over because people thought it was elitist; there were probably 400 people there, and 325 were kids that got the day off school from Holy Name [*Holy Name of Mary School*], because Arthur Meighen [*Public School*] wouldn't do it. That's when I got back and involved, because it was going really sideways. We brought it back up to the site, and we started with the golf tournament. That was Chris West's idea, the golf tournament. We built on that with a full day Saturday. That's 95% of the Hall's income, absolutely. And that's where Tom Valcke was a miracle worker, because we brought in the guy from *Saturday Night Live* (because Tom can phone Lorne Michaels with a direct line). You're bringing in a comedian from New York City, off *Saturday Night Live*, and there's something like 235 people there. And my line was if Jesus Christ Himself was there there might have been 400. But that's St. Marys. If you had midget wrestling or something you'd probably get a packed house. Or better, mention Arthur Meighen development and you get 300 people in a room. The town just moves in a different way.

But back onto the Committee [*Board*], they've lost something as far as bringing energized people on. My neighbor across the street says the town's given enough. I always say to him, "You're right. The town has given enough. It's time



for the big guys in Toronto. You're totally right. But why are you against the Baseball Hall of Fame?"

I want to go back to Tom Valcke and the two most incredible ideas he had. The tag on minor baseball membership across Canada, \$1.00 or \$1.20 or whatever it is that goes back here; a phenomenal idea. And the other was the accommodation. We tried to bring up on three separate occasions the Tim Horton's Foundation. Their camps are like resorts. What they want to do is give the kids massive aspirations for improving themselves. And here, even as a day camp, would be a great suggestion. Anyway, that was the one idea, the fee, and then the accommodation was a phenomenal idea that could have worked. Baseball Canada should have their kids billeted down there where they could walk out on a deck and look at a first-rate training site. We realized we'd never match Cooperstown with artifacts, so the idea was it would be an outdoor-centric place. We'd somehow incorporate the quarry, and so on. It's gone a little sideways. It's all about money. There are people who've made commitments of a few hundreds of thousands, but it can't get traction. They keep talking about these big campaigns, and there must be a lot of yawning, or people running for the exits when these campaigns are mentioned.

But why isn't Baseball Canada here? I don't understand that, if we want ourselves to be thought of as the cradle of baseball. If you have Baseball Canada here, and you have other things going on, you don't have to depend necessarily on the Blue Jays. The Blue Jays should want to be involved. Having Baseball Canada here gives it a kind of official stamp of approval. That means the Federal government is recognizing you. And you know what I've heard for 20+ years is "Oh well, their wives have jobs, and they've got houses". I say give them a moving expense; this is the way it's going to go. Why is somebody protecting jobs in Ottawa? My understanding is it's on the third floor of an office, or strip mall, or whatever. If they're worried about the expense of staying in Ottawa, it'd be a lot cheaper for them to come here. But nobody's taking the leadership to go and get them. And that was what was great about our Committee: there'd be somebody saying "Yeah, I've got a contact in Ottawa. I know the guy that's working in there." We did that, and they said "No, no. We're not going to move."

What really piqued me on the Baseball Hall of Fame was our 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Rotary. I did it out here in the tent at Stone Willow [*Inn*]. It was a great evening, and my presentation chair was going to name the top 5 Rotary projects. One of them was the Baseball Hall of Fame. She suggested that I might want to read it, so I did. It said it was Dick MacPherson who founded the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame. I said "Where did you get this?" and she said Wikipedia. [*It was neither Dick nor Lorne who founded the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame. It was Bruce Prentice.*]

There's got to be some vision here, and there's not. Their vision is this cardboard monument, and it's just wrong.