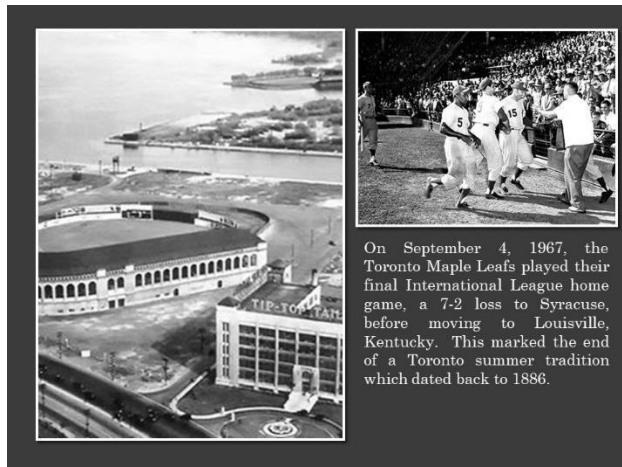




This paper constitutes a chapter in the SABR publication **Time for Expansion Baseball** (2018).

The date was September 4, 1967. As Canada's centennial summer drew to a close, a sparse crowd of 802 gathered at Maple Leaf Stadium to watch the hometown Leafs of the International League host the Syracuse Chiefs.¹ A ninth-



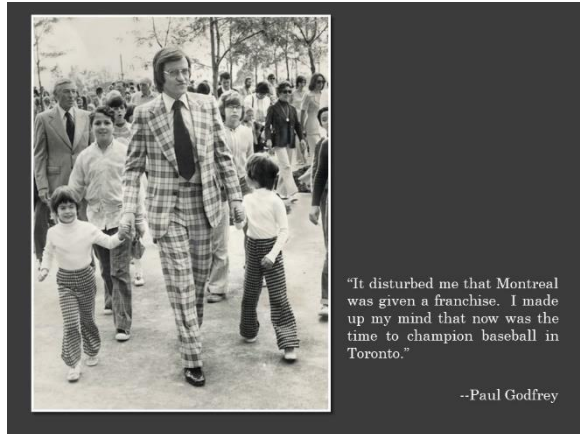
inning home run by [Syd O'Brien](#) could not overcome a 7-2 loss to [Stan Bahnsen](#) and the Chiefs. The once-proud Maple Leafs franchise drew an aggregate total for the year of only 67,216 spectators and was teetering on bankruptcy.² After the season, Toronto Community Baseball Ltd. sold the franchise and its debts to Indiana developer Walter Dilbeck for \$65,000. The Leafs were moved immediately to

Louisville, Kentucky.³ Baseball, a summer tradition in Toronto since 1886, had "crept out ... without a whimper of public protest."⁴

Baseball was not absent from the Toronto sports scene for long. In 1969, boxing promoter Jack Dominico was awarded an expansion team, also called the Maple Leafs, in the Ontario Inter-County League. However, municipal leaders like Paul Godfrey were not satisfied. Up the Macdonald-Cartier



Freeway in Montreal, the Expos set an attendance record for expansion teams as 1.2 million flocked to Jarry Park. Godfrey surmised that if Montreal was major league, then Toronto should be as well.



"It disturbed me that Montreal was given a franchise," Godfrey told Bob Elliott of the *Toronto Sun* in 1993. "I made up my mind that now was the time to champion baseball for Toronto."⁵ The alderman from North York received a terse response from Commissioner [Bowie Kuhn](#) in 1969 when he approached Kuhn without a venue:

"Son, here's the way baseball works. You get a stadium to play in and baseball will decide whether we'll come."⁶ According to Louis Cauz of the (Toronto) *Globe and Mail*, "Downsview Airport [in North York] and the Woodbine Racetrack in Etobicoke were bandied about as possible locations, but those sites would involve many more millions to develop than [was cost feasible]."⁷



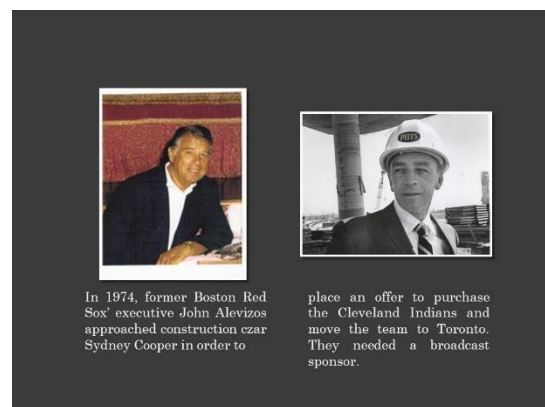
The question of a proper venue was addressed in 1973 when Godfrey, now Metro Toronto Chairman, met Ontario Premier William Davis prior to the Grey Cup finals at Exhibition Stadium. Davis asked, "Where can we put it?" Godfrey replied "Why not here?"⁸ The two Conservative politicians agreed to split the costs to expand and upgrade Exhibition Stadium to meet the standards of major league baseball.



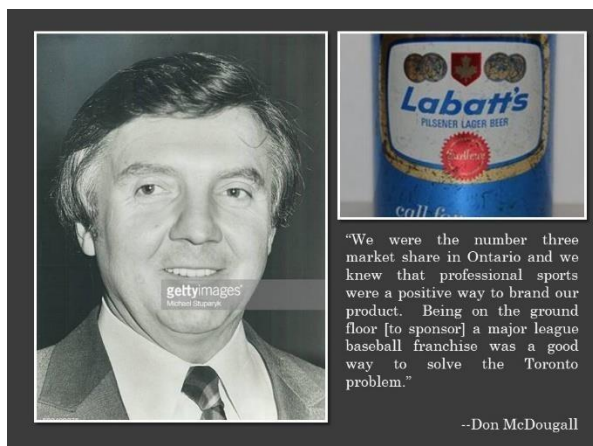
Amid double-digit inflation and a global energy crisis, Metro Toronto taxpayers demanded to know that any proposed renovation would be profitable.

Although Godfrey estimated a \$15 million investment, a *Globe and Mail* editorial rebutted by asking, "Should be we satisfied with 'ballpark figures' just because the topic under discussion is a stadium?"⁹ Metro aldermen approved the project in 1974 by a vote of 23 to 6; it would serve only as a temporary facility until a domed stadium was ready. The capacity for baseball was estimated at 40,000.¹⁰

As is often the case with municipal projects, the Exhibition Stadium budget was a gross underestimate. Once the renovation was ratified, the budget was closer to \$17.8 million, not including the scoreboard, private boxes, and concessions. The dressing rooms required additional renovation, adding another \$2 million. Several corporations agreed to absorb construction costs and receive advertising rights and a share of the profits once a team began to play.¹¹ Also in 1974, former Boston Red Sox executive John Alevizos sought to purchase the Cleveland Indians and move them to Toronto.¹² Upon approaching Davis for partners, Alevizos was advised to get in touch with local construction magnate Sydney Cooper.¹³



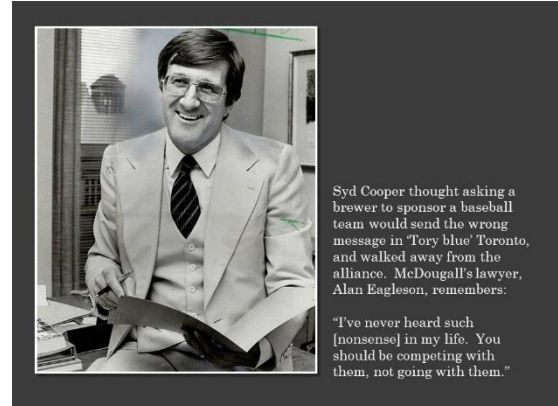
Meanwhile, in London, Labatt Breweries executives Donald McDougall and Ed Bradley brainstormed marketing ideas to improve the popularity of their product in Ontario. "We were the number 3 market share in Ontario behind Molson and Carling O'Keefe, and we knew that professional sports were a positive way to brand our product. We had recently become the sponsor of the Winnipeg Blue Bombers [of the Canadian Football League] and the product was so successful that we changed the name from Labatt's Pilsener to Labatt's Blue," McDougall said. "Being on the ground floor [to sponsor] a major league baseball franchise was a good place to solve the Toronto problem."¹⁴ Although Labatt had sponsored local sporting events in Ontario like golf and curling, the brewery could not make inroads with any hockey



or football teams in the province. In September, McDougall and his adviser, Alan Eagleson, met with Cooper to discuss a strategic alliance to bring baseball to Toronto. Cooper, who died in 2018, appreciated their interest but rejected their offer. He thought that asking a brewer to sponsor a baseball team would send the wrong message to the “Tory blue” Toronto of 1974.

McDougall remembered: "We got out on the street and Eagleson said, 'I've never heard such [nonsense] in my life. You should be competing with them, not going with them.'"¹⁵ Thus, the idea of owning a team, rather than merely sponsoring one, was planted in McDougall's mind. The next step was to speak to league presidents [Lee MacPhail](#) and Chub Feeney at the 1974 World Series. A third consortium

spearheaded by Lorne Duguid and Harold Ballard joined the baseball sweepstakes.¹⁶ As McDougall recalled, "The Duguid group [jovially] handed out brochures at the World Series. By contrast, we went to every place National League and American League owners met. Our market share responded positively to our effort to bring a team to Toronto, even if we hadn't achieved it yet."¹⁷ McDougall's next hurdle was to convince his fellow executives at Labatt that owning a baseball team was a good business venture.

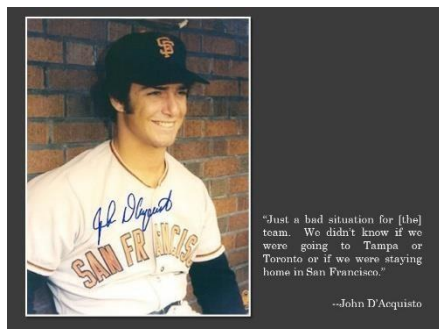
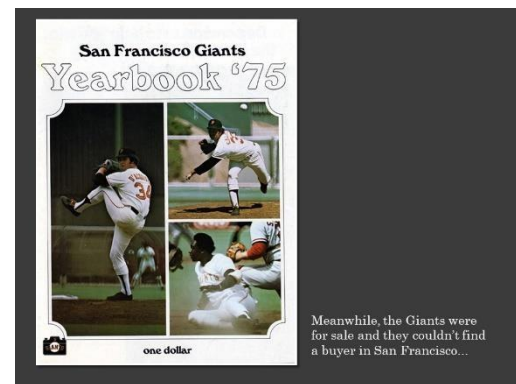


"They took the position that we shouldn't own the team [outright]," he said. "We could associate ourselves with the team ... as long as we didn't own more than 45 percent of the shares."¹⁸ By the end of 1975, Herb Solway, a Toronto lawyer retained by Labatt, was able to cobble a partnership. Montreal financier R. Howard Webster pledged to finance an additional 45 percent, with Page Wadsworth of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce contributing the remaining 10 percent."¹⁹

This was not the first attempt to bring a major league baseball franchise to Toronto. In the 1950s, when Jack Kent Cooke owned the Maple Leafs, he initiated unsuccessful attempts to persuade the Boston Braves, the Detroit Tigers, the Philadelphia Athletics, and the St. Louis Browns to relocate from their respective cities.²⁰ In 1959, Cooke became a catalyst for the Continental League to emerge as a third major league. When the American League voted to expand for 1961, thereby crushing the Continental League, Cooke abandoned the Leafs.²¹

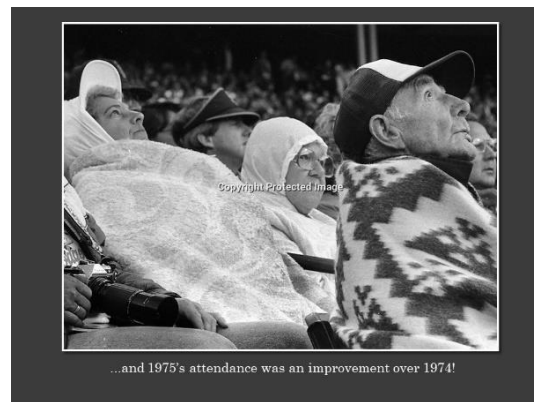
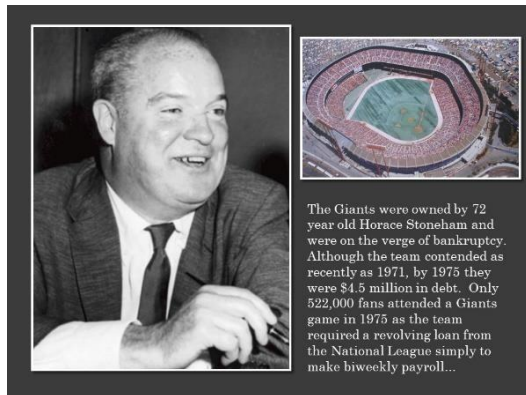
In addition to the Indians, the city of Toronto also entered preliminary talks with the San Diego Padres and the Baltimore Orioles to move their teams north of the border. However, these discussions all occurred before the stadium renovation was complete in August 1975.²² Solway and his associates tried to purchase an existing team and move it to Toronto. The San Francisco Giants, owned by [Horace Stoneham](#), became their test case.

"It was common knowledge [Stoneham] was trying to sell," recalled Solway. "If he had been able to find a buyer in San Francisco, we wouldn't ever have been involved."²³ The 72-year-old owner was nearly bankrupt and suffering from a chronic heart ailment.²⁴ Once a perennial contender in the National League, as recently as 1971, the Giants struggled under baseball's new economic structure. The team was \$4.5 million in debt, compounded by massive losses for 1974 and 1975.²⁵ The league recalled a \$500,000 loan on December 1, 1975.²⁶ As the club was saddled with a municipal lease through 1994, Stoneham decided to clot the red ink. The Giants were officially for sale.



[John D'Acquisto](#), a pitcher for the Giants, remembered: "They were talking about the National League taking over the official business of the team but had to cut salaries to make it affordable. Just a bad situation for a team. We didn't know if we were going to Tampa or Toronto ... or if we were staying home in San Francisco."²⁷

To compound matters, the Giants had become accustomed to playing their home games before a sea of empty bleachers. Having inherited the team in 1936, Stoneham was "oblivious to modern marketing methods."²⁸ Fans who continued to purchase overpriced tickets could expect to eat rotten food at the concessions



before returning to slashed tires in the parking lot.²⁹ Though they finished a respectable third in 1975, the Giants drew a paltry 522,919. That attendance figure was actually an improvement over 1974!

Giants vice president Charles Rupert and solicitor Jim Hunt met with McDougall and Solway at the winter meetings in Hollywood, Florida, to negotiate the sale of the team. The parties agreed on \$13.25 million: \$8 million for the team and \$5.25 million to finance litigation costs associated with breaking the municipal lease.³⁰ After both ownership groups received approval from their boards, Stoneham made the announcement official on January 9, 1976.³¹



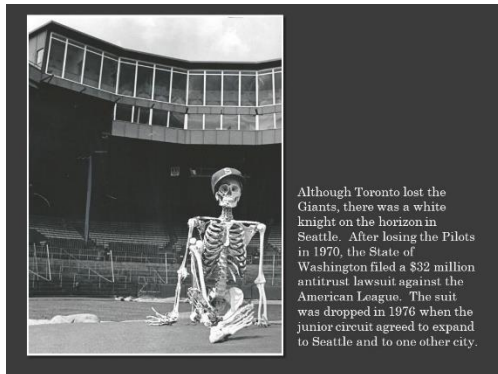
This was not how George Moscone envisioned spending his first day as mayor of San Francisco. Almost immediately, he filed an injunction with Superior Court to prevent the Giants from moving. One of Stoneham's directors, real-

estate magnate Bob Lurie, formed a partnership with Minnesota hotelier [Bob Short](#) to purchase the Giants and keep them in San Francisco. Feeney insisted that he was through granting loans to float the franchise.³² Lurie had until noon on February 11 to find appropriate financing.³³ With one day to spare, Short backed out.³⁴ McDougall remained hopeful that the Giants would play the 1976 season in Toronto.



"Logic is still on our side," said McDougall. "Changing ownership is not going to put people in the ballpark and it's not going to pay the bills."³⁵ Lurie asked the National League for an extension to find a partner. The league gave him five hours! At 2:45 P.M. on February 11, Lurie took a long-distance call from Arizona. It was meatpacker Arthur Herseth, offering to invest the funds required to keep the Giants in San Francisco. An agreement in principle on a deal was reached, and the offer to purchase was approved by Feeney with only minutes to spare.³⁶ Judge John Benson ruled that the Giants were remaining in "Baghdad by the Bay." Godfrey described the ensuing atmosphere in Toronto as "letting a ground ball go through your legs."³⁷

Although Toronto struck out in San Francisco, a white knight appeared on the horizon in Seattle. After the city lost the Pilots in 1970, the State of Washington filed a \$32 million antitrust lawsuit against the American League.³⁸ The suit was dropped when the junior circuit agreed to expand to Seattle and one additional city. Godfrey recalled that "All the time we spent ... trying to focus on buying a National League team, Lee MacPhail would tell us, 'Don't be surprised if you wind up in our league.'"³⁹



MacPhail was not wrong. On March 20, 1976, the American League voted 11 to 1 to award its second expansion franchise to Toronto.⁴⁰ In the words of Bob Elliott, "Irish wakes lasted longer than the [city's] mourning period."⁴¹ After

establishing a \$7 million entrance fee, McDougall exclaimed that "we are very pleased, needless to say."⁴²

Charles Bronfman, the owner of the Montreal Expos, and [John McHale, the club president](#), began to campaign among their fellow National League owners to expand to Toronto. As McDougall assessed, "They knew they didn't have a successful product on the field and that a team in Toronto would help them at the gate."⁴³ A preliminary vote showed 8 in favor and 4 against but league rules required unanimity. As long as [August A. Busch](#) of the Cardinals remained resolute in his opposition to expansion, it was not going to happen. Don McDougall said he could still hear the words of his fellow brewer from St. Louis:

"I have no problem with Labatt, I have no problem with Toronto, but I do have a problem with watering down our product. That's what I fear expansion is going to do."⁴⁴ A second vote was taken: 9 in favor and 3 against. When the Reds and Phillies echoed Busch's concerns, Commissioner Kuhn advised Toronto officials to refrain from signing any paperwork with the American League, as he envisioned that the strategy would generate enough time for National League owners to arrive at a consensus.⁴⁵ The American League remained prepared to expand to Toronto, but not until the National League had committed not to do so. Somehow, the Cardinals had switched their bias and after a third vote, the score was now 10 to 2. Kuhn told Godfrey to "give me a couple of weeks and I'll work on the two votes."⁴⁶ The final vote was 7 to 5; Toronto was going to the American League.

Although the league issue had been resolved, McDougall now had

competition from a second ownership group, headed by Philip and Irving Granovsky of Atlantic Packaging. Their presence posed a problem for the Labatt consortium. The brothers were friends of Jerold Hoffberger, owner of the Orioles and former president of National Breweries in Baltimore. In 1975, Hoffberger had sold National to none other



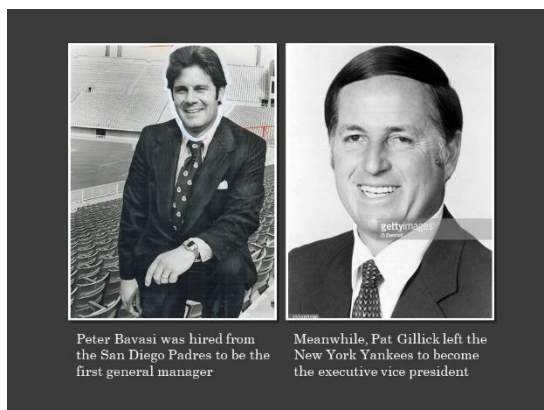
than Carling O'Keefe. As per Louis Cauz, "[he] was against the Labatt group, which needed at least nine of twelve votes to be awarded a franchise. Hoffberger had control of three votes and needed one more owner to side with him at league meetings."⁴⁷ The Labatt people hatched a plan to convince the American League to award the franchise to them.

"Lee MacPhail was flying to Toronto to meet with [Phil and Irving]," Don McDougall remembered. "I had a guy meet him at the airport and said, 'After you meet with them, come downtown and meet with us.' We entertained MacPhail for the rest of the day."⁴⁸ The ploy worked, and the American League voted 11 to 1 to award the franchise to Labatt as Hoffberger cast the dissenting ballot. Webster was named chairman of the board of Metro Baseball Ltd. while Labatt vice president Peter Hardy became vice chairman. Rounding out the Board of Directors were CIBC vice president David Lewis and former Premier of Ontario John P. Robarts. Toronto's membership in the American League became official on April 27, 1976."⁴⁹

The first employee of Metro Baseball Ltd. was Paul Beeston, a chartered accountant from Welland appointed to oversee business operations. After initially considering [Frank Cashen](#), the club hired [Peter Bavasi](#) away from the Padres to become general manager.⁵⁰



"What an opportunity!" recalled Bavasi. "At age 34, to have a chance to build a club from scratch for a wealthy and detached ownership group didn't take much thought on my part. Padres owner [Ray Kroc](#) and my father [[Buzzie Bavasi](#)] both said, 'You've been in training for this job since you were a kid. Go do it!'"⁵¹



[Pat Gillick](#) soon followed from the Yankees to serve as vice president, bringing his assistant Elliott Wahle with him. Gillick's mentor with the Astros and the Yankees, Tal

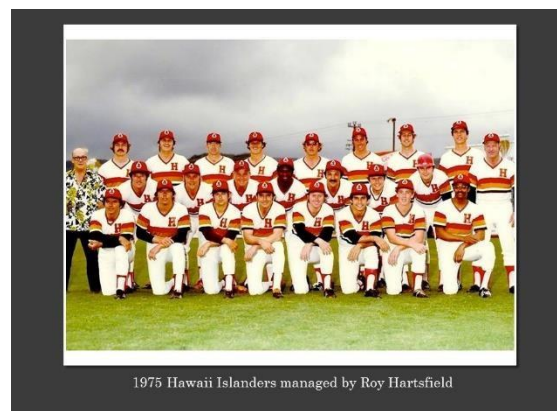
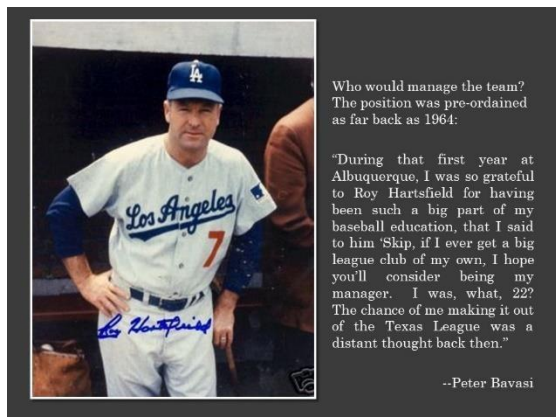
Smith, encouraged him to accept the Toronto position: "Pat has been a dear friend ever since we worked together with the Houston Colt .45s, when he joined us in 1963. When I went to New York I was able to encourage Pat to join us there. I had a hand in recommending him to Don McDougall to head up their operation."⁵²



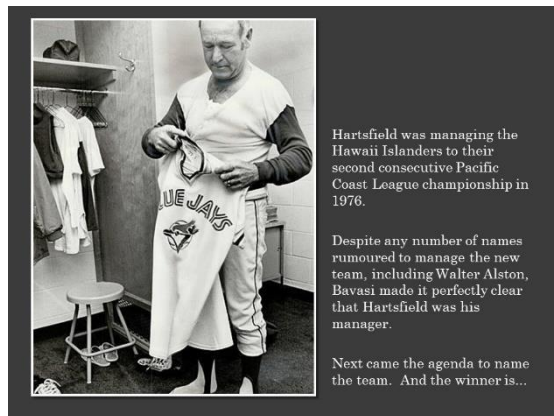
Beeston was not the only Canadian hired by the original Blue Jays. Scarborough's Bob Prentice was hired from the Detroit Tigers to become the director of Canadian scouting. Barrie's Ken Carson left the Pittsburgh Penguins to become the trainer, while Howard Starkman moved across town from the hockey Toronto Maple Leafs to become the director of public relations.⁵³ Whom would Bavasi hire to manage the team? What nobody realized is that the position was preordained as far back as 1964.

"During that first year at Albuquerque, I was so grateful to [Roy Hartsfield](#) for having been such a big part of my baseball education, that I said to him, 'Skip, if I ever get a big league club of my very own, I hope you'll consider being my manager,'" Bavasi said. "I was, what, 22? The chance of me making it out of the Texas League was a distant thought back then."⁵⁴ In 1976, Hartsfield led the Hawaii Islanders to their second consecutive Pacific Coast League championship.⁵⁵ The Georgia native was as famous for his unintelligible homespun expressions as his exceptional ability to mold young players with patience and understanding.⁵⁶

[Rod Gaspar](#), who played four years for Hartsfield, retains fond memories of his manager: "Roy was a good man and I enjoyed playing for him in Hawaii. Of course, I enjoyed any manager who played me regularly."⁵⁷

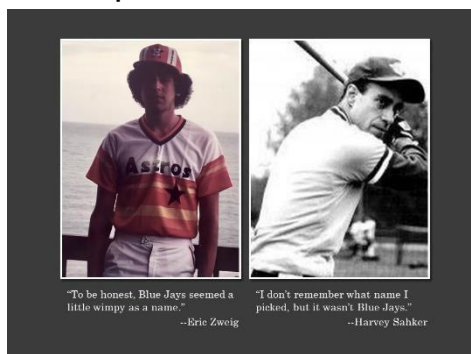
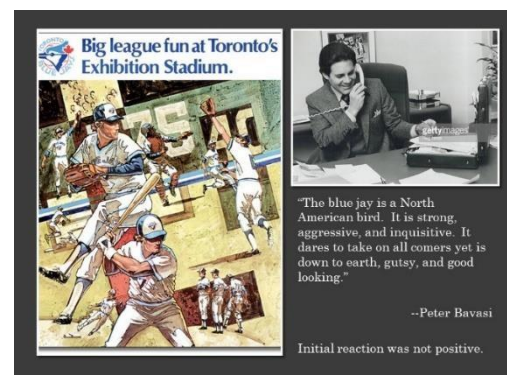


Bavasi made the unilateral decision on Father's Day to hire Hartsfield. "I called Roy at his hotel in Honolulu and told him I was making good on my promise. He'd be the team's manager if he wanted the job. Roy accepted. I told him we'd wait to announce his appointment until later September, so as to milk the story of who might manage the club."⁵⁸ Names like [Yogi Berra](#), [Elston Howard](#), and [Dick Williams](#) were all linked as potential managers.⁵⁹



In hindsight, Bavasi was amazed that in a city with three daily newspapers, the story never leaked. He said, "Neil MacCarl [of the *Toronto Star*] came knocking on my door at 4 A.M., yelling, 'We know it's [Joe Altobelli](#)! We're going with it.' But now someone said [Walter Alston](#) is considering your offer. I would call Roy often, warning him that no matter what he read on the wire, he was our manager."⁶⁰

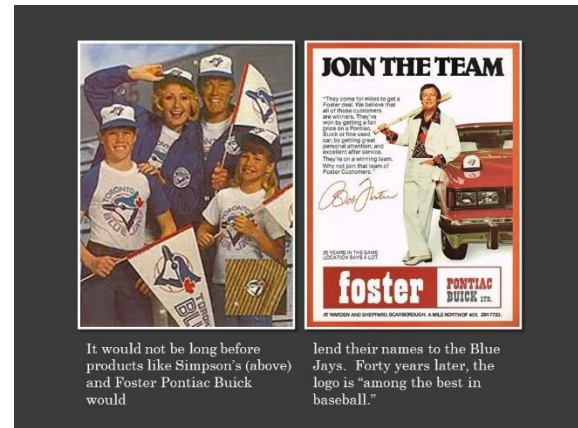
Torontonians submitted more than 30,000 entries in a "name the team" contest and the results were announced on August 12. Metro Baseball Ltd. was now officially known as the Toronto Blue Jays.⁶¹ According to the press release, "The blue jay is a North American bird. ... [I]t is strong, aggressive, and inquisitive. It dares to take on all comers yet is down-to-earth, gutsy, and good looking."⁶²



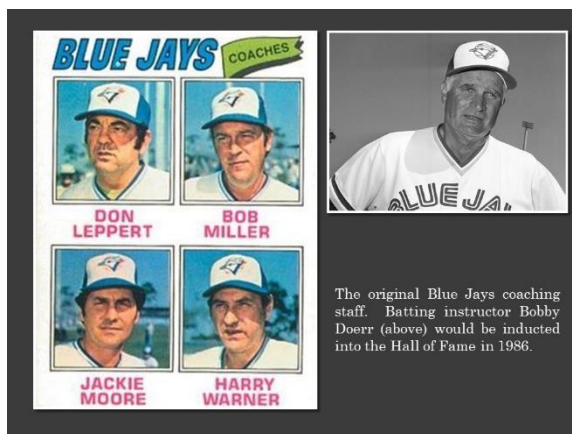
yet is down-to-earth, gutsy, and good looking."⁶² Initial reaction to the name was lukewarm if not cynical. Harvey Sahker, then a high-school sophomore, said he did not "remember what I suggested but it was not Blue

Jays.”⁶³ Budding sports author Eric Zweig added, “[T]o be honest, 'Blue Jays' seemed a little wimpy as a name but I think it was the logo that won us all over.”⁶⁴

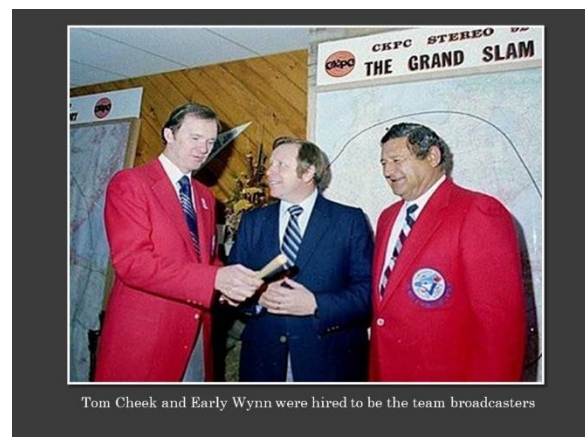
Bavasi aimed to introduce a logo that was "as easily recognizable as [Ray] Kroc's golden arches."⁶⁵ He argued that "the logo did three important things: it said who we are, what we do, and where we're from."⁶⁶ Though the logo was popular with the fans, it was not approved immediately. American League rules prohibited the image of a baseball on any logo because the graphic hindered the hitter's ability to follow the trajectory of the actual horsehide. As Bavasi recalled, "[F]ortunately for us, no one complained."⁶⁷ Forty years later, Howard Starkman observed that "the logo was ranked among the best in baseball."⁶⁸



Once the regular season had concluded, the Blue Jays hired their coaching and broadcasting staff. [Bob Miller](#), Hartsfield's pitching coach in Hawaii, followed him to Toronto. Other coaches included [Don Leppert](#), [Harry Warner](#),



[Jackie Moore](#), along with former Red Sox All-Star second baseman [Bobby Doerr](#). Two Southerners, Tom Cheek and [Early Wynn](#), were hired to broadcast baseball on the radio to millions of Canadians.



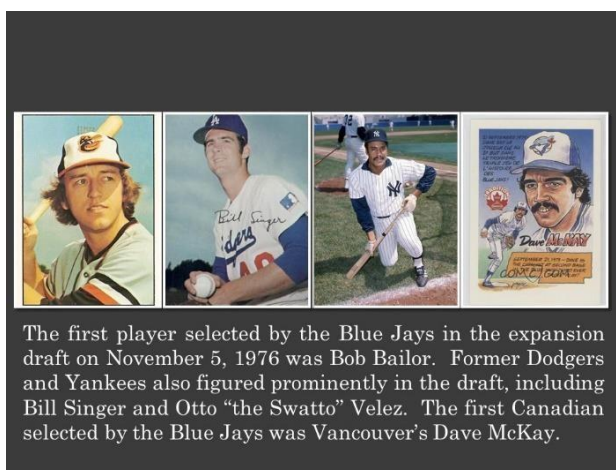
With a coaching staff in order, it was time to assemble the team. On October 21, 1976, [Phil Roof](#) became the first Blue Jay when the club acquired the former Leafs catcher from the Chicago White Sox. The following day, the team



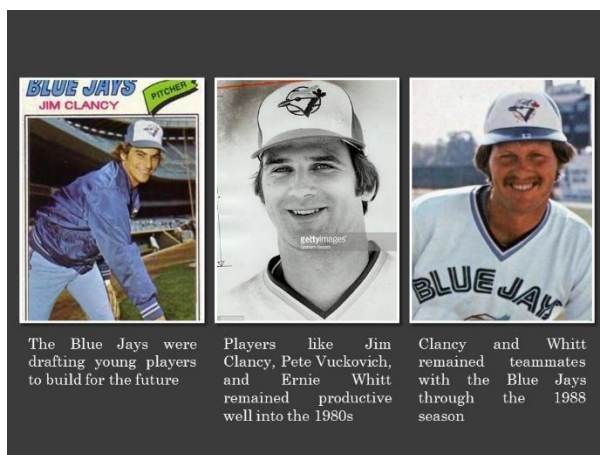
purchased the contracts of [Dave Hilton](#), [Dave Roberts](#), and [John Scott](#) from the Padres and [Chuck Hartenstein](#) from Hawaii – all disciples of Bavasi and Hartsfield.

The Plaza Hotel in New York played host to the expansion draft on November 5. With their first pick, the Blue Jays selected [Bob Bailor](#). A star prospect in the

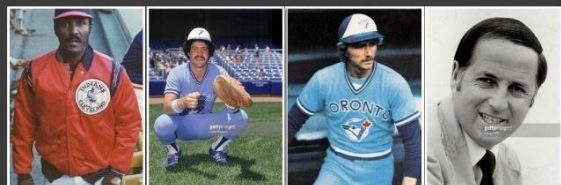
Orioles farm system, Bailor was unable to displace [Mark Belanger](#) at shortstop in Baltimore. On Gillick's advice, the club drafted [Otto Velez](#) and [Garth Iorg](#) from the Yankees. Meanwhile, [Bill Singer](#), who had pitched a no-hitter for the Dodgers, was drafted from the Twins. Former Leaf [Rico Carty](#) was drafted from the Indians. Other notable names included [Jim Clancy](#), [Pete Vuckovich](#), and [Ernie Whitt](#) – all of



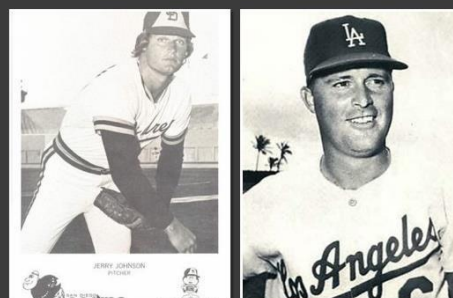
whom continued to play well into the 1980s. The one Canadian Blue Jay, [Dave McKay](#), was at home in Vancouver when he was drafted from the Twins: "I found out watching the late-night news. We turned our phone off having put the baby [Cody McKay](#) down that afternoon, and forgot to turn it back on. Friends and family were calling all evening."⁶⁹



In a pre-orchestrated deal with the Indians, the Blue Jays sent drafted pitcher [Al Fitzmorris](#) to Cleveland for [Alan Ashby](#) and [Doug Howard](#). A month later, Carty was traded back to the Indians for [John Lowenstein](#) and [Rick Cerone](#). Dave Roberts and Mike Weathers were soon traded for two more Bavasi players, [Jerry Johnson](#) and [Ron Fairly](#), respectively.



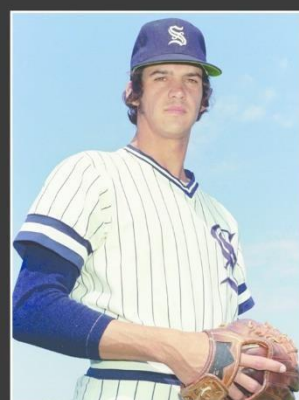
Now it was time to start to trade to prepare for the season. In a pre-orchestrated deal, former Toronto Maple Leaf and Cleveland Indian Rico Carty was traded back to the Indians for Rick Cerone. Alan Ashby was acquired from the Indians in a separate transaction.



Rounding out the roster were two more Bavasi players, Jerry Johnson from the Padres...

...and former Dodger Ron Fairly, who became the Blue Jays' first All-Star player in 1977.

The best trade of all, as it were, was the one that was never executed. Here is how Elliott Wahle recalled what transpired: "At the very end of spring training, [we were] sitting in an office with one desk and two telephones. We sat with the polyester uniforms drying over our heads with the heat on. The phone rang and it was [Gabe Paul](#) with the Yankees. He offered us [Ron Guidry](#) for Bill Singer, straight up. Peter says, 'We're not making the trade because Singer is the marketing face of the new Blue Jays.' Gillick says, 'I can put the uniform on and people will think I'm Singer.' Peter was unmoved."⁷⁰



The best trade was the one that wasn't made when at the end of spring training, the New York Yankees offered Ron Guidry in exchange for Bill Singer.

"We're not making the trade because Singer is the marketing face of the Blue Jays."

--Peter Bavasi

"I can put on the uniform and people will think I'm Singer."

--Pat Gillick

As training camp broke in Dunedin, Florida, in 1977, the Blue Jays estimated their payroll budget at \$5.2 million.⁷¹ Although Singer had pitched well, the fledgling franchise experienced growth pains in many other areas. While watching Bob Bailor play shortstop, Pat Gillick noted "questions about his arm," and the

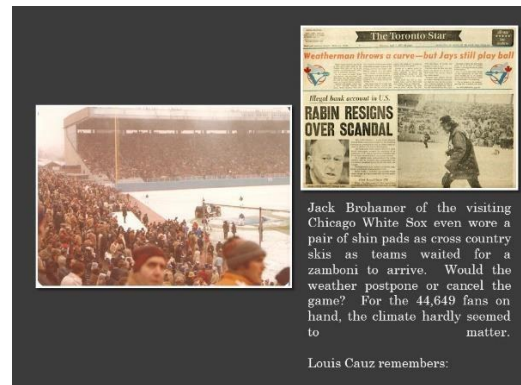
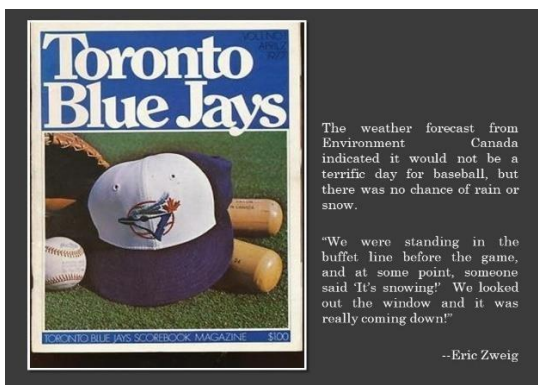


After posting a record of 8-16 in spring training at Dunedin, Florida, the Blue Jays and Bill Singer headed north to Toronto in April 1977.

prospect was moved to the outfield.⁷² The top-rated hitter, John Lowenstein, batted .222 and butted heads with the manager, prompting a trade back to Cleveland for [Hector Torres](#).⁷³ Even a man of Hartsfield's optimism could not hide his low expectations, offering that "the guys I managed in Hawaii were probably a better team."⁷⁴

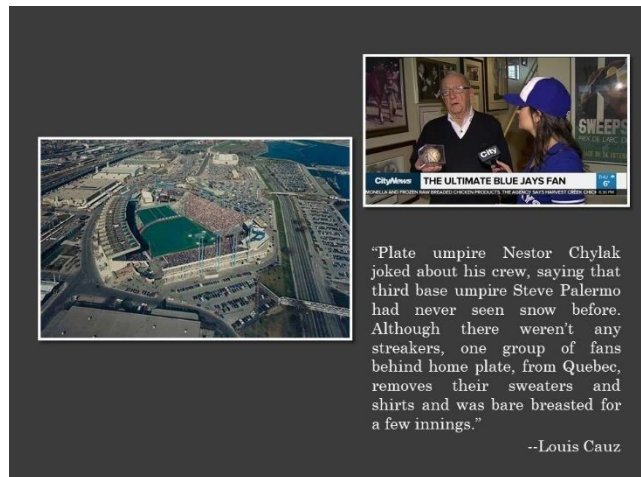
Ultimately, the Blue Jays posted a Grapefruit League record of 8-16. Errors were commonplace both on and off the field. One game in Sarasota, Starkman neglected to bring a tape of "O Canada" from Dunedin. After "The Star Spangled Banner" concluded, the numerous Canadians in the crowd began to sing their anthem in unison. Home-plate umpire [Jim McKean](#), a Montrealer, halted the first pitch until "O Canada" had concluded.⁷⁵ Tom Cheek recalled the cramped quarters of the broadcast booth in Dunedin that forced the engineer to sit in the stands adjacent to the players' wives. One game, the sound of a baby crying was being carried by a microphone onto the field; it belonged to Ashley Whitt, Ernie's infant daughter.⁷⁶

Moving north to Toronto, the Blue Jays faced additional obstacles as they prepared to host the White Sox on April 7. As the team was celebrated by a civic parade the day before, Ed Roete of Environment Canada forecast, "[T]he weather isn't going to be terrific for baseball, but there will be no snow or rain."⁷⁷ Louis Cauz recalls that at 10:00 A.M. on the morning of the game, he "didn't think it would be possible to play because of a swirling snowstorm [just west of Toronto]."⁷⁸



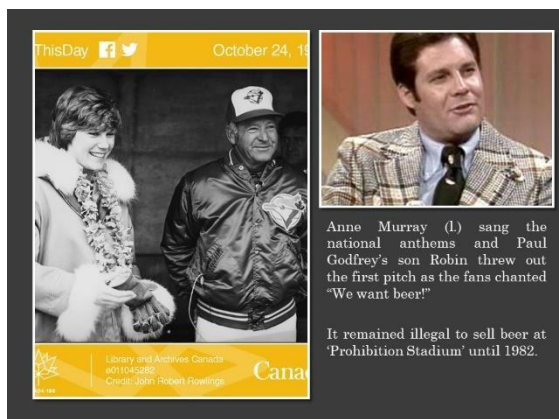
As the scheduled 1:30 start time approached, Eric Zweig was eating lunch at a restaurant near Exhibition Stadium: "At some point, standing in the buffet line, someone said, 'It's snowing!' We looked out the window and it was really coming down!"⁷⁹ White Sox infielder [Jack Brohamer](#) strapped on a pair of shin pads to be used as cross-country skis as the teams waited for a Zamboni to arrive. Would the weather postpone or cancel the game? For 44,649 fans, the climate hardly seemed to matter. Louis Cauz observed the pregame atmosphere as follows:

"Earlier, when I arrived at the stadium and saw the field, I had my doubts that a game would be played. But knowing the importance of the historic moment, and witnessing other snow-plagued fields on Opening Day in places like Cincinnati. ... I hoped the Zamboni could do the job of clearing the field."⁸⁰ He added, "[P]late umpire [Nestor Chylak](#) joked about his crew, saying that third-base rookie umpire [Steve Palermo](#) had never seen snow before." Although no fans were brave enough to streak across the frigid field, Cauz can still picture "one group of fans behind home plate, from Quebec, removed their sweaters and shirts and was bare-breasted for a few innings."⁸¹



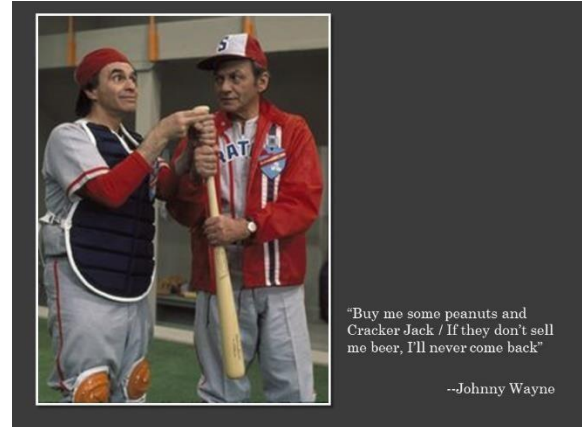
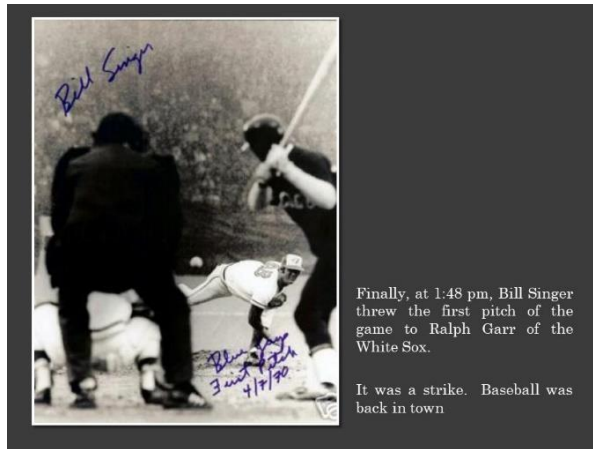
Toronto industrialist Harvey Wagman, who died in 2003, described the crowd passing his factory on Dufferin Street as "a parade of people wearing their parkas and carrying coolers."⁸² In times of less restrictive security and archaic blue

laws, the coolers were required to sneak beer into Exhibition Stadium. Even though the Blue Jays were owned by Labatt, "Prohibition Stadium" could not legally sell alcoholic beverages.



Despite the awful weather, Chylak insisted that the game go on. Anne Murray sang the national anthems and was

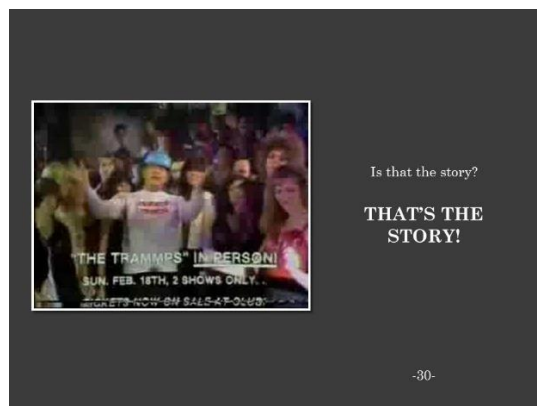
accompanied by the 48th Highlanders. Robin Godfrey, Paul's son, threw out the ceremonial first ball as chants of "We want beer!" could be heard throughout the stadium.⁸³



Finally, at 1:48 P.M., Bill Singer delivered the first pitch of the game to Chicago leadoff hitter [Ralph Garr](#). It was a strike. Baseball was back in town.

Epilogue

The Blue Jays defeated the White Sox, 9-5, in their inaugural game despite the frigid temperatures. After posting a record of 10-11 in April, the wheels fell off the engine. The Blue Jays completed the 1977 season with a record of 54-107. Failing to crack even the 60-win barrier, the club fired Roy Hartsfield as manager in 1979. Pat Gillick estimated that it would take a decade for the team to contend and he was not far off. The Blue Jays won 99 games and their first division title in 1985, their ninth American League campaign, before falling one game short of the World Series to the Kansas City Royals.



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• Alan Eagleson	Tal Smith
• Bob Elliott	Howard Starkman
• Dan Epstein	Harvey Wagman (1919-2003)
• Marsha Franty	Elliott Wahle
• Rod Gaspar	Sam Zeifman
• Pat Gillick	Eric Zweig

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- ³³ Elliott, 32.
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Maxwell Kates
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