

pile of masonry but not nearly so forbidding now as when Shelley saw it, the building having been painted a creamy yellow and converted into residential apartments. Only the blackened shadowy arch connecting the two portions of the palace across a narrow cobbled street retains a hint of the monstrous Baroque crimes that occurred here four centuries ago.

From the Palazzo Cenci, I made my way back to the Hotel Forum, between the northern end of the Palatine Hill and the Campidoglio. Except for the tall brick arches set into the hillside beneath the massed green of the cypresses and the darker pines above them, the palaces of the emperors and the ancient Roman aristocracy have to be imagined today. The Forum below the hill was green with January grass and forbs which I hated to be leaving for the snow and ice of Wyoming.

At the hotel that evening, we had a fine Roman feast, with a cocktail pianist thrown in by a generous management. Most of the guests were departing on early flights the next morning, and after the goodbyes had been said, the Rockford Rump Parliament, consisting of all the usual suspects, gathered in the bar downstairs for scotch and to say farewell to Fausto, the indulgent keeper of our livers for the past eight or nine days. I regret to say that I (but not I alone) had too many scotches, got to bed well after midnight, and would have got up at six in the morning with a serious headache had I not, in fact, awoken drunk. I was still drunk when Ray Olson and I arrived together at the airport at nine. Whether it was with last night's scotch or with the haunting, eternal beauty that is Rome, I could not have said.

*Chilton Williamson, Jr., is the senior editor for books at Chronicles.*

## Letter From Detroit

by John O'Neill

### Field of Schemes



Except for the filming of 61\*, the upcoming movie about the home-run race between Yankees Mickey Mantle and

Roger Maris in 1961, there was no action last summer at Tiger Stadium. The Detroit Tigers have ditched their historic home at the corner of Michigan Avenue and Trumbull and are entering their second season at their new home, Comerica Park.

Unlike Tiger Stadium, which seated over 50,000, Comerica Park seats roughly 40,000—that including the seating in 100 luxury boxes, 20 more than the franchise said it would have. The team's new home has scarcely a downward angle in the lower deck, making it difficult to see over the heads in the next row. There is also little shade from the sun or shelter from the rain, unless you are in one of the luxury boxes.

There is a Ferris wheel at Comerica Park, visible from southbound I-75, and a carousel with tigers instead of horses. The new ball park has the biggest scoreboard in the major leagues. There is also parking, but it costs \$20, which is more expensive than the very few economy seats available.

All of this might have been easier to accept had the public not been forced into paying much of the \$240 million construction cost. Detroit-area reporters have praised Tigers' owner Mike Ilitch for covering most of the cost himself, unlike franchise owners elsewhere who practice legal extortion, forcing their hometowns to pay all construction costs. The Tigers, however, were bound by lease to the old stadium. Unlike franchise owners in other cities who really meant it when they gave the taxpayers the ultimatum to build a stadium or lose the team, Ilitch did not have the option to move the Tigers from Detroit.

The press hasn't always favored a new ball park. Tom Monaghan, the previous owner of the Tigers whose staunch Catholicism made him unpopular with the media, was never able to enlist their help to rally for a new stadium. Nor was the late Coleman Young, who served five terms as mayor, and had the most hostile relationship ever between a mayor and local media. After Ilitch bought the team on the eve of the 1992 season and Dennis Archer was elected mayor in 1993, however, the baseball-team owner and the big-city mayor enjoyed a free ride with the local media.

Monaghan's nemesis was the Tiger Stadium Fan Club, whose spokesmen believed that the sale of the team would save the stadium. Ilitch and Archer were both careful and clever enough to pay lip

service to examining the option of preserving Tiger Stadium, and the fan club bought into this charade.

They got taken. Archer and Ilitch worked immediately to get all the powers that be lined up behind what would become Comerica Park. In March 1996, Archer arranged a ballot proposal to approve \$40 million in city bonds to fund the new ball park—on the same day as the Republican primary. The timing was deliberate: The press's focus on the primary would ensure limited public debate about the ball park, and, because Republicans in Detroit are quite rare, Archer ensured a low voter turnout.

Archer made his pitch for the new ball park in a television ad which aired the weekend before the vote. Singing the praises of a new park, Archer insisted that the best aspect of the plan was that the city would own the new facility. He failed to mention that the city already owned Tiger Stadium.

This was the same Dennis Archer who had refused to take a position the previous August on a ballot proposal to allow casino gaming in Detroit. During that campaign, the mayor had insisted that his position dictated that he not campaign for or against a ballot proposal.

Archer proved to be selective in applying this principle. And why had he made the bizarre assertion in the first place? Because he had pretended to be against casino gaming during the mayoral race in 1993, lest he incur the wrath of the city's religious leaders, whose crucial endorsements only Coleman Young could garner while publicly supporting casino gaming. But it was clear that Archer was giving a wink to the gambling interests, especially when it was revealed during the campaign that he had patronized casinos in Canada.

As a candidate, Archer opposed gambling. In his first term as mayor, he took no position but insisted, most cleverly, that he would fight for Detroit's right to gamble should the proposal pass. After it passed, he vowed to keep casinos off Detroit's scenic and residential riverfront. And now—you guessed it—Archer wants to put casinos on the riverfront.

The interests who pushed for a new stadium were largely those who had also pushed for casinos. Although Archer had admonished the Tiger Stadium Fan Club for having non-resident members, instrumental in the drive for a new park was the Coalition for Jobs and Economic Development, an almost entirely subur-

ban group of wealthy campaign contributors, many of whom supported casino gambling.

Restaurants in Detroit's Greektown had posted campaign signs for both the casino and ball-park initiatives bearing the same slogan, "Detroit Needs Jobs." Leading restaurant owners had bid on one of the gaming licenses with support from both Archer and Council President Gil Hill, despite the fact that these same investors were also delinquent in paying their city taxes. Much to Hill's chagrin, their bid was finally denied due to more serious legal problems back in Greece.

Another interesting connection between the two initiatives is Marian Ilitch, a casino investor and wife of the Tigers' owner. When asked at the 1997 tri-county summit on Mackinac Island about the obvious conflict between ownership in both a casino and a sports franchise, Mayor Archer played the sex card, insisting that the questioner simply disliked the fact that Mrs. Ilitch was a successful woman.

The annual summit is a planning session involving the mayor and executives of Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb Counties. Wayne County Executive Ed McNamara was quite helpful in promoting the new ball park. But no one was more helpful than Gov. John Engler—even though he is a Republican and Archer, a Democrat. Engler funneled \$55 million to the project from state funds without voter or legislative approval. The measure got more bipartisan cover when Ingham County Circuit Judge James Giddings (a liberal who had clashed previously with Engler) ruled the governor's action legal.

But there was another glitch yet to be overcome. Ilitch needed \$145 million to complete the project. Although Comerica Bank subsequently bought the right to name the ball park, it could not come to terms with Ilitch over financing his share of the costs, and Ilitch was forced to turn to a Japanese bank. In other words, Comerica pays to advertise at the new ball park, but doubts its worth as an investment. Comerica chief economist David Littman has stated publicly that new sports facilities are of doubtful benefit to the community.

Alas, Comerica Park is the new home of the Detroit Tigers. As the city celebrates its tricentennial this year, it will lack the closest thing to a tourist attraction. It is impossible to overstate Tiger Stadium's history. Having opened as

Bennett Park in 1896, it was the oldest home in all of professional sports and the model on which Yankee Stadium was built. Tiger Stadium (called Briggs Stadium at the time) is where Lou Gehrig removed himself from the lineup in 1939, ending his record of consecutive games played. It is also where Denny McLain won his 30th game in 1968, and where Reggie Jackson thrilled the nation with a monster home run into the right-field lights during the 1971 All Star Game.

Meanwhile, a new stadium under construction for the Detroit Lions is being financed by a hotel-and-motel tax, making Detroit even less attractive to visit. (The city did have visitors besides the opposing team when Tiger Stadium was alive and well.) But the demise of Tiger Stadium is more than just a slap in the face to real baseball fans. Comerica Park, albeit a beautiful brick structure, is a breach of public trust.

*John O'Neill writes from Detroit.*

## Letter From Eivissa

*by John Carney*

### *Dos mojitos, por favor*



A *mojito* is a Cuban mint julep, mixed with rum rather than bourbon. It was Ernest Hemingway's second-favorite drink. The shot of gin first thing in the morning from the bottle beneath the bed took top honors.

Somewhere just on the dark side of dawn in an Eivissa nightclub, I was trying to convince the waitress to deliver another round of *mojitos* because I wanted to continue my conversation with the leggy Catalan brunette sitting beside me on the nightclub's rooftop terrace. The waitress seemed to hear me above the music thundering out of the club and went off to fetch our drinks. I watched her *con permiso* her way through the crowd of good-looking, depraved, and decadent Euro-youth before turning my attention back to my Catalan conversationalist. One thing was certain: We were not the only people on the terrace discussing cocaine and sex.

"Eivissa" is the Catalan spelling of the Mediterranean island that the Spaniards call "Ibiza." Greeks called it the Island of Pines, and rugged pines still rise along the rocky hillsides and shoreline. In the valleys and plateaus, a dusty red soil supports olive, fig, and almond trees that rise in neat rows on farmsteads that look very much as they would have in the time of the Carthaginians who founded Eivissa City.

The newspapers reported that Spanish farmers were planning to join the anti-fuel tax revolt that was spreading across Europe as the summer drew to a close. My brother wrote an article for the *Wall Street Journal Europe* arguing that these weren't truly tax revolts but raids on the state treasuries by special interests. He has a point. The French truckers relaxed their protest when the government promised them a targeted tax rebate, which means more government red tape and doesn't relieve the tax burden on most French drivers. Governments use loopholes, directed tax-cuts, and rebates to grant favors to special interests and to control their citizens. They're really a sneaky form of government intervention in our lives.

A wise man once said, however, that we shouldn't oppose tax loopholes. We should try to expand them, in order to eliminate their favoritism. More generally, we should support anti-tax revolts regardless of what we think of the underlying motives of the protesters. These raids on state treasuries are double blessings: They let people keep what they earn, and they deprive the state of money it would otherwise spend to attack the liberties of the people.

Here in Eivissa, however, it's difficult to imagine that the farmers' protests would have had much effect. Life has a slow pace amidst the red clay and harsh hills, especially beneath the stifling Mediterranean summer sun. If the farmers had brought everything to a halt, I'm not sure anyone would have noticed—unless they blocked the discos at night. That would have caused rioting. In the end, several ships blockaded the Barcelona harbor, but the Catalan olive growers kept on keeping on, tending their trees around the occasional Carthaginian ruin.

The Romans and, later, the Visigoths followed the Carthaginians. Muslims took the island before the turn of the first millennium, and held it for more than 300 years. Eivissa's modern history be-