

LIFE IN THE U.S.



Julian Empson, a beer vendor for the Vikings, holds together the coalition to stop a new stadium.



Lyle Schwarzkopf, Minneapolis city clerk, is chief lobbyist for a downtown domed stadium.

SPORTS

Chilly 'no' to new Minnesota stadium

By Jim Ford

NEW YORK CITY TAXPAYERS recently subsidized the New York Yankees to the tune of \$240 million dollars. They paid for skyrocketing renovation costs on Yankee Stadium.

New Yorkers are in good company. In most cities, taxpayers help professional sports owners take in oversized profits, and then as fans they pay dearly for the privilege of sitting in their stadiums.

But public skepticism about the benefits of erecting steel monuments to professional sports is on the upsurge, with the spotlight on Minnesota.

After years of threats by Max Winter (owner of the football Vikings) that he would move his franchise unless given a new domed stadium, in May 1977 the Minnesota state legislature passed a Stadium Act creating the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission. The seven-member gubernatorially-appointed body chaired by Dan Brutger, a self-made St. Cloud millionaire who owns one of the state's largest construction firms and a 17-location motel chain, reads like a Who's Who of the state Chamber of Commerce.

The Commission must render its final decision Dec. 1. It has all but ruled out a domed stadium. A downtown Minneapolis site—once a foregone conclusion—is uncertain, and it is conceivable—though unlikely—there won't be any new stadium. Public opposition to a new municipal facility is overwhelming, stronger now than during the five years of debate preceding the Stadium Act. This is largely because Twin Cities sports fans have engineered a "Stop the Stadium" movement.

Stop the Stadium.

The "Stop the Stadium" movement traces back to the Sports Facilities Commission's first public hearing in July 1977. Julian Empson, a beer vendor for the Vikings, Twins and soccer Kicks, told the Commission that new stadiums put fans too far from the playing field, were "hollow

and depressing...promoted racial separation and general alienation," and that their artificial surfaces ruined games and players. Empson advised the Commission to forget about building anything new and, instead, undertake necessary renovations of 48,000 capacity Metropolitan Stadium in Bloomington.

Players hate the artificial turf, taxpayers won't pick up the tab, and fans fear TV blackouts.

Fifteen months later, Empson is still a sports connoisseur. But he is also the glue that holds together a loosely-knit Stop the Stadium coalition that includes the West Bank Tenants Union, Citizens Opposed to the Stadium Tax (COST), Twin Cities senior citizens and neighborhood groups, an enlarging number of state legislators, and the "Save the Met Committee" he organized.

Coalition members have circulated petitions throughout the state, spoken at numerous Twin Cities community meetings, leafletted sports events, held fundraisers and sold "Save the Met" T-shirts to support their activities, and sponsored rallies. Save the Met gets widespread media coverage, no small achievement since the state's major news publisher, the Minneapolis Star and Tribune Company, owns a portion of the targeted Minneapolis stadium site.

Boondoggling.

Save the Met has homed in on one popular and sensitive target—the history of stadium boondoggles across the country. Projected construction costs for a new facility range from \$28 to \$55 million, depending upon which of seven options the Sports Facilities Commission chooses. These estimates, says Save the Met, may not be "in the ballpark."

Save the Met points to the renovation

of New York's Yankee Stadium, where the public cost soared from \$25 to \$240 million; to the Louisiana Superdome, projected at \$35 million but swelling to \$325 million—not including a \$12 million operating loss to-date; to the Seattle Kingdome that gobbles up \$2.6 million in tax dollars annually to pay off original con-

struction costs; to the Pontiac Silverdome near Detroit, a white elephant despite an \$800,000 yearly subsidy from the state of Michigan. Besides, redemption of bonds issued to build Met Stadium won't be completed until 1988, and there are no less than six publicly owned arenas and stadiums in the Twin Cities that house—or once housed—professional teams.

Using Sports Facilities Commission price increase projections of 28 percent to 58 percent upon completion of a new stadium means the end of affordable tickets and a softer, expense-account crowd at sports events. A new 65,000-seat stadium also increases the chances of TV blackouts of Vikings' home games, Save the Met says, pointing to a mid-year FANS report based on FCC data.

Fairy tales.

The Stadium Act passed with the assurance that no public money would be directly involved in any construction—a real fairy tale. First came a "fall-back tax" (in the event a new stadium wasn't self-supporting), a 2 percent metro area liquor sales lien that supports the present operations of the Sports Facilities Commission and the \$42,000 annual salary of its executive director. If a new stadium is located in the site preferred by area business interests—downtown Minneapolis—

the Hennepin County Juvenile Center must be relocated at a cost of \$10 million. Another \$2 million is projected for repaving roads, building stadium access ramps, and adding or deleting sewer and power lines.

Social costs would involve the certain disruption of the West Bank community, and the possible displacement of the lower-middle income residents of multi-ethnic neighborhoods, senior citizens homes and hospitals by a developers' complex. Pollution from exhaust emissions during stadium events is expected to exceed legal safety standards, as are noise levels. There also isn't sufficient space for public parking.

And if a stadium overruns cost projections, the Sports Facilities Commission can extend the liquor tax. Raising funds for bond redemptions and interest payments in other urban areas has led to cutbacks in more vital city services, particularly in school system sports programs and the construction and maintenance of public recreational facilities.

The chief beneficiary of a new stadium and more seats stands to be Max Winter. His Vikings sell out every game, gross profits range from 33 percent to 50 percent, and net income this year will be upwards of \$3 million.

The bank account of Twins' owner Calvin Griffith is also in for a boost (if he isn't yet purged by the onslaught of calls for his removal following his racist remarks at a September Lions' Club meeting in Waseca, Minn., where he said that he moved to Minnesota in 1961 after learning there were only 15,000 blacks in the Twin Cities). The potential big loser in the owners' corner is the Kicks; there is speculation the franchise can't survive the lease obligations of a new stadium.

As for the athletes, only four of the 45-

man Viking roster favor a new playground and a Kicks player said his teammates were unanimously opposed. The prevailing sentiment is that artificial turf causes too many serious injuries, and even Vikings' coach Bud Grant bucked manage-

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Jonestown

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tell of Jones' possessive abuse of his followers.

Terrified by Ryan's visit.

When publicity broke in *New West* in August 1977, hundreds of members slipped away from their jobs to follow Jones into the wilds of Guyana. Jones was also fleeing Grace Stoen, a former member who was trying to recover her child that Jones claimed, loss of little John-John appeared to be one of Jones' greatest fears.

Although the agricultural experiment had been progressing, the influx of large numbers of raw recruits who knew nothing of farming strained the capacity of the place, and the farming declined. Jones had enough money—estimated by a lawyer who died in the suicide at over \$13 million in various accounts, plus well over \$1 million in cash at Jonestown—that he could have sustained the community comfortably. Instead, he drove people harder, fed them less, crowded them in inadequate quarters, and stepped up discipline. He spun out more wild stories to demonstrate the impossibility of escape—tigers and snakes waiting in the jungle, the government granted him the legal right to shoot anyone who fled, and the American embassy promised cooperation to send back anyone who escaped.

Each governmental, legal or press inquiry, each step of the Stoen law suit, each difficulty with the outside world convinced Jones more and more of the vast plot to destroy him. He retreated to his house, reportedly with continual high fever, taking drugs, reading voraciously (copies of *IN THESE TIMES* were, sad to say, discovered in his house at Jonestown). His services concentrated on harangues about current events and the rise of fascism, along with severe beatings of all who complained, although beatings were replaced by hard labor late last spring after a trusted member defected from the community.

The Ryan visit terrified him. When people decided to leave with the Congressman, Jones apparently decided there was no way out, even though negotiations had already begun with the Soviet em-

bassy in Georgetown for sanctuary in the USSR.

We tried.

Although many balked at the real "White Night," in the end, only three people—including Jones—apparently died from gunshots. Survivors, such as Prokes, who only by chance missed the suicide, cannot understand why more members did not doubt the wisdom of the suicide and escape. "It's the mystery of mysteries," he says.

Yet resignation, mixed with fear, and, for many, a genuine belief in Jim Jones' capability to lead them to a "higher plane" through revolutionary suicide probably led to the ghoulish, brightly colored stacks of bodies found around the Jonestown pavilion. On the arm of one young girl was written, "We tried." So many thought.

Now, the few dozen survivors, most still in Guyana, replay the final days in interviews (some sold for thousands of dollars to free-spending journalists) or in their dreams. Tim Carter tried hard one morning last week to wash away, with coffee, the Nembutal fuzz that had given him his first good night's sleep in more than ten days. "I dreamed I saw my wife and daughter," he said. "They were alive and reaching toward me. Then I woke and remembered they were dead. I wonder if those dreams will ever end." ■

Minn. Met

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ment by saying, "There is no question that artificial turf shortens a player's career."

Since mid-summer, members of the Sports Facilities Commission have backed off, emphasizing that they can render a "no-build" decision on Dec. 1. The Stadium Act was upheld in the state Supreme Court, thereby reversing a lower court decision; the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the case. Opponents of the act in the state legislature, led by the Ramsey County delegation, are gearing up for a repeal effort. The massacre of the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party in the general elections increases the chances for successful abolishment of the Act; Governor-

elect Al Quie is also said to be no booster of a new stadium.

But at the grass-roots level, members of the Stop the Stadium movement are pushing for a state commitment to refurbish Metropolitan Stadium. Anything less, be it a no-build decision or repeal of the Stadium Act, means the crucial battle may be yet to come. This is because the bloodbrothers of antitrust-exempt sports and big business have developed a new tactic to get what they want. It's called "private initiative of stadium construction."

The game plan comes from the St. Louis construction of Busch Stadium in 1966 by a group of developers headed by August Busch, owner of the Cardinals. They incorporated as the Civic Center Redevelopment Corporation and sang free enterprise's commitment to the salvation of the inner city. In return for sparing taxpayers the burden of building a new stadium, the Redevelopment Corporation bought at rock bottom prices land targeted for urban renewal and vacated by HUD using both state and federal funds.

The Minnesota scenario took on the spirit of St. Louis on Sept. 27 when Charles Krussell, executive director of the Greater Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce, representing a consortium of downtown business interests that included the Star and Tribune Company, asked the Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) for the exclusive 15-year rights to develop unused portions of the stadium project in return for \$11.5 million in land and gifts to the city.

HRA quickly approved the plan, despite objections of Jack Cann, coordinator of the Cedar-Riverside Project Area Committee, who said the consortium was given development rights "before the public understands what has happened. This is totally unrelated to the stadium. But somehow they've seen the opportunity and are just stepping in. It's like blackmail."

What the Minnesota battle shows is that sports and political activists cannot afford to ignore spectator sports issues, they are directly related to—and affect—a broad spectrum of social struggles, including the citizenry's right to actively participate in the sports experience. ■

Jim Ford is one of the founders of FANS, Fight to Advance the Nation's Sports.

Abortion

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order and confusion under which these unethical practices could thrive," she said.

"Public health officials cannot be excused for their failure to enforce existing regulations. But legislators have passed an amazing tangle of regulations and unconstitutional laws to the point where public health agencies and enforcement agencies can barely keep track of the regulations," she added.

The Illinois House Human Resources Committee will begin hearings next week eliciting testimony from representatives of clinics and regulatory agencies to determine what action should be taken to curb future abuse. Gov. Thompson's blue-ribbon investigatory task force will also soon begin work.

While pro-choice groups tend to support increased and firm enforcement of existing regulations, pro-life forces view the situation as an opportunity to enact legislation to further restrict availability to those seeking abortion.

"Pro-life will milk this expose for all it's worth. And it's worth quite a lot," Joe Scheidler, executive director of the militantly pro-life Friends For Life told *IN THESE TIMES* in reference to the continuing *Chicago Sun-Times* series. In the following days, however, the *Sun-Times* discussed Chicago clinics that provide safe and humane services, but also critically examined Friends For Life.

Calling Scheidler a "bearded, steely-eyed zealot," and a "demi-god of mercy," a reporter infiltrated the organization and related Scheidler's role as recruiter and trainer of "truth teams," sent to harass women entering clinics. More seriously, Scheidler's role as the main organizer of PEACE actions, responsible for the disruption and vandalizing of area clinics, was also described. PEACE (People Expressing a Concern for Everyone), ostensibly a separate organization, is merely a front group with no board of directors or internal structure of its own.

PEACE takes credit for Friends For Life activities that are illegal and raises questions regarding the non-profit, educational tax status of that organization. ■

ALBUM

PHOTOGRAPH BY MEG GERKEN





ART «» ENTERTAINMENT

Photographs by Sylvia Plachy

Some women like to play rock'n'roll

By Georgia Christgau

Late last summer local rock'n'roll waved me good-bye when someone threw a bottle at one of the Dead Boys on stage, cutting him.

So when a friend recommended The B52s this fall, I was quick with the generalizations. Punk rock was just stupid men posing as stupider boys. No group named after a bomber had anything to say to me. I went to CBGB (the New York punk club) alone on a rainy Thursday night. I was doing my job.

I knew there were two women in The B52s, which normally would have lifted my spirits, but tonight it only made me more wary. Hardly any women played instruments in rock bands. They would be terrible. Worse, I'd excuse them.

But as their set began I reacted

with a fan's instincts: Can I make what she's wearing for under \$5? The band did a great version of "Downtown." They played originals. One woman played guitar; the other, more typically for rock'n'roll, was a singer. But her pageboy brunette wig and campy clothes suggested a parody of a girl rock singer, not a clone of one. I'd watched Patti Smith choose androgyny to get around male stereotypes, but in my wildest educated guesses I'd never imaged a rock'n'roller walking on stage with a blue patent leather handbag.

I was having a great time. I thought the women on stage had something to do with it; yet their presence didn't seem like a big deal.

I went to see if there were any more women rock'n'roll musicians around town. I found 15 or so bands circulating with women

instrumentalists, but few were in the punk rock/CBGB's scene. Avant-garde rock—played mainly in little clubs that opened next week and closed sooner—was the scene for women rockers. But the vibes were very different. No fan stuff here. Act cool. I learned quickly about avant-garde vibes when one group played too loud: the people, instead of complaining, like a rock audience would, covered their ears politely, like friends.

In such a receptive climate, it was understandable that women could play instruments in rock bands without standing out conspicuously as Women. But I didn't really understand my place in such an audience.

So I decided to spend a nice day with the girls. I thought I'd invite my rock'n'roll buddy, Roberta "Robbie" Cruger, and a few musicians over for brunch. It's such a women's thing to do. The guest list included a purist rock'n'roll drummer in the Zantees named Miriam Linna, 22, who felt as funny about the avant-garde as I did; Adele Bertel, 23, a keyboard player of some repute in the avant-garde; and Nina Canal, 25, a guitar player from Tone Death, and a member of another avant-garde group, The Gynecologists.

Georgia: Do you feel what you're doing in avant-garde is derivative of jazz or rock or what?

Nina: Definitely rock'n'roll.

Georgia: Because of the rhythm or the sentiment or what?

Nina: Both. But it's not punk or new wave; both terms are inaccurate. People say the bands playing are not new, just early '60s over again, but there's other things going on. One of them is how many women there are.

Adele: Definitely has an influence.

Miriam: Girls were into it in the '60s. I don't think it's a progressive movement, it's regressive; one of the greatest drummers in the world was Honey Langtree of the Honeycombs, in the mid-'60s. Nobody said then, "Ew, a girl!"; they said, "Ooh, a girl!"

From left: Adele, Nina, Robbie, Georgia and Miriam talk about playing and listening to rock.

I can identify with women who don't make a big deal about being into rock'n'roll. As a first generation Beatles fan, I have the right. However, that shrug of indifference can be misleading. I also grew up with the women's movement and sometimes I tell myself that I only became a feminist because of good timing. I began writing reviews at *Creem* magazine in 1973, where I held the distinction of being the only woman on the editorial staff who'd never been the girlfriend of one of its founders. (Though when I was eventually fired for insubordination, it was suggested to me that everything could be worked out at a nearby motel.)

Georgia: The first group you were in, Miriam, The Cramps, was based on the idea that you would start from not being able to play...to learning how to play together.

Miriam: I started playing drums in November 1976. I never thought I would play; I was just an extremely ardent rock'n'roll fan. I came from Cleveland to New York to hear it, maybe start a fanzine or something. The Cramps were just a group of friends. My first thought was, "I can't do this. There hasn't been any girl drummers since Honey Langtree and she looked a lot better than me." Moe Tucker I idolized, but that was too much to ask, the legendary Moe Tucker, Velvet Underground, my God. But I just started playing and a lot of people were offensive, saying, "ew, a dyke." And so I'd say, ew to you, too. I can play drums, too.

Adele: But people would give you a lot of shit, Miriam?

Miriam: My mother, a lot: "I can't tell people you're playing drums!" She still hasn't told anyone. It's pretty wild.

Nina: Do you think there's a different sound in your band because you're a woman?

Miriam: I think, maybe, a cer-

Women who play rock have just taken up traditional male roles, right? Or have they? Four women rockers talk about rock, power, punk and dreams, over brunch.