

Chapter 3

Notes for Masochists

Oscar Wilde said, "Never write a love letter, never throw one away." He could have been talking about numbers nerds. Here's an e-mail trail from September to November for you to follow in the order that I received and sent messages. The real-time chronology is sometimes out of order (the modern day equivalent of going to the post office one day and mailing a Dear John letter; going the next day and finding a letter that unmistakably hints at getting married). Peter Kreutzer is the principal Other, with Les Leopold ever lurking in the background; they are each contributing numbers to Peter Golenbock's book this year. Much irrelevant material has been deleted and in a few cases the censor's knife has been wielded. [Clarifications have been added where absolutely necessary, which is not to say they clear much up.]

16-Sep-95 23:43 EDT **Sb: Re: last week** **Fm: Ron Shandler**

You wrote:

> Thanks for the transactions. I didn't even realize there wasn't a trading deadline at some point. Any interest in Hoffman for Reynolds?

With just as much of a meager shot at making a move in wins as in saves, I'll pass. A few weeks earlier and this would've been more intriguing. Thanks anyway.

17-Sep-95 00:55 EDT **Sb: Re:contact** **Fm: Eric A. Lindow**

What with traveling and moving, I haven't accomplished much of anything on our endeavors so far. Sunday night should be fine to call- try the home number as the Patton/Lindow line may not have a phone attached to it.

18-Sep-95 10:23:00 **Sb: moves 9/18** **To: Peter Kreutzer [SWAT]**

The Moose... activate Ben McDonald, drop Hurtado; activate Burnitz, drop Frazier. Please pass on the phone number up here in chilly woods. Also, for hot stove purposes, maybe those two proposals I sent you?

18-Sep-95 18:19:00 **Sb: late call** **To: Peter Kreutzer**

Moose forgot to say in earlier message, activate Leius, drop Worthington. Minny game is just beginning now, hope it's OK.

19-Sep-95 13:47 EDT **Sb: Re: late call** **Fm: Peter Kreutzer**

Your six o'clock call in is the sort of transaction I've had to turn down a number of times this year. The most painful involved Goodman, twice, when he was languishing with about 11 points. My test has to do with a rather imprecise determination as to whether anyone could possibly object and/or claim that precedent has been set. For this reason I've been most strict this year: I don't want to have to make these decisions—ever.

19-Sep-95 19:41 EDT **Sb: hi!** **Fm: Brett Summers**

Dave is downstairs sawing a board so he has a place to put the brains tomorrow. He's coming to my class to give a talk on neuroanatomy, and real dead human brains kind of come with the territory. I only wish we hadn't had chicken soup for dinner. Reminds me of mom's longstanding chicken abstinence after she visited the anatomy lab for art purposes. Yuck.

21-Sep-95 16:21 EDT **Sb: labr** **Fm: INTERNET:JHunt [BW SWAT]**

hey, alex, here are last week's deals:

baron reserves alfonzo, activates wallach; cuts webster, activates c.johnson; cuts j.ruffin, claims byrd-1; cuts orsulak, claims simms-1 shandler cuts battle, claims newfield-1; cuts leiper, claims m.williams-1 hunt activates aude, cuts busch; cuts blair, claims ericks-1; cuts leonard, claims ohoa-1 enrigo reserves alou, claims buford-8 p/g reserves bip, claims haney-

looks like you guys need a bad couple of weeks from vogel's pitchers, and that wacky strategy will work!

21-Sep-95 19:07:00 **Sb: Re: Skyline** **To: Colin Summers**

Another problem is that Stone is missing. Slipped out the door this morning when we were loading the car for Tiny. We couldn't catch him, then went inside and left the door open, and he hasn't been seen since.

21-Sep-95 19:15:00 **Sb: Stone is missing!** **To: Brett Summers**

He got out while we were helping Tiny load up her car in the middle of the morning, eluded capture, refused the open door invitation, and hasn't been seen since. Now it's dark. We'll leave the sliding door open all night and hopefully in the morning he'll be scratching at the bedroom door, especially up for breakfast.

21-Sep-95 21:44 EDT **Sb: Re: Skyline** **Fm: Colin Summers**

Very sad about Stone. I hope he has the sense to stay away from the road. And I hope he is getting his fill out there. I would open the van, if I were you. He probably knows that as well as he knows the house.

—Colin

21-Sep-95 16:41 EDT **Sb: Message from Internet** **Fm: lcarlson**

Dear Alex,

I appreciate the time you took yesterday to discuss the process you follow to get your book to us each year. I now have a better understanding of how much writing you do in the short time after the season ends. In view of that, I thank you very much for agreeing to move your due date up from December 12th to December 7th. That will help us immensely.

Our Sales Department appreciates that you are making the text as up-to-date as possible, but they have been anxious about getting the printed books sooner. As I explained yesterday, putting the book on an earlier schedule is urgent for our Sales and Production Departments. I am now alerting them that the final, finished manuscript will arrive on camera-ready disk on Thursday, December 7th. Kate is also pleased with this news.

22-Sep-95 18:56:00 **Sb: Re: The Client** **To: Colin Summers**

Stone's back, which Pog is kicking me off the computer to tell you [and Brett] about.

22-Sep-95 18:51:00 **Sb: next yr's book** **To: >Internet:jhunt**

I have the April 19 issue of Baseball Weekly and can type all your bid values into a spreadsheet, but it would be a lot quicker if I had a master list that was sorted alphabetically. I was wondering if you have such a thing in a spreadsheet of your own that you could send to me on email? Four simple lists would be the ticket — hitters and pitchers in each league alphabetically, with '95 projected dollar values — although if you also make stat projections, I'd of course be interested in those, too . . . Is it safe to say LABR's going to abort next year? You gave it so little play this time around because people found it to be less than entertaining? I definitely keep hearing that

about my appendixes — don't look back, no one cares — trouble is, looking ahead can be done in about 10 pages!

23-Sep-95 19:34 EDT **Sb: Re: next yr's book** **Fm: INTERNET:JHunt**

shoot, I spiked all those files with the predictions. but please feel free to use what you like- I haven't looked to see how accurate they were, but I don't think I happened to nail too many. (also feel free to give me the proper dissing for the billy ashley prognostication). as for labr, I think there will always be a labr in some form - it's just too valuable as a draft tool to see the results of our auctions. but yeah, most correspondence dealing with labr has been positive about the reduced coverage. (i've gotten a handful of complaints from people who wanted to see more, but it wouldn't take a great leap of imagination to assume they originated from some league members). good luck with the book - I hope things go a little more smoothly next spring. I gotta think they'll have an agreement by then. shhhyeahhhright

24-Sep-95 13:47:00 **Sb: Re: next yr's book** **To: INTERNET:JHunt**

Well, I've been typing in your \$V's for AL hitters, and here's a question: Are your values generated strictly by the projected stats? For example, you have nine \$17 hitters of various descriptions; is there some sort of formula that says Sandy Alomar and Rich Becker figure to be worth the same? Or do intangibles such as risk and position scarcity play a part? What's interesting is that I sent out the Spring Training Update to the book at exactly the same time you were preparing this for BW. On a flyer like Higginson we are remarkably close. I predict basically the same stat line and my mechanical formula says those stats are also worth \$17. But the bid price in the Update is \$11. The \$6 I don't want to risk on Higginson gets sent toward safer bets — like, you know, Olerud. Anyway, what I'm trying to figure out is, should I be comparing your prices to my supposedly objective stat values or to my admittedly subjective bid values?

24-Sep-95 19:39:00 **Sb: another query** **To: Walter Shapiro**

When you buy players with no salary, like Bonilla, I realize they become toppers the following season, if you freeze them. But what about dropped players like Mattingly? Is he now a topper for next year, which is hardly why we bought him back but is still better than \$13? And I need to know by tomorrow at noon what the call is on Jeter. [Must be activated off reserve roster this year to have option of freezing him next year at \$15?]

24-Sep-95 7:37 EDT **Sb: Re: query** **Fm: Walter Shapiro**

alex: all in good time, all in good time. Nabobs so depressed by performance of pitching staff — roughly 30 ER in last 30 IP with just one win — that I have not thought about anything — including the rules regarding Derek Jeter. Promise you an answer sometime today. All the best, the Nabobs

24-Sep-95 20-Sep-95 **Sb:Re:another query** **Fm:Walter Shapiro**

Alex: I was about to look up the answer to your last query, when this one came in...Mattingly is a topper for next year, no if ands or buts... As for what, I am doing tomorrow, I am almost too depressed to care. No hitting and no pitching is a dynamite combination with a week to go in the season... I would love Bobby Witt or Steve Sparks, but I assume they will either go to the Veecks and the Bags respectively, or else I'd guess wrong and be out bid...

I will answer your Derek Jeter question in the near future.

The Nabobs, who have lost their Natter.

24-Sep-95 20:51 EDT **Sb: Re:another query** **Fm: Walter Shapiro**

Alex--Have now checked the constitution. Here goes the rules as they apply to Derek Jeter and any of his ilk . . .

25-Sep-95 11:57:00

Sb: last call

To: Peter Kreutzer

1) The Moose will bid \$1 for shunned (and shuddery, of course) B.Witt; drop even more terrifying Jacome. If we don't get him, we'll activate Suppan, drop Jacome.

2) Claim Mieske, drop Masteller. If we don't get him we'll activate Brian Giles, drop Masteller.

3) Activate Snopak, drop Worthington.

4) Activate Jeter [DH], drop Donnie from the ballgame.

25-Sep-95 16:00 EDT

Sb: labr, etc.

Fm: INTERNET:JHunt

pretty quiet final week: baron cuts byrd, claims wall-9; p/g cuts hemond, claims perez-1; cuts decker, claims siddall-1; cuts haney, claims wehner-1; cuts vanderwal, claims tavarez-5 vogel cuts pulsipher, claims bochtler-9; cuts guthrie, claims cummings-9; cuts swindell, claims minor-9

I can't believe bochtler went so long without being claimed - I certainly could've used him.

as for the projections, I can't believe we were so close on higy - I thought i'd be alone in my lofty expectation. but I also can't believe he's hit for such a low average, but that's another story. but yes, my dollar formula was based solely on the predicted stats and an approximate pool of talent in a standard roto league. of course, my predicted stats took into account injury risk (mcgwire, etc.)

25-Sep-95 12:16:00

Sb: unclaims

To: Peter Kreutzer

Key stat in the Minnesota boxscore: T - 2:19. Twins and White Sox hitters running up to the plate and flailing at anything. Bere probably would have walked 10, if that's any comfort, in normal times. Tonight we'll have to watch Karl and Nitkowski — Karl's by no means a meaningless game — to test the hypothesis that what you want in the last week is control-artist lefties in games that don't count.

25-Sep-95 12:30:00

Sb: I get it now

To: Walter Shapiro

Thanks for the rules clarifications. Do you have any thoughts about making them a little easier to memorize in the future?

25-Sep-95 16:26 EDT

Sb: tilting at windmills

Fm: Stoneburn

Peter Kreutzer. unavailable, so don't know who went where, etc. assume you've seen stats. bags

26-Sep-95 12:11 EDT

Sb: Last swat

Fm: Peter Kreutzer

\$ CLAIMS

BURN BAGS claim D Singleton (OF) for \$3. Drop C Pacquette. Remaining: None

NATTERING NABOBS claim Robertson (P) for \$2. Drop K Wickander. Remaining: None

VEECKS claim S Sparks for \$4. Drop E Plunk. Remaining: None.

MOOSE FACTORY claim B Witt (P) for \$1. Drop J Jacome. Remaining: None.

No More Swats until next year, unless there is a playoff game, in which case: Ups and downs—October 2.

26-Sep-95 8:04:00

Sb: Re: tilting at windmills

To: Stoneburn

Will you still be using Benson's book? Even though it's not a popular exercise, if only for change of pace I like to check out the forecasts now and then, and Benson's are the only ones I don't have. Fact that he costs twice as much as anyone else can't have anything to do with it.

26-Sep-95 19:28 EDT

Sb: Re: I get it now

Fm: Walter Shapiro

... I can't see whether it matters if I finish 6th with 49.0 points or finish sixth with 55.0. (Hell, it matters, otherwise I wouldn't have called sports phone six times for the updates on today's Angels vs Seattle [Benes] game).

The truth about this season that seems to leap out at me is that someone could have done very well just trading at fair prices for underachieving ballplayers in early July. (Albert Belle and Paul Molitor leap to mind, as well as the Alex Fernandez's and Jack McDowell's of this world who are keeping Starr in first place). It seems to me that we all underestimated exactly how long it would take many players to recover from the long layoff. We all instinctively knew that May would not be typical, but for many players the quasi-spring-training lasted through the July 4th holiday. My guess, and it's only guess, is that there will be much wider discrepancies for players on 1st half vs. second half stats than is usual. (One way to measure it would be to count the number of hitters whose combined BA and SLG average rises or falls by more than .200 between the 1st half and second half) and compare that number with, say, 1993.

The collapse of the Angels was also statistically explicable, since they clearly had a disproportionate number of hitters who were thriving in the early going. Had we played a 162 game season, I would bet that Jim Edmonds would end up hitting .260 and having a Slugging Average around .440. (He'll be frozen in the ADL, of course, but I do wonder what the range of prices for him in startup leagues will be next year. I've always been a skeptic and I wouldn't go over \$16, since I take his second-half swoon very seriously).

Obviously, we must should take a look at our rules, since we really haven't gotten our act together on that score in about three years.

Totally favor doing away with the Derek Jeter inequity, but not retroactively.

26-Sep-95 21:17 EDT

Sb: Re: Stone is missing!

Fm: Brett Summers

Is stone back yet? No other e-mails so I don't know if he has come home or not...

26-Sep-95 8:16:00

Sb: delay

To: Brett Summers

Something's wrong with your email. I didn't get your query about Stone until this morning, and you obviously haven't gotten message Peg sent days ago. He showed up the next morning, very nonchalant. Where he spent the night is anyone's guess. The day before though, Lorraine Harrington was cleaning her living room when she heard a noise upstairs. She went up to check and found a cat in Joe's closet.

27-Sep-95 10:43 EDT

Sb: Last swat

Fm: Peter Kreutzer

Interesting idea but I would guess that somewhat wild power pitchers would benefit most from flailing. Doesn't Ted Williams chart show it harder to hit pitches at the edges and outside the strike zone? And isn't the benefit of wildness to the hitter with the patience to wait for a meatball?

These days, mostly, I can't bring myself to recalculate to see what would've happened if I hadn't dropped Witt and Sparks. Going into yesterday I'm pretty sure I was ahead, but if I have them I don't activate Bere (2 decent starts notwithstanding) and have 2 more wins. Maybe I even drop Witt yesterday. it's a hard game.

27-Sep-95 10:43 EDT

Sb: Re:unclaims

Fm: Peter Kreutzer

I tend to agree with Stoneburn, the prediction comparisons in the player comments don't often throw much light. What I'll be doing if Peter G's publisher can be convinced there won't be a strike next year is comparing the prices/predictions of the various touts in one place. I'd like your spring training price list because I'm curious, but also because I'd like to do a study of the variations.

I'm not sure about your lefty control pitcher theory, but game times have plummeted.

This is not turning into a week for improbable come-from-behind victories (unless you're a Cubs fan). Nova's pitchers are not cooperating. It will take a crumble of Scanlan-like proportions for the powerless but speedy ones not to walk away with 50% of our UBL money.

29-Sep-95 08:18 EDT

Sb: various

Fm: Stoneburn

pls give me mailing address and i'll send benson plus b. america. has bruce called you re-ubl news? he has much to say . . . kirby gets jaw broken, fan angry with yet one more late homer charges randy m, cochran compares fuhrman to hitler . . . what is world coming to!!?

01-Oct-95 16:57 EDT

Sb: Re: endgame

Fm: Peter Kreutzer

The only game info I've seen today is Mussina's brill job, which reminds me why I dumped Sparks and Witt (more than Sparks' rather ineffective outing). The problem for me is that Nova's pitching needed to suffer big time (and didn't) for me to have any shot at the big prize, so as far as I know I'm rooting for Hitchcock not to get the win in today's Yankee game—with the thought of sneaking into second. In fact I'm rooting for him to get hammered beyond recognition, because that's what it will take.

I'd love to take tomorrow off to watch the playoff. Will it be on free tv?

01-Oct-95 9:19:00

Sb: one more!

To: Walter Shapiro

What fun for the Nabobs, getting to watch Langston and Junior go at each other. But I am also psyched for this game. Angels have dodged infamy already, but to beat Randy Jonson in Seattle — the odds in favor of the Mariners (9:5) must be a record for a play-off, and are still modest! If Colin weren't so busy out in Vegas I'd call him up and ask him to put \$100 on the Angels.

02-Oct-95 01:03 EDT

Sb: Re: endgame

Fm: Peter Kreutzer

It turns out that as I wrote you this afternoon the Yanks and Hitchcock had already won, and that I was much more in danger of falling into fourth place than challenging for second. I expect there will be surprises in tomorrow's stats, and mostly hope that the pennant hangs in the balance throughout the playoff. I mean our pennant. So I activate Eduardo Perez and root for Rich Monteleone to win.

2-Oct-95 11:52:00

Sb: Re: endgame

To: Peter Kreutzer

The Langston thing curdled my soul. Ugliest TV shot I've ever seen. Obviously, earlier, when we could lip-read Langston and he was saying[]-something-or other, he was saying [] you, Hudler. Then he has to sit next to him and glare. And Hudler keeps looking out to the field and clapping his hands. I don't know what the hell was happening with Miller and Morgan. This was better than any footage in 10,000 hours of Simpson coverage and they are damn near totally oblivious. Langston had been pitching like a lion, true, but so had Hudler been playing like one. Hudler was a dope, of course, turning his back on the play, but no one ever notices if Langston makes the play that he was supposed to. Finally, Langston's HOLDING the ball was incredible — one of the great reflex feats I've ever seen — which M & M barely mention. The other thing that they completely missed was the play a moment later by Salmon. They're all over Blowers for not tagging up, but he would have been out easily, inning over, still 1-0, instead of on the next pitch Sojo hitting a squib that Snow should have at least stopped from going through. If it's 1-0, does Phillips hit that HR? To me, Snow's failure was bigger — more important and less excusable — than Hudler's.

03-Oct-95 18:08 EDT

Sb: Re: one more!

Fm: Walter Shapiro

Alex: It was actually a great game. I will probably remember Sojo's base-clearing inside-the-park-error-filled whatchamacallit long after I will remember who won the individual rounds of the playoffs. The one thing that I can say in defense of the wildcard system is that it seems to increase the likelihood of sudden-death one-game playoffs. And games like yesterday when everything was on the line is what baseball is all about.

Langston [a Nabob] may not be the best pitcher in baseball, but he certainly is the most expressive figure in defeat. I felt worse about his defeat than the OJ verdict.

Have heard about the standings from Starr, but have not seen them. My condolences to the

misbegotten Moose and the star-crossed Bags. Nabobs moderately happy with their final surge to fifth place.

Only four and a half months until pitchers and catchers.

04-Oct-95 01:19 EDT

Sb: Lang(ston)s his head in shame

Fm: Peter Kreutzer

The Langston-Hudler moment made me wonder about those cut-up scrappy personalities managers love so much. I don't think I saw Hudler this year without it being mentioned how often his hustle runs him into many, if not as many, stupid mistakes as it runs him out of. This may have been the ESPN guys each time, how many other chances did I get to see the Halos, but if true it may explain in part Langston's ire. I can't quite figure out what he was thinking on that play, or how he could miss Langston's botch.

Sojo's hit is snow of a different color. Since the bat sheared off and flew in the same direction as the spinning ball, it's hard to see JT's miscue as a mental error. Yeah, it's great if he can knock it down, but hard to say he should've. I think.

04-Oct-95 09:26 EDT

Sb: UPDATES

Fm: Stoneburn

where is jack ruby now that we really need him??

post-season has little reality, yet. see stats? anyway, i'm back in ny and trying to come to grips with idea of oj becoming even richer and more famous.

5-Oct-95 14:13:00

Sb: mail

To: Steve Stoneburn

I went to our little post office today and got the Benson books. Thanks very much. Did you read the two op-ed pieces in yesterday's Times? Scott Turow and Frank Rich? To understand the jurors is, perhaps, to forgive them.

5-Oct-95 15:09:00

Sb: yoo-hoo

To: Mark Starr

Nice going, Nova! Haven't seen the standings yet but I gather Hackers gave you a scare. But it just makes that artificial chocolate whatever all the sweeter, doesn't it?

5-Oct-95 15:13:00

Sb: nice try, hackers

To: Steven Levy

You at least put a good scare into Nova. What's your scouting report on Radke? Did you ever watch him pitch? Anything that might help when his name pops up on the screen would be welcome.

6-Oct-95 9:31:00

Sb: etc

To: >Internet:shandler

Well, Ron, you did it, you saved the game from the Sweeney Plan (no power). Ismael Valdes was the difference. Did Vogel come to you with that or did you go to him? Hunt says there will be a league next year, but I don't know...

06-Oct-95 10:15 EDT

Sb: Re: nice try, hackers

Fm: Steven Levy

It's frustrating to know that any combination of little things could have taken me over — one point in BA, or two wins, or two HRs and a stolen base...

The key trade of the season for me was Goodman trading Salmon for Jeff Russel when he know I was shopping Smith and Fetters. Either one of those guys would have been better for him, and I would have probably thrown in another worthwhile player. But he never called me. So I traded Smith to Starr.

Radke will be a good pitcher. I put him on our reserve list because Chris had just come from Minneapolis with the local paper saying that Radke shined in spring training and would be in the rotation after the first few weeks. He is gutsy, and seems to be one of those guys who will stick it out for the win. Of course chances for that don't come too often on his team, but what was impressive was something like a five game winning streak in August-early September — the league didn't figure him out, he was doing the figuring. This from a rookie suddenly in the

pressure position of being the ace of the staff.

06-Oct-95 16:48 EDT **Sb: Re: yoohoo** **Fm: Mark Starr**

At my age, more than a scare. Who asked the Bags [also punting power] to hit three home runs that last week while they were sinking out of sight with a .183 BA. Anyway, all's well that ends well, though I didn't need the added agony of the playoff game. I had it won on Sunday, then had a chance to lose it Monday if his guys went something like 5-8. Tall order with Randy Johnson pitching, but that didn't mean I didn't sweat. In the end, they went 1-5, the BA point was safe and I have my second championship—once a decade whether I need it or not.

07-Oct-95 20:33 EDT **Sb: stats** **Fm: Eric A. Lindow**

I got the games by position and am integrating it into the database before I send the info on. The only shortcoming I see in this list is that most players lack first initials.

08-Oct-95 10:56 EDT **Sb: Re: numbers** **Fm: Peter Kreutzer**

Was out to dinner and didn't see last night's game, unfortunately. I think Buck's great accomplishment (I refuse to credit Stick) is to have wrested the image of the Yankees, at least on the field, away from the Big Man. It actually makes them an easy team to like and root for.

9-Oct-95 10:33:00 **Sb: Re: numbers** **To: Peter Kreutzer**

Well, I doubt you were out to dinner last night. Luckily, I switched allegiances just in time. Shots of the owner up in his booth and Sierra at the plate were the last Straws. But what a great scamper by Griffey! All those Double Martinez signs were portents! No one — not Bob Gibson, not Steve Blass, not Orel Hershisier, not Rod Beck (in the regular season) — has ever been a mightier warrior than Randy Johnson. And now, and now... does the wiped out Northeast Nation get the Braves or Indians on Tuesdays? Better match-up in the NL; much more fun to watch AL.

09-Oct-95 10:18 EDT **Sb: Re: etc** **Fm: Ron Shandler**

He came to me, looking for Valdes. I was in the market to move one of my frontline starting pitchers for some speed and at the time, was more reluctant to move Shane Reynolds than the unproven-over-a-full-season-of-play rookie Valdes. Shows how smart I was . . . Still, congratulations on 2nd place and the perfect implementation of the Sweeney Plan. You just can't account for a wire-to-wire season like Vogel put in.

10-Oct-95 01:48 EDT **Sb: O Buck!** **Fm: Peter Kreutzer**

I sat glued to the TV, eating leftovers cold. Even the insipid posturings of Brent Mussberger couldn't wreck the game. From my seat I could see Cone falter, see him running out of gas. Even if it took an extra batter for Buck, how could he not go to the pen? I suppose he would've looked bad if Rivera or Pettite or Black Jack had given up the tying run, but doesn't he look bad now?

And then it looked like Piniella had made the same mistake, sticking with Johnson an inning too long. It is the brilliance of the game that the two situations were so congruent, so comparable, so immediate. Talent and guts only take you so far, and then you need strength and flexibility. That's what managing a pitching staff is all about. Piniella made the same mistake, only he had Edgar Martinez to fix it. I suppose if you're going to go down it may as well be with your best.

I would've yanked Cone after the walk to Tino (at least I think it was a walk, but then Mussberger kept calling it a hit, and because I wasn't keeping score at home I grew unsure...).

My warrior vote goes to Jack Morris, game 7 for the Twins. But then, Mike Scott never had a chance to go the extra yard.

11-Oct-95 11:31 EDT **Sb: photo** **Fm: Adam P. Summers**

Ask Lindy if he is interested in trying to sell the computer program via the world wide web.

Every year I ask you to get a visa account. This would be an added incentive. A potential 40 million people have access to the web sites.

13-Oct-95 07:57 EDT **Sb: trip west** **Fm: Adam P. Summers**

The next day Colin and I drove around LA. We saw Marc Sedaka and his new hovel. It has a great view which will be less great after a mudslide or earthquake moves him (or his upslope neighbors) downslope. Dinner was at a neat place where you pick all the materials for a stir fry and they do it in front of you. It was a contest to see who could get the most stuff in the all you can eat bowl. I won, but I could not eat half of what I picked since I ended up with a stirfry the size of my head.

Next morning Colin, Ilya and I went blading. Nell was excluded on the grounds that it is not fair to go if you can't risk falling down. In her current state she would weeble rather than fall so it was judged not risky enough. We did the strand from Hermosa to the factories just south of the airport. Ilya mentioned choking fumes further along so we did not proceed to El Segundo. After a nice breakfast Ilya and I drove around in pink death fetching a motorcycle...got to go. maybe more monday or tuesday.

17-Oct-95 16:01 EDT **Sb: Question regarding formulas** **Fm: M ROTHSCHILD**

Mr. Patton,

Let me start off by saying that I am a great admirer of your work. I wish I could tell you that I won my league thanks to you, but in this great age of information, our commissioner chose the USA Today on-line service as our stat service, and it crashed four times. The fourth time, came right after the all-star break, when I was in first place, but that was when the money was returned and the league ended.

I am currently trying to adapt the principles you have developed for my own personal use for a basketball league. I spoke to Eric Lindow and he informed me of your e-mail address. My question takes you back to probably your first publication on the pricing system which is a chapter in Peter Golenbock's book published in 1987. In this explanation of the system, you say there are 1392 total points generated by the players in the draft in a twelve team league. This comes out to 116 points per team. (by the way there is a misprint in the formula on page 99 which continues to torment me by making me think there's 113 points per team) I'd like to know how you came about the total of 1392. Was it just by figuring out the marginal value of the "average hitter", for instance, and then multiplying the points and average player earned by the total hitters in the league? I believe this to be the case considering my experience so far with basketball, but considering the time you put into devising the formulas (I know, because I've put in a ridiculous amount trying to translate them) I find it hard to believe that any numbers you use are arbitrary, which is what 1392 becomes. I'd greatly appreciate any insight you could provide on this matter.

Sincerely,

Matt Rothschild

17-Oct-95 23:44 EDT **Sb: All Praises** **Fm: Peter Kreutzer**

Kenny Lofton is great. So is baseball, although I wish I could've seen a NLCS game. It's weird to have not.

18-Oct-95 9:11:00 **Sb: Re: All Praises** **To: Peter Kreutzer**

Another incredible game. It was as if the intense concentration all nine players needed to hold down the Indians finally got to the Mariners. If Wilson had paid attention to the way Lofton caught the 27th out the night before, he would have know he was coming... Great camera work.

The two best shots, which surprisingly they chose not to repeat, were the one up the third base line, the foreshortening effect being only partly what put Lofton right on Espinoza ass, and the one down the third base line, where you see Wilson's disgust at missing the ball shuddering though his body, and you see Lofton, yep, right on Espinoza's ass. Baseball is great, and the two teams in the Series deserve to be called great. There's even a certain symmetry in their getting there, the Braves also demolishing by far the better of their two opponents and having trouble with the one that was really quite weak, that was running on fumes. They didn't have to show all four games in the first round, but it seems to me that for both rounds there was always an EST and PST game the same night. It would have been so easy to show all regional games without competition, in prime time, and still show a second game. The owners have sniffed too many fumes. I really think they are brain-damaged. The combination of success in business, constant failure with THEIR fantasy teams, is lethal. Is it possible that baseball is not going to heal itself over the winter, despite the wonderful medicine that the players are administering nightly?

18-Oct-95 09:28 EDT **Sb: CATCH UP** **Fm: Stoneburn**
SPENT ALL LAST WK IN ATLANTA AND NOW BACK THERE FIGHTING THROUGH MANAGEMENT BUY-OUT VS KILL; MUCH MUCH TENSION. WHO NEEDS IT ... CAN'T SAY WRONG GUYS GETTING TO PLAY BRAVES. MY COMPANY HAS BOX SEATS TO ALL ATLANTA HOME GAMES, BUT OF COURSE I WON'T BE THERE NEXT WK WHEN I COULD TAKE ADVANTAGE.CHEERS. BAGS

18-Oct-95 22:38:00 **Sb: pod** **To: Eric Lindow**
Well, I've got the hitter stats in a new directory, POD96, but it's pretty messy. I don't know how you keep all this stuff straight. I copied mail2.bin to both nlp94.pww and nlp95.pww, and the working files in EVA and PRO show the new data for NL hitters, but now what? Do I rename nlp94.pww nlp95.pww, since that's what it is, and nlp95.pww nlp96.pww? I don't dare. The directory will make more sense to me, but it might not make a bit of sense to the exes...

19-Oct-95 11:46:00 **Sb: just missed** **To: Mike Walsh**
Hi Mike, Alex here (I hope you've got your email ID-ing your correspondents by now). Been meaning to tell you that a couple of days ago I was down in Salisbury meeting with Nancy Cahan and Pat Sermon and someone from Random House about flogging this year's book. I had no idea I was in your area, but just as we were breaking up, Nancy said, "I know someone else who plays this game, Michael Walsh." So I said, show me where he lives, I'd like to meet him (just kidding), and we dropped by. Banged on the door, tracked down some distant banging in the attic, found a carpenter who said you had just gone to New York. Too bad. Great spot you have. Nancy said you've got a novel out? Way to go. (We don't get much news up here in Vermont.) The great thing is, I was trying to explain to Nancy who played this game — which seemed more hopeful than trying to explain what the game was — and I said it was in fact played by people who were all too busy: far from the get-a-lifers that Mike Lupica is constantly trashing; people who had too many lives. So later when she remembered that you were in a league, it was like, bingo. Anyway, Peg and I are here in Manchester at least until December... Good luck flogging your book. Trust all goes well in your lives, or most of them, we mustn't be greedy.

19-Oct-95 11:52 EDT **Sb: X.400 Delivery Report** **Fm: X.400 Gateway**
Delivery report for message 951019154204 71461.2046 FHJ89-2
Subject: just missed
To: X400:(c=us;a=mci;s=0003783638)
Status: Delivery failed
Time: 15:42:02 GMT 19-Oct-95
Reason: 1 - Transfer Failure

Diagnostic: 0 - Unrecognized ORName
Explanation: Recipient name is not valid on the receiving mail system.

20-Oct-95 19:21:00 **Sb: query** **To: Walter Shapiro**
Hey there, Walter — you get the feeling like I do Indians are going to mash Braves? But that's not the query. I tried to send a message to Mike Walsh a couple days ago and it was sent back. Used to work, so Mike probably has scampered on to a new address. Do you happen to have it?

22-Oct-95 0:23:00 **Sb: notes 10/21** **To: Eric Lindow**
I'm wondering if Team 29 should become Free Agent instead of Other. That's what 99% of Others are. If there's room, we could still have Team 30 as Other, which could include Japan, colleges, high school, Cuba, retired. Gallego in AL hitters should be D Gallagher, 35 — all other stats the same. Garciaper should be M Gallego, 35 — all other stats the same. I've changed the HR, RBI and SB denominators and am getting basically the right values. I tried to change the BA, but when I switched 4700 AB to 4300 AB, it came out 43000 AB... Made Albert Belle worth (\$1100). Did no one ever call this in? If so, shows even cyberspace punks are afraid to mess with Patton \$.

24-Oct-95 11:05:00 **Sb: Question regarding formula** **Fm: M ROTHSCHILD**
Dear Matt — I wish I could remember how I arrived at the 1392 point total but I can't. I do remember saying that Henderson or Righetti earned more than 12 points in the SB or saves category because all teams start from zero, then the bottom teams get x number of steals or saves. The same thinking applies to total team points: you start counting from zero even though the last-place team will have more than zero. The more important concept is that the point totals should convert to dollars that add up to league budgets. In my formulas I do this by multiplying 13/6 times whatever the point totals are in each category. In other words, every 6 points that a hitter or pitcher gains for a team are worth \$13. (The average hitter gains 6 points and is worth \$13; the average pitcher gains 4 points and is worth \$8.67.) Hope this helps with your basketball calculations. — Alex

24-Oct-95 15:04 **Sb: Question regarding formulas** **Fm: M ROTHSCHILD**
Alex,

I figured it out and thought you might be interested to know the answer. I appreciate you responding, anyway.

In the Golenbock book, you use 5.71 points for the average hitter, rather than 6. I know that you currently use 6 because it's based on the ratio of hitters to an average player (14 vs. 23) The 6 points is a misnomer, however, and it is based on the multipliers (4.1 for HRs, 14.27 for RBIs, 4.3 for SBs) which are based on the league averages and the spread each category to gain an additional place. Once the multipliers are adjusted, for any given year, the average player always earns 6 points. The misnomer comes from this:

A team made up of 14 average hitters, in a twelve owner league does not earn 14 * 6 points as is suggested. Rather, the team earns 6 points in each quantitative category * 3 quantitative categories = 18 points in the standings. So actually an average player earns 18/14 (1.29) points in the quantitative categories, not 6.

Hence, the 1392 is a somewhat arbitrary number and was broken down in that book to 959 for hitters, 433 for pitchers.

5.71 points/hitter * 14 hitters/team * 12 teams/league = 959 points/league (hitters only)

3.99 points/pitcher * 9 pitchers/team * 12 teams/league = 431 points/league

But this is incorrect, because the 5.71 is incorrect.

Actually, with your new numbers, hitters generate 1008 points per league (6 * 14 * 12)

With the corrected/normalized numbers, hitters generate

(18 points for average team/14 hitters) * 14 * 12 = 216 points, and 1008/216 = 6/1.29

I'm not sure if your averaged category multipliers are arbitrary (I think they are), but if you understand what I've written (I'm not sure I do) there should not be a need for them to be arbitrary once you know the league averages for BA, AB, and H you can solve for the multipliers. I'm not sure exactly how, yet, but once I figure out the formula, I'll let you know.

I hope this was clear and more than a waste of your time. Also, I'd like to suggest you explain the idea that the 6 points generated, while accurate, has really no meaning whatsoever, in your new book. I'd like to hear from you again on your thoughts regarding this. Matt

24-Oct-95 11:29:00 **Sb: eva/pro** **To: Eric Lindow**

In POD96 I've now got eva95.exe and pro96.exe, both copied from the eva95.exe that you sent me. So they both have the same hitter formulas, which is fine for now; however, they also seem to be drawing on the same data files. When I change the working file in PRO96, the working file in EVA95 also changes. That shouldn't happen, should it? I would think PRO96 would draw from alh95.pww and EVA95 would draw from alh94.pww. So you see that things are more than a little confused.

24-Oct-95 20:26:00 **Sb: Re: forecasts** **To: Peter Kreutzer**

I will be barely tracking the forecasters this year, but I will occasionally compare you, me and Hunt in the revised forecasts. So, please refresh me as to where these were seen last year? Somewhere in cyberspace, I know, but where exactly? And I am correct that you will be publishing '96 projections in Peter's book? Also, when did you make these projections? I'm assuming, based on the at-bats, that they are strike adjusted. The first guy I am doing is your man Albert. He hit more home runs JUST AS A BONEMAN than you predicted! Just kidding. But I trust you've scratched your head over Jerry Heath's price for him. \$31? Good grief. I've always said the best pricing test would be a retrospective draft. Buying players after the season ends. I'm pretty sure the 1995 Albert Belle would go for more than \$31. Don't you think? And, of course, what's screwy is that Jerry has Manny at \$27, only \$4 less than Albert.

25-Oct-95 11:08 EDT **Sb: Re: forecasts** **Fm: Peter Kreutzer**

The forecasts I sent you were strike adjusted and put together about a week before the season, although as I peruse them I'm struck by how grounded in the mechanical predictions we concocted last November they are. They appeared on the ESPN Net SportsZone on the World Wide Web.

One of the things I started messing with, in an attempt to find a way to generalize enough from year to year so that I could get context-sensitive prices without sorting and resorting players for each year (oh, if I were a programmer), has lead to a second, retrospective, evaluative pricing system. That is, if you were to draft players after the season was over and their stats were complete, what would you pay for them? Which is what you're talking about.

Maybe we should do this. If we got 12 teams to submit price lists, and then sorted them out as if we were drafting, we'd end up with 12 teams putting prices on known quantities. Are you game? It could be interesting.

25-Oct-95 19:45:00 **Sb: Re: forecasts** **To: Peter Kreutzer**

Definitely game! That's what my prices ARE. Who took how much of the pie. I'm telling you, you'll be whapped! Sign me up.

27-Oct-95 11:25 EDT **Sb: Re: forecasts** **Fm: Peter Kreutzer**

I'll get us a game: I'm thinking each team submits a list of 168 players and 108 pitchers w/ prices, ranked from most to least expensive. Someone (me), will conduct a "draft", starting with the top name on list 1, checking all the other lists, and giving the player to the team that's made the high bid. I think you should always top the next high bid by 1, rather than committing to the bid you make (That is if you make the high bid on Belle at \$50, and Jerry Heath has the next highest bid

at \$34, you get Belle for \$35, not \$50). Once the draft is complete, player stats are totaled and voila! A winner.

I think \$100 per team would make it interesting. And that we should use our usual minimums for ABs and IP. The only problem I can foresee is one team ending up with a ludicrous # of saves or steals. If that happens because of their valuation system, so be it. But if it's just bad luck, well, it doesn't seem like much fun.

When Albert hit the homer on Wednesday I thought: Hmm, nice adjustment. As the Maddux pitch approached the plate on Thursday I could see it was in the same spot, and when he hit it the same way I almost certainly decided to freeze him. I mean, wow! Whatta game.

27-Oct-95 23:21:00 **Sb: forecasts** **To: Peter Kreutzer**

Put me in the game, but we need more than just you, me and Jerry. I'd quickly go broke, topping all of his prices. You can only afford so many even \$32 Albert Belles. (The way to handle Jerry would be to push the scrubs out. Did it feel to you like Alex Rodriguez earned \$7 last year?) Now, I detected a tiny hint of agreement between you and Jerry. Something about a valuation system producing a "ludicrous number of saves." No way! There's nothing ludicrous about excess. Too much is never enough, not even if you're Levy. It's obvious that the whole reason Albert is worth only \$4 more than Ramirez in Jerry's calculations is that Albert goes right off the charts. He hits 20 more homers than Manny and gets credit for maybe five of them. That's no good. If we believed Jerry, you'd be dropping Albert and I'd be keeping Olerud! I'll mail you POD95 on Monday. Will the Indians be world champs by then? I suspect they will.

28-Oct-95 16:27 EDT **Sb: Re: forecasts** **Fm: Peter Kreutzer**

I think the game only works if we get 12 takers. Any fewer and we have to make adjustments and then the scientific part of it is gone. I'm not sure how much I agree with Jerry. What I do know is that retrospective valuing is way different than prospective valuing. And it's what lies in the difference that we should be interested in.

Peter's book is on, I guess. Which means less time to suss the difference (Viva!) and more time churning the numbers. Sacre bleu.

Much as I'm rooting for the Cleves, their fatal flaw is lefties. My buddy Jon, is also feeling a Cleveland run. And hell, my prediction was a 3-3 deadlock after six. But I'll bet the Injuns fold tomorrow night. And lose 7 to 2. I hope I'm wrong, there's a special thrill to game 7.

28-Oct-95 23:55 EDT **Sb: New PRO96 and pitcher data files** **Fm: Eric A. Lindow**

Copy the big file to your POD96 directory as PRO96.EXE. Copy the two small files to the same directory as: ALP95.PWO and NLP95.PWO - this will make the proper filenames for EVA. (Copy as .PWW if you want working files also). Then copy them again, using ALP96.PWO and NLP96.PWO so that you will have prediction files for PRO.

Probably a good idea to back up anything you have done so far before doing the above. although if you get the filenames right you can only affect pitcher data, which I assume you haven't done anything to anyway.

29-Oct-95 9:57:00 **Sb: Re: forecasts** **To: Peter Kreutzer**

Well, Jon and I were wrong. It was a good World Series. Real good, not great. Not enough close plays at home. Glavine was definitely great; Martinez wasn't just hurting, he was throwing meatballs. The Braves were pressing, the seventh game would have been painful indeed (unless you wanted those Cleves, but I'm a National Leaguer deep down). The great thing about Justice is he was telling the truth. The Atlanta fans were a bunch of hide-behind-your-popcorn-pantywaists. Gutless glory seekers. Baseball DOES include the fans. You can't have it both ways. Only Ted Turner gets through life on Prozac, and does anything. Justice said he never had felt so much pressure, the whole day had been the worst of his life. He wasn't as great as Glavine by any stretch, but what he did was more amazing because he was unable to block the pressure out. ... I like the National League but I sure don't like those Lemke/Belliard/Glavine innings. (Didn't

you have the feeling Glavine might do some damage if Belliard would just get on?) If someone's on, though, the sacrifice situation — with the third baseman playing a foot from the plate, the shortstop dashing maybe to second, maybe to third, and so forth — is fun. So what I propose as the final solution to baseball's only real problem is a DH/PH blend: in both leagues, you get one free pinch-hit for the pitcher. Once a game, the pitcher can be replaced by some thug on the bench without having to come out. There's always the threat that way, and there's all sorts of cat and mouse as to when to use it. One thing that would go and be good riddance is the double-switch. It's one of those things that someone like Whitey Herzog thought up and everyone else thinks they have to use, even though they're not bridge players. Last night Hargrove made a fool of himself by sending in Amaro for Ramirez when he brought in Poole. Even Joe Morgan (who I think has really slipped) let that go. The announcers aren't bridge players; they scratch their heads and say this is the National League at it's best, pal. Had the game gone on, they would have woken up to what really happened. Amaro did come up the next inning in what would have been the pitcher's spot — but Poole was taken out anyway! The weeping one, Tavarez (what's that all about?) was brought in to start the next inning. So Amaro (or better, Perry) could have pinch-hit. Meantime, guess who's not in right field anymore? If the Indians score ONE run, one, and the game goes on and on and on, guess who's batting behind Eddie Murray from now on? Tavarez. Eric Plunk. Chad Ogea. Eddie wouldn't see another pitch worth bitching about. One thing about batting orders is that the people at the top come up more often than the people at the bottom; it never fails. Well, I guess I'm getting my work done. If I can figure out how to dump Tapcis into Inword.

02-Nov-95 09:07 EST

Sb: Re: forecasts

Fm: Peter Kreutzer

Thanks for the disks. I was away a couple days and they were in my box when I got back.

I don't think the designated pinch hitter idea is a bad one, but it's still gimmicky. One of Atlanta's problems this year was that Blauser was hurt and not hitting. Lemke managed to pick up some of the slack, but with those three virtual holes (including the pitcher), that lineup was less than fearsome—even with all that meat. That should mean something, and it did. As good as the Braves were they had to come from behind to win over and over again. This year they got lucky. You can bet they won't be next year.

But with Devereaux or Smith AND Klesko in the line up they're a much more powerful offense, and much better defensively. Not that it made any difference in the Series. I say let the pitcher hit and let teams choose between weak hitting middle infielders and good hitters. It will be interesting to see what Davey Johnson, a notorious "defense is no substitute for offense" manager, does in the DH league.

03-Nov-95 19:03 EST

Sb: Re: forecasts

Fm: Peter Kreutzer

I just ran correlations on the predictions I have entered thus far in my spreadsheet: LABR, Hunt, Your \$s, Your Bids, ADL and Me.

Correlation turns each set of predictions into a line, then compares the attitude of the lines. A correlation of 1 means the lines are parallel, a 0 means they create a right angle, a -1 means they're parallel but the correlation is between the first number in one set and the last number in the other, etc.

One challenge in these comparisons is to decide what sets of data to compare. I think sorting by the actual earnings of the players is probably best, since that gives you the group that did it. Then see how well we figured they would do.

Anyway, the best correlation to the Top 100 AL hitters was, drum roll please, Patton dollars. Patton bids, ADL and Me were virtually tied, in that order. Surprisingly, Hunt was a little better than LABR, but well back (.59 to .54).

Part of your success is attributable to your allocation of more money for the hitters. It will be interesting to see what that does to the pitchers.

4-Nov-95 10:16:00

Sb: Re: forecasts

To: Peter Kreutzer

You're way ahead of me. I don't know a right angle from an angle iron. But what are you comparing all of us to? You're prices? Les's? I'm pretty sure it's not Jerry's. I use the term similarity score awfully loosely. For years they were something James trotted out to score himself with, and all I could tell about them was that they were ridiculous.

6-Nov-95 8:18:00

Sb: hey

To: Steve Stoneburn

Thanks for sending the Benson figures. They look sort of like Heath's.

6-Nov-95 8:45:00

Sb: universal baseball

To: Adam Summers

Guess what the latest UBL hot spot is? Worcester. When I'm visiting you in Amherst, it will be a half hour drive to go watch Don Mattingly play.

Actually, the UBL is in big trouble; they were standing at the altar with Liberty TV, when MLB crooked its finger and Liberty skipped out the side exit. They need two more franchises and don't think they can get them without a TV package already in place.

Stoneburn and Bruce went to a meeting in New York last week, and what they were told is it's a tough sell because everybody thinks baseball is on its last legs. Nothing could be further from the truth. Everyone makes such a big deal of the attendance decline in the majors; far more amazing, I think, is that 25,000 people still showed up for each and every ballgame. It wasn't that long ago that 10,000 was a good crowd. When teams went over the 1 million mark, they jumped for joy. Then 2 million became the benchmark. Now it's 3 million. Eight teams still drew over 2 million last season and the Rockies and Orioles went over 3 million.

The Houston owner called a press conference to tell Houstonians that if 2.5 million of them don't turn out this year, he's going to move! With baseball in the sorry shape it is, and with the sorry Astrodome to go to, 1.3 million turned out last year, and I'd love it if every one of them told Drayton McLane to shove off and take his sorry team with him.

The reason franchises are still worth in the kazillions is that the owners HAVE done one thing right: they've kept their club exclusive. They lost control of the players but they've still got their monopoly. The new team in Arizona doesn't have a stadium, doesn't know if it is in the AL or NL, and won't play until 1998; already it has sold *41,000* season tickets. You could say supply is being kept below demand.

Which is where the UBL should come in. With Worcester as one hot spot and Puerto Rico as another and Brooklyn as another and Mexico City as another and San Jose as another, all it needs really to do is put players on the field, and TV will come. Getting the players is the easiest part. There are right now upwards of 300 major league free agents and 500 minor league free agents, everyone of them desperate to keep playing. (Who in their right mind would prefer to work?) And good players, really good players, are sprouting up everywhere. The team that's my dark horse in the Olympics (to beat the Cubans, not the U.S.) is Japan. Baseball's flourishing in the oddest places, like the Netherlands and Australia. Baseball, much more than football (sorry, Ad), is taking over the world; there just seems to be something about it that is the perfect antidote for the world's frazzled nerves.

The minor leagues have never been more popular. Bill has a season ticket to the Hudson Valley Rengades in Fishkill. It's the only way he can get in.

06-Nov-95 01:19 EST

Sb: Angle irons

Fm: Peter Kreutzer

Once I did the correlations on the NL things got more interesting. Maybe because my predictions came out on top. Actually, in the AL if you sort on the top 168 players I nearly caught you, too. Hunt did better in the NL too. In any case, the difference between the various predictors and the league bidding, isn't all that great. Which we already knew.

I haven't put together the "Post Season Draft" yet. Les suggested that in addition to submitting prices, that each team also submit a list of players at their prices that would comprise a whole team. Obviously, this can't be a money bet (or has to be a small side wager). It would help even

out what could be some very bad luck on the draft. I'm on jury duty this week and have some family obligations, but hopefully I'll get a chance to make some calls.

I didn't enter Hunts stats, just the \$ values. Last year I did all the stats for you and James, and that took care of October.

James's similarity scores were an attempt, originally, to sort through the history of baseball and find people with similar profiles. By assigning values to each of the categories and comparing them against the whole database, he'd be able to find players whose careers were somewhat congruent at different junctures in their careers. My recollection is he used these groupings to forecast the future careers of big fat slow catchers and low average high SB centerfielders or whatever. Mostly arbitrary, one suspects, but interesting.

6-Nov-95 8:50:00 **Sb: Re: Angle irons** **To: Peter Kreutzer**

You're right about James. That's what he was doing... But for scoring himself he withheld a key piece of information: not how many people had 900 similarity scores but what did 900 mean? It wasn't linear — you couldn't say that 900 was 5.8% better than 850, or 928 .1% better than 927, so you were lost. My great advantage (like I've been telling Les for years) is that I'm not a math whiz like you guys. I'm the only one in the industry who can actually publish his formulas. (And, amazingly, that is a popular item in the book.) But I do, of course, pretend to be more ignorant than I am. And you, of course, continue to withhold the critical piece of information! WHAT are you comparing the predictions to? What measurement of the reality? Les's prices? Les (& More — what was that other guy's name) Dollars are damn good (they are the closest to mine); but until I know what you're really doing, I don't have any idea what you're doing.

06-Nov-95 15:21 EST **Sb: Re: Angle irons** **Fm: Peter Kreutzer**

Whoops. Yeah, I meant to also say:

Once I started scoring better in the correlations, I had to start examining the role that the pricing system for actual 1995 played. I was using Les's formula from 2 weeks ago to compare, which certainly gives an edge in the evaluation to my projections. Which is why this "Draft at auction a team from the already completed season" is so interesting.

If you drop me your formula for 1995 I'll plug it in and recorrelate. It should be interesting.

8-Nov-95 9:46:00 **Sb: Re: Angle irons** **To: Peter Kreutzer**

We really are onto something. To me the one remaining mystery of the game (the Rotisserie game) is why a \$40 player who earns \$40 is more powerful than a \$20 player who earns \$20. That shouldn't be the case in my pricing system, since mine doesn't have any bends or warps at all. It says 40 is 15% of 260 (.1538461, actually) and 20 is 8% (.076923). But all sorts of circumstantial evidence indicates you'll be mighty happy if Albert brings you \$40 for \$48 — happier than if Mattingly returned \$13 for \$13, which is why he's a free agent. In Jerry's world, as I said, Alex Rodriguez earned \$7 last year. In mine he earned \$4. In mine Albert earned \$46 (just about what I expected), not \$31. These are huge differences at each end. Clearly, there are warps in Jerry's world if Belle and Ramirez are a mere \$4 apart; if Belle is only 15% better (31/27) than Manny Ramirez. What he's doing is, he's underpaying Albert by 48% (46/31) to overpay Alex by 75% (7/4). Anyway, that's what I'm here to say, and I'm more than happy to put any amount of money up against Jerry's prices. He's going to have Alex R's stats and be nicked \$5. I'm going to be down \$32 and have Albert's stats. I can't wait. So what I'll do is, I'll send you the formulas in Lotus files that I sent Eric. This is fun. If you can figure out how to run this contest we'll get fascinating data. If you can get stuff back to me in time, it's definitely going into the Q&A. But please don't release my industrial secrets (Les is fine, although I don't think he's interested) before the book does.

09-Nov-95 00:16 EST **Sb: I've got files** **Fm: Peter Kreutzer**

Thanks for the files. I probably won't open them until the weekend. I have jury duty tomorrow and have to get my predictions to Les ASAP, so there isn't really time 'til then. And I want to review my list and settle it before I look at your prices. I mean, this is science, isn't it? There's also the competitive advantage, but my theory is so radical that it is either going to be a fabulous success or will crash and burn, so I doubt it would do any good to see your prices.

I talked to Steve today and he's in. Hopefully we'll get this together for next week. If you talk to anyone who might want in have them call me. I think we need 12 (we have you, me, Steve and Les so far). Maybe I'll send out some email and fax inquiries.

9-Nov-95 9:19:00 **Sb: Re: I've got files** **To: Peter Kreutzer**

Steve who? Levy? Stoneburn? Someone else? If you're talking about a real auction, there's no way. No time. I'm not sure what I pictured, but I thought it would be on auto-pilot. Albert's name comes up, and the highest price gets him, at \$1 more than the next price, and so on down. The trick was always finding 12 prices. I can think of you, me, Les, Jerry, Benson and — ? Hey, we could call Glen Waggoner and do the NL East.

09-Nov-95 10:57 EST **Sb: Schedule Crunch** **Fm: Colin Summers**

The schedule has already started to impinge on the design of the building. Through some miscommunication with the cabinet maker, the cabinets for the master bath and poolbath were not ordered. If they were ordered now from the custom cabinet place we had selected we wouldn't have them until the very end of December. So we have switched to a module cabinet for those spaces. A little more ordinary, a bunch of lines that are not from my hand and exist in many average homes across this desert basin floor. They are checking to see if they can get the formica I selected.

No solution there. It can't be late. They are shooting for a December 1 completion date now. The client hasn't taken a vacation for the past three years. On December 10 he will settle into his new home for a four week break from touring and the live show. Obviously, that sort of vacation can't be moved to January just because we won't have the cabinets ready. So we fall back to the ordinary in a few places.

There are other places that I won't compromise. I don't know where they are yet, but I know that on December 10 there will be some holes in the complete fabric of the house and the reason will be that they need to be custom patched, little odds and ends like a false mirror over a secret cubbyhole. If I took a day out from getting things done I could figure out which things I might not get done in time.

11-Nov-95 00:12 EST **Sb: Re: I've got files** **Fm: Peter Kreutzer**

Stoneburn wants to do it.

I pictured it the same way: everyone submits a list of 276 names. The highest priced player is named first and goes to the highest bidder for \$1 more than the second highest. And so on. Ties are determined by random selection: for the tied price (not \$1 more).

We've got: You, me, Les, Stoneburn. I'll contact the rest of our league: I figured Walter and maybe Levy would be into it, and who knows? And Starr. It's action, after all.

But if you can get some of those other touts in, great. I would think a call to Hunt would do it. He could write about it, and lord knows he needs material now that he's gone weekly. (Four weeks of printing Jerry's prices? Yeesh). And sure, Jerry, too. He wouldn't even have to do anything if we used his list of \$s.

In re: action. I thought if it were a friendly group we could make a wager, say a hundred or so, just to make it interesting. I'm game if everyone wants to. If that's a problem I'd forgo the bet: it will be plenty interesting anyway.

If you want to email Hunt and introduce me, I'll take it from there. I don't know how much time I'm going to have (I got on a jury) but I'll find it one way or the other.

11-Nov-95 10:04:00

Sb: idea

To: >Internet:jhunt

Hey, there, John — how's it going? I'm still working away on the book, and you've been doing fine, especially on avoiding the bombs.

A friend of mine named Peter Kreutzer wants to do a retrospective auction. That is, get 12 people together and buy last year's stats and see who wins THAT league. No forecasting skills, just a rock 'em sock 'em clash of pricing theories. Good idea? It's hot stove time and you might be able to get at least a couple of meals out of this for your own column. (I'm hoping he pulls it together in time for me to get it into the Q&A of my book.) Peter is doing the predictions for Golenbock this year. He's going to get Jerry Heath involved and has a few other people lined up. We need 12, obviously. Maybe you can pull in people like Ron Shandler and John Benson? You can tell them all they have to do is submit a list of 276 players (all of whom were on last year's Opening Day Rosters — not people like Wakefield or league crossovers like Bonilla) with prices for each. From then on it's nothing but auto-pilot. A player's name is nominated and the highest price gets him (at \$1 more than the next highest price). Then we give all the stats to Jerry. Anyway, in case you have time to help out, I gave Kreutzer your email address and you'll be hearing from him. He's already seen MY prices, but what the hell, he's already seen the stats.

11-Nov-95 10:07:00

Sb: price war

To: >Internet:shandler

Hi Ron — I'm sure you are totally snowed under at the moment (me too) but I thought you should see a message I just sent to John Hunt. Hope it explains itself, hope you can join. — Alex

11-Nov-95 10:46:00

Sb: Re: I've got files

To: Peter Kreutzer

What a weird world. While you were sending this message last night, I was wandering outside looking for our cat with a flashlight. I finished off Darren Daulton, went outside to stretch, and the cat flashed out the door. He doesn't know from cold, but the problem was, believe it or not, there's a coyote that comes down to the town. I've seen him twice now. Once when I was writing about Lofton, once when I was writing about Cone, somewhere in there. A movement catches my eye out the window, and there's this big silvery yellow coyote trotting across the lawn. When I say, "Hey you — what should I say about Lofton?" he takes off. Something keeps bringing him to the town and I have the feeling Manchester's cat population is already less than it was.

So you've seen the message I sent to Hunt. I trust you agree with the key stipulation: no Wakefield, no Bonillas. As for the order, why shouldn't it be random? Why not have Alex Rodriguez come up early? I can tell you from experience in the BW auctions that you can't keep grabbing the high-priced bargains, no matter how juicy they are. (We almost blew our Sweeney Plan — again — when Bonds stopped at \$43!) There can be a strong tilt towards the big tickets in the early rounds, because that's the way we play, but occasionally a Wes Chamberlain should be nominated. We'll have your co-author pick them. I'll be interested to see how Hunt et al respond to this. Am I right that you and Les are separate?

11-Nov-95 19:26 EST

Sb: Re: I've got files

Fm: Peter Kreutzer

Actually, I don't agree with the Wakefield stipulation. The idea is to summarize, say, AL value at the end of the season. Wakefield, Bonilla and, yes, even Mark Whiten, were part of the AL value pool. So if they rank above #168 they should be draftable. You get their AL stats only of course. Makes sense, don't it?

About Les and me, I was thinking we'd be separate teams. Why not? My pricing system is different than his, though I have to admit I've adjusted it to incorporate what I've learned from him. Just as I've adjusted it to incorporate what I've learned from you. And whoever else helps me understand stuff. But an interesting thing has happened: Both he and I have developed,

independently, alternative pricing schemes. We were working on different problems and used different methods, but somehow ended up with prices that are nearly congruent. So the question: If we both use the same scheme do we screw each other up? That wouldn't be any fun at all. So he wants to team up. We may be wrong but at least these new ideas will get a clear shot. I want to think about it some more.

I haven't looked at your prices, and won't until I settle on mine. I mean, I know pretty much what yours are. They're like Les's standard method and my standard method. With differences. But I'd hate to know just what your price is on Albert, or perhaps more importantly on Randy Johnson.

Give the coyote time. If I know my Indian legends he will not only tell you about Lofton, but also Will Pennyfeather. And will keep mum about Chief Knock-a-Homa.

12-Nov-95 10:42:00

Sb: Re: I've got files

To: Peter Kreutzer

No, it doesn't make sense. Sorry. This available-at-draft thing is something I've tried to get across many times to Les, but he doesn't listen. Briefly, here it is. We have \$260 that we want to spend as best we can in April. We need to know, if Albert does such and such, how much of my \$260 does he get? Because everyone's trying to figure the same thing out, the question for all of us is, how much of \$3,120 does each player that we buy in the draft get? Another way to put it is, the average player is worth \$11.3 (3120/276), and there's not anybody who would argue about THAT.

Players that come along later are what I call "free loot." They get measured by the same pricing system — for reference purposes after the season — so if Bonilla got the same stats as, say, Ripken, and Ripken was worth \$25 (I wish), Bonilla was worth \$25. For accounting purposes only. For reference. To make books more interesting, or at least fatter. Obviously, you can't buy Bonilla for \$25, because he's on the Mets.

That's why the prices for the entire AL at the end of the season go over budget, especially the hitter prices. (So many pitchers that are called "free loot" rip you off so bad that the pitching budget barely rises.) When you do open up my files, you'll see "draft populations" at the top. The AL hitters drafted are massaged by my formulas to earn exactly \$2,184. And this is where legitimate debate begins. Why is that? I say, the average hitter is worth 50% more than the average pitcher, because he contributes in three categories rather than two — and Les says this is baloney. I'm sure he's right. But I've never been able to turn the qualitative categories into quantities, so what I do is, I turn them into zero. I multiply 168 hitters by \$13 and that's the hitter budget. The 108 pitchers bought earn an average of \$8.67, so the pitcher budget is \$936.

I guess this isn't so brief, but I'm basically writing the masochist chapter.

Where I got lucky, Les says, is that I came up with allocations of money by this cockamamie theory that do rather resemble the way leagues allocate money. I counter that hard experience brings leagues ever into closer accord with my theory. Stage One leagues spend well over \$936 on pitchers. Stage Two spend less for pitchers than Stage One. Stage Three spend less than Stage Two. Stage Three is the final stage, and, I have to admit, they spend more than \$936. Does this mean I'm wrong about what the average pitcher is worth?

It means, simply, that I'm wrong about what the average pitcher is paid. I finally figured out WHY we pay too much when I grew up and stopped giving letter grades for pitchers and started giving them bid prices in the book. What I learned is, you have to bid at least \$1! There may not be 108 pitchers that you WANT to do that for, but those are the rules. (In last year's book I speculated that it would be fun to allow the bidding to begin at negative \$5; you get a \$5 credit if you start with Mike Moore on your team.) The list of acceptable pitchers must run to 108 and to keep the prices for 108 pitchers down to \$936, when there aren't any negative pitchers, is just about impossible. So my bids for pitchers add up to \$1,020. It's arbitrary as an exact figure but it closely reflects reality. Look at the Heath salary sheet (that I'm sure you've got). Pitcher payrolls last year: ADL \$1,080; BW \$1,018; RRL \$975... So the bid prices for hitters can't add up to \$2,184; they have to add up to \$2,100, and I'm telling you, making this concession to the real world hurt. But I've become a big fan of Bid \$; in this year's book they get more play than Patton \$. Bid \$ allow you to pay more for Ripken than he's worth, because he's Ripken, and more for

Piazza because he's a catcher.

Position scarcity, I suspect, is what you've been wrestling with. Your prices are radical because you think you've licked it. If you have, mathematically — wow — I am in awe. And you will definitely win this contest.

As for competing with Les, I do see the problem. From my standpoint it's a problem, too. I'll be getting Albert AND Randy Johnson, there's no suspense there — but how much the rest of you make me pay for them is critical. The prices are what the players earned last year; if you pay them what they deserve, you're in big trouble. You have a \$260 team. You finish 6.5. If we can get 12 people lined up with solid pricing systems, it's hard to imagine anybody buying more than \$270 worth of stats or less than \$250 worth of stats — as measured by each person's system afterward. As measured by Jerry Heath, 12 teams should be packed together not many points on either side of 52 points. It will be the wickedest average point gap in history! So, although I do see your problem, I still think you're wimps.

12-Nov-95 12:15 EST

Sb: Not a wimp

Fm: Peter Kreutzer

Hey, Les is the wimp. I'm ready to go. I added a wrinkle that changes my numbers a little off Les's. And since we started in different places our evals were a little different. I concur that there isn't going to be much spread, but those little differences will count for something. I want to know what.

And of course you're right about the "available at draft" thing. My point is that we're drafting NOW. We know what the AL and the NL did last year, and we know all the players who contributed. I can see that you don't want to figure them in because you're working toward next year's draft, when the same situation will obtain. 168 hitters and 108 pitchers will be taken, no more, no less.

I'm saying once the season is over and we KNOW what everyone's done, the Bonillas and Wakefield become very, very relevant. They wouldn't be, of course, in a league that doesn't allow moves (which would have to be the case in your league that allows negative bidding), but we have all found some way to slipstream them. And you can't argue that the homers and ribbies and good innings and wins they add to the mix don't effect the final price of everyone else in the league. Can you?

(It occurs to me that your league that allows negative bids helps me make my point. If we allowed negative bids in ADL, under our current rules, it's hard to imagine a scenario in which any team could get away with a negative bid. I bid -\$20 for Mike Moore—about his 1995 value—and you bid -\$19, and we both know that the bidding isn't going to stop until it gets, at least, to \$0. Because three weeks into the season we know that whoever gets him can drop him for a middle reliever, who also may be worth less than a \$1. But prospectively could be worth more [no pun intended]. And Moore himself, over just three weeks, COULD actually earn positive. So our flexibility, our ability to add a Bonilla or a Wakefield, or for that matter a Hippolito Pichardo, who started the season on a reserve list, affects the prices of the 276 players we draft. What I hoped to learn from this new pricing scheme and our winter game was more about how. And how much.)

As best I can tell, apart from the philosophical/analytical differences, our schism here is a practical one. You have prices without Bonilla and Wakefield. I have prices with them. One prediction I'm certain of: There may be gracious concession but there will be no compromise.

13-Nov-95 12:04 EST

Sb: Re: price war

Fm: Ron Shandler

Alex,

Thanks for the invite, but I'm not sure I'm all that interested in participating. I may be interpreting your idea all wrong, but it seems to me that the concept is a bit flawed. As I understand it, your goal is to determine whose valuation methodology is the most accurate. However, I'm not sure a mock draft is the way to go about it. Some points...

Doesn't this type of "competition" assume that hypothetically, if all 12 team owners used the

same valuation method and went into the draft with 12 identical lists, that all 12 SHOULD finish tied? Wouldn't this result HAVE TO be the case in order for an accurate analysis of 12 varying methodologies?

It would seem to me that draft order would be incredibly important. Since there is a small core of players who dominate certain categories, if a team picked 12th, that would put them at a disadvantage. This is unlike a normal draft where an owner who misses out on the superstars can double up on his efforts to land a greater number of mid-level players.

Although all teams would end up with \$260 worth of value, what would be there to prevent one team from drafting too deep in any one category? If Player X is the next name on my draft list, hit 25 HRs last year, and my team already has HRs locked up, wouldn't I draft a lower value speedster if I'm short on SBs?

Maybe I'm reading your idea all wrong, but I'm not sure exactly what this type of competition would prove. As of now, I'll pass on this, but let me know if anything changes.

Ron S.

13-Nov-95 12:45:00

Sb: Re: Not a wimp

To: Peter Kreutzer

I agree with you completely about the way the negative bidding would go. (There are riffs in both previous books about this — one, I believe, even proposing an opening bid of minus \$10 for Wakefield! — but I can't for the life of me find them.) And there is an obvious solution to our problem that involves a compromise from me, a concession from you. Change the budgets.

You know those lovely color graphs that Jerry sends us each month? His best case/worse case projections don't do much for me, but the draft rosters vs current rosters is his way of demonstrating empirically what I'm talking about. Get it out (I know you have it, Peter!) and let's look at the Bonemen.

They paid \$261 at the draft (so first of all — you should be disqualified!) and the draft roster earned, by Jerry's calculations, \$290: that means you bought a good team. You finished second in the hypotheticals, which means, for sure, you did. But for you to earn more than \$260 with your draft roster, somebody else had to earn less than \$260. Just glancing, five teams come out ahead and seven come out behind, so it looks like the draft rosters do earn about \$260 per team in Jerry's system — as they MUST. You can't buy more than \$260 worth of value per team if that's what each team is spending. This is the same as to say the average player bought in the draft costs \$11.3 and earns \$11.3. I mean, if we can't agree on that, then we are at loggerheads, but we can. Can't we? I don't know, Peter. I see you shaking your head. I see you and Les looking at each other. The Moose just doesn't get it. If he only knew a little bit about multiple regressions, maybe we could talk.

To be honest, I'm not dead clear on what Jerry means by "Current A.R. \$ earned." I think he means what Albert earned WHILE he was on your active roster, but it's possible he means what Albert earned on the year. But it doesn't matter. What matters is the Bonemen, in this reckoning, again earn more than \$260 — and so does EVERY OTHER TEAM... except, alas, me and Stoneburn. How is it that the pretty colors at the bottom go shooting off to the right in all but two cases? Answer: Wakefield and Bonilla. Teams earn more than \$260 per team at the end of the season.

This is inarguable, this is not theory. If you don't like Jerry's graphs, look at the stats that we're really paying him for. At the draft we bought 1834 home runs (see hypotheticals); at the end of the year we have 2011 homers (see final standings). These are numbers that can be added up on a calculator, if we have doubts about Jerry. So we have two choices. We either agree that players drafted earn \$260 per team, and use that as our starting point. Or we agree that the final stats are worth more than \$260 and use that as our starting point. To do the latter, all we have to do is accept your prices or mine.

13-Nov-95 19:10 EST

Sb: Ohhhhhhhh, I seeeeeeeeee.

Fm: Peter Kreutzer

Wow. A new thought. I didn't really think it was possible. At least not as regards this, but you're right: If we buy \$260 worth of stats at the start of the season and we end up with more stats at

the end of the season than we bought, they MUST be worth more than \$260.

To be honest, using Jerry's chart to prove this is not all that helpful. His "Draft Roster" consists of the up-to-date stats for the guys each team bought at the draft. His "Current Roster" is the up-to-date stats for the guys on each team now.

But more important to our debate, I don't think this new thought changes my argument very much. Here's why, and please feel free to call me stubborn and pig-headed and even dense:

The reason we know, at the start of the season, that the average player is worth \$11.30, is because we know there are 276 players and they cost a total of \$3120. From there the math is easy. But as you so interestingly point out, when the season is over, the player we paid (for arguments sake) \$11.30 for, will not be worth \$11.30 even if he generates exactly his projected stats. This is because of all the stats that accumulate that haven't been paid for.

For instance: We paid for 1834 homers. So the average drafted home run hitter whacked 10.92 taters. But the average player, on the year, hit 11.97 homers (2011 divided by 168). Extend this idea across all four (or 3) categories and you have to assume that the hitter you paid \$11.30 for at the draft because he was average, will end up being worth (when measured against the final league totals) somewhat less.

Anyway, I think this is a digression that doesn't come to bear on our discussion. About which my argument goes like this: Since our retrospective draft will only claim 168 players and 108 pitchers, we will have no inflation of stats as occurs during the usual year. We know that the 276 players we pay \$3120 for will, when the accounting is done, be worth \$3120. It doesn't matter whether Bonilla or Wakefield are in their number, because the guys who added surplus to the regular roto season (at the bottom of the pile), will not be drafted in our draft because they rank #277 to #310, let's say.

Which is why I think we should keep the \$260 budget and allow any player's 1995 AL stats be bought.

But your point does raise serious questions about how to value the stats of players at the end of the season. I've always indexed everything based on the idea that the 168th hitter and the 108th pitcher were each worth \$1 (you have to pay \$1 for them). But while this is the proper way to set prices for the draft, for a retrospective pricing system it doesn't seem like it is. And while the ramifications are apparent, what to do about them, alas, is not.

Ps. My total paid for the Bonemen is wrong on Jerry's sheet because he mistakenly gave me John Valentin at the start of the season rather than Jose Valentin. It was a mistake I'd have preferred go uncorrected.

14-Nov-95 08:00 EST **Sb: Re:white elephant** **Fm: Adam P. Summers**

A horse is a little like a boat. A continuing expense. It is mainly Pam's horse. She has wanted a horse since her last one was put down. This opportunity just came along. I have no real idea of whether it is a bargain or not. I know one thing about horse prices: \$.85/lb on the hoof. At around 1000 pounds I could get \$850 for the critter tomorrow. That is the reason why horses seldom sell for less than \$1000, no one wants to send Silver off to the dog food plant just because they sold him to someone who wanted to turn a quick profit.

14-Nov-95 9:27:00 **Sb: Re:white elephant** **To: Adam**

I love the idea of you and Pam being grifters! But you're right. Silver's dead meat otherwise. It's the kind of can't-fail scheme that I spend two months every year hoping I'll stumble on while I'm writing the book!

14-Nov-95 11:56:00 **Sb: Re:Ohhhhhhhh, I seeeeeeeeee.** **To: Peter Kreutzer**

Hmmm. Now where are we? I've read your message, and you've seen the reply from Shandler that I sent you before that (I try to limit the trips I make into cyberspace to the morning, when

I've got a fresh spacesuit on, and things often go flying both ways), so now we have a whole new set of issues that we haven't even talked about. Plus one less contestant. (What I really was hoping for this morning was a message from Hunt.) Well, I'll wait for your thoughts re Shandler's non-list. I sort of get what you're saying about the average player changing his stats and, unfortunately, I even more sort of don't. What I know is, Bonilla was not available in our auction last April so we can't buy him now. The very definition of a retrospective draft is to go back to the auction and bid on the players that we bid on then — KNOWING WHAT THEIR STATS ARE.

What we are trying to do is check out measuring systems. We aren't trying to learn who has the better handle on making predictions, or even whose pricing system is more useful for people who will proceed from them to make their own predictions, to set their own bids. The question is one of simple math: whose prices cut the pie up more accurately. We can agree on the size of the pie in April It's \$260 per team. After that — we now agree, so we have made progress — it's more than \$260 per team. As soon as one non-drafted player contributes stats to any team in the league the size of the pie changes. (With many pitchers, as we know, it shrinks.) But we can't agree on precisely how much it changes unless we can agree on a way of measuring, and as Shandler points out, if we could do that, we'd all end up with the same team! The reason we are talking, and talking, is that we don't think we quite agree.

You know who we won't hear from either? John Benson. Even though he cites being a CPA/MBA as a reason to buy his books, he has no patience for pricing theory. His retrospective prices are solid, very solid, but he could care less if they are VERY solid. He doesn't like to niggle. He calls me a bean-counter. Used to, when he thought that I'd be hurt. When he saw me crowing about it in my books, he stopped. Benson's contention is that pricing is maybe 20% of the game and predicting is 80%. The splits may be 10/90, I'm not sure, and that's fine too. He's absolutely right: It's a waste of time to split hairs over by far the less important side of the yin and the yang of Rotisserie baseball. I just enjoy wasting time. (But don't, alas, have time to straighten out that metaphor.) After discovering that I had tweaked the stolen-base denominator this year just far enough to cheat Lofton, in my judgement, out of \$1, I tweaked the denominator back, and thus had to change the prices in every spreadsheet for every player — pitchers as well as hitters — in both leagues. Took a day.

But I'm not a total lunatic. In the end I'm trying to do something useful with my prices, and that is leave a reliable record for readers to refer to in the stat scans of how players performed, in Rotisserie terms, over the last several seasons. When Les totally revamped his system a few years ago, even if it was an improvement (I thought so, since it moved in my direction), he snipped himself off from the past. There's no point in showing multi-year scans if you use multi systems.

When Lofton's five-year scan showed him earning \$39 last year, something just didn't feel right. He earned \$61 in 1994 and now he earned \$39? I had nudged the saves denominator up to pay more for power — because leagues are bunching ever closer together in the power categories and letting speed slip, that's the reality — but I had nudged it too far. I nudged it back. Lofton earned \$40, and I felt much better.

Pricing systems have four missions. 1) They try to distribute money in a sensible way between hitters and pitchers. 2) They try to figure out how much the various categories are worth. They recognize that all categories are not created equal. (In a pure scarcity model, Lofton's 1995 stats are worth \$51). 3) They attempt to recognize league differences. (Lofton last year in the National League would only have been worth \$36). 4) They try to cope — especially nowadays — with the fluctuations from year to year. (Albert's season last year would have been worth \$49 in 1992. His full season, had it been played, would have been worth \$55.)

What you said in one of your earlier messages about trying to learn something that will help you be a better player? Sounds good, but get real. That's Bensonville. Players don't do exactly what they're supposed to — ever — so don't worry about it. In your formulas. If you have the sense that the possibility of Bonilla coming into the league somehow affects what you're willing to pay for Jeffrey Hammonds, that's good; it should. Lower your bid price. But I'm telling you this, and it's really my last word on the subject: last year Hammonds earned \$4. \$3.78, to be exact. I

mean, it could go up a few cents if I decide that I cheated him when I tweaked the SB denominator to help out Lofton, but we're talking round numbers here.

14-Nov-95 20:27 EST

Sb: Ohhhhhhhh-kay

Fm: Peter Kreutzer

I don't remember saying that thing about "trying to learn something that will help (me) be a better player." And I like to waste time, too, but a quick trip to the filing cabinet didn't unearth it, so let me say this:

I got off on this tangent because I now have in my computer ALL the stats for ALL the players and pitchers who ever played. What I wanted to find was a reliable pricing system (didn't have to mimic draft prices) that measured roto value for all the seasons—all time. I wanted to do this because I thought it would help me make better mechanical predictions. Out of our discussions, and similar one's I've had with Les, I've also come to believe that there is a significant difference between what a player's stat value and what his draft value is (this, obviously, isn't new at all) and that lying somewhere in that difference is something interesting about the game.

For instance: Yes, all categories are not worth the same. But just because the way the game is played now gives certain weights to certain categories doesn't mean that particular (lack-of) balance is inevitable. One would assume that the smart player is always trying to cut against the grain. Isn't this, at least in part, what the Sweeny players taught us this year? We're not valuing SBs and Pitching enough in the draft and so the money one saves by dropping Power is sufficient to win all the other categories. What we saw in the ADL is that in a league with no freezes (thus, no concentrated cheap power) dumping two categories can be enough to win the whole thing. And you almost pulled the same thing off in LABR.

So, yeah, while pricing is far from the be-all and end-all of the game, it is the only way to get at what's happening in the game. From there we can take off in a number of directions, some interesting, some dead ends, and probably some valuable.

As far as checking out measuring systems goes, I better see your point than I did before. What I'll respond with is, okay, we can do it your way. The important thing is that either way we're measuring 276 players. If those are the players available when we drafted in the spring, or they are the players available when the season is over, the math will be the same (if the 168th player and 108th pitcher must cost a dollar). Only the values for the players will be different.

If we use those players only available in the spring we're STILL getting surplus value. Jeff Manto was drafted by 10 of Jerry's 30 teams, for an average price of \$1. Which averaged out over the thirty teams is .33. In our retrospective draft, some team is going to pay \$10 (Jerry) for him. That's \$10 that last April was spent elsewhere. But when all is said and done the stats for the retrospective league will be worth just \$3120, and not a penny more.

Although I think we've made progress, what I agreed to is that we spend \$260 for each team in the spring. And we end up with more stats than we paid for when all is said and done. Since, if we were to draft a team when the season was over, it would also be worth \$260, I don't agree that the value of the stats increases. In fact, I would argue that the value of the stats decreases. Consider this:

When you draft your team at the start of the season you have to spend \$260. For argument sake, you've spent 1/8th your budget (\$32.50) on homers. And you've paid the average price for homers (getting 10.8 per player in the bargain). But you know that 10% more homers are going to be available free during the course of the year in waivers and from the reserve list. You have also spent 1/8th your budget on Wins. But you know that 50% more wins are going to be available for free from waivers and the reserve list. Haven't you made a mistake?

Of course you have. You should've spent less money on the Wins and more on the Homers. Which is what teams do. They pay for what is scarce and reliable, and scramble later for abundance (which is abundant because it is less reliable).

But, to get back to our argument, when the season is over, when all the stats are reliable, isn't the true value of those wins the same as the value of those homers? They certainly gain you just as many points in the standings. And if you're only counting the top 168 players and 108 pitchers

at the end of the year (as we would be doing in our retrospective draft played by my rules), aren't they worth \$260 per team—same as at the start of the year?

The most significant bit of theory that I pull out of this argument is confirmation of your Pay More for Good Players idea. When we add 10% of homers to the league, it doesn't diminish the value of Albert's 50 homers and Buhner's 40. These chunks of homers are scarce and irreplaceable (unless we luck into Edmonds). But it does diminish the value of all those guys who I have on my list projected for 3 or 4 or 5 homers. Sure, if you have those few homers from Ozzie Guillen they add just as much to your team total as Albert's 48th, 49th and 50th. But if you didn't have Ozzie's you'd more than likely have someone else who would hit the same three, someone who didn't cost anything and in that sense they're valueless. So instead of spending \$2.60 for those homers (as Les's breakdowns suggest they're worth) you're better off spending \$2.60 more for Albert.

Yipes, I do go on. But I spent all day on a jury, with a brutal deliberation. So perhaps I'm especially wound up and contentious. I should say that I'm really enjoying this debate. It's hard from moment to moment to tell what makes sense and what doesn't, but I'm developing a much more rounded picture of all the different ideas aswirl in our game. BTW, I have Hammonds earning \$1 (\$1.30 to be exact). But then I include Bonilla and Coleman and Johnny Damon, too. Because they all played. And that's why I want to play.

14-Nov-95 20:27 EST

Sb: shandler's non-list

Fm: Peter Kreutzer

Shandler's points are dead-on.

The fact is that if all teams put in lists with the same values there wouldn't be a deadlock because coinflips would determine ties. And coin flips, while fair, aren't going to end up being distributed evenly.

The second point was of far greater concern to me. I rationalized it thusly: This game is an exercise, one for which we have no precedent. If it doesn't work out, if value in each of the categories isn't distributed in a way consistent with the submitted price list, then we won't have learned all that much from it. But it's also possible that the distortions (if you ended up with way too many homers and not enough steals) would be an accurate reflection of inadequacies in each pricing system. I don't think there's any way to tell until the exercise is over.

It would definitely be better to have an actual draft, so that adjustments could be made, but that seems impractical..

But then Les came up with a better idea: He suggested that each team submit a list of players who add up to \$260. If you're the only team to bid on a particular player, you get him. But if two or more teams bid, the high team gets the player. In the next round each team fills the open spots on their roster (created because they weren't the high bidder for a player) with available players and so on, until all 12 rosters are filled.

There is some debate about whether all the teams should know what the other teams's rosters look like. I think, since we want this to be a valuation challenge, that no team should know about the other teams partial rosters. At the start of each round you only know that you have these players, these holes, this much money left and these players available.

But one could argue the other way, too, which would enable each team to change strategies in mid course..

Personally, I think this is a great game for the winter. Will take multiple weeks, and MAY help us understand the valuation issues.

It would also be possible to do both at once.

15-Nov-95 14:40:00

Sb: Re:Ohhhhhhhh-kay

To: Peter Kreutzer

Uh-oh... Uh-oh... Doubling up on your punches? I may be about to go down for the count.

Trying to respond as briefly as possible to the points in both messages in the order that they're raised...

1) I guess you didn't say anything about being a better player. You keep referring to "learning something interesting" about the game, and because of my own cultural bias I just assume it

means it's going to help you win it.

2) The Sweeney Plan definitely changes values, and that is the whole point. Back when Dollar and Bill and I kept the topper for Frank Thomas every year, we also were punting speed. That way, no matter what the rest of you suckers thought, he was more valuable to us than he was to you, and we topped.

3) When all is said and done, not only will the stats of the retrospective league be worth \$3120, and not a penny more, they will be the stats of the retrospective league.

They will BE those stats. Does that help?

(Pardon my manners, Peter, but I'm also having a hard day -- drawing a blank on what to say about Dwight Smith, with the whole rest of the book to go! -- and so I thought a visit to the gym during lunch hour might help. I do, obviously, enjoy it myself.)

Anyway, the stats of the retrospective league will be the retrospective stats. Like I said. And you did, too.

4) Les's idea -- next message (thank God I saw it coming, or it would have caught me as I was walking to the corner after this one) -- is excellent. It would be fun to pick out several different teams worth exactly \$260 and then decide which one to submit. There's only one problem. Each team that I submit, if my prices are even halfway decent, will finish at .500. The prices are par. My \$260 team is worth \$260. What you're trying to do in the auction is buy about \$300 worth of stats with your \$260 -- in competitive leagues, that's normally enough profits to be in the running -- and the only way you get a \$40 profit is if someone else takes a \$40 loss. I have to underpay for the players I get, and you have to overpay for the players you get. That's what the contest would be all about.

5) It can't be done. I guess. Not at the rate we're going.

6) Maybe... Here's an idea. Like you say, it's a long off-season. Why don't we get 12 people together in New York (unfortunately, after both our deadlines have passed) and simply start bidding? We could plan it around the winter meeting. It wouldn't take long -- everyone puts 100 bucks on the table, that seems about right -- and away we go. In a weird sort of way, it could be exciting. No haggling over Bobby Bo, no fussing over Wakefield: anyone is fair game. You can buy Barry Bonds, if it makes you happy. Hell, you can buy Bobby Bonds or junk bonds or, by then, probably the whole UBL, and then we send all the AL stats that we bought down to Jerry to sort out for us.

But, um, this isn't quite where we started, is it? Very far from auto-pilot. So I guess, ahem, you better not look at my prices, after all. Don't peek, Peter. Leave those Lotus files alone! And let's get it on.

16-Nov-95 11:53:00

Sb: trying

To: Peter Kreutzer

Good heavens. No word from you this morning. You must be holed up in a hotel somewhere. Whatever your verdict is, at least you're taking longer than four hours.

(Let's discuss the trial.)

(Just kidding.)

Anyway, the reflective life goes on, and I have thought up a compromise.

The problem I have with what you want is contained in the very top of the Lotus files. When you do open them, you will see "AL drafts" and "NL drafts" at the top of the hitters'

stats, and the same thing at the top of the pitchers' stats. These are the average leagues. They are derived from the hypotheticals that Jerry sends me (and I believe Les gets them, too, if you don't). The hypothetical final standings are the very retrospective stats that I'm talking about. No changes after draft day. What we bought in the auction.

The amazing (actually, not so amazing) thing is how similar all the leagues are. Just two examples from NL leagues: WGN -- AB 53627, HR 1654, RBI 7238, SB 1399, BA .275; ERB -- AB 54275, HR 1665, RBI 7329, SB 1368, BA .274. From the AB it's clear they aren't the same hitters, but they're doing virtually the same thing. So, for the hitters, it's very easy to tell almost exactly how big the pie is. And then you just have to carve it up.

As you know, I give each hitter a 50% large slice than each pitcher. Each hitter is decreed to be worth (decreed, not proven, this is the argument) \$13. I am my own arbiter and once I've given the average hitter \$13, the hitters all told get \$2,184 (13 x 168). The reason I don't get a lot of flak for this is that experience by and large bears me out; most leagues spend more than \$2,000 on hitting.

And what they are getting from the hitters is almost identical from league to league.

Therefore, when I tailor hitting denominators to match the draft stats of the average league, the total prices for almost any league add up to \$2,184. Lots of people do this when they get my book. They don't mess with the formulas, they just go to Appendix A, look up what Patton says so-and-so earned last year, write it down next to the hitters they bought, and add it up. They normally do this once. But if they do it TWELVE times, they get just about \$2,184. (In the ADL, we don't. Because of our vapor lock on Gaetti, we were worse than the average league.)

There's \$936 left (3120 - 2184). (Or: \$8.67 x 108.) Yes, pitching is only 30% of the game; that's the shocking truth. Even though it accounts for 50% of the points. And there are fewer pitchers. That's the profound paradox.

But my job isn't philosophy, it's counting beans, and I'd love to be able to report that when you add up the prices for pitchers in the same way, you get \$936. You don't. Here's why.

WGN -- IP 10584, Wins 612, Saves 444, ERA 4.06, Ratio 12.13; ERB -- IP 11203, Wins 649, Saves 448, ERA 3.96, Ratio 11.97.

Those are the pitching stats that the Washington Ghosts bought in DC in April and the Elizabeth River Bushes bought somewhere in Virginia at the same time -- nothing hypothetical here -- and they screw my life up badly because they buy very different stats. They don't buy the same pitchers and the pitchers they do buy don't do the same things.

If ERB bought as many more homers as they bought wins, they'd have 1753 RBI.

It's hard to say about the averages, since achieving a lower ERA is good, achieving a lower batting average is bad, but let's say that's not the case. We'll pretend, in this shadowy world of ours, that more is better in both cases. We figure WGN's ERA is 4.06/3.96 "better" than ERB's ERA, multiply that times ERB's .274 batting average, and get a .281 batting average.

Imagine one league buying 168 hitters who had a .281 batting average and another league buying 168 hitters who had a .274 batting average. You'd have to think one league was using the DH.

The formulas in the book this year award the WGN hitters \$2,184. They WERE the average league. The astute Virginians get \$2,188; they nip the Washingtonians by .2%.

The WGN pitchers get awarded \$928 in the formula. The ERB pitchers get \$977. ERB is

5% better. Five percent, not point five. It would be as if they bought \$2,299 worth of hitting stats.

You can't buy more than you pay for. That's the one thing I'm sure we've agreed on so far. ERB did not buy \$3,165 worth of stats in its auction. It bought, at most, \$3,120 worth of stats. (If one team had \$5 left at the end, the league bought \$3,115 worth of stats.) ERB, using my prices, will find that there's a tiny bit of inflation. Because they were more prescient than the average league, they are going to earn \$264 per team ($3165/3120 \times 260$).

That's why this is worth all the fuss. That \$4 per team, in a retrospective draft, would be a killer.

You can't spend what you don't have. For my prices to work exactly in THEIR retrospective draft, they'd have to multiply every single price in the book by $3120/3165$. That would drop Albert's price from \$46 to \$45. It might be more relevant to them that it would drop Bichette's from \$54 to \$53.

Remember Shandler's wise observation. If I end up with even a \$259 team, I'm in last.

I've pondered, literally for years, over what I can do to make the pitchers behave themselves. There are solutions. Leagues may not much resemble the average league, but there is an average league. You'll see it at the top of the pitching spreadsheet: WGN, ERB and two other leagues averaged together. The formula makes those stats -- the NL average stats bought in auctions last year -- out to be worth \$950. Not \$936. The formula makes the average stats bought in the AL out to be worth \$912. Not \$936. When you have a formula that produces prices that are this different for the two types of Rotisserie leagues -- both using the same rules and having the same budgets -- you know something's flawed.

One solution would be to fiddle with the NL saves denominator until NL pitchers were worth exactly \$936 and the AL saves denominator until AL pitchers were worth exactly \$936.

Another would be to fiddle with NL wins denominator until the pitchers earned what they were supposed to, and do the same for the AL pitchers.

Or you could fiddle with both denominators until you had it right.

But what would "it" be? How can you change the wins denominator each year, when that's the one category in all of baseball that never changes?

Well, for two years now, I've had to change it. But that's not my fault. I blame that on the owners. Nevertheless, even in the worst of times, there remains one win per game. The saves category fluctuates a little bit and there is a slight league difference (more saves in the NL) but basically half the wins are saved and half aren't. I'll mess around with the first decimal in the saves denominator, and there I draw the line.

Because, to me, the most valuable thing about the prices is seeing everything in relation to everything else. The foundation of the theory is that each two wins that a Rotisserie team gets mean a point in the standings. This year, last year, next year. (Even this is open to debate, of course. No question but that wins get more hotly contested with each year, and the saves category slides.) What I want is a constant off of which I can spin all the other categories, and for me it's wins. Without any constant, it's very hard to see the league differences and yearly fluctuations that really are important. So my pitching prices for any given league are not accurate, and now I've spilled the beans. Here's the compromise. (It's HARD for me to compromise, Peter; takes me a while to warm up.) You tell me who the 276 players we buy

in the draft are. Throw in Bonilla, Wakefield, Bonds -- you name it -- just name them first. Remember, there aren't supposed to be any surprises in this draft; this is not a test of predicting. If Bonds is available, and we're counting just AL stats, I assure you I will take him over Hamelin. The one thing I insist can't happen is for me to be sitting there at the end, having spent all my money and filled my entire roster, and then have some wise ass across the table say, "Hey guys, we forgot Gary Gaetti." Personally, I believe since we forgot him we should forget him, but if you like being reminded that's okay. Select your 276 players, send me their names, give me half an hour to fiddle with the decimals -- I might only need ten minutes -- and I'm ready for the gong.

17-Nov-95 12:19 EST

Sb: a stand-up guy

Fm: Peter Kreutzer

I missed yesterday's round cause I was, sans computer, en route to NYC to see Walter's comedy act in the village. What he did is really a remarkable achievement: Got up on a stage in front of about 25 people in a small night club and told jokes. Funny jokes, for the most part. He was nervous, didn't know how to disengage the microphone from the stand so stood there with hands at his side and talked, but he got laughs and warmth back for his trouble. It was good fun, and reminded me most of what I miss about life in NYC. (Less driving).

I'd love to sit down and hold a draft to test these issues, but I think it would take a long time. Perhaps even as long as our regular draft (minus the reserve round). Which is why Les's compromise feels right. Actually, it's hardly a compromise but rather a full-fledged different game.

But what it will measure will be the same, even if we allow everyone to know the results of each round (which will allow for more "drafting" strategy and is probably inevitable, because someone has to decide who gets who each round and that's probably me and clearly if I know then everyone has to know).

Shandler's right that if everyone has a good pricing system then all teams will end up being worth \$260, but clearly everyone's pricing system is different. If you'd pay \$4 for Hammonds and I'd pay \$1, then you're going to get him, unless someone else writes down \$5. And just as clearly, Hammonds is worth only one amount. So someone is either going to overpay for him, or the person who doesn't get him is going to spend that \$4 on Chuck Knoblauch and get him, but then end up with Milt Cuyler, too. You know what I mean.

From those differences will come value, and winners. And losers.

Which gets to your denominator problems. There was a guy in the alt.baseball.fantasy newsgroup on the internet a few weeks ago who made the observation that no pricing scheme is valid unless it is compiled within the context of a league. Which I think is dead accurate. What we're doing, trying to make universal values, is impossible because the "average league" is just that: representative, not actual. As soon as people start bidding all the values change. When someone overbids early it means there is less money available for later. When someone chucks steals or power or average, the scale tilts.

Which doesn't mean that universal values aren't important. Everyone who goes into the draft with a comprehensive list of prices for players has assumed universal values. But you know all this. You taught me much about it. My point is that when the draft is done everyone has an opinion about who did better or worse, depending on how their universal values compare to the specific values the league placed on the drafted players. And sometimes those

opinions are right. Often, for reasons that can be out of our control, like injuries and trades, they're wrong.

One of the reasons they're wrong is that everything doesn't stop at the draft. The hypotheticals are important, but they don't measure the reserve lists and the waiver claims and trades. I would guess that the two leagues you cite use different reserve systems, or claims systems, which makes their efficiency at plucking value from the pool different. But even if they play with exactly the same rules they'll end up with different results because within the context of each of their leagues different guys have different values. If one team ends up with Fetters, Mesa and Smith, it skews the value of saves up and down the standings.

So when your values show individual leagues (and particularly pitchers) with values that deviate from 3120 you're measuring the various efficiencies and exigencies in each league. It isn't a flaw in your system.

What gets interesting, it just occurred to me, is that your request we designate the 276 players who are draftable before we draft, goes part of the way toward addressing those issues. I had been thinking that part of what makes each of our value systems different is our differing takes on what makes a player draftable. Is #168 Cuyler or Hamelin? From such questions will winners and losers, in my view of the game, be determined. And clearly the decision made in pitching would have more of an impact: How much ERA do you swap for additional WINS? If you know exactly how much total ERA there is, and how many WINS, those decisions become more manageable. And perhaps, all our values move closer together. I'd think so, though I don't know for sure.

I do know that we'll still end up with differences, because once rosters start being firmed up all the values change. For the team that has Lofton, Tom Goodwin is less valuable than for all the other teams (excepting those who are chucking steals). What I also know is that, even if we make the draft open to all players who accumulated AL stats in 1995 (or hell, even if we let teams draft guys who didn't play in the AL, like Bonds--Barry or Bobby) Gaetti isn't going to sneak through because we now know what he was did.

Jorge Fabregas might, but then again he could also end up, again, on a first place team.

In conclusion, at last!, I see your point and am willing to go that way if everyone else will go along (my guess is it creates more problems, but maybe not). We play Les's game, with everyone being apprised of everyone elses rosters after each round. I'm for the \$100 side bet but that shouldn't be a barrier to entry. And if I compile the stats I'll submit my list to a disinterested 3rd party before we start and stick to those values. Should I write it up?

18-Nov-95 10:31:00

Sb: answered prayers

To: Peter Kreutzer

No, I'm not referring to you're agreeing to whatever it is we're agreeing to, but to the complete list of major league salaries that was published yesterday in USA Today. Did you see it? (Here I am worried about you being sequestered somewhere, your eloquence being put to the test by eleven other increasingly lathered souls, and you're partying with the boys! Stoneburn's review of Walter's act was just as favorable, except Stoneburn didn't find him to be the least nervous.) Remember page 339 that I was so proud of in last year's book. Well, these are the greatest predictions I've ever made. I get incredible similarity scores, and then the real owners go right by me, once they've learned the score. I'll total it up in a player comment. Truman Capote should be writing about this, not Murray Chass. (Capote spells better than I do, but no amount of praying can get me back to the Sb: in Tapcis.)

Anyway, you, me, Les, Walter — we're all stand-up guys. And we can reduce or eliminate the bet, no problem. I just want to be clear, though: we have agreed to identify the 276 players first. Haven't we? And then I do have one other teensy weensy request — but it's not a demand! Can we please have negative bids? I can easily fudge the denominators to give positive values to the top 108 pitchers (whoever we identify as the 108 pitchers ahead of time can — and, of course, in a real auction must — have positive values). But that wouldn't be my pricing system, and it's my pricing system, not my bids that I want to test. The prices are retrospective; this is meant to be a retrospective draft.

I repeat, though, there's no way I'm sitting down now, not after all this sparring. So if you and Les want it to be \$1 minimum (frankly, if you're still confused which way we're pointing) give me the list of players and the time-out to fine tune the denominators, as Les might say. Also I hope you're doing something about getting enough people in the ring, because I still haven't heard even boo from Hunt.

18-Nov-95 15:19 EST

Sb: huncarved coffins

Fm: Peter Kreutzer

I didn't see the USA Today list, but I'm going to scoot onto their site on the Web and hope it's there. But it doesn't surprise me, I mean your salary prediction success. You nailed the issue last year, spun my head around. And the players should've paid attention. They'd be making a lot more money if they'd taken the owner's first proposal.

Of course, I'm enough of an idealist that I'm hoping the players are happy how this has gone so far. After all, they still have no cap and have thus far retained their freedom of movement, both of which they were being asked to sacrifice. But it's hard to see this being settled with the memory of the Owners offer of \$30M minimum salaries clanking around in the players's collective brain. Surely the owners, having found the Patton religion, aren't going to be making that offer again.

I like the negative bid idea, as I've said, but it won't work in this sort of game. Without a draft's interaction there's no way to keep money from being minted. The market just isn't responsive enough. So while I'd trust that no one would bid -\$25 for, say, Mark Holzemer, I think a -\$2 for Holzemer would be just as unfair even if it is a "fair value" bid. (After I wrote this I realized that if we designate 108 pitchers all will be bid on, and thought that maybe negs would be okay. But on further reflection, since not all 108 will be bid on in the same round, necessarily, the same problem obtains.)

I can't believe you haven't heard from Hunt. Maybe he talked to Shandler and figured the thing wasn't coming off. What I'll do is write it up and send rules to Shandler, who was interested if his concerns were addressed, which in this format they are, and Hunt and ADLers and anyone else I can think of. We need 7 more bodies/intellecets, which doesn't seem that hard.

Are you saying I should put together the list of available players and that will be okay for you? If so, I don't see why we can't designate the pool as players who accumulated stats in the AL in 1995. Then each of us can have our own top 276. But if we have to, well, I can live with that just fine. After all we're testing a pricing scenario. Give me the players's names in advance and I don't have to first figure out who player number 168 is.

18-Nov-95 20:32 EST

Sb: Re: idea

Fm: INTERNET:JHunt

that sounds like a great idea. another good idea would be to get a bunch of us together (maybe in a chat room on the INTERNET or something) and have an auction for a league based solely on '95 stats - the league would be over as soon as the computer compiles the teams. it would be just a simple exercise in drafting, but it could certainly open some eyes. do you like that idea?

19-Nov-95 10:14:00

Sb: Re: huncarved coffins

To: Peter Kreutzer

Now, I have to tell you, this is getting serious. I will admit that I only saw belatedly what an awful malaprop my "answered prayers" was; I'd rather think of myself as a subliminal genius than a pisspoor typist. But you missed it. Or did you? That's what's killing me. Is "huncarved coffins" your answer? It's going to ruin my day. Please respond immediately.

Meantime, I've forwarded Hunt's message — which is great! Somehow I don't think it would be a good idea to forward him all our messages; to, you know, like catch him up. And if he comes out of it thinking it was his idea, that's good too. In fact, I can see where I could be trouble if I get involved any bit further. Where I made my mistake was in thinking my BOOK prices are being tested. I can submit any prices I want — you and Hunt just tell me what the rules are — because it's ME who's being tested. That's all anybody cares about. And I'm going to win.

19-Nov-95 11:14 EST Sb: Re: hunt's in Fm: Peter Kreutzer

I think forwarding our correspondence on this would overwhelm the clearly overworked young man. I'll send him a note with the basic parameters of what we've been discussing and we'll move on from there.

The idea of conducting the draft on the INTERNET is fine, but won't be any faster than a real draft and means we need to find players who can access IRC. It's possible but I'm a fairly dedicated cybersurfer and have yet to foray into that. My guess is you don't even want to think about it.

In re "winning:" I of course like your bluster, but until we play the game it isn't much but warming air. Personally, I'm pretty sure you will be playing for third unless Les and I cancel each other out.

Fin.

Peter should have the last word, don't you think? Time to put up our dukes.

Draft Populations — hitters

AL 95	AB	H	HR	RBI	SB	BA	\$HR	\$RBI	\$SB	\$BA	\$TOT
BWAL	55142	15147	1881	7982	1094	.275	755	938	494	1	2188
BZB	54937	15038	1856	7935	1082	.274	745	933	488	0	2165
DDA	55674	15278	1875	8070	1087	.274	752	949	491	1	2192
LSL	55605	15225	1879	8011	1093	.274	754	942	493	0	2189
league	55340	15163	1873	8000	1089	.274	751	940	492	0	2183
team	4612	1264	156	667	91	.274	63	78	41	0	182
player	329	90.3	11.1	47.6	6.5	.274	4	6	3	0	13.00
NL 95	AB	H	HR	RBI	SB	BA	\$HR	\$RBI	\$SB	\$BA	\$TOT
BWNL	53660	14768	1638	7267	1410	.275	739	945	501	0	2185
BLK	53419	14645	1650	7190	1395	.274	745	935	495	-1	2173
WGN	53627	14741	1654	7238	1399	.275	747	941	497	0	2184
ERB	54275	14870	1665	7329	1368	.274	752	953	486	-2	2188
league	53745	14780	1652	7256	1393	.275	746	943	495	0	2183
team	4479	1232	138	605	116	.275	62	79	41	0	182
player	320	88.0	9.8	43.2	8.3	.275	4	6	3	0	13.00

Draft populations — pitchers

AL 95	IP	W	Sv	ERA	Rto	\$W	\$S	\$ERA	\$Rto	\$TOT
BWAL	9769	594	403	4.54	12.85	585	312	0	-1	896
BZB	10554	536	418	4.48	12.74	528	324	2	2	856
DDA	10694	635	426	4.52	12.83	626	330	0	0	955
LSL	10689	641	401	4.56	12.87	632	310	-1	-1	939
league	10426	602	412	4.53	12.82	593	319	0	0	912
team	869	50	34	4.53	12.82	49	27	0	0	76
player	97	6	4	4.53	12.82	5	3	0	0	8.46
NL 95	IP	W	Sv	ERA	Rto	\$W	\$S	\$ERA	\$Rto	\$TOT
BWNL	10528	607	444	3.94	11.87	598	332	3	3	937
BLK	11066	638	444	4.03	12.00	629	332	-1	0	959
ERB	11203	649	448	3.96	11.97	639	335	2	0	977
WGN	10584	612	444	4.06	12.13	603	332	-3	-4	928
league	10845	627	445	4.00	11.99	617	333	0	0	950

team	904	52	45	4.00	11.99	51	33	0	0	85
pitcher	100	5.8	4.9	4.00	11.99	6	4	0	0	9.42

American League 1995 formulas

\$HR	=	13/6*HR/5.4
\$RBI	=	13/6*RBI/18.43
\$SB	=	13/6*SB/4.8
\$BA	=	13/6*((1178.2+H)/(4300+AB)0.274)/0.0012
\$W	=	13/6*Wins/2.2
\$Sv	=	13/6*Saves/2.8
\$ERA	=	13/6*(4.53-(478.16+ER)/((950+IP)/9))/0.04
\$Rto	=	13/6*(12.82-((1353.22+H+BB)/((950+IP)/9)))/0.07

National League 1995 formulas

\$HR	=	13/6*HR/4.8
\$RBI	=	13/6*RBI/16.67
\$SB	=	13/6*SB/6.1
\$BA	=	13/6*((1155+H)/(4200+AB)0.275)/0.0012
\$W	=	13/6*Wins/2.2
\$Sv	=	13/6*Saves/2.9
\$ERA	=	13/6*(4-(422.22+ER)/((950+IP)/9))/0.04
\$Rto	=	13/6*(11.99-((1265.61+H+BB)/((950+IP)/9)))/0.07

American League 1996 prediction formulas

\$HR	=	13/6*HR/5.4
\$RBI	=	13/6*HR/19.3
\$SB	=	13/6*SB/5.4
\$BA	=	13/6*((1300.8+H)/(4800+AB)0.271)/0.0012
\$W	=	13/6*Wins/2.5
\$Sv	=	13/6*Saves/3.7
\$ERA	=	13/6*(4.25-(495.8+ER)/((1050+IP)/9))/0.04
\$Rto	=	13/6*(12.5-((1458.3+H+BB)/((1050+IP)/9)))/0.07

National League 1996 prediction formulas

\$HR	=	13/6*HR/4.9
\$RBI	=	13/6*HR/18.1
\$SB	=	13/6*HR/6.7
\$BA	=	13/6*((1283.1+H)/(4700+AB)0.273)/0.0012
\$W	=	13/6*Wins/2.5
\$Sv	=	13/6*Saves/3.8
\$ERA	=	13/6*(3.9-(454.9+ER)/((1050+IP)/9))/0.04
\$Rto	=	13/6*(11.85-((1382.5+H+BB)/((1050+IP)/9)))/0.07

Next year's notes will have — in addition to the 1996 actual formulas and 1997 predicted formulas — the 1995 Fight Formulas. To some extent there will be different denominators. All depends on what the game is. And I really expect to learn a lot from this. If Kreutzer and Leopold actually have figured out position scarcity (don't you think that's their secret that they can barely contain?), I may indeed get my nose bloodied. I can admit it to my fellow masochists.

Rest assured you will find the round-by-round in these pages. Should be fascinating viewing to retrospective fight fans.

Not a bad definition of what a masochist is.