

OUR CENTURY

1994

AT A GLANCE

Schools' independence bid fails again

It looked as though the school board might regain control of Cleveland schools for the first time since 1978. U.S. District Judge Frank Battisti modified his desegregation "remedial order." If the board carried out Superintendent Sammie Campbell Parrish's "Vision 21" plan, he said, the system could be self-governing by 2000.

Voters had defeated a 12.9-mill levy, putting in doubt the system's ability to complete the plan. Battisti ordered the state to contribute \$295 million over six years.

In October, Battisti unexpectedly died at the age of 72. In a eulogy, the Rev. Thomas Acker said of the judge, "He suffered willingly the arrows of public fury, a martyrdom in pursuit of justice for children."

In November, voters again defeated the school levy, despite a \$400,000 campaign to pass it. In December, a consultant reported that 60 of the district's 127 school buildings needed major repairs and 12 needed to be replaced. Dwayne Gardner of Planning Associates said many buildings were "literally falling apart." A \$60 million bond issue passed in 1987 had been mismanaged, he said.

As the year ended, the hopes for independence had faded. Officials feared a new judge would turn control over to the state.

The temperature dropped to 20 below the night of Jan. 18. That was one degree colder than Jan. 24, 1963, the old record. Six deaths in Greater Cleveland and nine others in Ohio were blamed on the cold. University Hospitals treated seven cases of frostbite. The cold spread across the Midwest and East. It was so cold, The Plain Dealer reported, that Hell, Mich., froze over.

Gov. George Voinovich led a Republican rout in November, winning re-election over Democrat Robert Burch with more than 70 percent of the vote. Lt. Gov. Mike DeWine became the first Ohio Republican elected to the Senate since 1970. He defeated Democrat Joel Hyatt, son-in-law of outgoing Sen. Howard Metzenbaum.

Steven LaTourette, the Lake County prosecutor, ended Democrat Eric Fingerhut's one-term stay in Congress. Republicans retook the Ohio Senate.

But one notable Democrat bucked the Republican trend: Dennis Kucinich, whose only office in the previous 15 years had been a brief term on Cleveland City Council, ousted a scandal-plagued Republican State Sen. Anthony Sinagra.

Cleveland won its first professional sports championship in 30 years. It was the Crunch that did it — Cleveland's indoor soccer team. Hector Marinaro scored six goals — the last one in double overtime — in Game 4 of the National Professional Soccer League championship series to beat the St. Louis Ambush three games to one.

The Cavaliers had a new coach for their 20th and last season at the Coliseum — the diminutive but fiery Mike Fratello. They lost 14 of their first 21, then rallied, winning 11 straight in February and March and their last eight of the season.

Again, they met Chicago in the playoffs. This time the Bulls didn't have Michael Jordan, who had retired to become a baseball player — temporarily, it turned out. But the Cavs didn't have Brad Daugherty, out with a bad back. They didn't have Larry Nance, victim of a career-ending knee injury. They didn't have John "Hot Rod" Williams, who broke his thumb practicing for the playoffs. And they didn't have a chance against the Bulls. They lost in three straight.

Browns owner Art Modell said his coach, Bill Belichick, was a new man since the release of Bernie Kosar. With Vinny Testaverde at quarterback, the team went 11-5 for its first playoff appearance of the 1990s. Testaverde completed 11 straight passes as the Browns beat the New England Patriots, 21-13, at the Stadium.

But the next week, in Pittsburgh, Testaverde completed only 13 of 31. The Steelers rushed for 238 yards and coasted to a 29-9 win.

Air fares were down, and business at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport was up. So were the tempers of Cleveland and Brook Park officials. Brook Park passed a new zoning law that could block airport expansion. Cleveland sued to invalidate it. Cleveland outbid Brook Park for land needed to expand Hopkins. Brook Park sued to appropriate the land.

Meanwhile, Cleveland City Council approved \$160 million worth of airport improvements, including a new garage. Then it discovered the city needed another \$480,000 to repair a moving sidewalk that didn't.

Faced with a Solomonian decision, Probate and Juvenile court judges made conflicting rulings in the case of "Baby Shampail." Probate Judge John Donnelly issued a decision allowing Tom and Cheri Burich, a white East-lake couple, to proceed with the adoption of the 22-month-old black girl for whom they had been foster parents.

Juvenile Court Judge Robert Ferreri intervened and awarded custody to the adoptive parents of Shampail's older sister, Abdul and Mary Abdullah of Cleveland Heights. Shampail and her 3-year-old brother, Hastings, had been placed with the Buriches after they were taken from their mother because of a drug problem.

The Ohio Supreme Court eventually ruled that the Buriches could adopt both Shampail and Hastings.



PLAIN DEALER FILE PHOTOS

Rich Amaral of the Seattle Mariners watches the first pitch in Jacobs Field on April 4.

Indians open new field and era

By Fred McGunagle

Red, white and blue balloons soared into a cold, clear, blue sky. The spirits of Clevelanders soared with them, their hopes as bright as the April sun. On green grass smelling of spring, President Bill Clinton wore an Indians cap as he threw out the first pitch in Jacobs Field.

The game was worthy of the occasion. Seattle's Randy Johnson mowed down the Indians for seven innings. But Sandy Alomar's single broke up the no-hitter in the eighth inning and Manny Ramirez's two-run double tied the score.

The Mariners scored in the ninth but the Indians tied it again with two out. And when Wayne Kirby's 11th-inning single brought in Eddie Murray for a 4-3 win, the day's ending was as perfect as its beginning.

This time, for a change, the Tribe wouldn't let its fans down. It won 18 straight in its new home, often with last-inning heroics. Capacity crowds watched the Indians battle the Chicago White Sox for first place.

Until Aug. 10.

That's when a strike suddenly ended the season. The Indians were one game behind the Sox. Had there been playoffs, they would have had a wild-card spot.

Clevelanders were disappointed, but the summer had been a huge success. The area around Gateway was filling with restaurants. Network television never tired of showing the three skyscrapers behind the left

field stands and the rest of downtown, spread out behind the bleachers.

Out-of-town papers raved about Cleveland's comeback.

Forgotten were the cost overruns for the stadium and for Gund Arena, nearing completion next door. Forgotten, too, were the broken promises that the teams would pay most of the cost and that the project would mean 28,000 jobs, \$33 million a year in taxes and up to \$51 million for development of the surrounding area.

Also overlooked was the loss of revenue caused by the strike. The Indians were charged no rent on the first 1,850,000 fans. With attendance stopped at just under 2 million, they paid \$1.2 million. Had sellouts continued, they would have paid 10 times as much.

The arena, meanwhile, was now \$30 million over original cost estimates of \$118 million. The Gateway Corp. fought off lawsuits by contractors demanding to be paid.

Somehow the facility opened on schedule. More than 20,000 attended a Billy Joel concert on Oct. 17. The Lumberjacks and Cavaliers drew huge crowds for their early games.

Still, estimates were that arena revenue would fall \$7.7 million short of costs. And on a hilltop in Richfield, the 20-year-old Coliseum stood vacant, surround by empty fields where Nick Mileti had dreamed of 350 acres of shopping malls and resort hotels.

There was another nagging problem a half-mile north of Gateway. The Browns' lease on aging Municipal Stadium was due to expire. Owner



Indians great Bob Feller is honored before the opening game.

Art Modell said the structure could be modernized for \$130 million.

"There's no local money," said Tim Hagan, president of the Cuyahoga County commissioners. "The citizens are unwilling to pay taxes for it and the governor has to take a leadership role."

Gov. George Voinovich faced similar pressure from Cincinnati. "Anybody who thinks the state is going to pay for their stadium or stadiums is not thinking very clearly," he said.

Mayor Michael R. White appointed a task force of a dozen business leaders to study the problem. Modell saw

Richard Jacobs being lionized for the Indians' upsurge in their new home and George and Gordon Gund being hailed as heroes for bringing the Cavaliers back downtown.

In his Stadium office he looked out on a freezing Lake Erie and seethed.

McGunagle is a Cleveland freelance writer.

E-mail: fmcgoo@prodigy.com

Photo researcher:
David G. Jardy
Plain Dealer Library

Where did Mike White, the consensus-builder, go?

Who was this guy masquerading as Mike White?

It couldn't be the same sure-footed, consensus-building mayor who coasted to an easy second term in 1993.

This mayor seemed to be deliberately provoking City Council with slights and insults. He purged Cabinet members who had served him loyally for four years. He asked for the resignation of respected Police Chief Edward Kovacic and replaced him with Patrick Oliver from the Metroparks rangers, the city's first black chief.

He outraged labor by proposing "privatization" — outsourcing — of city jobs. He announced a strict campaign-finance reform plan and said he would bypass council by circulating petitions to put it on the ballot as a charter amendment.

Unfortunately for White, his staff botched the job. One of the five people listed as sponsors of the petition effort was not a Cleveland resident. Worse, council found that many petitions had been circulated by city employees, in some cases on city time.

Many of the signatures appeared to

be in the same handwriting. Secretary of State Bob Taft ordered an investigation. When council refused to put the charter amendment on the ballot White sued, but eventually relented.

He feuded with Cleveland Public Library officials. He held an hour-long closed-door meeting with "his" school board members — all seven had been elected with his backing — without inviting Superintendent Sammie Campbell Parrish, who had just been given a new contract by the board.

When she complained, he said, "I

don't apologize."

Parrish said, "The mayor is a good person, but I am beginning to believe that I overestimated his understanding of education reform."

Police Chief Oliver, meanwhile, irked police, citizens and eventually White. In December, Oliver suddenly resigned.

White maintained he had not asked for the resignation and said he would launch another national search for a successor.

—Fred McGunagle

LOOKING AT A YEAR

Jan. 6: Figure skater Nancy Kerrigan is hit on the right knee by a man wielding a crowbar just before the national championships in Detroit.

Days later, it is revealed that rival figure skater Tonya Harding helped to plan the assault.

Apr. 21: The Red Cross estimates more than 100,000 people have been killed during two weeks of tribal

slaughter in Rwanda.

May 10: Nelson Mandela is sworn in as president of South Africa.

June 17: O.J. Simpson leads police on a low-speed chase along the freeways of Los Angeles the week after the murder of his ex-wife, Nicole, and her friend Ronald Goldman.

Aug. 31: The Irish Republican Army announces a cease-fire in

Northern Ireland.

Sept. 14: A players strike forces cancellation of baseball's World Series for the first time since 1904.

Nov. 5: Former President Ronald Reagan reveals that he is suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

Nov. 8: The Republicans win control of both houses of Congress for the first time in 40 years, ensuring that

Newt Gingrich will be speaker of the House.

Deaths: Former President Richard Nixon, former House Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill, scientist Linus Pauling, actor Burt Lancaster, singer Dinah Shore, composer Henry Mancini, band leader Cab Calloway, former Yippie Jerry Rubin.