

A "Chat" with Buzzie Bavasi

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"I get tired of hearing ballplayers bellyache all the time. They should sit in the press box sometime and watch themselves play."

San Diego Padres President, Buzzie Bavasi,

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***ABOUT and FROM BUZZIE BAVASI..
SOME QUIPS, QUOTES, and NOTES!***

From Walter Alston, regarding their Friendship

Nashua had a Dodger in the front office, of course. His name: Emil J. Bavasi. With our association in 1946 began a relationship that grew closer and closer over the years. Buzzie Bavasi, as everyone calls him, became one of my closest friends. Both of us ended up with the Dodgers for many years, Buzzie as general manager and in my opinion one of the finest there has ever been.

Walter Alston, A Year at a Time, 1976

From Walter Alston, regarding Buzzie's Hole-in-one

Buzzie Bavasi has been responsible for a lot of things in my life and one of them is golf. I hadn't played much golf when I got to Nashua, but Buzzie loved the game and played it all the time. Nashua had a nice golf course and Lela and I would often go out early in the morning to get in a round of play.

One day Buzzie and I went out to the country club with a couple of players, Dick Malady and Larry Shepard, who later managed Pittsburgh. We were all pretty scatter-gunned but on the sixth hole Buzzie tied into one. It was a short hole but he hit the ball well and when we got towards the green we couldn't find the ball.

We looked all over where we normally would find one of our balls—in the trap, off the rough or buried in the fringe of the trap in that hanging high grass. I finally walked by the cup and I'll be darned if the ball wasn't in there lying at the bottom wedged against the pin.

Buzzie had a hole-in-one. Now that was his first, I guess, and he was mighty happy. In those days in Nashua you got a set of tires or a case of Scotch or something for an ace. So as we were walking into the clubhouse after the round, I turned to Shep and Dick and suggested to them that we never saw any hole-in-one.

"Sign my card, Walter," Buzzie asked me.

"Why?"

"For my hole-in-one."

"What hole-in-one? I never saw any hole-in-one. Did you Dick? How about you Larry? Did you see Bavasi get a hole-in-one?"

Buzzie was raging. Here his manager and two of his players were swearing they'd never seen a hole-in-one. Bavasi went to the telephone and called his wife, Evit.

Pretty soon Evit showed up in the clubhouse. We were having lunch. She had a book in her hand and she gave it to Buzzie. It was the release book of standard baseball forms they give any player when he has been released.

Needless to say, we all signed the card and Buzzie got his prize.
Walter Alston, A Year at a Time, 1976

Walter O'Malley's Man

A week after succeeding Rickey as club president, O'Malley began bringing in his own team. To take over baseball operations, he promoted Buzzy (sic) Bavasi, a MacPhail man, to the post of general manager. Another protégé, Fresco Thompson, was given control of the farm system. Then, to make his point even clearer, he substituted MacPhail's favorite coach (and former Cincinnati pilot) Dressen for Rickey confidant Shotton.
Donald Dewey and Nicholas Acocella, Encyclopedia of Major League Baseball Teams, 1993

C. Arnholt Smith's Man

One omen might have been C. Arnholt Smith, a California banker and close acquaintance of then-President Richard Nixon who had gotten into the habit of investing in ambitious projects (like the Padres) with everybody's money but his own. Another omen might have been the distinctly Dodger look to much of the franchise after Los Angeles owner Walter O'Malley had personally steered San Diego's candidacy through meetings with other NL executives. The most conspicuous of the Dodger alumni was former general manager Buzzy (sic) Bavasi, who took over as Padres president under Smith and brought along his son Peter. The Bavasi family would in turn start a San Diego tradition of hiring field managers with connections to the Dodgers: Preston Gomez, Don Zimmer, Roger Craig, Frank Howard, and Dick Williams.
Donald Dewey and Nicholas Acocella, Encyclopedia of Major League Baseball Teams, 1993

Gene Autry's Man

Concluding after his investment in the three free agents that the organization needed somebody to control finances more scrupulously, Autry brought in as president former Dodgers' general manager and Padres' chief executive Buzzie Bavasi, then in retirement. Within a few weeks of becoming guardian of the treasury, Bavasi had full charge of California's baseball operations.

Donald Dewey and Nicholas Acocella, Encyclopedia of Major League Baseball Teams, 1993

Clay Kirby's Possible No-hitter

In one particularly notorious incident, on July 22, 1970, righthander Clay Kirby came off the mound in the eighth inning only three outs shy of a no-hitter. But because Kirby was trailing in the game 1-0, manager Gomez sent Cito Gaston up to bat for him with two out in the bottom of the inning (Gaston struck out). While Gomez defended his decision by saying that his job was to win games, Bavasi went berserk up in the pressroom, raging about the lost opportunity for having a no-hit pitcher as a drawing card.

Donald Dewey and Nicholas Acocella, Encyclopedia of Major League Baseball Teams, 1993

From Bowie Kuhn

"Buzzie was one of baseball's free spirits. He had a catlike ability to spring over, around and under out rules. He knew where all the bodies were buried, and more often than not, who had put them there."

Bowie Kuhn, Hardball, 1987

From Bill James

(in August 1956) Rizzuto was contacted by other teams about joining them for the stretch drive, but nothing could be worked out. He wanted to stay in NY. Buzzie Bavasi called, but he wanted Rizzuto to go to Montreal to stay in shape until the Dodgers could clear a space on their roster. Rizzuto said no.

Bill James, The Politics of Glory, 1994

From the San Diego Padres, August 17, 2001

Buzzie Bavasi, who helped spearhead the effort to bring Major League Baseball to San Diego and served as the Padres' first president, and Jerry Coleman, the voice of the

Padres for the last 29 years, will be inducted into the Padres Hall of Fame in a ceremony prior to tomorrow's 7:05 p.m. Padres-Expos game at Qualcomm Stadium.

The Padres Hall of Fame, which honors players, coaches and executives who have contributed to the organization's growth and success since San Diego broke into the major leagues in 1969, was created in 1999 as part of the club's 30th anniversary celebration. The inaugural class of Padres Hall of Famers included left-handed pitcher Randy Jones, first baseman Nate Colbert and owner Ray Kroc. Outfielder Dave Winfield was inducted last year.

Bavasi and Coleman were elected by a 24-member committee of media, club officials and fans, who use rules based on those necessary to be elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Eventually, the San Diego Padres Hall of Fame will be housed at San Diego's new ballpark, scheduled to open in 2004.

Already a veteran of nearly 30 years in the game, Bavasi joined C. Arnholt Smith's effort to attract a National League franchise to San Diego in 1967 and, after securing a team, served as the Padres' first president from the birth of the franchise until 1977. The 86-year-old, who today makes his home in La Jolla, was one of baseball's most-respected and best-liked executives for more than four decades. He began his career in baseball with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1939, serving the organization in various capacities. Following a stint in the military as an infantry machine gunner from 1943-46, Bavasi served as General Manager of the Dodgers' Triple-A club in Montreal. In 1951, he was appointed Vice President and General Manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, a post he maintained through the club's move to Los Angeles until he resigned to join the effort to bring the major leagues to San Diego.

From the San Diego Padres web page, 2001

From Andy Strasberg

"Just recently," mused the bustling collector, "Padre President Buzzie Bavasi and I were riding down in the elevator together and he mentioned one of his hubcaps was missing, as if I might know where it was. I didn't want to ruin my image so I answered back, 'If I bring it in will you be kind enough to autograph it for me?'"

Andy Strasberg, Director of Season Ticket Sales, San Diego Padres, 1975 Official Scorebook, Vol. 2, Number 6

Roy Campanella's Introduction to Buzzie

Anyway, Finch (an assistant to Branch Rickey with the Dodgers) was on the phone again to Rickey. "Nashua," he said after he had hung up. "Mr. Rickey says I should try Nashua. That's in New Hampshire. They've got a swell general manager up there, fellow named Buzzy (sic) Bavasi."

Roy sat back hopefully, and when Finch smiled for the first time as he spoke again on the phone, the relieved ballplayer felt the gloom lift from his heart. "It's all set," Finch grinned. "I told you that Bavasi was a swell fellow. Real progressive guy. When I explained to him that you were one of the Negro players Mr. Rickey wanted, he almost got sore at me. 'I don't care if he's green with orange spots or got two heads,' he hollered at me. 'If he can catch and hit, send him up.'"

Milton J. Shapiro, The Roy Campanella Story, 1958

Regarding His Nashua Experience, and Don Newcombe and Roy Campanella

"Nashua, NH, Was Safe Haven

Campanella and Newcombe Found an Early Home"

By Michael Madden

NASHUA, NH - Buzzie Bavasi was reluctant to add details to the tale that has grown and grown, because what happened that night 51 years ago in Holman Stadium was an exception to "what was without a doubt the most enjoyable year I ever had in baseball." And there is nearly a half-century from which to choose.

`` Oh, it was nothing, '' Bavasi said at first, preferring to relish story after story and laugh after laugh about the 1946 season of the Nashua Dodgers. `` They've built it up a lot ... it wasn't that big a deal. ''

`` Hah! '' said Don Newcombe. `` If it weren't for Buzzie Bavasi, I'd have had nothing in baseball. Those guys from Lynn all game were calling us niggers, and we had promised Mr. Rickey that we would keep our heads. We couldn't do anything, Roy and me ... but Mr. Bavasi did. ''

`` The Experiment '' was a euphemism for justice. Brooklyn's Branch Rickey had ended 60 years of baseball segregation after the 1945 season by signing five black players, including Don Newcombe, a 19-year-old pitcher; Roy Campanella, a 24-year-old catcher; and a speedy 26-year-old infielder named Jackie Robinson.

Newcombe and Campanella became the first black battery in the white world of organized baseball that summer of '46 in Nashua; while Robinson broke the color barrier with the

Dodgers' International League farm team in Montreal, Newcombe and Campanella were the first black players in more than 60 years playing for a team based in the United States.

``I'll always remember Nashua with warmth,'' said Newcombe, who went on to become a Hall of Fame pitcher with the Dodgers in Brooklyn and Los Angeles. ``Roy felt the same way, too. I can't tell you how many times we talked years later of how much we enjoyed playing in Nashua. But there were times with other teams ... particularly the Lynn Red Sox. They had this catcher, this redneck from the South, Matt Batts,'' said Newcombe of a player who would be called up to Boston in 1947. ``And they had this pitcher, Walter Cress, he could pitch, but he was a bigot, too. But the worst of them all was that manager of theirs, that Pip Kennedy. They had some real crackers on that team, real rednecks.''

Cress died recently, but Batts, now retired in Baton Rouge, La., denied that the Lynn Red Sox singled out Campanella and Newcombe. ``Roy was a heck of a ballplayer,'' said Batts, ``the best player in the league. What I remember was that Walter Cress and I used to rub Roy's head for good luck ... Roy was a very nice fellow, so were the two of them. ``Pip Kennedy, our manager, was a great guy. He was a chubby Irishman and he'd get after you to play your best baseball.''

But according to Newcombe, the abuse from the Lynn dugout and the third-base coach's box was nonstop that night the Sox played at Holman. ``Pip Kennedy was a no-good son of a bitch and you can quote me on that,'' said Newcombe. ``In the minors, the manager would be in the third-base box, and Kennedy was saying all kinds of racial epithets at me and Roy all night, `nigger-this' and `nigger-that.'''

The legend of that night has grown and grown. The Experiment had strict guidelines, and one was that Newcombe and Campanella could not say or do anything to retaliate. No head-hunting pitches from Newcombe, no words from either player, no recourse whatsoever. Nothing from Newcombe or Campanella in reply. Mere silence. But, said Newcombe, ``that didn't mean Mr. Bavasi had to take it.''

Bavasi, after saying time and again that the incident ``was nothing,'' finally provided some details. ``Lynn had this manager ... and he had been using the N-word the whole game,'' said Bavasi. ``I was mad and I had them come to get their share of the gate receipts.''
Bavasi had seen and heard enough. But would there be enough size to back him up as he confronted the Lynn Red Sox? Fear was in his bones, so Bavasi made sure some of his bigger players were around and that his manager, who had been talked into leaving his

beloved high school teaching position in Ohio, was at his side. ``I made sure Walter Alston was there; Walter was big,' said Bavasi.

``What I remember was the whole [Lynn] Red Sox team was there behind Kennedy, the bus was right there with all of them. And I said to him, `Why don't you say to me right now what you said to them and I'll kick your ass. Go ahead and say that to me.''' Bavasi's voice raced as he repeated these words. The emotions of a night 51 years ago came back to a man of 79.

``I challenged him,' said Bavasi. ``I said, `I'll take you on' and I remember seeing that bus. The whole Lynn team was right behind Kennedy. You know ... first time in my life I had ever challenged anybody and here I was challenging an entire baseball team.' A pause. Bavasi spoke again, saying, ``I owe my entire baseball career to Roy Campanella and Don Newcombe.''

And from Newcombe, ``Without Mr. Bavasi, Mr. Rickey, and Walter Alston, Roy and I would never have gotten to where we were. I owe everything to them.' The Class B New England League was reborn after World War II. Teams in Nashua and Manchester, N.H., Lynn, Lawrence, and Fall River, Mass., Pawtucket and Providence, R.I., and Portland, Maine, all posted \$1,500 in early 1946 to establish their franchises. The Nashua team was directly owned by the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Branch Rickey mixed the potions for his experiment carefully. He searched long and hard for the right man to be his general manager. ``I was just back from the war, three years of infantry, and I was down in Sea Island, Ga., with my wife for four or five months of rest,' recalled Bavasi. ``Then Mr. Rickey called me and asked me to come up to Nashua. I knew something was up.''

For his manager, Rickey talked Walter Alston into taking a temporary leave from his teaching and coaching job in Lewiston, Ohio. Alston, who had played briefly as a first baseman for the St. Louis Cardinals, would be the player-manager for Nashua - still playing first base - but he was unsure whether he wanted to continue in professional baseball. He did know for sure, though, that he wanted to teach high school boys and girls. This Nashua thing would be temporary, a favor for Rickey.

``One of the first things we did,' said Bavasi of Rickey's mixing The Experiment's potions so carefully, ``was to make sure that the city of Nashua would be behind us. What

we did was hire the [managing] editor of the Nashua Telegraph, Fred Dobens, to be president of the team. That way we knew the city's newspaper would back us.'

Newcombe and Campanella, meanwhile, were working out together as the winter went on, ``working out in the New York City YMCA,''' Newcombe said. Spring training with the rest of the Dodger farmhands in either Daytona Beach, Fla., or Thomasville, Ga., was out of the question.

``But it was such a thrilling time,''' Newcombe remembered. Almost daily, he, Campanella, and Jackie Robinson would talk, among themselves, or with Clyde Sukeforth, Rickey's chief scout, or with Rickey himself. ``Jackie would call us up, and Jackie'd lay down the guidelines for us, and that was fine with me and Roy. Jackie was more mature and the leader ... as three black guys, we were doing something we had to do and Jackie was telling us how we'd do it.'

The ``guidelines'' had been repeated often from Rickey and Sukeforth to the black players, then repeated over and over among the players themselves. ``I remember Jackie saying to me,''' Newcombe related, ``since I was a hotheaded teenager, ``Especially you, Don, since you're going to have the ball in your hand, you can't be throwing it at somebody's head who just called you a name.'''

The historical announcement came almost with a whisper. In mid-March, as Newcombe recalls, Rickey ``told us they wouldn't let us down South for spring training, and they wouldn't let us play in Danville,''' Ill., where the Dodgers had a farm club. ``He told us the Dodgers had only one farm team left to put us, and that it was up in Nashua.'

On April 4, Rickey announced that Roy Campanella, star Negro League catcher, and Negro League teenage pitching prospect Don Newcombe would be playing that season in Nashua. Newcombe and Campanella would be the first black players on an organized white baseball team based in the United States in 62 years.

``I've thought about this for 50 years,''' said Newcombe. ``Suppose Buzzie Bavasi was a bigot and said, ``I don't want any damn niggers on my team,''' and suppose the president of the New England League was a bigot and said the same thing, and suppose Walter Alston was a bigot and he said, ``I don't want any niggers on my team.''' I mean, the Dodgers were down to one farm team. Our whole lives would have been different.'

Newcombe and Campanella, their spring training completed at the New York YMCA, took a bus to Nashua. The rest of the Nashua team took a bus up from Thomasville, Ga. The bus broke down in Delaware, and Newcombe's first assignment in organized ball was to take another bus to Delaware with third baseman Joe Tuminelli and drive.

*This story ran on page c10 of the **Boston Globe** on 03/28/97.*

Regarding His Experience with the Angels and Nolan Ryan

"AN ANNOYING BUZZ

Arrival of VP Bavasi marks beginning of the end for Ryan and Angels"

By Kevin Sherrington

Buzzie Bavasi watches three games a day off his satellite dish. Out of baseball since 1984 after a half-century in it, he wants to be no closer than his screen. He attends only high school games near his home in La Jolla, Calif., if he goes at all.

This way, he still can enjoy baseball. "No one ever asks me for a raise," he said, chuckling.

Bavasi owned a part of the San Diego Padres, one of the three teams for which he worked. The rest of his time in the major leagues, the money only passed through him, from people like California Angels owner Gene Autry to Nolan Ryan. The passage rarely was smooth, particularly in the latter case. Bavasi jealously guarded his boss' wallet. He did his job well, as he and others saw it. He remembers now, 40 years later, what his best players made. He ticked off salaries as if they were the ages of his four sons. The 1955 Dodgers, Brooklyn's only World Series winner, had a payroll of \$545,000, an average of \$21,000. "And \$21,000 was a lot of money back then," Bavasi said. "I didn't know anybody else making \$21,000."

By the time he got to the Angels for the 1978 season, Bavasi was aghast at the money spent on players and the organization. He called the Angels a "country club" under general manager Harry Dalton, who left within a month of Bavasi's arrival as executive vice president. Intending to stay only a year, Bavasi spent seven with California. And that extended stay may be why Nolan Ryan is not an Angel today. Ryan said he and Bavasi "were not compatible." Bavasi made several comments to reporters that angered Ryan in 1978 and 1979, though the most famous came after Ryan left the club for the Houston Astros. Bavasi was the first of several critics to describe Ryan as a .500 pitcher, a brand of mediocrity that Bavasi still holds, though not as brazenly.

Bavasi was the reason Ryan decided to become a free agent and sign with the Astros after the 1979 season. Until Bavasi arrived, Ryan liked California. He considered moving his family from Alvin, where they annually returned in the off-season. Ryan loved Autry, a

generous and affable owner. He liked and respected Dalton, who had acquired him from the Mets. He couldn't stand Bavasi. "I wouldn't have come back," Ryan said, "as long as he was the general manager."

The relationship soured early, during the 1978 season. Ryan went 10-13, his worst record since a 10-14 mark in 1971, his last season with the Mets. He led the league in strikeouts for the sixth time with 260. But his earned run average was 3.71, up almost a run from the year before. The Angels still were not giving him much support, but it was better than ever. In his 13 losses, they scored 40 runs. From 1972-77, the Angels averaged 1.7 runs in his losses.

Ryan, coming off a terrific 1977 season in which opponents voted him AL Pitcher of the Year in a poll by *The Sporting News*, picked it up again in 1978. He gave up no runs in four of his first six starts, though he was only 2-1. His record got worse quickly. He lost six of his next seven decisions. His luck was no better. He went on the disabled list from June 14 through July 5 with a pulled left hamstring, injured in a race. He won once in seven starts when he came back. He went back on the disabled list Aug. 20 with a rib separation and did not return until Sept. 6.

There were problems other than injury, too. Lyman Bostock, an outfielder with a .318 career average signed by the Angels before the season, was shot and killed in Gary, Ind., on Sept. 23. "His death devastated our ballclub and left us all in shock," Ryan related in his 1988 autobiography. "What happened to Lyman was kind of the final blow in a year that had begun with high hopes for the Angels and ended with us finishing in second place, five games behind Kansas City."

Based on the 1978 season, Bavasi formed a quick opinion of Ryan, the club's best player for most of the 1970s. To Bavasi, he was no more than the Angels' fourth-winningest pitcher in their best season. A new club attitude was apparent. The 1978 Angels press guide boasted of Ryan's accomplishments "far beyond his contemporaries" and his prospects of future greatness. The 1979 press guide included, for the first time, a biography on Autry and Bavasi, credited with bold deals that brought the club its success. The information on Ryan was not nearly as kind as it had been just the year before. "While lacking a consistency which has limited his overall success," began the first lines of his 1979 bio, "nonetheless, for one game or one pitch, there's no pitcher who's more exciting to watch than Nolan Ryan."

Ryan had gone in one season from one of the game's best to an inconsistent, if exciting, sideshow. Ryan said he did not know if Bavasi had anything to do with the press guide changes. But he could well imagine it. "Buzie controlled and meddled in everything over there," Ryan said, "from the public relations department to how they ran the clubhouse." The pervasive operating style did not appeal to Ryan. "I think time passed him by," he said.

Bavasi's time in baseball was marked by brash deals and tough negotiations. Don Zimmer - involved in what Bavasi called his favorite deal, Zimmer for reliever Ron Perranoski, who became a Dodger standout in the 1960s - said free agency ruined baseball for Bavasi. "Buzie had fun negotiating with players before agents came along," said Zimmer, who told the Los Angeles Times everyone he knew respected Bavasi's ability. "It was like he made a game of it. But once all those agents came along, it took the fun out of the game for him."

Ryan never had an agent before the 1978 season. He negotiated his own three-year deal that paid him \$300,000 annually through 1979. Because of his deteriorating relationship with Bavasi, he decided he likely would pursue the free-agent market after the contract expired. To help him in that anticipated search, he hired Dick Moss as his agent. Moss got along with Bavasi no better than Ryan did. A former Angels official said Moss was the reason for the ultimate fall-out between Bavasi and Ryan. Moss, without Ryan's consent, presented a list of figures indicating what it would take to sign Ryan after the 1979 season. The incentives, Bavasi said, were so numerous and attainable that, in 1980, Ryan easily would have made \$1 million, a figure no one else in baseball made.

"If we gave Nolan that kind of money," Bavasi said more than a dozen years later, using Ryan's 10 victories in 1978 as a reference point, "what about the guy who won 14 games?" The bottom line for Bavasi always was victories. When Ryan signed with Houston after a 16-14 record in 1979, Bavasi said they would only have to come up with two 8-7 pitchers. "If nothing else," he wrote in his 1987 autobiography, *Off the Record*, "the mathematics bear that out."

Bavasi couches the criticism now in qualified praise. He said it was a mistake to let Ryan go. He said, with Ryan, the Angels "would have won a World Series" either in 1982 or 1986, when they failed in the American League playoffs. But he also noted that Ryan was 26- 27 in the club's first back-to-back winning seasons, Bavasi's first two with the Angels. He called Ryan one of the game's "strongest" pitchers, at one point mentioning Sandy Koufax and Don Drysdale. Then he quietly, deftly, withdrew Ryan from their company. "He was a better pitcher after he left us, really," Bavasi said. Ryan didn't want to leave. He and Ruth

were tired of taking their oldest child, Reid, from his school in Alvin to another in Anaheim at midterm.

"Up to 1979," Ryan said, "I anticipated finishing my career in California. I think I would have. We were going to have to make some decision about where to live full-time."

He thought a moment, smiling. "Buzzie made that one for me."

The Dallas Morning News, 06/20/93

Bavasi Stories

"I could listen to Buzzie Bavasi spin stories all day. Bavasi, the first general manager of the Padres, will be inducted into the team's Hall of Fame this season. At a recent press gathering, Buzzie lamented, "There's no negotiation in baseball these days.'"

One of Buzzie's favorite negotiating stories is from his time with the Dodgers, and it concerns Maury Wills. "Wills had stolen 104 bases the year (1962) before, so we offered him \$80,000," Bavasi said. "Maury asked if there was any way he could get \$5,000 more, and suggested if he made the All-Star team, I would give him a \$5,000 bonus. I thought about it for a second and said, 'That's a good idea, Maury. But if you don't make the All-Star team, I'll take \$5,000 back.' Maury signed for \$80,000.'"

Yes, baseball has changed in the last 39 years.

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Duke Snider's 1951 Contract

I knew I was going to be successful in 1951 long before the season, as soon as I found out Buzzie Bavasi was our general manager. He'd been the GM when I played in Montreal, and when Branch Rickey moved on to the Pittsburgh Pirates and Buzzie was brought up to take his place, I knew I was going to be all right. The reason I was so sure of myself was a conversation I had with Buzzie in Montreal when I was on a baseball exhibition tour after the '50 season. He complimented me on the year I had and gave me some advice for my contract talks. "You had a great year, Duke, he said, "so make sure you get paid for it in your new contract. Don't settle for anything less than double your 1950 contract. Stick it to 'em!"

Shortly after Buzzie became the Dodgers' GM, contracts went out and when mine arrived, it showed a figure less than double the previous year's salary. I sent it back to Buzzie unsigned with a note that said, "This doesn't look like double my salary to me."

Buzzie sent me another contract, with the figure that was double my salary. He attached a note saying, "You have a great memory, you rat."

*Duke Snider, **The Duke of Flatbush**, 1988*

Duke Snider's Feelings about Buzzie

FALLBROOK ---- Duke Snider, simply one of the best baseball players of any era, likes to help others. The Hall of Famer does it on his own terms. The 74-year-old Snider, a resident of Fallbrook for the past 45 years, isn't big on blowing his own horn. In his mind and heart, that would not be dignified.

If Snider can quietly lend a hand, fine. The less said the better. For instance, there was a time when he wrote a letter to the veteran's committee for the Hall of Fame at Cooperstown, N.Y., urging them to consider Buzzie Bavasi for induction.

Bavasi was the Dodgers' general manager during Snider's great seasons in Brooklyn. "I always thought Buzzie would end up president of the league or commissioner of baseball," Snider said Thursday. "Instead, he became part owner in San Diego. "I don't know if I should say that because I never told Buzzie about that letter. But he should be in the Hall of Fame."

It was a typical quiet act of courtesy on Snider's part.
*Steve Scholfield, **North County Times**, 2/16/01*

Buzzie Regarding O'Malley

Rickey, a devout Methodist, who wore black suits and bow ties, would wander the grounds and watch player's practice all day. "He had this unbelievable presence," former Dodger general manager Buzzie Bavasi said. "He's the best baseball man with the greatest baseball mind I've ever been around."

Buzzie Regarding Nolan Ryan

Ryan's tenure with the Angels ended after the 1979 season because then-general manager Buzzie Bavasi didn't believe he was worth \$1 million a season. Eleven years later, after

Ryan pitched his sixth no-hitter, Bavasi sent him a telegram. "Nolan," it began, "some time ago I made it public that I made a mistake. You don't have to rub it in."

Jeff Miller, *Orange County Register*, 1/5/99

Buzzie Regarding Alex Rodriguez Contract

(Speaking of the new Alex Rodriguez contract and the included incentives.) "The guy makes \$25 million a year and he gets another hundred thousand for making the All Star Team? If I was paying a guy \$25 million a year, he sure as hell *better* make the All-Star team."

Buzzie Regarding Sandy Koufax

When a reporter asks Dodgers general manager Buzzie Bavasi how he is going to replace Koufax, he replies, "Here is a boy who has pitched four no-hitters, won 27 games last season with arthritis and is Jewish. Now, who can replace him?"

Buzzie Regarding Kevin Malone

Malone proclaimed himself the "new sheriff in town" before the Dodgers went to spring training in 1999, and last winter referred to himself as "Dodger Boy." "He's probably a good baseball man," said Buzzie Bavasi, 86, the Dodgers general manager from 1951 through 1967, "but a fish who keeps his mouth shut doesn't get caught. I think that's probably good advice for Kevin."

Buzzie Regarding the Golden Rule:

"We live by the Golden Rule. Those who have the gold make the rules."

Buzzie Regarding Contacting Branch Rickey

Buzzie Bavasi, when Mrs. Rickey wanted to contact Branch Rickey: "The only way I know is through God, and Mr. Rickey may not want to speak to Him."

Regarding Change After the 1959 Season

Buzzy (sic) Bavasi wanted change. The Dodgers of 1959 were ribbed by Brooklyn veterans. Nineteen-sixty was a time to turn over personnel. A team must change constantly if it is

to win. The calf injury convinced Bavasi that Furillo's glories were history. He summoned Furillo to his office at the Statler Hilton Hotel and asked, "What do you think of Frank Howard, Carl?"

"I don't think he hits the curve good."

"But he has promise."

"You don't hit the curve, you don't belong here."

"Coming along, but slow."

"That Howard's gonna be something," Bavasi said.

Bavasi was bearing a message down Byzantine ways. He was suggesting that Frank Howard had arrived, and that Furillo, like Carl Erskine, should make gracefully to the judgement of years. Retire. Then, perhaps, the Dodgers would find him a job.

*Roger Kahn, **The Boys of Summer**, 1972*

Regarding Jackie Robinson's Retirement

At the end of the '56 season, when he made up his mind not to play in '57, Robinson agreed to sell the story of his retirement to *Look* magazine. It was an uncomplicated transaction. *Look* was to pay Jackie \$50,000 for the exclusive.

The Buzzy (sic) Bavasi complicated the story. Robinson had neglected to inform the Dodgers he was not coming back, and a few days before the article was to run, Bavasi traded him to the Giants for Dick Littlefield and \$30,000.

Robinson had wanted to tell Bavasi he was retiring, but he had not done so, hardly anticipating that the Dodgers might trade the man who had symbolized the team for a generation. When the Dodgers told him they were trading him, Robinson knew he was in a tricky situation. To stall for time to figure out what to do, he tried to persuade the Giant front office to hold the news of the trade for a couple of days. But they would not. A couple of days later, the *Look* article came out proclaiming his retirement from baseball. The Giants had offered him \$60,000 to play in 1957. It was a lot of money, more than he had ever gotten with the Dodgers. There was now a lot of pressure on him to keep playing.

Robinson was undecided, the money certainly attractive. But when Buzzy Bavasi cuttingly told reporters that the article was merely a scheme by Robinson to get more money out of the Giants, Robinson's mind was made up. Robinson, who had never been a money grubber, who had made far less money than many star ballplayers, whose salary was earned every spring by the third exhibition game from the throngs he drew in the South, could not bear being accused of greed by Bavasi and by implication, O'Malley, the most avaricious man of them all. Jackie, a man of principle, decided to retire as planned.

The beat writers were furious at Robinson for not giving them the story.
Peter Golenbock, Bums, An Oral History of the Brooklyn Dodgers, 1984

Lee MacPhail Dealing with Buzzie

In the course of the 1957 season I made my first major league deal. We were looking for a back-up relief pitcher. I learned from my friend Buzzie Bavasi that the Dodgers were willing to sell Sal Maglie, who was nearing the end of his outstanding career. Sal was just what we were looking for—an experienced, gutsy competitor. Moreover, he would be new to our league and American League hitters would not be used to his style of pitching. Unfortunately Weiss was sick but he okayed the deal and Topping gave me the green light to spend any reasonable amount necessary. Buzzie and I met in one of his favorite Manhattan seafood restaurants to close the deal. When the sale was announced, Buzzie made sure that both the restaurant and I received publicity, neither of which made Weiss very happy. Buzzie, Chub Feeney, and I became good friends over these years. About the same age, we had comparable jobs with the three New York teams, and we all lived in Scarsdale within a few miles of one another.

Lee MacPhail, My 9 Innings, An Autobiography of 50 Years in Baseball, 1989

Emil J. "Buzzie" Bavasi ***Career Summary***

COLLEGE

1938 **DePauw (Indiana) University**; degree graduate and played as catcher on baseball team

BASEBALL POSITIONS

1939 **Brooklyn Dodgers**, business office

1940 **Americus (Georgia) Pioneers**, Class D, Georgia-Florida League; Business Manager; played 4 games at 2B and hit .333

1941-42 **Valdosta**, Class D, Georgia-Florida League; Business Manager

1943 **Durham (North Carolina)**, Class B, Piedmont League; Business Manager

1943-46 **U.S. Army**, infantry machine gunner

1946-47 **Nashua (New Hampshire)**, Class B, New England League; Business Manager

1948-50 **Montreal Royals**, Class AAA, International League; General Manager

1948 **Brooklyn Football Dodgers**, Scout

1951-68 **Brooklyn Dodgers/Los Angeles Dodgers**, National League; General Manager/Executive Vice President

1969-77 **San Diego Padres**, National League; President

1978-84 **California Angels; American League; General
Manager/Executive Vice President**

1978-99 **Baseball Hall of Fame, Veterans Committee**

AWARDS

Minor League Executive of the Year, 1948

The Sporting News Major League Executive of the Year, 1959

San Diego Padres Hall of Fame, 2001

AUTHOR

With John Strege, **Off the Record**, Contemporary Books, Inc., 1987

**BUZZIE BAVASI-RELATED TRIVIA QUIZ, OCTOBER 20, 2001
(22 points possible)**

Career

1. *Buzzie Bavasi's clubs won:*
 - a. *6? 7? 8? 9? Pennants*
 - b. *1? 2? 3? 4? World Series*
 - c. *0? 1? 2? 3? Division Titles*

Brooklyn Dodgers

2. *In what year did Jackie Robinson become the first black player to win the Most Valuable Player award?*
3. *Who preceded Walter Alston as the manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers?*
4. *Not all of the Dodgers' home games in 1956 and 1957 were played in Brooklyn. What other city hosted several Dodgers home games during those two years?*

Los Angeles Dodgers

5. *In what year did Dodger Stadium open?*
6. *The 1963 Dodgers hold the record for fewest players used in a World Series. How many?*
7. *The Dodgers of 1965 and 1966 had the only infield in history with four switch-hitters. Name them. (one point apiece)*

San Diego Padres

8. *How many games did the Padres lose in their first year in the National League?*
9. *Xavier Nady was the third Padre to make his Major League debut with San Diego without any minor league experience. Who were the other two, who joined the Padres in 1972 and 1973, respectively? (one point apiece)*

10. Who was the last member of the 1969 Padres to play in a San Diego uniform. (hint: he was traded after the 1976 season but returned for a second stint in 1979 and 1980)

California Angels

11. The Angels lost Nolan Ryan as a free agent after the 1979 season. Which team signed him?

12. The Padres' starting pitcher in Tony Gwynn's first Major League game was sent to the Angels later that season. Name him.

13. Which team overcame a two games to none deficit against the Angels in the 1982 American League playoffs to advance to the World Series?

Hall of Fame Veterans Committee

14. For which pitcher did the Veterans Committee waive the requirement of playing at least ten years in the major leagues?

15. Which player was selected to the Hall of Fame by the Veterans Committee after receiving 74.5 percent, but not 75 percent, of the Baseball Writers Association of America votes in his final year of eligibility?

16. Three men have managed in the Major Leagues for at least five different decades. Connie Mack and John McGraw were enshrined in the Hall of Fame in 1937. Which manager was selected by the Veterans Committee in 1994?

ANSWERS

- 1. 9 pennants, 4 world series, 2 division titles*
- 2. 1949*
- 3. Charlie Dressen*
- 4. Jersey City*
- 5. 1962*
- 6. 13*
- 7. Wes Parker, Jim Lefebvre, Maury Wills, Junior Gilliam*
- 8. 110*
- 9. Dave Roberts, Dave Winfield*
- 10. Fred Kendall*
- 11. Houston Astros*
- 12. John Curtis*
- 13. Milwaukee Brewers*
- 14. Addie Joss*
- 15. Nellie Fox*
- 16. Leo Durocher*