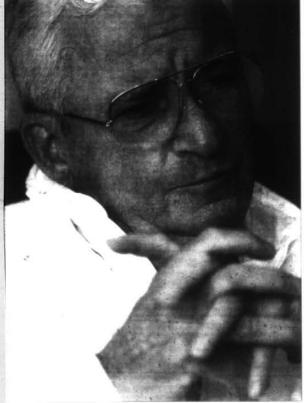
THE PLAIN DEALE

35¢ NEWSSTANDS OHIO'S LARGEST NEWSPAPER

CLEVELAND, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1995

Browns move in the works



Art Modell "We're talking I can't say any more. I'll be able to tell you more in three days."

Modell confirms discussing deal to relocate team to Baltimore

and MARY KAY CABOT
TRAN DELLIF MINEME

CLEVELAND — Browns majority owner Art Modell confirmed last night that he is discussing a deal that could end the storied football team's 49-year relationship with the city. He said he would have more to say "in hree days."

Sources familiar with the deal told The Plain Dealer that Modell will appear with Maryland officials Monday to announce a dealer with the confirmed with the confirmed

stodium revenue he gets in ficual studium revenue he gets in Cleveland. Achted at his Waite Hill home the night, Modell refused to comment on a possible move, saying only: "We're talking. I can't say any more. I'll be able to tell you more in three days."

The Baltimore Sun in this morning's editions reported that Modell would appear at a news conference in Baltimore Monday, accompanied a Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke and Maryland Gov. Parris N. Glendenling.

"I've not get finalized plans."

However, in a conversation with reporters from four Ohio messpapers, including The Plain Dealer, earlier in the evening, Modell broke his self-imposed silence on the Stadium issue and backed away from his February 1994 vow that he would never move the Browns as long as his family owned the world move the team, that's gone, that's null and void because the game has changed considerably, "Modell said. "We've suffered enormous losses in the last four years."

four years."

He said the franchise had "lost a bundle" in recent years and the team was in no shape to sell.



Bob Gries Browns minority shareholder. Alfred Lemer Browns minority



NFL rules for moving a franchise. 12-A

A profile of Art Modell, 12-A

Questions and answers. 13-A

Will he or won't he, asks columnist Bud Shaw. 1-D

The statements were his first since the beginning of training camp in July, when Modell slapped a moratorium on all Stadium talks, saying he wanted to focus on football. Modell had refused to discuss the Stadium issue or the Nov. 7 tax referendum to help finance renovation of the 63-year-old lakefront facility. Central days that the Browns were on the verge of leaving Cleveland for Baltimore, a football-hungry city that lost its NFL team, the Colls, in 1984 when owner Robert Irsay moved the team to Indian

could suffer a similar loss.

Baltimore is offering something
Cleveland was unable or, at least
so far, unwilling to offer: a new
stadium with modern amenities.

The Browns of late have been
having difficulty filling the Stadium, which holds 78,512 and is
something to great in the NFI.

dium, which holds 78,512 and is among the five largest in the NFL. On Thursday Mayor Michael R. White said there are now 24 vacancies for luxury loges. At one time there was a long waiting list. Modell said last night that economic factors that once contributed to his demand that the Stadium be renovated could now drive him away.

SEE STADIUM/12-A

Centerior is told to write off assets, eliminate dividend

By VINDU P. GOEL

COLUMBUS — In a potentially grave blow to Centerior Energy Corp. stockholders, state regularism and a state consultant recommended yesterday that the trouseness of the state consultant recommended yesterday that the trouseness of the state of the state

See monthly miss rise trons 30. 30. 40 859.15 in summer and from \$57.20 to \$62.85 in winter. Regulators and a PUCO-hired consultant, Hagler Bailly Consulting, said the suggested measures would improve Centerior's financial health over the long term and eventually lead to lower rates.

term and eventually lead to lower rates.

In the short term, the company will continue to exist "on the edge," Hagler Bailly said in its reporter of ficials were extrambling yesterday to assess the impact of the regulators' proposal, which was released at 4 p.m., after sthe stock market closed. Centerior stock closed at \$10 as hare, down 1.25 cents in New yesterday.

SEE CEJ14-A SEE CEI/14-A

Prime minister takes over key duties from Yeltsin

and JOSEPH ALBRIGHT

MOSEOW — Russia's prime
minister has taken authority over
leading government ministries
from ailing President Boris Yeltsin, who appeared weak and
sometimes disoriented yesterday
in his first brief television appearance since he was hospitalized eight days ago.

In a videotupe played on all major news shows last night, Yeltsin,
edurred, dispelled questions over
whether he was comatose or
worse. But it was clear the president's account hospitalization for
heart troubles in four months had
taken a serious toll.
Speaking after a half-hour visit
with Yeltsin at the Central Clinical Hospital, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin said he would
"Coordinate" work of the departments of defense, security, interrior and foreign affalrs, collectively known as the crucial

"power" ministries.
"The president has to be partially relieved of these duties to
give him a better chance to recover," Chernomyrdin, said at a
news conference. "But of course
we seek the president's advice on
all key questions."

When asked whether Yeltsin had
'requested that he take on the additional responsibilities. "I could
read in his eyes that Chernomyrdin , who would take over as presiperme minister said. Chernomydin, who would take over as presitated, did not formally assume the
mantle of head of state.

The broadcast, which showed
Yeltsin seated in an easy chair
wearing a blue and white logging
stit, was the biggest interruption
since he was hospitalized for a
mild heart attack on Oct. 26.
"Subjectively speaking, I'm not
feeling bad now," Yeltsin said, in
a halting voice.

SEE HEALTHIB-A

Inside

Typhoon sweeps Philippines

The most powerful typhoon in a decade rips through the Philippines, churning up flood waters that kill dozens of people, destroying thousands of houses and cutting electricity to a third of the country. I.a.

Forum	Religion
	Family 1-E Movies 10-E

Quickline · 999-5463

Free, fast news updates: The Plain Dealer Quickline delivers the news all day. Call for the latest on President Clinton's weekly radio address, Ext. 1206.

Weather

Blustery, flurries. High 37, low 23. Map, 12-B

Modell's stadium requests started long ago

CLEVELAND — For more than a decade, the Browns' majority owner has warned that he wanted a new or renovated place to play. But it wasn't until recently that his demands began sounding omi-

Art Modell pledged just two years ago that if city officials re-jected his plea for renovations, the Browns would continue to play in the lakefront Stadium for the remainder of the lease, which expires after the 1998 season.

"A deal's a deal," Modell said in 1993. "We'll live with it." And he added: "I love Cleve-land. I want to stay in Cleveland."

Although Modell is not the Browns' only owner, he has al-ways been its voice. Modell owns 51 percent of the team; his long-time adversary Bob Gries has a

43 percent interest. Modell's friend and business associate Al-

43 percent interest. Modell's friend and business associate Afred Lerner owns 5 percent, with the remaining 1 percent held by the percent beginning to the fore a new stadium in the mid-1980s, and in 1984 endorsed a proposal for a new, \$150 million domed stadium that had been proposed by country commission-ris. When the property tax issue to fund the domed stadium was put to voters in May 1984, it failed by a 2-to-1 ratio.

Modell did not give up. He expressed mild interest in another domed-stadium proposal, this one a six-sided facility with a retractable roof. But that proposal, from a private firm, never got off the ground.

ground.

The Indians were still a tenant of Stadium Corp., the company through which Modell manages the Stadium, but would not commit to a long-term lease. Without

"the dome is dead."

Besides, Modell said, he liked playing football in the open air and on grass.

"The only thing I want from the city is some kind of relief if the Indians leave the Stadium," he said.

Indians leave the Stadium," he said.

In December 1986, Modell said he favored a twin-stadium complex like that in Kansas City. However, he said he feared the Central starket, where Gateway would eventually go, was not large enough for two stadiums. The next year, Modell announced he would ask the city for an option to extend his lease at the existing Stadium until the year 2008. He also said he would spend \$7 million to \$10 million to rehayate the lakefront part corrected at the City Council propositing that Stadium Corp. be given two op-

tions to extend its lease for 10 years each. In early 1939, however, Modell relinquished his bid to extend his long-term lease at the lakefront Stadium.

He retention in density 1939, when plans were being discussed to build Gateway. "Tell the city and to something for the Indians alone," he said.

But Modell wanted something "done" for the Brown, to. He suggested improving the city-owned Stadium.

By 1990, the city was a something the suggested improving the city-owned Stadium.

owned Stadium.

By 1990, the city was moving forward on Gateway. Modell repeated that the Browns would keep playing in the Stadium.

"The Stadium has a lot of pluses and minuses," he said, adding that the pluses "outweigh the minuses."

But the minuses apparently started adding up a few years

September 1993 Modell

said: "We've got five years left on our lease. Beyond that, I dea't know."

He said he wanted a massive renovation. Funding was not es-tablished for such a renovation. But Modell said that if things couldn't be worked out, the Browns would continue to play in the Stadium through the 1998 season.

the Sjadium through the 1998 season;
He was slightly less patient within a year. In February 1994, within a year. In February 1994, wated-stadium to make his team competitive with others in the NFL But he added: "You'll never hear' me say, 'If I don't get this, I'm moving.' You can go to press myself If I did that. I will say this: The Cleveland Browns as an organization will expect only fair treatment. There will be no demands made. If they can't give us fair treatment, which means that that's something we have to take into consideration."

NFL rules on moves shaky after challenge

By TONY GROSSI

The National Football League has a specific set of guidelines that spell out the conditions under which a franchise can move to another city. But because of events in the last year, it is questionable whether those guidelines have any real power to keep a team from moving to a more lucrative site.

have any real power to keep a team from moving to a more lucrative site.

Basically, an owner must prove to his fellow team owners and the MFL commissioner that his team is under a financial hardship in its current location because of a run-down stadium, that he is stuck with an unattractive lease or poor attendance, and that the stuck with an unattractive lease or poor attendance, and that the stuck with an unattractive lease or poor attendance, and that the stuck with a finance in the stuck with a constant to the stuck with a stuck with a constant of the stuck with a s

clubs (23 of the 30 teams) before an owner may move a franchise. To set the process in motion; an owner must notify the commis-sioner with a written "statement of reasons" for his desire to move. It must be submitted by mid-Feb-ruary of the year in which he wishes to begin play in the new location.

It must be submitted by mid-February of the year in which he wishes to begin play in the new location.

The owner must present a detailed analysis of the club's existing stadium lease; a comparison of its home revenues with league averages; past and projected not proposed locations; and audited financial statements for the preceding four seasons.

The owner also must include an assessment of the suitability of the club's existing stadium, costs of and prospects for making any desired improvements to the stadium, authority.

The commissioner evaluates the relocation requests based on the following factors:

The adequacy of the stadium authority may be a stadium and the willingness of the stadium authority to make necessary improvements; fan loyalty and support; public financial support; the extent to which the owner that the catent to which the owner that the catent in the catent to which the owner that the catent in the catent in the catent to which the owner that the catent in the catent to which the owner that the catent in the catent in the catent in the catent to which the owner that the catent in the catent in the catent to which the owner that the catent in the catent

state his case in front of his fellow womers, after which the matter comes to a vote.

The NFL's legal counsel has said there is no rigid formula of how many of the criteria an owner must meet to win approval to move his franchise.

Raiders owner Al Davis, whose definant move of his team from Oakland to Los Angeles in 1982 helped prompt adoption on the highest of the control of

to Oakland,Davis countersued, and both legal actions are pending.

Also this year, the Rams declared their intent to move from Anaheim to St. Louis, which had been seeking a replacement for the property of the property of

St. Louis officials and the Missouri attoracy general threatened to sue the NFL If it continued to obstruct the team's relocation. The NFL backed down, subsequently negotiating a deal with Rams owner Georgia Frontiere that allowed the rest of the teams to share in some of the revenue generated by the move.

The contraction of the contraction of the Rams and Reiders and the Uncertain status of the ordinary of the succession of the Rams and Reiders and the uncertain status of the ordinary of the succession of the Rams and Reiders and the uncertain status of the ordinary of the succession of the Rams and Reiders and the uncertain status of the ordinary of the Rams and Reiders and the succession status of the ordinary of the Rams and Reiders and the uncertain status of the ordinary of the Rams and Reiders and the uncertain status of the ordinary of the Rams and Reiders and the Rams of Apparently spurred by the success of the Rams and Raiders and the uncertain status of the guidelines controlling franchise moves, other teams are openly pursuing deals to relocate to more profitable. The profits of t

Former home of the Browns?



This may be the last year a Cleveland Browns banner hangs off the Stadium if reports of the Browns moving to Baltimore are confirmed next week This photo was taken Jan. 25.

We're talking,' Modell says of Baltimore's bid for Browns

STADIUM FROM 1-A

"All I want to do is compete," he said. "I'm not in this thing to make money. I'm not in it to go bankrupt, either. I have to do whatever I have to do to protect my family and my franchise and employees."

In making the move, Modell risks further angering a football-mad constituency already alien-ated by recent public relations agfles such as the release of pop-ular quarterback Bernie Kosar two years ago and the hirring of an unpopular football coach.

"I cannot surrender 35 years of living in this town overnight and say I'm a happy guy — of course not," Modell said last night. "But I have to do what I have to do — if I do that. If I go."

I do that. If I go."

Modell said he could wait no longer for his opportunity to secure a new stadium. He noted that he ididn't object to the \$455 million Gateway sports complex project, which provided a new stadium for the Indians and a downtown basketball arena for the Cavaliers.

the Cavallers.

"I've had hope that something would happen here for six years," he he aid. "It stood aside on Gleen way to let that happen. If I want amant and I want the nie grant way to portrayed me as being. It would've said 'Look, what's he deal for the Browns? before I would've said took, the deal for the Browns? before I said OK. But no, I released my tenant, I tet him go over to Jacobs Fleid, and I've been suffering losses ever since."

City and county officials re-acted with caution to the Browns possible move. Issue 5 campaign operatives met at City Hall last night to discuss weekend strat-

"This couldn't come at a worse time," said Cuyahoga County Commissioner Lee C. Weingart, a co-chairman of the campaign. But he said that supporters of the tax will still arge voters to approve the referendum next week to send a message to Modell.

Despite the decline this year in attendance, the Browns tradition-ally have been one of the best-supported teams in the NFL Lo-la! TV ratings are tops in the eague. And reportedly, city offi-cials are prepared to put up as

much as \$174 million to help ren-ovate the Stadium.

Asked if he was working on contingency plans to keep the Browns in town, Mayor White insisted yesterday he is concentrating on passage Tuesday of Issue 5, the 10-year extension of the tax on cigarettes and alcohol that would partially fund Stadium renovations.

ovations.

"Where we are today is an offort to put the last piece of public linancing in place, so that the teleproper of the piece of

munity, and if it proves to be true, it's a real betrayal of the com-mitment that Art Modell made."

He was referring to Modell's moratorium on Stadium discus-sions until after the Browns' sea-son ended.

sions until after the Browns' season ended.

Shaker Heights investment
banker Paul Carieton, chairman
of the Issue 5 Committee, said the
passage of Issue 5 is important,
not only to show Modell the city
means business, but also to make
that point to the NPL.

Carleton said there still is hope
that the city can get the league to
halt the move. "The league has to
approve," he said.

Carleton said the ballot language states that the sin tax
would not be extended unless or
until -a franchise agreement is
signed. He said the language does
not specify an agreement with the
Browns and, at least in theory,
could mean with another team.

Former city Council President

Former city Council President Modell used borrowed funds from banks to buy Browns

By TONY GROSSI

By TONY GROSSI
TANGELLA BIJORIE

Art Modell was 35 years old when he completed the purchase of the Browns in 1961 for a then-record sum of \$3.925 million, He borrowed most of the money from Cleveland banks.

The Brooklyn, N.Y., native — high school dropout — had neverbeen to Cleveland. He bought the Browns because they were the control of the second of the second

and David, 34 — whom Modell quickly adopted. John is a musi-cian and composer living in Los Angeles. David is a Browns vice

claim and composer living in Los Academic and Composer living in Los Ports as the Composite of the Composite

George 1. Forbes, who helped keep the Cleveland Indians here, said he was not surprised by the developments.

eweiopments.

When Art [Modell] declared a moratorium a couple of months ago on making statements about the issue, I kind of suspected it might come about," Forbes said. "I hate to see it happen. It's a loss—a hell of a loss."

Statles "Statles"

— a neu or a 1988."

Stanley Trupo, the mayor of Be-rea, where the Browns' training camp is located, said last night that the team's players, coaches and other employeees pay about \$500,000 yearly in income taxes to the suburb.

About \$350,000 of that is used to pay the city's share of a \$2 mil-lion debt remaining on construc-tion cost for the Browns training facility, which opened in 1991.

Trupo, who has campaigned for the sin tax extension, said a con-tract between the Browns and Berea requires that the team pay for the training center if it leaves. The \$13 million complex is owned by Berea and leased to the Browns for 30 years. The suburb would try to lease the center to other businesses if it were aban-doned by the Browns, said Trupo. Under the terms of the Stadium lease between the city of Cleve-land and the private company that Modell controls, the com-pany would owe the city \$600,000 in damages for breaking the lease.

The 25-year lease, which expires in 1998, requires that the Browns remain as tenants for the full term. In the event that the team moved, Modell's Stadium Corp. would owe Cleveland the \$200,000 minimum *mnual rent for each remaining year of the lease, according to the agreement.

Plain Dealer reporters James Ewinger, David V. Sartin, Ste-phen Koff and Tony Grossi con-tributed to this report.



PLAIN DEALER FILE

Art Modell talks to reporters during a news conference earlier this

Jerry Jones.
Today, Modell is in the minor-ity, one of the few remaining own-ers whose sole source of income is his team. The advent of free agency in 1993 forced Modell to seek new sources of revenue to literally keep up, with the Joneses.

literally Keep Joneses. I Joneses. I 'I'm not in the oil business. I don't have shopping malls. Ninety percent of my family's net worth is in the Cleveland Browns.' Modell said in an interview in

early 1994. "And if I find my pockets aren't deep enough to compete, then I might have to re-view my options."

Now 70, Modell survived a massive heart attack in 1983 that led to quadruple bypass surgery. He needed further surgery two days later to correct several complica-

Modell also walks with a limp, the result of an artificial hip im-planted in 1993.