

## The Spaceman cometh:

## Bill Lee talks baseball

By Christian Avard  
*Vermont Guardian*

He's one of the game's most colorful personalities; a rare diamond in the rough among the cookie-cutter characters that seem to make up today's Major League Baseball.

Bill "Spaceman" Lee is a southpaw pitcher drafted by the Boston Red Sox in 1968. Known for once pitching in his famous astronaut suit, Lee played nine seasons for the Sox and four with the Montreal Expos. He has a lifetime record 119 wins, 90 losses, a 3.62 earned run average, and was a member of the 1973 American League All-Star team. But the one statistic that is "hardwired in my cerebrum" he said is the 12 times he beat the New York Yankees when pitching for the Sox.

Like most Sox fans, there is no love lost between

Lee, the New York Yankees, owner George Steinbrenner, and especially with former Sox manager and now Yankees' third base coach Don Zimmer. Zimmer had no tolerance for Lee's antics and would often bench him, the most memorable of which was during a critical four-game series in 1978 known as "The Boston Massacre." The Yankees outslugged the Sox 42-9 in the series.

Most of all, Lee loves the game and considers himself a baseball purist. He despises the designated hitter rule, games played on artificial turf, and polyester uniforms, and started a company that sells wooden baseball bats made from yellow birch.

He is the author of three best-selling books — *The Wrong Stuff* with Richard Lally, *The Little Red (Sox) Book* with Jim Prime, and *Have Glove Will Travel*, also with Lally.

Lee lives in Craftsbury, and has called Vermont

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## OMYA neighbors make one last stand

By Carrie Chandler  
Special to the *Vermont Guardian*

FLORENCE — Many people in Vermont may have heard of OMYA, the world's leading producer of calcium carbonate, but might not know what it does.

But a few citizens in Florence, a village of Pittsford, are all too familiar with the company.

In response to an Act 250 process that the Florence plant was undergoing in order to build a 30-acre, 80-foot high waste pit on top of their estimated 3 million tons of waste stored in old, unlined quarries, the citizen's group Residents Concerned

about OMYA (RCO), formed in 2002. In 2004, they filed a lawsuit to make sure that OMYA's waste is regulated by the state in order to protect their drinking water from possible pollution.

"The state should be holding them accountable, and they don't care. Nobody follows up. Our lawsuit is to demonstrate that there are a lot of chemicals in these materials that continue to be washed out. Part of their [OMYA's] argument has always been that everything goes to the east. And our argument is how could it not go west and go downhill? That seems to be the natural flow of pressure which

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## Keeping greenbacks in Vermont

By Shay Totten  
*Vermont Guardian*

MONTPELIER — When you think of pension funds, and the people who manage them, the term activist is not usually the first, or even second, word that comes to mind.

Vermont Treasurer Jeb Spaulding, however, in recent months has been turning the office into a change agent of sorts, leveraging the \$3 billion in pension investments to stop companies from investing in Sudan, encourage companies to adopt policies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as well as diverting some

money to be invested in Vermont projects rather than top flight companies headquartered elsewhere.

This week, Spaulding announced that a new pension fund program is in the works designed to support economic and community development in Vermont, and he is soliciting proposals that he hopes will generate investments in the areas of affordable housing, energy efficiency, venture capital, and timber management.

Spaulding said the pension funds will not make direct investments into a project, rather those decisions will be made by

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heads right to the water supply for the town of Florence,” said Bob DeMarco, a member of RCO.

The waste, or tailings, created from the processing of marble was classified as “earth materials” when OMYA first opened in 1979. In 2002, OMYA had filled up the old quarries that they were using as waste storage, and applied for an Act 250 permit to build and use a new waste pit on top of the old quarries.

During the Act 250 process, Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Jeff Wennberg recalled that “the committee asked the state’s solid waste program whether a solid waste permit was required” due to the chemicals that were added to the marble slurry during processing. While OMYA thought that the waste was exempt, due to the earth materials clause, “I came to the conclusion that a permit was required in mid-2003,” said Wennberg.

“Here are 100,000 to 150,000 tons a year they are dumping,” said Bev Peterson, an RCO member. “That’s their waste. And one-half percent of that waste are chemicals, that’s 22 pounds of chemical per square foot.”

Those chemicals include known biocides (or pesticides) such as tall oil hydroxyethyl imidazoline and amines. Without knowing where all of those chemicals are going while sitting in unlined quarries, Peterson noted, “this is why we’re concerned about water.”

That concern about water prompted RCO to file a federal lawsuit through Vermont Law School’s Environmental Law Clinic in 2005. “There are two legal claims in this lawsuit,” said David Mears, assistant director

of the Environmental and Natural Resources Clinic and lead attorney for the case. “An open dumping claim and an imminent and substantial endangerment claim.” After OMYA’s waste was defined as solid waste, “the plant was dumping solid waste without a permit. The court just has to look at the Vermont statute,” he added.

Substantial endangerment is a bit harder to prove. “If there are waste disposal actions that cause a threat to human health or the environment that has slipped through regulation,” this gives citizens a way to bring it into court, said Mears.

The claim comes under the jurisdiction of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, which is federal legislation passed in 1976 designed to protect the environment, including waterways, from solid waste contamination through spills or through groundwater contamination.

In response to the suit, “OMYA is working through the legal process” according to Christine Harris, a spokeswoman for OMYA Vermont. Both groups are engaged in discovery, uncovering research and information that pertains to the trial.

Most recently, RCO tested the water on OMYA’s site and found arsenic in the water and at least two of the wells are over what the EPA has set as the limit, claimed Mears.

The find was a boon for RCO. “This new information about the arsenic is going to let this lawsuit go back to court,” said DeMarco “It’s [been] in limbo until we come up with the evidence.”

“That was bad news. We would have rather found out that there wasn’t a case, but the experts said that there is no question that the arsenic came from the tailings,” said

Mears.

Armed with this new information, RCO will continue building their case until June, and Mears expects that it will go to trial in the late summer or early fall.

OMYA’s reaction to the find, according to Harris, is that “arsenic is a naturally occurring element in the earth’s surface, including the state of Vermont. As with all environmental matters, OMYA takes the issue seriously and additional samples will be tested for a broad range of chemicals and metals, including arsenic.”

The citizens aren’t blaming OMYA for the waste issues. “This whole thing still boils down to the state and the town. The laws are already there. None of this should be taking place,” said Umberto Rosarto, another RCO member.

Mears agreed. “We are not supposed to use the public as guinea pigs; the laws were set up to require permits in advance to make sure that waste was monitored. OMYA could have done this from the beginning, and we wouldn’t have problems,” said Mears.

When OMYA opened its plant in Florence in 1979, well after Act 250 was adopted in 1970, the company complied with the Act 250 requirements for earth materials. Until they applied for a permit for the new waste disposal pit, they were following the guidelines outlined in their first permit. When their waste became classified as solid waste, everything changed.

To the residents, though, that doesn’t matter.

“The state should hold them accountable to the fact that they have introduced these things into their water on their site. It’s against the law. They have contaminated their groundwater on their site and that’s



against the law. That’s what we need to focus on,” said DeMarco. “It doesn’t really matter if we are finding it down in our well. That’s really irrelevant.”

Asked what they want to get out of the lawsuit, DeMarco said he wants people to be accountable and responsible for the contamination.

“We want the checks and balances in place. We want the concerns of the local citizens addressed and understood,” DeMarco said.

No one calls for OMYA to shut down and move away. Instead, they have hope.

“I think that they’re realizing that they have to be better citizens,” said DeMarco. “I think that they are beginning to understand that they actually have to have a conversation with people.”

OMYA’s North American operations are headquartered in Proctor. In 2004, more than 300 Vermonters were employed by the company, and it paid \$2.2 million in property taxes to the 25 towns in which it owns property. OMYA quarries Vermont white marble and grinds it into calcium carbonate for use in paper, paint, and plastics.

Currently the company is in-

involved in a study, required by the Legislature in 2005, to discern the environmental and human health impacts of calcium carbonate mining. Recently, the company completed the first phase of the study in which existing data was reviewed. The next phase, in which data is gathered to fill in existing gaps in information, has already begun. A final report to the Legislature is due in January 2008.

Harris noted, “We have worked closely with the Agency of Natural Resources and believe that is very important to reaching a final outcome that will be agreeable to neighbors, regulators, and OMYA.”

Although the company is working to define and lessen its environmental impacts, the members of RCO are not satisfied.

“Why should we not control the place we live in? That’s the question I have,” said DeMarco. “Why does OMYA control the place we live in? Why do they control our water, our air, our sound, our train tracks, the roads? I mean, they are in control of all of that stuff that is interacting with us all in various ways, all the time, every day of the week.”

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home for 25 years. Today, he still plays baseball in tournaments around the country, including the Vermont Men's Senior League, and teaches an annual class at Middlebury College about the Negro Baseball League.

With the the 2007 baseball season underway, the *Vermont Guardian* caught up with Spaceman to talk about the Red Sox, their new pitcher Daisuke "Dice-K" Matsuzaka, rising baseball ticket prices, and much more.

**VG:** So the Red Sox home opener is April 10 against the Seattle Mariners. How do they compare with the 2004 Red Sox that won the coveted World Series? And, do you also think "Dice-K" is the real deal?

**Lee:** Oh, he's the real deal from what I've seen so far. I mean I've only seen him throw three games, but all three of them have been gems. He's got good command and it forces Curt Schilling to be a better pitcher than he was the other night and if Josh Beckett can stay away from the home run ball and get his act together, you've got three great starters right there and if you get Jon Lester back, strong and healthy, that's four, and then you can throw Tim Wakefield in who can throw a lot of innings, and save your bullpen. There's no reason why they shouldn't have a great year.

**VG:** And how do the rest of the players stack up?

**Lee:** Well, [the other pitchers] Julian Tavarez is starting right now and he threw well at the end of last season and Joel Pinero I thought threw well. His arm looks healthy and gosh darn with the closer they've got [in Jonathan Papelbon], he's unbelievable. So, I'm pretty impressed. I just think they're going to need one more hitter in that lineup somewhere. I don't know about shortstop Julio Lugo or their lead-off guy Coco Crisp. Third baseman Mike Lowell should come on and have a pretty good season near the end, but catcher Jason Varitek is your big question mark. I worry about him. He just doesn't seem to have any bullets in his gun when he's at the plate.

**VG:** You're a baseball purist. A concern is that with ticket prices going up will the average Vermonter be able to attend Major League Baseball games? Can anything be done?

**Lee:** Well, the New York and Boston common man can't go to the ballpark anymore either. It's a day of the past I think. It costs way too much money and it's supply and demand and a very elitist



**B**ill "Spaceman" Lee is remembered for his often funny and irreverent quotes. Here are some of his classics:

"I think about the cosmic snowball theory. A few million years from now the sun will burn out and lose its gravitational pull. The Earth will turn into a giant snowball and be hurled through space. When that happens it won't matter if I get this guy out."

"I would change policy, bring back natural grass and nickel beer. Baseball is the belly button of our society. Straighten out baseball, and you straighten out the rest of the world."

"There's nothing in the world like the fatalism of the Red Sox fans, which has been bred into them for generations by that little green ballpark, and the wall, and by a team that keeps trying to win by hitting everything out of sight and just out-bombarding everyone else in the league. All this makes Boston fans a little crazy and I'm sorry for them."

"You take a team with twenty-five assholes and I'll show you a pennant. I'll show you the New York Yankees."

thing. I mean [look at the opening series with the Texas Rangers]. There were more Red Sox fans then there were Rangers fans. If you go to spring training games, it's more Red Sox fans selling out all these games. Something about landing the Mayflower on the east coast, everybody seems to have a claim to New England and thereby a lot of Red Sox fans. I think we're even blowing out New York fans now for some reason.

**VG:** Do you think Steinbrenner shelling out cash for all these big name ball players has anything to do with driving ticket prices up?

**Lee:** Oh, for sure. You buy your own TV network and now you're a conglomerate; you own everything and it's just tough. You can't get to the games. If people are waiting in line for season's tickets for people to die, it's almost like the [Green Bay] Packers. These two teams seem to be that way forever.

**VG:** I know you live in the Northeast Kingdom but what brought you there and what made you want to stay?

**Lee:** Oh, I came down from Montreal. I didn't come up. Most people think you come up to the Northeast Kingdom. I came down into the United States because of the Red Sox fantasy camp. John and Stuart Savage ran it and they were from Vermont, that's what brought me to Vermont the first time and one of the fantasy campers owned a farm up there and his barn collapsed and forced him to sell part of his property and I bought the 14 acres on top of the ridge and built a house up there and it's been there ever since. It's just the neatest little community in the world, Craftsbury.


**VG:** Now I understand every year Middlebury College invites you to co-teach a class about the Negro Leagues. Do you still do it?

**Lee:** Yep, still do. It's Karl Lindholm's. He brings me in and teaches a course on old-time baseball, the economics of baseball, and the race relations of baseball. I was the player rep and John Milner [of the Mets] said I was only white guy allowed on the back of the bus, so it's kind of very apropos and he'll bring me in on May 10 on the final day of class, have a little seminar and discuss the relationship of the past, present, and future of the game. It's just kind of a little perk for the students. That's why I think Middlebury is the greatest school on the face of the Earth.

**VG:** Now in terms of your baseball trips to Cuba, what are some of your favorite memories?

**Lee:** You could be driving the bus down and park it on the side of the road and have a pick-up game with the locals anytime after four o'clock. Everybody gets out of work and they go out and go out and play baseball on any little field. You can get a game anywhere in Cuba just by stopping the bus and that's something you can't do in the United States.

**VG:** You've written three books on baseball so far. Anymore on the way?

**Lee:** Yeah, I have a new one coming out this month called *Baseball Eccentrics: The Most Entertaining, Outrageous, and Unforgettable Characters in the Game* that's being published by Triumph Books and should be out any day now and they're going have me tour it around. 

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a fund manager.

There is also no minimum, or maximum, amount that the pension funds will see invested in each project. The state's pension funds hold about \$3 billion in assets, so Spaulding said even diverting 1 percent — or \$30 million — would have a positive impact in Vermont.

"What we're really hoping is that if we lay out our criteria and don't limit the field of what kind of asset classes we can invest in that the creative minds in Vermont will come up with proposals that we can consider," said Spaulding.

While Vermont's model is based on what is done in Massachusetts, New York, and in other states, Spaulding said he expects that some proposals might set in motion new ideas that can be funded by economically targeted

investment programs in other parts of the country.

"What might be different here is that there is enough innovation out there that we might see investment proposals that they haven't seen in other states and might get others around the country," said Spaulding.

In particular, Spaulding said he believes with all the talk about climate change and energy efficiency that someone might be able to come up with a proposal aimed at helping to make homes more energy efficient.

A program under consideration in the Legislature has faltered recently because lawmakers are hesitant to enact a surcharge, or tax, on heating fuels.

The state Department of Public Service has estimated that Vermonters could save more than \$450 million if they invested \$150

million over the next 10 years.

Spaulding decided to get the funds to adopt a set of policies and procedures — which they did last fall — after digesting a report on economically targeted investments (ETIs) conducted by Burlington policy analyst Doug Hoffer.

The report, issued in February 2004, outlined what guidelines other states have put in place, and what success stories, as well as cautionary tales, were to be had at the time.

"The report makes it abundantly clear that you have to have a double bottom line — you cannot simply have a higher risk and double return, rather you need to be able to provide the competitive market rate return and have the collateral benefits of investing that money in local projects," said Spaulding.

According to some estimates Hoffer's report found, state and local pension plans control about \$2.2 trillion in assets. And, at least 29 states have a public pension plan with some form of an ETI program. The combined assets invested in ETI programs are estimated to be 2.4 percent of the total — about \$55 billion. The most common ETI programs are residential housing and venture capital. Eighty-four percent of all ETI funds are invested in residential housing and other real estate.

Other states have made invest-

ments in venture capital funds, but Spaulding said he didn't believe that would be a solid option for Vermont to pursue because the state's returns from venture capital investments has been less than stellar.

About 10 years ago, the pension funds diverted several million dollars into three different venture funds. In two, the funds have recouped their investment, while the third may post a modest gain, but below market.

The first request for proposals window will be May 1-June 15. In order to be considered, proposals must, at a minimum:

- Target risk-adjusted, market-rate returns equivalent to or higher than other available investments in a similar asset class, and,
- Provide a substantial, direct, and measurable benefit to economic or community development within the state of Vermont.

This isn't the only current case of Vermont's large cash holdings at work in Vermont.

Spaulding has also been diverting some of the state's short-term investments and cash holdings — which can range from \$20 to \$300 million on any given day — into local Vermont banks.

His office hosts a monthly Internet bidding process, and is circulating about \$40 million through a series of local banks. Spaulding said the state is seeing better interest rate returns through

this process.


"We feel there are benefits to doing this because we believe the banks will recirculate the money in Vermont, and if we can do that and get a better return than that is a win-win for everybody," said Spaulding.

Beyond keeping the green in Vermont, Spaulding is also a founding member of the Investor Network on Climate Change, which is a collaboration of institutional investors who work to engage the investment community on "what kind of new risks the carbon-constrained world presents to companies and investors."

Vermont's first foray into this investor-led proxy was sponsoring a shareholder resolution at a recent annual meeting of Bed Bath & Beyond. Spaulding said the resolution called on the company to be more climate neutral.

"We didn't win that one," said Spaulding.

However, 65 investment groups and Merrill Lynch did place a call to Congress urging members to enact clear regulatory frameworks so businesses know what kinds of rules and regulations they are going to have to adhere to in the future.

This, said Spaulding, will especially give investors an idea of what companies are living up to the standards, and which ones might not be. 

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