



# The Wood Pile



Newsletter of the Smoky Joe Wood Chapter of the Society for American Baseball Research

Volume I Issue 8

Winter 2019

## Leading Off: A Message from the Chapter President



Greetings, Woodpilars!

We have been rather busy this fall! We had a chapter outing to Yankee Stadium in September. We had a chapter luncheon at Rein's in September as well. In October, we held a chapter breakfast, where we hosted Paul Parker, one of the leaders of the Colorado chapter. We held our fall general meeting at Middlesex Community College, my home campus, in November & attended the Southern New England meeting just after Thanksgiving, followed by dinner at Rein's Deli.

By the time this newsletter is out, we will have enjoyed our annual chapter luncheon at Portofino's Restaurant in Kensington. We are also working on a chapter book about Jeff Bagwell, whose Connecticut roots are strong. Karl is spearheading this valuable project.

Regarding the 2018 baseball season, Hearts to the Red Sox for winning 108 games, & then cruising through the playoffs against strong teams.

Kudos to DeGrom for pitching so well, yet getting little run support.

And congrats to the A's & Rays, who did well as small market teams.

Darts to an awful Orioles team, who lost over 100 games, & are stuck with Chris Davis's bad contract.

Darts as well to the MLB tendency for batters to whiff 200+ times in a season.

The impending Hall of Fame election should provoke lively conversation, fit for observing National SABR Day.

See you soon at one of our upcoming events!

Regards, Steve Krevisky, Chapter President

## Upcoming Events

### Chapter Events

[www.smokyjoewood.com/events](http://www.smokyjoewood.com/events)

January 2019 or February 2019  
Chapter Breakfast  
Date & Site to be determined  
More: Contact Steve Krevisky  
[SKrevisky@mxcc.commnet.edu](mailto:SKrevisky@mxcc.commnet.edu)

January 2019  
Strat-O-Matic Game Day  
Date & Site to be determined  
More: Contact Karl Cicitto  
[kcicitto@cox.net](mailto:kcicitto@cox.net)

March 2019 (Date TBD) 11 am  
Date & Site to be determined  
More: Contact Steve Krevisky  
[SKrevisky@mxcc.commnet.edu](mailto:SKrevisky@mxcc.commnet.edu)

*Watch for emails from Steve Krevisky for details on our chapter plans.*

### National Events

January 26, 2019  
9th Annual SABR Day  
Multiple sites  
[sabr.org/sabrday](http://sabr.org/sabrday)

March 8-10, 2019  
SABR Analytics Conference  
Phoenix, AZ  
[sabr.org/analytics](http://sabr.org/analytics)

April 26-27, 2019  
19th Century Base Ball Conference  
Cooperstown, NY  
[sabr.org/ivor-campbell19C](http://sabr.org/ivor-campbell19C)

June 26-30, 2019  
SABR National Convention  
Manchester Grand Hyatt  
San Diego, CA  
[sabr.org/convention](http://sabr.org/convention)

*More information at [sabr.org/events](http://sabr.org/events)*

## New Chapter Members

Welcome to new members (since July 2018):

Kevin Mendoza, Stratford Prisco Panza, Milford  
Maggie Tarbox, Lebanon

## New York Yankee Game



More than twenty Connecticut SABR members, family & friends attended the chapter trip to Yankee Stadium on Saturday, Sept. 1. Steve K. secured excellent 200-level seats from which we saw Masahiro Tanaka pitch seven strong innings & Gleybar Torres hit a 2-run homerun. Final: Yankees 2, Tigers 1. Stay tuned for details about a chapter trip to see the Amazins at Citi Field in 2019.

## On the Web

Society for American Baseball Research: [sabr.org](http://sabr.org)  
Smoky Joe Wood Chapter: [smokyjoewood.com](http://smokyjoewood.com)

## Smoky Joe Wood Chapter Officers

Stephen Krevisky (President): [skrevisky@mxcc.commnet.edu](mailto:skrevisky@mxcc.commnet.edu)  
Alan Cohen (Vice President/Treasurer): [adc0317@comcast.net](mailto:adc0317@comcast.net)  
Stan Dziurgot (Membership Director): [stanyank7@yahoo.com](mailto:stanyank7@yahoo.com)  
Karl Cicitto (Communications Director): [kcicitto@cox.net](mailto:kcicitto@cox.net)

Members are welcome to submit articles, book reviews or other information that might be interesting to other chapter members. Please send information to Karl Cicitto at [kcicitto@cox.net](mailto:kcicitto@cox.net).

## A Night on the Town Lands the Men in Blue in Hot Water

By William J. Ryczek

*On the night of August 28, 1960, gamblers attempted to blackmail umpires Ed Runge & Bill McKinley to influence a future game. Bill Ryczek recounts the story & the calls the umps had to make.*

This article first appeared in [The National Pastime](#) in 2017.

Ed Runge was the patriarch of the only family to produce three generations of Major League umpires. He was an American League arbiter from 1954 through 1970, his son Paul worked in the National League from 1973 through 1997, & Paul's son Brian was a Major League umpire from 1999 through 2012.

In his day, Ed was considered one of the top umpires in the league, particularly behind the plate, where he was rated the best at calling balls & strikes by American League managers & coaches from 1959 to 1961. Runge had perhaps the largest strike zone in the Major Leagues, which endeared him to pitchers, but even the hitters appreciated his consistency. According to Jim Bouton in *Ball Four*, the only time Runge's strike zone changed was if a player did something to irritate him. If a hitter got on Runge's nerves, Bouton said, the strikes didn't have to be that good.

Bill McKinley—who, like his presidential namesake, was from Ohio—was an American League umpire from 1946 through 1965, known for being the target of the classic remark, “They shot the wrong McKinley,” which players would shout at him from the bench when he made a close call against their team. McKinley wanted to be a ballplayer, but after graduating from high school, he worked in his brother's meat market. After failing a minor league tryout, he went to one of the earliest umpire academies.

Runge & McKinley were on the same crew in 1960, & on Friday, August 26, they worked a twi-night doubleheader between the Orioles & Kansas City Athletics at Baltimore's Memorial Stadium. After the second game, the two men went to the Gaiety Supper Club, an establishment in a seedy area of the city known as “The Block” that offered much more than supper. It provided entertainment in the form of women then referred to as exotic dancers and now called strippers. Over drinks, Runge & McKinley made the acquaintance of two of the dancers. One of them, 24-year-old Helen Ela, known by the stage names of “Sherry” & “Kismet,” was an Egyptian belly dancer. The other was 21-year-old Mary Jane Spencer, also known as Valerie Spencer.

Before instant replay review was implemented in 2008, it had been discussed for several years. One of the concerns was the fear that cameras would embarrass the umpires by pointing out their mistakes. Never in the long history of umpiring, however, were any of them more embarrassed by a camera than Runge & McKinley on the night of August 28, 1960.

Their crew had moved to Washington by that time, & Runge worked the plate while McKinley was at second base in a one-sided game in which the Cleveland Indians beat the Senators 9–1. That evening, the two men reconnected with Ela & Spencer at a Hyattsville, Maryland, motel. They had been in the room no more than five minutes, barely enough time to tell the ladies about the Indians' Barry Latman's excellent pitching performance, when two



*Ed Runge was known as a pitcher's umpire during the estimated 4,500 games officiated in his career.*

*Source: [The Trading Card Database](#)*

men, 32-year-old Donald Anderson, who apparently was Spencer's fiancé, and 30-year-old Robert Waldron burst into the room, & one of them snapped a photograph of the four occupants. “See you in court,” he said, & the men left as quickly as they had entered.

Runge & McKinley, in a state of advanced panic, left immediately for their room at the Sheraton-Park Hotel in Washington, where they spent an agonizing night trying to figure out what to do. Going to the police would require an explanation of what they were doing in a hotel room with two strippers, but trying to cover up the incident might be worse if it became public. They decided to call the police.

The next evening, when the two men returned to their room, they found an envelope that had been slid under the door. It contained a copy of the incriminating photo & instructions to call a certain phone number. They did & were told that if they didn't pay \$5,000, Waldron & Anderson would sell the photos to a magazine & put an end to their umpiring career.

When Runge & McKinley said they didn't have \$5,000, they were told that the account would be settled if they paid \$3,000 and used their role as umpires to influence a game. When they said that was still too much, the two men offered to pay the umpires between \$1,000 & \$2,000 in return for influencing a game on which the blackmailers could win a wager. In 1953, when Waldron had been arrested for burglary, he gave his occupation as “gambler,” & fixing games may have been his intention from the start.

The police, of course, were aware of the negotiations & told the umpires to arrange a meeting with the extortionists at 1:00 a.m. at Baltimore's Friendship Airport. One of the detectives told Runge, “When you meet them, I want you to act scared & broke.” “I'll tell you something,” Runge replied, “I am scared, & I am broke.”

Waldron & Anderson showed up as agreed, not suspecting that the two men had gone to the police. They were gambling that the umpires would rather deal with them than risk the embarrassment of public exposure, & they lost. When they arrived & said enough to incriminate themselves, state police detectives emerged from the shadows & took the two men into custody.

On September 6, Runge testified before Magistrate J. Nelson Clark, & the testimony was sufficient for Clark to order the two men & Spencer to go before a grand jury. Ela, who apparently was not in on the plot, was not charged.

*“Hot Water” continued on Page 10*

## Missed Swings

By Alan Cohen

Missed swings refers to swings taken by Josh Gibson, James “Cool Papa” Bell, Oscar Charleston, & others who played baseball in the Negro Leagues when Major League Baseball was closed to many talented players who happened to have made the mistake of being born with black skin.

The full story of the accomplishments of these players will never be known. Negro League statistics were not fully maintained. One can only guess the home run achievements of Josh Gibson. According to various sources, approximately 500 games over a 17-year span were documented & in those games, he hit approximately 115 homers. Speculation is all we have. Gibson died in 1946.

But for one day each season the swings of the great black players were documented for all to see. Beginning in 1933 the East-West Game featured All-Star lineups. It was the brainchild of Gus Greenlee who owned the Pittsburgh Crawfords. Others involved in launch of the enterprise were owner King Cole of the Chicago American Giants, writer Fay Young of the *Chicago Defender*, & writers Bill Nunn, Chester Washington, John Clark & Roy Sparrow of the *Pittsburgh Courier*.

The wall between Negro League baseball & Organized Baseball was insurmountable & scant attention was paid to the exploits of the Black stars in the predominantly white mainstream press. But the games went on & ultimately the players would get their due recognition. Ten players from the 1933 game went into the Hall of Fame, as did the East manager Pop Lloyd.

The years have been kind to the memories of many of the participants in these games with more than 20 enshrined at Cooperstown, but others have escaped long-term fame. Jim West is one such forgotten player. He played for the Washington Elites was batting .419 on the eve of the 1936 game.

In 1937, the West Squad included pitcher Hilton Smith. Buck Leonard was on the East Squad and the top vote getters that year were Mule Suttles of the East & Turkey Stearns of the West. Suttles, then with the Newark Eagles, was accompanied by teammates Ray Dandridge & Willie Wells. Each of these players is enshrined at Cooperstown, although none ever played in the major leagues.

In 1941, catcher Roy Campanella of the Baltimore Elite Giants & infielder Monte Irvin of the Newark Eagles were in the forefront as the East broke open the game with a six-run fourth inning. In 1943, a record crowd of 51,723 saw Satchel Paige in his first East-West starting appearance hold the East hitless and scoreless in the first three innings (the only batter to reach was Josh Gibson on a walk) as the West won the game 2-1.

On the eve of the 1945 East-West Game, Philip J. Schupler, a New York State Assemblyman, wrote a letter to the Dodgers. The Assemblyman wrote that there were many talented & able Negro ball players available who would give the Dodgers a pennant. Eight days after this letter appeared in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, the 1945 East-West Game was played. At shortstop for the West squad was Jackie Robinson of the Kansas City Monarchs.



On August 24, 1946, the Monarchs were in Chicago. Clyde Sukeforth of the Dodgers introduced himself to Robinson. The following Tuesday, Robinson was in Brooklyn meeting with Branch Rickey. The signing of Robinson was announced in October.

By the time the 1946 game, only five black players had been signed to play in organized baseball, & the squads on August 18, 1946 were brimming with talent. Against a formidable East lineup that included Josh Gibson (in his last East-West Game), Buck Leonard, & future big leaguers Larry Doby & Monte Irvin, the West prevailed 4-1. New faces were on the teams that year, most notably Orestes “Minnie” Minoso of the New York Cubans.

By 1948, the Negro Leagues were beginning their decline. However, there was still great talent on exhibit. The West won the game 3-0 & the East was limited to three hits, one by Junior Gilliam, who later became a fixture with the Brooklyn and Los Angeles Dodgers.

In 1953, Indianapolis & Birmingham supplied the East players & from Kansas City & Memphis came the West team. The legends were gone, but one talented player was just breaking in. Ernie Banks was hitting a fantastic .385 for Kansas City. League president J. B. Martin was sure that Banks “won’t be in our league much longer.” A month and four days after appearing in the August 13 game, Banks made his major-league debut Chicago’s other big-league park.

One can only guess the records that would have been set by players such as Paige, Irvin, Campanella had they spent their entire careers in the big leagues & not had so many “missed” swings.

## Bench, Doolittle Cop Feller Valor

By Doug Kern



"Intersections" was the common theme of the 6th annual Bob Feller Act of Valor Awards, held Monday, December 3, at the U.S. Navy Memorial in Washington. The awards celebrate the unique combination of baseball & military service, embodied by Feller, by honoring one current MLB player & one Hall of Famer for their dedication to military causes, & also several current Navy and Marine service members for meritorious contributions within their unit. After breaking strikeout records as a 17-year-old in 1939, & throwing a no-hitter on Opening Day 1940, Feller became the first active player to enlist following the attack on Pearl Harbor, giving up possibly his best baseball years in order to serve the Navy as a Chief Petty Officer. Feller was often quoted as saying the greatest win of his career was World War II.

The 2018 recipient from among the Hall of Famers was Johnny Bench, who cited several intersections between baseball & the military within his own family. In addition to his own six years spent in the Army Reserve Engineering Corps (in which teammate Pete Rose also served), Bench's brother served four years in Germany. Their father, whose dream had been to become a major-league catcher, served eight years in Italy & North Africa, having to pass down his own dream to his three sons (& eventually live it through Johnny). The younger Bench was involved in a number of USO shows in his playing days, including a Bob Hope tour of Vietnam; made additional visits to the troops during Operation Desert Storm; & remains a major supporter of the "Hope for the Warriors" project which aims to enhance the lives of current service members returning from Iraq & Afghanistan. In accepting the award, Bench quipped that his travel team once beat an undefeated opponent in the season championship; asked why the kids on the other team were crying, his father replied, "Because they haven't learned how to lose yet. Now let's go get a cheeseburger."

In presenting the 2018 "active player" award to Nationals reliever Sean Doolittle, Under Secretary of the Navy Thomas Modly also relied heavily on his own unique intersections. Modly grew up in Cleveland, remains an Indians fan, & his wife was raised not far from Feller's hometown of Van Meter, Iowa. Each day at the

Pentagon he passes a picture of Sean's cousin Jimmy Doolittle, namesake of the "Doolittle Raid" on Japan in 1942; Sean's father was also an Air Force veteran who received a bronze star for missions in the Balkans & Persian Gulf.

While with the Athletics, Doolittle launched the "Freedom Alliance", supporting veterans of the U.S. operation in Somalia; he & wife Eireann are also heavily involved in "Operation Finally Home" which builds or modifies houses for returning disabled veterans. He also makes many visits to the Walter Reed Medical Center, & is a longtime supporter of the National World War II Memorial. Saying that he was very honored to be associated with Feller's legacy, Doolittle joked that "I'll never be able to accomplish what he accomplished on a baseball field, so this is kind of my Hall of Fame." Adding that the presentation of the colors at a sporting event "may be the only [service members] that some people ever see", he noted that sports have "a special obligation to honor the military" & called for MLB & other leagues to continue to raise awareness.

The Chief Petty Officer honored as carrying on the Feller legacy was Shawn Wingle, a 13-year Navy veteran who has served with distinction on the USS *George Washington* & USS *Abraham Lincoln*, responsible for the safe handling of all ordnance. He is also the *Lincoln's* drug & alcohol program advisor. Wingle will be coming ashore this winter to take a position at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis. Other distinguished guests included former Secretaries of the Navy John Dalton & Ray Mabus; Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Ron Green, who presented the Jerry Coleman Award for USMC service to Gunnery Sergeant Jonathon Rose; the Naval Academy baseball team; & two of Feller's grandchildren.

Previous baseball honorees have included Yogi Berra, George Brett, Rod Carew, Tommy Lasorda, Jonathan Lucroy, Darren O'Day, Tom Seaver, Nick Swisher, Justin Verlander, & Brad Ziegler. More information is available at [www.actofvaloraward.org](http://www.actofvaloraward.org).





## Five Ballparks in Five Days

By Ray Sikora

My son & I completed a five ballparks in five days road trip in mid September.

Our trip began with uncertainty as Hurricane Florence storm remnants traveled up the East Coast. Pouring rain greeted us in Philadelphia. After eating Philly Cheesesteaks at Campo's, our Uber driver warned us that the game would be cancelled. Luckily, he was wrong. The rain stopped while we toured Liberty Hall & saw the Liberty Bell prior to the game. When we arrived at Citizens Bank Park, the sun was out & we stayed dry throughout the night.

The game was initially a pitcher's duel between the two starters. Despite Aaron Nola's nine strikeouts in 5.2 innings, he was outmatched by Stephen Matz, who pitched five scoreless innings & hit a solo HR off Nola. Up 2-0 in the bottom of the 6<sup>th</sup>, the Mets bullpen allowed five straight batters to reach, including a three-run HR that put the Phillies up 5-2, which ended up being the final score.

Next day, on the road to Pittsburgh, we stopped at Gettysburg National Park. We walked several battlefields & stood where Lincoln gave the Gettysburg address. Once we arrived in Pittsburgh, we parked in a garage across the river from PNC Park, incidentally where the first Jack Reacher movie was filmed in 2012.

The game was a pitcher's duel between Chris Archer & Heath Fillmyer, who each went seven innings. The Pirates took a 1-0 lead in the second on a sacrifice fly, & the Royals tied it in the top of the third when Adalberto Mondesi, Raul's son, hit a HR. The final run in the game was a solo HR by Adam Frazier in the 5<sup>th</sup>, putting the Pirates up 2-1. For dinner we devoured the Primanti Brothers sandwich, with Capicola ham, tomatoes, coleslaw & French fries overstuffed into white bread. We also met a Pirates fan who has visited all MLB parks twice & has been to nearly 50 different MLB parks over the last 35 years.

Our afternoon in the Detroit area the next day included a stop to the Henry Ford museum. We saw numerous exhibits & displays of both Ford automotive history & other American history events. We saw our 1<sup>st</sup> batting practice at Comerica Park. Unfortunately, we didn't catch anything camped out in right field. When we saw another fan catch a HR on the fly, we learned a valuable lesson: don't forget to bring our gloves on future trips.

The batting practice HRs were a preview of the seven HR fireworks we saw during the game, including another HR by Mondesi. The Royals stormed out to a 3-0 lead in the top of the first with a three-run HR by Jorge Bonafacio, but the Tigers quickly counterpunched with four first inning runs of their own including HRs by Nick Castellanos & Christian Stewart, the latter Detroit's first round pick in 2015. The HR was the first of Stewart's career, who had been called up just 11 days earlier after blasting 55 HRs in his previous two minor league seasons.

The Royals took the lead back in the top of the second on a two-run HR by Brian Goodwin, but Stewart struck again in the bottom of the second with a three-run HR to put the Tigers up 7-5. Detroit scored two more runs in the second to go up 9-5 and never looked



back, eventually winning 11-8. Stewart finished with 6 RBIs, the first time since 1908 that a Tigers player reached six RBIs in one of his first 11 games. From our great vantage point two rows behind home plate, we snacked on bacon on a stick & Chicken Shawarma nachos, featuring hummus, garlic sauce, shredded chicken, lettuce & tomatoes atop freshly baked pita chips.

We stuck around Detroit Friday morning for a tour of the Ford Rouge plant, which included the assembly line where they build the F-150 trucks. We arrived at Progressive Field as the rain was just ending, preserving a Cy Young matchup between Chris Sale & Trevor Bauer. The Cleveland ace was making his first start since getting hit by a line drive on August 11<sup>th</sup>. We made sure to catch the eccentric Bauer's one of a kind long-toss warmup, which included throws with ease from deep right center field to the left field line.

Bauer lasted just 1.1 innings after hitting 34 pitches. Sale was also on a limited pitch count but still struck out seven batters in just 3.1 innings of work. The Red Sox, who rested nearly all their starters after having clinched the division the night before, were down 2-1 after the fourth inning ended, with the lone run by a Sam Travis HR, the first of his major league career. After a Rafael Devers HR in the 6<sup>th</sup> inning, the Sox put up four runs in the top of the seventh on six hits to go up 6-4. The Sox added an insurance run for closer Craig Kimbrel with Tzu-Wei Lin's first major league HR, & Kimbrel closed out the 7-5 win.

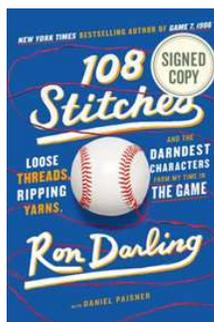
During the game we had the most unique food yet, the Happy Dog Slider Dog, a hot dog topped with bacon, mac & cheese, and fruit loops. Some local fans sitting near us weren't even aware of this "delicacy". We also found out after we got back home that we made the NESN Red Sox telecast a number of times during Sale's start due to our seats four rows back on the third base side.

We set off for DC Saturday morning but couldn't enter Nationals Park until the 2<sup>nd</sup> inning after the 4pm 1<sup>st</sup> pitch. The stadium was packed, as locals told us this was the first dry day in weeks. Fans with makeup passes from previous rainouts flooded the gates. The game was one sided, as the Nationals shut out the Mets 6-0 behind five scoreless innings from Austin Voth & a three-run HR by Matt Wieters.

*"Road Trip" continued on Page 10*

## Upcoming Baseball Book Releases

Compiled By Karl Ciccitto (Source: bn.com)



### 108 Stitches

(April 2, 2019) by Ron Darling

In *108 Stitches*, Ron Darling offers his own take on the "six degrees of separation" game & knits together a collection of wild, wise, & wistful stories reflecting the full arc of a life in & around our national pastime. Darling has played with or reported on just about everybody who has put on a uniform since 1983, & they in turn have played with or reported on just about everybody who put on a uniform in a previous generation. Through relationships with baseball legends on & off the field, like Yale coach Smoky Joe Wood, Willie Mays, Bart Giamatti, Tom Seaver & Mickey Mantle, Darling's reminiscences reach all the way back to Babe Ruth & other turn-of-the-century greats. Like the 108 stitches on a baseball, Darling's experiences are interwoven with every athlete who has ever played, every coach or manager who ever sat in a dugout, & with every fan who ever played hooky from work or school to sit in the bleachers for a day game.

### For the Good of the Game

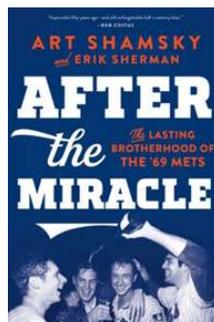
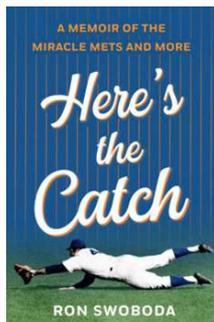
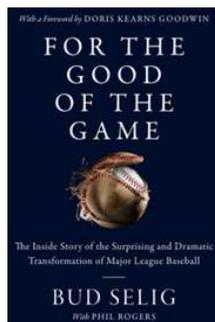
(July 9, 2019) by Bud Selig

In this enlightening & surprising book, Selig goes inside the most difficult decisions & moments of his career, looking at how he worked to balance baseball's storied history with the pressures of the twenty-first century to ensure its future. Part baseball story, part business saga, & part memoir, *For the Good of the Game* chronicles Selig's career, takes fans inside locker rooms and board rooms, & offers an intimate, fascinating account of the frequently messy process involved in transforming an American institution. Featuring an all-star lineup of the biggest names from the last forty years of baseball, Selig recalls the vital games, private moments, & tense conversations he's shared with Hall of Fame players & managers & the contentious calls he's made. He also speaks candidly about hot-button issues like the steroid scandal that threatened to destroy the game, telling his side of the story in full & for the first time.

### Here's the Catch: A Memoir of the Miracle Mets and More

(June 25, 2019) by Ron Swoboda

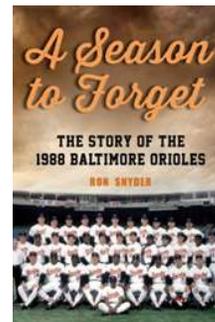
Swoboda is in the middle of writing his memoir, set to be released for the 50th anniversary of the Miracle Mets. Its working title, of course, is *Here's the Catch*. "The idea is a little double entendre, that here's the catch, referencing the catch, with the idea that there's a little bit more to the story," he (Swoboda) said. So...it's official. In this, the Big Nickel anniversary of the most Amazin' shocker in baseball history, there will be a new Mets book by Swoboda.



### After the Miracle

(March 19, 2019) by Art Shamsky and Erik Sherman

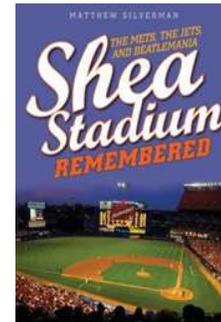
The New York Mets franchise began in 1962 & the team finished in last place nearly every year. When the 1969 season began, fans weren't expecting much from "the Lovable Losers." But as the season progressed, the Mets inched closer to first place & then eventually clinched the National League pennant. They were underdogs against the formidable Baltimore Orioles, but beat them in five games to become world champions. No one had predicted it. In fact, fans could hardly believe it happened. Suddenly they were "the Miracle Mets." The book is the reminiscing of Shamsky, Tom Seaver, Jerry Koosman, Ron Swoboda and Buddy Harrelson.



### A Season to Forget

(April 2, 2019) by Ronald Snyder

The Orioles were a model franchise thanks to its "Orioles Way" approach to building a franchise through a strong farm system. But five years after Cal Ripken, Jr. caught the final out to clinch the Orioles World Series victory over the Philadelphia Phillies, the franchise was in disarray. From not understanding how to utilize free agency to having their once famed farm system dry up of talent, the once-proud franchise was spiraling downward. The 1988 team opened the season 0-21, shattering the record for futility to start a season by eight games. They consistently found different ways to lose each night to the point that President Ronald Reagan sent a message of support to the lovable losers from Charm City.



### Shea Stadium Remembered

(January 15, 2019) by Matthew Silverman

Few remember that Shea Stadium & the Mets baseball club itself arose out of a dispute between two oversized egos: New York City official Robert Moses & Brooklyn Dodgers owner Walter O'Malley. O'Malley wanted complete control over a new stadium & all of its concessions in Brooklyn, Moses insisted that the stadium be built by the city in Queens & leased to the Dodgers. The impasse led to the Dodgers following the Giants out to the West Coast. With now no National League team in the New York area, the National League office awarded a new franchise to the city in 1960 on condition that it fund & build a new stadium, which the Mets (& later the AFL Jets) would lease. The stadium was named in honor of William Shea, the person most responsible for returning National League baseball to New York. By the time of its demolition in 2008, the Mets had played more games at Shea than the Dodgers had ever played at Ebbets Field, & the stadium had hosted seven National League Championship Series, four World Series, three Jets playoff games, & the American Football League Championship game in 1968.

## A Californian's Tribute to President George H. W. Bush

By Michael Ego

The game of baseball has been unable to determine definitively its birthplace & time. Many people thought that Abner Doubleday founded it in 1839 in Cooperstown, NY (his hometown), but historians proved this assertion to be false. Others have cited that in 1845 Alexander Cartwright was the founder of modern American baseball, at Elysian Fields in Hoboken, N.J. Regardless of its origin, President George H.W. Bush's legacy in baseball made it look like he created America's pastime in his backyard growing up in Greenwich. George H.W. Bush did not care about its origin. He loved the game of baseball.

Angelinos in California felt we were on top of the baseball world in 1989. The Dodgers had captured the 1988 World Series title, with players named Orel Hershiser, Fernando Valenzuela, Mike Scioscia, & Kirk Gibson on the Dodgers squad. Yet, the buzz in 1989 was about the 41<sup>st</sup> President of the United States, who had a background of being a collegiate player at Yale & photographed with the immortal Babe Ruth. Wow – that would impress any baseball fan during those days.

During my early days in Los Angeles, I did not have a positive impression about politicians – still stung by the days of President Richard Nixon in the White House. When President George H.W. Bush became the President of the United States in 1989, it was refreshing to see someone emerge from politics as believable & caring about the welfare of our nation. He restored faith & trust in American government & politics during a difficult period in America. In addition, of course, the bonus was that he was a baseball geek.

One notable act that I will always remember occurred on October 9, 1991, when President George H.W. Bush signed letters of formal apology & checks from the United States government issued to each of the living survivors of the internment camps. The U.S. Government sent them to over 88,000 survivors who were Japanese Americans incarcerated in internment camps during World War II, & to compensate them with a payment for monies they may have lost due to relocation. His action recognizes that the U.S. Government did serious injustices to Japanese Americans during World War II. My late father received a letter & check, & displayed it at our home, & I recall that vivid bittersweet moment even today.

The internment camps existed from 1942 to 1946. President Bush's letter provides an understanding on how the nation's thinking had changed in 1991 on this issue. Here is the content of the letter:

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

“A monetary sum and words alone cannot restore lost years or erase painful memories; neither can they fully convey our Nation's resolve to rectify injustice and to uphold the rights of individuals. We can never fully right the wrongs of the past. But we can take a clear stand for justice and recognize that serious injustices were done to Japanese Americans during World War II.

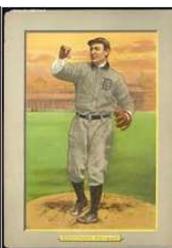
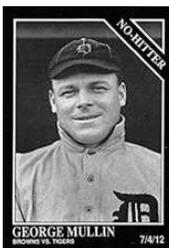
In enacting a law calling for restitution and offering a sincere apology, your fellow Americans have, in a very real sense, renewed their traditional commitment to the ideals of freedom, equality, and justice. You and your family have our best wishes for the future.”

Sincerely,  
George Bush

*Michael M. Ego is a Professor of Human Development & Family Studies & Asian American Studies at the University of Connecticut.*

## Cliff's Notes

By Cliff Blau



On page 14 of the August 2018 Wood Pile, it states that Wilbur Cooper is one of only two hurlers to pitch 3,000 innings and have a sub-3.00 ERA & NOT be in the HOF. Cliff's note to the Editor was as follows: There are a lot more than 2 pitchers with over 3000 innings & a sub-3.00 ERA who aren't in the Hall of Fame. I think there is a missing qualifier, such as pitched after 1920.

Fact check: Cliff is right. A review of the top 100 IP leaders shows that in addition to Cooper, Non-HOF'ers Bobby Matthews, Jack Powell, Jim McCormick, George Mullin, Will White, Jim Whitney & Charlie Buffinton all pitched 3,000+ innings & had a sub-3.00 ERA. Only Powell & Murray pitched after 1892 & both pitched well into the new century. Powell threw his last MLB egg in 1912 & Murray his in 1915.

On page 17 of the same issue, the answer to the following trivia question is given: What Detroit pitcher won 2 games in the 1909 World Series? The answer given was Bill Donovan. Cliff's note was as follows: It was George Mullin, not Bill Donovan, who had 2 pitching wins for the Tigers in the 1909 WS. Also, Bill Viridon's last name is misspelled.

Fact check: Cliff is correct. Mullin went 2-1 & Donovan was 1-1 in the Series that year. Mullin also registered a superb 0.969 WHIP in four Series games & 32 IP. Nice! And, yes....Verdin is not the same as Viridon when it comes to the Milkshake Man.

Hats off – and thank you -- to Mr. Blau.

## Frank Observations

By Michael Frank

### Cooperstown & Me

Over several trips to Cooperstown I watched it turn from a quiet little town to a commercial giant. Where there was once one or two stores selling baseball stuff, now there are so many. The Hall of Fame itself got much fancier, as did old Doubleday Field. And I went through different phases of life.

My first trip was summer 1969, the exact date lost to history, with some friends by car. We used the local lake (Glimmerglass) & stopped to see the then Oneonta Yankees play. Coach Cloyd Boyer talked to us.

On May 5, 1975 I was in the middle of a Greyhound Ameripass. At the time there were two daily busses each way between New York & Cooperstown. I went to the Red Sox on the same pass, from Cooperstown I went to Montreal & Niagara Falls. A large friendly dog attached itself to me, even waiting outside while I had a good meal at the Otesaga.

By Sept. 12, 1980, cousins had moved to Cortlandt, & they drove me down. At that time we participated in the Sports Phone Quickie Quiz as the Pension Connection, & did well. The return bus left from a deli, & I arranged to be on a phone there for the Friday afternoon final while a co-worker was at my press guides 200 miles away.

For Sept. 19, 1987, borrowing a client's wife's car from Syracuse, I picked up a lady friend from New York who was visiting her parents in Canajoharie, & we drove down, stopping at antique stores.

There was a gap. Finally, May 26, 2013, I went to the hockey research group convention in Utica, then connected to Cooperstown by bus. The bus stopped on a street just outside of town. I also visited James Fennimore Cooper's grave.

Despite the tediousness of many small towns on Route 28, I never understood why bus travel wasn't more popular.



## Connecticut Vintage Base Ball Association Launches

By Mike Dreimiller



The five vintage base ball teams in Connecticut - CT Bulldogs (Hartford), Lisbon Tunnelmen, Thames Base Ball Club (New London), Wethersfield Red Onion, & Woodstock Hilltoppers - have organized themselves as the CT Vintage Base Ball Association. They have a new web site at <http://ctvbba.org> which provides links to each team's web site, the complete 2019 schedule for all five teams, & a history of vintage base ball in Connecticut.

The CT vintage base ball season will kick off with Connecticut Day on May 4th at Cove Park in Wethersfield, CT. All five CT teams will be participating. The regular season will end on September 28 with the CT State Finals held at Woodstock Common in Woodstock, CT & will also feature all five CT teams.

The 2019 John P. Martin Memorial Northeast Historic All-Star Series will again be held at historic Muzzy Field in Bristol, CT on October 13. This year's all-star series featured teams 40 players from 23 teams & 8 states & even more participants are expected next year.

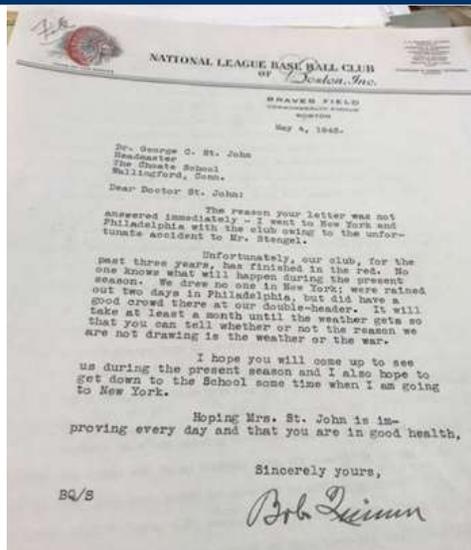
In addition to facing off against each other, some of the five teams will also be playing games against teams from MA, RI, NY, & ME & will be participating in the National Vintage Base Ball Festival in Gettysburg, PA, the New England Vintage Base Ball Festival in Cornish, ME, & the Hudson Valley invitational in Peekskill, NY.

All games are free admission. Most games are played using the rules of 1864 & 1865, & the CT Bulldogs also play the 1886 game against out-of-state opponents.

All of the teams are actively recruiting new players. Inquires sent to [ctvbba@gmail.com](mailto:ctvbba@gmail.com) will be received by all of the teams.

## 1943: Major Leagues Come to Wallingford and Casey Gets a Nickname

By Stan Dziurgot



*A cordial letter from the Braves to Choate which in passing mentions a rather famous accident involving Stengel.*

Every year baseball fans make their way to Florida or Arizona for spring training to see their favorite team get ready for the regular season. Training in warm & sunny climates it gives fans a reason to get out of the cold weather & see major league players up close in a smaller venue than a big league stadium.

In 1942 the Boston Braves had their spring training in Sanford, Florida. The United States had entered World War II just a couple of months earlier after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. By 1943 with the war now being fought on two fronts in Europe as well as the Pacific, things were changing in the country with many items being rationed to support the war effort; there were also travel restrictions. After meeting with Baseball Commissioner Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, Joseph B. Eastman from the Office of Defense Transportation told Landis that teams had to cut down on travel expenses. They were limited to trains north of the Potomac River & east of the Mississippi River. It was known as the Landis Eastman Line.

In 1943 the Brooklyn Dodgers trained at Bear Mountain, New York & the New York Giants went to Lakewood, New Jersey. The New York Yankees trained at Asbury Park, New Jersey while the Boston Red Sox were in Medford, Massachusetts at Tufts University. Bob Quinn, President of the Boston Braves considered Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts & also Amherst College.

At the urging of Victor Jones, a Choate School alumnus & Sports Editor of the Boston Globe, Quinn met with George C. St. John who was headmaster of Choate School which had opened in 1896 as an all boys prep school on Christian Street in Wallingford, CT. The town was north of New Haven & south of Hartford where the Braves had their AA farm team. An agreement was reached & the team reported to Wallingford on March 22<sup>nd</sup> which coincided with most of the Choate students being away on spring break. There were three outside baseball diamonds but because of cold weather many of the workouts took place indoors in a building known as the Winter-Ex or Winter Exercise Building which was large enough for infield practice. The building also had basketball courts, a running track & bowling lanes among its amenities.

The Braves manager in 1943 was Casey Stengel; one of the great characters of the game. Stengel, in his own words (Stengelese) said of the Choate facilities, "We'll be getting some excellent workouts in that there cage you just saw which is a honey in all my years to the present time, if I may be permitted to drop into that vernacular." He also pronounced the school's name as "Choke". Workouts were open to the public for 25 cents & all money donated to the Red Cross. Practice started at 9 am & had to end by 2:30 when the Choate Varsity Baseball Team (those who stayed on campus for Spring Break) would start their practice. Braves' players would sometime stay over & give instructions to the school team.

Many major leaguers were going into or had already been drafted into the military service. Some well known players still on the team in 1943 were Tommy Holmes, Tony Cuccinello, Eddie Joost, Clyde Kluttz, Phil Masi & Jim Tobin. One of the coaches was Benny Bengough, a catcher for the Yankees in the 1920's who played on the 1927 team. Future Hall of Fame pitcher Warren Spahn was already in the military. The team shared a locker room with the Choate athletes & also stayed in the student dorms during Spring Break called the Gables & East Cottage. The press would stay at the Edsal House.

Manager Stengel posed for a publicity photo wearing an academic cap & gown saying he was "lecturing his team". They started calling him "the Professor" which in his language came out "Perfessor" & the nick name stuck. Later while managing the New York Yankees he was referred to as the "Old Perfessor". Stengel also posed for a picture with a Choate Chemistry Professor named Edward Stengel who was referred to as Casey.

Some of the players would make the journey to the center of town & hang out at the bar at the Central Hotel on Center Street. Staying on campus could mean watching a movie shown by the Athletic Director of Choate students on a skiing trip. The Braves would play games against local teams, one being Yale University, & as in workouts all proceeds went to the Red Cross. One thing the players did enjoy were the meals at the school cafeteria. The chef, Bill Pudvah, struck up a friendship with Casey & would send him a fruitcake every Christmas. The Braves were apparently happy with the Choate facility & with travel restrictions still in place, they came back to Choate for spring training in 1944. Casey Stengel had been let go as Braves Manager during the 1943 season (they finished 6<sup>th</sup> in an 8 league team) so when they reported to Wallingford in 1944, Bob Coleman was the Skipper.

In 1945, with the war winding down, the team moved south to train at Georgetown University in Washington D.C. In 1946 with the war over, spring training was moved further south to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. In February 1976, part of the Winter-Ex building was destroyed in a fire but through the fund raising efforts of Worthington Johnson (Choate class of 1932) the building was repaired and re-opened in December 1976. It is now called the Worthington Johnson Athletic Center.

Choate was an all boys school, with famous alumni including John F. Kennedy & Adlai E Stevenson. The school merged with an all girl institution, Rosemary Hall, & now goes by the name Choate Rosemary Hall.

*"Wallingford" continued on Page 10*



## Hot Water (continued from Page 2)

In light of the negative publicity, Runge & McKinley were granted leaves of absence for the remainder of the 1960 season. Runge's wife stood by him. "They don't come any better than Ed," she said. "He's never done anything to be ashamed of in his life."

Both men returned to their duties in 1961, & their performance was as good as it had ever been. McKinley retired after the 1965 season when he reached the mandatory retirement age of 55, & Runge retired in 1970. McKinley umpired in the 1964 World Series & Runge in the 1967 classic.

By the time they retired, the 1960 indiscretion had been virtually forgotten. The speed with which the episode blew over was perhaps attributable to the journalistic mores of the era, when it was considered very important to protect the image of the game. It was also likely that, since many players, umpires, & probably writers frequented strip joints, they realized that it could have happened to them & empathized with the victims.

No games were influenced, & the integrity of the game—other than the public knowledge that a pair of umpires were caught with two strippers—was preserved. But for a few days in August & September of 1960, two American League umpires sweated more than they ever did under a mask & chest protector on the hottest summer day.

## Wallingford (continued from Page 9)

### Sources:

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3. [www.connecticuthistory.org](http://www.connecticuthistory.org)
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7. Choate News Coll card page 3 by Hugh MacColl
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9. Wallingford Magazine March/April 2017 "Spring Training at Choate"
10. Meriden Record Journal 04/01/2017 by Molly Cullahan "When Boston Braves held Spring Training in Wallingford"
11. Hartford Courant 01/17/1943 "Boston Braves pick Choate School in Wallingford for Spring Training Base" by Bill Lee
12. Choate Alumni Bulletin April 1943 excerpt from 01/17/1943 Boston Globe by Victor O. Jones also "Boston Braves at Choate" by H.L. Tinker
13. The Morning Record 10/02/1975 "A Class in Stengelese; Casey's Visit not Forgotten"
14. New Haven Register 04/02/1943 Column "Looking 'Em Over" by Daniel F. Mulvey
15. Choate Rosemary Hall – A History of the School. Manuscript by Tom Generous; Charles T. Wilson Jr. chair holder copyright 1997 by Choate Rosemary Hall pg. 102, 104, 105, 188-190

## Road Trip (continued from Page 5)

The most interesting part of the game was a bird that landed on the field, remember Mark "The Bird" Fidrych. He waddled around the pitcher's mound for two innings, & then made himself at home in the 3B/SS hole. After multiple attempts, Nationals 3B Anthony Rendon successfully shoed him away to the outfield, where he eventually flew out of the park. We enjoyed the scene while wolfing down a couple of Ben's Chili Bowl Half Smokes, a quarter pound hot dog with Ben's Chili Sauce.

The next morning, we left DC after going to the top of the Old Clock Tower, the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest point in Washington DC. It is now the highest viewing spot since the Washington Monument is closed for repairs.

Our trip back to CT included one last Philly cheesesteak at Geno's in Philadelphia. Overall, we had good weather, great seats at all the parks, & of course, plenty of filling (& unusual) ballpark eats. We are already planning a 7 parks road trip for 2019.

## Major League Players with Connecticut Connections (Final 2018 Season) *Source: www.mlb.com*

Player	Team	Conn. Connection	POS	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SAC	GIDP	AVG	OBP	SLG
Ahmed, Nick	ARZ	UConn	SS	153	516	61	121	33	5	16	70	42	109	6	15	0.234	0.290	0.411
Andreoli, John	SEA	UConn	OF	26	61	4	14	2	0	0	4	5	19	1	1	0.230	0.284	0.262
Davis, Rajai	DET	New London	OF	101	196	33	44	6	1	1	6	11	48	5	2	0.224	0.278	0.281
Pollock, A.J.	ARZ	Hebron	OF	113	413	61	106	21	5	21	65	33	100	8	6	0.257	0.316	0.484
Springer, George	HOU	New Britain	OF	140	544	102	144	26	0	22	71	64	122	3	12	0.265	0.356	0.468

Player	Team	Conn. Connection	POS	G	W	L	ERA	CG	SHO	SV	HLD	IP	H	ER	R	HR	BB	SO
Barlow, Scott	KC	New London	P	6	1	1	3.60	0	0	0	0	15.0	16	6	7	2	3	15
Barnes, Matt	BOS	Bethel	P	62	6	4	3.65	0	0	0	25	61.2	47	25	25	5	32	96
Harvey, Matt	CIN	Mystic	P	32	7	9	4.94	0	0	0	0	155.0	165	87	85	27	39	131
Hughes, Jared	CIN	Stamford	P	72	4	3	1.94	0	0	7	15	78.2	57	17	17	4	25	59
Leone, Dominic	STL	Norwich	P	29	1	2	4.50	0	0	0	5	24.0	27	12	12	3	11	26
Oberg, Scott	COL	Uconn	P	56	8	5	2.45	0	0	0	14	58.2	45	17	16	4	12	57
Scribner, Troy	ARZ	Washington Depot	P	1	0	1	4.91	0	0	0	0	3.2	4	2	2	0	6	4

## 1870 Game of the Century Radio Cranks Up November General Meeting

By Karl Ciccitto



Bill Ryczek (left) & Duke Goldman (right) presented at the Nov. 3 general meeting. Bill shared a 19<sup>th</sup> Century radio creation. Duke talked about "1933-1962: The Business Meetings of Negro League Baseball", for which he won the 2018 McFarland-SABR Research Award.

The 22 SABR members who gathered for the Fall General Meeting on November 3 at Middlesex Community College enjoyed a treat when they listened to a radio recreation of the June 14, 1870 game-of-the-century between the Cincinnati Red Stockings & Brooklyn Atlantics. Bill Ryczek, who helped conceive & create the broadcast, introduced the recording. Bill, John Thorn & Joanne Hurlburt were on-air talent for the broadcast.

After a historic 1869 season in which the undefeated Red Stockings went 57-0-1, the boys from Porkopolis ran their streak to 81 wins, according to the SABR Game Project, before the historic game versus the Atlantics. The two teams were studded with stars like Cincy's George & Harry Wright and Brooklyn's slugging Lipman Pike.

Cincy certainly was expected to win since they thrashed Brooklyn in 1869 by a score of 32-10. That score is relatively close compared to 94-7 & 100-2, the scores by which the Cincinnati nine dispatched Louisville & Memphis in May 1870. The Red Stockings were a base ball colossus.

With the score tied 5-5 after nine innings, Red Stockings manager Harry Wright declined the tie & asked that extra innings be played. His request was granted. Cincy went ahead 7-5 in the top of the eleventh but the Atlantics plated three in the bottom of that inning, winning 8-7, snapping the streak.

The radio recreation was outstanding. Bill Ryczek did an expert job of play-by-play. John Thorn contributed color commentary, with off-the-cuff back grounding of individual players & other baseball figures in attendance. Joanne Hurlburt was the on-the-field reporter who enthusiastically relayed the hissing & confusion that occurred at the end of the ninth. Between innings there were wonderfully imagined commercials for businesses like Al Reach's Baseball Emporium of Philadelphia.

The broadcast compressed the game into about 30 minutes, detailing the play-by-play in just four of the innings. They filled the gaps with summaries and concluded the action in the bottom of the eleventh when the Brooklyn used three hits & two errors by Cincinnati to take the game.

The broadcast is a pleasure to hear. If you would like it emailed

to you that can probably be arranged. Let me know at [kciccitto@cox.net](mailto:kciccitto@cox.net). All nine innings have been recorded and will be released at a later date.

Alan Cohen presented on the history of Negro barnstorming teams at Forbes Field. Alan reviewed the October 23, 1934 game between the Satchel Paige All Stars & the Dizzy Dean All Stars. Paige's team featured Josh Gibson, Judy Johnson, Cool Papa Bell & Oscar Charleston. Of note, the game stopped at one point when the umpire was hit with a mask & a rumble ensued. The game was resumed & completed & Paige got married after it.

The Negro barnstorming games at Forbes featured white & black players. On September 30, 1946, the Paige All Stars fielded Quincy Troupe, Sam Jethroe & Buck O'Neill while the Feller All Stars played Phil Rizzuto, Mickey Vernon, Charlie Keller & Bob Lemon.

On October 8, 1946, Forbes Field saw a glimpse of the future when the Jackie Robinson All Stars played the Major League All Stars. Ironically, Al Campanis was the shortstop on Robinson's integrated team. Jackie's nine also featured Larry Doby & Monte Irvin. The MLB team also played Al Gionfriddo, Hank Sauer & George Susce.

Duke Goldman presented on the business meetings of Negro League Baseball, a research subject for which Duke earned the 2018 McFarland-SABR Research Award. The Negro League business meetings were populated by sometimes shady, multi-talented and unique individuals. Here are some highlights:

- Gus Greenlee, owner of the Pittsburgh Crawfords, also operated a numbers game.
- Cum Posey, an inductee of both the Baseball & Basketball Hall of Fames, owned the Homestead Grays. He also owned the Pittsburgh Courier newspaper.
- Greenlee & Posey battled over players. Greenlee was accused of serious infractions like stealing players from other teams & then not paying them. His teams were also noted to simply not show up for games.
- Eddie Gottlieb & Abe Saperstein were also Negro League associates. Both were white booking agents who set up games & grossly surcharged the Negro team owners.
- Abe & Effa Manley owned the Newark Eagles. Abe also was a numbers operator. Effa emerged as the one who ran the baseball operation & is the only woman who has been inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. Her personal papers can be examined at the Newark Public Library.
- Tom Wilson and JB Martin were the respective Presidents of Negro National League and Negro American League. They negotiated with Happy Chandler to bring Negro League baseball into organized baseball after 1947.

## General Meeting (continued from Page 11)

- Dan Burley was a jazz pianist who also used the pen name Dan Deleighbur as a baseball journalist. He played on numerous radio & TV broadcasts with the likes of Ellington, Calloway & Ella, & edited many African-American publications including Ebony & Jet.

Last but not least, Duke talked about Wendell Smith, the best known of all those who attended the Negro League Business Meetings.

Steve Krevisky presented the case that Wilbur Cooper, ace of the Pirate pitching staff from 1912 to 1924 (plus his final two years with the Cubs & Tigers) deserves at the very least to be remembered -- something you can't say is really the case today.

Known as the Bear from Bearsville, PA, Cooper won 20 games four times. He won 19 games twice. He is the all time franchise win leader of the Pirates. He played for poor or mediocre teams & suffered the obscurity of hurling for teams that did not get him to a World Series. In fact, Wilbur missed the post season by one year, sent to the Cubs the year before the Bucs went to the 1925 series.

Cooper definitely won many games & lost quite a few too due to the lack of overall team talent. His career W/L percentage is .548 despite excellent pitching metrics.

Cooper reached a 4+ WAR in eight different seasons, suggesting he was the caliber of an 8x All Star. He had career PW (Pitcher Wins) of 19.7, ahead of Grimes, Hoyt, Bender, Pennock, Marquard & Haines.



## Japan Ball & Jolly Good Fun at Luncheon by Karl Cicitto



Twenty SABR members & family attended the December 22 Holiday Luncheon at Portofino's in Berlin. Mark Kanter, pictured above with Paul Hensler, talked about his trip to Japan. Larry Howard, a.k.a., Mr. Photogenic, donned his Yankee Santa cap & spread good cheer. (May Larry find even more starting pitching under his Bomber's tree.)

Mark & his wife spent 16 days in Japan, including 8 days with Japan Ball, a tour operated by Bob Bavasi. Bob is the son of Buzzy. Mark observed local baseball fetishes & culture while traveling 15,000+ miles in all. The bullet trains provided excellent service for some of the travel. Among cities visited were Osaka, Yokohama, Hiroshima & Tokyo.

Cultural differences between the MLB & Japanese game were many. Fans are handed a plastic trash bag when entering & a slavish dedication to cleaning up is observed. Japanese teams avoid embarrassing opponents in extra-inning tie games; they disdain aggressive strategies & "play it straight". There were almost no defensive shifts. Pitching velocity is lower in Japan & so are the number of home runs & strikeouts. Team spirit at Japanese games is akin to that of college athletics in the U.S. with the visiting teams fans occupying their own sections & playing musical instruments.

Mark saw many former MLB players in action including Vladimir Balentin, Netali Soto, Brandon Laird, Zelous Wheeler, Alfredo Despaigna, Casey McGeehee, Alex Guerrero, Mike Bolsinger & Koji Uehara.

Mark's presentation was followed by a vigorous Q & A session.

## Baseball Conjectures & Speculations

by Ezra Count

Answer these questions to the best of your imagination.

1. What are the soundest aspects of current Hall of Fame voting & what are the worst?
2. The regular season in major league baseball should be \_\_\_\_\_ games long.
3. The biggest contributions that sabermetrics has made to professional baseball are \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Select the best choice: Managing baseball teams is:  
a) an art      b) a science      c) a learned skill      d) a mystery
5. Give 5 baseball cliches that should be dropped.
6. Select the choices that best apply: Baseball broadcasters should be:  
a) partial      b) impartial      c) articulate      d) eloquent      e) folksy      f) dramatic  
g) humorous      h) colorful      i) sparing in their descriptions      j) other - specify.
7. What are the best ways that poorly-performing teams can maintain fan interest?
8. What lessons can baseball learn from pro football?



## 1938 Yanks, 2004 Sox, 1941 Bums Triumph at Strat-O-Matic Game Day

By Ray Sikora

At Runde Field in West Hartford, Connecticut on Saturday, September 8, 2018, the 1938 New York Yankees, managed by Stan Dziurgot defeated the 1938 Chicago Cubs, managed by Ray Sikora. Red Ruffing pitched 8 innings to get the win, with Johnny Murphy picking up the save. Bill Lee pitched 6 innings for the Cubs & took the loss.

The Yankees scored an unearned run in the bottom of the first inning. Frank Crosetti reached on an error by third baseman Stan Hack & then scored on a double by Bill Dickey. The Cubs tied the score in third inning, once again an unearned run. With one out, Billy Jurges reached on an error by center fielder Joe DiMaggio (quite an usual occurrence). Bill Lee struck out & Stan Hack redeemed himself for his error in the first inning by doubling in Jurges. The Yankees went ahead for good, with solo homers by Tommy Heinrich & Joe Gordon in the bottom of the fourth inning. The Cubs scored one in the top of the seventh, not enough to overcome the 1 run deficit, losing by a score of 3-2.

In the second game managed by Stan (Yankees) & Ray (Red Sox), the 2004 Boston Red Sox beat the 2004 New York Yankees 8-5 in 10 innings. Both pitchers, Pedro Martinez & Mike Mussina went the distance. Mussina had 9 strikeouts, but the Red Sox pounded out 13 hits, 4 in the bottom of the 10<sup>th</sup> to get the win. Martinez had 15 strikeouts but walked 9 Yankee batters, uncharacteristic for him.

The Yankees scored first in the top of the second. Gary Sheffield walked to start the inning. After consecutive walks to Bernie Williams & Hideki Matsui, Sheffield scored on a sacrifice fly by Jorge Posada. The Red Sox went ahead 2-1 in the bottom of the third inning, on doubles by Orlando Cabrera, Johnny Damon & Manny Ramirez. The Red Sox took a 2-run lead in the bottom of the fifth when Doug Mientkiewicz singled & later scored on a double by Mark Bellhorn. The Yankees tied the game a half inning later in the top of the 6<sup>th</sup>. Miguel Cairo & Deter Jeter both scored to even the game at 3-3, Cairo on a single by John Olerud & Jeter on a fielder's choice by Jason Giambi.

Consecutive doubles in the 7<sup>th</sup> by Bill Mueller & Mientkiewicz put the Red Sox up by 1. The Yankees once again tied the score in the top of the eighth. Three consecutive hits by Cairo, Jeter, & Olerud produced the tying run, but then Pedro struck out the next 3 batters to end the threat.

With nine innings over and the score tied at 4-4, the wild 10<sup>th</sup> inning began.

Cairo (4 for 5 in the game) led off with a single. After Jeter popped out, Olerud doubled in Cairo regaining the lead for the Yankees. After Giambi grounded out, Pedro walked Alex Rodriguez & Sheffield. Pedro recovered his control & struck out Williams to end the 10<sup>th</sup>. Yankees up by 1.



In the bottom of the 10<sup>th</sup>, Damon opened with a single, Bellhorn struck out & Ramirez singled. David Ortiz reached on a fielder choice, forcing Ramirez at second. With runners at the corners, Kevin Millar doubled home Damon to tie the score, Ortiz going to third. In a dramatic ending to a seesaw game, Jason Varitek took Mussina long with a walk off home run, propelling the Red Sox to 8-5 win over the Yankees.

One more game result, reported by Karl Ciccitto:

The '41 Yankees (Alan Cohen) & the '41 Dodgers (Karl) faced off in a one game reprise of the 1941 Series. Lefty Gomez was superb for the home team Yankees, going 8 innings, yielding just one run (unearned) & 4 hits – three of them to Medwick. Kirby Higbe was even better for the Bums. Hig went a full 9 innings, giving up three hits, no runs, & having his way with everyone in the Yankee lineup but DiMaggio, who reached three times with a double & two walks. The game reached the ninth inning with Brooklyn ahead 1-0 but three hits & a walk allowed by Ruffing in relief made the final Brooklyn 5, New York 0. A 3-RBI dinger by Medwick in the ninth was the capper.





## Opportunity Knocks for Writing Projects

Compiled by Karl Cicitto

SABR has published dozens of books and thousands of biographies and will continue to add to the canon of baseball history through the efforts of SABR members. Writing opportunities are abundant. First Timers are welcome. Here is some information on 5 writing projects and how to become involved.

### Team Ownership Histories Project

The SABR Baseball Biography Project and the SABR Business of Baseball Committee are teaming up to create a collection of the ownership histories of major league franchises. As they are completed, the histories will appear in the Business of Baseball newsletter and be posted permanently in a separate section on the BioProject web-site. If you are interested in doing a team's history, please contact Andy McCue ([amccue@sabr.org](mailto:amccue@sabr.org)), who is coordinating the project.

### Baseball Biography Project

The lofty goal is to write a high-quality journal-length biography of every player who ever played in the major leagues. 4,691 biographies have been written by 500+ SABR members as of December 29, 2018. Your subject can be anyone who ever played in the major leagues & has been retired for at least 5 years, or any manager, executive, umpire, scout, or broadcaster. In fact, we welcome your ideas for any subject who impacted the history of the game — someone from the Negro Leagues, the minor leagues, the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, and even Japan.

Web-site: [sabr.org/bioproject](http://sabr.org/bioproject)

Things you should know: [sabr.org/content/bioproject-resources](http://sabr.org/content/bioproject-resources)

Request an assignment: Lyle Spatz at [lspace@comcast.net](mailto:lspace@comcast.net)

### SABR Games Project

The SABR Baseball Games Project is a new initiative to research and write articles on major-league and Negro League regular, postseason and All-Star Games. These game accounts will complement Retrosheet and Baseball-Reference box scores as well as BioProject essays on the players involved. All games, regardless of their historical significance, are eligible to be written up.

Web-site: [sabr.org/gamesproject](http://sabr.org/gamesproject)

Things you should know: [sabr.org/content/sabr-games-project](http://sabr.org/content/sabr-games-project)

Request an assignment: Bruce Slutsky at [bruce@bruce Slutsky.com](mailto:bruce@bruce Slutsky.com)

### SABR Baseball Ballparks Project

We love ballparks and feel that each one deserves its own biography. Ballparks have a life of their own. Your job, as the ballpark's biographer, is to cover that life in detail, from birth to death.

Web-site: [sabr.org/bioproj/parks](http://sabr.org/bioproj/parks)

Request an assignment: James Forr at [jff110@hotmail.com](mailto:jff110@hotmail.com)

### SABR Book Projects

Biographers are needed for several books. Status of assignment availabilities changes daily. Please contact Bill Nowlin ([bnowlin@rounder.com](mailto:bnowlin@rounder.com)) to request an assignment.

## THE WOOD PILE

Newsletter of the Smoky Joe Wood Chapter  
of the Society for American Baseball Research



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Members are welcome to submit articles, book reviews or other information that might be interesting to other chapter members. Please send information to Karl Cicitto at [kcicitto@cox.net](mailto:kcicitto@cox.net).