

Society for American Baseball Research

BIBLIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

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Comments from the Chair

Andy McCue

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Elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter is the Committee's annual report, which is prepared for the convention program each year. It's been a productive year with solid newsletters from Skip McAfee, the continued fine work of Rich Arpi with *Current Baseball Publications*, the indexes we've been turning out for various books, the additions that Jim Lannen has been making to the Committee's Web page and, of course, The Baseball Index (TBI).

TBI is being used regularly by SABR members, the media, and other researchers. It is growing steadily. However, we can always use more volunteers. In fact, we need more volunteers. We can set you up with a program tailored to your interests (umpires, Negro Leagues, poetry, etc.) or we can get you going on some of the periodical runs that need to be indexed. Please contact me, or talk to me in Toronto, about this.

Included in this issue of the newsletter is something you could help us with: a list of books that we believe were published in 2003, but have not been indexed. If you have one of these books, go to <http://www.baseballindex.org/tbi.asp?a=frm> and fill out a form. It would probably be a good idea to contact me before you do that so I can send you a manual to help guide you through the form.

Please welcome new Committee members: **Peter Winske**, who lives in Florida and is, like me, interested in baseball fiction, especially juvenile fiction; **Greg Spira**, who lives in New York and is a book editor, including *Best Baseball Writing 200*; **Gabe Schechter**, who works at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and offers to help Committee members who may need something from the rare volumes in the Hall's library; **David Goss**, who lives in Indiana and does book reviews for *NINE*; **Tom Harkins**, who is a retired school librarian and Red Sox season-ticket holder; and **Angelo Louisa**, who is a Pirates fan, a history teacher, and very interested in the game's past.

Long-time Committee member Pete Peterson will be moving his "Writing Baseball" series to Kent State University Press, where it will be called "Writing Sports". Pete says the overwhelming majority of the "Writing Sports" series will still be about baseball, but the broader title will give him a chance to do a few other books as well. While working with Southern Illinois University Press, Pete was instrumental in reprinting the Putnam team histories with indexes provided by Committee members. To celebrate the move to Kent State, Pete says the press will publish the Indians and Reds Putnams next year, with the White Sox to follow in 2007. Bill Hugo did the Reds index, Bob Boynton the Indians index, and Bob McConnell the White Sox index.

The Kent State series will also have a treat for those of us interested in baseball fiction. Their 2007 lineup will include a previously unpublished baseball novel by James T. Farrell, inveterate White Sox fan and author of the Studs Lonigan series and *My*

Baseball Diary (1957). Pete tells me the novel is focused on the White Sox and deals with the Black Sox Scandal.

Speaking of the Black Sox, Potomac Books (formerly Brassey's and SABR's partner in publishing the AL and NL *Deadball Stars* books) will be publishing Gene Carney's book on the Black Sox early next year. They are looking for a volunteer from our Committee to do the index. The indexer will receive two free copies and acknowledgement in the book. If you're interested, please contact me via e-mail or speak to me at the convention.

McFarland has republished Ernest J. Lanigan's *Baseball Cyclopedia* (1922), with an index prepared by Roger Erickson. Trey Strecker completed the index for C.H. Claudy's *The Battle of Base-Ball* (1911), which McFarland will republish next year. Skip McAfee provided the index to Bob Luke's *Dean of Umpires: A Biography of Bill McGowan, 1896-1954*, recently published by McFarland.

I've included another interesting list in this issue of the newsletter. Several issues ago, Bobby Plapinger started a discussion of updating the various lists of "100 Best Baseball Books" or "Essential Baseball Library". In the April 2005 issue, SABR President Dick Beverage chipped in with his nominations. In this issue, it's Dick's list of biographies. I know Steve Milman is working on his own list, and I hope we can present it in the October 2005 newsletter. If any of you have lists of your own, or simply want to suggest changes in other people's lists, please chime in. I'd like to keep this discussion going.

I do hope to see all of you next month in Toronto. It promises to be an excellent convention. The hotel is about a three-block walk from the stadium and in the midst of the city's entertainment district. There are lots of restaurant choices within a few blocks and many book and record stores nearby. For those of you who can't make our Committee meeting (Saturday, August 6, at 3 p.m.), I'll give a report in the next newsletter.

Bibliography Committee Annual Report for 2005

Andy McCue
Committee Chair

The Bibliography Committee's major project, The Baseball Index (TBI), completed its third year of Internet availability. The site, www.baseballindex.org, became available on the Internet on May 27, 2002. During the past year, the database moved past the 210,000-record level. And, information from TBI is completely free.

When it opened, TBI contained about 175,000 books, articles, book sections, videos, art works, sound recordings and other items. The researcher may search it for references to a player, umpire, owner, or executive. It may be searched for terms, such as Baker Bowl or Cotton States League or Umpire Baiting or Changeups. More than 2000 separate terms are included as well as the names

of leagues, stadiums, and baseball groups. We have received more than 4000 visits per month since December 2004. In May 2005, we had risen to more than 6000 visits.

Joe Murphy, Steve Milman, and Brad Sullivan were major volunteers in cataloguing and providing new items for the database. New volunteer Tom Zocco began to make substantial contributions. TBI's inspiration and manager, Ted Hathaway, and Andy McCue, continue to oversee the project.

While TBI is our major effort, the Committee continues with other projects. The Committee was founded in 1983 by Frank Phelps and seeks to discover, organize, and provide information about books and other research materials that might be of interest to SABR members and other baseball researchers. The Committee currently has 82 members working on a variety of projects in addition to TBI.

Two long-time members continued to produce the Committee's two longest-running projects. Committee vice-chair Skip McAfee has edited the Committee's quarterly newsletter since 1988 and continues to make improvements. Book reviews from Terry Smith and other Committee members highlight the newsletter. The newsletter was converted to electronic distribution during the year.

Rich Arpi started his 18th year of researching and editing *Current Baseball Publications (CBP)*, the quarterly listing of baseball books and periodicals. The Committee has produced *CBP* since 1986; it also has been mounted on SABR's Web page to make it more accessible to all SABR members.

We are still seeking efficient ways to turn some of the Committee's older, paper-based research into Web-available documents. This is especially true of Frank Phelps' *The Index to The Sporting News Registers; 1940-1995* (1996), which is being worked on by Joel Dinda. Jim Lannen has continued to update and improve the cache of annual reports, newsletters, and *CBP* onto the SABR Web site; he is also working to expand the number of book reviews from our newsletter that are available electronically. He posted Joe Murphy's updated *Index to SABR Publications* as soon as it was ready earlier this year.

The Committee's project to provide indexes for baseball books published without them made slow progress during the year. Committee member Paul Cammarata is producing the index to the two-volume *Deadball Stars* series; that index will be published in the American League volume later this year. In the past year, Roger Erickson supplied the index for Ernest J. Lanigan's *Baseball Cyclopedia* (1922), recently republished by McFarland, and John Spalding provided Southern Illinois University Press with an index to the republication of Frederick G. Lieb's *The Baltimore Orioles* (1955).

Book Reviews

Leverett T. (Terry) Smith

North Carolina Wesleyan College, Rocky Mount, NC 27804

BOTTOM OF THE NINTH: Great Contemporary Baseball Short Stories.

John McNally, ed. Foreword by Richard Russo. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2003. 234 p. ISBN 0-8093-2505-5. \$18 (soft cover)

I've read the paperback of this one; there's also a cloth edition. It's a volume in the SIU Writing Baseball Series edited by Richard Peterson. There are 19 stories, in addition to the foreword, and an introduction by McNally. All but a few of the stories are genuinely contemporary, 17 published since 1980, the other two in the 1960s. Six were first published after the turn of the 21st century.

Russo's foreword praises baseball (p.xii) for being "like a book ... it's powerfully instructive. Baseball is also designed to induce

and embrace narrative. It's so slow, ... just leisurely; its plots and subplots unfold richly, like a good novel, which is why baseball has found a place in our literature that's unparalleled by any other sport." He continues (p.xiii): "Most of these stories are not *about* baseball, but baseball creeps into them. ... To read this anthology is to understand how deeply ingrained baseball is in our culture." For some reason, Russo chooses to denounce the sport of soccer, a sport he defines as "what happens when parents get their way" (p.xii), an attitude that strikes this baseball *and* soccer enthusiast as provincial.

McNally sticks to baseball in his introduction, and he's interested in short stories rather than novels. He begins by describing his own experience as a Cubs fan from the south side of Chicago, gives a brief history of baseball in American literature, mentioning Ring Lardner prominently but mostly listing book-length fiction. His anthology actually honors Lardner in that so many of the stories are first-person narratives in which the narrator's character becomes the chief interest, as occurs in Lardner's *You Know Me Al* (1914). Twelve of the 19 stories are first-person narratives, including the best of them (to my mind): Philip F. Deaver's "Infield," in which we learn about less happy aspects of small-town life.

Very few of the stories are concerned with major-league baseball, and they are less effective, being fictions. I was uneasy having the 1951 Phillies presented as a dismal team as they are in one story (actually, they were disappointing, finishing fifth after winning the National League pennant the year before). And I winced at mention of Willie Mays' poor play in the 1971 World Series (it was 1973). The best take place in small towns, amateur circumstances, or in the minds of their narrators, Chris Mazza's "Caught" a particularly shocking example. As McNally says (p.xix), the focus is often on "the peripheries, the edges, the *glimpses*. This is what I've always loved about Wrigley Field: you see so much out of the corner of your eye."

McNally chose just the right title for this anthology, *Bottom of the Ninth*. "In short story writing," he concludes (p.xxiii-xxiv), "the rule of thumb is that the closer to the *end* of the story that you can begin, the more intensity and immediacy you'll achieve—starting, as it were, in the bottom of the ninth." He asks us to take the "bottom of the ninth" metaphorically, as characters "face moments when the stakes are high and the time to act is now" (p.xxiv). He's chosen well.

TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY IN MUDVILLE: A Lifelong Passion for Baseball

Stephen J. Gould. Foreword by David Halberstam. New York: W.W. Norton, 2004. 360p. index, photographs throughout. ISBN 0-393-32557-1. \$14.95 (paperback edition)

After reading Alan Schwarz's account of Gould's ideas in *The Numbers Game* (2004), I realized this was the logical time to read Gould's book (originally published in 2003). Gould, famous as a paleontologist and popular writer on scientific subjects, calls himself one of "baseball's literary groupies", but he is more than that. The book is divided into four sections: "Reflections and Experience," mostly op-ed pieces from newspapers; "Heroes Large, Small, and Fallen," biographical sketches; "Nature, History, and Statistics as Meaning," extended essays, the book's most important section; and "Criticism," review essays.

Though Halberstam in his foreword portrays Gould as always a scientist, "a man on the job all the time", in the first two sections of the book, he's primarily Gould, the baseball fan. For some of us that may be the happiest part of the book, but for this reader—a National League fan who grew up near New York City at about the same time as Gould did—he is species Yankees fan, a natural enemy. But Gould isn't your ordinary Yankees fan (probably very few "Yankees fans" are stereotypical). Halberstam notes this quality (p.13): "Steve always rooted for the underdog. But not in baseball; the Yankees were rarely the underdog." Perhaps (as Gould

says) it's his 30 years of residence in Boston, but he also declares his love for the Red Sox. He writes (p.73): "After living in Boston for thirty years and holding season tickets in Fenway Park, the most captivating of all intimate bandboxes, how can I not love the Sox as well?" One has to wonder how Gould (who died in 2002) would have responded to the 2004 American League Championship Series. Beyond all this, readers will be startled (at least I was) to read about "my beloved Giants" (Gould's words) in an essay on Dusty Rhodes and the 1954 World Series (p.98).

There's a meeting with Roy Campanella that Gould describes in religious terms. Elsewhere, he described the condition of being a fan as "church—and nonbelievers cannot know the spirit" (p.74). "I met Roy Campanella at a university cocktail party several years ago," Gould writes (p.79). "Incredibly, for this wonderful man exceeded all others present by an order of magnitude in interest and achievement, he sat alone, talking with no one. So I walked over, still in the awe of remembered youth, and knelt by his wheelchair for the most memorable half hour of conversation in all my life. He wore a World Series ring on each finger of his left hand, but one exceeded all the others in size and brilliance. So I said to him: 'I know the year of that biggest ring. That must be for 1955, when you finally beat us.' And this great man simply replied with such heartfelt candor and pleasure: 'Yes, I am so proud.' And, at that moment, and forever, a little, but persistent, wound of my youth healed, and all shone bright and good." Few fans are as reverent as Gould shows himself here.

In the third section of the book—"Nature, History, and Statistics as Meaning"—Gould the scientist comes to the fore. It is the most substantial section of the book. This reader found it unusually challenging reading. One could do worse than beginning with the fifth essay of the section, "The Creation Myths of Cooperstown". There Gould states his perspective in contrast to others (p.203):

"Scientists often lament that so few people understand Darwin and the principles of biological evolution. But the problem goes deeper. Too few people are comfortable with evolutionary modes of explanation in any form. I do not know why we tend to think so fuzzily in this area, but one reason must reside in our social and psychic attraction to creation myths in preference to evolutionary stories—for creation myths, as noted before, identify heroes and sacred places, while evolutionary stories provide no palpable, particular thing as a symbol for reverence, worship, or patriotism. Still, we must remember—and an intellectual's most persistent and nagging responsibility lies in making this simple point over and over again, however noxious and bothersome we render ourselves thereby—that truth and desire, fact and comfort, have no necessary, or even preferred, correlation (so rejoice when they do coincide)."

As he says (p.182) in the essay on Joe DiMaggio's 56-game hitting streak: "Our error lies not in the perception of pattern but in automatically imbuing pattern with meaning, especially with meaning that can bring us comfort, or dispel confusion." The first essay in the third section, on the advantage of being left-handed, provides an example of the coincidence of fact and comfort.

Two other essays in the third section seem especially important. The first, "The Streak of Streaks," deals with DiMaggio's 56-game hitting streak from the unusual perspective of a statistician. He concludes (p.185-186): "Long streaks always are, and must be, a matter of extraordinary luck imposed upon great skill. Please don't make the vulgar mistake of thinking that Purcell or Tversky or I or anyone else would attribute a long streak to 'just luck'—as though everyone's chances are exactly the same, and streaks represent nothing more than the lucky atom that kept moving in one direction. Long hitting streaks happen to the greatest players—Sisler, Keeler, DiMaggio, Rose—because their general chance of getting a hit is so much higher than average."

In the second essay, "Why No One Hits .400 Anymore", Gould resolves the apparent contradiction between the rise of level of play and the absence of outstanding achievement. Gould shows

(p.159) why "the 'myth' of ancient heroes—the greater distance between average and best in the past—actually records the improvement of play through time."

The final section of the book comprises book reviews, mostly from the *New York Review of Books*, a journal that encourages full-blown essays in reviews mostly of multiple books. These reviews provide another platform for Gould's ideas. In the review-essay "Baseball and the Two Faces of Janus", Gould divides baseball writing into two categories: the hagiographic "tales of heroics" and "the Janus face of our daily lives". He places George Will's *Men at Work* (1990) in the second category and praises it. Then he lodges what he calls a "quibble with Will's overextension of his observations on baseball to a program for American rejuvenation in general" (p.266). There follows a liberal argument about the state of the nation that seeks to refute Will's conservative one.

There are many wonderful moments in the fourth section; for instance, this one-sentence summary of Marvin Miller's career as director of the Major League Players Association: "he forced an equitable distribution of funds available" (p.287). Finally, there is this reminiscence (p.253) of Paul Robeson's appeal for integration at a meeting of the owners and commissioner, offered in parenthesis in the course of a review of Jules Tygiel's *Baseball's Great Experiment* (1983): "My father often told me a story of Paul Robeson's in camera plea for integration before the annual meeting of baseball executives in the mid-1940s—where Dad, as a freelance stenographer, had been hired to record the secret proceedings for private use. Robeson, replete with flowing beard from his triumph, then under way, as Othello on Broadway, made a stirring statement that brought tears to my father's eyes. Robeson finished and left, and Kenesaw Mountain Landis moved on to the next item of business without a single word of discussion or commentary." This vivid memory is one of many kinds of interest that Gould's many miscellaneous essays provide. *Triumph and Tragedy in Mudville* is an important book for everyone from the most fanatical Yankees fan to the most scientific researcher.

Baseball Biographies: One Man's Opinion

Dick Beverage
SABR President

The Top Ten

Babe Ruth—Robert W. Creamer. *Babe*
Babe Ruth—Marshall Smelser. *The Life That Ruth Built*
Walter Johnson—Henry W. Thomas. *Walter Johnson*
Ty Cobb—Charles C. Alexander. *Ty Cobb*
John McGraw—Charles C. Alexander. *John McGraw*
Moe Berg—Nicholas Dawidoff. *The Catcher Was a Spy*
Hank Greenberg—Hank Greenberg. *The Story of My Life*
Ban Johnson—Eugene C. Murdock. *Ban Johnson*
Dizzy Dean—Robert Gregory. *Diz*
Leo Durocher—Gerald Eskenazi. *The Lip*

Well Worth Reading

Cy Young—Reed Browning. *Cy Young*
Hank Aaron—Hank Aaron. *I Had a Hammer*
Eddie Mathews—Eddie Mathews & Bob Buege. *Eddie Mathews*
Bobby Bragan—Bobby Bragan. *You Can't Hit the Ball ...*
Bill Veeck—Bill Veeck. *Veeck ... as in Wreck*
Rogers Hornsby—Charles C. Alexander. *Rogers Hornsby*
Honus Wagner—D. & J. DeValeria. *Honus Wagner*
Frank Frisch—Bob Broeg. *The Pilot Light ... Gas House Gang*
Casey Stengel—Robert W. Creamer. *Stengel*
Jackie Robinson—David Falkner. *Great Time Coming*
Bob Feller—John Sickels. *Bob Feller*

Tony Lucadello—Mark Winegardner. *Prophet of the Sandlots*
Kenesaw Mountain Landis—David Pietrusza. *Judge and Jury*
John Montgomery Ward—Bryan Di Salvatore. *A Clever Baseballist*
Hal Chase—Donald Dewey & Nick Acocella. *The Black Prince of Baseball*

These Have their Moments

Branch Rickey—Murray Polner. *Branch Rickey*
Dock Ellis—Donald Hall. *Dock Ellis in the Country of Baseball*
Dick Bartell—Norman Macht. *Rowdy Richard*
Ted Williams—Ed Linn. *Hitter*(*)
Larry Doby—Joseph Thomas Moore. *Pride Against Prejudice*
Kirby Higbe—Kirby Higbe. *The High Hard One*
Enos Slaughter—Enos Slaughter. *Country Hardball*
Lou Gehrig—Ray Robinson. *Iron Horse*
Lou Boudreau—Lou Boudreau. *Lou Boudreau*
Dick Williams—Dick Williams. *No More Mr. Nice Guy*
Don Drysdale—Don Drysdale. *Once a Bum, Always a Dodger*
Mickey Mantle—David Falkner. *The Last Hero*
Buck Weaver—Irving M. Stein. *The Ginger Kid*
Roberto Clemente—Kal Wagenheim. *Clemente!*
Grover Cleveland Alexander—Jack Kavanagh. *Ol' Pete*
Robin Roberts—Robin Roberts. *My Life in Baseball*

*Have not read Leigh Montville's new biography, *Ted Williams*, which may replace Linn's biography

Not Candidates for the SABR-Seymour Award

Whitey Herzog—Whitey Herzog. *White Rat*
Dom DiMaggio—Dom DiMaggio. *Real Grass, Real Heroes*
Duke Snider—Duke Snider. *The Duke of Flatbush*
Tommy Henrich—Tommy Henrich. *Five O'Clock Lightning*
Whitey Ford—Whitey Ford, with Phil Pepe. *Slick*
Willie Mays—Willie Mays, with Lou Sahadi. *Say Hey*
Mickey Mantle—Mickey Mantle, with Herb Gluck. *The Mick*
Monte Irvin—Monte Irvin. *Monte Irvin: Nice Guys Finish First*
Ron Santo—Ron Santo & Randy Minkoff. *For the Love of Ivy*
Ernie Banks—Ernie Banks & Jim Enright. *"Mr. Cub"*
Orel Hershiser—Orel Hershiser. *Out of the Blue*
Tim McCarver—Tim McCarver. *Oh, Baby, I Love It!*
Gil Hodges—Marino Amoroso. *Gil Hodges: The Quiet Man*
Stan Musial—Jerry Lansche. *Stan "The Man" Musial*
Most Gene Schoor biographies
Most **Billy Martin** biographies

Biographies that Need to be Written

Christy Mathewson—There have been several attempts, but none really captures the essence of the man. On the other hand, is there that much to capture?
Connie Mack—Same as above, although there is a lot about Mack that we really would like to know, regarding his ownership of the Athletics. He is a very enigmatic man. Norman Macht is researching Mack but is light years away from completion.
Joe DiMaggio—See Mathewson. Now that he is deceased, some scholar may come up with a definitive work. It would have been impossible while he was living.
Eddie Collins—What impact did the Black Sox Scandal have on him? We don't have an answer. It is difficult to understand why no one has attempted a biography of a player who had as lengthy a career as Collins had.
Steve Carlton—It's a bit too early to write a good biography about him, but it's strange that not even a bad one has appeared.
Tris Speaker—One is said to be on the way.
George Sisler—Rick Huhn has just released *The Sizzler*, but I've not seen it yet.

[Editor's note: Hope Dick can find space to include Jerrold Casway's *Ed Delahanty in the Emerald Age of Baseball*.]

Baseball Books Presumably Published in 2003 (and Not Yet Cataloged for TBI)

We need additional information about these books
(H = hardbound; P = paper; U = unknown binding)

Beckett, James. *Beckett Official Price Guide to Baseball Cards 2003*. New York: House of Collectibles. P
Christensen, Joe. *Alex Rodriguez*. Abdo Publishing. H
Donovan, Sandra. *Derek Jeter*. Minneapolis: Lerner Pub. H
Dougherty, Terri. *Ichiro Suzuki*. Abdo Publishing. H
Frost, Helen. *Let's Meet Jackie Robinson*. Chelsea House. H
Grabowski, John. *The Atlanta Braves*. Gale Group. H
Halzle, Theresa S. *Spirit of Play: Baseball*. Minneapolis: Augsburg. P
Jarnow, Jesse. *Johnny Bench*. New York: Rosen Pub. H
Johnson, Randy. *Randy Johnson's Power Pitching*. New York: Random House. H
Lemke, Robert F., ed. *2003 Standard Catalog of Baseball Cards*. Iola, Wisc.: Krause Publications. P
Olkin, Mat. *Baseball Examiner 2003*. McLean, Va.: Mat Olkin. P
Pepe, Phil. *The Yankees: An authorized History of the New York Yankees*. Dallas: Taylor Publishing. U
Rondeau, Amanda. *Base + Ball = Baseball*. Abdo Publishing. H
Shandler, Ron. *Ron Shandler's Baseball Forecaster*. Roanoke, Va.: Shandler. P
Sheehan, Joe. *Baseball Prospectus: 2003 Edition*. Dulles, Va.: Brassey's. P
Smalling, Jack. *The Baseball Autograph Collector's Handbook*. Durham, N.C.: Baseball America. P
Swirsky, Seth. *Something to Write Home About: Great Baseball Memories in Letters to a Fan*. New York: Random House. U
Wise, Henry. *Experience of a Junior League Baseball ...* New York: Vantage Press. H
3rd Annual Women's Baseball Camp ... U

"Tell me about the baseball," the boy asked him.
"In the American League it is the Yankees as I said," the old man said happily.
"They lost today," the boy told him.
"That means nothing. The great DiMaggio is himself again."
"They have other men on the team."
"Naturally. But he makes the difference. In the other league, between Brooklyn and Philadelphia I must take Brooklyn. But then I think of Dick Sisler and those great drives in the old park."
"There was nothing ever like them. He hits the longest ball I have ever seen."
"Do you remember when he used to come to the Terrace? I wanted to take him fishing but I was too timid to ask him. Then I asked you to ask him and you were too timid."
"I know. It was a great mistake. He might have gone with us. Then we would have that for all of our lives."
"I would like to take the great DiMaggio fishing," the old man said. "They say his father was a fisherman. Maybe he was as poor as we are and would understand."

Ernest Hemingway
The Old Man and the Sea
1952