

The Squibber

THE BOB DAVIDS CHAPTER E-NEWSLETTER

August 2014

This newsletter is produced by the Bob Davids Chapter of the Society for American Baseball Research ([SABR](http://sabr.org)), which serves members in Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia and parts of Pennsylvania and Delaware. Visit the chapter's official website at <http://chapters.sabr.org/bobdavids/>.

Submissions for future editions can be sent to Squibber editor Walt Cherniak at wcherniakjr@aol.com. Keep sending us those squibs, and those ideas for squibs!

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TRIVIA QUESTION: *Name the only two pitchers who have started games for the current Baltimore Orioles and Washington Nationals franchises? (See answers below).*

1. **SUMMER MINOR LEAGUE MEETING OF THE BOB DAVIDS CHAPTER:** *Join Us in Bowie on Aug. 30*

Join fellow members of the Bob Davids SABR Chapter at our summer minor league meeting, which will be held Saturday, Aug. 30 at Prince George's County Stadium, home of the Eastern League Bowie BaySox.

The meeting will be held beginning at 4:30 p.m., prior to that night's game between the BaySox and the Altoona Curve. SABR members and non-members alike are invited.

Speakers will include BaySox General Manager Brian Shallcross, as well as possible players and coaches to be determined later.

The cost for the meeting will be \$48 per person, which includes the price of a game ticket in the owner's box and dinner. Dinner will include hamburgers, hot dogs, pulled chicken, baked beans, potato salad, cole slaw, chips, watermelon and ice cream cups and soft drinks.

Tickets can be purchased at the door, by cash or cheque. To confirm your attendance (so we won't run short on food), please e-mail Bruce Brown at dbrucebrown@gmail.com and give a head-count for your party.

The stadium is located at 4101 Crain Highway, Bowie, MD.

Directions:

From Washington D.C., Northern Virginia, or the D.C. Beltway [I-495]: Follow Beltway or New York Avenue to U.S. 50 East (Exit 19 A off Beltway). Exit U.S. 50 at MD 197 (South). Follow until it ends at U.S. 301. Turn left onto 301 North, then right at the first light into Ballpark Drive.

From Baltimore Beltway [I-695]: Take Exit 4 [Route 97 South] toward Annapolis. Proceed to Exit 7 [Route 3, South to Bowie/ Odenton]...Remain on Route 3 [approximately 11 miles]. After passing under the Route 50 Overpass, proceed to second traffic light and turn left into Ballpark Drive. [Note: Route 3 changes to 301 South at Route 50]. Turn left at first light south of Route 50.

From Southern Maryland: Take Route 301 North past Upper Marlboro. Proceed through traffic light at the Route 197 intersection [Rip's Country Inn will be on the right] to the next traffic light, then turn into Ballpark Drive.

From Annapolis, Maryland: Take Route 50 West to Exit 13A [Route 301 South]... Proceed to the second traffic light and turn left into Ballpark Drive. Turn left at first light south of Route 50.

From Columbia, Maryland: Take Route 32 East to Route 3 South [toward Bowie]. After passing under the Route 50 Overpass, proceed to second traffic light and turn left into Ballpark Drive. [Note: Route 3 changes to 301 South at Route 50].

From Laurel, Maryland: Take Route 197 South through Bowie until it ends at Route 301...Turn left [North] on Route 301 and stay in right lane... Proceed to first traffic light and turn right into Ballpark Drive.

2. A FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT OF SABR 44: *Annual Convention Rated Among the Best*, by David Hughes

Three days and four nights in Houston in late July-early August did not sound promising when I first learned of the site for SABR 44. My concerns were unfounded. In reality, [the hosts](#), [the hotel](#), the attendees, and the myriad invitees from across baseball's wide spectrum made this convention perhaps the best of the six I've attended. This was a lot of fun.

Throughout SABR 44, I saw many familiar faces, owing to the fact that over 40 members of the Bob Davids chapter had joined me. Among the additional 500 SABR members who came, there was ample opportunity to renew old friendships and make new ones.

Where else, while standing in line to buy a drink ticket at Wednesday's welcome reception, could I strike up a 15-minute conversation with former Astros' great [Larry Dierker](#)? Where else could I hear four heretofore unknown (at least to me) anecdotes about the inimitable Yogi Berra, as told by former teammates 93-year old Eddie Robinson (<http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/3030255d>) and 89-year old [Dr. Bobby Brown](#) (<http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/abd081a0>)? By the way, both of those fellows are still sharp.

The easy answer is, nowhere else!

After the ice-breaker on Wednesday, we were off and running on Thursday as Houston Astros executive [Reid Ryan](#) delivered the opening remarks. Panel presentations followed, with former Colt 45s Jimmy Wynn, Bob Aspromonte, Carl Warwick, and Hal Smith recounting their days with the team as it played in the mosquito-ridden Colt Stadium for three seasons prior to the opening of the Astrodome. In the afternoon came the College Baseball panel featuring, among others Lamar Coach Jim Gilligan and the always controversial Roger Clemens. And no, there were no questions from the crowd concerning PEDs.

Over the course of two days we also heard from Enos Cabell, Jose Cruz, Grover "Deacon" Jones and former GM Tal Smith, who discussed the Astros of the 1980s; Toronto broadcaster Buck Martinez and others, who discussed their experiences in today's changing world of the media.

Bob Watson joined Dr. Brown and Eddie Robinson to talk about their experiences as front office decision-makers, and a panel of women who have contributed to baseball discussed past and present roles of women in the game. The group included media reporters, a former player from the All-American Girls' Professional Baseball League, and an executive from the College Baseball Hall of Fame. Many other panels and presentations were available for attendees to listen to, ask questions and hobnob with panel participants and presenters.

On Friday, Larry Dierker (wearing one of his many Hawaiian shirts) delivered a lively keynote speech at the SABR Awards Luncheon. Among the highlights was the announcement of the 2014 Bob Davids Award recipient, SABR Director Leslie Heaphy.

There truly was something for everyone and anyone on Thursday and Friday, including two nights of trivia contests, featuring individual and team competition. And through it all, I had the

opportunity to renew old friendships and meet new folks who shared many of the same interests we all have in the broad realm of baseball.

We spent the greater part of Saturday afternoon at Minute Maid Park, where we heard from two more panels: Dierker, Alan Ashby, and Art Howe (who briefly remarked on his disappointment over his portrayal in the movie *"Moneyball"*); and thereafter Jeff Luhnow, current general manager of the Astros, as well as two of his front office assistants, discussing the Astros' unique process of trying to build a team that will compete for championships not only within the next two or three years, but for a sustained period of time. Both panels answered many questions submitted from the floor. The practice of taking questions from the floor in writing allowed for more questions and was a great departure from past conventions.

As for the game Saturday evening, this marked the first time in a decade that the roof of the Minute Maid Park was open during a game in the month of August. It was a beautiful night, and the game lived up to the weather. At least two outstanding plays in the outfield (by the Astros' L.J. Hoes and Robbie Grossman), some shrewd base running by Astros' second baseman Jose Altuve, and Jonathan Singleton's inside-the-park home run (with an "out" call at home reversed after video review) made for a memorable event.

But all good things come to an end, and we packed up and went our separate ways on Sunday. These are some of my observations. For expanded convention reporting, go to: <http://sabr.org/convention>.

The last bit of good news is that we won't have to wait a year for the next convention. SABR 45 in Chicago will be June 24-28, 2015, at the Palmer House Hilton. Hope to see you there.

3. TALKIN' BASEBALL: *Upcoming Talks Scheduled, by Dave Paulson*

John Lord, writer of *"Bill Giles and Baseball,"* will speak at the next meeting of the Talkin' Baseball group on Saturday, Sept. 6.

On Oct. 11, the speaker will be Brian McKenna, discussing his book, *"Early Exits: The Premature Endings of Baseball Careers."*

The meetings will be held at 9 A.M. at Brighton Gardens, 7110 Minstrel Way, Columbia, Md. Come and bring a friend.

4. WHIZ KIDS PROJECT: *BioProject Writers Needed*

Ed Veit and Paul Rogers are looking for writers to help with a book for the SABR BioProject on the "Whiz Kids," the 1950 Phillies pennant winners who featured Robin Roberts, Richie Ashburn, Granny Hamner and Del Ennis.

If you're interest in contributing, please send e-mail to Ed at ewveit@me.com. Fact-checkers are also needed.

Veit, a Bob Davids Chapter member, grew up in Philadelphia with the Whiz Kids. He was 14 in 1950. Paul Rogers has co-authored two books with Robin Roberts and has been published several times in National Pastime. Paul is an attorney in Dallas and heads the law department at Southern Methodist University.

5. REMEMBERING DON ZIMMER: *Sixty-Six Years of Just Baseball*, by Jeff Stuart

Don Zimmer, who died June 4, was there to witness so much baseball history and is indelibly linked to it. He was one of the last two players alive to have played with Jackie Robinson.

He was on the 1955 Dodgers World Series championship team. "When Yogi hit the ball down the left-field line," said Zimmer with an unusual take of a famous moment in Game 7, "with Amoros' speed and being a left-handed thrower, a right-handed thrower probably couldn't have caught the ball. I always kid around with people. I say, 'I was very important in that seventh game.' You don't win many games by being taken out of the game." Amoros had entered the game as Zimmer's replacement.

His best year was 1958, when he hit .262 for the Dodgers. Zimmer was the emerging star who was going to replace Pee Wee Reese at shortstop. He was at short with Reese at third when the last out was recorded at Ebbetts Field in Brooklyn.

But in 1960 he was traded by Los Angeles to the Chicago Cubs for pitcher Ron Perranoski. Detroit Manager Bob Scheffing, three years removed from managing the Cubs, said at the time. "Not for 10 Zimmers should they have given up that wonderful guy." Two years later, he was an original Met, playing for the venerable Casey Stengel. "I don't like to rate the managers," he said. "But don't underrate Casey. I learned more of the game's fine points from him than from any other man." Zimmer went from the Mets to Cincinnati and then back to the Dodgers.

In June of 1963, he was acquired by the Senators for the waiver price. New Manager Gil Hodges, who had contemplated putting himself back on the active list, was happy to have his former Dodger and Mets teammate on board. "He's an aggressive ball player who goes all out to win," he said. "I think he will help us. And I'll forget about pinch hitting for a while."

Zimmer took over third base and gave the club an immediate lift. His first game for Washington was on June 30th against Minnesota at D.C. Stadium. The Nats lost 6-1 and Zimmer did not have a hit. But in the next game he singled and scored in a 7-1 win over Kansas City. In the opener of a July 4th double header, he walked with the bases loaded in the bottom of the eighth, scoring Chuck Hinton with the winning run. He singled and scored in the second game, another one-run Washington win, 3-2.

On July 5, Zimmer singled and scored again as the team swept four from the Athletics and welcomed in the Los Angeles Angels. He had just a walk in the first game against L.A., but the

Nats won, 5-1. In the first game of another double header July 7, he went 2-for-4 with three runs batted in. And in the second game, he was 2-for-3 with a grand slam in the first inning. The Nats swept the twin bill, 7-3 and 6-4.

The seven-game winning streak was the longest for any Washington club since 1949. On Aug. 30 in Boston, Zimmer hit yet another grand slam, the seventh of his career. Hodges, who held the National League record for grand slams with 14, told Zimmer, "The next time you're up with the bases loaded, I'm taking you out for a pinch hitter. You're breathing down my neck."

In 1964, Zimmer tried catching. "It was Gil's idea. You've got the square head for it," he said. I did pretty good. It kept me around for another year." He handled some of the young and sometimes wild pitchers in the Winter Instructional League. He suffered a chipped finger and later split that finger open. At age 34, Zimmer said, "In my mind I am going to spring training to be the third baseman. But if Gil wants me to catch, I will, whatever my best bet for a job is. I enjoy it and think I can do a credible job. I want to be a regular player."

After hitting 13 homers in 1963, he hit 12 in 1964. Zimmer was given his release in 1965. His final major-league game was on Oct. 2, against the Tigers at D.C. Stadium. He spent the 1966 season playing for the Toei Flying Tigers of the Japanese Pacific League.

Everything revolved around baseball for Zimmer. In 1951, playing with minor League Elmira, he married his wife Jean at the ball park. They both marched under a tunnel of player-held crossed bats from home plate to the pitcher's mound.

After playing he managed the Padres in 1972 and 1973 and almost returned to D.C., as the relocation of the club was close to a done deal. But the Padres stayed put, and so did Zimmer.

He managed the Red Sox from 1976 to 1980, winning at least 90 games every year but the last. He was the manager when the Yankees' Bucky Dent hit the infamous homer in the 1978 playoff game that sent the Yankees to yet another pennant and an eventual World Series victory.

Years later, when Zimmer took a coaching job under Joe Torre of the Yankees, he would cross paths with Dent again. "Dent has been traded by the Yankees to Texas, where I had just been fired as manager," Zimmer recalled. "I rent his house in Wyckoff, New Jersey. I go in there and on every wall, there's a picture of him with that swing for that home run. Every wall! I call him up and I tell him I turned every one of them around, facing the wall."

As for his experience with the Yankees. Zimmer recalled, "We won '98, '99 and 2000. I don't think you'll see that again. I really don't believe you'll see a team win three World Series in a row. Not that we were so much better than everybody else, but that's how hard it is to even win one World Series."

"Joe didn't need very much help from me," Zimmer told Mike Lupica of the *New York Daily News*. "People who don't know what a great manager this guy is are the ones who should have their heads examined."

Zimmer suffered two serious beanings in his baseball career. The first came on July 7, 1953, when he was hit in the head by a pitch delivered by Columbus pitcher Jim Kirk. The result was a brain injury that put Zimmer in a coma for two weeks. That led MLB to adopt the use of batting helmets. On June 23, 1956, he suffered a fractured cheekbone after being beamed again, this time by Cincinnati's Hal Jeffcoat.

Neither beaming affected his powers of reason. He lived a full baseball life, 66 years, from meeting Babe Ruth, to coaching Derek Jeter. He even has a "baseball curse" named after him. "The Curse of Don Zimmer has supposedly prevented any San Diego Padres pitcher from ever pitching a no-hitter. Steve Arlin of the Padres had a no-hitter going with one out to go on July 18, 1972. He had walked three. The potential last batter was Denny Doyle. Manager Zimmer was convinced Doyle, who was not particularly fast, would try to bunt his way aboard. He moved third baseman Dave Roberts in, but Doyle swung away and hit the ball softly right to where Roberts normally would have played. It has been more than 40 years and the Padres are the only club that has never had a pitcher hurl a no hitter.

"He was just wonderful," legendary Dodger announcer Vin Scully said on his passing, June 4, 2014. "It was an honor and a pleasure, and a huge grace to have known Don Zimmer, believe me."

6. CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA REPORT: *Atlantic League Picks Up the Pace, by Barry Sparks*

The Atlantic League formed a Pace of Play Committee in June to look at ways of speeding up its games. Members include Tal Smith, Roland Hemond, Bud Harrelson, Sparky Lyle, Cecil Cooper, Joe Klein and Pat Gillick.

The league adopted five measures on Aug. 1, as a result of recommendations from its Pace of Play Committee. The five measures are:

- Pitchers must deliver a pitch within 12 seconds with nobody on base (actually, that's simply enforcement of an ignored rule already on the books) and batters must keep one foot in the batter's box in between pitches.
- Defensive teams get three 45-second timeouts per nine innings — that includes conferences between the catcher and pitcher or infielders and pitcher. Pitching changes do not count as a timeout.
- Relief pitchers get six warmup pitches, not eight, upon entering the game, and must complete those pitches within one minute.
- Intentional walks are automatic, with no need to throw four pitches out of the strike zone.
- The rule book strike zone will be enforced, allowing for the high strike.

In the first 10 days after adopting the measures, the average length of an Atlantic League game decreased by 10 minutes (2:59 to 2:49). The percent of nine-inning games completed in less than 2:30 increased from 11% to 26%.

York Revolution News: The York Revolution, in its eighth season, passed the 2 million mark in attendance on July 8. Dianne Fox of York was the 24 millionth fan. Attendance is up 13 percent in 2014.

The Arizona Diamondbacks called up former York Revolution third baseman Andy Marte (2013) on July 31. At AAA Reno, Marte batted .330 with 13 homers and 62 RBI in 102 games. The promotion to the Diamondbacks completed a four-year major league comeback for Marte, who last played in the majors with the Cleveland Indians in 2010.

Marte became the eighth former Revolution player to reach the Major Leagues. He joined Tike Redman '07 (2007 Baltimore Orioles); LHP Justin Hampson '10 (2012 New York Mets); RHP Shawn Hill '12 (2012 Toronto Blue Jays); LHP Scott Rice '11 (2013 New York Mets); LHP Ian Thomas '12 (2014 Atlanta Braves); RHP Julio DePaula '13-'14 (2014 Baltimore Orioles); and LHP Ryan Feierabend '12 (2014 Texas Rangers).

7. HONORING HISTORIC BASEBALL SITES: *Project Launched to Memorialize Forgotten Ballparks*

Liam Fennessy, a rising sophomore and Sport Management Major at the University of Delaware, has begun a project that hopes to honor Baltimore-area sites that hold historical baseball significance.

Fennessy worked this summer as a digital marketing intern for Ripken Baseball and the Aberdeen Ironbirds. Assigned to write a story on Baltimore's baseball history for the Ironbirds' game-day program, he was struck by just how much history there was to be learned.

“As I did research, I discovered a wealth of baseball information that, as a die-hard baseball and history fan, I had never known about,” Fennessy said. “What shocked me as I continued to work on this story was to find that all of these sites in Baltimore that once held historic ballparks were not honored with plaques or memorials.”

Fennessy has launched a project to correct these omissions. He posted a message on SABR-L and is reaching out to other baseball fans in an effort to recognize these forgotten sites. They include: Bugle Field (Black Sox and Elite Giants), Maryland Baseball Park (Black Sox), American League Park (Minor League Baltimore Orioles), Terrapin Park (Baltimore Terrapins, Federal League team), and others.

His goal is to erect plaques at these sites, and to have a park erected at Camden Yards that honors all of the historic Baltimore ballparks.

Fennessy, who recently joined SABR, would welcome any assistance or advice as he reaches out to other groups to support this effort. Contact him at (443) 417-3611 or e-mail lfenn@udel.edu, lfennessy@ripkenbaseball.com.

8. VOLUNTEER NEEDED TO INDEX THE SQUIBBER: *Now In its 14th Year*

The Bob Davids Chapter newsletter, the one your reading now, began under the creative editorial eye of Larry McCray. Larry moved shortly thereafter and turned the house organ over to Walt Cherniak, our editor ever since that time. The volume of quality writing we have now amassed merits its own index, the better to serve as a research tool. If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact Walt at wcherniakjr@aol.com.

TRIVIA ANSWER: Daniel Cabrera was 48-59 in 146 starts with the Orioles between 2004 and 2008. He was 0-5 in eight starts for the Nationals in 2009. John Halama went 0-3 in three starts for the Nationals in 2005 and 3-1 in 17 appearances (1 start) for the Orioles in 2006.