

The Squibber

THE BOB DAVIDS CHAPTER E-NEWSLETTER

August 2016

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://sabrdaids.org/>.

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: *Who was the first player for a Washington-based major league team to hit more than 10 home runs in a season? (See answer below)*

MINOR LEAGUE OUTING IN POTOMAC: Still Time to Sign Up

Time is running out, but you can still attend the minor league game and in-season meeting of the Bob Davids Chapter this Saturday, Aug. 20.

When: Saturday, Aug. 20, 2016 beginning at 3:30 p.m.

What: The annual minor league game meeting of the chapter.

Our program includes:

3:15-3:30: Meet outside the stadium to obtain your ticket

3:30-5:15: Inside the stadium, we'll hear from several speakers, including some from the Potomac Nationals.

5:15-6:35: Enjoy the Grand Slam Picnic dinner, featuring ribs, mac-n-cheese, fried Chicken, hot dogs, hamburgers, and other traditional ballpark fare.

6:35-end: The Frederick Keys vs. the Potomac Nationals.

Where: Pfitzner Stadium
7 County Complex Ct.,
Woodbridge, VA 22192
Phone: 703-590-2311

<http://potomac.nationals.milb.com/index.jsp?sid=t436>

How much: \$35 for SABR members and visitors. Cost includes parking, tickets to the game and the dinner in the picnic area. PLUS: It's Gio Gonzalez and his dog Stitch bobble-head Night!

Why: This meeting is an annual event. We would love to include you. Please you let us know if you plan to attend by contacting chapter vice president Peter Cottrell so we can provide an accurate headcount to the P-Nats staff.

There is normally a \$5 parking charge at Pfitzner Stadium, but the P-Nats are waiving it for the chapter for this game. When you enter the parking lot, let the attendant know that you're with the SABR group.

Our minor league game is the tail-end of a home-and-home series between the Potomac Nationals and the Frederick Keys.

Peter Cottrell
17600 Stoneridge Ct.
North Potomac, MD 20878

Since the event is so soon, do not mail registration forms and checks; rather, please bring the registration form and a \$35 check per person to the meeting and send an email message to pcottrell@gaitHERsburgmd.gov with intent to attend.

A HOT TIME IN THE OLD TOWN: Annual Major League Outing a Success, By Mark Pattison

Some 60 SABR members had a great time at its annual major-league outing June 11 at Nationals Park, listening to a vendor speak in sentences longer than “Beer here,” and a journalist-author giving an inside look at the Washington Nationals and the front office that supports them.

Howie Hart, 64, who has sold everything from nuts to soup -- well, maybe soupy beer -- during his 32 years as a vendor, gave insights into his trade. He was working the Nats-Philadelphia Phillies that day and came to the park earlier than usual to set up so he could have the time to talk to the SABR assemblage. He had worked the Beyonce concert at Verizon Center the night before, so Hart was working on mighty short rest for the 12:05 p.m. start.

Hart said he is one of the few vendors who makes a living from his vending, although he does odd jobs to supplement his income; he said the vast majority of vendors have a day job and moonlight as vendors, and the average age of vendors, he noted, is creeping higher.

He’s worked concerts and football and NASCAR and just about anything else where you can pack thousands of hungry or thirsty fans into a relatively small place for a few hours, but Hart’s first love is baseball. If he can get away with it, he told SABR, “I still try to steal a look every chance I get” to watch a play unfold.

Hart works his way south after football season is over, landing in Florida in time to work Phillies spring training games – which is where a couple of alert SABRites attending a game this March thought, “Hey, wouldn’t he be a great speaker if we could get him?” Hart even prepared an outline which he referred to at times as he tried to encapsulate his career in a half-hour – including questions.

“I try not to intrude upon the game,” Hart said, although he’s built up a decent fan base of his own with a relentless schedule that includes Orioles, Nationals, George Washington basketball and other events, including the occasional Bowie Baysox game. When there are two events the same day, he chooses the gig likely to pay him the most.

Hart reminisced, nearly to the point of tears, about fans who have befriended him along the way, and also displayed some techniques about how to politely refuse selling beer to someone already clearly intoxicated. Selling booze to someone already drunk “is not worth my job,” Hart said, noting he was devastated when GW fired him briefly over a mild fracas with the team mascot.

Washington Post national baseball writer Barry Svrluga, who lives a mile from Nationals Park, spoke about how he developed story lines for the book *“The Grind”* (which was available in paperback at some merchandise booths at the game) after he took to heart a comment from one Nationals player about how he had to “keep grinding” regardless of whether he had had a good game or a bad one.

Svrluga and others on the Nats beat at the Post also worked up several advance stories during the 2015 season in anticipation of a talented team making a deep postseason run. Svrluga and others had been granted exclusivity by Nats players and key personnel in exchange for confidentiality. But when the season had a sour start, and things went south in a hurry after the

trading deadline, a far different picture emerged than the one they had expected, one punctuated by inflexibility, lack of communication and clubhouse dissent. Unflattering details began to emerge from their reportage before the season ended, sealing second-year manager Matt Williams' fate.

Other topics touched upon by Svrluga included the Dusty Baker hiring, prospects in the Washington system, and the age-shaving scandal from the Nats' Dominican Republic operation that cost Jose Rijo and then-GM Jim Bowden their jobs. And, before anyone works themselves into a lather, no, Svrluga said, the Post isn't going to change its box scores to include lines for every player who makes gets into a game even if he didn't make a plate appearance.

Former Bob Davids Chapter President (and current Babe Ruth Chapter President) Bruce Brown entertained the audience with some Horsehide Trivia questions and teasers from 2007 – which was, given the crowd reaction, a very good year for trivia. The ballpark-style buffet spread at the back of the room also proved enjoyable.

And just as a 92-degree sun shone on the SABRites at game time, the Nats shone brilliantly as they easily took an 8-0 decision over a faltering Phillies team. Four runs in the second inning pretty much decided the matter, with Washington scoring three more in the bottom of the fifth to leave little doubt. Tanner Roark raised his record to 5-4 with a seven-inning, seven-strikeout performance. Anthony Rendon's two-run fifth-inning double was the biggest blast of the day, while Clint Robinson and Michael A. Taylor led the 13-hit attack with three hits apiece.

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

Charles Martin will be the featured speaker at the next meeting of "Talkin' Baseball" on Saturday, Sept. 3. He will discuss his book, "*Lawyerball*."

On, Saturday, Oct. 1, Jake Russell will discuss his book, "*100 Things Nationals Fans Should Know and Do Before They Die*."

On Saturday, Nov. 5, Ann Good will discuss her book, "*Washington Nationals A to Z*." (See more on her book below)

The monthly meetings are open to SABR members and non-members alike. They are held at 9 a.m. at Brighton Gardens, 7110 Minstrel Way, Columbia, Md. Come and bring a friend.

DICK BOSMAN COULD PITCH: *Recalling the Ace of the Senators, By Jeff Stuart*

Dick Bosman could pitch. Consider for a minute that he finished with the lowest ERA, 2.19, in the American League in 1969, an achievement underappreciated in Washington and elsewhere, I think. Jim Palmer and Mike Cuellar of the Orioles finished second and third respectively. Cuellar shared the Cy Young Award with Denny McLain and had 23 wins.

"Bos" won 14 games that year and lost only five on a team that finished 10 games over .500. "Bosman has become Ted Williams' best bet to pitch a winning game," wrote columnist Shirley Povich.

Bosman won an astounding 16 games in 1970 for a team that won only 70 games. On Thursday, Sept. 17, Bosman claimed his 16th win and became the Senators' winningest pitcher in 11 years, shutting out Baltimore, 2-0, on five hits.

"This guy knows how to pitch," said catcher Paul Casanova. "He was sharp. His slider was his best pitch and his fastball was sinking."

"This is one of the greatest thrills of my career," said Bosman, "especially winning in that way -- on a shutout and on a night when I had my good stuff. I felt I was in control all the way." It was his second shutout of the year and his seventh complete game.

There was champagne in the visitors' clubhouse, as Baltimore clinched the A.L. East title when New York lost. But Bosman deserved a bottle of his own. Pitching coach Sid Hudson visited the mound after two leadoff singles in the top of the ninth. "I didn't think for a moment I was coming out," Bosman said. "He just reminded me to keep the ball down." Bosman did, inducing a double play, the Nats' third of the evening, to end the game.

Earlier that year, Bosman had pitched a one-hitter at Minnesota, facing only 29 batters.

By the end of the 1967 season, Bosman was Washington's best pitcher, winning three of four starts and compiling an ERA of just 1.76. In February of 1968 the 6-3, 200-pound pitcher signed a \$20,000 contract. GM George Selkirk made the Kenosha, Wis. native promise to stop drag racing and motorcycle racing. Bosman once drove a car at 187 miles per hour.

Bosman did continue to hunt and ride a ski-mobile in the winter, though. "I plan to make good in baseball," he said. "I don't want to sound conceited. But I don't see how I can miss staying in the the big leagues now," he told Bob Addie of the Post. "I have always had a good sinker and slider. And I developed a curve ball in Hawaii. That really helped. I am going to work on my changeup when i get to Florida. With all the experience I have gained, I think i will be hanging around the majors for a while."

On May 2, 1969, the 25-year-old Bosman hurled a one hitter against the Indians, posting a 5-0 shutout. The lone hit was single to left by Tony Horton in the fourth. "The 13,649 fans cheered their heads off for Bosman when he came to bat in the eighth," wrote the Post's George Minot. "They were honoring him not only for his brilliant pitching performance but also for his bases-loaded single in the fourth that sealed the fate of Indians starter Luis Tiant.

Bosman threw only 108 pitches in the game. Manager Ted Williams said afterward, "Bosman is gaining more confidence. He's beginning to realize there is more to pitching than just rearing up and throwing the ball. And he is not giving away his pitches like before." It was the eighth victory in nine starts for the Nats.

Newcomer and former 30-game winner Denny McLain was reportedly perturbed to lose the 1971 Opening Day assignment to Bosman. "Competition is good for everybody," said Williams. "It is good for Denny to want to start on Opening Day. But Bosman was just as determined. These guys should have goals. Everyone should have a goal." The Nats' 8-0 win over the A's and Vida Blue justified Williams' decision. Bosman pitched a complete game shutout, allowing just six hits.

On July 19, 1974 Bosman, now pitching for Cleveland, no-hit the visiting A's 4-0, and would have had a perfect game if not for his own error fielding a bunt by Sal Bando in the fourth. His throw pulled Tommy McCraw off the bag. Bosman walked none and struck out four on the night.

In May 1975 Bosman was dealt by the Indians to the Oakland A's, the team he no-hit the year before. He had spent nine seasons with the Senators, Rangers, and Indians, all bad teams. "It wasn't even like being in the major leagues," he told the Post's Robert Facht. "Year after year after year, it dragged me down; the defeatism, the negative comments in the dugout." So he was happy to join the contending A's. "Hello, I'm Dick Bosman. I'll do anything," were his first words to his new teammates. Bosman won 11 games to help Oakland to its fifth straight division title.

In April 1977, the frustrated last ace of the Washington Senators quit the game in a salary dispute with A's owner Charles O. Finley. "I had three straight winning seasons and a good spring," he told the Post's Tom Boswell. "I worked for 10 years to bring my salary up. I am disappointed and disillusioned. I have lost my heart for the game." After being unconditionally released by the A's, Bosman was offered a contract by the Chicago Cubs but would have had to take a \$40,000 pay cut.

A fierce competitor, Bosman ranted at his teammates when they started to struggle late in the 1970 season, suffering a 14-game losing streak. "Some of my teammates are lying down on the job," he told George Minot. "They know who they are. They don't give a damn."

Bos always gave a damn. He started the final game in Washington on September 30, 1971. And when fans stormed the field with two out in the ninth and the Senators holding a 7-5 lead over the Yankees, Bosman, tried unsuccessfully to persuade people to return to their seats. He wanted to win that final game for the fans.

Dick Bosman, the Opening Day starter, was the team's best pitcher, and like most of the players, he loved playing and living in the Washington area. His wife is from Fairfax, Va., where they lived that final season. After retiring, he served as a pitching coach for the Chicago White Sox (1986–87), Rochester Red Wings (1988–91), Baltimore Orioles (1992–94) and Texas Rangers (1995–2000). Now 72, Bosman has been a coach in the Tampa Bay Rays' system since 2002.

SOUP TO NUTS ABOUT THE NATS: New Book Covers if All, from A to Z, By Mark Pattison

If you've been browsing through the sports shelves at your nearby bookstore for literature on the Washington Nationals, you've likely been disappointed.

New SABR member Ann Lambert Good wants to change that.

She's written "*Washington Nationals A to Z*," an alphabetical compendium of the franchise since it moved to D.C. in 2005.

Good, a retired CIA analyst who now works full-time for an international affairs consultancy, had been similarly dejected about the lack of Nats books, so last year she decided to take matters into her own hands. "I never thought I'd write a book on anything," she said, noting this is her first book on any subject.

Growing up in St. Louis, she was fond of the Cardinals. But moving to the Washington area -- Good lives in Great Falls -- she was among the many who pined for a team of their own. But being on assignment outside the United States for 10 years made her realize how much she'd missed the game she loved.

During the 9/11 terror attacks, Good was in, of all places, Saudi Arabia. She said she and other Americans "stayed up all night" watching that year's World Series between the New York Yankees and Arizona Diamondbacks because baseball had "symbolized America," Good said.

Upon returning to the United States in 2003, she and her husband would go to Baltimore Orioles games until the drive got to be too long for its own good. The same came to be true for Potomac Cannons (later Nationals) games in Manassas. Still, she took in a game when she could, including the brief Maryland Fall League, as well as spring training trips to Florida to take in games.

When the Montreal Expos moved to Washington in time for the 2005 season, Good was sold. She and her husband, Steve -- who took all the photos used in "A to Z" -- became 81-game-plan season ticket holders right away. Steve had grown up in Washington and was a fan of the Senators and had transferred his allegiance to the O's after the Senators' departure for Texas. But like Ann, Steve quickly became a convert to the Nats.

Good had long been wowing the men in the office with her ability to spout baseball stats and trivia. "There are a lot of women who were crazy about baseball," she said. "It kind of shocks the guys when you know more about baseball than they do."

She confessed, though, to being floored by Bruce Brown's old Horsehide Trivia questions during the June 11 pre-game chapter outing at Nationals Park. "I was very humbled by the trivia contest," she said. "I don't think I knew many of them (answers). The name thing (the birth names of famous nicknamed ballplayers) is one of the hardest things I ever heard -- and people know who their names were! Tris Speaker, Pie Traynor -- it was just incredible to me."

Good joined SABR as she was wrapping up the first draft of "A to Z," which has to do a bit of juggling to include every letter of the alphabet. The "X" entry, for instance, include XBH (extra-

base hits), a brief synopsis of Expos franchise history, and "X-Rays" -- notable injuries suffered by Nats players.

All of the book's stats are good through the 2015 season.

And, yes, she knows there are a number of hyphens missing in the text, particularly in the introduction. Good attributed it to a computer glitch, adding she didn't care to count how many missing hyphens she had reinserted upon seeing page proofs. Despite this, "A to Z" has lots of helpful information that one can have at one's fingertips rather than having to rely on a computer or smartphone.

As most baseball authors know, finding a willing publisher can be as tough as writing the book in the first place. Big publishers don't have a need for it, and mid-size publishing houses are not that much of a better bet; Good said she felt honored to get an actual rejection letter mailed to her, instead of the email rejection messages she had been sent. She found Mascot Books in Herndon by virtue of Mascot having published a book about Nats mascot Screech.

"A to Z" retails for \$14.95 and can be purchased through the publisher at mascotbooks.com, or through Good herself at baseballstrikezone.com.

TRIVIA ANSWER: *Billy O'Brien, a 27-year-old first baseman for the Washington Nationals, led the National League in 1887 with 19 home runs, two more than future Hall of Famer Roger Connor.*