

BIBLIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

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SABR Biblio News

Comments from the Chair

Cleveland proved to be another excellent convention, with a decent hotel with a wide range of places to eat nearby and a pleasant walk to the ballpark.

Our committee meeting was graced with the presence of Frank Phelps, our founding chair, who hadn't been able to get to a convention in some years. Frank attended the committee meeting and took part in a number of convention activities. On Thursday evening, attendees could go over to the Western Reserve Historical Society for a tour of the SABR archives and the Frank Phelps Collection of baseball research materials, which Frank donated some years ago.

At our meeting, Bob McCallum suggested a project to identify information about early and erratic publications containing baseball news. Bob has done quite a bit of foundation-building, but needs someone to take over the project. There's a fuller description later in the newsletter.

Noel Milan, a new committee member who works for the National Endowment for the Humanities, brought up the NEH's U.S. Newspaper (www.neh.gov/projects/usnp.html), which is funding the microfilming of newspapers. He noted that there may well be overlap with Bob's idea.

At our committee meeting, I spent a good part of the time looking for ideas to stimulate more volunteer activity to improve and expand TBI. Huge needs remain in TBI and the more volunteers we can generate, the better. Several volunteers came forward either at our committee meeting or at the other committee meetings I attended, where I gave similar pitches.

There seems to be interest in expanding our coverage of such publications as *Baseball America*, *Baseball Digest*, *the Minneapolis Review of Baseball* and *Elysian Fields Quarterly*.

I am also still looking for someone with expertise in software programs that track websites. This is another sub-project for TBI. I think we need to start including websites as they are a growing source of excellent research material. The problem, of course, is that they disappear relatively quickly. So, I'm looking for someone who knows something about the programs (which I assume exist) that would keep checking whether a website still exists. If you are such a person, or know someone who is, I'd appreciate your getting in touch.

In the last newsletter, I included a note from Paul Dickson and Dover publications about possible books Dover might include in a projected reprint series. So far, the nominees have included *Every Diamond Doesn't Sparkle* (Fresco Thompson and Cy Rice), *Dodger Daze and Knights* (Tommy Holmes), *Baseball and the Cold War* (Howard Senzel), *Percentage Baseball* (Earnshaw Cook), *Ban Johnson: Czar of Baseball* (Eugene Murdock), and *100 Years of Baseball* (Lee Allen). If you have any further suggestions, please send them to Paul (newdefiner@aol.com) with a copy to me (agmccue44@earthlink.net).

Andy McCue
Chair, Bibliography Committee

Bibliography Committee Annual Report

The Bibliography Committee was founded in 1983 by Frank Phelps and seeks to discover, organize, and provide information about books and other research materials which might be of interest to SABR members and other baseball researchers.

The committee currently has 233 members working on a variety of projects in addition to the mainstay of the Committee, The Baseball Index (TBI).

TBI recently completed its sixth year of Internet availability. The Web site, www.Baseballindex.org, became available on May 27, 2002. During the past year, the database moved past the 227,000-record level. Information from The Baseball Index remains completely free of charge.

When it became available for general use, 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. One can also search for specific terms, such as Baker Bowl or Cotton States League, umpire-baiting or changeups. Over 2,000 separate terms are included as well as the names of leagues, stadiums and baseball groups. Usage continues to rise steadily as more people try it and find how serviceable it is.

Our major problem with the project remains the need for more volunteers to continue to expand the database. I continue to oversee the project, with Steve Milman remaining a major contributor.

While TBI is our major project, the committee continues with other undertakings.

A project begun last year to put Frank Phelps' listing of obituaries in *The Sporting News* into the TBI format has made tremendous progress, with special gratitude to Phil Bergen for his work. Mike Grahek, Glenn Morosco, and Bill Nowlin have also contributed. One more group of obituaries remains to be completed, totaling more than 9,000 obituaries will be posted into TBI.

Ron Kaplan continued to improve the publication with more reviews and pictures. Critiques from Terry Smith and other committee members highlight the quarterly publication. We also seek to re-print book reviews from other committee newsletters as well.

Rich Arpi started his 20th year of researching and editing *Current Baseball Publications*, the quarterly listing of baseball books and periodicals that the committee has produced since 1986. *Current Baseball Publications* has been added to SABR's main Web page to make it more accessible to all members of the organization.

Committee co-chair Skip McAfee continues to lead our project to produce indexes for significant baseball books that were published without them. The committee also acts as a clearinghouse for SABR authors who are seeking a volunteer to produce an index for their book.

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' Index to *Sporting News* Registers, 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 website. He is also working to expand the number of book reviews from our newsletter that are available electronically.

Early Baseball Newspaper Project Proposal

The project is to catalog and centralize basic information about 19th and early 20th century newspapers entirely or partially devoted to baseball. The information could be stored on the Bibliography Committee/SABR Website so researchers could quickly identify possible sources of information.

Here's an example of what I envision:

Name: Official Baseball Record
Publishing dates: Oct. 1, 1885, and Apr. 17, 1886 thru Oct. 9, 1886
Frequency: Daily except Sunday
Location: New York City
Availability: All on one reel of microfilm. Copy available at San Diego Public Library and (soon) the SABR Lending Library
Size: Four pages, incl. two of ads
Amount of Baseball Content: 100%
Contents Description: Some short articles. Mostly notes on current news of National League and American Association. Standings (incl. W-L vs. each club) for NL and AA. Starting in 1886, similar standings for Southern League, Eastern

League, International League and New England League. Sketches of players plus a few managers, umpires and executives were included every day. These sketches included player's place of birth, age and, in a few cases, date of birth, plus resume of playing career dating back to amateur clubs. Also a pencil portrait.

If you're interested in expanding such listings, I have developed a list of publications that need to be looked at. Please contact Andy McCue at agmccue44@earthlink.net for further information.

Bob McCallum

Reviews and Features

The Only Game in Town: Baseball Stars of the 1930s and 1940s Talk About the Game They Loved, by Fay Vincent. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006.

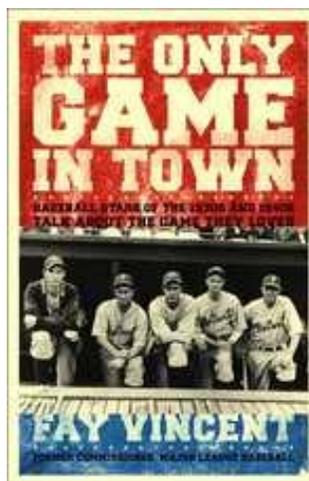
To cut to the chase, this is a disappointing book. It represents the first volume of "The Baseball Oral History Project," an attempt by a tax-exempt foundation to provide systematic oral histories. But it fell into the trap of many other oral histories that depend on the hazy memories of elderly ballplayers – including Elden Auker, Bob Feller, Tommy Henrich, John "Buck" O'Neil, Dom DiMaggio, Johnny Pesky, Warren Spahn, Larry Doby, Ralph Kiner, and Monte Irvin – combined with a vanilla-coated treatment supported by exaggeration and platitudes.

Volume 1 focused on the integration of the major leagues. Unfortunately, very little new material was unearthed. We read again about the bus rides, segregated eating facilities, the apparent dominance of Negro leaguers when barnstorming versus white squads, and how sad that Josh Gibson and Oscar Charleston and so many others were unable to show their stuff in the big leagues; the book revealed little in regard to research value.

We keep reading about Ted Williams being a great hitter. What else is new?

The DiMaggio and Pesky interviews repeat material that was better handled in David Halberstam's *The Teammates* (2003).

I was hoping to read about specific items that Vincent did not broach. For example, why did Auker change the spelling of his first name? Did Henrich really make an error on purpose to extend a game into extra innings so that Joe DiMaggio could have a chance to extend his hitting streak?



How did Doby handle his one year as a manager? And did Irvin participate in the heated feelings between the Giants and Dodgers in view of his tender feelings toward Jackie Robinson and Roy Campanella?

The book also suffers from apparently minimal copy editing. The dates of the interviews were not given. Vincent allowed the players to ramble on, to the extent that Pesky and Kiner, in particular, appear illiterate. The players often made statements that proved to be untrue, but there was little attempt by Vincent to correct them. Examples abound: Spahn (p.146) noted that Willie Mays was 0 for 23 before his first major league base hit, but Irvin (p.227) said it was 0 for 15. Feller said (p.53) that the Cubs won 116 games in “1906 or 1908” (why not give the correct date?). Pesky noted (p.135) that Williams did not have a high school diploma, but three pages later, he said Williams did have a high school diploma. Pesky also said (p.131) that Spud Chandler won 20 games “in ’41 I think” (it was 1943 and 1946; Chandler won only 10 games in 1941).

Other editing shortcomings include: the introduction of a Jack Malaney (p.131) without indicating who he was; the apparent misspelling of Bill Killefer’s name (Killapher on p.179); Feller’s saying (p.47) that Enos Slaughter scored on a single during the 1946 World Series (it was officially scored as a double); misspelling (p.24) of Harlond Clift’s first name; Feller stating (p.41) that he struck out leadoff hitter Lyn Lary in his first big league game, although he noted (p.40) that he previously pitched “five or six times before I got my first start”; Feller stating (p.46) that African-Americans were “called ... black in those days” (actually, they were referred to as Negroes when Feller was pitching); Doby quoting (p.180) Bill Veeck using the term “Afro-Americans” in 1947; Spahn referring (p.160) to the “Juggs gun” (actual name is “JUGS”); and O’Neil stating (p.92-93) that “had I been born earlier, I wouldn’t have played against Babe Ruth ... [and] wouldn’t have seen Cobb” (I believe he meant to say “born later”).

I was expecting a higher quality book from an important baseball presence as Fay Vincent.

Skip McAfee
Columbia, Md.

* * *

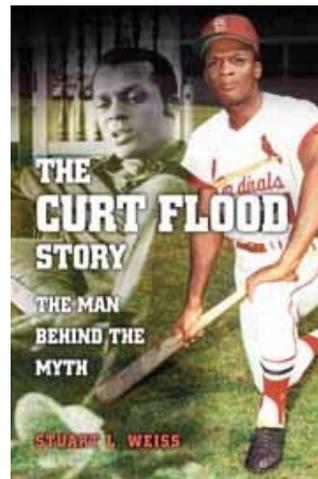
The Curt Flood Story: The Man Behind the Myth, by Stuart L. Weiss. Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2007.

Recently, we’ve had three book-length treatments of Curt Flood’s life: Brad Snyder’s *A Well-Paid Slave: Curt Flood’s Fight for Free Agency in Professional Sports*, Alex Belth’s *Stepping Up: The Story of Curt Flood and His Fight for Baseball Players’ Rights*, both published in 2006, and in 2007 Weiss’s volume. Weiss comments on the achievement of the other two in an unusually interesting bibliographical essay that describes the history of his research into Flood’s life.

There he dates the beginning of his research at his learning of Flood’s death in 1997. The impetus was to find out “why he lost [his suit against Major League Baseball]

when his lawyers’ argument seemed correct.” Beyond that lies the question of why it was Flood who brought suit. “What was different about Flood?” (237). Good questions, both, and, to my mind at least, they’d been quite thoroughly answered in Snyder’s *A Well-Paid Slave* (I haven’t read Belth’s *Stepping Up*). Snyder found his answers in an exhaustive analysis of the trial itself and in Flood’s African-American heritage. Weiss thinks otherwise, though he calls Snyder’s book “a fine book that I should like to think of a complementing this one” (246).

And they do complement each other in many ways. Weiss’s is intended as a corrective to Snyder’s conclusions. Weiss thinks Snyder accepts Flood’s understanding of his own motives as stated in *The Way It Is* and elsewhere. Weiss’s book has the form of an argument. Weiss argues that there is a “Flood myth,” Flood’s “self portrait . . . as a martyred hero.” His book will reveal the actual Flood. “This book, “he announces “offers new dimensions to Curt Flood’s battle [to change baseball’s reserve system], which was the central issue of his life’s story, but it is not the whole story.” He continues “Neither does this book pretend to be the last word. It originated quite by chance, not by design, and if it is provocative – which it will surely be – then I would hope that others will correct such errors in judgment as they think I have made” (2).



What are those new dimensions? Mostly, they involve a character study of Flood. Weiss has little to say about Flood’s suit except to note that it served the interests of the Players’ Association rather than Flood’s and not much to say about Flood’s civil rights activity either. He regards the documents concerning Flood’s divorce “surely the most crucial source material for discussion the very heart of the story, the pressures that Flood could not handle>” These, along with suits against Flood’s photography business, he notes that Snyder made no use of; for Weiss, they are “most crucial” (246).

Weiss is also highly suspicious of Flood’s *The Way It Is*, calling it “an apologia, the story of Flood as the justifiably angry victim of persecution” (199). Weiss goes to considerable lengths – including visiting the Oakland neighborhood where Flood grew up, and High Point, the North Carolina town in which he played a year as a minor leaguer – to cite mitigating influences to life for an African American in the ghettos and the South in the fifties. In addition he calls into question Flood’s complaints about life on the Cardinals. He quotes Flood’s story about getting useless advice about hitting from Stan Musial. “But all the future Hall-of-Famer could give him, Flood recalled a decade later, were useless bromides that went: ‘Well, wait for a strike. Then you knock the shit out of it.’ Continuing to reflect on Musial’s advice, Flood said, ‘I might as well have asked a nightingale how to trill.’ This last was fair, but it was also a sad commentary, the more so as Flood had advised Bob Broeg of the *St. Louis*

Post-Dispatch several years earlier that ‘Hutch helped me and especially Stan. Stand [sic] pointed out that by waiting on a pitch to go to the opposite field, you not only get a better look at the ball, but you also keep the defense spread’” (58). Weiss also gives two versions – Flood’s and Musial’s – of Flood’s being turned away from Musial’s restaurant. All this underlines Weiss’s contention that Flood is myth-making, creating the myth of himself as a martyred hero.

According to Weiss, Flood decided to sue Major League Baseball because of “an unusually complex personality, character, and set of life experiences – dare one say a sensitive psychological makeup that gave him a sense of victimization. And these underlying characteristics set the stage for a chain of events in which an apparent miscue in the 1968 World Series would cause Flood to unravel, to feud with the Cardinals and be traded a year later, then to react almost blindly by filing his lawsuit” (4). Weiss pictures Flood as being – not a selfless martyr – but someone who, as a result of what happens to him – racial prejudice, business reversals, family problems, alcoholism, letting the team down by committing a crucial error – “unravels,” acts irrationally and irresponsibly in pursuing his lawsuit.

Weiss himself sometimes seems uneasy about his conclusions. Although he sees him as fundamentally irrational and irresponsible in pursuing his suit, he also encounters positive qualities in Flood. For instance, at one point he characterizes Flood’s suit as “righteous” as well as “irresponsible” (232). He also finds himself admitting Flood *was* a victim. In discussing Flood’s time in High Point, Weiss points out that he was not universally rejected by whites, and suggests that Flood doesn’t include this in *The Way It Is* because “that would have detracted from his portrait of himself as a victim, which of course in some very real ways he was” (34).

Oddly, Weiss addresses the reader at the end of his Bibliographical Essay as follows: “you, the reader, must decide whether the story told in the chapters you have read [is] strongly sourced and whether they [the chapters] inform or mislead. That is why there are footnotes. That is why writers differ in their interpretations” (246). Weiss does use sources that Snyder doesn’t, and his book is “strongly sourced” – he uses them well – but it didn’t really change my picture of Flood gained from Snyder’s book. While Weiss certainly deepened my sense of Flood’s life being out of control, Snyder’s book had already convinced me of that. I find myself preferring Snyder’s cultural explanation to Weiss’s psychological one. Surely both would agree that Flood succeeded in “taking one for the team.”

Leverett T. Smith, Jr.
Rocky Mount, NC



Author Q&A: Sarah Freligh, poet

Sarah Freligh, a former sportswriter with the Philadelphia Inquirer recently published Sort of Gone, a collection of poems centering on the career of a veteran pitcher, both on and off the field.

RK: Why did you chose poetry over prose to tell your story?

SF: In early 1998, my mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer and I found I couldn’t write fiction to save my own life. I was nearing completion on a novel in stories as well as on eight or nine newer stories, but the prospect of immersing myself in all those words seemed impossible. At the time I was the marketing director at BOA Editions where I was reading all these wonderful poets like Kim Addonizio, Lucille Clifton, and Dorianne Laux. They were writing about the simplest things—feeding the cat on the back porch, for example—and managing to make the experience both inclusive and moving. So I started writing poetry and the early poems in *Sort of Gone* are what came out.

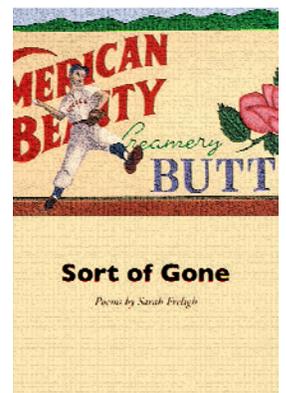


RK: Did you consider other formats, or did you always have poetry in mind?

SF: It was always intended to be poetry, though you could argue that some of the poems in the book are really short fictions. Also, many of the poems are written from the point of view of a limited omniscient narrator rather than the confessional “I” that drives much contemporary poetry. It’s wasn’t so much a choice as just the way it came out.

RK: When it comes to the craft of writing, do you constantly edit, go through multiple drafts, or do you find first shot is best shot? Do you agonize over every word, since there are obviously so many permutations?

SF: I scribble a lot in notebooks. After a while, when I’ve forgotten what I loved or hated about it, I’ll type it into the computer and then start fooling around. I love the sounds of words, the physicality of words. I fool around for a long time, but it’s not agonizing. It’s a luxury I didn’t have when I was a sportswriter writing on 15-minute deadlines. I would read what I had written the next day and be full of regrets at having to be good enough.



RK: Was the ballplayer based on an actual pitcher?

SF: While the character of Al Stepanky is largely fictional, some of his experiences are real—or “ripped from the headlines,” in the words of Law and Order. The poem “Minor League” is based on a real incident that I heard about secondhand. Some minor league players who lived in the apartment building next to mine had a wild party one night during which a player punched a hole in the living room wall. He was far too drunk to risk a trip to the emergency room, so he “cast his hand in masking tape,” just like the poem says. I don’t know if anyone signed it; that’s the fictional part.

RK: Tell me about your career as a sportswriter.

SF: I started out at a very small daily in Illinois. From there, I went back to graduate school at University of South Carolina where I got a Master’s in Mass Communication. I spent a couple years in Fort Myers, Florida, covering the Miami Dolphins, the Kansas City Royals, who at the time had their spring training complex in Fort Myers, and the Fort Myers Royals of the Florida State League. From there I went to the Philadelphia Inquirer where I covered Penn State football, boxing, Olympic sports, and tennis.

RK: Do you think that experience helped the book, or did it make no difference, since the mediums are so different?

SF: I think any writing, if it’s going to recreate experience rather than just report on experience, demands that the writer pay attention. Whether you’re writing sports or a sestina, you’re recreating a world for the reader. And it has to be a very particularized, non-generic world, so you better pay attention.

RK: What is the significance of the title?

SF: It’s the title of one of the poems, so named because the rather eccentric pitcher in the poem offers up several equivocal observations prefaced by “sort of.” I also think of it as the “sort of” netherworld where a ballplayer finds himself at the end of his career. His body has retired, his mind has not. He’s “sort of gone.”

Ron Kaplan

Lowenfish wins Seymour Medal

Lee Lowenfish received the Seymour Medal for his biography Branch Rickey: The Ferocious Gentleman. Following are his remarks at the SABR Convention in Cleveland.

SABR has been an important part of my life for 30 years and winning the Seymour Medal for my biography of Branch Rickey is a great thrill and honor. Especially when I consider the competition of such fine books as Norman Macht’s *Connie Mack and the Early Years of Baseball* and Adrian Burgos’ study of Latin Americans and the color line, *Playing the Game*.

Let me share briefly some indelible experiences in my life as a SABR member. I will never forget my first national SABR meeting in 1978 when I drove the former National League catcher Charlie Hargreaves from his home on the Jersey Shore to the gathering in Paramus in northern New

Jersey. He greeted me, a total stranger at his door, with the warm exclamation, “You’re a *big* bastard, aren’t you?” Four years later at the Baltimore national convention, *Sports Illustrated* bestowed upon me a “They Said It” quote of the week: “They call us baseball nuts but they forget a nut is a very fine fruit.” I doubt they would use that quote today but I trust you understand the good-natured spirit of my remark.

I think this morning of many of the SABR members who influenced and befriended me and though now gone from this earth will never be forgotten. Tony Lupien, the Harvard graduate and former major league first baseman who I met at the Paramus meeting in 1978, shortly thereafter became my collaborator on the first edition of *The Imperfect Diamond*, our labor history of baseball. Tony died nearly four years ago, but his funeral at the chapel on the Dartmouth campus where he had coached for many years was a beaut, as we would have called it, with a Dixieland band performing and former players and colleagues remembering him with love and passion. Though Tony was not enthusiastic about my interest in telling the full story of Branch Rickey (very few players who lived in the age of the perpetual reserve clause have been), Tony remains an enduring influence as someone who believed deeply in the values and meaning of baseball, its rituals, and challenges.

I think this morning also of Joseph Overfield, Buffalo’s official baseball historian, who was a stellar researcher and writer and whose correspondence was an inspiration for me. I treasure the memory of meeting him in Buffalo and being his guest at a Bisons game at the then-new Pilot Field (which, alas, goes by another name today).

I think today of another SABR pioneer, Dr. Stanley Grosshandler of Raleigh, NC, once a team doctor in Milwaukee and a most fluent writer and a generous correspondent who shared with me the views of his acquaintances who both adored and did not adore Branch Rickey.

And I recall as well this morning Eugene Murdock of Marietta College whose biography of one of Marietta’s most famous alumni Ban Johnson is a must on any SABR member’s bookshelf. How the baseball gods must shine on Murdock, the teacher of future major league pitchers Kent Tekulve and Terry Mullholland.

I think too of another SABR stalwart Gene Karst, a sportswriter and later a United States Information Association official who lived almost 98 full years. Gene was a wonderful raconteur whose stories of being hired by Branch Rickey’s Cardinals as a 24-year-old publicity assistant in 1931 and his insights into Rickey’s character aided my biography tremendously.

If you have never written a book, you have no idea how many people aid the process. Special thanks to those at the University of Nebraska Press who had faith in this project from the outset, notably Dan Ross, now at the University of Alabama Press, and his successor, acquisitions editor Rob Taylor and his then-assistant Nina Shevchuk-Murray who saw it to completion. And warm thanks to the many SABR members and friends who have extended their congratulations and pointed out errors that I will make every effort to correct in the forthcoming paperback edition.

Unfortunately, I never met Branch Rickey who died a few years before the creation of SABR. I have no doubt, though, that he would have encouraged its birth and growth

and would have spoken to us many times and suggested new pathways for research and writing while recruiting new members. Because of the warm and insightful memories of his children and grandchildren, I feel pleased that I was able to recreate his life spirit and to present what one of his Continental League colleagues implored me to produce: “a fair likeness.” God, baseball, and family were interchangeable to Branch Rickey. Though he was a farm-raised Christian believer who created a large family with his wife Jane Moulton Rickey, and I was bred in a small family in the heart of New York City and am a childless Jewish agnostic, it is the spirit of baseball that unites use across the generations and beyond the divides of politics.

I thank you again for recognizing my effort in bringing back to life in the memorable words of a bemused Brooklyn fan a “man of many faucets, all running at once,” someone who was one of the slyest men who ever lived but in all fundamentals a man of honor.

Thank you for my honor.

New chapter for former *Times* sportswriter

Murray Chass was a staple of *The New York Times*' sports section for almost 40 years. With the state of the newspaper industry currently in flux, he was one of more than 100 staff members of the august publication to receive a buyout.

“Basically what they were trying to do — like so many baseball teams — is shed payroll,” said Chass in a phone interview from a recent vacation in Cape May.

Chass, who joined the *Times* in 1969, had no plans to retire when the offer was made. “I wasn’t sure how long I was going to work, but I wasn’t ready to quit writing,” said the 69-year old columnist. “But it was too good [an offer] to pass up. It was a little difficult, but you make the decision to move on.”

Not one to let any grass grow under his feet, Chass created his own Web site (MurrayChass.com) as an outlet for his baseball musings. “I’m enjoying it. I’m writing three or four columns a week. I don’t have a boss, I don’t have anyone telling me what I can and can’t

do, and I write pretty much what I please.”

Chass was spurred by the numerous e-mails and correspondences from loyal readers telling him how much they would miss his work. “I figured, if they wanted to continue reading, I would give them the opportunity.”

Chass is not in it for the payday, either from his own work or through advertising revenue on the site. “I don’t expect to make any....It’s doing something I enjoy doing.”

A “newby” at the Internet game, Chass admits he “would like to do a better job in getting the word out. I’m sure there are a lot of people who would go to the site if they knew about it. Someone suggested I should take out an

ad in the *Times* but I’m sure they would run [it],” he said, tongue in cheek.

Chass goes to great pains to make clear that his on-line presence is *not* a blog. “To me, the blog has a bad connotation because anybody can write [one], and just about everybody does.” His main complaint has been that most bloggers have no real journalism experience; they haven’t done research or interviews and are just spouting opinions, and doing it without much grace or panache.

Recently, Buzz Bissinger, author of *Friday Night Lights* and *Three Nights in August*, appeared on the HBO sports program *Costas Now* on a panel discussion about the role of blogs in sports reporting. He entered into a heated exchange with Will Leitch, at the time the editor of *Deadspin.com*, a blog devoted to sports gossip. In an obscenity-filled on-air tirade, Bissinger called Leitch and his ilk to task for poor journalistic ethics and quality.

Chass echoed Bissinger’s sentiments. “I think newspaper people look down at the blogs because we have spent our lives learning the craft, learning how to do it the right way and most bloggers have the ability and opportunity to just go online and do whatever they want. They have no accountability. I would like to see a blog that runs a correction.”

He has been the target of indignation by younger fans and those who put great stock in the plethora of statistics; Chass has been called, among other things, a “dinosaur.”

“I have not encountered a blogger who’s doing what I’m doing, writing columns that have ideas and that are well-thought out. On the other hand, people say I generalize too much and that I should not generalize. I’ve probably looked at a dozen blogs and haven’t found anything worthwhile ... to go back to read them.

“I think the Internet today has changed people’s mindsets so much, especially the younger crowd will latch on to anything that’s on the Internet. It’s sort of scary, as far as I’m concerned.” He takes no comfort in the fact his the *Times*’ features several blogs on its Web site.

“You don’t have to remind me.... The *Times* has gone crazy with blogs and I think that’s unfortunate because the reporters are spending on their times on their blogs when they should be out digging up news.”

With his many years in the game, Chass would seem like natural to come out with a baseball book. But while still an employee of the *Times*, he would not consider it, following his ethics that one can’t serve two masters. His loyalty was admirable, if now seemingly misplaced. Now that he has some extra time, he is considering that long overdue book, but not the one some might have expected.

“One of my thoughts has been for some time to write children’s books. Not novels, but for really young kids, the kind that we read to out children and they read now to their children. It’s something I will get to soon, probably the first thing I will work on.”

Ron Kaplan

Please send articles, reviews, and suggestions to Ron Kaplan at Ronk23@aol.com. Please put “For SABR Newsletter” in the subject line.
