

THE BALTIMORE CHOP



SABR Babe Ruth Chapter

Vol. 3, No. 1

Spring 2019

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President's Message

When Vlad Guerrero Jr. doubled in Toronto in his major-league debut, my mind went to how many sons of major-leaguers are playing professional baseball right now.

It's rare when the son outperforms his father, but it's easy to see why the possibility of the next Ken Griffey Jr. whets a fan's appetite when a familiar name pops up in a box score. As of this writing, on 2019 MLB rosters alone, we have 20! (See Page 3)

It appears that baseball is in good hands for a long time.



O's 1956 Home Opener: Something's Odd

The Orioles played their 1956 home opener on April 20, and it was captured by a *Sunpapers* photographer.

Jim Considine takes a deep look at the photo from that day's *Evening Sun* (he bought a copy from *The Sun* and colorized it), at the ceremonies and those who took part, how the Orioles' third season turned

out, and what it says about the world of professional sports circa 1956.

Something is a little odd here. Read on to discover.

Behind the Photo ▶ Page 6



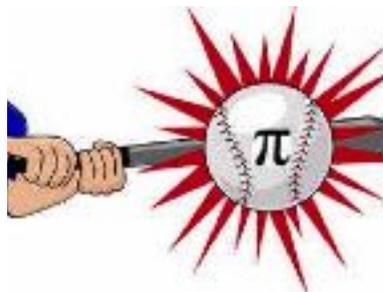
Vlad Guerrero Jr. and Sr.

The Ballplayer Who Batted Pi

By Wayne Patterson

March 14, 2019—I confess that what follows is somewhat autobiographical.

I wanted to write this today because it is the 14th of March, and in recent years many schools—and the National Baseball Hall of Fame[1] in Cooperstown, have celebrated what has come to be known as “Pi Day”. For many of you around the world, this may not make good deal of sense, because of the way you usually write numerically the 14th day of March: 2019.14.03, for example. But in some countries, and in particular in the United States, the normal shorthand for a day of the year is more commonly written 3/14, or 3.14—and, of course, many of us, as a first approximation, think



Pi▶ Continued on Page 8

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Getting to Know...Peter Coolbaugh

In each issue, we will profile one of our members.

Chapter Vice President Peter Coolbaugh's baseball roots formed in Pennsylvania. He's from West Pittston, outside Scranton, and his first baseball game was at Philadelphia's Veterans Stadium around 1984.

He lives in Baltimore, works as a litigation paralegal and calls the Orioles (and Cubs) his favorite teams. His favorite ballparks are Oriole Park, Wrigley Field and, going back to Pennsylvania, PNC Park in Pittsburgh. But his favorite baseball memories are elsewhere—seeing Game 3 of the 2008 World Series with his father in Philadelphia and proposing to his wife in 2012 at the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown.

Coolbaugh's favorite players are Babe Ruth, Hank Aaron and Cal Ripken Jr.

A SABR member December 2007, it's no surprise that two of his hobbies are watching baseball and reading baseball books. His other hobbies are cat rescue, volunteering and traveling.

Something most people don't know about him is that he is a cancer survivor. Coolbaugh was diagnosed with advanced Stage III multiple myeloma in May 2016, which also caused kidney failure. A year of treatments and dialysis followed. A stem cell transplant in April 2017 enabled him to get off dialysis a few months later, and he has been in stringent complete remission from the cancer since.



Peter Coolbaugh hanging out at his favorite parks.

Calendar

Regularly scheduled events

Peeps @ The Peeb

Conversation, nibbles, libations
First Wednesday of the month, 7-9 PM
Peabody Heights Brewery, 401 E. 30th St., Baltimore

Talkin' Baseball

Since 1999, Bob Davids Chapter hosts a guest speaker
First Saturday of the month, 9 AM
Bighton Gardens, 7110 Minstrel Way, Columbia
OR Vantage House, 5400 Vantage Point Rd., Columbia
(venue will be listed in the meeting announcement)

Called Shot lunch

BYO lunch and talk baseball
Third Wednesday of the month, noon
Babe Ruth Museum, 216 Emory St., Baltimore

June

1: Talkin' Baseball, Cesar Brioso, "Last Seasons in Havana: The Castro Revolution and the End of Professional Baseball in Cuba"

1: Orioles game (vs. Giants) and outing

5: Peeps @ The Peeb

19: Called Shot lunch

26-30: SABR 49, San Diego

July

3: Peeps @ The Peeb

6: Talkin' Baseball, Roberta Newman, "Here's the Pitch: The Amazing, True, New, and Improved Story of Baseball and Advertising."

17: Called Shot lunch

August

Minor-league game and outing in Delaware, co-sponsored by the Connie Mack Chapter; details TBA

3: Talkin' Baseball, David Briscoe "Black Thursday, Blue Monday: In Search of the Curse of the Washington Nationals (a Baseball Whodunit)."

Chapter News

Michelle Freeman One of Six Inaugural SABR Ambassadors

Chapter Secretary Michelle Freeman was recently appointed to the inaugural class of six SABR Membership Ambassadors selected by SABR's Board of Directors and staff. SABR Membership Ambassadors will assist in the recruitment and retention of members, as well as to create meaningful connections and provide leadership opportunities outside chapter and research committee constructs.

SABR Membership Ambassadors will assist new members by providing a personal touch and perspective. They will call and/or email new members within a defined geographic area and inform them about how they can maximize their membership and how to get started in their primary areas of interest. Ambassadors should expect to answer follow-up questions from new members as necessary, but within reason. In addition, ambassadors will be asked to share ideas and provide leadership regarding membership recruitment efforts.

Congratulations, Michelle!

Son of a Ballplayer ...

(See President's Message, Page 1)

Son	Team	Father	Career
Cam Bedrosian	Angels	Steve Bedrosian	1981-1985
Cody Bellinger	Dodgers	Clay Bellinger	1999-2002
Brett Bochy	Giants	Bruce Bochy	1978-1987
Michael Brantley	Astros	Mickey Brantley	1986-1989
Peter Bourjos	Angels	Chris Bourjos	1980
Robinson Cano	Mets	Jose Cano	1989
C.J. Cron	Twins	Chris Cron	1991-1992
Delino DeShields	Rangers	Delino DeShields	1990-2002
Dee Gordon	Mariners	Tom Gordon	1988-2009
Vladimir Guerrero Jr.	Blue Jays	Vladimir Guerrero	1996-2011
Jose Martinez	Cardinals	Carlos Martinez	1988-1995
Adalberto Mondesi	Royals	Raul Mondesi	1993-2005
Joe Pederson	Dodgers	Stu Pederson	1985
Dereck Rodriguez	Giants	Ivan Rodriguez	1991-2011
Austin Romine	Yankees	Kevin Romine	1985-1991
Travis Shaw	Brewers	Jeff Shaw	1990-2001
Dwight Smith Jr.	Orioles	Dwight Smith	1989-1996
Fernando Tatis Jr.	Padres	Fernando Tatis	1997-2010
Neil Walker	Marlins	Tom Walker	1972-1977
Chad Wallach	Marlins	Tim Wallach	1980-1996

Books from a Hall of Famer

Two SABR chapters have gotten a trove of baseball books with a Hall of Fame provenance.

In April, my husband and I were in Michigan helping go through his aunt's house, mostly sorting books and records. She was the widow of Tigers Hall of Famer Charlie Gehringer, so there were a lot of baseball books (the other nieces and nephews had already looked through the books). Some were obviously gifts from authors (at least one of whom personalized it "To Charley"). We sorted the baseball books into Detroit and general and offered to contact the Detroit SABR chapter about the Detroit-oriented books.

We carted three boxes of baseball books back to Maryland, one with Detroit material and two with some Hall of Fame programs, Cooperstown journals and general baseball books. I contacted SABR Detroit President Peter Hoyos, who was thrilled: The chapter gives books to its trivia contest winners, and books that belonged to a local Hall of Famer was unexpected. I sent the box, Peter insisted on reimbursing me for shipping. I joked that I'd settle for a T-shirt; he still sent a check with the shirt and said to make it a contribution to our chapter.

So, three boxes of baseball books have found good homes, with the Baltimore Babe Ruth Chapter inheriting two boxes and a little cash.

--Ruth Sadler

How DiMaggio Became a Switch-Hitter (on Paper)

By Phil Hochberg

Every baseball fan—well, almost every baseball fan—knows that Hall of Famer Joe DiMaggio had one of the picture-perfect right-handed swings. And every baseball fan—well, again, almost every baseball fan—knows that left-handed catchers are exceedingly rare. (The last left-hander whose primary position was catcher played 120 years ago.) Apparently, the editors 18 years ago at Harper Perennial Modern Classics never got the word.

What's the connection between SABR and the arts? Bear with me.

In the course of his 56-game hitting streak in 1941—in the June 29 doubleheader in Washington's Griffith Stadium—DiMaggio was captured by an unknown *New York Times* photographer as he sought to break George Sisler's modern-day record 41-game hitting streak.



The *New York Times* photograph.

DiMaggio went on to hit in 56 consecutive games, a record has never been seriously challenged.

In 1974, *Sports Illustrated* developed a "Living Legends" art series of great sports figures. Well-known artist Harvey Dinnerstein created a 24x32 oil painting of the iconic photo and named it "Wide Swing," perhaps the best-known baseball painting ever. The original was available for \$90,000, a small price when compared to the Honus Wagner baseball card, but likely beyond the budget of most sports fans.



Harvey Dinnerstein's painting.

DiMaggio ► Continued on Page 11

Major League All-Stars' 1934 Goodwill Tour to Japan

By Fred Glueckstein

After the 1934 World Series, a group of major-league baseball stars led by Babe Ruth traveled from the United States for a goodwill tour of the Orient with visits in Honolulu, Japan, Shanghai and Manila. The trip to Japan by the Americans was the brainchild of Matsutarō Shōriki, who owned the *Yomiuri Shinbun* newspaper. Shōriki wanted to see how popular and successful baseball could be with the Japanese population, and he organized the exhibition with professional American baseball players.

Before that, other teams from the United States had come to Japan. There were tours by non-professional American "all-star" teams in 1908, 1913, 1920, 1922 and 1931. The American teams played Japanese amateur or college baseball clubs. John D. Shibe, vice president of the Philadelphia Athletics, organized the 1934 tour to the Orient. The selection of the team's manager, American League stars and support staff for the team were Shibe's immediate charge.

Dramatic news about the trip was reported on July 6, 1934, by *The Washington Post* under the headline: Babe Ruth to Play On Tour of World. It read in part: "The famous right fielder of the New York Yankees said he would accept the invitation of John Shibe to join the outfit which will go to Japan. Mrs. Ruth will accompany him. The team expects to go around the world, playing its final game in France." The next major announcement addressed who was to manage the team. On August 24, 1934, *The New York Times* answered the question, reporting from Philadelphia: "MACK TO TOUR ORIENT: Will Accompany Ruth's Major Leaguers Abroad This Fall." The article read in part: "Connie Mack, manager of the Athletics, disclosed today that he will accompany the good-will tour of big-league baseball stars to the Orient this Fall and that [field] manager of the team will be George Herman (Babe) Ruth."

Besides Connie Mack and the Babe, there were 13 additional ballplayers: Lou Gehrig and Lefty Gomez, Yankees; Jimmie Foss, Eric McNair, Bing Miller, Joe Cascarella, Harold "Rabbit" Warstler and Frankie Hayes (who replaced injured teammate Charlie Berry), Athletics; Charlie Gehringer, Tigers; Earl Averill and Clint Brown, Indians; Moe Berg, Washington Nationals/Indians; and Earl Whitehill, Nationals.



1934 tour stars (Babe Ruth and Connie Mack Center)

Also making the trip were Johnny Quinn, a Southern League umpire who would work as the tour's umpire; E.E. Ebling of the Athletics, as trainer, and Robert J. Schroeder, assistant sec-

retary of the Athletics, as business manager. As reported by the *Chicago Daily Tribune* on October 12, 1934, the tour party amounted to 36.

On October 20, the Americans left from Vancouver, British Columbia, on the ocean liner, RMS Empress of Japan. The ocean liner's destination was Yokohama, Japan. On October 25, the Empress of Japan arrived in Honolulu where the team played one game at National Stadium against a selected team from the Hawaiian Islands. With 25,000 in attendance, the All Americans won, 8-1. Gehrig had a home run.

As the ocean liner approached Yokohama after six days at sea, Foreign Minister Okada Hirota sent wireless messages welcoming the United States baseball stars to Japan. A crowd of 5,000 fans lined the Yokohama pier waving American or Japanese flags. Attending the welcoming ceremonies aboard the ship was a group of boys who played baseball for a school for the blind. Each boy read a line of greeting from a Braille card. Ruth left the other players and hugged each child.

On Friday, November 2, the team arrived in Tokyo by train for Sunday's opening game. During the trip from Tokyo station to the Imperial Hotel in open-top cars, police reserves were called, as a crowd estimated between 100,000 and 500,000 crowded the Ginza to greet the Babe and his teammates.

Confetti and streamers were thrown from the buildings and the Stars and Stripes and Japan's Rising Sun were displayed all over. Ruth enjoyed the heartfelt greeting and grinned while shaking outstretched hands as the enthusiastic Japanese fans yelled, "Banzai! Banzai!, Babe Ruth." (Banzai means (may you live) 10,000 years.)



Babe Ruth waves to fans in Tokyo.

The Americans' opponents on the tour were present and former players from the Big-Six University League created in 1925. Before the establishment of the Japanese Baseball League in 1936 and the subsequent development of Nippon Professional Baseball, the Big-Six University League was considered the highest level of baseball in Japan. The league's members were Hosei University, Keio University, Meiji University, Rikkyo University, University of Tokyo and Waseda University.

The tour opened on Sunday, November 4 with 65,000 in attendance at Meiji Jingu Stadium in Tokyo. As they did throughout the tour, the Americans allowed their hosts to bat first; that way, they would not have to bat in the ninth inning and likely inflate the run difference. The Americans defeated

Japan Tour ▶ Continued on Page 12

Orioles Opening Day, April 20, 1956 – Tales Behind the Photo

By Jim Considine

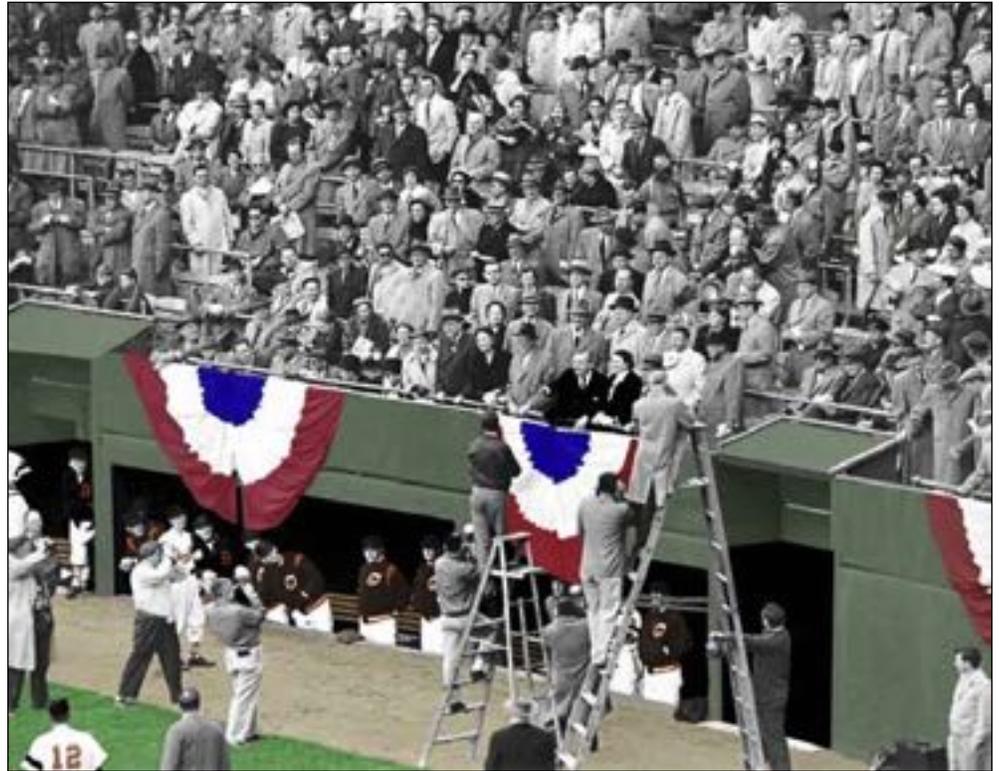
This photo depicts Baltimore Mayor Tommy D'Alesandro Jr. tossing out the ceremonial first pitch at the Orioles' 1956 home opener vs. the Washington Nationals. The mayor is accompanied by his wife Nancy. The gentleman in the dark topcoat to his right is Gov. Theodore Roosevelt McKeldin and his wife Honolulu. The Republican governor and Democratic mayor attended many events together in Baltimore. McKeldin had served as mayor for one term in the mid-'40s and would serve a second term in the early 1960s.

The Orioles had opened the season with a three-game sweep in Boston. Paul Richards (#12), beginning his second season as manager, is in the lower left corner. He is the only Orioles field manager who also performed the duties of general manager. His team has been the worst hitting team in the eight-team American League since moving to Baltimore in 1954. In 1955, he inherited a team that finished in seventh place, 1½ games ahead of the last-place Philadelphia Athletics. The A's moved to greener pastures in Kansas City in 1955 as they passed the O's in the standings, bettering their record by six victories.

In the 1956 season, Washington would drop into last place. The post-World War II Nats finished in the AL's second division 14 out of 15 seasons. A novel about their futility (*The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant*) became the hit Broadway musical *Damn Yankees*. In the late '50s, after finishing last in four of five seasons, they moved to Minnesota. Sitting on their bench on this opening day is a future Hall of Famer, 20-year-old Harmon Killebrew, and a 22-year-old Cuban, Camilo Pascual, who would be the best pitcher in the Senators organization since Walter Johnson.

Several of the Orioles in this photo are wearing jackets from the 1953 St. Louis Browns (the jackets came with the purchase of the franchise). The notion of a baseball team wearing another team's uniform is unthinkable in the majors today. However, in 1956, I doubt if anyone noticed except for the newspaper people who were covering the first-pitch ceremony. Only the fans who had the best seats, closest to the field and had a good angle to look into the Orioles dugout, could detect the wardrobe malfunction. The brisk weather probably occupied the minds of the fans in attendance. Nary a word was reported in the sports pages of *The Sun*. For the folks who were watching the game on their home television or at the local tavern were watching a black and white, over-the-air broadcast on WBAL-TV. Identifying the details of a logo on a garment worn in the dugout would be impossible based on the quality of the picture on the screen. The details you are seeing is a result of a high-resolution scan of an 11" x 17" photo that was purchased from *The Sun*. This picture was partially colorized to make the Browns jacket stand out.

Why were the Orioles wearing Browns 1953 jackets? The play-



The photograph of the first pitch ceremony is from the Baltimore Evening Sun Sports, Page 1, above the fold photograph that ran on Saturday, April 21, 1956. This particular copy is a high-resolution scan from an 11" x 17" copy purchased from the Sun. The limited colorization is the author's handywork. The photograph was originally discovered by the Uni-Watch blog, <https://uni-watch.com/>

ers were cold, and the jackets supplied by the Orioles were thin windbreakers without much insulation. The 1953 Browns jacket, though, was made from wool that would stand up to the chill. The weather on this opening day was a brisk 52 degrees with a steady 20 mph wind out of the north-northwest (a wind chill of 44 degrees) which was blowing straight into the Orioles dugout.



In 1956, baseball teams did not supply clothing that provided comfort for every sort of weather imaginable. You made do with what the team issued. The teams that drew the biggest crowds had the money for extra player comforts, and Baltimore was sixth of eight in AL attendance.

The 29,083 fans who braved the chill only had to face the elements for a quick nine-inning game. The Orioles defeated the Senators, 3-2, in 2 hours and 9 minutes plus the pomp and

Photo ► Continued on Page 10

It Happened in Baltimore

By Mike Huber

Fans of the Baltimore Orioles in the '60s, '70s and '80s knew that "Pitching, Defense and Three-Run Homers" epitomized manager Earl Weaver's approach to winning games. The Birds were winning games, led by Hall of Famers Brooks and Frank Robinson, Jim Palmer and a great supporting cast. The SABR game essay [May 16, 1965: Orioles rookie Jim Palmer hits first career homer and earns first career win](#) spotlights the memorable beginning of a great career for Palmer as one example of Orioles baseball.

The tall right-hander truly earned the victory, both offensive-

ly and defensively. His first career home run tied the game, and his pitching stopped the Yankees from blowing the game wide open. In his 19-season career, "Cakes" hit only two other home runs, but his first was memorable because it came in the game in which he earned his first big-league victory.

At SABR, the Games Project captures baseball history one game at a time. Become a part of that history by writing a game essay. Details are available at the [Games Project](#).

(Mike Huber is the Chair of the Games Project Committee. Visit the [Author's Page](#).)

Orioles Career Leaders (through 2018 season)

At-bats	
Cal Ripken	11,551
Brooks Robinson	10,654
Eddie Murray	7,075
Adam Jones	6,385
Brady Anderson	6,271
Boog Powell	5,912
Mark Belanger	5,734
Paul Blair	5,606
Nick Markakis	5,331
Brian Roberts	5,214

Home runs	
Cal Ripken	431
Eddie Murray	343
Boog Powell	303
Brooks Robinson	268
Adam Jones	263
Chris Davis	241
Rafael Palmeiro	223
Brady Anderson	209
Ken Singleton	182
Frank Robinson	179

Wins	
Jim Palmer	268
Dave McNally	181
Mike Mussina	147
Mike Cuellar	143
Mike Flanagan	141
Scott McGregor	138
Milt Pappas	110
Dennis Martinez	108
Steve Barber	95
Mike Boddicker	79
Scott Erickson	79

Saves	
Gregg Olson	160
Zack Britton	139
Jim Johnson	122
Tippy Martinez	105
Stu Miller	100
Jorge Julio	83
Russ Myers	76
Eddie Watt	74
Dick Hall	60
Tim Stoddard	57

Runs	
Cal Ripken	1,467
Brooks Robinson	1,232
Eddie Murray	1,084
Brady Anderson	1,044
Adam Jones	875
Brian Roberts	810
Boog Powell	796
Al Bumbry	772
Nick Markakis	749
Paul Blair	737

RBI	
Cal Ripken	1,695
Brooks Robinson	1,357
Eddie Murray	1,224
Boog Powell	1,063
Adam Jones	866
Ken Singleton	766
Brady Anderson	744
Rafael Palmeiro	701
Melvin Mora	662
Nick Markakis	658

ERA (500 innings)	
Stu Miller	2.37
Hoyt Wilhelm	2.42
Eddie Watt	2.74
Pat Dobson	2.78
Jim Palmer	2.86
Billy O'Dell	2.86
Dick Hall	2.89
Jim Hardin	2.95
Tom Phoebus	3.06
Robin Roberts	3.09

Innings pitched	
Jim Palmer	3,948
Dave McNally	2,652 ² / ₃
Mike Flanagan	2,317 ² / ₃
Scott McGregor	2,140 ² / ₃
Mike Cuellar	2,028 ¹ / ₃
Mike Mussina	2,009 ² / ₃
Dennis Martinez	1,775
Milt Pappas	1,632
Steve Barber	1,414 ² / ₃
Sidney Ponson	1,375 ¹ / ₃

Hits	
Cal Ripken	3,184
Brooks Robinson	2,848
Eddie Murray	2,080
Adam Jones	1,781
Brady Anderson	1,614
Boog Powell	1,574
Nick Markakis	1,547
Ken Singleton	1,455
Brian Roberts	1,452
Paul Blair	1,426

Batting average (1,200 AB)	
Roberto Alomar	.312
Miguel Tejada	.305
Bob Nieman	.301
Bob Boyd	.301
Harold Baines	.301
Frank Robinson	.300
Eddie Murray	.294
Javy Lopez	.293
B.J. Surhoff	.291
Tommy Davis	.291

Winning % (50 starts)	
Steve Stone	.656
Mike Mussina	.645
Jim Palmer	.638
Wally Bunker	.620
Mike Cuellar	.619
Dick Hall	.619
Dave McNally	.616
Alan Mills	.604
Milt Pappas	.598
Wei-Yin Chen	.590

Strikeouts	
Jim Palmer	2,212
Mike Mussina	1,535
Dave McNally	1,476
Mike Flanagan	1,297
Mike Cuellar	1,011
Milt Pappas	944
Steve Barber	918
Scott McGregor	904
Dennis Martinez	858
Chris Tillman	847

of π as 3.14. Of course, π is actually the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter.

It struck me that this confluence of events gives me pause to think back to my very early years and how my love of mathematics and my love of baseball were intertwined, and perhaps having in some way guided my path for most of my life. Was it my passion for baseball that somehow propelled me in the direction of becoming a mathematician? Or was it my fascination with the mathematical qualities of baseball that have made the game a continuing part of my life?

Just a bit of evidence from my very early years. From about the age of 3 onward, I followed the numbers in mathematics with a passion. My grandfather owned a drugstore and would bring home his weekly copy of *The Sporting News*, where my first experience in reading (and arithmetic) had to do with consuming all the box scores of the previous week as reported in *TSN*. And so it was, that I conceived of a way of maintaining baseball statistics, such as batting average, before I had ever heard of or certainly knew what was “long division”.

In short, what I did was for each potential divisor (or number of at-bats) up to, let’s say, 100: find the number of points on a batting average that would be assigned to each base hit if the batter had a given number of at-bats. For a simple example, a batter with 50 at-bats would have 20 points for each hit, thus 13-for-50 would be 20+20+20 ... 13 times, or .260.

For another example, a batter with 34 at-bats would have about 29 batting average points for every hit, so 9-for-34 should be around 29 added 9 times, around .261.

In the same timeframe, I attracted some attention in my small hometown in New Brunswick, Canada, for my reading

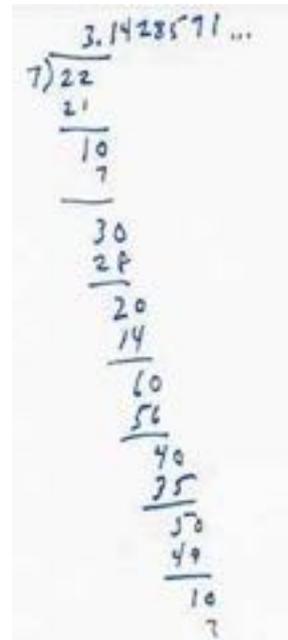


ability and was on the radio numerous times being asked to demonstrate what level I could read at age 3. A little later, I was interviewed not so much about reading but what we now call baseball trivia, by the sportscaster at our local radio station. I’m the smaller one in the photograph.

That radio broadcast led to an event when I was 5 years old and my father took me to Boston to see major-league baseball games with both the Red Sox and the Braves (yes, younger reader, the Braves were once the Boston Braves). I was interviewed again by the Boston media about baseball trivia, and between games of a Sunday doubleheader with the Red Sox, the Red Sox broadcaster, Bump Hadley, who had a pretty successful pitching career winning 161 games for several teams, most notably the Yankees, tried to stump me with the following question: “How many no-hit, no-run games has Bob Feller pitched?” When I answered “two”, he stopped me and said: “Well, I’m sorry, Wayne, but the answer is actually 3.” Then I responded that in one of Feller’s no-hitters, he gave up one run

but no hits, so therefore actually my answer two was correct. (You could look it up!) Hadley apologized to me and made clear that I had given the correct answer.

This thread of the earliest influence of my (as I thought) mathematical accomplishments and mastery of baseball trivia, I now realized has continued to influence my thinking throughout life. One more computation that I thought I discovered, I think around age 8 or 9, was when I found a brief article in our local newspaper reporting on a discovery that some mathematicians had been able to calculate π to around 200 decimal places (remember this was in the days when very few people had access to computers). So I took this on as a challenge and was amazed to discover that I could exceed the results that I had seen reported, and indeed even go much further, as follows:



Of course, I learned later that calculating 22/7 only gives a very rough approximation to π .

So, as I now contemplate this interrelationship between the body of knowledge that we call mathematics and the body of knowledge that we call baseball, I am struck by how much each influences the other.

For example: the Ruth-Aaron pair (Carl Pomerance)[2]; “The Housekeeper and the Professor” (Yoko Ogawa)[3]; Roy Hobbes *The Natural* (Bernard Malamud) [4]; the Hall of Fame’s exhibit on π Day; and, I humbly submit, my article in *Cryptologia* [5] on how to “decrypt” the coding system used by third-base coaches to signal batters and runners.

So this leads me to the title of this short article: The Ballplayer Who Batted Pi.

I imagined that there is some mystical ballplayer who actually achieved a career batting average of π , or .314..., going out to as many decimal places as necessary.

Of course, unlike the news article I read almost 70 years ago, the record for the number of decimal places of π is in the hundreds of thousands. But it begins with

3.14159 26535 89793 23846 26433 83270 ...

which is enough for our purpose. Then, of course, we’ll divide by 10 so it looks more like a batting average: .31459...

The question then stands: What real ballplayer has a career batting average that is as close as possible to the real value of π ? For a player to have done this over an extended period of time, the person had to have been fairly high up in the elite. In fact, the three closest are ranked 72nd to 74th all-time in career batting average.

Rank	Player	Career batting avg.	Hits	At-bats
72	Bibb Falk	.3145	1,463	4,652
73	Cecil Travis	.3142	1,544	4,914
74	Hank Greenberg	.3135	1,628	5,193

Cecil Travis is the closest to π in batting average. His career average is 0.000045... above π . He played in 14 seasons, all with the Washington Senators, from 1933 to 1947 minus

nearly four years of service in World War II, when he earned a Bronze Star. He was a three-time All-Star, was voted best shortstop, and batted over .300 eight times. Since he played exclusively for the Senators, he never was in a World Series.



Cecil Travis

winning two, and batting .318 overall. For his last season, 1947, the Tigers sold him to the Pittsburgh Pirates—where he was able to provide some encouragement to Brooklyn Dodgers rookie Jackie Robinson: “You’re a good ballplayer, and you’ll do all right. ... Always remember to keep your head up.”

Bibb Falk, 12 years as an outfielder, mostly with the Chicago White Sox from 1920 to 1931, was also very close to π , batting 0.00033 above the “ π -Line”. An interesting aspect of Falk’s career was in his debut season of 1920, he was a teammate of all eight players eventually banned from baseball in the “Chicago Black Sox 1919” scandal, subject of the book and film *Eight Men Out* [6].

We can extend this a little further, not to leave out the importance of pitching in the game. Although a whole new family of baseball statistics (slash lines, WAR, ÖBP) has emerged, I’ll stick with the tried-and-true. What real pitcher has an ERA closest to e , the base for natural logarithms, or 2.7181828...?

The answer is Ned Garvin (*The Navasota Tarantula*), yielding 423 earned runs in his $1,400\frac{2}{3}$ innings over seven seasons from 1896 to 1904, for an ERA of 2.72 (more precisely: 2.717991432...) with six major-league teams. Thus, his career ERA was 0.0002903 higher than e . In his best season, 1903, he won 15 games for the Brooklyn Superbas (Dodgers) of the National League.

It would be nice to have a pleasant story about Garvin, but in reality, he was pretty terrible: attempted murder of an African-American, knifing another person in a bar, stomping a beer glass on another player’s face, and more.

Now it should be said that the answers to the previous questions can only be approximations. There will never be a ballplayer whose batting average will be π , and never a pitcher whose ERA will be e . For those readers who are not mathematicians, all batting averages, ERAs, fielding percentages, WHIPs and so on, fall into the category of the rational numbers. The property of the number being rational does not have to do with whether the number makes sense or not, but rather that it can be expressed as the ratio or the quotient of two integers. Since all of the aforementioned statistics involved dividing an integer (number of hits, number earned runs allowed, number of walks plus hits, etc., etc.) by another integer (number of at-bats, number of innings pitched, etc.), every such statistic is a rational number.

However, again to explain for the non-mathematicians,

neither π nor e is rational, by which we mean (among other things) that the decimals never repeat.

But all is not lost in trying to identify these mystical ballplayers, because one of the fascinating relationships in mathematics is that if you take e , and raise it to an exponent $2\pi i$ (where i is the square root of -1) you get the following remarkable expression:

$$e^{2\pi i} = 1.$$

I’d love to explain this to the non-mathematicians, but that would be another paper by itself. Therefore, we have some real ballplayers who actually achieved a career batting average of $e^{2\pi i}$, 84 of them, but only one had as many as three at-bats (3-for-3, 1.000): John Paciorek.

On September 29, 1963, John played his only game at the age of 18 against the New York Mets. He went 3-for-3 with two walks, three RBIs and four runs. A back injury cut short his career. John is truly the “The One Game Wonder.” John Paciorek is the oldest of three brothers who all played in the majors. Brother Tom played 18 years for six teams.

Footnotes/Comments

- [1] <https://baseballhall.org/learn/get-your-geek-on-pi-day>.
- [2] Nelson, C.; Penney, D. E.; and Pomerance, C. “714 and 715.” *J. Recr. Math.* 7, 87-89, 1974. On Aaron-Ruth numbers. For those not intimately familiar with the intersection of baseball and mathematics, noted number theorist and baseball fan (and acquaintance) Carl Pomerance observed, when Henry Aaron hit his 715th home run, eclipsing the then-record of 714 by Babe Ruth, an interesting property of the numbers 714 and 715: consecutive integers, the sum of whose factors are equal:
 $714 = 2 \times 3 \times 7 \times 17$; sum = $2 + 3 + 7 + 17 = 29$;
 $715 = 5 \times 11 \times 13$; sum = $5 + 11 + 13 = 29$.
- [3] Ogawa, Yōko, *The Housekeeper and the Professor*, Shinchosha 2003. English translation by Stephen Snyder (2009). Novel about a number theory professor who suffers brain damage from a car accident, and subsequently can only remember things for 80 minutes at a time. His baseball hero is Yutaka Enatsu, an actual southpaw pitcher in Japanese professional baseball from 1967 to 1984, with a career ERA of 2.49 and with the still-record 401 strikeouts in 1968 for the Hanshin Tigers. Wearing uniform number 28, in part he is the professor’s favorite player because 28 is the second smallest perfect number, that is, the sum of its proper divisors is the number itself:
 $1 + 2 + 4 + 7 + 14 = 28$.
- The novel, though not well known outside of Japan, was the first recipient of the Hon’ya Taisho award (Japan Booksellers Award), was adapted into a film version in January 2006, and after being published in paperback in December 2005, sold one million copies in two months, faster than any other Shinchosha paperback. The novel’s bibliography lists the book *The Man Who Loved Only Numbers*, a biography of the prolific Hungarian mathematician Paul Erdős. (Mathematicians in theory all have an “Erdős Number”. Mine is 2.)
- [4] Malamud, Bernard, *The Natural*, Harcourt Brace and Company, 1952. Also the 1984 film by the same name starring Robert Redford as Roy Hobbes. It is well-known that the shooting of Roy Hobbes that begins the plot is based on real-life shooting of Phillies first baseman Eddie Waitkus.
- [5] Patterson, Wayne, *The Cryptology of Baseball*, *Cryptologia*, 35:1-7, 2011. I describe an effective way of stealing third-base coaches’ signals after gathering and analyzing maybe half a game’s worth of signals.
- [6] Asinof, Eliot, *Eight Men Out*, Henry Holt, 1963. 1988 film

Photo ► From Page 6

circumstance of opening day.

There was also a 30-second moment of silence for the Senators longtime owner, Clark Griffith, who had died in the fall of 1955, and Orioles team treasurer, Howard Jones, who died earlier in the week. The Orioles are wearing black armbands for Jones.

At the time the photograph was taken, 11 Oriole players and coaches are in the dugout. The rest of the team is on the field awaiting the mayor's pitch. In 1956, the process of the first pitch involved tossing the ball to a gaggle of players who would compete to catch the ball. The *Sunpapers* reported that D'Alesandro (father of current U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi) had a motion "like a sore-armed infantryman pushing a

Pi ► From Page 9

of the same name by John Sayles starred a very realistic cast, in the baseball sense: D.B. Sweeney as Shoeless Joe, John Cusack as Buck Weaver, Charlie Sheen as Happy Felsch, and David Strathairn as Eddie Cicotte.

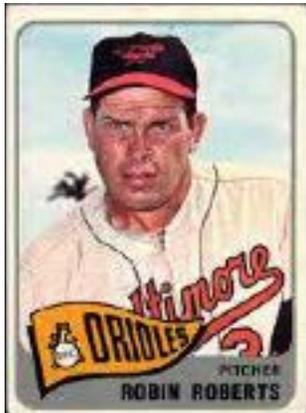
(Wayne Patterson received his Mathematics PhD from the University of Michigan. He taught mathematics at the Université de Moncton (en français) in his hometown of Moncton, New Brunswick, then taught computer science for 40 years at four universities until retiring from Howard University last year. He played baseball at all levels until college (no college baseball in his part of Canada) and has served as an official scorer for major-league, AAA, A and NCAA games (approximately 800 altogether), plus as a public address announcer and scoreboard operator. He has been invited for 19 presentations at the Hall of Fame Cooperstown Symposium, including the 2019 symposium: "Who's on First? Shakespeare, Franklin, Costello", the broader legacy of Abbott and Costello. He is the author of four books (three in computer science, one in baseball), including Behavioral Cybersecurity, published in May.)

Veterans ► From Page 4

the Orioles.

In approximately three years beginning with his arrival in Baltimore and ending with his release by the club on July 31, 1965, Roberts started 106 games and was credited with 42 victories. His ERA during that period ranged from a low of 2.78 to a high of 3.38, but equal significance should be given to the valuable advice he provided to a pitching staff featuring promising young pitchers Steve Barber, Dave McNally, Wally Bunker, Milt Pappas, Chuck Estrada and Jim Palmer. In a twist of fate, the emergence of several of these hurlers led to Roberts' eventual release.

The fact that three veterans of such distinction graced Memorial Stadium's field in the club's first decade near the Chesapeake Bay must be considered remarkable. And, best of all, the local team clearly benefited from the presence of all three, albeit in different ways.



hand grenade." The baseball he used was a replica of the ball used in 1876. It traveled about 40 feet.

Orioles starting pitcher Jim Wilson (12-18, 3.44 ERA, 235¹/₃ innings in 1955) may have been warming up with star catcher, Gus Triandos. In 1956, the teams would warm up their pitchers in Memorial Stadium's vast foul territory.

A question possibly was on fans' minds was whether the new, shorter, home run dimensions would improve the Orioles' anemic offensive output. Memorial Stadium opened in 1954 without a center-field fence. A simple barrier was erected after opening day with the deepest dimension set at 445 feet. Richards moved the fence in by 20 feet after one season as manager.

Memorial Stadium's center-field dimension was similar to that of the Polo Grounds (think of Willie Mays' catch in the 1954 World Series). The Orioles hit a total of 106 home runs in their first two seasons, last in the eight-team AL for this period. With the center-field fence at 410 feet and the power alleys at 405, the Orioles hit 91 homers in 1956 and Triandos became the first Oriole to hit more than 20 homers. It was still the fewest homers in the AL, but the Orioles also won 12 more games over the 1955 season. The pitchers ranked sixth of eight, but the boundaries that kept Orioles hitters in check were a big help for a lousy staff.

The Orioles were the butt of a joke in the 1957 hit movie *12 Angry Men*. Juror #7 played by Jack Warden is determined to finish his jury duty in time to get to Yankee Stadium to catch that night's game against the Indians. He engages in conversation with a Juror #5 (Jack Klugman), who admits being a Baltimore fan, leading to the line: "Baltimore? That's like being hit in the head with a crow bar once a day."

The 1956 Orioles had finished ahead of the Senators and Athletics, 16 games under .500. Wait until next year! The team saw gradual improvements until 1960, when the "bonus babies" started to mature as the Orioles gave Juror #9's Yankees a run for the pennant.

Tragedy would hit the Orioles on September 16 when Tom Gastall, a bonus baby catcher signed in 1955, was killed when his plane crashed into the Chesapeake Bay. Gastall had played quarterback at Boston University as well as baseball, and he was drafted by the NFL's Detroit Lions in 1955. Gastall, who had purchased the aircraft two months earlier, was trying to get enough flying time registered to upgrade from his student license, but he kept his flying a secret from the Orioles brass and many teammates. He wanted to be able to fly home to the Boston area after the season concluded. After a workout on the Orioles' day off, he went up. At 6:21 PM, he radioed the tower at Harbor Field that he was "going in the water". Search and rescue missions were conducted by the Coast Guard, Civil Air Patrol and Maryland Air National Guard. His body was recovered a week later. He was married and had a 15-month old son. Services were held on September 29 in his hometown of Fall River, Mass.

Triandos represented the Orioles players at the funeral while the team played Washington in the final series of the 1956 season. Gastall is the only Oriole on the active roster to die during the season.

Baltimorean Jim Considine is a member of the St. Louis Browns Historical Society & Fan Club. "I'm not sure how I got hooked up with them, but it was fun," he says. "They use me as a source when they have questions about the Orioles. When I showed them the picture of the 1956 Orioles wearing Browns gear, they were thrilled." However, his fan color choices are strictly Baltimore: "Baltimore Colts blue, Ravens purple, and Orioles orange."

In looking at it, you can almost feel DiMaggio driving the ball into deep center field. Dinnerstein was quoted as saying that the original painting depicted DiMaggio wearing long sleeves. Before the painting was published, so the report goes, Dinnerstein got a call from DiMaggio saying that he never wore long sleeves because his fans wanted to see his “rippling muscles.” Dinnerstein said that he then asked a muscular model to pose as he repainted DiMaggio’s arms.



Reversed! The promotional card for the cover of the first edition *Summer of '49* paperback.

From there, it only got worse. In May 1989, William Morrow had published *Summer of '49* by David Halberstam, one of the great writers of the late 20th century. Halberstam, who had written the definitive book on the Vietnam War—*The Best and the Brightest*—and other well-received books, took time out to write six books about sports. A *New York Times* book review praised *Summer of '49*:

Reconstructing the race of '49, Mr. Halberstam has gone behind the scenes and talked to every living veteran of the season except Joe DiMaggio, who the author says avoided his every approach. We learn of the tensions and passions that drove the two teams [the Yankees and the Red Sox], and the strengths and peculiarities of a remarkable cast of characters.

Wikipedia said: “...Halberstam depicted the 1949 Yankees and Boston Red Sox as symbols of a nobler era, when blue-collar athletes strove to succeed and enter the middle class, rather than making millions....”

A reviewer for New England Sports Network called it one of the five greatest baseball books ever.

The hardback edition used a dust jacket painting of a player sliding home, entitled “Sliding Home.” (The original artwork is owned by Patti and Jerry Sowalsky of Potomac, Md.) And the painting for that 1979 book was done by Harvey Dinnerstein.

Although it took 13 years for the paperback edition to come out, the publishers felt they had to use a different cover. They decided they would use another Dinnerstein painting for the cover. Given that DiMaggio was a key player in the 1949 season, a painting featuring him — “Wide Swing” — would be ideal.

But somehow, somehow...the classic painting was reversed and showed up on a promotional card with DiMaggio batting left-handed, with the Yankee logo reversed and in front

of a left-handed catcher. How? Who knows? A Google search found numerous references to and pictures of “Wide Swing,” but not a single reference or picture of the reversed image. Someone (whose name is probably best forgotten) picked up the promotional card of the reversed “Wide Swing” and commissioned an impressionist cover painting of the reversal for the paperback. There indeed was DiMaggio, batting left-handed and swinging in front of the left-handed catcher.



Error: Publisher

(Artistically, the wrong version cover art was probably better. You would want the buyer’s eye to flow from left to right to open the book. In the correct version, the eye moves from right to left to the binding.)

Dinnerstein wrote to me that he has had “an amazing response to the [original DiMaggio] image over the years,” which he attributes “not so much to the painting, but the remarkable qualities that DiMaggio projected in his time.”

And now, the bastardized painting is off the current cover of the paperback version. Pick up the newest version of the paperback and you’ll see a picture of DiMaggio and Ted Williams and just below it, heaven forefend, a photo of the *New York Times*’ “The Swing.” Justice is done.

I had been familiar with the Dinnerstein original, having seen it in a gallery in Potomac. To say the least, I was shocked enough to write to Halberstam. And the author—known not to suffer fools gladly—wrote back to me: “For Phil Hochberg, who caught my publisher trying to turn the great DiMaggio into a switch hitter. Best. David Halberstam.”

I suspect that Halberstam was likely a little less pleasant in his next note to Harper Perennial Modern Classics: The cover was immediately changed.



Right-side up.

Phil Hochberg is a member of SABR’s Bob Davids Chapter. He was the stadium announcer for the Washington Senators from 1962 to 1968 and was Rex Barney’s backup as stadium announcer for the Orioles in 1981, 1982 and 1983.

the All Nippon team, 17-1. Ruth singled once and walked three times.

The second game was also at Meiji Jingu Stadium. Again, 65,000 fans were in attendance as the Americans won, 5-1. Averill had two home runs, and Foxx and Gehrig one each.

The third game was scheduled for November 7 at Hakodate on the northern island of Hokkaido after an overnight rail and ferry journey. Due to heavy rain, the game was postponed and played on November 8, which was considered the first day of winter in Japan. With a capacity crowd of 8,000 and with temperatures near the freezing point, the Americans won, 5-2. The fans wanted to see Ruth hit a home run, but he singled home McNair in the seventh.



On November 9, before 20,000 fans in Sendai, Ruth hit his first home run, into the right-field stands, then homered a second time. Foxx, Gehrig and Miller also hit home runs in a 7-0 victory.

The next 14 games were in: Tokyo, November 10-11; Toyama, November 13; Tokyo, November 17; Yokohama, November 18; Shizuoka, November 20; Nagoya, November 22-23; Osaka, November 24-25; Kokura, November 26; Kyoto, November 28; Omiya, November 29, and in Utsunomiya on December 1.

The Americans all 18 games by one-sided scores. The game in Shizuoka on November 20, however, was a notable exception, as the Americans only won, 1-0.

In the fourth inning, a high school student named Eiji Sawamura entered the game as a pitcher. Sawamura struck out nine batters, including Gehring, Ruth, Gehrig and Foxx in succession. He held the Americans to a run during the remainder of the game, a home run by Gehrig in the seventh gave Sawamura the loss.

Mack attempted to sign Sawamura after the game, but the schoolboy refused and later joined with the Tokyo Giants as part of Japan's first professional league. In 1943, Sawamura enlisted in the Japanese Imperial Army. He was killed in battle near Yakushima when his ship was torpedoed by the USS Sea Devil near the end of World War II.

Sawamura was inducted into the Japanese Baseball Hall of Fame in 1959. The Sawamura Award, Japan's equivalent of MLB's Cy Young Award, has been given to the best pitchers in the league since 1947. The award is named in Sawamura's honor.

The Americans won all 18 games. Ruth hit 13 home runs and batted .408. After the games in Japan, the team played in Shanghai and Manila. The players returned to the United States, except for Ruth, his wife, daughter and Yankee teammate Lefty Gomez, who continued to travel.

"We sailed from Manila to Singapore, Bali, Java," remembered Julia Ruth Stevens. "Then across the Indian Ocean and through the Suez Canal to the Mediterranean and Marseille, then to Paris by train, to London and home on the S.S. Manhattan to New York. We were away four months."

Ruth ended his professional career in 1935 with the Boston Braves of the National League. He played in only 28 games and batted .181 before retiring. Despite his desire to manage

Typical Starting Lineups					
American League (1934 AL totals)				All Nippon	
		BA	HR		
McNair	SS	.280	14	Makino	2B
Gehring	2B	.356	11	Karita	SS
Ruth	1B	.288	17	Mihara	3B
Gehrig	LF	.345	49	Horio	CF
Foxx	3B	.334	44	Yajima	RF
Averill	CF	.313	31	Yamashita	1B
Miller	RF	.243	1	Fuma	LF
Berg	C	.244	0	Inokawa	C
Gomez	P	N/A	N/A	Date	P

as he did during the 1934 tour, he never managed in the major leagues.

Note: A wonderful array of photos of Babe Ruth and teammates during the 1934 tour can be found in Robert K. Fitts' highly recommended book *Banzai Babe Ruth: Baseball Espionage & Assassination During the 1934 Tour of Japan*.

Sources:

Montville, Leigh *The Big Bam: The Life and Times of Babe Ruth*.
 Stevens, Julia Ruth and Bill Gilbert, *Babe Ruth: Remembering the Bambino In Stories, Photos & Memorabilia*.

- The Baltimore Sun*
- Chicago Daily Tribune*
- The New York Times*
- The Sporting News*
- The Washington Post*
- Wikipedia

Trivia Answer

Rank	Player	RBI	Year
1	Miguel Tejada	150	2004
2	Rafael Palmeiro	142	1996
3	Jim Gentile	141	1961
4	Chris Davis	138	2013
5	Eddie Murray	124	1985
6	Frank Robinson	122	1966
7	Boog Powell	121	1969
8	Brooks Robinson	118	1964
9	Albert Belle	117	1999