

# Society for American Baseball Research

## BIBLIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE

### NEWSLETTER

July 1996 (96-3)

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## Comments from the Chair

**Andy McCue**

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I was glad to meet several of you in Kansas City during SABR 26 and renew acquaintances with many others.

Although we had rather light attendance at the Committee business meeting (which was scheduled against the infamous trivia finals), I think we had a rather productive convention. I would also urge you to read the Committee's annual report, which is published elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter.

### New Committee Members

Just before and during SABR 26 we attracted several new members, whom I'd like to introduce:

Bill Krahling (1807 McDonald Dr, Champaign, IL 61821-6056). Bill has wide interest in baseball books and we hope to get him involved in Baseball Online.

Steve Gietschier (The Sporting News, 10176 Corporate Square Dr, Suite 200, St. Louis, MO 63132; phone 314/839-3839). Steve has been very helpful to the Bibliography Committee and many other SABR members on various research projects. He is the chief archivist at TSN and oversees its library operation. (Note TSN's new address).

Tom Muldowney (226 Emerson St., #3, Pittsburgh, PA 15206; phone 412/661-6915). Tom is primarily interested in major league materials, including team publications and economic matters.

Terry Sloope (38 Fouche Dr, Cartersville, GA 30120). Terry is helping with Baseball Online, working on some *Baseball Digest* issues from the early 1970s.

David R. Pratt (190 West End Lane, #2303, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082). Dave will help prepare software for Baseball Online.

### Book Indexing Project

Regarding the indexes to the Putnam team-history series, Howard Pollack assured me he is still working on the index to *The Philadelphia Phillies* (1953) and talked about software that aids in constructing an index. Bob McConnell, who finished the index to *The Chicago White Sox* (1952), asked to do *The New York Yankees* (rev. 1948) and will embark on that task soon. Only the Orioles, Cubs, and Milwaukee Braves are not spoken for or finished; and the Braves is a particularly easy one since it adds only about 30 pages to the already indexed *The Boston Braves* (1948). Other Putnam books requiring indexes include *The Umpire Story* (1953) by James Kahn and *The Story of the World Series* (1949) by Fred Lieb.

In a highly related matter, I had the opportunity to spend some time with Tim Wiles, who has taken Bill Deane's place as chief re-

searcher at the Hall of Fame. While talking about our indexing project, I asked Tim for which books his people would most like to see indexes. He immediately answered: *Judge Landis and 25 Years of Baseball* (1947) by J.G. Taylor Spink and *The Old Ball Game* (1971) by Tristram P. Coffin. He promised to come up with a top 10 "most wanted" list, which I'll be able to share with you in a future newsletter.

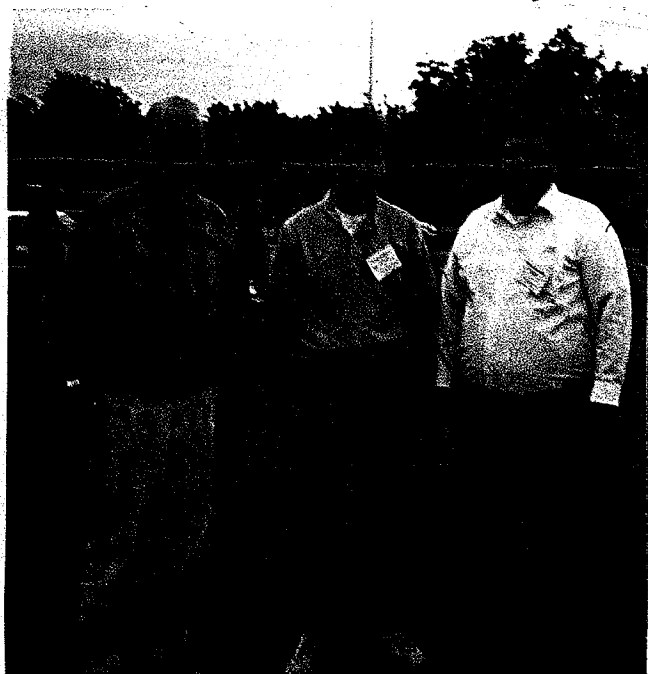
I've also received from Tom Shieber a corrected and expanded index to Cap Anson's *A Ball Player's Career* (1900). All Bibliography Committee indexes are on file with SABR's Research Library; contact Len Levin, 282 Doyle Ave., Providence, RI 02906 (phone 401/351-3278).

### Other Indexes

One significant event—at least for Joe Murphy and me—came at the meeting of the SABR Board of Directors on June 6 during SABR 26 in Kansas City. The Board finally made up its mind as to how it will publish Joe's updated index to SABR publications. It will be advertised in *The SABR Bulletin* and made available at cost to any SABR member who wants it. It will be offered on disk (which I recommend to you if you have the capability) and as a photocopied printout. Joe did some wonderful work, not only in bringing Phil Bergen's 1987 index up to date, but in adding flesh to that bare-bones approach.

Frank Phelps' index to *The Sporting News Baseball Register* (1940-1995) continues to sell well. I sold about 40 copies at SABR 26, plus some more by mail from announcements in our newsletter and *The SABR Bulletin*, and on the SABR Internet mailing list. I need to sell about 40 more to break even, so order early and often. Cost (including postage): \$6.

I'd also like to mention a similar project done by another SABR member, John Spalding (1875 South Bascom Ave., Suite 116-257, Campbell, CA 95008), who has produced a guide to baseball guides, record books, and registers, from 1869 to 1995. It lists all the feature articles that have appeared in *all* the guides over those years, and then breaks them down. If you're interested in such topics as ballpark fires or college baseball, you can find out which guides and which years had information on those topics. It's an invaluable research tool. Cost (postpaid): \$14.95.



Baseball Online engineers at SABR 26 (l. to r.): Bernie Esser, Ted Hathaway, and Andy McCue

## Baseball Online

I was very encouraged by the impression that Baseball Online made during SABR 26. Ted Hathaway (5645 Fremont Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55419; phone 612/869-1420) brought his computer to the convention and we spent two afternoons in the vendor area performing demonstrations for all comers. I was especially pleased that some of SABR's senior researchers (Bob Bailey, David Pietrusza, and John Thorn, for example) dropped by and we were able either to impress them with the breadth of the project or actually offer help with research on which they were working.

Ted and I were helped immeasurably by the work of all the volunteers who've been the backbone of the project. Tim Cashion and Brad Sullivan made massive contributions of periodical articles, which pushed our totals to nearly 40,000 citations on the eve of the convention. Their input was added to those of people such as Bernie Esser, Joe Murphy, Ron Replogle, Terry Sloope, Steve Milman, and Dick Miller.

One of our discussions at the Committee meeting was a new name for the project. Our only suggestion so far, and therefore the best, is Researching Baseball Index, or RBI. I'd hope we can do better and I hope you'll chime in with your ideas.

## And Lastly . . .

I'd like to correct a misstatement I made in the April 1996 issue of the newsletter. While Tom Hetrick is working on a biography of Chris Von der Ahe, it is *not* coming from McFarland. Tom says he'll get back to us when he has lined up a publisher.

I hope to hear from many of you in the next few months. Contributions to the newsletter are always appreciated. In addition to comments or suggestions on any current or proposed Committee topic, we are always looking for book reviews. Send contributions to newsletter editor Skip McAfee.

And don't forget Rich Arpi and *Current Baseball Publications*.

## Annual Report of the Bibliography Committee, 1995-96

**Andy McCue**

*Chairman, SABR Bibliography Committee*

The Bibliography Committee's major projects made substantial progress in the year since SABR 25 (June 1995).

**Baseball Online.** An annotated, electronic database/bibliography of baseball research materials, Baseball Online is finishing the year with more than 37,000 entries, a 15.6% annual improvement. During the year, Tim Cashion joined Ted Hathaway and Andy McCue in overseeing the project. Ted takes the lead role in most matters and oversees the periodicals side of things. Andy is responsible for the books side of the project. For 10 weeks during the winter, an offer to do search requests for SABR members and other baseball researchers was posted on SABR's Web page on the Internet. Ted received approximately 150 requests for information and was able to provide citations of further research sources in 79% of the cases. We are exploring several alternatives to making the database more accessible. Ted has applied for a grant to Hewlett-Packard Corp. to give us the basic equipment for putting the database on CD-ROM. We are also talking with several SABR members about helping us with the software necessary to post the database directly on the Internet. The substantial progress in building up the database has been the result of considerable service on the part of several volunteers from the Committee. Tim Cashion, Dick Clark, Bernie Esser, Jerry Kirsch, Steve Milman, Joe Murphy, Ron Replogle, and Brad Sullivan have all done excellent work on the project in the past year.

**Current Baseball Publications (CBP).** Rich Arpi continues to do yeoman work in producing *CBP* on a quarterly basis, with an annual wrap-up. *CBP* lists all baseball books, pamphlets, newsletters, and other publications that come out during the year. In addition to being distributed to active Committee members, *CBP* is available through the SABR office on a subscription basis. A program started by Ted Hathaway has been instrumental in soliciting several paid subscriptions from outside SABR, mostly from libraries. *CBP* is now listed in *Ulrich's International Periodical Directory* (the largest periodical directory in publication) and is being regularly advertised on the World Wide Web.

**Index to SABR publications.** Joe Murphy completed his update to Phil Bergen's 1987 index to SABR publications. Joe's work is much more thorough, covering topics as well as subject names, authors' names, and article titles. The index covers all editions of *Baseball Research Journal*, *The National Pastime*, *The SABR Review of Books*, convention publications, and other SABR works. As I write this report, SABR Publications Director Mark Alvarez and the SABR Board of Directors are considering how to publish the index. They are considering making it available on computer disk or in a printout at cost.

**Index to The Sporting News Baseball Registers.** Committee Chairman Emeritus Frank Phelps completed his index to TSN's *Baseball Registers* (1940 through 1995). John Green did an outstanding job of converting Frank's precise printing into computer characters, formatting the pages, and setting up the final product. The 78-page pamphlet was printed in April and is available for \$5 plus \$1 postage. The index lists every time a player, manager, coach, or umpire has been listed in a *Register*. It updates an index TSN used to print itself, but which has not been done since the early 1970s. It allows a researcher quickly to find a person's last appearance in a *Register*, and thus to find his fullest record.

**Book indexes.** Committee members had an excellent year producing indexes for important baseball books that were published without them. Jack Carlson completed an index to Fred Lieb's *The Pittsburgh Pirates* (1948), Bill Hugo finished one for Lee Allen's *The Cincinnati Reds* (1948), Bob McConnell weighed in with Warren Brown's *The Chicago White Sox* (1952), and Jim O'Donnell did one for Shirley Povich's *The Washington Senators* (1954). This work leaves only a few of the Putnam series of team histories (Yankees, Cardinals, Cubs, Orioles, Phillies, and Milwaukee Braves) without indexes. All indexes are available through the SABR Research Library overseen by Len Levin.

**Newsletter.** Newsletter editor, and Committee Vice-Chairman, Skip McAfee produced the quarterly newsletter in fine style and in a timely fashion. Terry Smith and Ron Kaplan produced many fine book reviews for the newsletter. Bob Boynton has begun organizing an index of reviews of baseball books: Committee members send notes on the publication and date of reviews and Bob makes the resulting lists available to interested parties.

**Committee membership.** The Committee finished the year with 68 members, after the rolls were purged of inactive members.

## Baseball Online

**Ted Hathaway**

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During SABR 26 in Kansas City, Andy McCue and I brought along a personal computer and opened up the Baseball Online database for members to use. Our purpose was to show members what the database looked like and how they could use it. It also gave members a chance to find some information relevant to their research, and to demonstrate just how useful the database can be. Several members, including the Society's President, were able to

find new information on their current research topics.

Baseball Online has nearly 47,000 entries, including more than 26,000 magazine/periodical articles, almost 14,000 books, and 6700 chapters or sections of books. This represents more than a four-fold increase in only three years.

In Fall 1995, we posted an offer on the World Wide Web to search the database for any research information anyone (SABR members and nonmembers) requested. Almost 150 requests came in about 10 weeks and we were able to find results for 79% of them. After this success, we decided it was time to start pursuing public access. Our success at SABR 26 in Kansas City has confirmed this decision. We are discussing the possibility of Web access with two vendors, and hope to have the database available for public access within a year.

Dave Pratt, a SABR member and systems analyst in Florida, has generously donated his time and talent to writing a new search engine program for Baseball Online. The accompanying illustration (see last page) is of the program's search screen. This program will allow us to use our own program to search the Baseball Online database as well as greatly increase the searching capabilities of the database. Dave has made great progress with his program, but it will likely take him into this fall to complete it.

Recent accomplishments by our volunteers include:

a) More than 5000 citations from Tim Cashion, who has nearly completed the cataloging of *USA Today's Baseball Weekly*.

b) The continued cataloging of *Oldtime Baseball News* by Bob Boynton, who has completed the entire run of this publication.

c) Brad Sullivan is back on board with the project after a hiatus of a few years and has cataloged several months of *The Sporting News* from 1977 and 1978 (more than 1000 citations).

d) I have cataloged hundreds of articles from *Black Sports* (1976-1978), *Inside Sport* (1992-1993), *Sport* (1990), *Fantasy Baseball* (1993-1994), and *Reds Report* (1993), along with hundreds more from *The Minneapolis Star Tribune* and the *New York Times*.

As always, Baseball Online (by the way, we are looking for a new, more appropriate name—any suggestions are welcome) is a volunteer project, but nonetheless it has been a quality effort that has grown rapidly. The opportunities for volunteers to contribute to the project are greater than ever. Any of the following are good and worthwhile projects: *Baseball America*, *Baseball Digest*, *Sports Illustrated*, *The Sporting News*, *Brit Ball* (U.K. baseball), *International Baseball Rundown*, *Boston Baseball*, *Reds Report*, and others (copies of the last four are available, but must be returned).

## Baseball Online Statistics

Level	Number	% change over last year
<i>Books</i>		
5	2,818	18.7%
4	1,437	19.9%
Other	9,724	7.4%
Total	13,979	10.7%
<i>Book Sections</i>		
5	5,590	18.4%
4	1,091	45.5%
Other	39	18.2%
Total	6,720	22.1%
<i>Magazine/newspaper articles</i>		
5	17,499	112.7%
4	1	0.0%
Other	8,545	16.7%
Total	26,045	57.5%

Total		
5	25,907	69.1%
4	2,529	29.8%
Other	18,308	11.6%
Total	46,744	38.8%

## Book Reviews

**Leverett T. (Terry) Smith**

*North Carolina Wesleyan College, Rocky Mount, NC 27804*

**ENDLESS SUMMERS: The Fall and Rise of the Cleveland Indians.** Jack Torry. South Bend (Ind.): Diamond Communications, 1995. \$24.95

**Two-Bass Hit: Baseball and New York, 1945-1960.** Peter Rutkoff. *Prospects*, 1995, v.20, p.285-328.

**ONE PITCH AWAY: The Players' Stories of the 1986 League Championships and World Series.** Mike Sowell. New York: Macmillan, 1995. 312p. \$12.95 (soft cover)

I realize these three writings might seem rather a mixed bag. Torry's is mainly a history of the Cleveland front office since the early fifties; Rutkoff's is an academic study; Sowell's an oral history focusing, it would seem, on the game on the field. Taken together, though, they contain most of the principal off-the-field elements that need consideration if we are to understand the development of the game.

Torry's book may prove enormously useful for those of us interested in the business end of the game. Essentially it chronicles the changes in the ownership and management of the Cleveland Indians from World War II to the present. Occasionally we are distracted by the game on the field (in fact the book ends with a list of the team's starting lineups between 1954 and 1994) and by material outside the time frame (there's an account of the building and financing of Municipal Stadium). For myself, these were welcome distractions. Torry interviewed 77 people in preparing the book and consulted several archives. The book has notes, a bibliography of some 80 titles, and an index.

There are good guys and bad guys in *Endless Summers*. Bill Veeck and Hank Greenberg, Dick Jacobs, Hank Peters, and John Hart are the good guys. In between, everyone fails, though the general managers are deemed variously competent. Torry feels that the owners failed because they ran the Indians like a civic enterprise rather than a business (p.193). "They were too poorly financed to produce a winning product," Torry contends (p.232).

Torry argues that a successful major league franchise must found itself on a player-development system. Greenberg created one in Cleveland; Peters created another. In between, the ownership saved money by cutting back on the farm system. Torry seems to realize that other elements are necessary for success and he mentions them but doesn't always get them integrated into his argument. He tells the story of the creation of Jacobs Field, clearly an element in the current Cleveland success. He acknowledges the importance of "packaging and marketing" in a team's success and comments occasionally on this dimension of the Cleveland enterprise (p.233). He calls Cleveland's signing of young players to long-term contracts "John Hart's revolutionary idea"; it too he tells us is an important part of the Indians' current success. He remarks finally on the proper place of trades and free agents in building a successful team—after these other elements are in place.

We are indebted to Torry for digging up so much information about the financial careers of Cleveland's various owners. I was startled to find Torry attributing the "innovative tax twist" of depreciating players' salaries over five years to Nat Dolin. Usually, Veeck gets credit for this bit of legal shuck and jive. There's a lot in Torry's book for the researcher interested in franchise history. I

did miss a sense of Cleveland's connection with other owners in the league and a sense of the communities in the city in which the club operated.

Peter Rutkoff is concerned to do just this in his essay to connect New York City's three major league teams of the time with the various communities of the city. Rutkoff asserts that "professional baseball mirrored the fundamental tensions of urban life" and consequently we can read in the history of New York's three teams "the demographic, economic, and political changes of the postwar era" in New York City (p.286).

Rutkoff sees the Giants as the team of New York's Irish and Jewish communities, then largely dispersed. For him, the Giants of these years is largely a team of the past. He's much more interesting on the Yankees and Dodgers.

The Yankees are not just an embodiment of "the city's and the nation's imperial pretensions" (p.296), but also "honored the ethnicity of their city, especially the Italian-American component", and the players manifested a "blue collar ethos" at odds with the team's imperial image.

The Dodgers, of course, went several steps further, into racial integration. In Brooklyn, most paradoxically, the demographic changes were ethnic in nature, and the arrival of African-American athletes on the field was more welcome than their brothers' and sisters' arrival in the stands and in the neighborhoods. Though Rutkoff sees Robert Moses as an important factor in the Dodgers' move to Los Angeles, he pinpoints the arrival of African-Americans in the neighborhood as crucial. "The more successful the Dodgers became in the 1950s, the more baseball owners feared black urban dominance" (p.317). Moses and Walter O'Malley, Rutkoff concludes, opted for the same solution (p.322):

"By moving the Dodgers to suburban Los Angeles, O'Malley adopted Moses's suburban, even anti-urban view. Both abandoned not just the city, but an understanding of contemporary urban life as complex, diverse, changing, ambiguous, dense, and finally, beyond rational control."

And this is one way of understanding much of the franchise movement since. An interesting note by Torry (p.228) reveals that the vote that secured Jacobs Field for Cleveland came from suburban Cleveland, not the city itself.

I found Sowell's *One Pitch Away*, somewhat disappointing. His narrative of the 1986 postseason and interviews with many of the players involved did not bring to life that exciting time as I'd hoped. The way Sowell sets the book up suggests another purpose. First, he gives us an account of the postseason; then he presents the results of 14 interviews, beginning with Donnie Moore's widow and ending with Dave Henderson. And I think that's the key to the book. Sowell's books have always focused finally on human catastrophe: first Ray Chapman, then Ed Delahanty, and now Donnie Moore's suicide. Bill Buckner's error in the sixth game of the World Series was certainly catastrophic, but not by itself catastrophic enough to provoke a book by Sowell. The title, *One Pitch Away*, refers both to the Moore-Henderson confrontation and to the events of the sixth game of the Series, when both Ray Knight and Mookie Wilson were down to their last strike.

At any rate, at least three of the interviews are especially noteworthy for what they reveal about the humanity of ballplayers. I was shocked and dismayed by what I learned reading Sowell's account of his interview with Tonya Moore. What I concluded was that Donnie Moore killed himself not so much because of professional disappointment but because he was in a long-term abusive relationship with his wife. While I don't know of any evidence that ballplayers abuse their wives any more than the rest of American males, this story raises fundamental questions about sport and gender. Sport has traditionally excluded and subordinated women; here is an occasion in which that circumstance became lethal.

Another interview that fascinated me was that with Bob Knepper, also known for his remarks on "woman's place". What was so fascinating was that those apparently insensitive remarks came out of a deep and serious concern with what it meant to be a

Christian playing professional baseball. Finally, the interview with Doug DeCinces detailed his difficult relation with the management of the California Angels. No wonder labor negotiations are so acrimonious.

All three of these writings—while they don't tell us much about the game on the field—reveal a great deal about the culture of baseball.

## Book Review

Ron Kaplan

23 Dodd Street, Montclair, NJ 07042

### I WAS RIGHT ON TIME

Buck O'Neil, with Steve Wulf and David Conrads. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. 254p. \$23.

*I Was Right on Time* was, in fact, one year late.

The autobiography of Buck O'Neil, the 85-year-old overnight sensation, was originally to have been released in Spring 1995, but scheduling problems pushed it back to June 1996.

O'Neil became a media darling following Ken Burns' epic *Baseball* miniseries. A twinkle in his eye accompanied his recollection of the old days, when the exploits of players such as Paige, Leonard, and Gibson appeared almost exclusively in African-American newspapers. O'Neil spoke with absolutely no bitterness while educating the viewers about life in the Negro Leagues.

In fact, O'Neil is *such* a likeable sort, one wants to say only nice things about him, since he's labored so long in relative obscurity, which is why it's difficult to be negative about this ordinary tale of a somewhat not-so-ordinary man.

Unfortunately, *I Was Right on Time* has little to differentiate it from other baseball autobiographies.

The former first baseman uses his book to set the record straight about some points that have been bothering him, primarily the concept of what the Negro Leagues were all about. O'Neil chides the inaccurate portrayal of such movies as *Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars and Motor Kings*. He quotes Buck Leonard: "We were not disorganized, just unrecognized." To be sure, there were unstable franchises and some club owners who had less than the pure interests of the game in mind, but these problems also plagued the major leagues in the early 1900s.

O'Neil almost seems to forgive (but never forgets) the racism of his day to the philosophy that "folks didn't know any better". Northern black players had a more difficult time of it because they hadn't been subjected to the degree of Jim Crowism that their Southern counterparts had grown up with.

Like many old-timers, regardless of race, O'Neil notes the differences between the modern players and those of his generation. The older we former players get, he chortles, the more heroic our exploits. But he also writes: "I am not one of those crabby old-timers who thinks that the players of today couldn't hold a candle to the players of his era. No, they're probably faster and stronger and quicker than we were. I just wonder if they have as good a time as we did. ... The modern ballplayer has more of a life outside of the ballpark. [It] was *all* we had. We ate, drank, breathed and slept baseball."

Interestingly, O'Neil is quite candid about the repercussions of breaking the major league color line. "I ... get a bittersweet feeling because I remember that a lot of people lost their whole way of life. That was another of those ironies. ... Not only did a black business die, other black businesses did, too, the ones that were dependent on black baseball and black entertainment. ... A way of life came to an end along with black baseball. But I guess it couldn't be any other way."

With his playing days winding down, O'Neil was named manager of the Kansas City Monarchs. Following the demise of the

Negro Leagues, he became a scout for the Chicago Cubs and Kansas City Royals. Over the course of his career, he discovered such notables as Lou Brock, Lee Smith, and Joe Carter.

In 1962, O'Neil became the first black bench coach for a major league team. Did he have the qualifications to manage a major league team? Of course. Did he ever get the opportunity? Of course not. Commenting on that topic, O'Neil writes: "There are far too few black scouts, executives, coaches and managers. The proportion of blacks to whites in the front office is nowhere near what it is on the field." He goes on to chastise the marketing strategies of major league baseball for not doing more to attract black fans, as well as the working person. At the press party marking the release of his book, O'Neil told the audience that the game has moved away from the blue-collar city dwellers in favor of white-collar suburbanites.

Reflecting on his career, O'Neil writes about a long ball he hit in a Negro Leagues World Series that was turned into an outstanding out by Leon Day. "I see [that ball] as sort of a symbol for my career. Like that ball, I went a long way, and like that ball, I came close to making it over the wall. Alas, I didn't make it. ... But you know what? I felt good because I had given it my best shot."

And that is the essence of this book. As good a guy as O'Neil is, as interesting a storyteller, *I Was Right on Time* falls a bit short of the wall.

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Image of the new Baseball Online program interface