

Spring Flings

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The Official Newsletter of the Spring Training Committee of
The Society of American Baseball Research

Committee Meeting

Our Committee will be meeting at 4 PM on Friday August 5, 2005 at the SABR National Convention in Toronto. The person who will lead the meeting will be announced at a later time. I would like to ask committee members to help the committee foster ties with the other research committees. At this time we have strong ties with the Ballparks, Deadball, Nineteenth Century, Pictorial and Scouts committees, as the chairmen of those committees are members of our committee. They are all very active in the success of our committee. I believe that is most important that we establish close ties with the Asian, Business of Baseball, Latin American, Minor League, Negro League, Science, UK and Women in Baseball Committees. I will ask whoever runs our meeting to make sure that someone from our committee is in each one of the other targeted committees meetings.

Committee Resources

There are many resources for committee members to use to research the various topics of interest to the committee members. Among those sources are Proquest and the Paper of Record. Proquest, which is available to all SABR members free of charge, currently has *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Boston Globe* and *Atlanta Constitution* available to be viewed. Although most of these papers are not offered in a complete run, what is available is very good. The Paper of Record is available for a fee from www.paperofrecord.com (your SABR membership gets you a discount) , among the offerings from Paper of Record is a long run of The Sporting News. The SABR.ORG Website also has a short run of The Sporting Life available, as well as a page for our committee.

A web search will reveal a treasure trove of very useful websites to choose from. I went through Google Scholar and found a very interesting article on the Spring Training parks in Mesa, Arizona. One can also find the Brooklyn Eagle newspaper archives online as well as many other newspaper archives. Springtrainingonline.com is another great resource (Of course it is, it is ran by one of our committee members!!!).

Of course one of the best resources is our fellow committee members. The best way to tap into this resource is to use the committee discussion list at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sabrspring/> all committee members are urged to join the list. It maybe quiet at times but, you never know when one seemly innocent post will trigger a heated debate!!!

Committee Projects

By Kevin Saldana and Rod Nelson

Believe it or not....

There are several projects in progress by our committee members. The Spring Training Player Inventory Index has been a very fruitful project that I have been following with great interest. Anyone with a team media guide and a baseball encyclopedia can participate in this wonderful project. It is being chaired by Rod Nelson and Bill Hickman.

At present

the Excel file is posted to the FILES area of the SABRspring Yahoogroup and has only had only minor revisions since it was posted in April. It lists 3947 player seasons, some roster and non-roster, from 1928-2000. I believe the number of players is approximately 2700.

For what it's worth, I consider this compilation to be an extension of the work that has been done by other researchers with regard to the so-called Cup-of-Coffee ballplayers, the mostly obscure figures in baseball history that quite often have very interesting biographies. SABR members should refer to this list when asked by family members and acquaintances of players claiming to have big league experience, when standard references show otherwise.

There are lots of gaps to be filled in and we would encourage interested parties to get involved. There are countless non-roster players to be identified, as well as other demographic data such as accurate DOB, POB (as opposed to so-called Hometowns), B/T, Ht, Wt, and College. Much of this can be found online and I would request that any committee member with an interest in this project to follow-up with Rod Nelson directly by email. Familiarity with spreadsheets helps immensely

The Professional Baseball teams in training project has made a little bit of headway in the last year. The project is currently at 66 pages and lists 95% of the clubs from 1950-present. The file on this project is posted on the committee page on the SABR website.

The committee is also working with the Lee County, Florida Government, which is looking to open a Spring Training Museum at the Lee County Sports Complex.

Spring Training Memories

At present I have had no volunteers to write this column. We have 65 members on the committee and only three people have shared their memories of attending Spring Training games. I certainly hope that I do not have to start writing each committee member to get them to help with this column.

A Spring Training Oddity

As most of you should know, all minor leaguers from the same organization train together, this has been status quo since the early 1970s and a common practice since the early to mid 1960s. Most Major League organizations have their farm clubs train near the parent club.

In Indy ball most clubs train at home. In the Atlantic League, the league trains as a whole in Florida before the season starts. I have found a rather interesting oddity to this norm. This year marked the debut of the Golden Baseball League. Rather than have the clubs train in one central location or all at home, the single entity league had the clubs, who signed all their own players train in three separate locations in Arizona. The Fullerton, Japan, Long Beach and Yuma Clubs trained at Yuma, Arizona. The San Diego and Mesa Clubs trained at Mesa, AZ and the Chico and Surprise Clubs trained at Surprise, Arizona. According to the league, the reason for this was that several of the league clubs play at college parks that were still being used by the schools. Of course, the Japan Club is a travel team that does not have a regular season home. You would have thought that they would have three teams train in two places and the other two teams train in the third location rather than one place have four clubs and the other two places have two each. Perhaps it was the ability to schedule games that played a factor in that decision.

Other Committee News and Notes

I was fortunate over the course of the year 2004 to make several business trips to Phoenix, Arizona. With several committee members living in the Phoenix Metropolitan Area, I was able to touch basis with two of those members. Please remember in your travels that we do not have to wait for a regional or national SABR meeting to get together with fellow SABR members. Last year one committee member spent some time in San Diego, he called me hoping to get a chance to get together with me, unfortunately I was in a busy period at work and could not get the time off necessary for even a quick meeting. So any committee members visiting Southern California are welcome to call me while you are in town. If you traveling, try to visit with SABR members in the area that you are visiting. I myself would not dream of making a trip to anywhere near Cleveland and not stop at the SABR office!!

I would like to thank Rod Nelson for his help in writing the committee projects column.

I would also like to thank the SABR Office for their assistance in converting the newsletter to Adobe Acrobat and for the following note:

For the first time in its history, the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR) will be offering monetary grants to baseball researchers to assist them in carrying out their research.

Thanks to the generosity of the Anthony A. Yoseloff Foundation, SABR will begin a two-year program in which it will award \$4,000 in baseball research grants each year.

While not a pre-requisite, it is hoped that the grants will help younger and/or less-established baseball researchers make their mark. The two main requirements for the grant is that the researcher be a SABR member, and that the end product of the research be published first by SABR. The application deadline for the first year of the grants is August 20, 2005.

For more information on how to apply for a Yoseloff-SABR Baseball Research Grant, see <http://tinyurl.com/acgc6> or contact the SABR office.

In closing, I would like to thank all the committee members for their help in making the committee a great success!!!