SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER
SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN BASEBALL RESEARCH

December 2020

GREETINGS, NEW ENGLAND SABR-ITES!

See you virtually on Saturday, February 6, 2021. Abundant thanks to chapter member **Mark Kanter,** who volunteered to host a chapter meeting via Zoom. It will begin at 2 P.M. The meeting will be pretty much like our sessions at St. Philip's Parish Center and McCoy Stadium, but lacking the baseball book raffle/sale. Also, there will be no mock Hall of Fame vote, since any new inductees will already have been chosen. We expect to have a speaker and research presentations. Lunch will be in your kitchen.

If you are interested in doing a presentation, contact Mark (stratomark@hotmail.com) or me (lenlevin5@hotmail.com). Let us know about any other thoughts you have.

For those who haven't done it, attending via Zoom is simple: A few days before the meeting, Mark will send out a log-in address. You click on it, then follow the simple instructions to access the site. You can get on or off whenever you wish.

So that's the "Thanksgiving Saturday" meeting. The next question is whether we will be able to convene in June, and if so, where. Farewell to McCoy Stadium; the search for a new site begins. It has been suggested that we look to move to Polar Stadium in Worcester, along with the Pawtucket Red Sox. That may be too far removed from the base of our attendance, but we'd like to hear opinions on that. If you have one, send it to me.

Baseball books worth checking out

Chapter member **John Vorperian,** our literary go-to guy, tells you about some baseball books worth reading while waiting for the season to begin:

ISSEI BASEBALL: The Story of the First Japanese American Baseball Players, by Robert K. Fitts (University of Nebraska Press). If baseball can be a bridge between cultures, why are there so many toll roads? In 1905 Waseda University's baseball team slid into Northern California for the start of a West Coast tour. Their inaugural USA campaign inspired formation of the first Japanese pro baseball club on either side of the Pacific Ocean. Based out of Los Angeles, that particular club, Guy Greene's Japanese Barnstormers, performed throughout the USA's Midwest in 1906 and 1911. SABR member Rob Fitts, author of such books as the award-winning *Banzai*

Babe Ruth; Mashi; and *Wally Yonamine*, has crafted a detailed account of some brave baseball pioneers. Young men like Harry Saisho, Ken Kitsuse, Tom Uyeda, Tozan Masko, and Kiichi Suzuki, who picked up the pill and played for pay before throngs of Yankees. Their sport achievements and the harsh encounters with a bigoted society will make the reader take pause. How do spectators of one color behave when the athletes are of a different color? Is there any difference between 1906 and 2020? As a sport historian, I found the games played tables contained in *Issei Baseball* to be a big plus. Surprised to learn that on Waseda U's 1911 encore tour, the July Fourth game was played in Yonkers, New York, just 15 miles from my TV studio.

GODS AT PLAY: An Eyewitness Account of Great Moments in American Sports, by Tom Callahan (W.W. Norton & Company). The once *Time* magazine senior writer and *Washington Post* sports columnist has an array of wonderful yarns crisscrossing the four major sports. Written by an observer of the stars of American athletics over four decades, *Gods at Play* is a delightful page-turner. Callahan's tales of the national pastime include Roberto Clemente's 3,000th and final regular-season hit, in the Steel City; Hank Aaron knotting with Ruth at 714; and private moments like Joe Morgan whispering thank you to a virtually blind Jackie Robinson on the field at the 1972 World Series. Callahan's epilogue "Regular Monkeys" is indeed a key feature. One-liners that will amaze. Would you believe he saw the Splendid Splinter laugh? Must be true, look who dons the book's cover.

MAJOR SPORTS LEAGUES (Second Edition), by Thomas W. Brucato (St. Johann Press). Those who play in fantasy baseball, Strat-O-Matic, or APBA circuits may find this reference volume to be an aid. The most important aspect of those recreational endeavors is to have a great team name. Why not thumb through a book that has listings of major-league teams in 22 sports? You will garner a nifty name. Brucato, a loyal Cincinnati Redleg fan, begins with 1871 and brings us to 2019. His list covers over 100 distinct major leagues, 1,600-plus franchises and over 2,600 team monikers. He also tracks team transfers from city to city. Keep in mind that those location maneuvers are not just on the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Somehow and some way he records *Major Sports Leagues* in Europe, Asia, and Australia.

John Vorperian hosts BEYOND THE GAME, a community-syndicated cable TV program in New York and parts of the USA. Johnny V's past shows are at wpcommunitymedia.org. Looking into his Crystal Ball, JV forecasts a California clash between the Padres and Athletics as the 2021 fall classic.

Trivia

Brothers. Who are the only three brothers to all be taken in the first round of the amateur draft?

It still hurts. Bucky Dent's home run in the 1978 Game 163 was one of three in the game. Which two future Hall of Famers hit the other two?

Masher. What player had the most seasons in which he hit at least 10 doubles, triples, and home runs?

Junior achievement. Who are the three players who hit 20 or more home runs in a season before their age-20 season?

Famous switcher. Who was the first switch-hitter elected to the Hall of Fame?

Famers. The 1995 World Series between the Indians and Braves featured six future Hall of Famers. How many can you name?

Big streak. Which pitcher holds the record for the most Opening Day starts for the same team?

Low output. Only two of the 39 position players elected to the Hall of Fame on the first ballot hit fewer than 100 career home runs. Do you know who they are?

Name's the same. Which two players with the same name – one of them a Hall of Famer – have hit the most combined homers?

Homer at last. When Ted Williams hit a home run in his final major-league plate appearance, he was actually the second future Hall of Famer to do it. What New England-born future HOFer was the first?

For Red Sox fans. What do these Red Sox players have in common: Bill LeFebvre, Ben Steiner, Eddie Pellagrini, Merrill Combs, Danny Sheaffer, Sam Horn, Kevin Youkilis, Daniel Nava, Bobby Dalbec?

Double duty. Who was the first pitcher to win a Cy Young Award in both leagues?

K's aplenty. Which pitcher holds the record for the fewest innings pitched in a season with 100 or more strikeouts? (Hint: The pitcher is still active.)

A long time. Who is the last Yankee to lead the American League in batting average?

Low and lower. When Bob Gibson led the National League with a 1.12 ERA in 1968, what pitcher led the American League?

Relief help. What Red Sox nemesis is the only player to win three games in relief in a single postseason series?

Big little men. Of post-World War II pitchers in the Hall of Fame, only two are under 6 feet tall. Do you know who they are? (Hint: They also have the best won-lost records of their group.)

Three-spot. What Hall of Famer is the only major leaguer to post three straight seasons reaching 200 hits and 35 home runs?

Two to one. When Babe Ruth hit 60 home runs in 1927, the two top home-run producers in the National League hit that many combined. Who were they and how many did each hit? (Hint: One is a Hall of Famer.)

Trivia answers

Brothers. J.D. Drew (2nd overall in 1997 by the Phillies, then 5th overall in 1998 by the Cardinals); Tim Drew (28th overall in 1997 by the Indians); and Stephen Drew (15th overall in 2004 by the Diamondbacks).

It still hurts. Reggie Jackson and Carl Yastrzemski.

Masher. Lou Gehrig. He had nine such seasons.

Junior achievement. Tony Conigliaro, Red Sox (24 homers in 1964); Bryce Harper, Nationals (22 homers in 2012); and Juan Soto, Nationals (22 homers in 2018).

Famous switcher. Frankie Frisch, elected in 1947.

Famers. Tom Glavine, Chipper Jones, Greg Maddux, and John Smoltz of the Braves; Eddie Murray and Jim Thome of the Indians.

Big streak. Robin Roberts, 12 consecutive Opening Day starts from 1950 to 1961.

Low output. Rod Carew (92 home runs) and Ozzie Smith (28).

Name's the same. Hall of Famer Frank E. Thomas (521 HRs from 1990 to 2008) and Frank J. Thomas (286 HRs from 1951 to 1966) combined for 807 home runs.

Homer at last. Mickey Cochrane, born in Bridgewater, Massachusetts. Cochrane's exit as a player was not exactly voluntary; on May 25, 1937, he hit a third-inning home run off Bump Hadley of the Yankees. In the fifth, he was beaned by Hadley and nearly killed. He returned as the Tigers' manager but never played again.

For Red Sox fans. They all hit a home run in their first game, LeFebvre, Pellagrini, and Nava did it in their first at-bat (Nava a grand slam on the first pitch to him).

Double duty. Gaylord Perry (with Cleveland in 1972, San Diego in 1978).

K's aplenty. Aroldis Chapman (106 strikeouts in 54 innings for the 2014 Reds).

A long time. Bernie Williams (.339 in 1998).

Low and lower. Luis Tiant, then with the Indians, led the AL's pitchers with a 1.60 ERA in 1968.

Relief help. The Mets' Jesse Orosco, in the 1986 NLCS vs. the Houston Astros.

Big little men. Whitey Ford (5-feet-10, 236-106) and Pedro Martinez (5-feet-11, 219-100).

Three-spot. Jim Rice (1977-79).

Two to one. The Phillies' Cy Williams and HOFer Hack Wilson of the Cubs hit 30 each.

R.I.P. Rick Baldwin (Mets 1975-77); Kim Batiste (Phillies 1991-94, Giants '96); Julio Becquer (Washington Senators 1955-60, Twins '61, Angels '61, Twins '63); Frank Bolling (Tigers 1954, '56-60, Milwaukee Braves '61-65, Atlanta Braves '56); Lou Brock (Cubs 1961-64, Cardinals '64-79, HOF); Oscar Brown (Braves 1969-73); Delores Brumfield (South Bend Blue Sox, AAGPBL, 1947, Kenosha Comets '48-51, Fort Wayne Daisies '52-53); Tyson Brummett (Phillies 2012); Margaret Jurgensmeier Carroll (Rockford Peaches, AAGPBL, 1951); Foster Castleman (NY Giants 1954-57, Orioles '58); Derryl Cousins (umpire, American League/major leagues 1979-2012); Jim Cuneo (umpire, National League 1978-79, American League '79); Ray Daviault (Mets 1962); Adrian Devine (Braves 1973, '75-76, Rangers '77, Braves '78-79, Rangers '80); Hal Dues (Expos 1977-78, '80); Ed Fitz Gerald (Pirates 1948-53, Washington Senators '53-59, Indians '59); Whitey Ford (Yankees 1950, '53-67, HOF); Bob Gibson (Cardinals 1959-75, HOF); Bill Gilbreth (Tigers 1971-72, Angels '73); Dave Gray (Red Sox 1964); Charlie Haeger (White Sox 2006-07, Padres '08, Dodgers '09-10); Carroll Hardy (Indians 1958-60, Red Sox '60-62, Colt .45s '63-64, Twins '67); Angel "Remy" Hermoso, Braves 1967, Expos '69-70, Indians '74); Jim Hicks (White Sox 1964-66, Cardinals '69, Angels '69-70); Charles Jackson (umpire, American League 1979); Jay Johnstone (Angels 1966-70, White Sox '71-72, Athletics '73, Phillies '74-78, Yankees '78-79, Padres '79, Dodgers '80-82, Cubs '82-84, Dodgers '85); Lou Johnson (Cubs 1960, Angels '61, Milwaukee Braves '62, Dodgers '65-67, Cubs '68, Indians '68, Angels '69); Howie Judson (White Sox 1948-52, Reds '53-54); Dot Kovalchick (Fort Wayne Daisies, AAGPBL, 1945); Eddie Kasko (Cardinals 1957-58, Reds '59-63, Astros '64-65, Red Sox '66; manager Red Sox '70-73); Keith Lampard (Astros 1969-70); Bobby Locke (Indians 1959-62, Cardinals '62, Phillies '62-64, Reds '65, Angels '67-68); Hank Mason (Negro Leaguer, Phillies 1958, '60); Mike McCormick (New York/San Francisco Giants 1956-62, Orioles '63-64, SF Giants '67-70, Yankees '70, Royals '71); Lindy McDaniel (Cardinals 1955-62, Cubs '63-65, Giants '66-68, Yankees '68-73, Royals '74-75); Jack McMahan (Pirates 1956, Kansas City A's '56); John McNamara (manager Athletics 1969-70, Padres '74-77, Reds '79-82, Angels '83-84, Red Sox '85-88, Indians '90-91, Angels '96); Bob Miller (Phillies 1949-58); John Miller (Orioles 1962-63, '65-67); Joe Morgan (Astros 1963-71, Reds '72-79, Astros '80, Giants '81-82, Phillies '83, Athletics '84, HOF); Bill Oster (Philadelphia Athletics 1954); Jim Owens (Phillies 1955-56, '58-62, Reds '63, Colt .45s/Astros

’64-67); Johnny Paredes (Expos 1988-90, Tigers ’90-91); Ron Perranoski (Dodgers 1961-67, Twins ’68-71, Tigers ’71-72, Dodgers ’72, Angels ’73); Betty Petryna (Grand Rapids Chicks, AAGPBL, 1948, Fort Wayne Daisies ’49); Paul Pettit (Pirates 1951, ’53, Bonus Baby); Bobby Prescott (Kansas City Athletics 1961); Hal Raether (Philadelphia Athletics 1954, Kansas City Athletics ’57); Les Rohr (Mets 1967-69); Jorge Rubio (Angels 1966-67); Mike Ryan (Red Sox 1964-67, Phillies ’68-73, Pirates ’74); Tommy Sandt (Kansas City Athletics 1975-76, major-league coach 1987-2002)); Paul Schrieber (umpire, National League/major leagues 1997-2015); Tom Seaver (Mets 1967-77, Reds ’77-82, Mets ’83, White Sox ’84-86, Red Sox ’86, HOF); Bob Sebra (Rangers 1985, Expos ’86-87, Phillies ’88-89, Reds ’89, Brewers ’90); Bill Spanswick (Red Sox 1964); Tony Taylor (Cubs 1958-60, Phillies ’60-71, Tigers ’71-73, Phillies ’74-76); Bert Thiel (Boston Braves 1952); Arnold Umbach (Milwaukee Braves 1964, Atlanta Braves ’66); Claudell Washington (Athletics 1974-76, Rangers ’77-78, White Sox ’78-80, Mets ’80, Braves ’81-86, Yankees ’86-88, Angels ’89-90, Yankees ’90); Ray Webster (Indians 1959, Red Sox ’60); Fred Wenz (Red Sox 1968-69, Phillies ’70); Wally Wolf (Angels 1969-70); Tom Yewcic (Tigers 1957).

L’envoi. Until we can actually gather in person, I’ll forgo the usual request for you to send me your RSVP and bring along any unneeded books for our book raffle. This time I’ll urge you to wear a mask and stay safe.

Len Levin