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## Comments from the Chair

**Andy McCue**

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By the time you are reading this, the season will be three or four weeks old. But as I write this, I am four hours away from the opening game of the season. It may be gray outside the window, but all that Bart Giamatti stuff looms.

The baseball books appear ready to flow, with the usual unbelievable number of books we get after a New York World Series, intensified by the subway nature of things. Last night, I started a very interesting book on the political history of Yankee Stadium (*Diamond in the Bronx* by Neil Sullivan). I've only read a chapter but it looks good.

As for Committee business, I'd like to welcome five new members:

**Paul Andresen** (3006 NW McKinley Dr., Corvallis, OR 97330), former SABR Treasurer.

**Mike Beasley** (5505 Guilford Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46220) is particularly interested in guides, annuals, rule books, and scoring, especially from the 1940s to the 1960s.

**Gary Eisenhuth** (213 Irving St., Longview, TX, 75605) has wide-ranging interests.

**Bruce Roth** (2215 Grundy Rd., Woodbridge, VA, 22191) is interested in the Negro Leagues, statistical analysis, and biographies. He has already proven very helpful to The Baseball Index (TBI) and our book indexing project.

**Jim Stimac** (22133 Tenny, Dearborn, MI, 48124) is interested in the Negro Leagues, biographies, and team histories.

Next year, SABR is planning to publish a compendium of committee projects and I am looking for nominees from the Bibliography Committee. This can be any project which falls under the rubric of the Committee's reason for being: identifying possible baseball research materials and organizing information about them. Some possibilities might include a guide to where to find baseball book reviews (a frequent query on SABR-L), or a history of the Putnam team histories, or a description of a particular library or museum's collection of baseball materials. SABR Publications Director Mark Alvarez is looking for our project by early May, so please respond quickly if you have an idea. And, since I'm going to be travelling in late April and early May, you'd be much better off sending me your ideas by e-mail.

Committee member John Matthew IV, recently named as czar of the Toronto Blue Jays Web page, has suggested we compile a list of the "recommended" biography for all of the folks for whom there are multiple works. In some cases, it might be more of a "strengths and weaknesses" approach. John has volunteered to compile such a list. If you're interested, or just want to file a comment on a biography, get in touch with John. His e-mail is john.matthew@home.com, and his snail mail is 167 Church St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5B 1Y4.

In line with the above, I would like to mention that Idealogical has finally mounted TBI on the Web to a limited extent. While we're still trying to get the full database mounted on cbs.sportsline.com, Idealogical has provided links from some of its existing information. The company has already mounted the information from The Ballplayers on its site. Now, if you go to these profiles, you will also get a link for more bibliographic information, which will give you a list of books and

articles drawn from TBI. This is limited, but it is something of value. We're still hoping for more.

Committee member Joe Murphy has updated his *Index to SABR Publications*, which allows you to look up that article on Luke Easter you vaguely remember without plowing through all the back issues of *The National Pastime* or *Baseball Research Journal* and the various convention publications. The index is available from SABR headquarters in Cleveland.

This past quarter, we've also received four new indexes to baseball books that were published without them: *My Kind of Baseball* (1953) by Rogers Hornsby and *My Greatest Day in Baseball* (1945) as told to J.P. Carmichael (indexed by Richard Miller); *Confessions from Left Field* (1983) by Raymond Mungo (indexed by Skip McAfee); and *Lou Boudreau* (1993) by Lou Boudreau, with Russell Schneider (indexed by Bruce Roth). These indexes are available through Len Levin's SABR Research Library, 282 Doyle Ave., Providence, RI 02906-3355.

This spring also saw the Southern Illinois Univ. Press' (SIUP) republication of two of the Putnam team histories: *The St. Louis Cardinals* (1947) by Frederick G. Lieb and *The Chicago Cubs* (1946) by Warren Brown. Committee members provided much-needed indexes to both of these republications, which make them much more useful. The Committee and SABR received credit, along with the indexers (Bob Boynton for the Cardinals book and Joe Murphy for the Cubs book). Next spring, SIUP plans to reprint Frank Graham's histories of the Giants (1952), Yankees (1948), and Dodgers (1948), with indexes by Terry Smith, Bob McConnell, and Rick Johnson, respectively.

Committee member Bill Dunstone was inducted to the Wall of Fame at Tropicana Field on Feb. 10 during the Tampa Bay Devil Rays' fanfest. Congratulations, Bill.

Our Committee meeting at the SABR national convention in Milwaukee is scheduled for Sunday, July 15 at 8 a.m. Schedules are always tentative at this point, but at least we have some idea. The convention remains a highlight of the year for me, just seeing so many people who I correspond with, or talk on the phone with during the year. I highly recommend it.

I hope your team is off to a good start, except against the Dodgers, and that we'll get a chance to meet and talk in Milwaukee.

## The Baseball Index (TBI) 1st Quarter 2001 Report

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Please note my new e-mail address.

Our one-time co-director and long-time stellar contributor, **Tim Cashion**, has given us another terrific compilation of his excellent work. Tim recently handed us a data file with more than 4500 new entries for the database. Nearly 2000 of these were from *USA Today Baseball Weekly* for 1995, 1997, 2000, and 2001. Tim has indexed nearly 25,000 articles from this publication, covering most of its run. The remainder of the items indexed by Tim come from several STATS publications from the 1990s. These will greatly improve our coverage of statistical analysis publications. Tim has continued his work on The

Baseball Index for several years now and is one of our most important contributors. We are most grateful to him.

Brad Sullivan continued his work on *The Sporting News*, adding another 2363 articles indexed from 1921, 1968, 1969, 1986, and 1989. You may take notice of the year 1921. Until now, all we had available for Brad was issues from 1960 to the present. I found that we can make legible copies from microfilm of these earlier years relatively cheaply and quickly. Working from these, Brad has already indexed 336 articles. We have also copied several months from 1894 of *Sporting Life* — a publication from which we have heretofore indexed nothing. We are keenly looking forward to seeing the indexed articles from these issues as well. Brad also added 375 articles from 1985 and 1999 issues of *Sports Illustrated*, 123 articles from 1948-1949 issues of *Broadcasting*, and 96 articles from the 1965 issues of *Baseball Digest*. Thanks, Brad!

Joe Murphy added 175 articles from the 1953 issues of *The Pacific Stars and Stripes*. This daily publication for U.S. soldiers in the Far East contained numerous articles from various U.S. newspapers, as well as many original articles. More than a thousand articles have been indexed from this one year so far.

Bob Timmermann indexed 94 articles from 1861 issues of *Wilkes' Spirit of the Times*, while Terry Smith added another 131 articles from the 1915 issues of *Baseball Magazine*.

Other than 192 articles from *American Boy* (1914-1919 and 1927) and 138 from *Pacific Stars and Stripes* (1953), I didn't do much indexing this quarter. Most of my attention was focused on making improvements to the database. To that end, I went through all the fields of the Books and Book Sections files, making hundreds of changes and corrections, particularly to the "named persons" and "topics" fields. These changes are most important to maintain the consistency and improve the usefulness of the database. The next step will be to tackle these changes in the Articles file, which is now more than three quarters of the entire database. Making these corrections will likely take months.

#### TBI Statistics

File	Level 5	Level 4	Other	Total
Books	6,430	2,234	10,015	18,679
Book sections	10,151	4,105	223	14,479
Articles	118,318	1,446	7,724	127,488
Total	134,899	7,785	17,962	160,646

## Book Review

Leverett T. (Terry) Smith

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### THE ERA 1947-1957: When the Yankees, the Giants, and the Dodgers Ruled the World

Roger Kahn. New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1993. 372p.  
ISBN 0-395-56155-8. \$22.95

When *The Era* appeared in 1993, I noted the overlap of material with Kahn's *The Boys of Summer* (1972) and decided to wait for the paperback, which has not yet been published, so far as I know. Larry Gerlach mentioned *The Era* with approval in his review of writing on baseball in the Summer 1994 issue of *Journal of Sport History*. The book was one of the many sources in William Marshall's *Baseball's Pivotal Era, 1945-1951* (the 1999 Seymour Medal winner), which covers much of the same ground. All this caused me to stop waiting for the paperback edition. *The Era* is a memoir (Kahn covered the teams during the era as a journalist) with a twist. He blends his own memories with printed sources (there is a nine-page bibliography) and recent interviews with the principals.

Gerlach finds *The Era* "highly suggestive of research possibilities". One academic study of this era is Peter Rutkoff's "Two-Base Hit: Baseball and New York, 1945-1960" (*Prospects*, 1995, v.20). Rutkoff cites

*The Boys of Summer* but not *The Era*, which was probably not available to him; his references contain nothing written after 1990.

Kahn's declared purpose is "to set down the Era as it was" (p.2). In almost the same breath, he acknowledges his own particular perspective. He admits "prejudices" but does not list them, unless they lurk in his list of the era's most significant figures: Jackie Robinson, Casey Stengel, Larry MacPhail, Leo Durocher, Joe DiMaggio, Willie Mays, Don Larsen, Walter O'Malley. The book chronicles all three teams, but as I read, I was most interested in what Kahn had to say about the Yankees; and most of that seemed negative.

As a champion of integration in *The Boys of Summer*, Kahn depicts the Yankees there as a racist organization, and this depiction continues in *The Era*. He tells of Robinson's statement on the television show *Youth Wants to Know* that "the Yankees are prejudiced" (p.304-305). After Allie Reynolds' success against Robinson in the 1952 World Series, Stengel is quoted as saying: "Before he tells us we gotta hire a jig, he oughta learn how to hit an Indian" (p.306).

Race continues to be a main theme in *The Era*. Kahn visits with Enos Slaughter and Joe Garagiola and finds their memories of encounters with Robinson faulty (p.95-98). He wonders if there "ever [has been] a more glorious moment in sport" than Ford Frick's stopping the St. Louis Cardinals' plan to strike rather than play against Robinson in 1947 (p.59).

Stengel and DiMaggio are central characters in Kahn's narrative, and Kahn pulls no punches in describing their human limitations as well as their baseball excellence. He praises Stengel as a great manager but describes him as "delightful, vindictive, cordial, alcoholic, calculating, and thoroughly mean" (p.158). One of the best moments in the book, for this reader, occurs when Stengel complains to his wife Edna about DiMaggio (p.217): "I got this fella who sucks up all the glory and plays only when he feels like playing. I never had one like that before. What am I gonna do?" Edna was a practical person: "Let him play whenever he wants to play, dear." There is an unpleasant picture of DiMaggio tucked into this that may be elaborated in Richard Ben Cramer's recent biography (*Joe DiMaggio: The Hero's Life*, 2000), which I haven't yet read.

Kahn is awed by DiMaggio's talent, but not convinced that he is as good as his supporters maintain (p.76): "DiMaggio's most soaring accomplishment is generally said to be his great batting streak. In 1941, he hit safely in 56 games, swinging hard, not bunting, even when the streak was on the line. ... During 1941, DiMaggio struck out 13 times. Swinging as hard as he could, clouting 30 home runs, against the best pitchers in baseball throwing him their best stuff at the corners, DiMaggio struck out once every two weeks." This said, Kahn asserts the existence of a "DiMaggio publicity barrage that continues into the present", created by DiMaggio himself (p.71, 211). Kahn cites the research of SABR member Ron Skrabacz, a statistician, to show that DiMaggio's achievements were "commendable, but less than godlike" (p.213).

Occasionally, Kahn turns from memoir to argument, as when he contends that the years 1947 to 1957 were "equally the most important and the most exciting years in the history of sport" (p.1). Kahn's arguments made this reader uneasy. Though Kahn is certainly right when he argues against inevitable progress, and he presents his argument evenhandedly, readers may find they want to tip the balance another way than Kahn does. Is Mark McGwire, for instance, really less of a slugger than Mickey Mantle? Kahn may be forgiven for thinking so in 1993.

There is much else in *The Era*. I have not mentioned Kahn's treatment in economic terms of MacPhail's sudden departure from the Yankees immediately after the 1947 World Series, or his publication of a 1953 Brooklyn Dodgers balance sheet that suggests how profitable they were in Brooklyn, or his characterization of Mays in 1954 as "the most joyous ballplayer ever" (p.318). Best of all, perhaps Kahn always writes with clarity and simplicity.

Editor:

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