

# SABR Scouts' Committee Newsletter

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Feb. 18, 2001

## A SMALL GUILT TRIP

Your chairman returned from six weeks on the scouting trail to find a huge stack of mail which literally took two weeks to work thru. You pay bills, you work thru a huge amount of scouting correspondence from around the world, you answer another huge pile of mail regarding your role as secretary of U.S. All-round Weightlifting Ass'n, and you stack the SABR mail at one side. Then you file (because your wife refuses to be your filing secretary and you can't blame her) a stack of things which is literally two feet high...a two-day job. Finally, you do an 18-page directory of your international scouting program for the Padres and send it to 40 countries -- and, almost as an afterthought, you turn your attention to the SABR scouting committee.

Then the guilt trip begins.

You read pages of research being done by committee members around the world, you get lists of "who signed whom" which took many hours of detail work, you sense a devotion to the committee's goals from people you don't really know, and you think, "You're like a general sitting in Washington sending guys into battle half a world away to do the trench warfare while you reap the glory." And you say to yourself, "It's about time you did some of the work." But time is the problem. So, after this guilt trip, I'll do this newsletter with a clear conscience, knowing that I'm ashamed of my contributions, but damned glad some of you are out there winning the battle - and the war.

My personal goal is to have the Padres' international program in such a workable order by the end of 2001 that I'll have time to do a lot of research for our committee and write on other subjects in 2002 and beyond. When you're 68 - it might be time to join the ranks of those who are finding contentment in doing something a bit less than the highly cut-throat world of professional sports.

Now - on to the upbeat---

## THE CONVENTION

Your chairman will be at the SABR's 31st annual convention on July 11-15 at the Four Points by Sheraton Milwaukee Airport Hotel. The schedule for committee meetings, etc., has not been released to date, but it won't be on the 15th - since Ol' Clark will be off that day for European 18-under championships in Barcelona.

If you have a presentation you'd like to give, please let me know ASAP. I have not asked for any visual aids for the meeting room - so I must know soon if aids will be needed.

Really looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible. I'll probably be at the hotel on the evening of the 10th, so we can start the weekend with a great bull-session.

CONVENTION (Cont.)

I assume most of you get the SABR Bulletin and have instructions concerning the hotel, but, just in case...

The hotel reservation number is 1-800-558-3862. The Four Points Hotel rate is \$99.00 a night, tax included.

Also - the official airline is Midwest Express. To make reservations, call 1-800-452-2022 or use your local travel agent. You'll get a 10% discount with a 60-day lead on your flight if you use the number CMZ1014 when you make your reservation.

THE GREENWADE AWARD

We have a very active group working toward the Tom Greenwade Award, which will go to the person who makes the largest contribution to the "Who Signed Whom" list. We'll make May 1 the cut-off date so Wayne McElreavy and Ol' Clark can determine a winner and be sure he gets to the convention. The award will be a Babe Ruth model bat donated by the Louisville Slugger folks. Our thanks to former committee Jim Kreuz for making the arrangements with the Slugger office.

SOME NOTES AND NEWS

# Committee member Dick Clark, who is chair of the Negro League committee, recently co-authored two books with Larry Lester and Sammy Miller. Both are a part of the Black America Series offered by Arcadia Publishing. The books are Black Baseball in Chicago and Black Baseball in Detroit. Both cover the history in both cities from the mid-1880's thru the time of integration. Dick is also one of the front-runners for the Tom Greenwade Award, though he says he does "Who Signed Whoms" as a sideline to his other research. His is a pretty productive side effort. You can order both books thru SABR Bookshelf - \$18.99 each.

# Hey, we've made it to the Big Leagues. SABR now has our committee newsletter for sale at \$2.50 an issue. A little secret - if you're interested in being a part of the committee's efforts, you can get back issues free from the chairman. Don't tell SABR.

# We've made solid contact with three regional scouting groups - St. Louis, Texas, and Ohio Valley. The presidents of all three groups are vitally interested in our committee and Brad Del Barba, the Ohio Valley president, is taking the responsibility for co-ordinating our activities with the Florida Marlins.

# Roland Hemond, who had been our committee man with Arizona, has returned to his old haunts with the Chicago White Sox. He's now in Chicago. His phone is 312-674-5283 and his fax is 312-674-5105. No matter the hat he wears, Roland is the best friend scouts have in baseball. His dedication to the scouts' exhibit in Cooperstown leads the rest of us.

# Tom Voll is not a committee member, but we just made him one. His interest is researching baseball in Eastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania. He recently sent a large packet of newspaper clippings from 1902-12

primarily from East Liverpool and Steubenville, Ohio, in which scouts were mentioned and tracked as they moved thru the area. A number of names I'd never heard came to the fore as the leading scouts in the pre-World War I era. It was a surprise to read how many scouts were at work and to find a new list of "Who Signed Whoms." Anyone interested in baseball history in area west of Wheeling, W.Va., can contact Tom Voll, 1003 So. Railroad Street, Toronto, Ohio 43964. He's Clark's kind of guy. Uses a manual typewriter with a ribbon which must be 30 years old. Keep the data coming, Tom. And welcome to the scout's committee.

# Now comes a break in Southern California. James Roberts recently joined SABR's Oral History Committee and now comes to our committee. He has close ties with the So. California Scouts' Association. Great. His project is to create video biographies with members of that ass'n, starting with scouts who played in the major leagues in the 1940's and '50's prior to moving on to careers as scouts. He's working with Spider Jorgensen, George Genovese, and Gene Handley as well as Don Lindberg, who was Scout of the Year in the west in 1999. Jim's data can be found in the directory.

# Bill Alpach isn't a committee member either, but he must be a SABR member who reads the Bulletin. He sent along a story about Ellsworth Brown, the scout who signed Kirby Puckett. Brownie was one of the first scouts to befriend Ol' Clark when Ol' Clark was a young scout. He was old then and he's still at it every day at the age of 86, but with the enthusiasm of a youngster. Brownie's situation is a two-sided story. And, as always, it points out the inexact science of "who signed whom."

After Puckett was elected to the Hall of Fame, one of the national baseball publications told the story of how the son of Jim Rantz, then and now the minor league director for the Minnesota Twins, played in a summer college league with Puckett and told his dad how good he was. When dad came to visit, Kirby had his usual good day. He had dropped out of Bradley University after his freshman year and was headed to Triton Juco in suburban Chicago (as the result of a late summer workout for Ol' Clark at Triton). Rantz told Tom Hull, the Twins scout in the area, to bear down on Puckett. Kirby had a good fall and the Twins selected him in the first round of the winter draft (which hasn't been around for over 15 years).

Then Tom died before the season started and Brownie inherited Kirby. Puckett had his bad days, but Brownie stayed with him and, at the end of the season, signed him. Brownie will be the first to tell you that if Tom hadn't died, Brownie's name would have never been on the contract. Brownie did his job; he had even liked Kirby when "Puck" was at Bradley as a freshman. Who was really responsible for Kirby Puckett? As normally happens, it is a team effort. Rantz's son, Rantz, Ford, Ellsworth?? All four did their thing.

# Speaking of Brownie -- his tenacity was rewarded in the late 1960's by signing three-time National League batting champion, Bill Madlock. Brownie had followed Madlock in high school in Decatur, Ill., and stayed with him when off-field problems caused him to be by-passed by most clubs. Madlock went to Keokuk, Iowa, Juco and Brownie never gave up on him. Brownie is a wide-bodied guy who looks a lot like a bulldog - and he scouts the same way. He's the same friendly guy who greeting a young Ol' Clark back in 1968. He deserves having his name on Puckett's contract.

# The obvious question concerning the Puckett case is this: Why the hell didn't Clark sign Puckett when he had him in a tryout? First, he wasn't eligible to sign at the time of the tryout. Second, I had him on my winter draft list, but the Twins drafted ahead of the Reds. Had it been the other way, the above story might have been about your chairman. Which highlights how scouts - good scouts - often have little production in a draft era.

# Ev Parker was on the original list of committee members I inherited. He's on the current list only because his old mailman violated Postal Service rules by forwarding Ev's newsletters well past the legal forwarding order. Ev's a former NYPD inspector who retired three years ago to Napa, Cal., and lives near former major leaguer and long-time White Sox scout, Dario Lodigiani. He immediately came up with Dario's list of Big Leaguers. He also writes a weekly column for the Napa Valley Register about life in general and baseball in particular. He notes that Dario is proudest of signing Ken Williams. Ev comments: "Not bad - he scouted a high school kid smart enough to one day be his boss." Ev can be reached at 7 Penrod Court, Napa, CA 94558. That's it. He says: "...was glad to hear from another dinosaur like me. I, too, stay with the feathered quill and don't mind when our SABR pals call me the 'snail mail' guy."

# New committee member is Gregg Omoth, a welcome voice in an age when both baseball and history seem to belong to the 50-over crowd. Gregg lives in suburban Minneapolis, has a B.A. in history and is working on his Masters in the same field. He's ready-made for SABR. He joined SABR a year ago and notes that: "Scouting fascinates me for many reasons, the stories are great and trying to separate reality from the myths would be a challenging and interesting task." Gregg, you're in the right place. Welcome aboard!!!!

#### MAJOR LEAGUE CLUBS

We're making progress with major league help. We're at eleven and counting. The following have checked in.

##### American League

Chicago White Sox - Roland Hemond.  
New York Yankees - John Coppolella  
Detroit Tigers - Greg Smith  
Minnesota Twins - Brad Steil

##### National League

Arizona D-Backs - Mike Rizzo.  
Florida Marlins - Brad Del Barba  
LA Dodgers - Bill McLoughlin  
Cincinnati Reds - Brad Coleman & Gary Hughes  
Phila. Phillies - Larry Shenk  
Atlanta Braves - Tyrone Brooks  
San Diego Padres - Glenn Geffner

The major contribution from the major league organizations will be to dig back in their archives and come up with the actual reports and letters, etc., involved in signing the great players. We've already run into the same problem with more than one organization...they preserve the archives for a period of time (as short as 10 years), then discard them. We thank these men in advance for everything they can do for the cause...and welcome aboard 20 more clubs as time passes.

## NICK KAMZIC

Death tends to happen at inopportune times. Roland Hemond had Nick enthusiastic about getting his files in order to turn over to the Hall of Fame Museum. Before he could start the project, Nick fell ill and did not recover. His obit from the Chicago Tribune follows:

# Veteran scout Nick Kamzic; started with Angels in 1961

**By James Janega**  
TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

Nick Kamzic, 81, an Evergreen Park resident whose 39 seasons as a scout for the Anaheim Angels made him the last original member of the California ballclub when he retired last year, died Tuesday, Dec. 12, in Little Company of Mary Hospital, Evergreen Park. He had been hospitalized for congestive heart failure.

He was an expert on spotting baseball talent and his work led to some of the Angels' most successful signings.

"He meant everything to this organization. His knowledge of the game of baseball and this organization was unmatched," said Anaheim vice president of communications Tim Mead.

"Nick was one of the icons."

Once a promising player himself, Mr. Kamzic devoted his life to the sport even after age and war injuries prevented him from playing professionally.

"Baseball was his life," said his son Paul.

"He used to say it was the game that God created."

Born in Pennsylvania, Mr. Kamzic moved to Chicago after his father died. He was a standout athlete at Kelly High School on the South Side when he graduated in 1938. He attended Wilson Junior College in pursuit of an engineering degree, but left college in 1941 to play minor-league baseball for the Detroit Tigers. He was poised for a major-league career when he was drafted into the Army in 1942.

In his four years in Europe, he was wounded twice; a gunshot wound in France and shrapnel wounds in Germany. While recuperating in England, he earned Army certification to teach physical therapy and rehabilitation, and

worked briefly as an Army therapist after his return to the United States. He also played for St. Louis and Cincinnati farm teams but quit playing in 1947.

Instead, Mr. Kamzic began scouting, putting 100,000 miles on his car every couple of years during trips from Texas to Canada, his son said. He peddled car wax, sold shoes, built bridges and worked in factories to supplement his income, all the while scouting for Cincinnati, Milwaukee and ultimately, the Angels.

Mr. Kamzic often said he was owner Gene Autry's first hire. Without a doubt, he was the team's longest-serving employee, Mead said.

In recognition of his tenure, the wall in Mr. Kamzic's home office is covered with awards, including the Angels' first Gene Autry Award. The Angels established an award in Mr. Kamzic's honor in 1997. The Nick Kamzic Award honors the organization's outstanding scout.

Mr. Kamzic had a hand in recommending or signing Jim Fregosi, Doug DeCinces, Jim Abbott, Rick Reichardt, Frank Tanana and Andy Messersmith, among others. Having seen thousands of players during his career, he told a Tribune sportswriter he scouted more than half the top 100 players selected last year.

In addition to his son, Mr. Kamzic is survived by his wife, Marie; a daughter, Mary Kay Malcolm; and two grandchildren.

Visitation for Mr. Kamzic will be held from 2 to 9 p.m. Saturday and Sunday in the Kenny Brothers Funeral Home, 3600 W. 95th St., Evergreen Park.

Mass will said at 10 a.m. Monday in the Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church, 14610 Will-Cook Rd., Lockport.

### STEVE LAMAR

When Jim Kreuz was the chairman of this committee, one of the most productive members was Steve Lamar. When Ol' Clark took over, Lamar had disappeared. His mail was returned. Thanks to the SABR office, he was found. He'd moved from the Cleveland area to Laverne, CA, and he just turned in a list of 48 "who's."

In recent weeks, Steve has convinced his wife that he's lost his mind. He's now on a press guide project. As of Feb. 6, he'd gone thru 33 press guides, has 33 scouting rosters and between 700 and 800 signings.

Steve has a suggestion. "It might be useful to nail down the year of each signing. In doing so, we could construct at least partial scouting rosters for seasons when the rosters are not available - particularly for many years ago. So, my suggestion would be to ask people who submit signing info to also provide the year of each signing when possible."

It is obvious that Steve is doing two projects here. First, he's compiling the usual "who signed whom" list. Second, he's making the first effort to compile the scouting rosters from the first scout till today for each organization.

Personally, I'd love to see each major league club compile for the Hall of Fame Museum the entire roster of all the scouts and the years they worked. We have baseball encyclopaedias filled with rosters of all the players, but nowhere can you find that list of scouts.

Steve - more power. Let's hope you get some help in this project. Maybe Ol' Clark will be able to add some things concerning the Big Red Machine and the Braves. Question: have you had any trouble separating the full-timers from the part-timers? Nothing in scouting is ever black and white. There is always lots of gray (or grey, if you're British).

More on Steve in the Directory.

### WRAPPING IT UP FOR NOW

The pages that follow are our current committee. We welcome each and all...anyone with interest in baseball, history, and scouting. Our only requirement: join the SABR.

If Wayne McElreavy hasn't been inundated by the signing lists, we're asking him to get that list to Ol' Clark for two reasons. First - we'll publish it in the next newsletter one last time before it becomes too huge. Second - Ol' Clark has an idea to help things. If I take that list with me on 14-hour plane flights and take along a list of Hall of Famers, All-Star selections, and major record holders - I'll match them as the Atlantic and Pacific pass below. End of guilt trip.

We'll get back to you in a couple of months with updates on everything. Keep on working - so the general can be credited for winning the war. Have a good season...

BILL CLARK

DIRECTORY  
SABR SCOUTS COMMITTEE  
 (As of Feb. 20, 2001)

Skip McAfee  
 5533 Coltsfoot Court  
 Columbia, MD 21045-2424

Irv Bergman  
 9717 Sills Dr. East  
 Boynton Beach, FL 33437

Dick Clark  
 1080 Hull St.  
 Ypsilanti, MI 48198-6472  
 SABR - 1981  
 Home: 734-487-5273  
 Fax: 248-649-5425  
 e-mail: tstearnes@aol.com

Brian Collins  
 2266 Palmer Ave.  
 New Rochelle, NY 10801  
 SABR - 1995  
 Home: 914-235-8371  
 Fax: 914-793-7431

Greg Crouse  
 2746 Oakwood Drive  
 Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio 44221  
 SABR - 1983  
 Home: 330-928-5674

Tim Cummins  
 177 Hamton Street  
 Auburn, MA 01501  
 Home: 508-753-8387  
 e-mail: basescout@aol.com

Jack Etkin  
 1001 Steele Street  
 Denver, CO 80206  
 Home: 303-399-5082  
 Fax: 303-388-2599

Mal Fichman  
 Box 3143  
 Boise, ID 83703  
 Home: 208-853-3743  
 Fax: 208-853-6731

John Haffner  
 1391 W. Oak Street  
 Zionsville, IN 46077  
 Home: 317-873-6060  
 Fax: 317-873-4660  
 e-mail: haf705490@aol.com

Roland Hemond  
 Chicago White Sox  
 333 West 35th Street  
 Chicago, IL 60616  
 SABR - 1985  
 Home: 602-604-8779  
 Fax: 312-674-5105  
 Office: 312-674-5283

John Herbold  
 4450 Whitewood Ave.  
 Long Beach, CA 90808  
 Home: 562-425-6176  
 Office: 323-343-3093  
 Fax: 323-343-3199  
 e-mail: jherbold@calstatela.edu

Gary Hughes  
 100 Cinergy Field  
 Cincinnati, Ohio 45202  
 Home: 561-641-1752  
 Office: 800-858-9385, ext. 8814  
 Cell: 513-324-1906  
 e-mail: ghughes@cincyreds.com

John Keenan  
 4101 Sandpiper Lane  
 Great Bend, KN 67530  
 Home: 316-792-2815

Jim Kreuz  
 70 Bayberry Court  
 Lake Jackson, TX 77566  
 Home: 979-297-0407

Jerry Lafferty  
 PO Box 356  
 Trenton, Mo. 64683  
 Home: 660-359-5511

Brad Del Barba  
 PO Box 17842  
 Covington, KY 41017  
 Home: 859-431-3440  
 Message: 800-333-4408, ext. 3522  
 e-mail: bdelbarba@flmarlins.com

Steve LaMar  
 1488 Third St., Unit C  
 La Verne, CA 91750  
 SABR - 1986  
 Home: 909-392-4694  
 Fax: 909-596-3475  
 e-mail: stephoosh@msn.com

Bill Lamberty  
1336 Cherry Street  
Bozeman, MT 59715

Norman Macht  
226 So. Washington Street  
Easton, MD 21601  
SABR - 1985  
Home: 410-770-4539  
Fax: Same  
e-mail: loispn@dmv.com

Joseph McGillen  
2838 Woodbridge Rd.  
Philadelphia, PA 19114  
SABR - 1980  
Home: 215-698-0476  
e-mail: jmcg2838@aol.com

Wayne McElreavy  
PO Box 1154  
Claremont, NH 03743-1154

Roberta Mazur  
Scout of the Year Foundation  
PO Box 211585  
West Palm Beach, FL 33421-1585  
Phone: 561-798-5897  
e-mail: mlscouts@aol.com

Dale McReynolds  
PO Box 516  
Walworth, WI 53184  
Home: 414-275-3250

Rod Nelson  
1550 Platte Street, No. 455  
Denver, CO 80202  
Home: 303-893-6767

John Odell  
Hall of Fame and Museum  
PO Box 590  
Cooperstown, NY 13326  
Office: 607-547-0337  
Fax: 607-547-2044  
e-mail: jodell@baseballhalloffame.org

Gregg Omoth  
1405 Olive Lane, Apt. 109  
Plymouth, MN 55447  
Home: 763-449-6446  
e-mail: gomoth@uswest.net

Paul Fauks  
841 Alexandra  
Glendale, Mo. 63122  
Home: 314-821-2853

John Pardon  
PO Box 728  
Crugers, NY 10521-0728

Everett Parker  
7 Penrod Court  
Napa, CA 94558

Frank Van Rensselaer Phelps  
253 Bernard Drive  
King of Prussia, PA 19406-1756

Phil Pote  
PO Box 26052  
Los Angeles, CA 90026

Fred Schuld  
1572 Bradford Dr.  
Macedonia, Ohio 44056-1412  
SABR - 1985  
e-mail: fredschuld@hotmail.com

Tom Shieber  
Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum  
PO Box 590  
Cooperstown, NY 13326  
Office: 607-547-0277  
Fax: 607-547-2044  
e-mail: tshieber@baseballhalloffame.com

Brad Steil  
34 Kirby Puckett Place  
Minneapolis, MN 55415  
Office: 612-375-7477  
Fax: 612-375-7417  
e-mail: bradsteil@twinsbaseball.com

Herman Wheeler  
4514 Marblearch Dr.  
Grand Prairie, TX 75052-4630

Tom Voll  
1003 South Railroad Street  
Toronto, Ohio 43964

Tim Wiles  
72 Main Street, No. 2F  
Cooperstown, NY 13326

James Roberts  
1209 Grossmont Dr.  
Whittier, CA 90601-1064  
Home: 626-961-2449  
Fax: 626-961-2459  
e-mail: jasroberts66@msn.com

Chairman  
Bill Clark  
3906 Grace Ellen Drive  
Columbia, Mo. 65202-1796  
Home: 573-474-4510  
Fax: 573-474-1449  
Cell: none.  
e-mail: none