

# Society for American Baseball Research

## BIBLIOGRAPHY COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

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### Comments from the Chair

**Andy McCue**

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I'd like to welcome three new members to the Committee:

**Charles (Newt) Weaver** (2 South Baltimore Avenue, Ocean City, MD 21842-4102; vette-99@prodigy.net) has specialized in collecting game accounts from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, his prime area of interest. He's especially interested in the teams just below the level of full professionals.

**Ben Walsh** (577 Haight St., San Francisco, CA 94117; ben-walsh@yahoo.com) is also a 19<sup>th</sup>-century buff, but with a particular interest in early league history.

**Ronald Schrank** (16 Birch Ave., Farmingdale, NY 11735; Prince HalsChase@cs.com) has an interest in a wide range of topics.

Research in Baseball Index (RBI) is looking for a new name. Major League Baseball, which recently copyrighted the acronym "RBI" for its Reviving Baseball in the Inner Cities program, has called SABR and made some mild threats. We spoke to SABR legal counsel Doug Pappas and believe we could win any court case. However, since Ted Hathaway and I have never particularly liked the name "Research in Baseball Index", and since even a court "victory" would cost more money than it would be worth, we are searching for a new name. If you have any suggestions, and we hope you do, please communicate them to Ted or me.

I also wanted to note the "RBI contribution of the quarter", which came from Steve Milman. It's *Altjematingeol, Spaldings Base Ball Rules in Micmac*, published in 1912. Micmac, for those of you who missed it, is an Algonquian dialect spoken by native Americans in Nova Scotia and northern New Brunswick.

In poor journalistic style, I have left the newsiest Committee information until the end. Between the University of Nebraska Press and Southern Illinois University Press, three of our Committee's baseball book indexes were published commercially this spring. This is a first for us. Nebraska reprinted Roger Kahn's *Season in the Sun* (1977) with an index by newsletter editor Skip McAfee and Kahn's *Good Enough to Dream* (1985) with an index by Roger Erickson. Southern Illinois brought out a new edition of Alfred H. Spink's difficult-to-find *The National Game* (2<sup>nd</sup> enlarged & revised edition, 1911). Skip provided an index for this one, which went a long way toward solving Spink's problems with spelling players' names and getting his facts straight.

Next year, Southern Illinois will start Committee member Pete Peterson's long-held dream of reprinting all of the Putnam team histories with our Committee members' indexes. For early 2001, Pete (editor of SIU's Writing Baseball series) is looking to reprint Frederick C. Lieb's *The St. Louis Cardinals* (1944) with an index by Bob Boynton and Warren Brown's *The Chicago Cubs* (1946) with an index by Joe Murphy. For 2002, Pete is looking at Frank Graham's histories of the three old New York teams: *The New York Yankees* (1948) with an index by Bob McConnell; *The New York Giants* (1952) with an index by Terry Smith; and *The Brooklyn Dodgers* (1948) with an index by Rick Johnson.

I also discussed our indexing program with SABR publications director Mark Alvarez. He would like to get the Committee involved in producing indexes for SABR's books, such as last year's biography of Wilbert Robinson by Jack Kavanagh & Norman Macht or this year's bio of Lefty Grove by Jim Kaplan. Next year, SABR plans to produce a book called *Memories of a Ballplayer: Bill Werber in the 1930s*. If anyone is interested in indexing this work, please contact me ASAP.

This quarter, we received indexes to: Stew Thornley's *On to Nicollet* (1988) from Ted Hathaway; Kevin Kerrane's *Dollar Sign on the Muscle* (1984) and Arthur Bartlett's *Baseball and Mr. Spalding* (1951) from Dick Miller; and Kirby Puckett's *I Love This Game!* (1993) from Alain Usereau.

### Research in Baseball Index (RBI) 1st Quarter 2000 Report

**Ted Hathaway**

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Actually getting our hands on publications to index for RBI is often one of the biggest problems we face. This problem is sometimes compounded by not even *knowing* a particular publication exists or whether it contains material on baseball. For example, recently I found—quite by accident—that *Forest and Stream* (a forerunner of *Field and Stream*) inexplicably had considerable baseball coverage in the 1870s. Happily, my library actually had these issues and I've indexed many of them this past quarter. One of the significant features of RBI is that it lets researchers know about such lesser-known sources of baseball information, providing unique access unavailable through any other index.

Some additional examples of this indexing "serendipity" came this past quarter with the indexing of several African-American publications from the 1940s and 1950s. Access to the Kaiser Index to Black Periodicals told me about *Color, Our World, Our Sports, Sepia*, and *Jet*. Larry Lester generously loaned copies of the baseball articles from the short-lived *Our Sports* (edited by Jackie Robinson). The rest were accessed through microfilm. Many of you are probably familiar with *Jet*, but may not be aware of its regular coverage of baseball in its early days. With these publications, we have greatly enhanced RBI's coverage of the struggle of African-American players in the years following Robinson's entry into the game.

More good fortune came with my obtaining most of the issues of *Sports Illustrated* from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. I have already farmed out several years of these to **Bob Timmermann** and **Brad Sullivan**, who have begun work on them. We have done a considerable chunk of this publication already, and with this large collection we hope to move more rapidly toward completion of the entire run.

I am particularly pleased, however, with the work accomplished this quarter: two of the main publications from the game's formative years—*Spirit of the Times* and the *New York Clipper*. I had already completed several years of *Spirit*, but recently gained greater access to the University of Minnesota's fine run (hard copy!) of this publication. By the end of next quarter, I will have completed the entire run from 1856 to 1874 (when *Spirit* covered baseball). By using the university's

microfilm copies of *Clipper*, I finished the years 1856 to 1861. Finally, the aforementioned *Forest and Stream* added some additional coverage of the late 1870s following *Spirit's* dropping of baseball coverage. By late June, RBI will have in-depth and continuous indexing of baseball's formative and early professional years.

I will be at the SABR 30 convention in West Palm Beach, Fla. to discuss RBI, offer demonstrations, accept research requests, and have copies of the database for sale. Please stop by our booth (perhaps with a new name!) in the exhibit hall.

A few words about our volunteers:

**Brad Sullivan** continued his work on *The Sporting News* this quarter, indexing 1264 articles from 1969 and 1970. He also worked on *Broadcasting* (1940-1944; 154 articles), *Time* (1958-1960; 52 articles), and *Sports Illustrated* (1976-1977; 215 articles). As always, Brad is our greatest and most important indexer. I'm happy to report that I have secured a laptop computer for his convenience in working on the project.

**Terry Sloope** continued chipping away at *Sport* (generously loaned by **Steve Milman**), indexing the 1958 issues (165 articles).

**Bob Timmermann** worked on a scattering of publications, ranging through *Journal of Sport History*, *True*, and *Sports Illustrated* (96 articles).

**John McMurray** contributed indexing to another 40 articles from current issues of *Sports Collector's Digest*, *Baseball Digest*, and *Sports Cards*. With his modest, but steady contributions, John has contributed nearly 1000 entries to RBI.

I don't normally mention **Andy McCue's** contributions to the Articles end of the database, he being a modest fellow easily embarrassed by such attention, but I thought members should know that he regularly works on issues of *Nine*. He added another 32 articles indexed this past quarter and, indeed, has indexed the entire run of the publication (1992-present; more than 400 articles).

My thanks and appreciation to all who have contributed to building RBI this past quarter.

Also noted:

*Color* (1948-1955; 22 articles)

*Forest and Stream* (1873-1879; 148 articles)

*Jet* (1951-1956; 585 articles)

*New York Clipper* (1856-1861; 1289 articles)

*Our Sports* (1953; 40 articles)

*Our World* (1946-1955; 64 articles)

*Pacific Stars and Stripes* (June 1953; 182 articles)

*Sepia* (1965-1978; 22 articles)

*Spirit of the Times* (1868-1869, 1871-1873; 792 articles)

*Wilkes' Spirit of the Times* (1860, 1867-1868; 280 articles)

## RBI Statistics

File	Level 5	Level 4	Other	Total
Books	4,887	2,140	11,045	18,072
Book sections	8,908	3,438	207	12,553
Articles	98,417	1,321	7,281	107,019
Total	112,212	6,899	18,533	137,644

## Book Review

**Leverett T. (Terry) Smith**

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### A NICE TUESDAY; A Memoir

Pat Jordan. New York: Golden Books, 1999. ISBN 1-58238-028-7.  
\$23

When I came across this book in a local bookstore, I thought, not of Jordan's extraordinary *A False Spring*, which details his difficulties as a bonus baby in the 1950s, but of a 1979 book of his on basketball called

*Chase the Game*, which follows the college and pro careers of Walter Luckett, Barry Macleod, and Frank Oleynick and concludes with the statement of another former player: "I don't chase the game no more." I wondered if Jordan were still chasing the game of baseball. Having read *A Nice Tuesday*, I would say he was, but there's much more to the book than that. It is the sort of autobiographical narrative in which the author attempts to discover who he is by reviewing his past. That's the elusive game Jordan is chasing.

But baseball—or, rather, pitching—is at the center of the book. The "nice Tuesday" of the title is the day on which 56-year-old Jordan pitches an inning for the minor-league Waterbury Spirit. His preparation for pitching that inning and its aftermath form Jordan's investigation of his past. There's little rehearsal of the events chronicled in *A False Spring*, so SABRites will find this frame the most interesting part of the book. There is, though, a wonderful portrait (p.182-190) of Joan Joyce, star fast-pitch softball pitcher, whom Jordan admires. Jordan captures her competitive intensity when she says (p.189): "I never had any goals in sports except to strike out every batter I faced."

Jordan is harder on Atlanta Braves pitcher Greg Maddux, subject of a brief vignette (p.249): "He was such a machine. He seemed conditioned to do only one thing. Low and away every pitch. He couldn't get out of himself, break his pattern. Maybe he was afraid if he did, he'd lose the delicate balance he's created over the years. He was a craftsman, not an artist. It dawned on me that he must be fearful. That if he changed anything, he might lose his success."

Jordan distinguishes himself from this sort of pitcher. He also contrasts his effort at pitching at 56 with George Plimpton's forays into various sports and his book with the resulting Plimpton books. "I was no George Plimpton, nor was I meant to be. This was not some preordained exhibition in which my opponents would lay down for me, the fifty-six-year-old writer, who wanted to see what it felt like to be an athlete. I knew what it felt like to be an athlete." (p.105-106). For Jordan, Plimpton is "the guru of success": "He profiled heroes, I profiled failures" (p.299). When Plimpton compliments him on *A False Spring*, he fails to reciprocate.

Jordan's quest in *A Nice Tuesday* is different. He is both a writer and a pitcher, but one who still needs to understand the relation of these two occupations (p.245): "I still see myself as a pitcher, with a 95-mph fastball and infinite promise, who happens to be writing just now. Writing is what I do. Pitching is what I am. In my mind's eye, writing has always been just a temporary respite for me from that day when I will take the mound again and pitch. The fantasy of an old man of fifty-six. An old man who lives a sedentary life. An old man so rooted to the mundane order of his life that he is the butt of his friends' jokes."

Jordan presents pitching and writing as mutually exclusive occupations. He says he had "forced myself to be the kind of man I admired but knew I wasn't." Pitching again "would be my last chance to return to my self" (p.48). He solves this problem tentatively by compartmentalizing (p.99): "I would be the man I had made myself into, every waking moment of my life, until I stepped on the mound and let myself be what I was, a pitcher." Having accomplished his goal of successfully pitching an inning, he wonders about his reaction (p.312): "What was I trying to prove? Nothing. I just wanted to pitch." Made uneasy by newspaper reports of his pitching that depicted him as an old man trying to recapture his youth, he plans to return to pitch a whole season. Dropping this idea, Jordan explains to his teenage catcher (p.337): "I'm not a kid like you. I don't have the time to be everything I think I can be. I only have the time to be some of them, the important ones."

*A Nice Tuesday* is a fascinating book about being a pitcher and about being a human being.

Editor: Skip McAfee

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