

SABR Scouts' Committee Newsletter

Vol. IV, No. 2

Sept. 4, 2003

SABR 33

SABR 33 is now a very pleasant memory - two months gone. It was truly a fine four days in Denver highlighted by seeing the work of the SABR Scouts' Committee coming together with presentations by co-chairman Rod Nelson, SABR's F.X. Flinn, and researcher Jim Sandoval. The future of the committee, in three short years since it was re-organized, is so bright it is scary. We'll break the week down by topics and you'll get the idea.

THE PANEL

For the second year, the scouts' panel drew an overflow crowd...this time to hear the comments of Tracy Ringolsby, the national baseball writer for the Rocky Mtn. News; Roland Hemond, our SABR committee stalwart and a special consultant for the Chicago White Sox; and Pat Gillick, the general manager of the Seattle Mariners, who flew in to serve on the panel and receive the Roland Hemond Award later in the day at the SABR awards dinner. Your newsletter editor (Bill Clark) had the honor of being the panel moderator.

The primary topics were "Money Ball," and the concept of a worldwide amateur draft, two items of huge interest in today's scouting world. There was little positive comment for either.

SERVICE AWARDS

The committee, which retired the Tom Greenwade Award following the 2002 convention, presented its new "Distinguished Service Award" to two recipients - Rod Nelson and Roland Hemond. Why? Here's why:

Rod Nelson has now pulled together a data Base history of all 16,000-plus major league players since 1876 and has been able to attach the signing scout to more than half of them. His data has some 30 columns of info. The paper printout is 361 pages on 8½x14 paper. The printout by scout was well over 200 pages.

Roland has been a huge source of information for the scouts' exhibit at the Hall of Fame Museum in Cooperstown, filing well over 3,000 documents with the museum. In addition, he has made hundreds of updates, additions, and corrections on the "who signed whom" list.

He is the one major league executive who has been relentless in his quest for data for our committee and for the Hall of Fame's museum. The annual Hemond Award needs no further explanation.

The Service Awards are a committee function, but the Hemond Award has now been accepted as an annual SABR award.

THE HEMOND AWARD

The award goes annually to the major league executive who has contri-

HEMOND AWARD (Cont.)

buted the most toward baseball research - particulaly regarding scouting, but not limited to scouting alone.

Pat Gillick, the Seattle GM, was an easy winner in 2003. His openness to research, his feel for the history of the game, his strong use of extremely talented scouting staffs to build championship teams in Toronto, Baltimore, and Seattle, his field experience as a scout 35 years ago for Houston - all make him a SABR project in progress.

Pat made a special effort to be a part of our panel and had to leave during the awards ceremony - off to follow his club on a short night's rest. He joins Roland (2001) and Bob Howsam (2002), the G.M. of world champions in St. Louis and Cincinnati, as the third winner of the award.

JIM SANDOVAL

Jim is a baseball nut from Huntsville, Alabama, who has undertaken the task of pulling together the data of scouts' rosters. His goal is to compile a data file by year, by team, and by scout, listing where every scout worked from 1901 to the current day.

What he needs in addition to notes generated by general research from all SQBR committees, he needs a person in each major league city to come forth with annual employment lists from all major league clubs.

Jim's address is: Jim Sandoval
144 Smith Vasser Rd.
Harvest, AL 35749-9579
Phone: 256-721-7643
e-mail: casandman@aol.com

SCOUTS' BIOS

The third major project of our committee has fallen behind schedule.

Your editor sat in the Dead Ball Committee meeting and listened as Tom Simon from Vermont reviewed the bio project under way there. In three short years, the committee has prepared a book of 133 biographies of arguably the major National League figures from 1901-1920. There is at least one picture of each person and each bio is at least 1,500 words in length - some up to twice that size. The book will be published later this year.

The American League bio collection is now a work in progress with many of the 130-plus bios already assigned and a 2005 publication date has been scheduled.

Our scouts' committee needs a bio editor - someone to work with the co-chairs who has time and enthusiasm of a Tom Simon to do this project. We have 10 bios assigned, but none are completed. We have 100 more awaiting assignment. Roberta Mazur from the Scout of the Year Foundation and Frank Phelps have supplied many basic bios to serve as a foundation

BIO PROJECT (Cont.)

for expansion.

It seems that we'll never see this project completed unless one of two things happens:

- 1 - Your newsletter editor retires from active scouting.
- 2 - We find a project co-ordinator/editor.

Rod Nelson has plenty to do without the bio project. So, too, does Jim Sandoval. And Bill Clark is negotiating for a two-year contract extension with the Padres.

So - if you have the time and sincere interest - contact Bill Clark at 3906 Grace Ellen Drive, Columbia, Mo. 65202-1796. Phone: 573-474-4510. Fax: 573-474-1449. We'll match you with Tom Simon and use his success as a basis for our success.

THE DATA

In a meeting of committee chairs, the question of data ownership arose and was not thoroughly resolved, though the general rule of thumb seemed to be:

- 1 - Research belongs to the one who does it.
- 2 - However, if that research is approved as a part of any SABR project, its final disposition would belong to SABR.

So who owns the "who signed whoms?" The Scouts' Rosters? The bio projects? Stay tuned. If the "who signed whoms" and scouts' rosters are integrated into other SABR data, they, too, would probably be SABR property. But, if they are held apart, then a decision would be made based on a hearing. The evidence now points to SABR ownership of the "who signed whoms," since the original project was put into action by Jim Krueze, the immediate past chairman of this committee, who had no idea he was opening a can of worms. Like we noted earlier - stay tuned.

ALAN SCHWARZ

Alan was on hand for a SABR panel and joined us at the scouts' committee meeting. He offered Baseball America's assistance in any way we can use and was eager to share in our data. He offered the comment that we need to designate what area a scout should be listed: area, cross-checker, part-time, pro, associate, director etc., Rod already is updating his file, where known. With the advent of the draft in 1965, such designations are needed.

TRACY RINGOLSBY

In addition to a full life as a writer for the Rocky Mtn News. Tracy also serves on the panel to establish the scouts' exhibition in Cooperstown. We all know that scouts are light years away from being in the Hall itself and that we're also a long way from being given a wing unto ourselves such as the media people have.

RINGOLSBY (Cont.)

Tracy notes that this is quite possibly a blessing in disguise. He feels that the museum would be happy to devote a weekend - or a week - to the scouts exhibit when it finally opens and we would not share time with Hall of Fame inductions like the media folks do today.

THE MUSEUM

The museum is being renovated and expanded and it is this expansion which will house the scouts' exhibit. We are a long way from being forgotten. For a long time we'll not be in the Hall of Fame - but we will be in Cooperstown as soon as expansion is completed.

THANKS

To Irwin Herlihy for enough data to do a bio on Larry Sutton, one of the great scouts of the distant past. Irwin is a great "digger," but says "Don't accuse me of being a writer." So we'll find one of those for you, Irwin, and Larry Sutton will be a done deal. Thanks.

SOME POST-SABR 33 THOUGHTS

As your editor and co-chairman worked his way thru four days in Denver, he became acutely aware of a number of things:

1 - As a person who has no computer and no interest in owning one, I really am out of touch with most of SABR. Literally hundreds of communications move thru the committee and I have no awareness.

2 - My job as the international scouting supervisor of the Padres keeps me on the road year-round - up to 300 days a year if we can stretch the budget that far - and a 45-year commitment to weightlifting takes much more time than SABR (I publish an international lifting newsletter 8-9 times a year and serve the national body as secretary). In addition, my wife and I, with the help of our daughters are returning a 200-acre former farm site back into a nature area.

3 - I'm the only chairman without an e-mail address. I live by the fax, which seems to have been forgotten in this e-mail age.

4 - In addition, I still train with the weights and try to stay strong enough to be the guy to beat in the 70-74 age group at the national level.

5 - I'm also the secretary and newsletter editor for the Midwest Scouts Ass'n. and deeply involved in trying to establish a National Major League Scouts' Ass'n.

All of which makes it look like I have no time for the SABR committee.

Several times during the four days, I asked myself "Why are you here? Your research time is limited and your technical skills are nil." I wondered if SABR really needed me. I'm still not sure. Maybe the Padres won't renew my contract and I'll have time to write at least four books going thru my thick head and I'll have a chance to do a bit of research.

THOUGHTS (Cont.)

When I filled a void three years ago as the committee chair, I had two missions:

- 1 - Complete the project of "who signed whoms" begun by Jim Kruez.
- 2 - Develop a list of scouts by team, year, etc.

A year ago, Norm Macht asked that we add a bio collection to be published by SABR in book form..

So we have a three-part commitment in our committee - plus helping to get data to the Hall of Fame for the scouts' exhibit at Cooperstown. Nothing is completed and won't be in the immediate future.

But with Rod working on his data file 18 hours a day and Jim Sandoval dedicated to his scouts' list, we're a huge distance from where we were three years ago. If we can get the bio project under a third leader, we'll fill a huge void in baseball research - the world of scouting.

I like to think maybe I've been the straw that stirred the drinks. I'd like to be around when we bring our three projects to completion - so if no one complains too loudly, I plan to stay around a year or two more sharing the chairmanship with Rod and hammering out newsletters on this typewriter which Rod will turn into e-mail so that a lot more folks will be in touch.

I probably should walk away and remove the dinosaur from the scene, but it has been a great thrill and, I feel, an addition to SABR's program to see the enthusiasm for the Hemond Award and the scouting panels which have brought active major league executives and national baseball writers to SABR.

So - I've submitted a budget for 2004 and we'll get on with the future - with a damned dinosaur up front.

FUTURE PLANS

The plans are very simple - move toward completion of our three goals. Take on no other projects until these are complete.

1 - The primary goal is to find a director of the bio project. Whoever you are - please step forth!!!

2 - We need people in major league cities to help Jim Sandoval to run down the scouting rosters in those cities. We need volunteers to contact Jim and work out what is needed in each city.

3 - Rod can always use data about who signed whom...about what scouts were responsible for finding a player, even if he didn't actually sign that player, etc.. His data is so complete it is scary - so get to Rod with anything you might add. Rod's e-mail is SABRscouts@aol.com. He has other means of communication, but the e-mail is your best bet. If you don't have e-mail - call him at 303-477-1656. His fax is 810-222-7586.

Just three things - that's it. Our future.

STILL INTERESTED

Many of you who receive this newsletter have been on the mailing list for three years, but we've heard nothing from you.

We have a liberal budget from SABR, but there's no reason to waste 37-cent stamps if you no longer have any interest in what we do or plan to do.

If you no longer have interest - please drop Ol' Clark a note and tell him you're history. Might e-mail the same to Rod, since he also keeps the mailing list.

If we don't hear from you - we'll assume you still have interest.

FINALLY

To contact your newsletter editor/co-chairman:

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A closing thought - this is the Cubs' year. The curse of the Babe will continue in Boston, but the lovable Cubbies will go all the way and Dusty Baker will be the honorary mayor of Chi-Town for life.

Comments???