



Society for American Baseball Research

San Diego Ted Williams Chapter

# NEWSLETTER

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# 1

## "A PADRES YARN"!

It's About Karl Wallenda...


On August 31, 1975...At San Diego Stadium

by Andy Strasberg



**THE GREAT WALLEND  
IS COMING!**  
TO SAN DIEGO STADIUM  
**SUNDAY, AUGUST 31 — 1 P.M.**  
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE  
**PADRES vs. MONTREAL EXPOS**

WATCH 70 YR. OLD KARL WALLEND  
WALK A TIGHTROPE ACROSS SAN DIEGO STADIUM FROM  
THE TOP DECK. DON'T MISS THE MOST DANGEROUS  
STUNT EVER PERFORMED IN CALIFORNIA. NO  
INCREASE IN TICKET PRICES!



**TICKETS**

Field—Press .....	\$4.00
Loose .....	\$3.50
Plaza .....	\$2.50
General Admission .....	\$1.50
Gen. Admission (14-under) .....	\$1.00

As the mid-point of another forgettable Padres season approached, the 1975 team was long out of contention and, as a result, struggling at the gate.

In anticipation of a likely losing record after the All-Star Game break, Padres VP of Business Operations Elten Schiller decided to appeal to fans with additional ticket-purchase benefits.

Instead of reducing ticket prices to attract more fans, his preferred method of trying to overcome a losing team's appeal was to apply "added value" to the cost of a regular ticket. As he put it: "Win or lose, our \$4 field level tickets cost \$4."

The added value could take many forms, such as "giveaways" to each fan attending a designated game receiving a cap or kids getting a Little League-size wood bat.

Other added value incentives included staging an event either before (Hollywood Stars celebrity softball) or after (fireworks shows) the game.

Keeping an eye on what other teams were doing, Schiller noted that a few teams had hired the world-renowned circus performer Karl Wallenda to walk a post-game tightrope.

Jim Weigel, the Padres' promotion director who reported to Schiller, hired Wallenda to perform after the Sunday, August 31, game when the Montreal Expos were in town.

The performance would have Wallenda starting from San Diego Stadium's upper deck left-field stands, walking a tightrope stretched high above and across the entire playing field. The walk for the one-time Ringling Brothers Circus star would total 660 feet across, the longest since 1970, when he had performed over the Tallulah Gorge in Georgia. In baseball terms, that translates to almost two inside-the-park-homers.

Did it work? Well, our game attendance did show a slight increase over a few of the season's previous games that included the popular Friday and Saturday games.

But here's the backstory that fans were not aware of:

A few days before the performance, Padres team president Buzie Bavasi learned that the 70-year-old Wallenda was dealing with a double hernia and was due for surgery the following week.

Bavasi, who was jittery about the daredevil act, directed Weigel to ask Wallenda if he'd prefer to cancel the appearance, noting he would still receive his full \$5,000 fee.

Wallenda, a true showman, refused to cancel because he lived by the traditional show business credo, "The show must go on."

And, indeed, it did.

The day before the performance, the Padres were comfortably nestled in 4th place in the National League West with a 60-75 record, 30 1/2 games out of first place.

Wallenda was setting up the wire with his son and young granddaughter at the top of the stadium for the Sunday post-game performance. Weigel and a newspaper writer sent to do a feature story on the famous tightrope artist watched with interest.

The writer knew Wallenda had performed before presidents, kings, queens, and other celebrities around the world and asked him who he thought was the most famous person for whom he had performed.

Listening in, Weigel was surprised by what Wallenda said after a moment's reflection: "I think it would have to be *der fuhrer*, Adolph Hitler."

Moments before the Sunday game, managers Gene Mauch of the Expos and the Padres' John McNamara met with the umpiring crew at home plate.

First base umpire Bruce Froemming pointed out the wire high above the field and proclaimed that for one game a new San Diego Stadium baseball ground-rule as follows: Any fly ball that hit the wire would be "live" and in-play.

Relaxing in the press box, Wallenda calmly ate a bologna sandwich as he waited for the game to end. In a crisp game that took less than two hours, the Padres won 6-0, thanks to homers by Willie McCovey and Dave Roberts and the superb pitching of Brent Strom.

Just before the game ended, having completed my ticket-office responsibilities, I decided to sit among the sun-drenched spectators. There were plenty of empty seats.

At precisely 3:12 pm, I watched as The Great Wallenda gingerly stepped out on to the 5/8th-inch cable wire 130 feet above the playing field, anchored by 11 Padres ushers stationed on the field.

The wire appeared to be swaying as a result of the inconsistent abilities of the ushers' strength to steady the tightrope wire with long affixed ropes.



The announced crowd of 9,876 fans was now reduced to my best guess of approximately 8,000. They were eerily silent as Wallenda methodically placed one foot in front of the other, appearing as if he was being tested to demonstrate he could walk a straight line after being pulled over by the CHP.

For a moment I diverted my attention to look at the fans in the stands.

It appeared that every fan's head was tilted upward, transfixed on Wallenda, and shading their eyes from the late afternoon glare, virtually all with their mouths agape.

Not wanting to miss a step, I quickly focused back to Wallenda and began snapping photos of the unique post-game, death-defying circus act with my Nikkormat 35 mm camera.

Here, I'll let take Weigel take up the action: "I was standing next to Wallenda when he began his walk and gave him his balancing pole. I then rushed to the other side of the ballpark where he would finish up. Like all those there that afternoon, I held my breath.

"When he was half-way across the wire, he faked a stumble and the crowd gasped. In my amazement, I opened my mouth wide but no sound came out. A few feet later, he yelled out to me, 'This one's for you, Jimmy,' and did a headstand. I screamed to him, 'Karl, just get over here and off the wire!'

"When he eventually reached the other side, I met him with a hug and a huge triple martini, which he had requested in his contract."

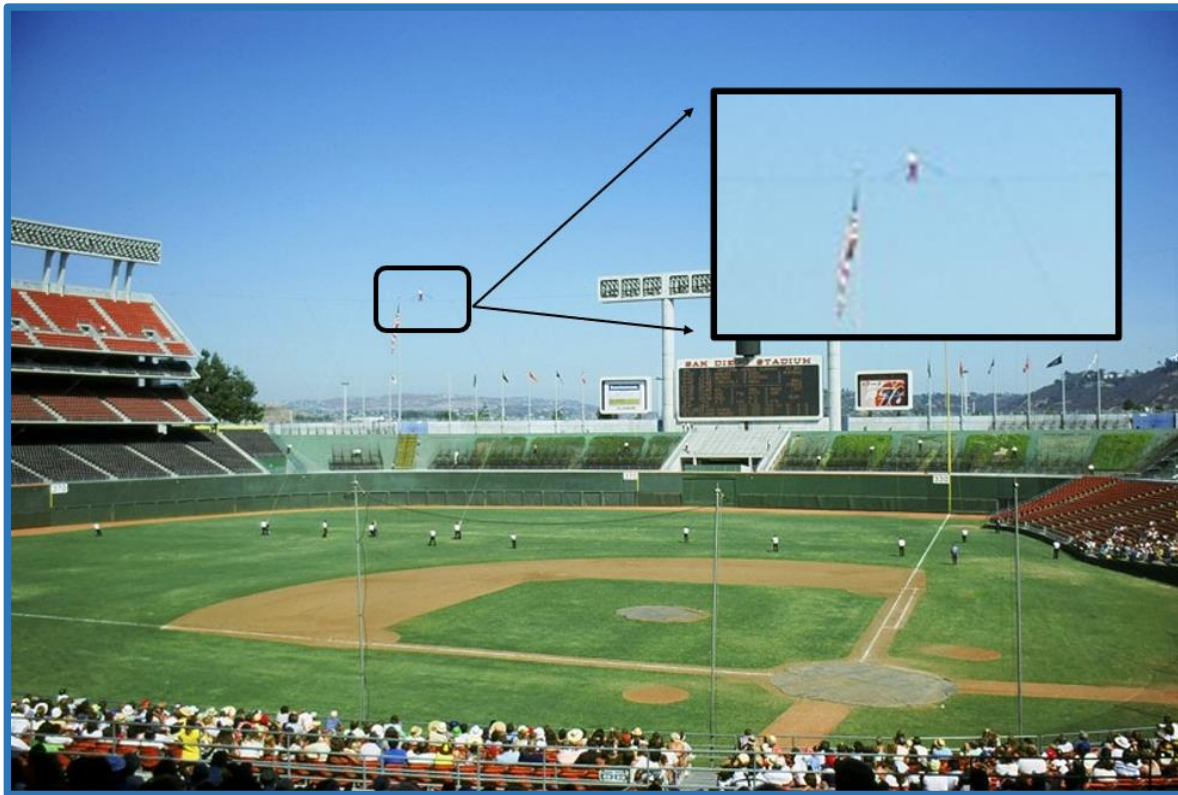
### **FEAT BLENDS BALANCE, BOLOGNA**

## **Wallenda's Triple Martini Just 1 More For The Wire**

September 1, 1972, *San Diego Union*, p.11

After Wallenda reached the other side of his 13-minute, 551-step walk, the relieved crowd erupted into wild applause. I'm not positive, but I thought I heard more than a few exulted shouts of "Prost!" and "Zum Wohl!" from those fans who knew how to cheer in German.

As for me, all I could do was start breathing again!



Photos courtesy of Andy Strasberg, and his Nikkormat

*Andy Strasberg, who worked in the Padres front office in 1975-1996, is authoring a book about some of his memories from those years. It will cover 108 first-person stories by Andy...or, as he refers to them... "yarns"!*

*This story was one of the 108.*



### **Wallenda's Feat by the Numbers**

- 35**    *Weight of his pole (pounds)*
- 13**    *Time to walk across (minutes)*
- 660**    *Length of high wire (feet)*
- 551**    *Number of steps to cross*
- 130**    *Distance of wire above ground (feet)*
- 6**    *Maximum sway in wire (feet)*
- 15**    *Maximum sag in wire in the middle (feet)*

Source: September 1, 1972, *San Diego Union*, p.11



## 2

## BASEBALL HALL OF FAME'S PARTNERSHIP WITH SAN DIEGO BRC and SABR Benefit from 2006 Donation

*by Jeremy Davies*

In 2006, the Sullivan Family Baseball Research Center (BRC), located at San Diego Public Library's (SDPL) Central Library, acquired several unique collections from the Baseball Hall of Fame (HoF). These items are found on microfilm, for those who enjoy all things analog. However, if you haven't tried the microfilm readers at the Central Library you are in for a treat. Our new readers now display on digital screens with the ability to scan, download, or send to an email.

Aside from the novelty of microfiche, why take a trip to peruse these resources? Though these collections are certainly rare, they also provide invaluable tools for researching the National League, American League, minor leagues, Negro Leagues, and All-American Girls Baseball League. The four primary HoF files are these (see exhibits on the following page):

- The **minor league contract cards**, for example, provide extensive information about players' contracts and movements between 1902 and 1982.
- Also, the so-called **MLB Questionnaires** provide beneficial demographic and biographical information about players from several leagues. So-called because the questionnaires were collected by Hall of Fame staff from the 1940s to 1980s.
- Likewise, the **Tom Burlin Questionnaires** include valuable information about players active from the 1920s to the 1970s.
- And, of course, I would be remiss without mentioning the **Black Sox Scandal**. This collection from the American League offices includes photos and records related to the 1919 World Series scandal, where players from the Chicago "Black Sox" took bribes to throw games. Also included in these reels are records of other baseball gambling-related incidents.

Interested in expanding your research? Come check us out!

You can find these Hall of Fame resources at the SDPL [Central Library](#), on the 8th floor, in the [Sullivan Family BRC](#). This extensive collection can provide most of your research needs.

You may quickly access stored items, like the above-mentioned resources, with the assistance of reference desk staff. Beyond microfilm, most items are available for checkout!

If you would like to start your research now, you can [search the library catalog](#) or view [digital baseball collections](#) from the comfort of your own home. If you are a California resident, you are eligible for a free SDPL library card. Signing up is quick and easy; you may start the process by clicking [here](#). More information about library lending, including details for non-residents, can be found [here](#).

Lansdowne, Pa.  
Feb. 24th, 1921.

Hon. Kenesaw M. Landis,  
Room #722 Auditorium Hotel,  
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Judge Landis: -

At your suggestion, I am returning on separate sheet, a list of expenses which I incurred on Chicago trip last Friday and Saturday.

Since my return I have thought of two things which I thought you ought to know.

First-- A specific instance similar if not identical to 'collection' of White Sox to Detroit players, pitchers or who ever it was. Namely, it was published in the newspapers at the time that pitcher Frits Coumbe, (I can not remember whether he was with Cleveland then or not) received \$100 from some leading Club maybe Boston, for winning a game of ball. This incident is rather vague in my mind, but I know Ray Schalk remembers it distinctly. I am sure about it being Coumbe, but could not swear as to the Clubs involved.

Second-- Weaver did make a bet for me, how or with whom I never knew, of an amount of \$40, on the morning of Labor day 1917 to the effect that we (White Sox) would beat Detroit two games that day. After we had won the morning game, a very close one that Eddie Murphy won with a pinch hit, I made the remark to Weaver that I was sorry I had made the bet or something to that effect, and that I did not think I would ever bet on another game that I was in. Gleason as far as I know is the only other player who knew of this bet, and not until I had told him about it, and who at my request assumes half of it after the first game had been already won. So that my part of it was only \$20. Weaver was there and knew that I asked Gleason to take half of it. It was the first bet of an amount anywhere near that amount I had ever made on a ball game, and I guess it was on my mind more than the game itself. At any rate I have never made one since that time.

These two incidents are all that I can recall right now. If I can be of any further assistance to you in any way, believe me, I will be only too glad to do so.

Very sincerely and respectfully yours,  
EDWARD T. COLLINS.

Letter from Hall of Fame player Edward (Eddie) T. Collins to Hon. Kenesaw W. Landis, dated February 24, 1921 (From: Black Sox File)

I have been collecting Baseball Autographs for about 20 years. Your autograph would really mean alot to me if I could add it to my collection.

Also my time is spent with Gardening (String Beans, Radish, Cucumber, Nectarines, Plums, ect.) and Music (Sinatra, Mancini, Miller, Basie, Heath, ect.). I love to make tapes for anyone wants one. Also enjoy Golf, Camping and Fishing.

Please take a moment if you can to answer a question or two I have below, and autograph it with my index cards and mail back to me.

Thank you,  
Thomas Burlin

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WHAT ARE SOME MEMORABLE EVENTS FROM YOUR BASEBALL CAREER THAT WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER?

1. 1st day in N.L.
2. ALL-STAR GA. '54 (HR) CLEVE.
3. RBI LEADOFF '55 DET.
4. 4 GRAND-SLAMS ('53 season) & TOT.
5. WORLD SERIES CHAMPIONS '49 CLEVE.
6. SON (BOB) IN N.L.

WHO WERE SOME PLAYERS AND PITCHERS THAT YOU FELT WERE OUTSTANDING?

1. ALICE REYNOLDS NEW YORK YANKEES
2. HERB SCOTT
3. BOB FOSTER
4. W. FORD N.Y.

ANY MEMORABLE GAMES THAT YOU RECALL SPECIFICALLY?

1. HR. IN '54 ALL-STAR GAME

*Ray Boone*

Last page of questionnaire filled out by San Diegan Ray Boone, MLB player 1948-60 (From: Tom Burlin Questionnaires File)

BULLETIN	N.A.	C.	DATE	CONTRACT YEARS ACQUIRED		RELEASED		SUSPENDED		APPLICATIONS		ASSIGNMENTS		RESERVED		CLUB	CLUB	
				CONTRACT	RELEASED	RELIABLE	NOT RETIRED	CLAIM	REINSTATEMENT	MAILED	ORIGINAL	OUTRIGHT	EXCHANGED	EXCHANGED	EXCHANGED			
9			AUG 22 1936														San Diego	1936
			NOV-1 1936															1936
3			APR 22 1937															1937
			NOV-1 1937															1937
20			DEC 1 1937															1937
			MAY-3 1938															San Diego Boston AL
			APR 1 1938															1938
			MAY-2 1938															Boston AL, Minneapolis
			SEP-16 1938															1938
			NOV-21 1938															1938
			NOV-14 1939															1939
			NOV-15 1939															1939
			NOV-8 1940															1940
			APR 5 1941															1941
			NOV 12 1941															1941
			APR 10 1942															1942

NAME WILLIAMS TED OVER

The first of Ted Williams' five contract cards, showing the period 1936-1942 (From: Contract Card File)

Name: DIERKER LARRY EDWARD  
LAST NAME FIRST NAME MIDDLE NAME SUFFIX

Exact place of birth: HOLLYWOOD CALIF.  
(If born in foreign place name nearest village)

Date of birth: 9 23 46  
MONTH DAY YEAR

Permanent address: 5906 CAKOLE AVE WOODBRIDGE HILLS CALIF.  
(STREET) (TOWN OR CITY) (STATE)

Current occupation: None  
(Please describe exact duties)

How did you bat? (L, R or B) R How did you throw? (L or R) R

How tall are you? 6' 4" What was your playing weight? 190 lbs

Nationality (American, but of what descent): GERMAN

Elementary School attended: BERTHOLD AVE Years completed: 9

High school attended: TAFI Years completed: 3

College attended: PIERCE Years completed: 1/2

Degrees granted: \_\_\_\_\_

Wife's maiden name in full: \_\_\_\_\_ Marriage Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please list all marriages) (Month) (Day) (Year)

Were you ever in the armed forces? No What branch of service? \_\_\_\_\_  
 When? \_\_\_\_\_

What was your first year of professional baseball? 1964

What was your last year of professional baseball? \_\_\_\_\_

If you had it all to do over, would you play professional baseball? YES

*Larry Dierker*

Questionnaire completed by MLB pitcher Larry Dierker (1964-77) (From: MLB Questionnaires File)



## 3

**SAN DIEGO'S MONROE FIELD****1936-1941**

by Tom Larwin

When Lane Field opened in March 1936 as host for the San Diego Padres in their inaugural season in the Pacific Coast League (PCL) it was not the only new ballpark that year in San Diego. About five miles to the northeast of Lane Field another ball field, called Monroe Field, would open with its first game to be played in November of that year.

One of the outcomes of the PCL Padres beginning play in 1936 was that there would be no baseball fields open to city and semi-pro baseball leagues. Lane Field was occupied in the spring and summer with Padres' baseball, and was to be used for football in the fall and winter months. Thus, the local leagues were limited to playground fields for their games.

There was a need for another field in the city, one that would be designed specifically for amateur and semi-pro baseball games.

In January 1936 there were newspaper reports of a new athletic area generally bounded by Madison Avenue on the north, Meade Avenue on the south, Ohio Street on the west, and Illinois Street on the east. However, the project would be in the middle of a residential area and the plan generated opposition that resulted in a "no" vote by the City on January 9.<sup>1</sup>

Over the next eight months a group was organized called Recreational Enterprise, Inc. It comprised approximately 20 local business-sportsmen.<sup>2</sup> The group was led by two former San Diego High School baseball players, Travis Hatfield and Bill Ramage.

The group was evidently successful in turning around public opinion, as in early October plans were announced to open the new park on October 25. The Recreational Enterprise group was to manage construction.

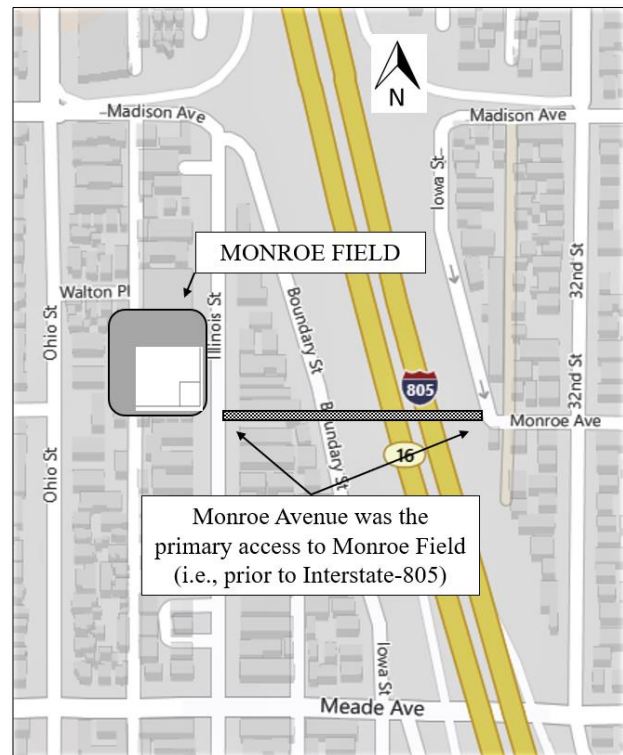


Figure 1. Location of Monroe Field overlaid on a current map of the surrounding neighborhood.

<sup>1</sup> January 10, 1936, "Softball Park Flops, Commission Bars Baseball Field Among Residences," *San Diego Union*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> September 6, 1936, "Local Group Constructing Softball Park," *San Diego Union*, p.36.

The eventual general site plan is shown in Figure 1.

The cost estimate for the park’s development was in excess of \$10,000. Key features included lights for night play and a seating capacity of approximately 4,000. Home plate was to face the northwest, and the left- and right-field line would measure 297 and 307 feet, respectively. Turf was to be planted in the outfield initially, and a later phase would add it in the infield, as well.

The name of the new park was left up to a contest among residents. The winner would receive \$25. Nearly 400 different suggestions were received. A rather unimaginative name was selected, Monroe Field, in recognition of the street that provided access to the park.<sup>3</sup>

**MONROE FIELD’S OPENING DAY: NOVEMBER 1, 1936**

The first game to be played in Monroe Field was pushed back a week and rescheduled to take place on Sunday, November 1. It turned out that this November timing was perfect and would permit San Diego to have a team that would play in a ballpark fit for high level play in the 1936-37 Southern California Winter League.

The opening game scheduled San Diego to play at home—Monroe Field—against one of Southern California’s best semi-pro teams, the Pirrone’s All-Stars, from Los Angeles.

The new park and game attracted media attention as demonstrated by the sports section headline from the November 1 *Union* shown below.



Both teams were composed of well-known (then), experienced professional ball players. For instance, on the San Diego team were Earle Brucker, Archie Campbell, Pete Coscarart, Gene Desautels, Ernie Holman, Rod Luscomb, and Herman Pillette. Pirrone’s had Louie Almada, George Caster, Steve Mesner, and Carl Sawyer.<sup>4</sup>

The projected lineups for the game are shown to the right.

Local dignitaries in attendance at the game included heavyweight boxer and former San Diego Aces’ player, Lee Ramage,<sup>5</sup> and the San Diego Padres owner, Bill Lane. Admission of 40¢ was charged and an estimated 1,500 fans were in attendance. They witnessed a win by Pirrone’s, 3-0, in a quick one hour forty minutes.

<b>San Diego</b>	<b>PIRRONE'S ALL STARS</b>
FRANKIE MOREHOUSE.....SS	LOUIE ALMADA.....CF
PETE COSCARART.....2B	CARL SAWYER.....1B
AL McNEELY.....CF	STEVE MESSNER.....3B
EARL BRUCKER.....1B	LYN STORTI.....RF
ERNE HOLMAN.....3B	FERN BELL.....LF
GENE DESAUTELS.....RF	CHILI GOMEZ.....SS
RODNEY LUSCOMB.....LF	ALLAN STRANGE.....SS
DALLAS WARREN.....C	JOHNNY KERE.....2B
HERMAN PILLETTE.....P	JOHNNY KERE.....2B
UTILITY	HUGH McMULLEN.....C
ARCH CAMPBELL.....P	JACK SALVESON.....P
CHEY SMITH.....IF	GEORGE CASTER.....P
JOE DOBBENS.....OF	
ASHLEY JOERNDT.....OF	

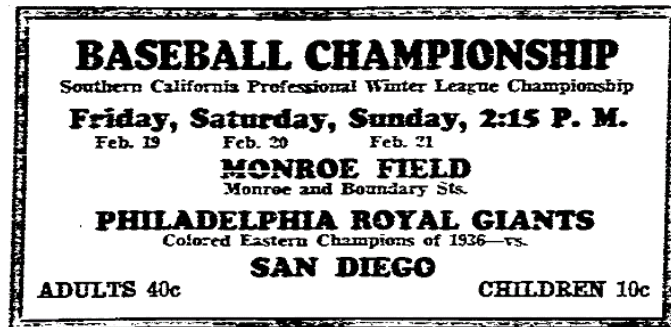
The Winter League consisted of six teams, with five teams from the Los Angeles area, including the Philadelphia Royal Colored Giants. San Diego won more than they lost and in

<sup>3</sup> October 19, 1936, “Monroe Field Selected as Park’s Name,” *San Diego Union*, p.14  
<sup>4</sup> Carl Sawyer was well known at the time, especially on the west coast. In 1936 he was well beyond his best years as a player. However, he remained active as a baseball comedian—who could still play adequate baseball. For more information on Sawyer go to [SABR’s BioProject](#).  
<sup>5</sup> The San Diego Aces were in the California State League (D) in 1929. Halfway through the season the League collapsed. Lee Ramage played in six games at second base. That was his last stint in professional baseball. However, he then turned to boxing and was a ranked heavyweight in 1936.



February 1937 played the Giants for the League championship. The Giants had a team loaded with professional players from the summer Negro Leagues back east. Leading off and playing center field was [James "Cool Papa" Bell](#), and the team's catcher was [Biz Mackey](#), both of whom would be eventually elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame. They also had the best nicknames, for example, "Cowboy" Dunne, "Undertaker" Morney, "Bad News" Wright, "King Kong" Cole, "Slim" Mathews, "Slasher" Summers, and "Pullman" Porter.

The 1936-37 Winter League championship came down to a best-of-three series between San Diego and the Giants at Monroe Field in February 1937.



On February 12 San Diego won the first game, 2-1. With the score tied, 1-1, the winning run was scored in the bottom of the ninth inning with one out when Pete Coscarart was called safe in a steal of home. A "near riot" ensued, but the call stood and San Diego won game one.<sup>6</sup>

Squaring the series on February 19, the Giants won game two, 10-6. That forced a final game three to decide the championship the next day.

Shortly before the game was to be played, San Diego learned it would be without its normal first baseman, Joe Dobbins, because of an "ailing molar." So, in the stands was the Doerr family, baseball players Bobby<sup>7</sup> and brother Hal, along with their parents. Hal, a professional catcher, volunteered to step in for Dobbins and went on to play the entire game in right field, as manager "Junk" Walters took over at first base. The addition of Doerr turned out to be a brilliant decision. With two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning, Doerr came up to bat with two men on base. He had gone hitless in his first two at-bats, but not this one, as he hit a home run to win the game, 4-3, and the League championship.

Doerr's dramatic home run would remain a prime highlight of Monroe Field's relatively short life span.

However, there was another series that provided a highlight, as well. This one was played a year later, in January 1938, in what was called the "mythical city championship series."<sup>8</sup> The series was between Farley's and the Gold Club, both member teams of the 1937-38 Southern California Winter League. Included were notable minor- and major-league players such as the Coscarart brothers, Rod Luscomb, Bill Skelley, Chet Smith, and Ted Williams, who at the time was a month away from joining the Boston Red Sox in Florida for spring training.

<sup>6</sup> February 13, 1937, "Giants Near Riot As 2-1 Tilt Won By San Diegans," *San Diego Evening Tribune*, p.19.

<sup>7</sup> [Bobby Doerr](#) played second base for the 1936 San Diego Padres and went on to have a Hall of Fame career with the Boston Red Sox. Hal played five years in the minor leagues and never made the major leagues.

<sup>8</sup> January 2, 1938, "Gold Club Wins 3-0," *San Diego Union*, p.47.

After two seasons with the San Diego Padres, Williams was already a celebrity in town. The photo of him wearing a Gold Club uniform from the January 1, 1938, *San Diego Union* noted as much (see Figure 2). The caption that accompanied the photo read as follows:

*"When the new Gold Club baseball team opens a series with Farley's this afternoon at 2 at Monroe Field, Ted Williams, above, San Diego Padre sensation who goes to the Boston Red Sox in 1938, will be holding down an outfield position."*

The series was deadlocked, with the deciding game to be played on January 9. Farley's won that game and the so-called pennant, 10-6, behind the pitching of Herman "Old Folks" Pillette. He was aided by Pete Coscarart at second base, who had three hits including a home run, and handled 11 chances without an error.<sup>9</sup>

Afterwards, the two teams agreed to play one more game on January 16. Gold Club's manager, Walters, asked for a fourth contest with a side wager as the prize to the winner. In addition, the teams decided to honor Williams, with a "Ted Williams Day."<sup>10</sup>

"Tex" Reichert, a Navy pitcher, helped the Gold Club win the wager with a no-hitter. It was a victory, 1-0, with Williams, appropriately enough, getting a key hit and scoring the game's only run.<sup>11</sup>

Using Monroe Field as its home, the Gold Club would go on to host travelling teams in 1938, such as the Los Angeles Colored Giants.

But the scheduling of baseball games at Monroe Field gradually faded as the year went on and increasingly softball games took the field, and there was even a donkey baseball game "played with live donkeys."

### 1939 SIGNALS THE BEGINNING OF THE END

By 1939 the park was mostly occupied by softball leagues, both women's and men's. Other functions started to appear such as polo matches.

There was a Carnival in 1941 and by 1942 the field was no longer being used for sports. World War II had an adverse impact on organized sports and at one point the field was being used as a salvage depot.<sup>12</sup>

In the period 1942-44 an annual circus "came to town" and that appeared to be the only function hosted at the field.

The neighborhood had never really liked the idea of a sports field in its midst and there were continuing efforts to turn it into a park for general use.<sup>13</sup> In 1946 the owner sought rezoning for purposes of an ice rink. By 1951 Monroe Field was subdivided and residential lots were being sold.

In 1952 apartment construction erased any lasting evidence of Monroe Field.



Figure 2.  
Ted Williams, Gold  
Club Outfielder

<sup>9</sup> January 10, 1938, "Farley Nine Wins City Title," *San Diego Union*, p.12

<sup>10</sup> January 16, 1938, "Farley's, Gold Club To Meet Again Today," *San Diego Union*, p.42.

<sup>11</sup> January 17, 1938, "Tex Reichert Pitches No-Hitter; Club Wins," *San Diego Union*, p.12.

<sup>12</sup> October 26, 1942, "Army Scrap Haul Totals 800 Tons," *San Diego Union*, p.1.

<sup>13</sup> May 18, 1946, "Residents Want Field Made Park," *San Diego Union*, p.5.

\* \* \*

In retrospect, as a ballpark, Monroe Field had a good run for three years, 1936-38—for sure, its Golden Years. By all public accounts it seemed to be functionally adequate. If there were any gripes, they were never made public by players, fans, or reporters.

Seating arrangements were not described and yet newspaper reports noted up to 2,000 fans attended games. No photographs have been found of the stands or the field.

An accurate physical description of the field layout was not found in the research either. The direction of the field and measurement of the left- and right-field distances were described in the early plans, but it is unknown if that is how it ended up, nor was there any description of the center-field fence distance.

However, there was a qualitative reference to the center-field distance and it took place in one of the Winter League games played on November 15, 1936. It had to do with a home run hit by San Diego’s Earle Brucker, and it was reported as follows:

*“It will be a long time before the fans will see a longer home run hit than the one Brucker smacked over the center field fence in the seventh. The ball cleared the fence 450 feet from the plate and landed in a chicken yard. A minute later the poultry owner came charging on the field, but all he wanted was Brucker’s signature on the ball.”<sup>14</sup>*



**What Do You Think  
About Missions Here?**

FILL OUT AND SEND TO THE SUN

San Diego has a chance for a Pacific Coast League baseball club if the men who hold an option on the San Francisco Missions can be assured of adequate attendance. The Sun, believing a club would be of great civic value, invites its readers to comment on the proposed coming of the Missions.

Below is a form all baseball fans are invited to fill out and mail to The Sun Sports Department, 7<sup>th</sup> and B Sts.

Bear in mind that there will be some 90 games for the season and that prices are 75 cents for adults in the grandstand and 40 cents for adults in the bleachers. Children are 15 cents.

The form:

Would you buy a \$15 season box? .....

Would you regularly attend weekends? .....

(State Sat., Sun., or both)

What site do you suggest for the park? .....

(Sports Field only available site now under consideration; Stadium out because no left field; only alternative some new location).

**Do You Want  
Organized Baseball Here?**

I want to see Pacific Coast League baseball in San Diego and hereby pledge myself to attend and support the sport.

Signed.....

Address.....

I hereby pledge myself to purchase a season box seat ticket, which sells at \$15 per year.

Signed.....

**Send no money. These are just pledges. Send them in at once to the sports department, San Diego Union.**

Questionnaires in San Diego Newspapers Gauging Fan Interest in Baseball  
Left: December 20, 1935, *San Diego Sun*; Right: December 21, 1935, *San Diego Union*

<sup>14</sup> Earl Keller, “San Diego Ball Club Triumphs, November 16, 1936, *San Diego Evening Tribune*, p.22.

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## RECAP: TED WILLIAMS CHAPTER MEETING, January 28, 2023

by Geoff Young

We held our first chapter meeting of 2023 on January 28 at the Central Library downtown. The 20+ attendees enjoyed presentations from three distinguished speakers, each of whom arrived armed with an arsenal of amusing anecdotes.

Mike Koser, longtime radio professional and host of the [Lost Ballparks](#) podcast, shared tidbits from his interviews with various baseball personalities, including Billy Williams, Jon Miller, and Bob Costas. One such tidbit came from a discussion with Dave Parker, who sold hot dogs at Crosley Field when he was in high school and who homered on the first pitch he saw during an open tryout there. The Reds wanted to sign him based on his performance that day, but Parker declined on account of being in the 10th grade.



Veteran broadcaster Mel Proctor, who called Padres games at the turn of the millennium, recounted stories from his book [I Love the Work, But I Hate the Business](#). He talked about concocting accounts of away games for a PCL Hawaii Islanders team that couldn't afford to send him on road trips; a giveaway promotion that went awry when his partner in the booth, John Lowenstein, threw his gifted seat cushion out the window and fans followed suit, causing the game to be delayed; and the time he invited the audience to call his cell phone number on air during a Washington Nationals contest, only to discover that the lone viewers were in the production booth.



Left: Mike Koser is covering some secrets he learned about old Tiger Stadium from his Lost Ballparks podcast interview with broadcaster Jon Miller. (Photo credit: Tom Willman)

To the right: Mike interviews Mel Proctor using his podcast format. (Photo credit: Tom Larwin)





Photo credit: Tom Willman

Former SABR president Andy McCue wrapped up the festivities by relating some of what he found while writing *Stumbling around the Bases*, which covers the American League's often comical efforts at expanding in the '60s and '70s. In a fascinating game of "what if", McCue noted that Charlie Finley originally wanted to move his Kansas City A's to Seattle but eventually settled on Oakland because it had a better stadium. Years later, when a cash-strapped group brought the short-lived Seattle Pilots into the league, they opened their ballpark with port-a-potties, no concessions, and freshly painted right-field seats that literally left their mark on anyone who dared sit in them. More on McCue's new book can be found in the following article.

All in all, the meeting was a rousing success and set the stage for the coming season, which promises to be filled with its own stories that will baffle and delight future generations.



<b>A</b>	<b>THLETIC PARK</b>	<b>26TH STREET AND NEWTON AVE.</b>
		<b>PALMER BROS., Lessees and Mgrs.</b>
<b>SUNDAY, NOV. 4</b>		
<b>Grand Opening Baseball</b>		
<b>PASADENAS vs. PICKWICKS</b>		
<b>ADMISSION 25 CENTS. GRAND STAND, 10 CENTS. BLEACHERS FREE.</b>		
<b>Game Called at 2:30 P. M. Take National Ave. Cars direct to Grounds.</b>		

### San Diego's Athletic Park ...

... opened for play on November 4, 1906, at 26th Street and Newton Avenue with the Pasadenas from Los Angeles coming south to play San Diego's Pickwicks.

*"The new park which will be dedicated next Sunday is one of the finest to be found in Southern California. It is enclosed by an eight-foot fence, the dimensions of the grounds being 500x350 feet. The new grand stand which has been erected will accommodate 900 persons, while the bleachers will hold 800 more. Plenty of room has been provided for carriages and automobiles. The diamond and field are free from all stones and, it is expected, the diamond will prove a fast one."*

(November 2, 1906, *San Diego Evening Tribune*, p.8)

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## FOR YOUR BASEBALL LIBRARY— 4 NEW BOOKS!

- **STUMBLING AROUND THE BASES** *The American League's Mismanagement in the Expansion Era*
- **ROY WHITE** *From Compton to the Bronx*
- **HOME RUNS** *Tales of Tonks, Taters, Contests and Derbies*
- **BACKYARDS TO BALLPARKS** *More Personal Baseball*

### Stumbling around the Bases The American League's Mismanagement in the Expansion Eras

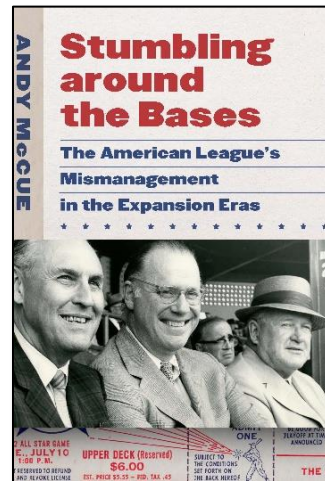
by Andy McCue

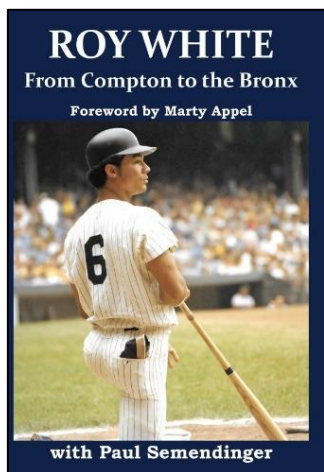
From the late 1950s to the 1980s, baseball's American League mismanaged integration and expansion, allowing the National League to forge ahead in attendance and prestige. While both leagues had executive structures that presented few barriers to individual team owners acting purely in their own interests, it was the American League that succumbed to infighting—which ultimately led to its disappearance into what we now call Major League Baseball. *Stumbling around the Bases* is the story of how the American League fell into such a disastrous state, struggling for decades to escape its nadir and, when it finally righted itself, losing its independence.

The American League's trip to the bottom involved bad decisions by both individual teams and their owners. The key elements were a glacial approach to integration, the choice of underfinanced or disruptive new owners, and a consistent inability to choose the better markets among cities that were available for expansion. The American League wound up with less-attractive teams in the smaller markets compared to the National League—and thus fewer consumers of tickets, parking, beer, hot dogs, scorecards, and replica jerseys.

The errors of the American League owners were rooted in missed cultural and demographic shifts and exacerbated by reactive decisions that hurt as much as helped their interests. Though the owners were men who were notably successful in their non-baseball business ventures, success in insurance, pizza, food processing, and real estate development, didn't necessarily translate into running a flourishing baseball league. In the end the National League was simply better at recognizing its collective interests, screening its owners, and recognizing the markets that had long-term potential.

You can order it here: <https://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/nebraska/9781496207036/>





## ROY WHITE

### From Compton to the Bronx

Roy White with Paul Semendinger

Roy White played on the New York Yankees from 1965 through the 1979 season. Roy grew up on the tough streets of Compton and created a successful all-star baseball career playing alongside such greats as Mickey Mantle, Roger Maris, Whitey Ford, Thurman Munson, Reggie Jackson, Catfish Hunter, and many others. Today Roy White sits among the greatest all-time Yankees in most offensive categories. After his career with the Yankees, Roy White became a star in Japan playing for the Tokyo Giants and playing alongside the greatest Japanese player of all time Sadaharu Oh.

Considered one of the classiest baseball players ever, this is Roy White's story, but it's also the story of a unique period in baseball history when the Yankees fell from grace and regained glory and the country dealt with societal changes in many ways.

You can order it here : <https://www.amazon.com/Roy-White-Compton-Bronx/dp/1951122577>

## Home Runs

*Tales of Tonks, Taters, Contests and Derbies*

by Andy Strasberg

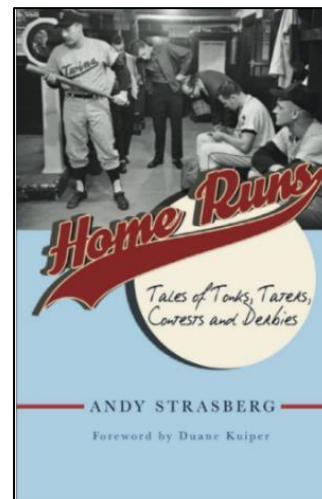
Baseball's most celebrated competition takes center stage and begins with the story of the most famous home run derby competition—TV's *Home Run Derby*—and covers memorable derbies and competitions through the years.

*Home Runs: Tales of Tonks, Taters, Contests and Derbies* focuses on three big stories:

- Creation of television's *Home Run Derby* which included legends Wille Mays, Henry Aaron, Duke Snider, Mickey Mantle, Ernie Banks, and Harmon Killebrew.
- The first full accounting of a post-1961 North Carolina derby tour by Roger Maris, Harmon Killebrew, and Jim Gentile.
- The evolution of MLB's Home Run Derby now a regular part of the annual All-Star Game events. First-hand accounts the first one held in 1978 in San Diego and a memorable one won by Mark McGwire in 1992.

Added to the stories throughout are numerous truly unique **unpublished photographs**.

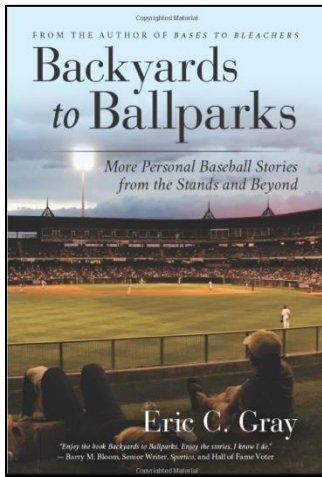
You can order it here: [Home Runs by Andy Strasberg](#)



## Backyards to Ballparks

*More Personal Baseball Stories from the Stands and Beyond*

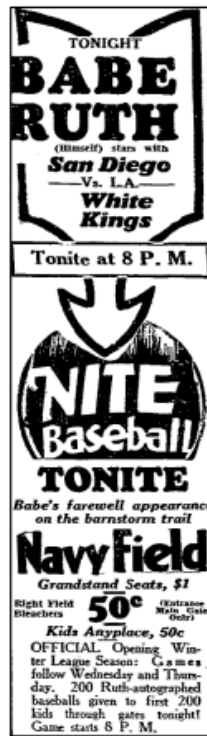
by Eric C. Gray



“What is your favorite memory connected to baseball?” is the simple question asked by author Eric Gray that launched the book *Bases to Bleachers*, a collection of personal memories. With over 1250 tales collected from around the world, it became evident that one volume of stories would not be enough. And they kept coming. *Backyards to Ballparks: More Personal Baseball Stories From the Stands and Beyond* is the second volume.

The stories are all different...but the heart and soul of the book are the same. They all have in common that tribute to why baseball remains the American pastime, how it connects friends, families, communities. These memories, often more human interest than play-of-game in nature, all have baseball as a setting, but speak to how baseball provides joy and anguish, nourishes family traditions, creates friendships and can profoundly affect you.

You can order it here: [Backyards to Ballparks by Eric Gray](#)



October 19, 1931, San Diego Evening Tribune, p.8



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## TED WILLIAMS CHAPTER NOTES



### WELCOME TO SABR and to the TED WILLIAMS CHAPTER!

Daniel Levin, *October 13, 2022*

Allan Sipe, *November 15, 2022*

Meridith Coady, *November 30, 2022*

Michael Madden, *December 5, 2022*

Dylan Shelton, *January 20, 2023*



### THANKS BRO!

Our October 2022 *Newsletter* had a Trivia Quiz with a focus on the Hall of Fame. With a little sibling rivalry at work our author, Bob Parrott, was informed by his brother that the answer to Question 6 was not correct.

Bob brought the error to our attention and noted the following:

*"I shared the trivia questions with my brother and he said #6 answer should include Pujols. Initially I thought he was wrong because I thought the question read 'eligible players.' But he was right, damn."*

On October 31, 2022, Pujols "officially" became eligible for the Hall of Fame when he signed his retirement papers.

\* \* \*

Q. Who are the **two three** players with at least 3000 hits and 500 home runs not in the HOF?

A. (1) Rafael Palmeiro, (2) Alex Rodriguez and **(3) Albert Pujols.**



## Baseball Reliquary 2022 Induction and Awards Ceremony

In our February 2022 *Newsletter* we reported on the Baseball Reliquary and its history.

On November 5, 2022, the Baseball Reliquary held its annual event, the Shrine of the Eternals awards and induction ceremony. The Shrine is often referred to as the "People's Hall of Fame" for its focus more on stories than statistics. Due to the pandemic this 2022 event was the Reliquary's first award ceremony since 2019. It was also the first one that was not led by the Reliquary's late, visionary founder, Terry Cannon, who passed away in 2020.

The three elected inductees to the **Shrine of the Eternals** were:

- Bob Costas, legendary sports broadcaster
- Andrew "Rube" Foster, founder of the Negro National League
- Max Patkin, "Clown Prince of Baseball"

Receiving the **Hilda Award** for distinguished service to the game by a baseball fan was Jeff Boujoukos. He has collected game-used bats from hundreds of Red Sox players from 1960 to the present. Alex Belth, curator of The Stacks Reader, received the **Tony Salin Memorial Award** recognizing his commitment to the preservation of baseball history.

The 90-minute ceremony can be viewed via this link

[2022 Shrine of the Eternals Awards.](#)



**PADRES**  
**ARE IN TOWN**

7:30 P.M.  
**PADRE WIVES**  
vs.  
**PADRE Husbands**

GAMETIME  
8:00 P.M.

**SAN DIEGO vs. HAWAII ISLANDERS**

TICKETS ON SALE NOW! **WESTGATE PARK**  
Highway 395 & Friars Road in Mission Valley — CYPRESS 8-9826

Baseball buses — leave Downtown Plaza starting one hour before game time. pick up along 5th Avenue enroute to Westgate Park.

July 10, 1962, *San Diego Union*, p.17



**WE WELCOME  
YOUR ...**

- Comments
- Ideas for future articles, or projects

Contact: Geoff Young  
via email at

[gyoung858@yahoo.com](mailto:gyoung858@yahoo.com)

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# LAST PAGE

**CHAPTER ARCHIVES ARE AVAILABLE**

For information on our chapter or to check out past Chapter newsletters and Chapter Project Reports click on this link:  
<https://sabr.org/chapter/san-diego-ted-williams-chapter/>

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Tom Willman Treasurer	Anna Newton
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