THE SQUIBBER

December 2018

The Squibber is the Bob Davids chapter’s quarterly newsletter. It is emailed to chapter members roughly every three months. If you're a Bob Davids chapter member and are not getting the Squibber, please check that your email address and chapter affiliations listed on the SABR site are correct. Please send submissions for future editions to Squibber editor Walt Cherniak at wcherniakjr@aol.com.

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48 ANNUAL MEETINGS -- AND COUNTING: Mark Your Calendar for Jan. 26
Let the others make their empty boasts on SABR-L. The Bob Davids Chapter is SABR’s first chapter, and its most active, as exemplified by our upcoming chapter meeting Saturday, Jan. 26, at the Holiday Inn in Rosslyn, Va. It'll be the chapter’s 48th annual meeting. We've never skipped one yet, and we're not about to start now. Neither should you. Where else can you get a full day of baseball like this?
We'll have documentary filmmaker and D.C. resident Aviva Kempner not only talk about her new film on Moe Berg, which is due out in May, but we'll also be treated to a 20-minute section of the work-in-progress.

Also gracing the microphone will be Sydney Bergman of the "Resting Pitch Face" podcast, who will make a research presentation based on her Fangraphs piece, "Umpires Disproportionately Eject Non-White Players."

Anybody who has seen the "Baseball Americana" exhibit at the Library of Congress will delight in this adjunct presentation by chapter treasurer Dave Paulson, "Baseball and U.S. Postage Stamps."

Jimmy Williams (no, not Jimy), assistant coach for the Prince George's Community College Owls baseball team, will be another of our featured speakers. Williams played AAA ball in the Orioles and Dodgers organizations, and played two seasons in Japan for the Chunichi Dragons.

Chapter member Steve Klein will deliver a research presentation on the Black Sox.

Another chapter member, Jimmy Asel, who will do a research presentation on "Inherited Runners."

We'll also have a speaker from the Washington Nationals front office. Paulson is working with the office of Nats GM Mike Rizzo to send someone in the organization who can keep up with us.

Part and parcel of any Bob Davids Chapter Annual Meeting is the raffle. Tickets are still only $1 each or 10 tickets for $5. Not only can you go home with baseball books and paraphernalia, you can also bring items to donate. Proceeds help the chapter stay in the black. If you're prepared to spend a little more, vendors of baseball books and related materials will also be on hand. Any authors among us at the meeting will be available for autographing.

You can't forget lunch, especially if you're going to be at a meeting that runs from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. We'll have a lunch buffet with chicken parmigiana, vegetarian lasagna, tomato-basil mozzarella salad, antipasto salad, garlic bread, assorted desserts, coffee, water and iced tea, not to mention morning and afternoon coffee service.

During the business portion of the meeting, we'll vote on the offices of vice president, secretary and one at-large board seat. All are two-year terms. If you are interested in running, contact chapter president David Raglin at darags@ymail.com or 703-835-1198.

We'll also sprinkle in some trivia (and it ain't trivia if you know the answer!) and get to meet up with 125-plus chapter members, many of whom you haven't seen since the convention, or maybe even last year's chapter meeting.

And all of this can be yours for just $39 for SABR members and guests, and just $19 for anyone age 15 and under. For the first time, you can save your spots by using PayPal as well as by check. Send the registration fee to ($39 per adult, $19 per student) via PayPal to sabrdavids@aol.com. If you are registering for other people, please provide us the names in the “Notes” section. Paying by check? Mail it and the registration form in this issue to SABR c/o Dave Paulson, 5400 Vantage Point Rd. #801, Columbia, MD 21044.

This price is good through Jan. 22. Afterward, it jumps to $45 per adult. If you're a late registrant or day-of registrant, don't send the registration form or the checks, but fill them out and bring them with you -- and notify Dave Paulson beforehand at d2244p@yahoo.com of your intent to attend.
This year, there will be a $5 charge to park in the hotel garage, but you have the option of taking Metro to the Rosslyn station on the Blue, Orange and Silver lines and walking to the hotel. The Holiday Inn Rosslyn at Key Bridge is located at 1900 North Fort Myer Drive in Arlington. Why be late?

Registration Form
Send this form, with a check for your payment, to SABR c/o: Dave Paulson, 5400 Vantage Point Rd. #801, Columbia, MD 21044

# of adult tickets ______ $39 X = $__________
# of student tickets _______ X $19 = $__________
Total Cost X $__________

We need your e-mail address to put you on the meeting mailing list for updates. Thanks!
Name
____________________________________________________________________
Address
____________________________________________________________________
City _________________________________ State ___________ Zip
E-mail address_______________________________________________________________
Telephone(s)___________________________________________________________

Names of other people included on this registration:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Additional questions? Contact David Raglin at darags@ymail.com or (703) 835-1198.

TALKIN’ BASEBALL: Upcoming Speaker Announced

Here is the speaker schedule for the next meeting of the “Talkin’ Baseball” group.


The Talkin’ Baseball group meets on the first Saturday of each month at 9 a.m. Meetings are held at Brighton Gardens, 7110 Minstrel Way, Columbia, Md. Come and bring a friend!

THE FINAL WINNING SEASON OF THE ORIGINAL SENATORS -- Thanks to Tom Ferrick, By Andrew Sharp

On Sept. 28, 1952, at Fenway Park, journeyman reliever Tom Ferrick pitched four scoreless innings and was the winner in a 5-4 Senators' victory. The season-ending win let Washington finish at 78-76, the last time the original Senators had a winning year. It also would be Ferrick’s last time on a major league mound.

At the end of the 1952 season, the 37-year-old Ferrick was released by Washington, even though he had pitched well. It was Ferrick's second go-round with Washington,
where he had pitched out the bullpen in 1947-48. He began his major league career with the Athletics in 1941, and pitched for the Indians in 1942 before enlisting in the Navy. He missed the next three seasons while in the service. When he returned the Indians dealt him to the Browns, who in turn traded him to Washington. The Senators traded him back to St. Louis for the 1949 season. After four seasons with the American League’s bottom-feeders, Ferrick found himself with the first-place Yankees just before the trading deadline in 1950. He won eight games and saved nine others for New York down the stretch and was the winning pitcher in Game 3 of the 1950 World Series, pitching a scoreless 9th inning against the Whiz-Kid Phillies.

Exactly a year after his trade to the Yankees, Ferrick was part of a deal that sent lefty Bob Kuzava to New York in a deal that turned out to be a good one for Washington. In addition to Ferrick and pitcher Fred Sanford, the Nats got Bob Porterfield, a right-hander who in 1953 would be the last Senator to win 20 games, going 22-10. (My copy of Shirley Povich’s 1954 team history is autographed by Porterfield.)

Despite his release after ’52, Ferrick had a soft spot for Nats owner Clark Griffith. When Griffith let him go, “He told me how sorry he was. He had to make room for some young pitchers. He was right…. He thanked me for all I had done for the club,” Ferrick told veteran sportswriter Jerome Holtzman in 1987. “He didn't have to do that. Most of the time they give you the pink slip; they don't say goodbye.”

Assessing his own career in 1957, Ferrick was self-deprecating. “I never had too much stuff. A medium rare fastball and a fairish curve. That’s all. I toyed with the knuckler but rarely threw it. But I could get the ball over the plate and that’s the main thing with a relief pitcher,” he told an Associated Press writer. “I wasn’t much. I’d keep the curveball low and outside and hope the batter would bite.”

Ferrick wasn’t out of work long. He took a job as a player-coach with Indianapolis, Cleveland’s top farm club. He appeared in 23 games in 1953, his last as a player. The team was managed by Birdie Tebbetts, who took Ferrick along with him to Cincinnati when Tebbetts was hired as manager.

That began a nearly 12-year run as a pitching coach for Ferrick with the Reds, the Phillies, the Tigers and the Athletics before he moved on to scouting for the A’s and the Royals. He joined the Royals staff for its first season and remained the team’s top special assignment scout until 1989. He stayed on as a consultant until 1994, when he ended nearly 60 years in professional baseball.

Ferrick died in October 1996 in suburban Philadelphia, where he had made his home since the 1940s. He was 81. His oldest son, Tom Ferrick Jr., shared a Pulitzer Prize while working at Philadelphia Inquirer, where he was a reporter, editor and columnist.

BASEBALL ‘AMERICANA’ STYLE: Library of Congress Exhibit a Big Hit, By Mark Pattison

Leave it to the Library of Congress to place its "Baseball Americana” exhibit close to a ceiling fresco featuring nine naked 19th-century base ball players. Susan Reyburn, who curated the exhibit and gave a tour to 15 lucky SABR members, pointed out the, er, “artwork” prior to an hour-plus guided tour of memorabilia that dates back more than 150 years.
Nearly as soon as you walk into the exhibit, you see two video collages of great players and great moments. Look at the screen on the right and you'll see Drew Storen closing out a win for the Nationals, and Max Scherzer being congratulated on the field after a complete-game win.

Between the screens are some of baseball's earliest documents, including the 1857 document considered the sport's Magna Carta. It was included in a box of maps sold at auction in 1991 for $12,000, sight unseen. The buyer not only stumbled onto this treasure but recognized its value, selling it later for $3.2 million, according to Reyburn. "Nobody realized," she said, "that the papers had survived. ... It's something you'll see only at the Library of Congress."

"Baseball Americana" also exhibits the first written reference to baseball (1786), the first printed reference to baseball (a 1787 book), and a circa-1400 painting depicting a monkey holding a bat, with a nun behind the presumed plate. There's also the sole remaining copy of a newspaper containing an account of the first collegiate baseball contest.

Reyburn, who's shown Hank Aaron around the exhibit, pointed out another TV screen meant to showcase some of the game's best broadcasters, including Nats play-by-play man Bob Carpenter's "See! You! Later!" after a Bryce Harper home run. The montage also shows a second ball Bill Buckner didn't catch: The first one, sure, was the Game 6 missed ground ball in the 1986 World Series, but Buckner was in left field and had no chance to catch Aaron's 715th big-league homer.

You'll see a couple of SABR-related items, including the 1996 McConnell-Tattersall home run book, and there's sheet music along the lines of "Meet the Mets" and a Bob Dylan tune called "Catfish," his ode to then-Oakland A's pitcher Catfish Hunter. Joe Cocker committed it first to vinyl; Dylan himself didn't record it until 1991, by which time Hunter was in the Hall of Fame.

You can also go back, way back, into D.C. baseball history with a photo of the starting American league lineup at the 1937 All-Star Game played at Griffith Stadium in Washington. There's also the oversize trophy given by Roger Peckinpaugh's fans for winning the 1925 AL Most Valuable Player Award; the baseball writers who voted for the award hadn't thought of giving anything to commemorate the achievement. It turns out that Peckinpaugh's granddaughter, whom Reyburn knows, had it in her possession. Reyburn asked for it to be lent for inclusion in the exhibit, but the granddaughter hemmed and hawed. The silver is tarnished, she said, the lettering engraved on the trophy is very hard to read -- and both her granddad and she had used the trophy cup to store gardening implements.

Reyburn invited the group to conduct research at the Library of Congress by obtaining a reader's card, which is good for two years. And if the LOC doesn't have what you're looking for it at any of its three buildings on Capitol Hill, they'll drive it in from one of its many storehouses so you can see it.

You can also look up the library's vast collection online, including all of "Baseball Americana" and more. ("It'll be up forever," Reyburn declared.) One example: its collection of baseball cards, with both the fronts and backs available for view. The exhibit displays an uncut set of 1887 Washington Nationals baseball cards, and Reyburn said the LOC has an uncut set from each of the eight National League teams from that season.
And don't worry. "Baseball Americana" will remain at the Library of Congress' Jefferson Building -- the original LOC building -- through July. And one LOC staffer told me after the tour that a few new things will grace the exhibit come January. Maybe Bryce Harper's new contract numbers?

A DREAM DESTROYED: The Failed Effort To Bring Baseball Back to Washington, By Gary Sarnoff
On the evening of Sept. 22, 1971, the smallest crowd of the MLB season of 1,311 watched the two teams at the bottom of the AL East standings battle at RFK Stadium. While the Washington Senators were in the process of pounding the Cleveland Indians, 9-1, the Senators were losing a bigger battle at Washington's Sheridan-Plaza Hotel.
In a closed-door meeting, American League President Joe Cronin, who managed, played shortstop and drove in 118 runs for Washington's last pennant winner in 1933, had tears in his eyes when he made an official announcement: “Joe Danzansky made an offer, but the American League took the position that the offer was too thin.”
Joseph B. Danzansky, age 60 was a baseball fan determined to keep the Senators in Washington. He was a successful attorney who had a principal client in the retail supermarket chain – Giant Foods.
In 1964, he gave up his law practice to become president of Giant Foods. In addition, he became president of the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Board of Trade in 1971. At the 11th hour on the night of September 22, 1971, in the meeting room at the Sheraton-Plaza Hotel, he outbid the Bill Veeck-Hank Greenberg group and Olney, Md., real estate developer Don Lambarre.
His final bid to Senators owner Robert E. Short was at an amount that was close to the $9.4 million Short had paid to buy the Senators in December of 1968. Short declined the offer, claiming it was not enough to satisfy the club's equity holders.
With the Senators now out of the question, Danzansky turned to another plan: an attempt to buy an MLB team and shift that franchise to the nation's capital. Just three days after the hotel meeting and five days before the Senators played their last home game, Danzansky announced that he was going to try to purchase the San Diego Padres and relocate them to Washington.
He asked City Council Chairman Gilbert Huhn to contact Padres team president and part-owner Buzzie Bavasi about a deal. “My analysis of our phone conversation was that Bavasi would be very interested in a Washington proposal,” Huhn said. Arthur “Dutch” Bergman, manager of the Armory Board and RFK Stadium, also reached out to Bavasi to assure favorable stadium conditions. “He told me he would be interested in more details about the stadium rental,” said Bergman.
The prospect of replacing the Senators began to arouse the baseball fans in the District. “We'll get someone here,” a fan said at the Senators' last-ever home game on Sept. 30. “Maybe the San Diego Padres,” another fan added. “And maybe next year,” said another fan. “I'm not a baseball man,” assured Earl Foreman, the owner of the ABA Virginia Squires, “but I would be glad to assist in any way to restore baseball in Washington.”
The Padres were a perfect franchise for relocation. They had finished in last place and were last in league attendance in every season since joining the National League as an expansion team in 1969. They were unable to afford players and sign draft picks due to
their poor financial status. Recently a prospect named Doug DeCinces wanted $6,000; the Padres could only offer $4,000. “That’s an example why the team isn’t as strong as we hoped it would be,” Bavasi would later say. In addition, the Padres had to sell good players to make payroll. “Fred Norman would still be on our pitching staff,” Bavasi said in 1977. “Same with Joe Niekro.”

The Washington baseball hopefuls knew that they were too late to obtain the Padres for the 1972 season. However, in June of 1972, baseball’s return to Washington seemed like a sure thing for the 1973 season when nine of the 12 National League owners approved of the purchase and transfer of the Padres. “I am happy that they’re [the Padres] are going to Washington,” said Mets vice president and general manager Bob Scheffing. “Washington is a good city with a nice ballpark. They will do well.”

Phillies executive vice president Warren Giles also liked the idea of baseball returning to Washington. “They’ll draw 1.5 million,” he said, “2.8 million if they contend.” “I always felt that Washington was a far better baseball town then its misfortune would indicate,” said Cardinals executive Bing Devine.

“My feeling is that Washington will remain in the West division,” said Giles. “Washington will join Atlanta and Cincinnati as the eastern teams of the National League West.” “To switch divisions needs the approval of every team in the league,” said Cubs executive John Holland. “We would be opposed to moving out of the Eastern Division.”

The purchase price was said to be close to $12 million, a cost for a weak team that raised many eyebrows. However, Spec Richardson, executive vice president and general manager of the Astros, said that cost was cheap. “I wouldn’t sell our club for that amount.” Bob Holland disagreed. “It’s a good price considering the original price was $10 million. Twelve million isn’t out of line.”

The move, however, did not go through, and the Padres would remain in San Diego for another season. “Disappointing,” Danzansky said. But he and his backers did not give up, and one year later the move seemed so certain that Topps began to print “Washington” on its 1974 Padres team cards.

The deal was believed to be done, until a San Diego district attorney named John Witt filed a damage suit against Major League Baseball based on the fact the Padres had signed a stadium agreement through 1988 before their 1969 maiden season. The National League owners greatly desired to have a team in Washington and wanted to go through with the deal, but only if the Washington ownership group could guarantee that the league would not be sued. While Danzansky and his group did their law research, another bidder came forward with a strong desire to keep the Padres in San Diego.

Marge Everette, director of the Hollywood Race Track, made an offer but was denied by the National League owners. Meanwhile, Danzansky had an answer for the National League. They could not assure that a lawsuit could be avoided. Shortly after that, Ray Kroc stepped in, and the dream to bring baseball back to Washington was dead.

**MYTHS OF BASEBALL: True or False? By Charles Pavitt**

This is the second in a series of Squibber contributions intended to report the truth (as far as present data suggests) of the tidbits of “conventional wisdom” that TV analysts and comparable pundits make without any true knowledge about their validity.
Myth #4: Momentum effects exist within an inning, such that when a team starts getting baserunners and scoring runs, it is likely to continue. Rebecca J. Sela and Jeffrey S. Simonoff (2007), in a chapter in a 2007 book entitled Statistical Thinking in Sports edited by Jim Albert and Ruud H. Koning, used Retrosheet data and some fancy statistical techniques (combining Markov transition probabilities among base-out situations à la Mark Pankin research with logistic regression) to examine the issue with Retrosheet data from 2003 and 2004 to establish their models and 2005 for validating them by seeing if one would reach the same conclusions for this second analysis as for the first. Controlling both for batter and pitcher quality, for pitch count, and for quality of the on-deck batter, the only momentum effects uncovered were negative; with two runners on base and either one or two outs, there is a slight increase in the odds that outs begat more outs. Consistent with this result, findings indicated that, in those situations, average runs for the remainder of the inning for the team at bat were lower than expected given base-out situation and current batter and pitcher quality. Bottom line: This myth is likely to be false. Myth #5: Double plays are rally killers, decreasing subsequent run scoring more than expected from standard run expectancies. In the same analysis, Sela and Simonoff supported this myth. Unfortunately, they did not consider whether this finding was responsible for the “anti-momentum” effects. Myth #6: The recent impact of analytics is responsible for batters going for broke on every swing and thus the increased number of strikeouts. On page 216 of his 2017 book entitled The Shift, Russell Carleton listed the average number of strikeouts per team per game for years ending in 6 from 1976 to 2016. The printed figures are 4.83 for 1976, 5.87 for 1986, 6.46 for 1996, 6.52 for 2006, and 8.03 for 2016. Dave Smith, in a paper titled Why Do Games Take So Long? that he presented at the 2018 national SABR convention and that is available at the Retrosheet research paper collection, included a graph showing strikeouts to start increasing in the early 1980s and accelerating to its current level starting in 2006. Tom Ruane’s analysis of pitches between 1988 and 2016, also at the Retrosheet research paper collection as part of a file called Fun with Retrosheet Data, Episode 5, is consistent, with the proportion of pitches that are strikes (including non-two-strike fouls) was at 35.25 percent in 1990, went over 36 percent for the first time in 1997, stayed over 37 percent starting in 2007, reached 38 percent in 2012 and 38.86 in 2016. Bottom line: The myth is most certainly false as stated, as strikeouts have been increasing for decades, but the impact of analytics may have accelerated that increase. A TRUE “GLOVE” STORY: MEMORIES OF A NEVER-FORGOTTEN MITT: -- By Stephen Klatsky Growing up in the Bronx in the 1950s I had a Fred Hatfield model glove when I started Little League — playing for Tremont Chevrolet. Our February outdoor tryouts were brought indoors because of snow. They were held at James Monroe High School—where both Hank Greenberg and Ed Kranepool went to school. The glove served me well catching grounders hit onto the basketball court wood floor. My dad, Bernard, who loved baseball, had a friend named Stan, who was a salesman for the Dubow sporting goods company, founded in the 1930s with headquarters in
Chicago. One day, my Dad brought home a Dubow baseball glove catalog, saying pick one out.
I looked through it several times. Each time my eyes were fixed on a beautiful Tom Brewer model, a fine pitcher for the Boston Red Sox. Although our household was Yankees all the way, the Red Sox were not exiled. At least not then. Of course, the Tom Brewer model was near the back of the catalog -- prices increasing as you thumbed through it.
I told my dad I loved the Tom Brewer glove. He pointed out I could do better by getting a glove, bat and ball set. A Hank Bauer model. A Yankee, not a Red Sox. Hank, the ex-Marine with “the face of a clenched fist.”
I really wanted the Tom Brewer glove. But, I wanted to please my dad -- very much wanted to. My batting average in pleasing my dad hovered near the Mendoza Line. So, I said yes.
The Bauer model glove was black, not that sweet cream, tan color that seemed to be the most popular. It was stiff, hard to fold. Even after placing a ball in the pocket, tying it and waiting it remained stiff. Oil did not help soften it. Staring at it did nothing. Instead, for Little League I kept using the Fred Hatfield model, named for the utility infielder who played for four of the original eight AL teams.
Somewhere, probably when we moved from the Bronx to Queens in 1958, the Dubow catalog got lost -- I won’t say as everyone does that my mom discarded my baseball cards -- heck, we may have left them on the window sill at 1460 Bronx River Avenue, Apt. 7K.
My baseball playing career ended very early. My younger brother Robert had all the talent and drive. My talent was reading baseball books and magazines, team histories, Baseball Digest, Who’s Who in Baseball, the Sporting News Official Guide, Register and Dope Books.
For some reason that Dubow Tom Brewer model stayed on my mind. For a long time. About 10 years ago I started looking on the internet for vintage gloves. So very cool. Plenty of gloves of various manufacturers, different decades, widely different conditions. One day I saw a Dubow Tom Brewer glove. The glove I once so wanted. Heck, what is $50 compared to a completed memory?
I wanted one in such condition that I could play catch with my first grandchild Aaron (named after Aaron Boone). This one was. The glove fit perfectly, the name Tom Brewer was clear. The colorful Dubow label was very visible.
Aaron was getting older. At age 9 -- when I was 65 -- we often played catch. I used a Mizuno model that his mom, my oldest daughter Geri, bought me. But, I traded off with the Tom Brewer.
Geri sent me an email after several times playing catch, checking in to make sure that it was okay to always come out and play catch with Aaron. I wrote something like- are you kidding? When we catch together I so hope that when he is 65 playing catch with his 9-year-old grandson that he will recall when he was 9 catching with his 65-year-old grandfather. And, then we will both be 9 forever.
Tom Brewer passed away on February 15, 2018, at age 86, in Chewa, South Carolina, the town where he went to high school and returned to after his fine major league career. In 7 full seasons from 1954 to 1960 he was 91-84, and 19-9 in 1956.
He went to Elon College, now University, in Elon, N.C. -- ironically, the college town where my middle daughter Stacey and family live. I still use my Tom Brewer glove to play catch with Aaron, and now his younger brother Brady (after former Oriole Anderson) and younger sister Brooke, who has started softball. When I play catch, or go to ballgames or even when I just think of my four generation baseball family I can't help but whisper “Play Ball.”