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President’s Message

This time of year is almost as spec- ulatively hopeful as spring training is for baseball fans. You always think your favorite team could use some improvement (or the Red Sox’s case, maybe not!) and hope the front office is making the right moves.

It’s telling that though we’re sur- rounded by non-baseball weather, the game never leaves the minds and hearts of the fans of the game. Cri- ses come and go. Innovations pop up regularly. Consider 2018:

• We had the acceptance of the concept of a “starter” to pitch the first inning or two of a game. Tampa Bay was 18 games over .500 with it.

See You at BBRC4, Jan. 20, 2019

The program for our annual meeting, “BBRC 4” on Jan. 20, 2019, is nearly set. The all-star lineup so far:

✓ Jane Leavy will discuss her new biography of Babe Ruth, The Big Fella.
✓ F.X. Flinn, 15-year national treasurer of SABR
✓ Cappy Gagnon, past president of SABR and former professional bodyguard to the stars
✓ Charlie Vascellaro, chapter member, will discuss baseball in the U.S. Japanese internment camps during World War II.
✓ John Burbridge, chapter member, will recount an occasion in Baltimore that affected baseball in a nationally public way.
✓ Warren Grill, former chef to the Washington Nationals, will recount his time in that position.
✓ Ken Mars and Dave Stinson will present their current research.
✓ An ex-Oriole, arranged by chapter member Bill Stetka.
✓ Dave Stinson will be the Master of Ceremonies.

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Getting to Know...Rich Ottone

In each issue, we will profile one of our members.

Rich Ottone was born in Mineola, N.Y., to a Dodger-loving mother (from Brooklyn) and a Yankee-fan father (from Queens), both of whom followed their fathers’ teams and figured prominently in his baseball life.

The fan in him comes from his mother: “She used to tell me stories about listening to the games with her dad. Her favorite players were Gil Hodges and Duke Snider, so I became a huge fan of that team.” From his father, reconnecting with SABR, which he had originally joined in the late ‘90s: “My father recently passed away and was a lifelong baseball fan, as was his father before him. I was looking at some old photos and reminiscing about talking to him and his father about baseball and it struck me that it was time to rejoin SABR.”

Ottone grew up in Washington and saw his first game at RFK Stadium in 1971: “It was part of a friend’s birthday party, Senators and Tigers. I remember Mickey Lolich shut out our guys that day. That happened a lot that season. A couple of weeks later, the Senators were gone for good.”

He has spent the past 30 years assisting intellectually and physically disabled adults in various counties in Maryland. The Eldersburg resident works for the Carroll County Bureau of Aging and Disabilities as the program coordinator for its Senior Inclusion Program, “one of the most rewarding experiences in my professional career.”

Ottone considers himself an Orioles and Nationals fan but his favorite park is PNC in Pittsburgh. His favorite player is Rickey Henderson, and he has a soft spot for Adam Jones (“analytics aside, I would love to see him come back to the O’s”).

He has two favorite baseball memories: attending the first three games of the Orioles’ showdown series with the Brewers in 1982, and his first date with his future wife (1991, the final season at Memorial Stadium), who didn’t share his urgency in getting to the park from his parking spot on Barclay Street, so he had to stop several times until she caught up. (They married four years later, but she hasn’t let him forget it.)

His non-baseball interests include attending live music shows and doing landscaping.

Something most people don’t know about him? “I’m horrible at it, but I really enjoy playing online video games with my son. He is very patient with me. I also love to write and want to write a book about my experiences growing up as a local sports fan in DC during the late ‘60s early ‘70s.”

Update on Jackie Robinson Project

An update from Richard Zamoff, director of the Jackie Robinson Project at George Washington University, on the future of the project, which was highlighted in the last issue of The Baltimore Chop.

He reports that the Washington Post and WUSA have reported on the GW student petition that urges the university not to terminate the project. Here is the link to the Post article from Dec. 9.
From David Stinson’s Blog: Travels with Jane

Jane Leavy and the Search for ‘Big Fella’ Babe Ruth’s Baltimore
By David Stinson on November 24, 2018

Jane Leavy’s new book The Big Fella, Babe Ruth and the World He Created, is a fascinating look at the life of Babe Ruth, including his humble beginnings in Baltimore, Maryland. Ms. Leavy’s attention to detail, and her Herculean efforts to uncover unknown and long-forgotten facts about Babe Ruth’s life in Baltimore, helps bring the Big Fella’s formative years in Baltimore into focus, providing a clearer understanding of the years he spent in Baltimore and the impact those years had on his personality and ultimately on his trajectory to the pinnacle of the sports and entertainment world.

Researching and writing Big Fella consumed eight years of Ms. Leavy’s life, and the accolades she has received for her efforts, and the resulting book, are well earned. In April 2016, I had the good fortune of tagging along with Ms. Leavy as she toured Baltimore in search of Babe Ruth’s past.

Our first stop was the former site of St. Mary’s Industrial School for Boys, once located at 3225 Wilkens Avenue, just west of downtown Baltimore. In 1902, Babe Ruth was sent to live at St. Mary’s at the behest of his father, George Herman Ruth, Sr.

After St. Mary’s closed in 1950, the Archdiocese of Baltimore transformed the property into Cardinal Gibbons School, which opened in 1962 and closed in 2010. At the time of our visit, the site recently had been purchased by St. Agnes Hospital. The field where Babe Ruth once played baseball as a boy was in the process of being converted from grass to artificial turf under the direction of the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation.

During our visit, Brian Cromer, a project manager and caretaker of the former St. Mary’s site, gave us a tour, including the Industrial Arts Building and the former Xaverian Brothers residence hall. The residence hall was constructed in the 1920s after a 1919 fire at St. Mary’s destroyed a majority of buildings at the school. The residence hall is constructed of stones salvaged from the fire.

The field is adjacent to the Industrial Arts Building, perhaps the most historically-important building still on the site, dating back to the days when Babe Ruth lived at St. Mary’s.

In that building, Babe Ruth learned to make shirt collars, a trade the Xaverian Brothers who ran St. Mary’s taught Babe Ruth as part of his education there.

Our visit was kind enough to show Ms. Leavy the construction plans for the field.

The field is adjacent to the Industrial Arts Building, perhaps the most historically-important building still on the site, dating back to the days when Babe Ruth lived at St. Mary’s.
When Love Throws A Curve

By Peter Coolbaugh

Much like the speed of a pitch, you never know how fast something is coming at you until it gets near. And even then, many times you are caught off guard.

Such was the case in early 2008 when I first came in contact with a girl. We worked on the same case for different firms, but on the same side. Having only communicated by email initially, once I got a little personal with her, I was able to get her phone number. And our first conversation lasted six hours.

I was in Baltimore. She worked in Boston and lived in Lowell. After about six weeks of talking daily, we finally met in Charm City one Saturday in February. I met her at the light rail, and our first date was at Sports Legends Museum at Camden Yards. The courtship had begun.

Her name was Renee. Like me, she was from Pennsylvania and the oldest of three. We were born the same year, graduated the same year and had similar backgrounds. For some reason, it just seemed to work from day one. And then came baseball season.

Renee was originally from Philadelphia. You know the kind: brash, sassy and likes pizza. She said her favorite team was the Phillies, though she did not follow them regularly. She had only been to Veterans Stadium, Citizens Bank Park and Fenway Park. That was about to change.

In a Fever Pitch-style move, I invited her to Opening Day 2008 at Camden Yards. The Orioles played Tampa Bay (now called the Rays) that day, and I wanted her to experience the magic of the start of another season. Bonus—it was also her birthday. So she got her first Orioles t-shirt (of many) and some grub at the pregame party at the Babe Ruth Birthplace.

On her next trip down to visit, it began to snowball. Although she was not expecting it and certainly not dressed for it, after picking her up at BWI, we went to Nationals Park for a game vs. the Cubs on a rainy April night. I was in full baseball mode, and I think she was beginning to grasp the concept.

Late in 2008, Renee returned to Philadelphia and lived right in Center City. The trip was much easier to make, and we saw each other at least twice a month for a two-year period. Then in November 2010, she moved to Charm City to be closer to me, and lived in an apartment building about two blocks from the ballpark. Man, I was so jealous.

And, yes, the summer baseball trips continued. She got to experience baseball at all levels. To date, we have been to about 14 minor-league/independent parks and two spring training sites. At the MLB level, we have seen games and/or taken tours at 10 parks: Baltimore, Philadelphia, Washington, Fenway, Pittsburgh, Minnesota, Chicago Cubs, New York Mets, New York Yankees and Turner in Atlanta. Not bad...

Clearly she has enjoyed going to games. We have a 13-game plan (since 2009) to the Orioles on Sundays, and see many more than that during the season. Given my obsession, both with her and with the game, it was time to take it to another level.

On April 2, 2012, we were at the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. This was our second trip there in three years,
Memorial Stadium Memories from 1957

By Francis Kinlaw

The Baltimore Orioles’ 1957 baseball season may be memorable for fans of a certain age for any one of several reasons. Record books (as well as today’s online sources) reveal that the club managed by Paul Richards finished in fifth place in an American League consisting of eight teams, 21 games behind the pennant-winning Yankees, with a won-loss record of 76-76. (A pair of tie games were never completed during the 154-game campaign.)

Some fans may recall that catcher Gus Triandos led the team with 19 home runs, or that first baseman Bob Boyd had the Birds’ highest batting average (.318). Others may recall that second baseman Billy Gardner played in all 154 games and led the club with 36 doubles, or that Willie Miranda retained the regular spot at shortstop (over Jim Brideweser) despite an unimpressive batting average of .194. Still others may remember the outfield featuring Bob Nieman in left field, Jim Busby in center and Al Pilarcik in right.

On a more specific level, four consecutive complete-game shutouts thrown by pitchers Hal “Skinny” Brown (June 24 against the Tigers), Billy Loes (June 25 against the Athletics), Connie Johnson (June 26 against the Athletics) and Ray Moore (June 28 against the Indians) may come to mind. And let us not forget that Billy O’Dell registered an earned run average of 2.69 and that bullpen regular George Zuverink posted a record of 10-6 (and an ERA of 2.48) without starting a single game!

But, perhaps most significantly, the 1957 season will be remembered as the final one of George Kell’s exceptional major-league career and as the season that preceded Brooks Robinson’s promotion to regular status in the Orioles’ lineup.

Aside from these on-the-field achievements and moments, fans attending Orioles home games in 1957 had their own experiences. If you are old enough—and were fortunate enough—to attend an Orioles home game almost 62 years ago, you may have a personal interest in a description of the “nest on 33rd Street” that appeared in the April 15, 1957 edition of Sports Illustrated magazine:

“(Memorial Stadium) looks more like a football bowl than a ballpark. The outfield walls are devoid of advertising. The restrooms are clean and there is waiting only on capacity days. Fans must go to refreshment counters for beer, since city law prohibits sales in stands. Since the round trip consumes about a half inning, a hungry Baltimore fan sometimes has a difficult decision to make. Pizzas and crab cakes are specialties.

“The #3 bus takes you from downtown to the ballpark—which is located in an attractive north Baltimore residential section—in 20 minutes for 20 cents. Figure on (the trip taking) 10 to 15 minutes by car. Parking costs 25 cents on private lots surrounding the stadium and is free (except for a 25-cent tip to the ‘parkers’) on a city lot across the street. Overall, there is room for 5,500 cars. The usual last-minute Baltimore rush by arriving at least 15 minutes early. It takes about 20 minutes to get out of the area by car.

“A favorite spot to sit is in the upper deck with its added five-mile view of Baltimore, if you don’t mind the long climb and a long-range view of the diamond. Dress warmly for early-spring and late-season games though, because it gets cool up there. For sun, sit on the east side of the stadium. If you want comfort, the only seats with backs are in the lower deck from home plate to both foul lines. Watch out for thick, round poles blocking your view above the 25th row in the lower stands.”

Sixty-two years is a long period of time, but even aging baseball fans never seem to forget the special feelings generated by a ballpark. So, why not take a few enjoyable moments to compare your own impressions of Memorial Stadium to those of the Sports Illustrated critic?

Cal and Lou

By Lyle Spatz

(This article originally appeared in The National Pastime in 2003)

In recent years, baseball fans have argued whether hitting home runs was easier for Mark McGuire, Sammy Sosa, and Barry Bonds than it was for Babe Ruth, Roger Maris, and Hank Aaron.

Similar arguments occurred in the early 1990s when Cal Ripken was chasing Lou Gehrig’s record of 2,130 consecutive games played. The comparisons of the two “iron men” centered around which player had the more difficult circumstances to overcome in recording such an amazing feat of endurance. Those who argued in favor of Gehrig pointed to numerous doubleheaders, long train trips, and summers without air conditioning. Ripken’s defenders countered that Gehrig never had to play on artificial turf—or at night—Cleveland and Philadelphia played the first American League night game two weeks after Gehrig’s streak had ended. And, they added, shortstop Ripken was playing a much more difficult and demanding position than first baseman Gehrig.

Good arguments all, but perhaps they were missing the most important point, which are the similarities between the two men. Whatever advantages or disadvantages each had, the fact remains that in both Gehrig’s era, and in Ripken’s, every other major league player performed under the same conditions. Yet, no one else, in any era, has come close to playing in 2,000 consecutive games. Moreover Gehrig was among the most admired players of his time and Ripken was among the most admired of his. Deservedly so, both were quiet, decent men who preferred to let their play on the field define them. Both conducted their careers in very much the same way. They showed up every day and did their jobs—and did them very well. In the American League’s first one hundred years, each was probably the best ever to play his position.

When Gehrig played in his 1,308th consecutive game, breaking Everett Scott’s record, Scott said that if the record had to be broken, he was glad it was Gehrig who had broken it. You have to think that when Ripken played in his 2,131st consecutive game, Gehrig, if he were here, would have said the same about Cal.
and pleasant courtesy of the White House guard who ultimately directed us to the East Wing of the world’s most important building, where we were entertained by the Marine Corps Band playing a light and lively variety of swing tunes. Wine and champagne were served to several dozen guests representing the seven honorees, including Elvis Presley, Roger Staubach and the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

We were encouraged to visit rooms adjacent to the reception area and were impressed by the lavishly appointed, exquisitely decorated spaces, each adorned with portraits of presidents and first ladies. Following a brief interlude, we proceeded to the East Room, where dozens of camera men were poised to capture the ceremony. Guests were seated to the front and sides of the stage, and our museum contingent was directed to seating on the right, in the third and final row. The first row was reserved for the Supreme Court justices, who were there to pay tribute to Scalia. The newest justice, Brett Kavanaugh, was directly in front of us, an arm’s length away. To our left, presidential advisor Kellyanne Conway. To the left of the stage, chatting with the Ruth family, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Acting Attorney General Matt Whitaker.

President Trump and wife Melania then were introduced as they navigated the center aisle toward the stage. The president then introduced the seven honorees (or representative), who entered the packed room from a rear entrance just beyond where we were seated. The 40-minute ceremony featured brief remarks by the president as each honoree or their representative was summoned to the podium, where they received the Medal of Freedom. Three teleprompters guided the president’s remarks, and we could see when he drifted off-script, which did not happen too frequently.

Babe Ruth was the sixth honoree, with grandson Tom Stevens accepting. During his comments on Ruth, Trump, reading from the teleprompter, mistakenly offered that Ruth was traded to the Yankees for a 35-year-old third baseman plus $100,000. In fact, the Yankees paid Boston owner Harry Frazee $125,000. There was no trade tied to the transaction. Aside from that, his remarks were mostly spot on.

Afterward, we were invited to a buffet reception adjacent to the East Room. The president and first lady did not attend, but everyone else stayed on to enjoy wonderful cuisine, prepared by beaming members of the White House staff. Young military officers, dressed to the nines, were on hand to provide assistance, answer questions, snap photos or engage in conversation. The reception gave us the opportunity to meet Roger Staubach, Kellyanne Conway, and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, who told me she was finally able to sleep in a bed (after famously cracking three ribs) but only on her back, not on her side!

The entire experience was something I will never forget. It’s not every day you get to attend a White House reception, that’s for sure. Bottom line: They put on one heck of a show, top drawer all the way. As guests were escorted outside after the reception, we were given a linen-papered booklet featuring the seven honorees, and the brief narratives inscribed on their individual Medals of Freedom.

In the end, Nov. 16, 2018 proved quite a day for Babe Ruth, his family and those of us whose job it is to preserve his incredible legacy. What a thrill!

**Medal of Freedom:**
**The Company Babe Keeps**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseball Honoree</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>President</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joe DiMaggio</td>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Ford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie Robinson</td>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Reagan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ted Williams</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>George H.W. Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hank Aaron</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>George W. Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberto Clemente</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>George W. Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Robinson</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>George W. Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buck O’Neil</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>George W. Bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stan Musial</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Obama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ernie Banks</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Obama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vin Scully</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Obama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babe Ruth</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Trump</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moe Berg was awarded the Medal of Freedom, an award established by President Truman in 1945 to honor service in World War II. Berg declined the award. President Kennedy re-established the award in 1963 to recognize “distinguished civilian service in peace time.”

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is one of the two highest civilian honors. The other is the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor. Two baseball players have been so honored by Congress: Roberto Clemente in 1973 (five months after his death) and Jackie Robinson in 2003.

**Other Baltimore-born Honorees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eubie Blake</td>
<td>ragtime/jazz composer, pianist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David K.E. Bruce</td>
<td>diplomat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurgood Marshall</td>
<td>Supreme Court justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Mikulski</td>
<td>U.S. senator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarence M. Mitchell Jr.</td>
<td>civil rights activist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Trivia Corner**

Here is an alphabetical list of the players who were chosen by the Baltimore Orioles in the top 10 of the first round of Major League Baseball’s June Amateur Draft. See how accurate you are matching the correct year and overall position of each one.

Hint: All but one were taken in the first five.

Answer on Page 10.
Honorees with Maryland Connections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. Naval Academy Alumni</th>
<th>Johns Hopkins Hospital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Abbey director, Johnson Space Center 1996-2001</td>
<td>Ben Carson director of pediatric neurosurgery 1984-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adm. Arleigh Burke WWII, Korean War; Chief of Naval Operations 1955-61</td>
<td>Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Alumni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adm. William Crowe Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; ambassador to United Kingdom</td>
<td>Denton Cooley performed first implantation of an artificial heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. Peter Pace Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; first Marine officer with three different four-star assignments</td>
<td>Helen Brooke Taussig founded field of pediatric cardiology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adm. Hyman Rickover &quot;Father of the Nuclear Navy&quot;</td>
<td>Johns Hopkins University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Staubach Heisman Trophy, Pro Football Hall of Fame</td>
<td>Rachel Carson MS; author of Silent Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adm. Elmo Zumwalt WWII, Korean War, Chief of Naval Operations 1970-74</td>
<td>Arnall Patz faculty/researcher; discovered that oxygen therapy was causing epidemic of blindness among premature babies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johns Hopkins Hospital</td>
<td>Johns Hopkins School of Public Health Alumnus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johns Hopkins School of Medicine Alumni</td>
<td>Donald Henderson epidemiologist who directed 10-year effort that eradicated smallpox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johns Hopkins University</td>
<td>University of Maryland Law School Alumnus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johns Hopkins School of Public Health Alumnus</td>
<td>James Rouse real estate developer who founded new town of Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johns Hopkins School of Public Health Alumnus</td>
<td>Baltimore Orioles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donald Henderson epidemiologist who directed 10-year effort that eradicated smallpox</td>
<td>Frank Robinson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Maryland Law School Alumnus</td>
<td>Baltimore Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Rouse real estate developer who founded new town of Columbia</td>
<td>Mark S. Watson Pulitzer Prize 1944, first journalist to win Medal of Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore Orioles</td>
<td>WJZ TV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Robinson</td>
<td>Oprah Winfrey 1976-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore Sun</td>
<td>Other Maryland Connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark S. Watson Pulitzer Prize 1944, first journalist to win Medal of Freedom</td>
<td>Whittaker Chambers died in Westminster; former Communist became outspoken anti-Communist, testified against Alger Hiss 1949-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WJZ TV</td>
<td>Sargent Shriver born in Westminster; driving force behind Peace Corps, started Job Corps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After finishing our tour of the former St. Mary’s site, we drove just one mile northeast on Franklin Avenue to the house where Babe Ruth lived until he was two years old.

Located on the southeast corner of Frederick Avenue and Font Hill Road, the house once was owned by Babe Ruth’s paternal grandfather.

After that time, the house was boarded up and its fate now seems uncertain. Given the history of the building, perhaps the City of Baltimore could recognize the significance of the structure and help encourage its preservation.
Our journey next took us to a half mile further east on Frederick Avenue to the Westside Shopping center, located between Frederick Avenue to the north and Wilkins Avenue to the south, at Catherine Street.

As Ms. Leavy notes in her book *Big Fella*, the site of this shopping center was once occupied by the William Wilkens & Co., Manufacturers of Steam-Curled Hair and Bristles. Babe Ruth would have passed this expansive industry and the stockyards that once surrounded the area while traveling Wilkens Avenue on his way to and from St. Mary’s.

The William Wilkens & Co. factory was located in a hollow. According to Ms. Leavy, pigskins and horsehides were placed in the sun to dry in an area of the property once known as Hogs Hair Hill.

One mile east of the former site of William Wilkens & Co., and five blocks from the eastern terminus of Wilkens Avenue, is Woodyear Street, where Babe Ruth lived from ages 2 to 6.
One can imagine young Babe Ruth playing in the back yard of the house and running alongside the garage behind his house.

It is remarkable that this structure still stands today, with no marker noting its historical importance.

As Ms. Leavy detailed in her book *Big Fella*, Woodyear Street was a modest working class neighborhood. One other relative of Babe Ruth lived on the north side of street at 302 South Woodyear Street.

South Woodyear Street is located near Carroll Park, a 117 acre park and the third oldest public park in Baltimore.

Jane Leavy’s *Big Fella* is an engrossing read, and Ms. Leavy has done Baltimore proud, shedding much light (both known and previously unknown) on the history of Baltimore and its famous son Babe Ruth. Touring Baltimore with Ms. Leavy in search of Babe Ruth’s past was a true pleasure and I feel fortunate to have been along for the ride.

Ms. Leavy will make two appearances in Baltimore during the coming two months, first at Babe Ruth Birthplace and Museum at 3 pm on Saturday, December 15, 2018, and then at Peabody Heights Brewery on Sunday, January 20, 2019, during the SABR Baltimore Babe Ruth Chapter meeting. Come out and meet Ms. Leavy at either of these two Baltimore events and pick up a signed copy of *Big Fella*.

The blog [davidbstinsonauthori.com](http://davidbstinsonauthori.com) covers historical items of interest at the intersection of Baltimore and Baseball. David B. Stinson, author of *Deadball, A Metaphysical Baseball Novel*, also has a companion website, [deadballbaseball.com](http://deadballbaseball.com), which covers the lost ballparks of Baltimore, as well as other lost ballpark sites located around the United States.
but this one would prove much more memorable. The Hall of Fame was in on it with me, so they were able to get photos as it happened. I proposed to Renee in front of the World Series rings display on the third floor. Several pictures were snapped which show her apparent surprise and my delight to her answer of “yes”. Later that evening, our engagement was on the Cooperstown Chatter blog for the world to see. Points to me for doing something different!

Baseball was definitely part of the wedding planning experience. There was our engagement shoot at Camden Yards in March 2013, and there was the “Save the Date” card that was shaped to resemble a ticket. Although we had a church wedding, the reception was a different story. The three-tier cake was white with red stitches, guests sat at “team” tables, there were baseballs under the vases, and the candy bar had baseball-themed goodies. And just because … our guest book was a 4-foot baseball bat that people could sign with Sharpies. Plus each groomsman got a Louisville Slugger engraved bat with his favorite team logo. No, I don’t consider it overkill…

I did compromise, though. We did not have our reception in the Camden Yards warehouse. We chose an intimate Italian restaurant with a private room just a few blocks from the church in Little Italy. Who said I am not open to concession at times?

We will be married five years in December 2018. And we have been together over a decade. Is baseball the thing that magically connects us? No, of course not. But it does provide one common love that we share. And it surely is not over yet. Renee is greatly looking forward to going to San Diego in June 2019 for the SABR convention.

This is obviously a condensed version of our lives together. Perhaps someday a tome can be written with all the details. I do retain all rights to the story. and if there is a film version, I would like Scott Eastwood to play me. Clint is a little too old.

Moral of the story: Baseball still brings us all together. And for those of us who are really lucky, it can even help lead you to your soulmate. We just have to be able to recognize the pitch and swing at the right time.

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**Trivia Answer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Player</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Overall draft position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dylan Bundy</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Gausman</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeffrey Hammonds</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Loewen</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manny Machado</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick Markakis</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Matusz</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben McDonald</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matt Weiters</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**President**

- The “shift” is now almost universally used, especially with incredibly detailed information available on every player at every position on every team at every level.
- Wins Against Replacement (WAR) is an idea utilized by almost everybody except Major League Baseball. [We’ve got a pool going for the date when that stat is listed on its website.]
- The very idea of “Shohei Ohtani” fascinates and intrigues the baseball world.
- The election of Harold Baines to the Hall of Fame (not a typo).

Even with novel notions in our game, it rolls along like a mighty river. Whatever stress or even turmoil you have going on in your life, baseball is the great palliative, the best comfort or at least the most reliable. Whether obscured by clouds or not, the sun will rise tomorrow and just as reliably, baseball will be there.

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**Seasons greetings**

May all your baseball wishes come true in 2019