On Saturday, February 2, SABR Chicago members packed the Evanston Public Library’s Falcon Room to celebrate SABR Day. Members were treated to an afternoon of diverse presentations and a lively trivia challenge between two local powerhouses. But prior to the festivities, a small group gathered for lunch across the street from the Evanston Public Library at The Celtic Knot.

Analyst Scott Lindholm kicked off the festivities with a statistics-based look at the best teams in baseball history. According to his number crunching, he produced his list of the top 10 teams. Did your favorites make the list?

Our second presenter, Chapter member Jon Daniels, provided an update regarding his longstanding efforts to place a marker in Chicago’s Millennium Park to commemorate the site of two 19th century professional ballparks.

We turned back the clocks for our third presentation. Gary “The Professor” Schiappaccse and Ellie “The Boss Lady” of the Chicago Salmon discussed vintage baseball ... err, base ball.

Neal Johnson and his son Matt highlighted Thinking Baseball their innovative new training/coaching app. During their presentation, they shared their story about how Chicago Cubs broadcaster, Pat Hughes, became involved with the project.

Finally, SABR Day 2019 drew to a close with a trivia challenge between local baseball heavyweights, Dave Zeman and Chris Kamka. Chris emerged victorious.

2.) Ellie “The Boss Lady” from the Chicago Salmon.

3.) Jon Daniels highlights his efforts to recognize former Chicago ballparks.

4.) Vice Chair Richard Smiley officiates the trivia challenge between Chris Kamka and Dave Zeman.

5.) Scott Lindholm highlights the best teams in baseball history.

6.) Matt and Neal Johnson walk the crowd through Thinking Baseball, a new training app.

7.) Presenters (l to r): Neal Johnson, Jon Daniels, Gary Schiappaccesse, Ellie “The Boss Lady” and Dave Zeman.
The Emile Rothe Chapter from the Beginning

By Jon Daniels

In July 1981, my wife Marge and I went to the SABR Convention held in Toronto. I was pleasantly surprised how well she socialized with the other attendees. By the end of the convention she was ready to join SABR. We made a side trip to Cooperstown and met up with Bob Davids and other SABR officers at the Hall of Fame Library. At that gathering she handed over her membership check to Executive Director Cliff Kachline and officially become a member of SABR. Little did I know at that time, how significant her contributions would be to the Emil Rothe Chapter.

The history of the Chicago Chapter goes back to November 17, 1976 when Emil Rothe hosted the first meeting of 10 members at his home. Earlier in that year in June, Chicago had hosted for the second time the Annual SABR Convention. Emil organized that conference which attracted 45 members. Emil became a member of SABR in 1973 but had been writing baseball articles for publications such as Baseball Digest many years before. Being a retired junior high school teacher provided him with plenty of time to continue his research (primarily on his favorite team the Cubs) and to organize chapter meetings. In 1983, SABR bestowed upon Emil the SABR Salute for his contributions to baseball research.

In early 1982, Marge and I, along with Barb and Rich Topp, attended a chapter meeting in which Emil expressed his desire to transition chapter leadership. The four of us, led primarily by Marge and Barb, decided to take on the chapter responsibility. On November 20, 1982, we hosted our 1st chapter meeting at the 1st Congregational Church in Berwyn. Over the next 10 years, we organized regular meetings that usually attracted at least 50 members. Our player guests included Dick Kokos, Moe Drabosky, Rich Nye, Bob O’Farrell, Marv Rothblatt, and Bob Will. Marge’s SABR involvement went beyond meetings as she with the able assistance of Barb prepared a Chapter Meeting Manual for new chapters and contributed significantly to the revision of SABR’s by-laws.

The highlight of the couples’ tenure was organizing the 1986 SABR National Convention at Loyola University. A record 479 members and guests attended the convention which would be the last one held at a college campus. The chapter was one of the first to prepare a special publication for a conference. The 56-page journal commemorated the 80th anniversary of the 1906 Cubs-White Sox World Series. Conference activities featured a Cubs game and a tour of Comiskey Park. Player Panel guests included Chico Carrasquel, Johnny Klippstein, Double Duty Radcliffe, and Nelson Potter. During the annual meeting, Marge was elected to the Board of Directors.

On November 19, 1989, at the suggestion of Rich Topp, the chapter was named the Emil Rothe Chapter. In December 1994, Marge and Barb relinquished chapter responsibilities to Bill Slankard. During Bill’s 3 years as Chair, the chapter broadened its activities to include a newsletter (Editor Dave Mundo) and outings to nearby ball games. Since 1998, Rich Hansen has chaired the chapter and continues to have regular meetings with traditional activities, such as presentations and quizzes, plus a social media presence with Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit. He has been ably assisted by Vice Chair Richard Smiley, Secretary David Malamut, and Treasurer Peter Yee as the chapter continues to be very active.

Get Social with SABR’s Emil Rothe Chicago Chapter

There are five easy ways to interact with Chicago Chapter members.

Click today and start talking baseball.
What’s On Deck?
Get Your Pencils and Scorecards Ready

• SABR Analytics Conference
  Presented by MLB and Kinatrax
  March 8-10, 2019
  Hyatt Regency Phoenix
  122 N. 2nd Street
  Phoenix, AZ 85004

• Chapter Game #1
  March 23, 2019 - 2 p.m.
  Boilermakers vs. Wildcats
  Northwestern University
  2750 Ashland Avenue
  Evanston, IL 60201

• Chapter Meeting
  April 27, 2019 - 1 p.m.
  Chicago Public Library, Portage-Cragin Branch
  5108 W. Belmont Avenue
  Chicago, IL 60641

• Chapter Game #2*
  May 4, 2019 - 6:30 p.m.
  South Bend Cubs vs. Clinton LumberKings
  Ashford University Field
  537 Ballpark Drive
  Clinton, IA 52732

  With Field of Dreams Chapter
  * Possible meeting with guests prior to game

Get Your Baseball Research Published
Are you conducting baseball research? SABR’s Emil Rothe Chicago Chapter can help. We are looking for new articles to publish in the Chapter’s monthly newsletter and social media outlets. Submit your articles to Chapter Secretary David Malamut via email at david@malamut.net. Submittal deadlines are the 15th of each month for inclusion in the next edition.

...Out With the Crowd

Northwestern University’s
Rocky and Berenice Miller Park

Clinton LumberKings’
Ashford University Field

• SABR 49 - San Diego
  June 26-30, 2019
  Manchester Grand Hyatt
  1 Market Place
  San Diego, CA 92101