

Society of American Baseball Research



Emil Rothe Chapter - Chicago

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Newsletter

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National Chapter Website <http://www.sabr.org/sabr.cfm?a=cms,c,1058,9,0>
Member Chapter Website <http://malamut.net/sabrchicago.html>

Minutes of the August 11th, 2007 meeting

Meeting at Elfstrom Stadium, (Kane County Cougars)

The meeting started a 3pm, Rich Hanson started the meeting

David Malamut then started with an introduction of what was to happen in the presentations, and at the game.

History of the Kane County Cougars

Bob Yahr then started in on the history of the Midwest League and the first two years of the Cougars (91-92)

Pam Rasmussen presented the history of the Cougars the Marlins years (93-02)

Kathy Baumann presented the history of the Cougars the Oakland years (03-07)

Cougars radio announcer Jeff Hem, Cougars manager Aaron Nieckula and Cougars Assistant General Manager Jeff Ney then spoke to the group from the Cougars prospective

Cougar bus driver Richard Gertiksen then spoke about his travels driving the team around the midwest for the last eleven years.

The weekly weekend autograph session on the field that the Cougars have was next for the group then the ball game.

This game was significant because it set a record in attendance for the league for one game, with 14,492 fans packed into Elfstrom stadium. The record broke the record that the Cougars set four years ago.

At the meeting there were 15-20 people, during the game there were 45-50 people.

Marge Daniels Memorial, by Larry Roth

On July 25, SABR and the Emil Rothe chapter lost a devoted friend when Marge Daniels passed away after a long battle with cancer. For many years Marge and her husband Jon were active in organizing Chicago regionals. They also played a major role in the planning and organization of the 1986 National Convention in Chicago. ■

Unlike her husband and most of us, Marge was not obsessed with baseball. She joined SABR to more fully share in Jon's life. But Marge, being Marge, was not content with mere membership – she got elected to the board! She believed that her discipline, focus, determination and organizational skills were needed and would contribute significantly to SABR's governance – and she was right. Particularly noteworthy was her role in the continuing development of SABR's bylaws. I once heard her asked why she gave so much of herself to SABR, she replied “because I love SABR.” And SABR members reciprocated. I recall being at a national convention attended by Jon but not by Marge. Jon was besieged with so many questions concerning Marge's absence and welfare that he prepared a written explanation and hung it around his neck so that the question could be answered before it was asked.

SABR's 2007 National Convention began the day after Marge's death. At the business meeting on that day SABR's President, Dick Beverage, tearfully announced Marge's passing. The assembled members uttered an audible sigh of relief.

My most vivid and fond memories of Marge will be of her as Jon's wife. They were a pair! For 33 years theirs was the ultimate mixed marriage – Jon a Cardinals fan while Marge cheered on the Cubs. Their love for and devotion to each other were obvious. But they also really liked each other and thoroughly enjoyed each others company. Marge once told me how fortunate she was to have found Jon. She was cognizant of that every day of her life and she devoted her life accordingly.

Marge was a nurse and she possessed the qualities found of that profession namely strength of character, sense of compassion, iron will, selflessness and a desire to help the ailing (be they patients or by-laws). Marge's character and will caused her to be the only survivor when, several years ago, she participated in an aggressive, experimental protocol to treat her cancer.

On April 5 she went into the hospital for what was intended to be an outpatient procedure. There were complications. She never returned home. For nearly four months she suffered setbacks and staged comebacks. Her indominantability was never more fully demonstrated. Through it all Jon was by her side providing love, support and aggressive oversight of her treatment. He was magnificent. When, at Marge's funeral, I commended him, he said, he said simply but eloquently “I had a great model.” He sure did.

NEXT MEETING: The next meeting is on Saturday, October 27th and will run from 1 till 4:30 pm . The address is 311 South Wacker Drive, 30th floor. The building immediately south of the Sears Tower. Entrance is on Upper Wacker Drive on the weekends. Proceed up the escalators and check in at the front desk before coming upstairs. Tell them you are here for the SABR Meeting.

Richard Smiley and Gary Crawford will be presenting as well as Jonathon Eig, author of a recent book on the rookie season of Jackie Robinson. Please contact me with any suggestions or if you have something to present.

Research help:

I am writing a biography of the late White Sox catcher and Hall of Famer Ray Schalk (1912-28). I have found several references to Schalk recording putouts at each base. I am trying to find the specific game when he put out an opponent at second base; some references say it was in the 1916-18 period against the St. Louis Browns, but my review of box scores and game accounts thus far have come up empty. Help!

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At the last meeting I asked those of you who went to the National Convention in St. Louis for a story on what happened there. Since nobody did the same things or saw the same things, I asked for as many articles as possible. Here is what I got

Submitted By Gene “Two Fingers” Carney

From “Shadows of Cooperstown” blog

OK, so much for the notes I made on the road. What follows are notes from back here in the Shadows of Cooperstown. And I’m going to jot them down quickly, and *in no special order*. Here we go.

TRIVIA. At my first SABR convention, in 1993, I remember taking the trivia test (written), and quickly realizing I was in *way too deep*. I know a lot of baseball history, with an emphasis on the stories, but I have not memorized lists, and the really obscure stuff I know is clustered around my personal interests. But I peeked into the Triviafest at SABR 37 anyway ... then left. *Still too deep*. But I came back for the team and individual finals, and — stayed! And, thanks to my B-Sox research and selective expertise of old-time players (due to that APBA game addiction), I actually got several question right, questions that stumped the experts. I understand MLB.COM videotaped the finals, so I won’t spoil it for anyone by saying more.

THE ARCH. I could see the Arch from my 12th floor hotel room window, the whole thing. It looked best when it framed a riverboat, floating down (or up) the river. I passed up every chance to go up into the thing during the three summers I spent in St Louis (1970-72), and my streak is intact. I did wander under the Arch, the morning that a Vintage Base Ball Game

was played on the surrounding lawns. I watched a couple of the early innings, which were played using the 1858 rules. The middle innings used the 1862 rules, then the last innings used the 1873 rules. What's the diff? Well, in 1858, runners could not take leads when they were on base; in 1862, they could (two strides); by 1873, the game was ruined, they could take an *unlimited* lead and steal at will. *Gimme that old time*

BUSSSSSCH! I had seen the "old" Busch Stadium when it was fairly new, and liked it, despite the Astroturf, which baked the players. Its scoreboard was fascinating. As for the new Busch — what's not to like? It has everything you expect, altho the history is subtle (eg, concession stands named *Dizzy's* but I didn't see any photos of the brasher of the Dean brothers). One of the old radio commercials (I grew up listening to Haray Caray on KMOX, it came in fine in my Pittsburgh home on a hill), for Busch beer, featured the sound of a bottle being pried open, and an explosion of spray: *bussssch!!* Well, at the newest Busch, I received several sprays. The first came before the game, a downpour with thunder & lightning accompaniment, but I survived with *only* a spray by cramming into a top level runway. The next downpour, equally as sudden, soaking, and passing, came during the game, emptying out the twelve rows in front of me ... but I again received just a nice, cooling, refreshing spray. It was a lop-sided game, but SABR games offer great company. *Bussssssch.*

DIZZY. Speaking of 'Ol Diz, he appeared at the convention, in the body and voice of Ben Jones, a former congressman known for his TV roles as the *Dukes of Hazzard's* "Cooter" (but not to me), and we can only hope that more people with his background will not run for president. He was excellent, from the consensus I picked up ... and I had the feeling I'd seen him do this one-man act before, in Cooperstown, probably.

PLAYER PANELS. This was my 6th convention, 4th in a row, and again I rate the player panels as one of the highlights. This time, there were two — one of former Browns (yes, Virginia, there was an American League team in St Louis, once upon a time), and one of former Cardinals. On the former, I most enjoyed Roy Sievers, a player I remember (but not as a Brownie). On the latter, they were all very good: George Altman (I recall him mostly as a Cub), Al Hrabosky, Ricky Horton, and Ted Savage. It was especially interesting — and painful — to hear stories of the lingering segregation in the 1960s, experienced by blacks in southern spring training hotels — but not just there. Jackie had opened the door, but the first guys who entered were really not welcome everywhere. It's the TTT rule: *Things Take Time.*

BUT IS IT ART? Ask Joanne Hulbert, chair of the newly-named Baseball & the Arts Committee (formerly Music & Poetry). This is such a huge area, that continues to grow ... but I think it will become a terrific resource in the future for many projects. I'm a recovering poet myself, and more interested in getting my play (now a musical) onto *some* stage, *somewhere*, *someday*. *TTT.*

IF YOU TEACH IT, DO THEY LEARN? Another committee I visited was Dick Hunt's Education group. I'm long gone from the classroom, but Dick is my baseball neighbor, so I'm a member of this committee by osmosis. I'm told that SABR has about 1,400 members with educational links, K-thru-grad school ... so you can tell there's a lot of energy to harness. *TTT*, indeed.

ON THE B-SOX TRAIL. My own talk seemed to go well, once the overhead projector was located and set up. I didn't need it, but it is more fun to use pictures, even pictures of old newspaper articles. *See, there really IS a Collyer's Eye.* I summed up, as quickly as I could (20 minutes, doing 80 mph to squeeze it all in), what we've learned since my book went to press. *We*, not just what I've tracked down myself. Still on deck: *Collyer's Eye, 1919.* Stay tuned, the mi-

crofilm is on order at last!

IF YOU SELL IT, WILL THEY BUY? The vendors' room at SABR conventions is like an oasis in the desert — sooner or later, you have to go there. It's a crossroads, hazardous to your wallet, because of all the great books. McFarland has a new one for teachers, on how they can use baseball to teach their subject. I confess that I did some scouting in the vendors' room, among some of the publishers represented. And maybe I was scouted, too — who knows? I had prepared a list of possible next projects: *Eight Books Not Out*. If you are an editor and want a list, let me know. I left this item with a number of people in the vendor room. Johnny Appleseed theory. Potomac Books, by the way, sold out all 16 copies of *Burying the Black Sox*, and I sold the several copies I had along (I don't leave home without them, because in baseball, *you never know*). I signed more than I sold, and I enjoyed so much, meeting folks (total strangers) who had read the book and were excited by it.

TABLE TALK. Sometimes I think the sessions get in the way of the great conversations that we can have at the meals. I think that sums up this topic.

SAME TIME NEXT YEAR. These conventions, the Surgeon General should warn, can be addictive. Each year I make new friends ... and I'm a reunion nut, so you know I enjoy seeing familiar faces. Only a few from the B-Sox Yahoos, but that was fine. *What are YOU working on? What's the best talk you heard today? Going to lunch? Got dinner plans?* The problem, of course, is that I came home with about two dozen things to follow up on.

THE RITTER AWARD. I think this is the first time I've won anything within SABR. In my acceptance speech, I noted how much research went into the award. For example, finding out who the eleven judges were, and where they lived. What their asking price was. Then, the challenge of slipping the bribe money under their pillows, so (if caught) they could use the Tooth Fairy Defense, perfected long ago by Eddie Cicotte. Seriously — receiving this award was a real treat. I never met Larry Ritter (and I wish he had started taping player interviews 40 years sooner!), but from all I know about him, being associated with his name is an honor.

BACK-TO-BACK. When I ran into Cait (*Crazy '08*) Murphy, the first question I asked was *How did you get to give back-to-back talks?* I was not the only speaker who felt confined, *crammed*, into 30-minute segments. Somehow, Cait had two, back to back. And she apparently got them by asking. Live & learn. Anyway, her talks were both excellent, and one got an award, and I congratulate her for that, even as I remind her to share with me soon, her review of *Burying the Black Sox*!

GARAGIOLA. The keynote speaker this year was Joe Garagiola, and it was a good choice. He is a plain talker, funny, simple but not simplistic. I might not mind if he went into politics. He recalls baseball as it was, without glorifying it or whitewashing it or elevating it. And he has that gift, he is still full of childlike wonder when he watches a game. And that, happily, is contagious, you catch the magic as he talks and makes you laugh. In a TV interview I caught (but not in his speech), he talked some about Barry and steroids, giving me the impression that he and his generation probably would have taken them, if they were available — noting that his own performance needed all the help it could get. But he drew the line at precisely the place where I draw it: when it is learned that the stuff is harmful, you stop. Joe is a crusader about the harm that spit (chewing) tobacco can cause, has caused. Nothing gets him more animated. Maybe someday Barry Bonds will make the banquet circuit, warning everyone (but especially kids and young players) about the dangers of ingesting stuff you don't know enough about. File under *I have a dream*.

NEXT YEAR, CLEVELAND

Congratulations to Steve Gietschier and his whole team for making the St Louis convention such learning fun. I was looking for souvenir shirts priced \$10-20, but instead I came home with this issue of *NOTES* to remember SABR 37. Believe it or not, this summary is highly incomplete, I attended lots more sessions.

The word that came to mind many times at this convention (as it has before) is “immersion” — go to Guatemala to *immerse* yourself in Spanish, but for baseball, go to a SABR event.

Next year, the National is in Cleveland, and they will have a tough act to follow. All things permitting, I plan to be there. And I’m also thinking already about 2009, in Washington, D.C

Submitted by Richard Smiley

St. Louis Toodle-loo

St. Louis is a baseball town. The Cardinal sticking out of the ground at Joe Medwick’s grave site; the plaques commemorating the boyhood homes of Yogi Berra and Joe Garagiola; the side wall of a building on the former site of Sportsman’s Park painted with the names of the Hall of Fame members who once roamed that field; the full sized statue of Chris Von Der Ahe which adorns his gravesite but which once sat outside the entrance of a ballpark; the staggering proportion of fans attending games at the new Busch Stadium in Cardinal gear, while not seeing fans in the gear of local sports teams like the Rams. These are the images I took away from this year’s SABR Convention held in late July in the Gateway City.

The Adams Mark, the convention hotel, was perfectly situated downtown – in the shadow of the Arch and walking distance from Busch Stadium. The setup allowed for a lot to be accomplished in a short period of time. I was able to get to two games two games at the new ballpark and mostly enjoyed the experience. Some members of the local baseball community have objected to the sightlines in some areas of the stadium, and I could somewhat sympathize with their complaint. For example, in the section we sat in for the “SABR” game (left field upper deck), parts of the outfield were simply not visible to us. Nevertheless, I found these negatives more than balanced by the positive features of the park: the old Busch Stadium scoreboards located under the stands displaying the board as it appeared for the last game played there in 2005; the elegant view of the city skyline behind the current stadium scoreboard; the spacious concourse beneath the stands; the historical markers outside of the stadium built into the sidewalk; and the enthusiasm of the crowd.

As for the convention itself, I saw a number of fine research presentations highlighted by Dave Smith’s analysis of the differences between the six possible first pitch outcomes (ball hit in play; hit batter; ball called; strike called; strike foul; strike swinging) which revealed that a batter who swings and misses at the first pitch has a significantly lower chance of success than those with the other first pitch outcomes. Peter Morris’s presentation on William Buckner, an African-American trainer who worked for the White Sox during the dead ball era was also exemplary and Cait Murphy’s revelations about how baseball kept a potential

scandal at the end of the 1908 season from appearing in public won an award.

The convention set records both for number of overall attendees and number attending the luncheon (featuring the perfect banquet speaker – Joe Garagiola). This bodes well for future conventions being held in the Midwest, as it runs contrary to the unspoken belief that “SABR Conventions need to be held on a coast to draw a crowd”. That belief will definitely be put to the test next when Cleveland becomes the host city. In 2009, the convention will be held in Washington D.C. with the promise of seeing games in the best of the retro ballparks (Camden Yards in Baltimore) as well as the first of the new generation of ballparks (the stadium going up in Washington).

As always with a SABR convention, the best part of it was the people I saw. Old friends such as those from the Deadball Era Committee’s “Boiling Out” trips to Hot Springs and new faces such as Joan Thomas, the St. Louis Chapter SABR Member who led the bus tour to the old baseball park sites throughout the city. It is memories such as these that will bring me back to future SABR conventions.

Submitted by Wayne Stivers

The Saint Louis Committee did a wonderful job of keeping SABR members informed and updated on a daily basis on SABR-L about changes and new features concerning the Saint Louis Convention.

Upon arriving at the Adams Mark Hotel, you entered a spacious lobby with plenty of room to converse with other SABR members, a very convenient check in procedure, and a spacious vendor room. All the presentation rooms were located on one floor, and all were located next to each other, which made it easy to get to the next presentation with ease. It is amazing that after thirty some years, the quality of the presentations seem to improve each year.

If you weren't there, you missed a wonderful entertaining banquet speech on Saturday, from Joe Garagiola, former Major League catcher, NBC celebrity, and a Saint Louis native. He kept everyone in stitches for over an hour with his tales about growing up in Saint Louis with Yogi Berra, and his stories about his playing days in Major League baseball. This was worth the price of admission alone.

There were many nice restaurants within walking distance of the hotel, and the hotel had a very nice restaurant also. We dined at Mike Shannons restaurant one evening. The food was very good, the atmosphere was lacking good baseball memorabilia, and you needed your banker when the bill was presented, but we had a good time.

It was a treat to walk to the new stadium, and to see the Cardinals play the Brewers in the new stadium. The new stadium is a great improvement over old Busch Stadium by leaps and bounds. I was at the opening of Old Busch Stadium in the 1960's, and I thought it was something special at that time. They had some excellent new food venues at the new stadium, which was an improvement over a plain hot dog. Beer was selling for only \$8.50, but since we had our banker along from our experience at Mike Shannons, he was able to take care of

he was able to take care of it. The game was an important one since the Cardinals and Brewers were in a pennant chase with the Cubs, and the Brewers prevailed after two rain delays (I should say storm delays, as these were not just your normal rain delays) For anyone who was there, I am sure you will agree it was a well organized and entertaining SABR Convention, and like myself, you were glad you made the choice to attend this year. If you didn't attend this years Convention, make plans to attend next years Convention in Cleveland. You won't be disappointed.

As part of a series of books celebrating anniversary seasons of notable teams utilizing (along with much other material) biographies written for the SABR BioProject, we are announcing plans for a book to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the pennant-winning 1959 White Sox team. Along with biographies of each of the members of the team (including the owner, front office, manager and coaching staff), the book will include articles covering the pennant race, the World Series (too bad we can't stop after Game 1!), the ballpark, the broadcasters and the experience of rooting for the White Sox in the late 1950s. Some of the bios have already been written or assigned; a list of players still to be assigned follows at the end of this e-mail.

We are looking for help not only in writing articles for the book, but also to assist in gathering photos, researching articles, assisting with editing, proofreading, fact-checking and all the other work involved in putting together the book. We would like to have most of the articles written by early next year to give us time to assemble the book. If you're interested in working on this project, please contact either or both of us and let us know how you'd like to help. This should be a fun project for all involved. We'll look forward to hearing from you.

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Editors

If you want to submit an article or have a research request or suggestion or any news for the November issue of the newsletter please email it to the editor David Malamut david@malamut.net by November 3rd, 2007.

