

BOSTON BRAVES HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

Spring 2007

Annual Dues

The arrival of the new baseball season also signals the time to renew your annual membership in the BBHA. The challenge of keeping the memory of Boston's Braves alive is becoming greater as the population of living former players continues to drop precipitously and now numbers only forty. For 2007, your executive committee intends to continue to issue periodic informative newsletters and conduct an annual fall reunion while keeping dues at the very reasonable \$15 level. We are grateful to those members who care to contribute more and acknowledge their generosity by recognizing them as Royal Rooters in our reunion program. We operate on a very tight budget in an environment of increasing costs, including the impending rise in postage.

This year, member **Bob Polio** has designed a membership card that you'll be proud to carry in your wallet. Our annual reunion will take place on Sunday, **October 7th** and "the King of Baseball," **Roland Hemond** will be our guest of honor and Hall of Fame inductee. It should be a most memorable event. More information will be provided as the time draws nearer. We're also inviting you to help out in the planning by submitting ideas on format and guests.

If you've missed out on picking up one of our Boston Braves t-shirts, they're now back in stock in sizes large and extra large. They're priced at \$18 postpaid.

Before you forget, please make out your membership dues check to the Boston Braves Historical Association and mail it to:

**George Altison
Business Manager
Boston Braves Historical Association
Post Office Box 5668
Marlborough, MA 01752**

Thanks for your continued support and encouragement. With your help, Boston's Senior Circuit Boys of Summer will not be forgotten.

City Series Resumes

Despite the uninformed comments of some sports columnists, major league baseball has seen fit to resume the historic City Series between the Braves and the Red Sox. These competitions can be traced back to 1905 when they commenced as a post season affair between the Hub's National and American League representatives. Among the participants in the inaugural championship were Hall of Fame hurlers Cy Young of the Red Sox and Vic Willis of the Braves. One October game featured a duel between two "Cy Youngs." The Braves

sent Irv "Cy the Second" Young to the mound but the 20-game winner was bested by his elder. The Braves lost the initial competition six games to one.

This year's edition will kick-off at Fenway Park on Friday, May 18 for three games against the Atlanta version of the Tribe. The series will resume in Atlanta a month later when the Bosox journey to the South for a mid-week series on June 18-20. Let's make sure that there are spectators in the stands at both sites wearing block "B" blue and red ballcaps to remind the media and younger fans of the baseball heritage represented by these interleague contests!

Opening Days

From 1876 to 1952, the Boston Braves opened the season 77 times and achieved a 39-36 won/loss record in first-out-of-the-gate contests. Two games ended in ties (1877 and 1924) and a double-header commenced the season in 1919 (the second game defeat is not included in the above totals). The Braves started the season 32 times in Boston with the remaining 45 openers played on the road. The most runs scored by the Tribe in an inaugural tilt was 15 (1890), as contrasted with 19 by an opponent (1900). Hall of Famer Kid Nichols drew the most starts (7) and tied with fellow Hall of Famer John Clarkson for most victories at 5. Four hurlers – Dick Rudolph, Danny MacFayden, Al Javery and Johnny Sain lost three Openers each. The Opening Day home run king is Herman Long who stroked 5 dingers over four contests. The biggest Braves circuit clout barrage took place in 1950 at the Polo Grounds when Bob Elliott, Connie Ryan and Sam Jethroe sent baseballs into the stands. The final season kick-off game took place at the Wigwam, where despite a Jethroe homer, Spahnne lost to the Dodgers 3-2.

1935's away Opener on April 23 drew 47,009 to the Polo Grounds to witness Babe Ruth's first appearance in New York as a Boston Brave after fifteen years as a Yankee. Included among the throng were Colonel Jacob Ruppert and Ed Barrow. The Bambino played eight innings in this 11-inning 6-5 Tribe loss. Hitless in his at bats, Ruth scored a run after walking and being driven in by a Pinky Whitney home run. In the fifth inning, he made a spectacular one-handed catch in the far corner of the right field wall of a line smash by Giants first baseman and manager, Bill Terry.

Of all of their inaugural season games, one stands out. On April 15, 1947 at Ebbets Field, the Braves' Dick Culler, batting against lefty Joe Hatten, led off with a soft grounder to the hot corner. Dodgers' third baseman Spider Jorgensen fielded the ball and threw it to first baseman Jackie Robinson, a 28-year-old rookie, who fielded the ball perfectly, recording the

season's first putout. Major league baseball had finally officially ended its disgraceful "color line." The Braves followed the Dodgers' lead in 1950 with "Jet" Jethroe but sadly, Boston's other team delayed integrating until 1959.

Firsts and Lasts

"Retrosheet" is a volunteer organization that was founded in 1989 to computerize play-by-play game accounts and other historical baseball data for manipulation and other use by baseball researchers. Their web site, www.retrosheet.org, is rich in information and a great place for Boston Braves fans to sift through season-by-season and game-by-game information on the Tribe.

One area on the site is devoted to ballpark "firsts" and "lasts." Specific sections are dedicated to initial and final activities at Braves Field.

Braves Field experienced its official opening game on August 18, 1915. Washington manager Clark Griffith threw out the ceremonial first pitch. The Braves, led by George Stallings, took on the Miller Huggins-directed Cardinals. Legendary umpire Bill Klem was one of the two arbiters assigned to the contest. Boston's Dick Rudolph opposed St. Louis' Slim Sallee on the mound and led the home team to a 3-1 triumph. The very first batter was Miller Huggins, who was also the club's second baseman, and who struck out. The Wigwam's initial hit was a single recorded by the Red Birds' shortstop, Art Butler. The Braves made history when Rabbit Maranville drove in the first run, scoring teammate Sherry Magee. Braves' third baseman Red Smith was first to pilfer a base within James Gaffney's new stadium. The earliest circuit clout was delayed until August 23rd when Pirates' first baseman, Doc Johnson, achieved the field's initial four-base hit. Almost a year later, on August 3, 1916, Red Smith cleared the bases with the premiere grand slam. The 1916 season also featured the first no-hitter, authored by Braves' right-hander Tom Hughes.

Fast-forwarding into the future, 1952 marked the end of the line for professional baseball at the hallowed grounds between Gaffney and Babcock Streets. The final game was played on September 21 when the Brooklyn Dodgers came to town. Opposing managers Charlie Grimm and Chuck Dressen designated Jim Wilson and Joe Black, respectively, to start the game. 8,822 fans unknowingly witnessed this sad, historic event. The league-leading Bums emerged victorious, 8-2, while achieving a number of "lasts." On that fall day, the Dodgers recorded the last hit (Jackie Robinson), run (Joe Black), RBI (Carl Furillo) and homer (Roy Campanella). The Braves' Walker Cooper was the last batter, who flew out to Andy Pafko, recording Braves Field's last putout. The Tribe acquired Pafko the following January but Handy Andy was prevented from ever again patrolling the spacious outfield confines of the Wigwam when his new team left for Milwaukee during spring training. Pafko eventually returned to the Hub in 2001 to attend a BBHA reunion. The

1951 season witnessed the last Braves Field hitless game when the Pirates' Cliff Chambers accomplished the feat in the night-cap of a doubleheader on May 6th.

Baseball Cards

Despite departing Boston during spring training in 1953, Boston Braves continue to appear on newly minted baseball cards. Early 2007 issues by the Topps Company contain two of our favorites – **Sibby Sisti** and **Warren Spahn** – in Boston togs. Sibby appears in a "Distinguished Service" set, honoring members of the "Greatest Generation" for their World War II contributions. Card number DS 14 features a color portrait of our BBHA Hall of Famer and recognizes his wartime Coast Guard service. As a fellow Coast Guard veteran, your editor can attest that Super Sub Sibby lived up to the USCG motto, *Semper Paratus* (Always Ready) on the baseball diamond. Executive Committee member **Jonathan Fine** points out to us that Topps incorporated Sibby's 1952 baseball card portrait into the design of the 2007 pasteboard.

Spahnie also appears in a 2007 Topps offering. The Hall of Fame lefty is portrayed in glorious color in his Boston Braves uniform in a Heritage Flashback insert. The use of this particular photograph is questionable as the card bears the date, September 17, 1958, when the team had relocated to Milwaukee. Another version of the card includes an imbedded shaving from a seat from County Stadium in Brewtown. Topps has blown it previously when it issued Tommy Holmes cards with uniform and bat inserts but photographs of Eddie Mathews were mistakenly used to portray "Kelly."

The Greater Boston Sports Collectors Club (www.GBSCC.com; 781-994-1185) has issued a "Boston Sports Kings" collectors card set that contains a number of Boston Braves. Appearing in the set are Eddie Mathews (#5), Sibby Sisti (#13), Johnny Sain (#16), Gene Conley (#32), Warren Spahn (#38), Johnny Logan (#39), Dick Donovan (#51), Elbie Fletcher (#52 – unfortunately in a Pirates uniform), Sam Jethroe (#73) and Tommy Holmes (#79). All of the athletes in this 80 card compilation have an association with the GBSCC in some manner. The collection honors the club's 20th anniversary. GBSCC club officials and BBHA members **Bill Carvahlo**, **Jim Gebo** and **Peter D'Amico** are also included among the set's honorees. Past BBHA Reunion guests Frank Malzone, Walt Dropo, Ted Lepcio, Eddie Pellagrini, Bill Monbouquette and Mickey Vernon also appear. The GBSCC also created individual commemorative "Cards That Never Were" of Bob Elliott and Sibby Sisti. The former represents a tribute to the 1948 NL Champs and uses a color photo of "Mr. Team" that originally appeared in a Sunday newspaper rotogravure. Sibby's pasteboard uses the 1954 Topps baseball card design and lists his position as "supersub."

In Memoriam

Eddie Mayo

Eddie Mayo (Mayoski), an infielder with the 1937-38 Boston Bees, passed away on November 28, 2006 at age 96. He was the second eldest living member of the Braves player family and eighth oldest former major leaguer at that time. Born in Holyoke, MA in 1910, Mayo made his major league debut with the 1936 New York Giants. Over a nine season career, he would also perform for the Philadelphia Athletics (1943) and Detroit Tigers (1944-48) and appear in the 1936 and 1945 World Series. At the time of his death, he was still wearing his 1945 World Series Championship ring. Mayo, who batted left and threw right, answered to the nickname, "Hotshot." Known for his fielding, he led all third basemen in that category in 1943. Shifting to second base in 1944, Mayo led that position in double plays that year and captured the fielding crown the following season. Along with Skeeter Webb at shortstop, he was part of a 35-year-old combo that anchored the infield for the pennant winning Tigers. Mayo was chosen for the All Star squad in 1945.

When the Bees sold Mayo to the Pacific Coast League Los Angeles Angels in May of 1938, he balked at going, wanting to remain on the East Coast to be close to his New Jersey dairy farm. Faced with either reporting or retiring, Mayo headed west and ended up the club's MVP with a .332 batting average. On a less illustrious note, in July of 1941, Mayo was suspended by the PCL's president for a year for spitting in the face of an umpire. Mayo fought the suspension and was exonerated in September. He continued to perform well during his stay in the City of the Angels. In 171 games for the 1942 Angels, he batted .307, leading Connie Mack to draft him for his war-ravaged 1943 squad. After his playing career, Mayo coached for the Red Sox (1951) and Phillies (1952-54).

Billy Klaus

Billy Klaus, who appeared in seven games with the 1952 Boston Braves, passed away on December 3, 2006, six days before his 78th birthday. The 11-year big leaguer was originally signed by the Cleveland Indians in 1946 but his signing was voided before the 1947 campaign, allowing the Cubs to pick him up. After the 1949 season, he was drafted by the Dallas Eagles of the Texas League, led by Charlie Grimm, and remained with them until his contract was purchased by the Braves in 1951. Grimm had moved on to skipper the Tribe's top affiliate, the Milwaukee Brewers, in 1951 and recommended that the parent club secure Klaus' services. Klaus spent most of 1951 and 1952 in Milwaukee. He made his major league debut at Braves Field on April 16, 1952 in a losing effort against the Dodgers. He was sent down at the beginning of May when the Tribe promoted former Negro Leaguer Buzz Clarkson to the parent club. Klaus remained with the Braves through the transfer to Milwaukee, where he became a part of the multi-player deal with the Giants that also saw Johnny Antonelli, Don Liddle and Ebba St. Claire head to Gotham for

Bobby Thomson and Sam Calderone. His strong 1954 performance (21 homers and a .280 batting average) with the Giants' AAA affiliate Minneapolis Millers attracted the attention of the Boston Red Sox, who traded Del Wilbur to get him.

As a twenty-six year old rookie, Klaus won the starting shortstop position when Milt Bolling broke his arm in spring training and aging former Brave Eddie Joost was unable to assume daily duty. He would perform capably for the Bosox at shortstop and third base through 1957. The emergence of Don Buddin and Frank Malzone sent him to the pines in 1958 and led to his trade to the Orioles in the off-season. He remained in Baltimore for a couple of seasons and witnessed the development of another outstanding third baseman, Brooks Robinson. In 1961, Klaus became a charter member of the expansion Washington Senators, who sold him to the Phillies the following year. He completed his major league stint in Philadelphia in 1963, a year before his younger brother Bobby debuted with the Reds. Klaus wasn't finished playing professional baseball, however. He joined the Chunichi Dragons in Japan for two seasons, playing along with expatriates Bob Neiman and Jim Marshall. Klaus would later manage in the minors for the Senators, Athletics and Pirates. After baseball, he ran a painting contracting business in Sarasota, FL and a gift and antiques store in Valle Crucis, NC.

Ray Berres

99-year-old **Ray Berres** died of heart failure and pneumonia on February 1, 2007. He was the oldest living Brave and second eldest big leaguer when he died. Berres spent his entire 11-season major league playing career in the National League, beginning with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1934. He spent time with the Pirates and Giants in addition to his stop with the Braves in 1940-41. The Braves acquired the backstop from the Pirates in exchange for Al Lopez. The two would later cross paths in their post-playing days with the Chicago White Sox. Primarily a back-up catcher, Berres hit .216 in 561 games. His principal claim to fame, however, was as a pitching coach for the White Sox from 1949-66 and 1968-69. His pitching squads routinely were among the league's best in earned run average. Berres specialized in revitalizing the careers of veteran hurlers. His successes included Gerry Staley, Turk Lown, Bob Shaw, Ray Herbert, Marv Grissom, Bob Keegan, Don Mossi, Juan Pizarro and Tommy John. His key was mechanics, focusing on a proper delivery.

Lou Burdette

Eighty-year-old **Selva Lewis Burdette, Jr.** died on February 6, 2007 at his home in Winter Garden, FL after a prolonged battle with lung cancer. The right-hander broke into the majors with the Yankees in 1950 and was dealt to Boston on August 29, 1951 along with \$50,000 for Johnny Sain. Some predicted that the ditty, "Spahn and Sain and pray for rain" would be replaced by "Spahn and Burdette and

two days of wet." The following season, he became a workhorse on the pitching staff, appearing in 45 games, winning six while losing 11 and recording a 3.61 ERA. However, it was Milwaukee's fans, rather than their Boston brethren, who would witness the refrain come true. The Spahn-Burdette tandem was one of baseball's best during the Fifties and early Sixties. The two were also renowned pranksters in the clubhouse and good friends off the field. One of Burdette's most notorious practical jokes was tricking a Topps baseball card photographer into believing that he pitched from the portside. That photograph made its way on to his 1959 bubble gum card.

Burdette was a two-time All Star who twice won twenty or more games, led the league in strikeouts three consecutive years and hurled a no-hitter. He defeated former Boston and Milwaukee Braves teammate Gene Conley and the Phillies in the latter gem. Burdette led the National League in victories in 1959. Perhaps his greatest success occurred during the 1957 World Series where he humiliated his former team, pitching three complete game victories against the Yanks with a 0.67 ERA. His Game 7 shutout at Yankee Stadium capped off a 24-inning scoreless run. The opportunity arose when his buddy, Warren Spahn, came down with the flu and he was handed the ball with only two days of rest. His two Fall Classic blankings matched the total of regular season scoreless games thrown against the New Yorkers in the Junior Circuit. Burdette was named the Series' MVP.

Fidgety on the mound, Burdette was often accused of throwing the banned spitball and he used this perception as part of his psychological warfare against batters. He was once quoted as saying, "It's my best pitch and I don't even throw it."

Burdette was the winning pitcher in the famous pitching duel with Harvey Haddix. "The Kitten" pitched twelve perfect innings but it was Burdette who prevailed in thirteen innings. On that performance, he opined, "I must be the greatest pitcher ever, since the greatest game ever pitched couldn't beat me."

Like Spahn, Burdette was also handy with a bat. Of his twelve career homers, two came off of Hall of Famer Sandy Koufax. Burdette particularly enjoyed hitting in the Coliseum with its 250 foot left field foul line. Half his circuit clouts occurred in this reconfigured football stadium, including a two-homer (one a grand slam) game against the Dodgers there in 1958.

After leaving the Braves, during the twilight of his career, Burdette spent time with the Cardinals, Cubs, Phillies and Angels. Ending his playing days in 1967 with California, he yielded a 430-foot blast to Harmon Killebrew at the old Metropolitan Stadium. The upper deck seat where it landed has been preserved as an honored relic and hangs from the ceiling at the Mall of America.

Burdette finished up with a 203-144 record with a 3.66 ERA over 18 seasons. After retiring as an active player, he coached in Atlanta in 1972-73. A distant cousin, Fred Burdette, pitched briefly for the Cubs in 1962-64.

Burdette is a member of the Braves franchise Hall of Fame. He had hoped to attend the Milwaukee Braves 50th World Championship anniversary celebration this August. Teammate Johnny Logan, an honored BBHA member and Milwaukee Braves Historical Association (MBHA) founder said, "I was looking forward to seeing him again. This is so sad. He loved this team and the people here." We were fortunate to welcome him back to Boston at our 2001 reunion and will cherish our memories of his appearance.

There has always been confusion over the spelling of Burdette's first name – "Lew" or "Lou?" He preferred signing autographs as "Lou" and attributed the alternative spelling as the penchant of sportswriters. Burdette once remarked, "Depending upon how it's spelled on my checks, that's the way I spell it." Burdette's family has indicated that "Lou" was the spelling of choice for his gravesite.

Bob Sturgeon

Bob Sturgeon, a member of the 1948 NL Championship squad, passed away on March 10, 2007 at age 87. Originally signed by the Cardinals, he broke into the majors with the Chicago Cubs in 1940 as a twenty-year-old shortstop. A slick fielder, Sturgeon remained with the Windy City club through 1942 before spending three years during WWII in the Navy. In his final season before military service, Sturgeon roomed with Hall of Famer Jimmie Foxx when the latter was waived to the Cubs by the Red Sox.

Upon his return from the Navy in 1946, Sturgeon had his best year, batting .296 in 100 games. Relegated to utility work the following season, he was picked up by the Braves on March 1, 1948 in exchange for Dick Culler. Again playing an infield utility role, Sturgeon got into 34 games and batted .218. While he didn't appear in the Fall Classic, Sturgeon saw his best friend, Bob Lemon, win two games for Cleveland. Sturgeon's family relocated to Long Beach, CA when he was a lad and the Lemons lived nearby. The two spent a great deal of time together according to Sturgeon's son, Jim. For his efforts during the 1948 campaign, Sturgeon received a full World Series share and a ring. He cherished the ring and wore it for the remainder of his life until it disappeared a few years ago.

Sturgeon concluded his six-season, 420-game career in the big leagues in 1948. His lifetime batting average was .257. Sturgeon would go on to manage in the minors in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada and Salt Lake City, UT. Later, he worked for McDonnell Douglas as the company's sports director. Sturgeon returned to Boston in 1988 to attend the New England Sports Museum's 40th anniversary celebration of the '48 Braves team.

Sturgeon numbered among his friends, Tommy Lasorda, who he played against in the minors, and Chuck Stevens, a former Brownie and PCL first baseman. The latter gave the eulogy at Sturgeon's funeral service.

Members of the Braves Family

Art Fowler, a former Boston Braves farmhand but better known as Billy Martin's pitching coach, died on January 29, 2007. He was 84 years old. He toiled in the bushes, originally signing with the Giants and rising as high as to Milwaukee in the American Association in 1951 before being released by the Braves and picked up by the Reds in the 1953 off season. An older brother, Jesse, appeared with the Cardinals for thirteen games in 1924. Fowler had a nine year big league career with the Reds, Dodgers and Angels through 1964. He linked up with Billy Martin when the latter took the manager's job at Denver in the American Association in 1970. Fowler would work as a pitching coach for the Angels, Twins, Tigers, Rangers, Yankees and Athletics. The South Carolina license plate on Fowler's car read "NYY42&1," – commemorating the Yankees and his and Martin's uniform numbers.

Boston Braves minor leaguer **Oran Davis** was 81 when he died on November 23, 2006. He signed with an Indians farm team at age 16. After serving in the Army Air Corps in WWII, Davis attended the University of Western Michigan on a baseball scholarship. In 1949, he played at Pawtucket and Hartford. With the New England League Class B Slaters, Davis appeared in 109 games at third base and batted .319. Among his teammates who made the parent club at some point in their careers were George Crowe, Steve Kuczek, Don Liddle and Harry MacPherson. Another teammate, outfielder Bob Montag, captured the batting crown with a .423 average. Called up in September to the Eastern League Class A level with the Hartford Chiefs, Davis played in 25 games and hit .274. Teammate Billy Reed led the league in hitting with a .338 average and the club featured such other players as Hank Ertman, Jack Daniels, Paul LaPalme and Bob Buhl.

85-year-old **George "Lefty" Buickel** passed away on November 27, 2006. A four-letter athlete in high school, he debuted with the Mayfield Browns and Owensboro Oilers in 1940 before joining the Army Air Corps. Assigned to service combat aircraft, Buickel had the opportunity to play on a military team and strike out Ted Williams. After returning home, Buickel was signed by Braves farm director Harry Jenkins and assigned to Indianapolis, which optioned him to Owensboro. He had his most successful year in 1946 with that Class D Kitty League team. With an 18-4 record and a 2.58 ERA, Buickel played a key role in the Oilers capture of the league championship. Future major league manager Chuck Tanner broke into professional baseball there that year, playing in 23 games for the Tribe affiliate. Buickel went on to play for the Fort Lauderdale Braves and the Hartford Chiefs. He ended his baseball career in 1951.

Vincent Pankovits, Braves chattel in the late '40s, passed away on February 9, 2007. As a catcher, he played for several farm teams in 1947-48. In 1947, Pankovits had stops with the Mount Vernon Braves in the Illinois State League, the Owensboro Oilers of the Kitty League and the Richmond Roses in the Ohio State League. The following season, he spent time with Mount Vernon and the Jackson Senators of the Southeastern League. During 1949-50, Pankovits backstopped in the Colonial League with the Bridgeport Bees. In the early '50s, he skipped and played for several Class D teams. His last name may sound familiar because his son, Jim made it to the big leagues as a utility player with the Houston Astros from 1984-88. Pankovits was signed as a minor league free agent by the Red Sox in 1990 and received the Pawsox Tenth Player Award. He made a brief two-game appearance for the Red Sox that season. Jim Pankovits managed the New Britain Red Sox in 1992-94 and later worked in the Astros' system. Thanks to member **Mike Keough** for sharing his encyclopedic knowledge of Braves minor leaguers for the above information on father and son.

The recent passing of 80-year-old former relief pitcher and Dodgers' "Boy of Summer," **Clem Labine**, caused us to wonder how the Braves overlooked this Woonsocket, RI native, who practically played in their backyard. It was a stroke of bad luck that deprived the Tribe of Labine's future bullpen services. After a scheduled tryout with the Braves fell through, Brooklyn quickly signed him to a contract in 1946. Labine would claim a place in the legendary Topps 1952 baseball card set along with fellow Rhode Islanders, Chet Nichols and Max Surkont, the latter two in Braves togs. He would perform for 13 years in the majors and appear in five World Series. Labine ended his playing career with a brief appearance with the inaugural Mets team in 1962.

Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and adviser to President John F. Kennedy, **Arthur Schlesinger Jr.** died at 89 on February 28, 2007. His obituaries noted that he grew up as a Boston Braves fan.

Living Braves List Update

In our last newsletter, we provided our best attempt at listing all living players who appeared as a member of the Tribe. We solicited your help in verifying its accuracy and, thanks to our membership, have come up with the revised list below. Sadly, the ranks have declined to 40 men since our previous effort. Replacing Ray Berres as the eldest living Brave is **Tommy Reis**, born on August 6, 1914. Special thanks go to member **John Brooks** for his assistance.

Bob Addis (Outfield, 1950-51)
Johnny Antonelli (Pitcher, 1948-50)
Eddie Carnett (Pitcher, 1941)
Dave Cole (Pitcher, 1950-52)
Clint Conatser (Outfield, 1948-49)
Gene Conley (Pitcher, 1952)
Del Crandall (Catcher, 1949-50)

George Crowe (First Base, 1952)
Jack Daniels (Outfield, 1952)
Alvin Dark (Shortstop, 1946, 1948-49)
Bob "Ducky" Detweiler (Third Base, 1942, 1946)
Jack Dittmer (Second Base, 1952)
George Estock (Pitcher, 1951)
Roy Hartsfield (Second Base, 1952)
Ralph Hodgins (Outfield, 1939)
Tommy Holmes (Outfield, 1942-51; Manager 1951-52)
Virgil Jester (Pitcher, 1952)
Art Johnson (Pitcher, 1940-42)
Ernie Johnson (Pitcher, 1950, 1952)
Eddie Joost (Shortstop, 1943, 1945)
Art Kenney (Pitcher, 1938)
Steve Kuczek (Pinchhitter, 1949)
Walt Linden (Catcher, 1950)
Danny Litwhiler (Outfield, 1946-48)
Johnny Logan (Shortstop, 1951-52)
Harry MacPherson (Pitcher, 1944)
Dick Manville (Pitcher, 1950)
Ray Martin (Pitcher, 1943, 1947-48)
Ralph McLeod (Outfield, 1938)
Luis Olmo (Outfield, 1950-51)
Gene Patton (Pinchrunner, 1944)
Bill Ramsey (Outfield, 1945)
Tommy Reiss (Pitcher, 1938)
Norman Roy (Pitcher, 1950)
Mike Sandlock (SS/Third Base, 1942, 1944)
Hal Schacker (Pitcher, 1945)
Nick Strincevich (Pitcher, 1940-41)
Bert Thiel (Pitcher, 1952)
Don Thompson (Outfield, 1949)
Al Veigel (Pitcher, 1939)

Thanks Ronnie

Once again, we're able to feature a wonderful sketch of a member of the Braves Family courtesy of the generosity of talented artist and illustrator, **Ronnie Joyner**. In this edition, Ronnie has portrayed one of our last reunion's honored guests, Bob "Ducky" Detweiler. Ronnie worked with the Detweiler family and used period photographs to capture the image of the former Braves infielder. He's hard at work on other Boston Braves subjects that will be appearing in future editions of the newsletter. Ronnie may be contacted by email at ronnie@ndun.com or traditional mail at 7780 Traeleigh Lane, Charlotte Hall, MD 20622. Thanks again Ronnie!

Sittin' In The Jury Box

Congratulations to Peter Gammons who received the Judge Emil Fuchs Award for long and meritorious service to baseball. Gammons has covered the National Pastime for 37 years in a variety of mediums. The award was presented on January 11 at the 68th annual dinner of the Boston Chapter of the Baseball Writers Association of America. The award is named in honor of the former Boston Braves owner. **Christine Torgeson Shaw**, daughter of first baseman Earl and frequent reunion attendee, contributed artifacts to the "Batter Up! Spring Training In The Sunshine State" exhibit that ran at the South Florida Museum in Bradenton through April 29. She recalled especially fond memories of barbecues in their Holmes Beach

backyard that her dad threw for his Braves teammates during spring training at McKechnie Field.

As you watch baseball games on large screen, high definition televisions, remember that the Boston Braves were featured in the first televised baseball broadcast in color. The event occurred during the first game of an August 11, 1951 doubleheader at Ebbets Field. The Braves lost that game to the Dodgers and Ralph Branca, 8-1. The telecast was beamed for a fifty mile radius around New York City. A CBS spokesman estimated that it reached approximately 10,000 people who watched it on 1,000 home-made converters. Receivers were set up in Gimbels department store and at CBS headquarters.

In his February 24th column, BBHA member and *Boston Herald* sportswriter, **Steve Buckley** noted that San Francisco's interleague trip to Boston on June 15-17 will mark the first time that the Giants have played an official game in the Hub since they split a doubleheader at Braves Field on September 1, 1952. Given the controversy surrounding Barry Bonds' quest for the overall home run crown, Buckley suggested that Hank Aaron be invited to Fenway Park on June 14 to mark the 55th anniversary of the day that his contract was acquired by the Boston Braves. He also thought that Sadaharu Oh might also be included in the proposed pre-game ceremony. We heartily support his idea!

The current president of the Negro League Baseball Players Association, **Stanley "Doc" Glenn**, has a Boston Braves connection. Glenn was scouted and signed by Hall of Famer Oscar Charleston, then a coach with the Philadelphia Stars. He performed for that team from 1944 to 1950 and was known better for his defense than offense. Honey Russell, the basketball coach at Seton Hall University and Braves scout, signed Glenn to a Tribe contract in 1950. The backstop was assigned to the Hartford Chiefs and got into 20 games, batting .259. While there, he observed teammate and fellow former Negro Leaguer George Crowe lead the Eastern League in hitting. His batting average dropped to .216 in 109 games at Hartford the following season and after beginning the 1952 season in the Connecticut capital, was sent to the Quebec Braves in the Provincial League where he stayed through 1953. Released by the Braves, Glenn spent the next couple of seasons playing for an independent team in Ontario, Canada before retiring.

In an interview in the December 10, 2006 *Worcester Telegram & Gazette*, our great friend and BBHA Family member **Art Johnson** related a tale about pitching to Babe Ruth. The 1940-42 Braves lefty was scouted by the Tribe when he was a 15-year-old high school prospect. Asked to pitch batting practice at the Wigwam in 1935, Johnson had the opportunity to face the mighty Bambino. "Babe hit one off me over the Jury Box in right field. It was the longest home run I ever saw."

Johnny Logan and the Milwaukee Brewers Historical Association continue to be very active and have honored individuals with ties to Boston. Featured at their annual dinner on November 7th were **Jack Dittmer** and **Joe Morgan**. They were joined by Logan, Andy Pafko and Felix Mantilla. Mantilla, a Boston Braves farmhand, was inducted into the Old Time Ballplayers' Association on November 17. The MBHA's April 2007 newsletter contained a feature story on how John Quinn put together the 1957 World Champs. Plans are underway for a 50th anniversary celebration on August 30. All living members of the 1957 club have been invited. Its core was comprised of members who at one time donned the block "B" on their caps or originally signed with the Boston Braves including Logan, Pafko, and Mantilla as well as Bob Buhl, Don McMahon, Billy Bruton, Phil Paine, Bob Trowbridge, Lou Burdette, Frank Torre, Eddie Mathews, Joe Adcock, Warren Spahn, Del Crandall, Hank Aaron, Harry Hanebrink, Ernie Johnson, Dave Jolly and Gene Conley. Coaches Connie Ryan and Bob Keely as well as publicity director Donald Davidson and traveling secretary Duffy Lewis had Boston roots as well. If the Braves had been able to hold on in Boston....

Ray Crone Sr. started his professional baseball career with the Boston Braves' Owensboro, KY affiliate in 1949. He reached the majors in 1954 with Milwaukee and pitched

for five years in the big leagues, including stops with the Mets and the Giants. After his playing time was over, Crone embarked upon a lengthy career as a scout. He was recently named the Midwest Scout of the Year. Crone is a member of the Texas Scouts Association Hall of Fame and received the Baltimore Orioles Meritorious Scouting Service Award in 1988. His son, Ray Jr., works for the Tigers.

Despite a shake-up that resulted in the replacement of Frank Robinson at the helm of the Washington Nationals, **Randy St. Claire** retained his post as the team's pitching coach. 2007 will be his fifth year with the Expos/Nationals. Randy's dad, Ebba, caught for the Boston Braves in 1951-52.

Our great friend, Braves Family member and reunion moderator **Joe Morgan** was inducted into the Boston Red Sox Hall of Fame along with BBHA member **Dick Bresciani** on November 9. Congratulations gentlemen!

Congratulations and best wishes to **Father Gerald Beirne** upon his recent retirement. Father Beirne has provided the convocation at many of our reunions, always inserting a baseball theme into his remarks. He's also a frequent contributor to this newsletter. We'd also like to thank **Arnold Bailey** for his write-up of our last reunion in *Sports Collectors Digest* as well as our expression of gratitude to **Simon Chiasson, Jack Wholley, Ray Benoit** and **Owen Carle** for their contributions.

Bob Brady, Newsletter Editor