

BOSTON BRAVES HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Newsletter

Fall 2007

Roland and Roy Steal the Show at Reunion XVI

By Saul Wisnia

Baseball executive legend **Roland Hemond** earned induction into the Boston Braves Hall of Fame and former Braves second baseman Roy Hartsfield into the hearts of attendees at the 16th annual BBHA reunion and dinner at the Brookline Holiday Inn on October 7.

After a wet but spirited contingent made the rounds of Braves Field with tour guide extraordinaire **Ralph Evans**, the formal festivities started with a new twist as the legendary voice of the late Sherm Feller resounded via CD throughout the room. "Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, we would like you to rise and please sing, as John Kiley plays our National Anthem," Feller implored, and the crowd did as instructed – placing hands on hearts as Kiley's delightful, fast-paced organ rendition ensued and undoubtedly brought the minds of many back to ballgames gone by.

Here's to Hemond

The day's biggest cheers were reserved for Hemond, selected by the Association as its 11th Hall of Fame honoree by virtue of his stint with the Hartford Chiefs – Eastern League affiliate of the Braves – and the countless people he has touched and helped in the game ever since. So moved was Roland to earn the distinction that he took a 6:30 a.m. flight to Boston on reunion morning from Chicago, where his Arizona Diamondbacks (he works with the club as a special consultant) had defeated the Cubs in the National League Division Series late the previous night. Here is the text of his plaque, which was presented to him at the dinner:

Roland Hemond – Boston Braves assistant farm system secretary, 1951-52.

From a modest beginning in 1951 in the front office of the Hartford Chiefs, Roland Hemond rose to become the "King of Baseball," a title bestowed on him in 2001 by Minor League Baseball for his longtime dedication to the National Pastime. A native New Englander who hailed from the Central Falls, Rhode Island area, Hemond served as general manager for two major league teams and held executive positions with seven clubs. A three-time recipient of the Major League Executive of the Year Award, he was also honored with the Judge Emil Fuchs Award for long, meritorious contributions to baseball. A respected mentor, Hemond has been credited with grooming a number of prominent front office executives. Reflecting his beginnings with the Boston Braves, he was instrumental in founding an organization to provide assistance to professional scouts in need of support. Hemond was also the first recipient of an award established in his name created to honor the special achievements of those dedicated to the scouting profession.

Hemond, who also attended one of the first BBHA galas back in 1992 while general manager of the Orioles, delighted the crowd with the tale of his start with the Braves organization, which came by chance as a stint in the Coast Guard was winding down. As he explained, "I had saved some leave so I could visit a cousin of mine who was in the Pittsburgh Pirates training camp. I got down to Florida, hitchhiked to the training camp, and lo and behold they told me the plans had been changed. Instead of arriving Thursday, my cousin would be arriving Monday.

So now I had a dilemma, and I asked one of the ladies if I could get a ride back to town. She said, 'I'd be glad to,' and introduced me to her husband sitting in the front seat. He was blind; he had been a professional ballplayer wounded in World War I in France. They had a boardinghouse with one room vacant, and asked if I wanted to stay there. That man – Sgt. Leo C. McMann – changed my life. He used to travel through the farm systems of the minor leagues as the 'Lucky Sergeant.' He would wear his Army uniform, sing the National Anthem, and root for the home team. He said, 'There are two gentlemen you should meet: Charlie Blossfield, general manager of the Hartford, CT., club [the Chiefs], and Fresco Thompson, the farm director of the Brooklyn Dodgers.' So I typed up my own letter of introduction, he signed his name across it, and I went back to Hartford. I was interviewed, and they asked if I could come back when the Braves were going to come through town to honor the venerable Bob Quinn – who had been in baseball since the 1880s, and became the president of the Braves later on. [Quinn was also the grandfather of Hemond's wife, Margo.]

So I came back to be interviewed by the Braves people, and I was hired at \$28 a week for the rest of the season once I got discharged. I showed up on July 3, and the rest is history. I must confess I was more of a Red Sox fan, but to get a job with the Braves was quite a thrill. [Farm Director] John Mullen was the one who interviewed me. He said, "Can you type?" and I said, "Yeah, I learned to type in the Coast Guard." So he said they'd give me a two-week tryout. Well here I am 56 years later, still hanging around. So thank you John Mullen.

How lucky one can be. I've been so lucky throughout my baseball life. But Ray [Lague], without you being a pitcher in the Pittsburgh Pirates farm system, it wouldn't have happened. So can you please stand up?" As his cousin rose to take a bow, he yelled out to Roland that he actually later signed with the Braves in '52. "That's right," Hemond passed on to the crowd. I recommended him to the Braves, and he signed with that organization and pitched at Eau Claire and Quebec.

Making a trade – for himself

Hemond talked with pride about his current club, and how he had come to rejoin it in mid-2007 after a stint with the White Sox, for whom he was serving as executive advisor to general manager Ken Williams. (He had previously been executive vice president of the

Diamondbacks after stints as GM of the White Sox and Orioles). “In late July I was approached by the president of the Diamondbacks ballclub and asked if I would ever consider coming back to them. As I analyzed things, the White Sox were having a horrible year, and when you’ve been in the game long enough, you should be an astute expert of things. They weren’t going anywhere, and since I live in Phoenix I had been watching this young Diamondbacks ballclub come together. So I traded myself to the Diamondbacks.

Lo and behold, they’re calling me the good luck charm down there now. They ask me, “What’s the record since you arrived?” I keep track of it, and say, “Well, we’ve played .620 ball.” Then they ask me, “What’s the White Sox’s record since you left?” and I say, “Well, they’re playing .438.” I was in the Coast Guard for four years and never learned how to swim. I was scared to death in the North Atlantic, but learned to type and found a way to get a job in Brooklyn so I could get off those high seas and weather patrol. So now I wear a life jacket in my pool, and know when to get off a sinking ship. You can see that I made a very wise move joining the Diamondbacks. I hope we play the Red Sox later in October.” [Sorry, Roland, maybe next year!]

Saluting the Scouts – and others

Known as the “Patron Saint of Scouts,” Hemond was true to form in acknowledging longtime Cubs talent hawk **Lennie Merullo**, now retired after a half-century of scouting. “Bill Veeck owned the [White Sox] ballclub in 1976 and ’77, and we had a very limited scouting staff. Bill used to say, ‘Roland, don’t bother preparing a budget. We don’t have any money – we’ll just think of something.’ We were trying to swing a trade that spring for Ron Guidry, before he had that big year [in 1978], and [Yankees President] Gabe Paul kept saying, ‘Over my dead body.’ Then one day after Paul had been coming to Sarasota to talk to us about the trade, he got ill. I said, ‘Bill, I don’t know if I should pray for Gabe to get well. If he doesn’t we might get Guidry.’ But Bill said, ‘No, no, Roland, don’t get carried away.’

Anyway, I said, ‘Bill, we have a good scouting report from Lennie Merullo, who’s working for the Scouting Bureau. He’s turned in a report on Dewey LaMarr Hoyt in the Eastern League.’ Bill said, ‘He’s a good man and a great scout,’ and that’s how we made that trade. Lennie, where are you? Thanks! Let’s give a big hand to Lennie Merullo. That’s how guys like me take bows afterwards, right? You succeed, but it’s because of your scouts, your player development people, and everybody else who puts in tons of hours and effort and makes great evaluations, judgment, and projections. We’re only as good as the people working with us, and I’m one of those who have been extremely fortunate to work with so many great people who have helped me.

I want to thank everybody in this room for perpetuating the legacy of the great Boston Braves. I went to the reunion last month of the ’57 Braves in Milwaukee. It’s kind of dreadful in a way; if the Braves had stayed longer, with the club they had later in the decade, we would probably still have the Braves here today. Right after we moved to Milwaukee Del Crandall came out of the service, Billy Bruton and Johnny Antonelli came forward, Eddie Mathews had hit 25 homers here his rookie year, then hit 47 his

first year there, and Spahnke kept going and going. Burdette won those three World Series games for us in ’57, and he had been acquired for Johnny Sain by a great scout, Johnny Moore.

That’s when I learned to really have the utmost respect for scouts. Johnny Moore had signed Eddie Mathews and Del Crandall, and when they were trading John Sain to the Yankees, New York wanted to give the Braves another pitcher. Johnny Moore says, ‘Please try to get Lou Burdette,’ and Burdette went on to win more than 200 games plus those three in the World Series. So it’s your scouts and your player development people. Oh, and what a shortstop we had too. I always wanted the ball hit to **Johnny Logan** with the game on the line, because you knew he’d make the play. He was an underrated player, because he played it the way it should be played. With guys like Aaron and Mathews he was a bit overlooked, but in Milwaukee he was appreciated – and continues to have the Milwaukee Braves reunion. It was through him that we had that great ’57 reunion last month, and John, we can’t thank you enough.

I have to thank **Tom Ferguson** and **Mort Bloomberg**. I have a sneaking suspicion that they might have campaigned for me to be standing here today, but I thank everybody connected with the Braves and the historical association. It’s a real honor for me to be standing here today and enjoying this with relatives – nieces, nephews, grand nephews, dear friends. I look at my best friend there, Bob Brown. We played on several teams with and against each other. He was a fine shortstop and I was a mediocre second baseman. He was Johnny Pesky and I was Bobby Doerr. Every time I see Bobby at Cooperstown he tells everybody, ‘Roland tried to get my job,’ because in my high school graduation program it said, ‘Bobby Doerr beware. Roland is graduating.’ I just tell him, ‘Bobby, you had no concerns whatsoever.’

A lot of great thoughts come about, and you realize all of the people who have helped you to learn the game each passing day – and I’m still learning. You think of people like Jeff Jones, the old Braves scout. Or Doc Gautreau and Hal Goodnow, people you remember from New England. John Quinn. Donald Davidson, who was a favorite of mine and my roommate in Milwaukee for quite a while, until I traded him for Tommie Ferguson. Then I traded Ferguson to move in with a family that had seven children, so I could live a sane life.”

At second base, Roy Hartsfield

Each year’s dinner features the return of at least one ballplayer to Boston after a long time away. This time around that player was Hartsfield, a second baseman with the Braves from 1950-52 who made his first trip outside Georgia in decades to be there. A solid .273 hitter with the Tribe, the Georgia-born Hartsfield was every bit the southern gentleman as he spoke of the sad circumstances that helped lead to his departure from the club, and how he carved out a second career in the game that would eventually include a long coaching stint with the Dodgers and three years as the first manager in Toronto Blue Jays history from 1977-79.

“I loved it when I was here 55 years ago. I’m just sorry I didn’t get a chance to stay a little bit longer,” he told the crowd. “That’s the way the cookie crumbles, as they say. But the

Braves were nice to me. I still get a few bubble gum cards occasionally, and they usually enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope along with the card. A lot of them ask me in their little notes they send, 'Why didn't you play longer on the major-league level? Your stats weren't that bad.' And being the egotistical fellow I am, I agree with them!

You may not know this, but the Braves did everything they could to help me. I had great treatment from Mr. Quinn and everyone connected to the Braves. But prior to coming to the major leagues I had a severe case of heat prostration down in Savannah, Georgia playing a doubleheader one Sunday afternoon, and I wasn't smart enough to realize what was happening to me. I had quit perspiring about two innings before, and I knew something was wrong – I just didn't know what it was. We only had one extra man in those days, so I said to myself, 'Well, there are two men out in the inning. As soon as the inning is over I'll tell the manager and this guy who has been sitting in the shade all day can come out and pick me up for two innings.' Well, the next hitter puts the ball in the hole over between the shortstop and third baseman. Our shortstop goes over to backhand the ball, and he just does a big tumble. He had the same thing as I had, so here comes the extra man to take *his* place. Now I had to play those extra two innings.

On the way back home to Charleston, we stopped to get a bite to eat. To my sorrow, the cramps started in on me in the back of my legs and went up in my thighs and my back and my chest. When you get a cramp and you try to move your body to get rid of that one, you get one somewhere else. That was the predicament I was in. They got me to a hospital, and the doctor told my wife when he first saw me come in the door, 'This guy either has heat prostration or sunstroke. If it's sunstroke, he's a dead man.' That's what he said.

Anyway, they hydrated me, and the doctor said, 'You'll never be the same anymore in the heat.' To make a long story short along that line, Doc Lacks and I spent eight hours after a lot of Sunday afternoon doubleheaders in the clubhouse, me lying flat down on the training table, because if I moved a muscle I'd get another cramp. It got to the point where I couldn't play doubleheaders. I'd have to leave around the fourth inning. So I'd play as long as I could, and then I'd walk off the field – knowing I was losing a job. They didn't pay two salaries for one job in those days. They may now, but not then. Naturally, I didn't want to lose a job, but it eventually caught up with me.

In the winter of 1952, I was notified by Mr. Quinn that the Braves had traded me to the Dodgers [on 1/17/53, along with \$50,000, for Andy Pafko]. I thought, 'That's the worst thing that can ever happen to a guy!' I hated it, because the Dodgers had always beaten us. And I felt like I was a pretty good competitor, but when I reported to Dodgertown for spring training in 1953, there were 800 ballplayers in camp. All of them were pros, and there weren't too many jobs available. But by that time the word was out around the league that I had a heat problem and couldn't play in doubleheaders. So I was finished as a player on the major league level. I told my wife, 'If we're going to stay in this game, we're going to have to go down another avenue.'

Second chance with Brooklyn

I was fortunate. I played in their [Dodgers] farm system for five years. They were all losing clubs at the time, clubs folding up. Fresco Thompson, who was their vice president in charge of the minor leagues, came to me one spring training and said, 'Roy, I've got a minor league managerial job open if you'd be interested in it.' I said, 'Sure, I would be.' It was with Des Moines in the old Western League, Class A ball. I went out as a playing manager, and at the end of the year he said, 'I can't promise you anything for next year, because we're losing clubs every year.' I said, 'Well, Fresco, you don't owe me anything. I appreciate you getting me this job.'

So I went home at the end of the year, and not only did my team fold up, but the whole league folded up. I was sitting at my table having dinner with my family around 4 p.m. one day in November, and the phone rings. It's Fresco, and he says, 'Roy, I want to tell you this, and if you want to leave us you can. The only opening I have is in D Ball. I know that's not as prestigious as managing in A Ball, but if you stay with us, I think I can get you more money.' I said, 'Well, Fresco, I have yet to go to the grocery store and buy any food with prestige, so that's fine by me.'

I feel that was the best thing that happened to me in baseball, other than coming to the big leagues initially with the Braves. Fresco Thompson and the Dodgers treated me very well. I worked for them for 20 years; I managed 11 years in their minor league system, and they lived up to everything you could expect them to do. All in all, the 44 years I spent in baseball I consider some of the best of my life. I started right out of high school, at age 17, playing pro ball, and I stayed 44 years until I retired.

I've been retired for 21 years, and I play golf with about 40 or 50 old-timers; we play on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and they call us the creepy crawlers. We're aptly named, I assure you of that! But I love the game of golf; in fact, I had a hole-in-one about a month ago. That was my second one; they only came about 50 years apart. The first one, I was playing with Red Adams, the pitching coach of the Dodgers, Monty Basgall, one of their scouts, and Duke Snider. That was at spring training in Vero Beach, at the Vero Beach Country Club. You know, when you have a hole-in-one, you're supposed to buy the drinks. Well, I didn't have two nickels to run together; I couldn't buy drinks for anybody. Duke never let me forget it.

Taking flight

I'll tell you a few things about me you didn't know, or might not care about. I lost my wife three years ago; we had three daughters, all of whom now live within an hour's drive of my home. They look after old dad pretty good. I didn't travel any from the time I retired until this trip to Boston. My middle daughter is an avid golfer, and she's been to Scotland a couple times to play. She's wanted me to go back with her to Ireland and Scotland and play some golf with her. I told her, 'Well, if you figure out a way for me to get there without flying, and I will.' But now I know as soon as I get back home, my next trip will be to Scotland.

It's been a good life for me. Baseball has been great. I've met a lot of great people, many of whom are in here right now. Roland Hemond, my buddy Tommie Ferguson, who was batboy when I was here. Johnny Logan, one of my teammates. I had a lot of fun playing with

John. He kept you laughing, and he was a heck of a ballplayer too. I just can't thank you enough. I thought I was through traveling, because I've seen everyplace I want to see. But when they asked me to come, I thought, 'Why not? That would be nice.' I want to thank all of you once again. You've all been wonderful, and it's been great to be back in Boston. I hope I get the chance to come back again, since I've lost my fear of flying." [Hartsfield also had the crowd in stitches with his jokes, found later in this issue.]

Logan gets his spaghetti

Quick to praise Hartsfield for his address and his playing ability was his old double-play partner **Johnny Logan**, shortstop with the Braves from 1951-61 and a regular BBHA attendee. "Roy Hartsfield, you're outstanding," Logan stated during his time at the dais. "You were my first second baseman. I was surprised you really didn't get the opportunity with the Boston Braves. Logan and Hartsfield were pretty good."

In addition to mentioning other ballplayers on hand, Logan remembered his big-league roommate **Sibby Sisti**, the "Super Sub" of the Braves from 1939-54 and a BBHA Hall of Famer who died on April 24, 2006. At last year's banquet, Logan had implored to host George Altison that spaghetti be included on the 2007 menu to honor his old friend's Italian heritage. "And what do you think I had today?," Logan shouted out with his trademark enthusiasm, "I didn't have chicken or fish, I had spaghetti! And George, it was delicious! Even Tommie Ferguson had some. George, we love your chicken and fish, but it's just not our diet."

Logan also spoke proudly of his work as head of the Milwaukee Braves Historical Association, which on August 30 celebrated the 50th anniversary of the 1957 World Series champions that but for one more year's patience, could have been in Boston. "I brought in 16 ballplayers who are above the ground," he stated. "Don't laugh! I know the other guys like Spahn, Burdette, Adcock, Buhl, Bob Hazle, and the rest, were at our party. The guys I invited and really were there included our No. 1 man, Hank Aaron. Believe me, when he accepted our invitation to be at our 50th anniversary... I'd start calling the ballplayers, and first thing they said was, 'Logan, who's coming?' I'd say 'Henry Aaron is coming,' and they'd say, 'Oh, then I'm coming too!' Gene Conley came, Wes Covington came, Del Crandall came, Ernie Johnson came, Andy Pafko, Felix Mantilla, Red Schoendienst... and what a beautiful banquet we had."

Also at short, Alvin Dark

Another Braves championship club – the 1948 NL pennant-winners – was represented in the playing ranks by **Al Dark**, who hit .325 as a rookie shortstop that year and was back for his third BBHA reunion. "It's a great honor for me to be here," he said. "I appreciate it, and every time I'm invited I come back. I think the reason is that when you have success with the first ballclub on which you played, it's a little deeper feeling for that particular person. When I played for the Giants, we were in three World Series, so I had more success there; but I really enjoyed being here in Boston. It's a great honor, and it tickles me to death that all of you guys my age come up and tell me all of the good things I did, and none of the bad. I really appreciate it. I'm

glad that when we get to be our age, we have short memories."

Walpole Joe is right again

No reunion would be complete without an appearance by **Joe Morgan**, the folksy Walpole native and former Braves farmhand who reached cult status in New England for managing the Red Sox to AL East titles in 1988 and '90. In addition to serving as co-master of ceremonies with this correspondent, Morgan offered some of his usual astute assessments on the Bosox season just past. He praised Terry Francona for "doing a better job of managing each year," sung the praises of rookie Dustin Pedroia and Jacoby Ellsbury, and stated that fellow freshman Daisuke Matsuzaka needs to "work on finishing hitters off to become a big winner."

And as he did last year in stating that pitcher Josh Beckett would rebound from an up-and-down first season in Boston to emerge as a true ace in 2007, Morgan offered up a prediction that would soon come true: "I'd say the winner of the Cleveland-Red Sox series is going to win the World Series." This was an especially bold forecast considering that neither the Red Sox nor Indians had even yet gotten past their first-round opponents (the Sox were in the midst of finishing their sweep of the Angels that afternoon, while the Indians would dispatch of the Yankees the next day). Not only that, but he had Diamondbacks exec Hemond in the audience listening. But Joe has never been afraid to speak his word, and he was right again.

Morgan also got in a few jokes at his own expense. In rattling off some trivia items, he mentioned that he holds a big-league record himself for "playing for the most teams – five – while getting into the fewest games – 88. Now that's hard to do, right?" He even had a retort to Hartsfield's hole-in-one story: "I play a lot of golf too, Roy. When a guy asks me, 'Did you ever get a hole in one?'" I say "No, I never try for one."

Others on hand – and in our thoughts

As usual there were plenty of other ballplayers, personnel, and dignitaries among the crowd. **Art Johnson**, the Winchester native who was the best left-hander on the "Bees" before the arrival of Warren Spahn in 1942, was back to keep his near-perfect BBHA attendance mark alive. Another local-boy-made-good on hand was **Norm Roy**, who came out of Waltham to pitch for the 1950 Braves and delighted in meeting up with old carpool-mate Hartsfield. The "other" team in Boston was represented as well, by All-Star Red Sox pitcher **Bill Monbouquette** – a former Braves Knot Hole Gang member growing up in Medford who pitched for the Crimson Hose from 1959-66.

Two more of the 1948 NL champs who did their part for the club off the field were back, batboys **Tommie Ferguson** and **Charlie Chronopoulos**. Both rose from their humble beginnings to carve out careers in the game – Chronopoulos as a minor leaguer with the Braves, and "Fergie" as a traveling secretary with the Brewers and a longtime scout with the Phillies. Like Hemond, Ferguson spent more than a half century in pro baseball. "Charlie the Greek's" career in the game was much shorter, but he found other satisfying work as the longtime police chief of Tyngsboro, MA.

Father Gerald Beirne of Rhode Island, recently retired from his parish but still on hand as a Braves trivia master, offered his traditional benediction and roll call of Braves players who had passed away since the previous year's get-together. On the sad list were former BBHA honorees John Sain and Lou Burdette, as well as a man who had attended most if not all of the previous 15 dinners: **Ralph McLeod**. A true American hero whose career as a ballplayer, a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge, and a Quincy firefighter was recalled in the summer newsletter, McLeod was represented this year by his daughter, **Beverly St. Pierre**. Other "Braves family" members making their regular appearances were **Midge Landry**, the niece of 1940s Braves infielder "Skippy" Roberge; and **Adacie Allen**, the longtime season-ticket holder who for years cheered for the club alongside legendary rooter Lolly Hopkins as one of "Lolly's Girls."

Several other invitees could not make it back. Among these were reunion regular **Gene Conley**, the great two-sport star who pitched for the Red Sox and Braves and was a back-up center to Bill Russell on the Celtics. The first man to win world championships in two pro sports, the gentle giant is currently recovering from heart trouble, and we give him and his family our best. Our wishes also go out to **Steve Kuczek**, who had a double off Brooklyn's Don Newcombe in his lone major league at-bat (with the 1949 Braves) and hoped to make his first BBHA function this fall until family-related health problems interfered. Kuczek's perfect 1,000 average, incidentally, was compiled as a pinch-hitter for Connie Ryan after Connie had been ejected for coming to the on-deck circle wearing a raincoat during the September 29 game at Braves Field. Apparently his protest of the inclement weather didn't sit too well with umpire George Barr.

Mary hits a high note

One other ballplayer on hand was **Mary Pratt**, a North Quincy native who pitched with the Kenosha Comets and Rockford Peaches of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, immortalized in the movie "A League of Their Own." A 21-game winner in one season who later taught for nearly a half-century in Quincy and elsewhere, Pratt continues to be a strong advocate for women's sports. "Five years ago Ralph McLeod and his family invited me to come to these Boston Braves reunions," she told the crowd, who has seen her each fall since. "I feel so humbled that they would have invited me today, when we come here to honor Ralph. He and I were high school classmates – the class of 1935 for Ralph, and the Class of 1936 for me. Ralph was not only a good baseball player, he was a star in three sports – baseball, basketball, and football. If you go over and visit North Quincy High, you'll see in the front lobby a nice picture of Ralph."

I remember Wally Berger and Rabbit Maranville, and used to go to Braves Field, which is now the Case Center taken over by my alma mater [Boston University]. For all of us so interested in sports, I just say 'Hang in there.' Because sports is America. It just seems to tie us all together. I feel so humbled to think that you would invite me, and I wish all of you would come with me on the 23rd when we go out to Rockford for our next reunion. If I can get all of my teammates there, you'll hear us singing: *Oh, we hail from Rockford, Illinois, oh just across*

the line. We're not too young, we're not too old, in fact we're in our prime. Pratt went on to sing the entire theme song of the Peaches, with the audience clapping along and then bursting out in huge applause as she left the stage. Requests for a reunion tour next fall are already coming in.

Those to thank

The people who make this all possible each year are my fellow BBHA Committee members: Bob Brady (also editor of this newsletter), Mort Bloomberg (who brought Feller and Kiley along), **Jonathan Fine**, **Dave Goodwin**, and **Gary Mastas**. **Ralph Evans**, as mentioned earlier, was back to give his great tour of Braves Field, and his audience included Hartsfield – who visited the old park for the first time in 55 years. Talented artist **Mark Waitkus** provided another stellar painting for the front of the reunion program, this time of the late, great Johnny Sain. And last but certainly not least is BBHA business manager **George Altison**, who continues to serve as Association MVP every year by organizing the event over months and months of phone calls, letters, and other work. Thank you, George, for continuing to keep the spirit of the Braves alive.

Hardball Humor

In addition to stories from his own career, Roy Hartsfield offered the following hilarious tales of other big-leaguers:

"When I was managing at Toronto, Bobby Doerr – whom all of you know – was my hitting coach. I loved Bobby Doerr; if you don't like Bobby Doerr, there is something wrong with you. He's just a great guy. He and Williams had been teammates with the Red Sox. But if you were talking with Ted, if you weren't talking about hitting, you had a very, very short conversation. That's all Ted talked about. Bobby told me one story about a time they had gone out to eat, and then went back to the hotel. Now, Bobby is a .285 lifetime hitter [actually .288], and that will make you all kinds of millions today as a second baseman. But Ted said, 'I've been watching you, Bobby, and I think you're a little slow with your wrist action coming through the ball. I think if you speeded that up a little bit, you'll have more success.' Bobby said, 'Well thanks, Ted, but I think I'm doing OK.' Well, Ted got all upset by this, and he said, 'OK, fine. If that's the way you feel about it, be a lousy .285 hitter for the rest of your life!'"

Everybody talks about dear old Yogi [Berra]. He's a good friend of mine; I've known him for a long, long time. But one time when he was catching for the Yankees, they gave him a testimonial dinner at Toots Shor's. Among the gifts that they gave him was a big, tall grandfather clock, taller than Yogi. Well, after the party was over, in the wee hours of the morning, Yogi has this big grandfather clock over his shoulder as they walked out of the place. While they're standing there outside, saying goodbye, a drunk staggers up the sidewalk. He runs into Yogi's clock, and Yogi spins around. He manages to hang on to his clock, looks at the drunk, and says, 'Hey, why don't you watch where you're going?' And the drunk looks back at Yogi and says, 'Well, why don't you wear a wristwatch like everybody else!'"

There are a million stories about Casey Stengel. He had a left-handed pitcher named Tommy Byrne, who did a great job for him. He

relied on Tommy quite a bit. This one night, Casey is going to make a pitching change. Usually when a manager leaves the dugout and walks across the foul line, he points to whichever arm pitcher he wants to bring in [a righty or lefty]. Well, this time he gets to the mound and takes the ball from the other pitcher, and he and Yogi are standing there waiting for the reliever to arrive from the bullpen. When he gets there, it's the right-hander. Casey says to the umpire, 'I didn't want the right-hander, I wanted the lefty.' The umpire says, 'Yeah, but Casey, you pointed to your right arm.' Casey looks over at Yogi and he says, 'Yogi, which arm did I point to?' Yogi says, 'Skip, you pointed to the right arm,' and Casey glares back and says, 'Who in the hell are you working for, anyway?!'

So the next night, it's the same situation. He's got Byrne out in the bullpen, along with a right-hander. Along about the eighth inning, he's got to make another pitching change. So he goes out and takes the ball away from the pitcher, gently lays it down on the pitching rubber, and starts walking to the dugout. The umpire says, 'Hey Casey, wait a minute. Which one of these pitchers do you want?' And Casey says, 'You made the decision last night, you make it again!'

OK, I know my time is short. I'll tell you one more and get out of your hair. This involves Ted Williams. He was a great hitter; it was always a pleasure to watch this guy hit the ball. Dizzy Trout was pitching for Detroit here at Fenway Park. Most pitchers felt like if they just got Ted Williams out, they had accomplished something – let alone strike him out. Well, that little cat-and-mouse game between pitcher and hitter that goes on every time someone steps to the plate started between Ted and Dizzy. Detroit had a couple-run lead at the time. Trout misses with a few pitches, then Ted fouls a few off, and then he misses with another one. Now the count is three-and-two, and Dizzy has a brainstorm. He says, 'I've got him right where I want him. I've got him set up for this pitch, and I'm going to get him.' And he did – he threw it in there and got a called strike three.

Well, Ted didn't like anybody to get him out, let alone strike him out. He was a fierce competitor. So a month and a half later, the Red Sox are in old Briggs Stadium, and Diz is pitching for Detroit again. A similar situation arises, and here Ted is at the plate. The same thing happens; he fouls off one or two, Diz misses with a couple pitches, and he runs the count to three-and-two again. Then, suddenly, Dizzy has a brainstorm: 'I got him in Fenway, and I'm going to get him again today.' So he threw that same pitch, and Ted hit it over the double-tiered stands in right field, over the street, and on top of a building across the street. As Ted goes trotting around first base, he hollers at Trout, 'Hey, Dizzy, if you can find that one I'll autograph it too.'

Congratulations

Once again our reunion raffle featured a number of attractive items. Thanks to all who participated. The set of four Boston Braves-related books was won by **Jean Walker** of Woodsville, NH. The commemorative reunion autographed bat went to **Bruce Fay** of Needham, MA. **Alex Rennie** of Falmouth, MA took home a Johnny Sain autographed baseball. Making his first trip to Boston, **Father John Terry** of Wilkes Barre, PA claimed the autographed print

of Braves Field. We also acknowledge the generosity of those who contributed the items to our raffle.

The Joyner Collection

This issue contains two more masterpieces by artist **Ronnie Joyner**. Inserted are wonderful portraits of Danny Litwhiler and Tommy Holmes. We were graced by the presence of both athletes during our past reunions. Ronnie has captured both in an excellent tribute to these Boston Braves flycatchers.

The Quebec Connection

The presence of former Quebec Provincial League hurler **Ray Lague** and BBHA member **Daniel Papillon** of Quebec City, Quebec at the reunion reminds us of a connection that the Braves had with that Canadian province. During its final years in Boston, the Tribe maintained a working affiliation with the Class C Quebec Braves of the Provincial League. At one time, the Quebec Provincial League served as a haven for former jumpers to the Pasquel brothers' ill-fated Mexican League as well as for African Americans seeking to play in a less racially charged atmosphere than found in parts of the United States.

1945 Braves manager **Del Bissonette** piloted Quebec in 1939-40. Sibby Sisti made his managerial debut there in 1955. The second African American to play for the Braves, Jimmy "Bus" Clarkson (1952) batted a mighty .401 with 29 homers for the St. Jean club in 1948.

One of the league's most legendary characters was **Roland Gladu**. Breaking into organized baseball in 1932, the Montreal native met with limited success until landing with the Quebec team in the late 1930s where he consistently batted over .300. Gladu, originally an outfielder, eventually shifted to first base until forced to third to accommodate player-manager Bissonette. That change would prove fortuitous for him in 1944. Struggling with the WWII player shortage, the Braves were in need of a third baseman and signed Gladu upon the recommendation of Bissonette. Gladu had led the Canadian-American League in batting (.347) the previous year. In order to make him even more attractive to the Tribe, Bissonette advised Gladu to shave a couple of years off of his age.

Based on a strong spring training performance, Gladu made it on to the Braves roster. Opening the season on April 18 in the starting line-up, he cracked a triple in his major league debut off of the Giants' Bill Voiselle and scored the only run in a 2-1 defeat. Gladu was called upon to pitch batting practices because of the team's shortage of hurlers. In that role, he incurred an arm injury that took him out of the line-up and out of the majors forever after only 21 games. Sent down to the Hartford Bees, Gladu responded with a robust .372 batting average, second only in the Eastern League to Albany's Rip Collins' .396. He also drove in 102 runs.

Gladu's performance attracted the attention of his hometown Royals who lured him back over the border for 1945. Once again, he finished second in the league in batting (at .338) and passed the century mark in RBI (105). Faced with a glut of infielders in 1946 – including Cookie Lavagetto, Augie Galan and

Jackie Robinson – the Dodgers affiliate cut Gladu and, as a result, he crossed two borders to play.

Gladu signed on with the outlaw Mexican League and for two seasons hit .322. When the league folded, he joined several of its refugees who headed to the Provincial League. Gladu retained his batting eye and hit solidly above the .300 mark from 1948-51 with Sherbrooke as its playing manager. When Sherbrooke's stadium burned to the ground, canceling its 1952 season, Gladu became a scout, first with the Indians and later for the Braves (1953-63). He remained close to Del Bissonette and was instrumental in Boston's purchase of Provincial League stars **Humberto Robinson**, **Carlton Willey** and **Ed Charles**. He also signed Quebecois future major leaguer pitchers **Georges Miranda**, Ron Piché and Claude Raymond. Ontarian pitcher Ken McKenzie was also one of his finds.

After leaving baseball, Gladu was active in youth sports programs in the Montreal area through the 1990s. He died at age 83 in 1994.

Bing and the Braves

The disintegration of the Fuchs regime after the Babe Ruth fiasco in 1935 led to the control of the Braves being shifted to **Charles Francis Adams**. Adams had invested in the club over the years but had taken a back seat to the Judge. Unfortunately, Adams' other sports passion was horse racing and his ownership of the profitable Suffolk Downs track did not sit well with Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis. Pressured by Landis and tired of his investment in a perpetual second division money-losing team, Adams actively sought out potential purchasers.

The tournament director of the Professional Golfers Association, Fred Corcoran, was a Braves fan and over the course of his business travels, met and became friendly with **Bing Crosby**. While the two were in New York on one occasion, they took in a Braves-Giants game at the Polo Grounds. The Tribe performed well and defeated the home team. In jest, Corcoran remarked to Crosby that he could do worse than getting into baseball by buying the Braves. To his surprise, the crooner indicated an interest if someone would partner with him in the acquisition.

Corcoran approach another of his close friends, Elmer Ward of Newton, MA, a wealthy clothing magnate. Over a round of golf, Ward and Crosby agreed to negotiate the sale of the Braves with Adams. In a meeting at Ward's home, Crosby, Ward and Adams decided on a price and shook hands on the deal. The only remaining hurdle was the commissioner's approval.

Adams traveled to Chicago to personally plead his case before Landis. The "fly in the ointment" was Crosby's ownership of a small race track that was patronized by the Hollywood movie crowd. Adams cited Crosby's spotless reputation, the color and prestige that his co-ownership would bring to the National Pastime and, most importantly, the fact that the prospective owners would pull the Braves out of the red and restore them to a competitive team.

Having dealt with the Black Sox scandal previously, Landis would have none of it. "Why Mr. Adams, if I sanctioned that sale, I

merely would be trading Suffolk Downs for Bay Meadows." Bill Cunningham of the old *Boston Post* broke the story via a leak from Corcoran. Landis publicly denied the story and Crosby, Ward and Adams refused to comment.

After the Three Steam Shovels bought the Braves, Landis was interviewed by Tom Swope in *The Sporting News*. The Judge related the reaction he received as the result of the Cunningham piece. "And so I began getting letters, stacks of letters, raising the very devil with me for refusing to let that sterling character, Bing Crosby, buy a baseball team. Many of them very insulting. To each letter I sent exactly the same reply. I thanked each and every letter writer. I told each one, 'I thank you for your great interest in our National Game of Baseball.'"

Landis finished the interview with an "I told you so" retort. "And then, one day came an exposure of a jockey ring at Bay Meadows race track. Jockeys confessed they had been manipulating races in the interests of their betting or for bribes. I am certain that Mr. Crosby had nothing to do with this, but it happened at his race track. And shortly after the exposure of the jockey ring at Bay Meadows, the letters about my having refused to let Mr. Crosby buy a ball club stopped coming."

Crosby severed his ties with the track and became a part owner of the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1946 in a syndicate headed by Indianapolis banker, Frank McKinney and Columbus realtor, John Galbreath.

Crosby's partnership in the Pirates set in motion events that helped the Braves capture the 1948 National League pennant. Fellow Pirates investor McKinney held an interest in the Braves and was the majority owner of their class AAA Indianapolis affiliate. In severing their ties, a dispute arose as to the rights to certain of latter's players. Winning a coin toss, the Braves received the first selection from the pool of minor leaguers. They wisely chose **Vern Bickford**. McKinney also approached the Braves, seeking Billy Herman to manage the Buc's. A multi-player deal was constructed, delivering "Mr. Team," **Bob Elliott** to the Wigwam.

What Might Have Been

The Milwaukee Braves 50th Anniversary Celebration of the 1957 World Series Champions on August 30 reminds us of what might have been ours had the Tribe been able to hang on a little longer in Boston. Led by **Johnny Logan**, a cornerstone to both the BBHA and Milwaukee Braves Historical Association, a sold-out, first class tribute took place at the Potawatomi Bingo Casino's Northern Lights Theater in Milwaukee.

Surviving former Braves returned to Milwaukee to commemorate Sudsville's Glory Days. In addition to Johnny, a number of ex-Boston Braves Family Members were part of this special event. This entourage included Felix Mantilla, Gene Conley, Del Crandall, Hank Aaron, Ray Crone, Ernie Johnson, Andy Pafko, Chuck Tanner, Frank Torre and Carlton Willey. Others linked to the '57 Champs in the Family but who had passed away included Warren Spahn, Lou Burdette, Joe Adcock, Eddie Mathews, Phil Paine, Duffy Lewis, Bob Keely, Connie Ryan, Bob Buhl, Don McMahon, Billy Bruton, Bob Trowbridge, Harry Hanebrink and Dave Jolly. David Perini represented his family

and enjoyed a mini-front office reunion with the Quinns. Perini revealed that he was in the Braves' locker room shortly after the World Series clincher. As a member of the Holy Cross football team, he was in town to play Marquette. Perini even got to use Hank Aaron's locker to store his equipment.

An official documentary film was produced by the MBHA with a scheduled release date of December 1. Entitled "Milwaukee Braves: The Golden Legacy," the DVD captures the celebratory banquet including interviews and images from the 1957 season. Copies may be ordered by visiting the MBHA's website: www.milwaukeebraveshistoricalassociation.com. Price per DVD is \$19.95.

Members Memories

In our last issue, we asked the membership to share with us their reminiscences of times at Braves Field. We received some great stories that we'd like to share with you.

Bob Barry of Bayonet Point, FL was fortunate as a lad to have a father, Paul Barry, who worked at the Wigwam as assistant concessions director to Bill Driver, Joe Cairnes and finally, Earl Yerxa. As a nine-year-old, Bob managed to attend some fifty games at Braves Field, taking the subway from his Newton home and entering through the Press Gate, courtesy of an arrangement made by his dad. His early access to the ballpark enabled him to take in batting practice and scoop up errant balls hit into the stands. Bob recalls at one time having over 100 of the spheroids, much to the envy of his friends.

Assisting his father from time to time, Bob would take sandwiches before the game from the concessions stand to the Umpires' Room, located in the alley just beyond third base. The grateful umps would often throw him a shiny new baseball for his efforts. Bob's favorite was future Hall of Famer, Al Barlick. Bob occasionally found his way into the Braves clubhouse and, while adhering to clubhouse manager Shorty Young's instructions to stay out of the way, obtained many autographs.

Sometime in 1948, Bob and his dad were invited to John Quinn's home in Newton. There, he was awestruck by the large Boston Braves Indian Head logo inlaid in the middle of the kitchen floor. As the years passed, Bob became friends with Jackie Quinn and his sister, Margo. At one time Bob, Jackie and Corky Cronin (Joe's son) played baseball together. Margo would later become Mrs. Roland Hemond.

One lasting and memorable moment from the 1948 season remains most vivid in Bob's mind. "On a warm August night, the public address announcer asked those in attendance to stand for a moment of silence at the passing of Babe Ruth. The crowd was so respectful, you could hear a pin drop."

Bob's father followed the Tribe to Milwaukee in 1953, helping Earl Yerxa set up the concessions at County Stadium. After school let out, Bob spent the summer in Milwaukee and got to shag balls during batting practice.

Bob Coan of Acton, MA was a proud member of the Knot Hole Gang in the early '50s that inhabited seats in the left field pavilion. His neighbor, a postman on the night shift, took his

sons, as well as Bob and his brother to several games a year.

Bob's memories include his neighbor's "oderific" cigars, "meager crowds, fried clams, a band of musicians that roamed the grandstand, the way Marv Rickert wiggled his hips while digging in at the plate and the high leg kick of [his] hero, Warren Spahn."

Etched into Bob's memory is a late September game at the Wigwam where the Braves defeated Brooklyn on a controversial call. He observed several Dodgers, led by Roy Campanella, kicking at the Umpires' Room door after the game.

Thanks, gentlemen for sharing these wonderful times with us. Hope these stories stimulate other members to jot down some tales and send them along!

Going, Going, Gone!

For those of us not lucky enough to have a relative that played major league baseball, it always surprises and disappoints us when such a fortunate family disposes of their heritage of baseball treasures, depriving future generations of this link to the National Pastime. Once again, we've seen it occur. The 50-year baseball collection of Hall of Fame manager **Bill McKechnie** was sold off during the fourth annual Louisville Slugger Museum and Factory Auction on November 10.

While "Deacon Bill" won four Senior Circuit pennants (with the Pirates, Cardinals and Reds) and two World Championships (1925 and 1940), perhaps his greatest accomplishment was leading the ragtag, perennially cellar-dwelling Braves to a semblance of respectability. McKechnie directed the Tribe from 1930-37. It was a homecoming of sorts as he had played for the Braves in 1913, appearing in a single game. He led the team to first division finishes in 1933-34, their last times at that lofty elevation until the beginnings of the era of the Three Little Steam Shovels in 1946. McKechnie was regarded as an astute developer of pitching talent and was credited with the emergence of two aging minor league hurlers, Lou Fette and Jim Turner, into big league twenty-game winners. In leading the then named Bees to a fifth place finish in 1937, the Deacon received *The Sporting News* Manager of the Year Award. He left Boston to skipper the Reds for the next nine years.

In 1947, McKechnie was recruited by Bill Veeck and Lou Boudreau to jump to the American League and serve as the Indians' pitching and bench coach. Some say that McKechnie was the *de facto* manager of the club allowing the youthful playing manager to concentrate on on-the-field duties. His savvy was put to good use by the Clevelanders in their most recent successful World Championship campaign in 1948. Previously his and Billy Southworth's paths had crossed in St. Louis in 1929 when Billy the Kid got his first shot at big league managerial reins, swapping his minor league post at Rochester with Cards' manager McKechnie. Southworth lasted for ninety games before the "trade" was reversed.

McKechnie left the Indians after the 1949 season and finished his coaching career back in Boston, but this time with the Red Sox in 1952-53. He entered the Hall of Fame in 1962 along with Jackie Robinson, Edd Roush (a

former Reds teammate) and Bob Feller. He died at age 79 three years later.

Book Reports

Ellsworth Tenney "Babe" Dahlgren played just 44 of his 1,139 major league games as member of the Boston Braves. The Tribe purchased the first baseman from the Yankees on February 25, 1941 and sold him to the Cubs on June 15. Babe, nicknamed by his grandfather, had broken into the big leagues with the 1935 Boston Red Sox. Over the course of a twelve-season career with eight different ballclubs, he found his time in the spotlight with the 1939 New York Yankees. On May 2, Dahlgren replaced an ailing Lou Gehrig at first base, ending the Iron Horse's consecutive playing streak at 2,130 games.

Dahlgren's grandson, Matt, has penned a book, *Rumor in Town: A Grandson's Promise To Right A Wrong*, as a tribute to his grandfather and to set the record straight. Matt had big league dreams and played high school and college ball, donning the "tools of ignorance." He signed with the West Virginia Coal Sox of the Frontier League in 1993 but his career came to an abrupt halt when the team went bankrupt.

Babe Dahlgren was the subject of vicious and unfounded rumors of drug abuse that plagued him to his death in 1996. Taking a nearly completed manuscript that his grandfather had worked on before he passed away, Matt Dahlgren weaves a tale of a rich career that crossed the paths of many of baseball's immortals yet was tainted by rumors of marijuana use falsely started by "Marse Joe" McCarthy and ignorantly sustained by Branch Rickey.

Dahlgren's tale is especially poignant as investigations continue into current day players' alleged abuses of controlled substances. Babe Dahlgren was the first major league baseball player to be tested for drugs, which he undertook voluntarily to clear his name. Despite negative reports from several tests, those in authority, including Judge Landis, failed to intercede and punish those who continued to place Dahlgren under an unjust cloud of suspicion.

Matt Dahlgren reports that while his grandfather's stay with the Braves was short, he does include stories involving Casey Stengel, Max West, Babe Ruth and Paul Waner. There are two photos in the book with Babe as a Brave – one with Jimmie Foxx and the other looking on with Jim Tobin while Casey argues a balk call.

To learn more about this book and/or to make a purchase, visit www.rumorintown.com. Matt Dahlgren may be reached at mdahg@aol.com.

Another new book will take you back to the early days of the Braves franchise. Author Bill Felber has written *A Game of Brawl: The Orioles, the Beaneaters, and the Battle for the 1897 Pennant*. One might argue that this story is the Braves' counterpart of the Red Sox-Yankees rivalry. In fact, Felber has one chapter dedicated to "Baseball's Original Evil Empire." The Orioles of that era were regarded as one of the dirtiest and most hated teams in baseball. Future Hall of Famers John McGraw, Wee Willie Keeler and Ned Halon were members of that squad.

"America's team," the Boston Beaneaters, were managed by Frank Selee and

captained by Hugh Duffy. Other members of the club included Jimmy Collins, Chick Stahl, Bobby Lowe, Kid Nichols, Fred Tenney and Billy Hamilton. "Nuf Ced" McGreevy and his Royal Rooters were loyal followers of the ballclub.

The book culminates in a detailed review of the season's final three weeks and the final three game series between the two teams. Some thirty thousand fans attended the last and decisive game, witnessing the Beaneaters' defeat of baseball's first despised franchise.

Information on the 320 page hardcover book may be accessed on the University of Nebraska Press website (<http://nebraskapress.unl.edu>) or the author's website – www.billfelber.com.

Sittin' In The Jury Box

Our thanks go out to **Marvin Pave** of *The Boston Globe* and **Arnold Bailey** of *The Providence Journal* for their efforts at publicizing this year's reunion in the pages of their newspapers.

After his years as a Super Sub with the Braves ended, **Sibby Sisti** embarked upon a minor league managerial career. Twice during that career, a teammate from the 1948 NL Champs succeeded him at his former post. After piloting the Sacramento Solons in the Pacific Coast League to a sixth place finish in 1958, Sibby was replaced by Bob Elliott. Years later, after skipping the nascent Seattle Pilots' expansion Newark Co-Pilots in the New York-Penn. League, he yielded those managerial duties in 1969 to the "Second Earl of Snohomish," Earl Torgeson.

One of Sibby's biggest fans and a serious collector of his memorabilia is BBHA member **Jim Gebo**. In fact-checking Sibby Sisti's biography for the forthcoming book on the Braves/Red Sox 1948 season, your editor discovered that when Sibby managed the Jacksonville Braves in the South Atlantic League in 1959, one of his opponents, the Macon Dodgers, had a shortstop by the name of Mel Gebo. Mel Gebo batted .255 in 139 games.

Boston's Museum of Science has announced that it will be hosting "Baseball As America" from June 15 through September 1, 2008. This exhibition, produced by the National Baseball Hall of Fame has been traveling the country since 2002. The National Pastime is celebrated through the display of more than 500 artifacts from the Cooperstown museum's collection. There will be a special local case featuring items from Boston's baseball history. Among those treasures will be a 1948 Boston Braves sateen jersey, specially crafted for use under the Wigwam's lights. We hope that the exhibit will be fairly balanced between the town's American and National League entries. Perhaps we should start lobbying both museums now to make sure!

This year's Hall of Fame balloting by the Veterans Committee will involve managers, executives and umpires. The committee has gone three straight elections without enshrining anyone. The ballot for managers and umpires will be reviewed by a 16-member board that includes Hank Aaron, Earl Weaver, Jim Bunning, Tommy Lasorda and Bob Gibson. **Billy Southworth** is listed among the candidates as are two former Boston Braves infielders

turned skippers, **Danny Murtaugh** and **Gene Mauch**. The voting results are to be announced at the baseball winter meeting in Nashville on December 3.

The Red Sox recent announcement that one of the renovations taking place at Fenway Park this winter will be to install a fully equipped kitchen in the team's clubhouse reminded us of a conversation between former batboy **Tommie Ferguson** and **Mort Bloomberg**, one of the BBHA's founders. Tommie told Mort how equipment manager Shorty Young would head to the concession stands between games of a doubleheader to purchase ham and cheese sandwiches for the Braves players. The cost – thirty cents each. The days of clubhouse kitchens and bountiful catered postgame spreads were a long way off when Boston was the home of the Braves!

And speaking of food – Mort remembers that not only were the Braves the first team to sell fried clams to patrons but also the first to cease the practice. It seems that some fans complained that the aftereffects of the frying process diverted their attention from the ballgame. To replace this offering, the club added baked beans to the menu – which undoubtedly produced unwanted side effects as well!

Sox manager Terry Francona's eight wins in his first eight World Series games broke the previous record of four wins in a row held by a number of managers including **George Stallings**, who accomplished that feat in 1914 with the Miracle Braves.

A number of media folks portrayed this year's ALCS as Boston gaining revenge from Cleveland for the happenings of 1948. While the Red Sox might have paid back the Tribe for their playoff loss, the Braves did not need their American League rival's assistance to avenge the World Series defeat. That score was evened when the Atlanta version of the Tribe bested the Indians in six games in the 1995 Fall Classic. 1948 marked the only other time that Cleveland had a 3-1 advantage in postseason play. Unfortunately for Boston Braves fans, the 1948 Tribe was not as successful as the 2007 Bosox in staging a comeback.

Boston College's victorious football game against Clemson this past November 17th caused us to recall that the two had previously played four games at Braves Field between 1942-52. Clemson found the Wigwam to its liking, taking three out of four pigskin contests from the Eagles.

Last of the Ninth

Thanks to all who've dropped a line or otherwise contributed to this newsletter or to the Association. Among those deserving of recognition include **John Ahokas, Mike Keough, Hank Dever, John Delmore** and **Al Rocci**.

The BBHA extends its warmest holiday wishes to its members, their families and all in the Boston Braves Family.

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