



# the **Base Ball Player's Chronicle**

Jan 2008

Newsletter of the Vintage Base Ball Association

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## **BALTIMORE**

The 13th annual Vintage Base Ball Association convention was held January 18 through January 20 in the Eastern metropolis of Baltimore. The Maryland city and the host clubs, the Eclipse Base Ball Club of Elkton, Maryland, the Chesapeake and Potomac Base Ball Club of Baltimore, and the Fair Plays BBC of Easton, Maryland, welcomed fifty registrants and their guests, representing 21 vintage base ball organizations. The event represented the first visit by the annual meeting to the eastern seaboard.

### **MEET & GREET**

Conferees arriving on Friday the 18th were afforded the opportunity to register for the convention at the host hotel, the Holiday Inn, stroll the historic streets of the Inner Harbor area of the city, and attend the evening social at the hotel.

### **WELCOME AND WORKSHOPS**

Saturday morning and the first part of the afternoon were given over to welcomes from VBBA President Glenn Drinkwater of the Genesee Country Village, Mumford, New York, and Bruce Leith, operator of the host Eclipse BBC of Elkton, and to the presentation of 12 workshop offerings. All were well received and showed meticulous preparation on the part of the presenters. They generated much useful information and discussion.

### **A LITTLE FIELD EXERCISE**

Ample time was available after the conclusion of the presentations and before Saturday evening's festivities to allow a costume change for the All Clubs' Match Base Ball Game. No serious injuries resulting despite cold and sloppy conditions, the competition was declared a success, and all hands retired to change costume again and prepare for the evening. Many repaired to the nearby Baltimore Chop Book Store, one of the finest vendors of base ball books in the nation, where light refreshments and heavy conversation could be found, before descending on the Sport Legends Museum for the annual banquet, featuring keynote speaker Marty Payne. Held in historic Camden Station, in the Gentlemen's waiting Room which hosted in its long history most of the great figures in American base ball, attendees enjoyed both Mr. Payne's address on the spread of base ball in Maryland and, before sitting down, a tour of the museum, which holds many prized historical artifacts.

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The 2009 convention will take place in Cincinnati, Ohio, at a date to be announced.

## **SPOTLIGHT:**



### **MONTGOMERY COLLEGE SAW DOGS (CONROE, TX)**

Vintage base ball is increasing rapidly in

Texas, thanks in no small part to the organizer of one of the first clubs in the state, Michael Hickey of the Montgomery College Saw Dogs. Michael agreed to be "Spotlighted" for this issue of The Ball Player's Chronicle.

### **HOW DID THE CLUB START?**

The club basically started in 2003 as a one game experiment. I had just finished teaching a Leisure Learning class on the Beer and Whiskey League, and someone suggested that perhaps we should play a game of "old fashioned" baseball. After a few calls and emails to inquire about the rules, we decided to play the game using 1860 rules. Everyone enjoyed the game so much, that we decided to play more games on a regular basis.

### **DID ANY EXISTING CLUB OR CLUB OPERATOR HELP?**

Erik Miklich of the NY Mutuals was a huge asset when we started the program. He patiently answered all my questions, and also gave me some great advice.

### **HOW DID YOU FIND PLAYERS?**

When we began the program, most of our ballists either worked for Montgomery College or were friends of somebody associated with the college. However, presently over half of our team is made up of community members. Most of our players have come to us.

### **WHAT WAS THE TOUGHEST START-UP PROBLEM?**

The toughest hurdle we had to overcome was that there was only one other vintage team in the state of Texas when we started our program (the Buffalo Gap Chips in Abilene) and we did not even know about them. The program almost came to an end in 2005 when fewer and fewer individuals showed up for games. They simply got tired of playing games against the same individuals.

In 2006, we formed the Montgomery College Saw Dogs and we made a concentrated effort to take the game of vintage base ball to the public. That year, we scheduled games with the coaches of area little league associations, area historical societies, and other local organizations. This approach breathed new life into the program. In fact, this is a strategy that continues to well for us.

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'Dog' refers to equipment used in a saw mill.

## DOWN TO BUSINESS

Returning to the hotel on Sunday morning, many then opened their wallets as the Silent Auction conducted over the weekend reached its conclusion. Over \$600 was raised to defray the cost of the Convention. Thanks are owed to the bidders and to the VBBA clubs which generously donated items for sale.

Business began with a special session on the Constitution and Bylaws of the Association. Extensive proposed revisions of those documents were read, amended, and approved. Among the changes:

- 1) Provision for regularly scheduled meetings of the board.
- 2) Amendment to the Nominating Committee, which will consist of the president, a Trustee appointed by the president, and a member in good standing not currently serving on the executive board. The nominating Committee is to assemble a slate of candidates for office annually by November 15.
- 3) Provision for balloting prior to the convention by mail for the election of officers. Ballots are to be mailed by the Secretary with the annual dues notice in November and be returned by December 31.
- 4) Inclusion of a Communications Committee, to include the webmaster and the newsletter editor.
- 5) Removal from the bylaws of specific dues amounts, which will in future be set by the board. The deadline for payment of dues moves from November 30 to December 31.
- 6) Removal from the bylaws of the provision that the annual meeting shall be held in February.
- 7) Provision in the bylaws for a quarterly newsletter and for a VBBA website, under the direction of a webmaster and a newsletter editor, both positions to be appointed annually by the board. President Drinkwater then reviewed the further changes necessitated by the incorporation of the Association, a step which was completed on December 17, 2007.

The procuring of 501(c)(3) status, also in progress, is expected to be concluded in 2008. After being put in final form, the constitution and bylaws, retitled the Code of Regulations for incorporation purposes, will again be posted on the Association website. The agenda then proceeded to general business, which concluded with nominations for the executive board. The board consists of five officers-President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Historian, all elected annually, and six trustees serving staggered two-year terms, with three elected annually. As provided in the both the old constitution and the new Code of Regulations, the Nominating Committee had assembled a slate of candidates, finding one for each position. As none of the incumbents had reached the limit of three consecutive terms, all were eligible for re-election, and all agreed to serve again. The re-elected officers: Glenn Drinkwater (Genesee Country Village, Mumford, NY), President; Ed Shuman (Canal Fulton Mules, Canal Fulton, OH), Vice-President;



*Montgomery College Saw Dogs*

*(Spotlight) Continued from Page 1*

### WHAT'S THE HISTORY OF THE CLUB NAME?

Our team name represents the historical importance that lumber played in this particular region of Texas. A "dog" is a piece of equipment used in sawmills to keep lumber steady as it is being cut.

### WHY DO YOU PLAY YOUR PARTICULAR YEAR?

We use 1860 rules because we believe that they are the easiest to play by. As noted earlier, most of our exhibitions are played against teams that have never played the game. Thus, keeping the game simple, makes it more enjoyable for everybody.

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT?

Dr. Tom Butler, the President of Montgomery College, has been one of our team's biggest supporters. He has helped us our tremendously since the inception of the program. In fact, I have just found out that the Saw Dogs will be donning new uniforms for the upcoming season.

### WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THE SPORT?

While the historical aspect of vintage base ball is very important, the most enjoyable feature of base ball is the camaraderie it cultivates amongst its participants. I have been amazed at the friendships made and the advice offered (and sought) between this eclectic group of individuals.

### PROSPECTS FOR THIS SEASON?

The prospects for the 2008 season are outstanding. Through the efforts of many, the sport of vintage base ball continues to grow in Texas. We now have teams in Houston, Richmond, Farmers Branch, Abilene, and Irving. More importantly, the number is expected to increase in the future. This coupled with more exhibitions with local organizations means a few more games for the Saw Dogs. It looks like we are going to have to stock up on our sport drinks of choice-Mylanta and Ensure.

### GOALS FOR THE PROGRAM?

Our primary goals for 2008 are to improve our program and to grow the sport of vintage in the state. In addition, one of our primary objectives has always been to use the vintage base ball program to strengthen the ties that link Montgomery College to the community. This is significant because it not only educates the public about the evolution of the game, but it also provides us with an opportunity to showcase our campus.

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*Delagates & All-Clubs Match Participants from the 2008 Convention in Baltimore, MD*

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Eric Sjogren. (St. Croix BBC, Stillwater, MN), Secretary; Rich Arpi and Bob Tholkes, both of the Quicksteps BBC, Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN, Treasurer and Historian respectively; Ed Elmore (Atlantic BBC, Smithtown, NY), Drew Frady (Colorado VBBA Denver, CO), and Helen DeGeatano (Douglas Dutchers BBC, Douglas, MI) as trustees. Returned for the second year of their terms as trustees are Billy Pollifrone (Genesee Country Village), Scott Westgate (Rochester Grangers, Rochester Hills, MI), and Dave Brooks (1869 Cincinnati Red Stockings, Cincinnati, OH). These labors accomplished, the meeting adjourned, and a special meeting on the subject of historical accuracy convened. President Drinkwater described the work of the Rules and Customs Committee, which is engaged in the process of assembling a comprehensive guide on the subject, assisted by experts from the Society for American Baseball Research.

The Association wishes to commend the outstanding hospitality of the Maryland clubs as hosts of the conference. A remarkable job of organization was accomplished in a short period of time.

*- Robert Tholkes, Editor*

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*Glenn Drinkwater, President  
Billy Pollifrone, Webmaster  
Bob Tholkes, Editor*

*Send contributions and comments  
to the Communications Committee  
at [communicationscomm@vbba.org](mailto:communicationscomm@vbba.org)*

The first NABBP Convention was in 1857 with delegates of 16 clubs from the NYC area present.

## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING**

The meeting began with a special session on revision of the Constitution and Bylaws. Historian Bob Tholkes volunteered to take minutes in the absence of the secretary.

Call to order- President Glenn Drinkwater, 9:40 a.m.

Club delegates present:

R. Arpi, B. Tholkes

*(Quicksteps BBC, Columbia Heights, MN)*

B. Leith, T. Duffy

*(Eclipse BBC, Elton, MD)*

C. Burton

*(Clodbusters BBC, Dayton, OH)*

E. Elmore, F. Obidienza

*(Atlantic BBC, Smithtown, NY)*

J. Turner, R. D'Ambrisi

*(Chesapeake & Potomac BBC, Baltimore, MD)*

M. Dickson

*(Lah-de-dahs BBC, Dearborn, MI)*

B. Dieckmann

*(1869 Cincinnati Red Stockings, Cincinnati, OH)*

L. Phillips

*(Buckeyes BBC, Cincinnati, OH)*

B.Hansen, G. Uminowicz

*(Fair Plays BBC, Easton, MD)*

J. Kimnach

*(Ohio Village Muffins, Columbus, OH)*

- E. Miklich, S.Sullivan  
(*New York Mutuals BBC, Bethpage, NY*)
- D. Otlewski, S. Westgate  
(*Rochester Grangers, Rochester Hills, MI*)
- B. Plott  
(*Sycamore Grasshoppers BBC, Wharton, OH*)
- P. Salamone  
(*Elizabeth AC, Elizabeth, NJ*)
- K. Schlapp  
(*New York Gothams BBC, New York, NY*)
- B. Shaw  
(*Neshanock BBC, Flemington, NJ*)
- E. Shuman  
(*Canal Fulton Mules, Canal Fulton, OH*)
- H. Bailey  
(*Brooklyn Stars BBC, Brooklyn, NY*)
- R. Shaw  
(*Newtown Sandy Hooks BBC, Newtown, CT*)
- G. Drinkwater  
(*Genesee Country Village, Mumford, NY*)

Bob Tholkes reviewed the revisions to the Constitution and Bylaws proposed by the Quicksteps BBC. The revisions were accepted by a show of hands, moved Chesapeake & Potomac BBC, seconded Elkton Eclipse BBC.

Glenn Drinkwater reviewed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws mandated by the incorporation of the Association, and organized along with the revised Constitution and Bylaws into a Code of Regulations for the Association. The changes and reorganization were approved by a show of hands, moved Genesee Country Village, seconded Eclipse BBC of Elkton.

### MUTUAL CONFUSER

Erik Miklich, Bethpage Village (Long Island) vintage base ball coordinator, New York Mutuals' captain, feared speedball pitcher, and founder of the excellent website 19c Base Ball.com, tortured attendees at Baltimore with a 35-question quiz on the history of field set-up (top score was 13!). How does that compare to his opponents batting averages?

Try one of the easier questions from the quiz:

**What year's set of rules standardized the distance between all four corners of the infield to 30 yards?**

The answer can be found in the grey box at the bottom of page 3.

More from Erik's quiz in the next [Ball Players' Chronicle!](#)

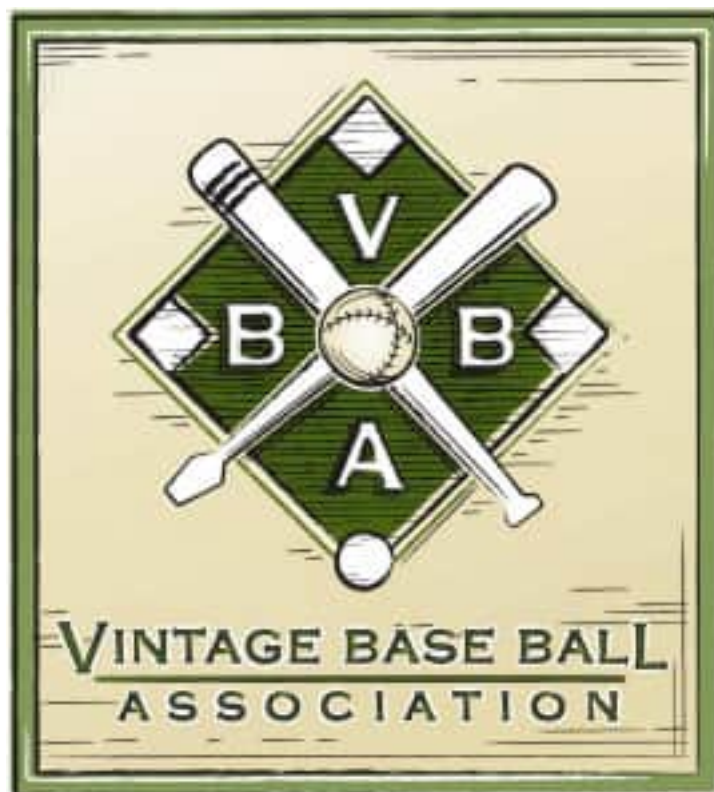
Glenn Drinkwater opened the general business portion of the meeting by reporting on two initiatives completed in 2007: the incorporation of the Association and commencement of the process for obtaining 501c3 non-profit status, to be completed in 2008, and the revision of the Association logo, to improve its appearance. Eric Miklich pointed out that the revised logo is historically inaccurate in that the bases are incorrectly placed. Scott Westgate moved (seconded Miklich) to investigate the cost of correction. The motion was defeated on a show of hands.

Rich Arpi reported that the Association treasury balance is \$9,013 and submitted a financial report.

Rich Arpi reported that 2008 membership to date is 60, including 32 full members, 24 individual memberships and four associate memberships. Membership in 2007 (including 2006 members carried over without payment of dues) was 129, including 68 full members, 14 associate members, and 47 individual members.

Glenn Drinkwater reported for the Nominating Committee that all incumbent officers were still eligible for re-election (the constitutional limit of three consecutive terms remains in force) and had agreed to accept nomination for their current positions. Nominations were called for from the floor. None were received. The incumbents were re-elected by acclamation (moved Tholkes, seconded Arpi).

The meeting was adjourned without motion at 11:45 a.m.



*The New VBBA Logo Approved by Convention Delegates*