We are thrilled to include a special item in this issue. In the last issue, we featured a biography of George Kell, one of the two Arkansas Hall of Fame third baseman after whom our chapter is named. In this issue, we feature the other Arkansas Hall of Fame third baseman, Brooks Robinson. Again, the biography is written by Robinson's long-time friend, Jim Rasco. Please take the time to read this delightful biography of a wonderful player and man.

We also have two book reviews, The Echoing Green, reviewed by Terry Turner and The Only Game In Town: Baseball Stars Of The 1930's And 1940's Talk About The Game They Loved, reviewed by Mike Dugan. I've read The Echoing Green and concur with Terry's endorsement. I haven't read The Only Game In Town, but after reading Mike's review I've decided it will be my next "baseball book" purchase.

Trivia Column (For answers, look on page 8.)

"Correct thinkers think that baseball trivia is an oxymoron: nothing about baseball is trivial."

-- George Will (April 8, 1990)

Questions of the day -----

1. What is the longest winning streak by a team that finished with a losing record?
2. Who is the only player with a 240-hit season who never got 200 hits in any other season?
3. Who is the only man to hit a ball off the Wrigley Field scoreboard?
Manager's Memo

Hello baseball fans!

It’s hard to believe, but Spring Training 2007 is almost here! If you listen closely you can almost make out the crack of the bat on the ball. Here is a quick update on upcoming events for the Brooks Robinson – George Kell chapter SABR chapter.

- Our spring meeting will be March 10 at 12:00 p.m. at the Holiday Inn in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Member Jim Sanders has arranged for former major leaguer Hal Smith (St. Louis, 1956-1961 and Pittsburgh, 1965) to speak to us. Following any research presentations, we will venture just down the street to tour Andrews Field. Andrews Field is one of the five oldest surviving parks in the country and is due for demolition later this year, so don’t miss the chance to see it.

- The National SABR convention will be in St. Louis from July 26 to 29 at the Adam’s Mark Hotel. This is probably as close to Arkansas as it will ever be, so make it if you can. A few members from our chapter have expressed interest in going. Perhaps we can make arrangements for carpooling to St. Louis. The Cardinals play the Cubs that Thursday so any of us who want to see that game on the first day of the convention should plan ahead for it will sell out quickly.

I attended the last SABR convention that was in St. Louis (1992) when I was fresh out of college and had a blast. Although the panels and presentations were great, my favorite part was just meeting and chatting with knowledgeable baseball fans from all over the country. It is also a good chance to pick up some good baseball reading material.

- Due to popular demand, our late summer meeting will be back at AutoZone Park on August 11. The meeting will start at 12:00 noon and conclude with the fireworks that will follow the Omaha – Memphis game which begins at 6:00. Lunch will be on your own before the meeting, but snacks at the meeting and dinner at the game will be provided. Cost is $20 per person. If anyone knows of a possible speaker for the meeting, please let me know.

---- Madison McEntire

BROOKS ROBINSON
By Jim Rasco

On July 31, 1983, Brooks Robinson of Little Rock, Arkansas and George Kell of Swifton, Arkansas became the sixth and seventh third basemen in major league history to be inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame at Cooperstown.

Most areas of the illustrious career of Brooks Robinson have been well documented. It is easy to check out the details of Robinson’s sixteen consecutive Gold Glove awards; his eighteen All-Star game appearances; and his World Series stats. However, nowhere can you find any kind of a
compilation of the contemporary post-season all-star selections of the twentieth century. Beginning in 1931, The Sporting News announced a post-season Major League All-Star team as selected by the Baseball Writers Association. In 1946, the Associated Press polled baseball writers to announce their annual major league all-star selections. Starting in 1948, the United Press polled their writers to select annual post-season all-star teams for each league. For the fifteen year period from 1950 through 1964, LOOK magazine polled the Baseball Broadcasters and Telecasters of America to announce a major-league “All America Baseball Team” and also published “All American League” and “All National League” teams. Beginning in 1960, The Sporting News switched from a major league team to separate teams for each league. In 1961, the United Press International dropped their separate league selections for a few seasons and began to announce only one major league team - before switching back to their original format before the end of the decade. Finally, in recent years, several different sources such as STATS, Inc. and Charles Faber have published books featuring retroactive AL & NL all-star teams. (However, these retroactive teams were based strictly on offensive statistics or pitching statistics that the authors considered important. For that reason, I would consider these selections as “minor” selections when compared to the teams that were selected by the actual votes of the players, managers, coaches, writers and/or broadcasters immediately following each season.) Over the past couple of decades, I have spent many, many hours in many different libraries across the country searching out the various post-season all-star selections from 1931 through the late 1970’s. I am pleased to share the post-season all-star selections that mention Brooks Robinson.

Briefly, before I get into the major league career of Brooks Robinson, I will mention that Brooks grew up in Little Rock; was honorable mention all-state quarterback for Pulaski Heights Junior High in 1951; starred for the Doughboys American Legion teams during the seasons of 1952, 1953 and 1954; and was first team all-state in basketball as an eleventh grader in 1954 for Little Rock Senior High (this school, of course, was soon to be known as Little Rock Central High). Everyone knows that Brooks became a Hall of Famer playing third base. Third base was not always his primary position. In 1983, I had the honor of being a guest in Cooperstown for the HOF induction of Brooks and George Kell. During the HOF ceremony, I was seated behind George Haynie. George was the manager of Brooks’ American Legion team. He told me that he played Brooks at second base – because Brooks was the only player on the team that could “make the pivot” on the double play. Brooks told me that his first minor league manager, George Staller (at York in 1955), saved his career by moving Brooks from second base to third base and keeping him “from getting killed” by runners sliding into second to break up the double play.)

All of you reading this article know that Brooks appeared in a few games during the 1955 and 1956 seasons with the Orioles before getting his first opening day start on April 15, 1957. As Brooks told me a few years ago, “George Kell moved over to play first base that day.” Shortly after the season started, Brooks had knee surgery and Kell returned to third base and started for the AL in the annual All-Star game in his final season. At the end of the 1957 season, Kell retired and in 1958 Brooks was able to continue his streak which would extend to twenty consecutive seasons as the Oriole third baseman on opening day.

For the 1960 season, Brooks hit .294 with 88 RBI’s and won his first of sixteen consecutive Gold Gloves. He came into his own during the middle of July. In the last game before the All-Star
break, Brooks had three consecutive hits – a triple, a double and a single. Then he played in his first All-Star game. Immediately after the break, on July 15th, he hit for the cycle for the only time in his big league career. In that game he had a homer, a triple, a double and two singles to run his streak to eight hits in eight consecutive trips to the plate. At the end of the season, he was third in the voting for MVP of the American League. He was the leading vote-getter for the AL All-Star team selected by the UPI. Brooks received 23 of the 24 UPI votes and was also selected to AL All-Star teams picked by STATS, Inc. and by Charles Faber. LOOK magazine selected Brooks as the top third baseman in the AL and third best in the majors behind National Leaguers Eddie Mathews and Ken Boyer. In the AP major league poll, Mathews beat out Brooks 83 votes to 60.

In 1961, Brooks hit .287 and was named to the AL All-Star teams announced by The Sporting News, Faber ratings and by LOOK magazine. For LOOK’s All America Team, Eddie Mathews squeaked by Brooks and Ken Boyer as the outstanding third baseman in the majors. In the LOOK voting, Mathews had 80 points, Brooks 75 and Boyer 74. The UPI picked a major league team for the first time and Brooks finished third behind National Leaguers Boyer and Mathews.

In May of 1962, Brooks became only the sixth major leaguer to hit grand slam home runs in two consecutive games. For the season he hit over .300 for the first time with an average of .303 along with 23 home runs. For his efforts, he was named as the top third baseman in the majors by the AP and by UPI. Brooks repeated as the top AL third baseman named by The Sporting News and by Faber. He was 9th in the voting for MVP of the AL. LOOK magazine had Brooks third in the majors at third base behind Ken Boyer and Rich Rollins.

Though he was awarded his usual Gold Glove at the end of the 1963 season; Brooks had a rare “off-year” on offense (hitting only .251) and was not named to any post-season All-Star teams.

In 1964, Brooks was simply the best player in the major leagues!! He hit .317, with 28 homers and a league leading 118 RBI’s. His slugging average was .521 and his on-base percentage was .368 (both were career highs). SPORT magazine named Brooks as the MAJOR LEAGUE PLAYER-OF-THE-YEAR. The Baseball Writers selected Brooks as the AL MVP in a landslide. Brooks received 18 of the 20 first place votes and finished with 269 points to Mickey Mantle’s 171. Of course, Brooks was named to every AL All-Star team and to every Major League All-Star team. The AP named Brooks as the top third sacker in the majors over National League MVP Ken Boyer. The Sporting News selected Brooks as the AL player-of-the-year. (There were twenty voters – Brooks had 16 votes and Mickey Mantle had the other 4.) Brooks received a perfect score in LOOK magazine’s final AL all-star selections. Brooks received all 63 votes (worth three points each) for a perfect score of 189 points. As in the AP poll, Brooks beat out Ken Boyer for the third base position on the LOOK All America team. Brooks was the lone unanimous choice in The Sporting News poll to select an all-star team for each major league. Brooks drew the vote of all 92 members of the Baseball Writers Association who participated in the AL poll.

1964 was a year for the entire Robinson family to remember as Brooks’ younger brother, Gary, lettered at wingback (behind future NFL star Jim Lindsey) for the undefeated national champion Arkansas Razorbacks.
Though battling a cracked bone in his right thumb and a pulled shoulder muscle, Brooks had another great year in 1965 - hitting .297 with 18 home runs. He came in third in the voting for the league’s MVP and was again named to all of the AL post-season All-Star squads. For the first time, The Sporting News had the players in each league vote for the league All-Star teams. Brooks received more votes than any other player in the AL. He also easily repeated as the outstanding third baseman in the major leagues in the polls conducted by the AP and by the UPI.

Brooks played in his first of four World Series’ and picked up his first World Series ring in 1966 following another outstanding season. It was the first pennant for the Baltimore franchise. The great season started in the summer for Brooks when he won the Arch Ward Memorial Trophy as the outstanding player in the All-Star game in Busch Stadium in St. Louis. Brooks had three of the AL’s six hits – including a triple off Sandy Koufax. He also established the All-Star record for third basemen by handling eight chances in the field. At the end of the season, Brooks was runner-up to teammate Frank Robinson in the voting for the league MVP. For the regular season, Brooks had 100 RBI’s and scored 91 runs. He was voted the best third baseman in the AL by his fellow players in the annual poll conducted by The Sporting News. In the voting by the AP, Brooks received 266 of 371 votes to be selected as the outstanding third baseman in the majors. (In the UPI poll, National Leaguer Richie Allen received one more vote than Brooks.) Brooks was also selected to receive the Lou Gehrig Memorial Award following the 1966 season. This award was given to the major league player who best exemplified Gehrig’s character and integrity.

In 1967, for the second consecutive year, the AL lost the All-Star game 2-1. As in 1966, Brooks scored the only run for the AL as he hit a home run in the sixth inning. At the end of the 1967 season, Brooks was named to all of the AL post-season All-Star squads. In the polls for the major league All-Star teams conducted by the AP and the UPI, Brooks was runner-up to National Leaguer Ron Santo.

In 1968, Brooks was named to all of the AL post-season All-Star squads. In the annual AP poll, National Leaguer Ron Santo beat out Brooks to be named the outstanding third baseman in the major leagues. The UPI chose National Leaguer Mike Shannon at 3B.

In 1969, Brooks hit .500 in the AL Championship Series to lead the Orioles to the World Series. However, the “amazing” Mets kept Brooks from picking up another World Series ring. Though Brooks picked up his tenth consecutive Gold Glove and had 23 home runs and 84 RBI’s – future Hall of Famer Harmon Killebrew was selected as the AL’s top third sacker at the end of the season. (Killebrew hit 49 homers and was the AL’s MVP.)

1970 was an unforgettable season for Brooks. On June 20th, Robinson’s 2,000th major league hit was a game-winning three-run homer. During the regular season he hit .276 and had 18 homers along with 94 RBI’s. Though Killebrew had another outstanding season with 41 homers and 113 RBI’s, Brooks was the runner-up to National Leaguer Tony Perez in the voting for the top third baseman in the majors in the AP poll. Brooks was voted the AL’s MVP by the Washington Chapter of the BBWAA. Brooks hit .583 in the three-game sweep of the AL Championship Series and then hit .429 with two home runs and six RBI’s in the Orioles five-
game World Series victory over the Reds. In addition, no baseball fan will ever forget his fielding gems at third base during that world series. Needless to say, SPORT magazine selected Brooks as the MVP of the 1970 World Series. The Baseball Writers voted for Brooks to receive the Babe Ruth Award as the player with the best performance in the World Series. At the end of the year, Brooks received the annual Hickok Award as the outstanding professional athlete covering all professional sports for the calendar year 1970.

1971 was almost a repeat of 1970. Brooks hit .272 and had 20 homers to go along with 92 RBI’s. The players voted for Brooks as the best third baseman in the AL in the annual poll conducted by The Sporting News following the end of the season. Brooks came in fourth in the voting for MVP of the AL. National Leaguer Joe Torre had a “career season” hitting .363 and beat out Brooks for top spot at 3B in the majors in the AP poll. Brooks led the Orioles to their third consecutive three-game sweep in the AL Championship Series by hitting .364 with a double and a home run. Though the Orioles failed to repeat as World Champions by losing the World Series to the Pirates in seven games, Brooks had another outstanding series with five RBI’s and a .318 batting average. On October 11th, Brooks had three singles (each driving in a run) and two walks to become only the third player to reach base five times in a World Series game. The only two players that had performed this feat previously were Babe Ruth in 1926 and Lou Brock in 1967.

For the only time in a six-year stretch, the Orioles failed to make the play-offs in 1972. Brooks was named as the top third baseman in the AL by the players in The Sporting News poll and in the Faber ratings. The AP voting showed a tight three-way race for the top third baseman in the majors. National Leaguers Ron Santo (118 votes) and Joe Torre (106 votes) headed the list, with Brooks coming up just short with 99 votes. Brooks received the Roberto Clemente Award at the end of the season. (The Clemente Award was given to a major league player based on his character and charitable contributions to his community.)

In 1973, Brooks picked up his 14th consecutive Gold Glove and the Orioles lost the final game of the ALCS to Oakland with Brooks hitting .250 in the five-game series.

In 1974, Brooks hit .288 during the regular season and was selected to receive his 15th consecutive Gold Glove. In July, Brooks was selected to start for the AL in the annual All-Star game. It was Brooks’ eighteenth consecutive All-Star game over a fifteen year period. (There were two All-Star games played during the seasons of 1960-61-62.) In the post-season the Orioles fell in four games to Oakland in the ALCS. Brooks was 12th in the voting for AL MVP.

Brooks’ final season as a “regular” was 1975. At the age of 38, Brooks appeared in 143 games at third base and made only nine errors. At the conclusion of the season, AL managers and coaches voted for Brooks to receive his sixteenth consecutive Gold Glove.

On opening day for the 1976 season, Brooks was in the starting lineup at third base for the Orioles for the twentieth consecutive season. Brooks appeared in 71 games at third base in his next-to-last season in the majors.

In the ninth game of the 1977 season, Baltimore was hosting Cleveland. The Orioles were trailing 5-3 with one out in the bottom of tenth when Brooks was called on to pinch-hit. There
were two Orioles on base and southpaw Dave LaRoche was on the hill for the Indians. Brooks hit his 268th and final major league home run to win the game for the Orioles 6-5. Brooks played in his final major league game on August 13, 1977. On September 18, 1977, the largest regular season home crowd in Oriole history turned out for a ninety minute pre-game ceremony to honor Brooks on “Thanks, Brooks” day. Five years later, in his first year of eligibility, Brooks received 344 of 374 possible votes from the Baseball Writers and was elected to be inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Brooks Robinson has received many, many other awards – I will mention just a few…..

In 1977, a book was published entitled SPORT Magazine’s All-Time All-Stars. In this publication, Brooks Robinson was named the outstanding third baseman in the history of major league baseball.

Immediately following his retirement, Brooks was inducted into the Arkansas Sports Hall of Fame and was the first player elected to the Oriole Hall of Fame. The Orioles retired his uniform #5. Baltimore’s Memorial Stadium honored Brooks Robinson and Hall of Fame quarterback Johnny Unitas of Colts fame with plaques in the lobby of the stadium. Street & Smith named Brooks as the outstanding major league third baseman for the Decade of the 1960’s. At the end of the twentieth century, Brooks was named as the outstanding American League third baseman for the previous one hundred years.

OPINIONS OF BROOKS ROBINSON

When Fred Worth asked me to write a biography of Brooks for our SABR newsletter, he requested that I ask a couple of questions. I visited with Brooks at Lamar Porter Field on July 23, 2006. (In hindsight, it turned out to be a sad day. Paul Eells (longtime voice of the Arkansas Razorbacks) was there to interview Brooks and shoot some video for KATV. It turned out to be the last time Brooks and I ever got to visit with Paul as he was killed in an auto accident eight days later. By the way, you don’t ever get a chance to know nicer men than Paul Eells, Brooks Robinson and George Kell.)

Question – Who was the best player you ever played against?

“Jim, there were three – Mantle, Mays and Aaron”

Question – Who was the best player you ever saw?

“Same three – Mantle, Mays and Aaron”

“Question – What is the one thing about you that most people don’t know, but that you will share with us? (At the time I asked this question, Brooks had been signing autographs for a few minutes – left-handed, as always.)

“That I’ve always written left-handed and I believe the ability to use both hands helped me with my fielding in my baseball career.”
### Upcoming Events

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<tr>
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<td>Fort Smith, Arkansas</td>
<td>We'll be meeting at the Holiday Inn in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Former major leaguer Hal Smith (St. Louis, 1956-1961 and Pittsburgh, 1965) will be the guest speaker. If you want to make a research presentation, let Madison know. We will also tour Andrews Field, one of the five oldest surviving parks in the country. If you need recommendations on a place to stay, contact Jim Sanders at <a href="mailto:hellobaseballfans@aol.com">hellobaseballfans@aol.com</a>.</td>
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### Research Anecdote

Chapter member Fred Worth was in Douglassville, Texas, trying to find St. William's Cemetery, the final resting place of two-game pitcher, Bernie Henderson. Here is the story of that find.

"To say Douglassville is small is an understatement. Population is 180 or so. No cemetery was visible in town except Douglassville Cemetery. We stopped in a convenience store and asked for help. George Frost, a retired football coach and former member of St. William's Catholic Church (which was torn down in 1960) happened to be in the store with his granddaughter to buy some fried chicken for lunch and said he knew where it was. He then said, 'If I tell you how to get there, you'll never find it.' He then offered to take us to the cemetery. He was right. If he had not taken us we would NEVER have found it. You have to take a county road that is more of a grassless ditch than a road. Then you turn off into the woods on some private property on something that probably once resembled a path. The church had been back there, with the cemetery (about 20 graves) next to the church. The front steps of the church are still there. I hope George's fried chicken was still hot when he got home to eat it."

### Trivia Answers

1. 14 games by the 1999 San Diego Padres (74-88)
2. Darin Erstad had 240 hits for the 2000 Angels. His next best total (through 2006) is 177 hits in 2002.
3. Sam Snead, the golfer. Yes, it's a trick question compliments of Terry Turner.
Book Review #1
The Echoing Green by Joshua Prager
Review by Terry Turner

Leo Durocher and the New York Giants used a navy telescope to steal signals during the 1951 NL pennant race.

That's the premise of Joshua Prager's The Echoing Green. He makes a good case. Bobby Thomson and Ralph Branca are the main characters and "the shot heard 'round the world" is Act One. But the research is the thing that amazed me.

Prager went into detail about Durocher's germ of the idea. I won't spoil the plot but a Dodger fan played a big part in the scheme. Also intriguing was a proposed Dodger-Giant trade of 1949 which never materialized. The author probes the family tree of all the antagonists and the protagonists. You get the feelings and thoughts of players involved in the Giants' frantic 37-7 record over the last quarter of the '51 season.

The tauntings of Brooklyn's manager Charlie Dressen and Branca during a Dodger hot streak needled Durocher. Shortly after he advised the Giants that they would begin stealing signs in a more sophisticated way.

Prager captures the mood of the times. To me his research over five years is awe-inspiring. A senior special writer for the Wall Street Journal, Prager uses 153 pages for epilogue, footnotes, bibliography and index.

The thing that fascinated me the most was the first friendly then later strained and finally calm relationship between Thomson and Branca. Also how public figures around the country and world reacted to the dramatic home run intrigued me.

I tend to read several baseball books simultaneously but The Echoing Green was my sole focus for the New Year.

Book Review #2
The Only Game In Town: Baseball Stars Of The 1930's And 1940's Talk About The Game They Loved by Fay Vincent
Review by Mike Dugan

This is the wonderful first volume in Vincent's Oral History Project. The former commissioner still loves the game in spite on the unspeakable blindside on him by Bud Selig and his cronies. In the late 1990's he noticed that we were losing former players and many of their stories were being lost for all-time.

Vincent took it upon himself to save as many of these as possible. With the help of National Baseball Hall of Fame Director Dale Petrosky who pledged both the Hall's research and financial assistance Vincent began his journey.
In the first volume he spent time with such former stars as Bob Feller, Larry Doby, Warren Spahn and Dom DiMaggio. Each of these former greats told of their beginnings in the game with their dads and how they grew to love the game both for the competition and its beauty. Dom DiMaggio speaks to that when he states "Baseball is beautiful in its simplicity, everything is laid out in front of you, you can see everything as it happens." He then goes on, as many of the players do in the book, to say that much has changed with drugs and gambling. They all fear that public perception of the game is not good and may not be repairable.

Spahn tells of his World War II experiences and dispels the myth that he was at the Battle of the Bulge (he arrived there days after it was settled). He was at the Remagen Bridge. Feller tells of buying his own plane in the fifties to fly to all of his barnstorming events. Eldon Auker and Johnny Pesky talk about how privileged they were to not only rub elbows with the greats but to just play the game.

The entire book is perfect for sitting back at night and escaping to a simpler time and a time that may be better in our minds than it actually was, but that too is part of the beauty of baseball. Vincent was inspired by Lawrence Ritter’s The Glory Of Their Times.

Unlike Ritter's classic there is nothing in this book that you have not heard but it is just the simple telling of stories by these former heroes that gives it a warm feel. I can't wait for future editions from Vincent.