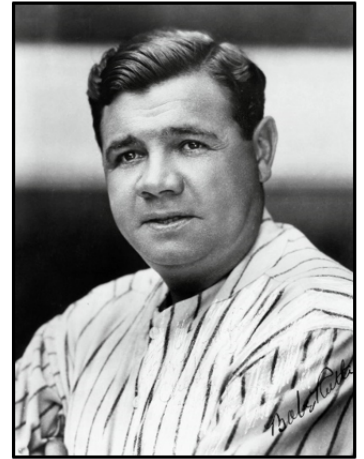




## Babe Ruth

7-time World Series Champion  
Career Batting Average: .342  
Career Home Runs: 714  
Career Pitching Record: 94-46  
Career ERA: 2.28  
1st in All-Time slugging percentage: .690  
1st in All-Time OPS: 1.164








2019 Campaign

Edition No. 4

February 22, 2019

My Brothers:

As we anticipate the next blast of winter weather predicted for the Heartland this weekend, let's gather 'round the old Hot Stove and chew on a few matters, mostly baseball-related:

-  It's just one man's opinion, but I think the Padres will rue the day they inked Manny Machado to his ten-year contract for \$300,000,000. The guy has talent, yes, but he is pond scum.
-  I have no idea where Bryce Harper will end up. I thought sure he would be a Yankee or a Phillie by now.
-  I am good with this year's Hall of Fame class: Mariano Rivera, Edgar Martinez, Roy Halladay, and Mike Mussina. But I don't understand why a part-time player (i.e., a *reliever*) is the first and to date only unanimous selection. I mean, not Willie Mays? Not Hank Aaron? Not Cal Ripken? Not Greg Maddux? Come on.
-  I loved watching Larry Walker play. But Larry Walker does not belong in the Hall of Fame. Ditto Todd Helton.
-  I love the fact that Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens are not yet in at Cooperstown. And I loved Roger Clemens as a player. As a lying sack of peat moss, however, I hated him.



I understand that they are talking about adding the Designated Hitter rule to the National League. That almost makes me sick to my stomach. The powers-that-be will surely ruin our National Pastime if we give them enough leeway.



Sayonara, Smilin' Timmy Miles. It was grand to know ye.



### THE SIREN SONG OF SPRING

PLAY BALL! At this edition goes to press, the Phillies and the Rays are pitted against each other in the Grapefruit League opener at Fort Charlotte, officially commencing the Spring Training season.

In less than two weeks, I plan to be sitting in the cheap seats at Steinbrenner Field in Tampa, taking in a Spring Training contest between the St. Louis Cardinals and the New York Yankees, which can only mean one thing--this god-awful Nebraska winter is almost over. Somebody pinch me!

### TRIP UPDATE

We have more commitments for our HSL Trip to Arlington on June 7-9, with recent affirmatives received from Itchie and Curby, which brings us to a total of 9 "yeses." However, we also have an additional "no" to add to PAwesome's declination, this from our beloved Underbelly who reports he will be attending some sort of vague ceremony for some undisclosed shirttail relative in some unannounced location. Sounds like it's time for a polygraph.

	In <sup>1</sup>	Out <sup>2</sup>	Lame Excuses for Those in Column 2
Stretch	✓		
Shamu	✓		

<sup>1</sup> Paddlers of their own canoes.

<sup>2</sup> Non-paddlers.

Big Guy	✓		
Mouse	✓		
Skipper	✓		
B.T.	✓		
Screech	✓		
Itchie	✓		
Curby	✓		
PAwesome		✓	Too busy with work Too busy with family Purported trip to Ireland Bunionectomy procedure that week Tracy says no friggin' way Acolyte duty at church Fear of insecure southern border Clear conflict of interest Dog ate his homework
Underbelly		✓	Allegedly attending mysterious "ceremony" for unnamed kin at undisclosed location Polygraph date TBA

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

Just over 27 years ago, our man Itchie (before he was known by that moniker, or as "Bender," or as "Foster," or as "Rafsanjani," or as . . . well, you get the point), he was preparing for matrimonial bliss, as memorialized by the below article from the Omaha *World Herald* dated January 9, 1992, which was reprinted with permission in an issue of *From the Bullpen* that same January.

### Are Wedding Bells to Ring for Omaha Playboy?

Omaha (AP) - In a surprise announcement made last week, Omaha credit-card magnate and reputed gangster playboy John "Skipjack" Thielen announced his engagement to a young Omaha beauty identified merely as "Anne." The fast-talking Vice-President of Schmooze at First Data Resources ended decades of rumors and speculation of closet homosexuality in making the announcement.

Although details are sketchy, sources close to Thielen report that he shamelessly begged for the hand of his fiancé on Christmas Eve before dozens of family members and friends, employing his best salesmen's rhetoric in convincing the young lady to accept his offer without giving her time to fully consider the possible consequences of the transaction. Like many a First Data client, Anne accepted Thielen's pledge of faithful service and marital bounty without scratching below the surface to puncture his superficial exterior.

Thielen's prospective bride, who refused to disclose her last name or to be interviewed for this article, reportedly has engaged legal counsel to secure a written

commitment of Thielen's manifest engagement promises, including his assurance that his treasured pheasant would be removed from its showplace on the Thielen fireplace mantel.

Tentative plans call for an August 1992 wedding at the temple of Thielen's personal basement shrine in west Omaha, with a reception to follow at one of Thielen's favorite bachelor haunts, Moxie's Lounge on West Center Street. A throng of well-wishers and family members is expected to attend, including Thielen's beloved Aunt Linda of the Twin Cities.

When told of the wedding announcement, Thielen's fellow managers in the Eastern Nebraska Hot Stove League expressed amusement, but only mild surprise. Bob "Masterspieler" Hurlbut, manager of the rival Lincoln Tribe, stated that "I always knoo that Sandjigger wood take the plunge, but it's sad too think that we'll probly never see him again. He never was the mastur of his own shipp, but now he'll never even paidel his own kanoo." Hurlbut added, "And by the way, did I menchun that I love my life?"

Long-time companion and reputed Thielen playmate Chuck "Shamu-Gone-Bad" Sinclair, who recently announced his own engagement, was more optimistic:

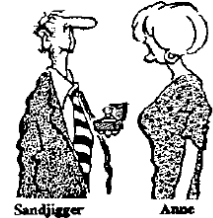
"Now that Thielen will be married, maybe he'll have me over for dinner more often. I wonder if they'll have free booze and chow at the reception."

Normally reserved fellow team-owner Dennis "Pipsqueak" Bontrager was harsh in his assessment of the situation: "That money-flashing punk was under her thumb from the first day they started dating, and after he's married, he won't be able to put on a clean pair of socks without getting permission from the queen. His wild and crazy days of getting a snootful and squaring off with Ringo for a game of triple Yahtzee are like WhiteSot's glory days as League champion - ancient history."

When told of his fellow managers' comments, Thielen grinned sheepishly and stated, "I'll be the one wearing the pants in this family. Just ask Anne. She just made me a new pair of denim bolibottoms with her name embroidered on the pockets."

And so it seems a long and storied chapter in the history of one of Omaha's most eligible bachelors has been closed. As succinctly put by an anonymous League pundit, "He must have been tired of being happy."

### The Proposal



Sandjigger

Anne

"OK, but only until I find someone better."

\* \* \* \* \*

That's it for this issue. Back at you next week.

Skipper