

# Bonds, baseball and books

The debate rages on— does Barry Bonds “juice?”

As I write this, Barry Bonds has hit 730 home runs during his storied career. After hitting a home run in three consecutive games this week, he is only 25 home runs short of Hank Aaron's all-time record. If you are an avid baseball fan, then chances are you have a strong opinion as to whether an \*asterisk should be added next to Barry Bonds home run record. But, baseball seems to thrive on controversy and the ongoing Barry Bonds saga seems only to add fuel to the fire.

Jose Canseco fanned the fire with his book titled “\*Juiced: Wild Times, Rampant Steroids, Smash Hits, and How Baseball Got Big.” We currently have Juiced in our library as part of the rotating collection from the Northwest Kansas Library System. (any book with a red dot)

Canseco was a major leaguer from 1986 through 2004. He was one of the stars of the major league during his tenure. In this book he exposes some of the biggest names in baseball for using steroids. In fact, his reputation for experimenting and using different substances became such that he was dubiously nicknamed “The Chemist.” The premise of “\*Juiced” is that steroids are rampant through the major league. Worse yet, the future of baseball (according to Canseco) doesn't look a whole lot better. So if half of what Canseco says is true in this book, do we have reason to worry? If so, who is getting cheated?

Maybe America has lost sight of the slogan “for the love of the game.” It would seem as if baseball is nostalgically referred to as



## Jeff Friesen, Library Link

• Director of Pioneer Memorial Library

America's favorite pastime because skill and desire, not money or drugs were the essential ingredients that made our baseball heroes. Hopefully someday Major League Baseball will circle back to what made it great in the first place. As we gear up for another major league post-season, here are a couple of great baseball books that capture the spirit of the golden age of baseball.

Unfortunately we can't have all the books that we would like to in the library. The good news is that we can get almost any book that you want through an interlibrary loan. All you have to do is ask! A good example is the baseball classic “The Glory of Their Times” edited by Lawrence S. Ritter.

Ritter set out in the 1960's to capture and frame the memories of some of the contemporaries of baseball's golden age. His medium: a tape recorder. At the time of these interviews, Ty Cobb had just passed away and Ritter wanted to preserve some of the first-hand accounts of players. Some of his interviewees include Sam Crawford, “Chief” Meyers, “Rube” Marquard, Davy Jones, Hans Lobert, “Smokey” Joe Wood, Ed Roush, and Fred Snodgrass. This compilation is a first-hand glimpse into the early days of baseball — a simpler time.

Simon and Garfunkel reflected on simpler times in the song Mrs.

Robinson. The lyrics read “where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio a nation turns its lonely eyes to you, woo hoo hoo.” It is hard to imagine thinking of Barry Bonds in that same context. Maybe Joe summed up his attitude best when asked why he went out and played hard every day. He said, “Because there is always some kid who may be seeing me for the first time. I owe him my best.”

Joe DiMaggio was an icon during a great period of baseball history. It was said that he made the game look easy. Well, the game seems to be getting more and more complicated all the time — too bad we can't have Joe back. We have a couple of books on our shelves that capture Joe's life: “Joe DiMaggio: The Hero's Life” and “Where Have You Gone, Joe DiMaggio? The Story of America's Last Hero.”

Make the game simple again. Play some catch this week and show a kid what a great game baseball can be. Have a great day!

Pioneer Memorial Library is located at 375 W. Fourth St. and open seven days a week. Winter hours are as follows: Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.; and Sunday, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m. For more information contact the Library at 460-4470 or visit our web site at www.colbylibrary.com.

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