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***New Baseball Book “Covers the Bases” About America’s Favorite Pastime, the Colorful Exploits and Personalities of Famous Teams, Owners, Managers, Commissioners and the Fans Who Love the Sport***

***Baseball Bits offers up a fascinating set of facts and figures about professional baseball in America, from the perspective of an avid fan, former AP sportswriter, and author of 33 baseball books***

With baseball’s Spring Training underway, fans everywhere are looking forward with anticipation to a new season for America’s favorite pastime. Ever since its invention in [date] in Cooperstown, New York, the sport of baseball has been a quintessentially American phenomenon that narrowly tracks the cultural evolution of the broader American society.

Now, a new book, ***Baseball Bits: The Best Stories, Facts, and Trivia from the Dugout to the Outfield***, (May, 2008, \$16.95, ISBN: 978-1-59257-775-0, Alpha Books) written by former AP sportswriter Dan Schlossberg, offers up a broad array of historical anecdotes about the career successes – and sometimes failures -- of the sport’s most well-known and storied players and clubs. It also provides fascinating stories about some of the game’s most colorful managers including Sparky Anderson, Joe Torre, Tony LaRussa and Billy Martin, as well as highlighting the high profile and sometimes controversial activities of team owners such as George Steinbrenner and Marge Schott.

*Baseball Bits* provides baseball fans with an all-encompassing glimpse into professional baseball through the years. It covers everything from the history of the “Star-Spangled Banner” as a game-opening anthem, the tradition of U.S. Presidents throwing out the first pitch on opening day, the origin of the “seventh inning stretch”, and everything in between. It includes a unique set of interesting factoids about baseball and how its colorful history is so closely intertwined with our own. And, it allows readers to test their knowledge about the sport’s history in the days before the introduction of the designated hitter, wild card and interleague play. The book traces the sport’s rise, its superstars, legendary teams, and seasons and serves up little-known facts and statistics only known by true aficionados.

“The beauty about *Baseball Bits* is it’s really a book that can be read, put down and picked up again offering bits at each reading session,” says author Dan Schlossberg. “I’ve often told people it is the ultimate bathroom companion book.”

Among the books' trivia includes such factoids as:

The first official baseball game was played by the Knickerbockers at Elysian Fields in Hoboken, New Jersey on June 19, 1846.

Early National League teams had a salary cap of \$2,400.

It was only after the advent of the American League in 1901 that meaningful post-season play began.

Although "The Star-Spangled Banner" was first played during the 7th inning stretch of the 1918 World Series Game 1, it did not become a regular pre-game feature until 1942.

The smallest crowd ever to attend a big-league game braved a rainstorm to see Chicago beat Troy (NY) on September 17, 1881. Only 12 fans showed up.

After the Chicago White Sox won the 1917 World Series, they went 88 years without winning another.

The estimated cost of building the new Yankee Stadium, scheduled to open in 2009, is \$1.02 billion – making it the most expensive ballpark of all time.

Honus Wagner never made much money as a player but his baseball card is worth millions. The T206 Wagner, part of a 1909 American Tobacco set, was pulled because he eschewed tobacco products. Only a half dozen survived, one of which sold for \$1 million in 2000.

Joe Jackson got his Shoeless nickname in the minors, where he played a game in his socks after a new pair of shoes gave him blisters.

Reggie Jackson's father, Martinez, earned \$7 a game with the 1933 Newark Eagles, a Negro League team. Thirty-three years later, Reggie signed a five-year, \$3 million contract to play for the Yankees.

The word "rookie" was first used by the Chicago Record-Herald in 1913. The unflattering term for a first-year player may have stemmed from chess, where the rook must wait its turn and is often the last piece to be used as the game opens.

The Chicago Cubs were originally called the Chicago White Stockings.

Cincinnati's Owner Marge Schott often let her pet Saint Bernards roam the field before games, which sometimes resulted in players diving for the ball finding themselves covered with dog excrement.

#### **About the author:**

**Dan Schlossberg** is a former AP sportswriter and author of 33 baseball books, including *Baseball Gold*, and more than 25,000 articles about baseball during his 38-year career. Schlossberg has contributed to *Baseball Digest*, *The Sporting News*, *MLB.com*, and the All-Star Game and World Series programs. He is managing editor of "BallTalk," a syndicated weekly radio baseball show.

*Alpha Books, a member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc., publishes high-quality lifestyle and reference books in 30 different categories. The Complete Idiot's Guides®, Alpha Teach Yourself in 24 Hours, At Your Fingertips-- as well as other series and stand-alone titles -- provide helpful how-to information and general knowledge in an easily accessible manner.*

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