

continued from page 12

skills it demands. Berg went on two tours of Japan as an unofficial representative of Major League Baseball, and on each of these tours served as a welcome instructor in the art of catching. In effect, as Dawidoff suggests, Berg served as a coach who occasionally played at need.

Dawidoff excels in his depiction of Moe Berg the OSS agent during World War Two. Here Berg's ability to charm people into telling him their secrets whilst remaining a mystery himself found a perfect home. Dawidoff deftly describes the confused environment of the OSS during WWII that allowed an amateur such as Moe Berg to excel, as well as explaining how the very qualities which allowed Berg to excel prevented him from becoming a factor in the United States' newly formed spy agency, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The key to the book, and the explanation to the subtitle *The Mysterious Life of Moe Berg*, is Dawidoff's answer to the question of why this Princeton graduate who had also received a degree from

the Columbia School of Law was willing to work as a poorly paid journeyman catcher for a decade and a half. The answer can be confirmed by his approach to baseball in the latter half of his career, but can only truly be understood by looking at his life after his time in baseball and the OSS were complete. Dawidoff shows that the itinerant lifestyle which a professional sports career such as baseball allows appealed very much to both Berg's vanity and his obsession with privacy. Berg's eccentricities were tolerated by the ultra conservative world of baseball because he had the reputation of being brilliant, a reputation which was so close to being accurate that the exaggerations of a friendly sporting press were readily accepted. An itinerant lifestyle is, however, a difficult one to maintain when you have expensive tastes and little or no income. Such was Moe Berg for the last two plus decades of his life.

Yet, lack of income was for Moe Berg far less of an obstacle than it would be for most. Early on in the book, Dawidoff draws a picture of Berg as a consummate story teller who was welcomed by

most people with an unspoken understanding that they would be footing the bill. Not only was Berg able to find free accommodations and meals from his friends, he was able to exploit his charm for free transportation, free coffee, and free newspapers from petty businessmen and conductors who were fascinated by him and willing to accept his conversation as full payment. In many respects, this is an extremely attractive lifestyle which is particularly appealing to an individual such as Berg who was willing to live a life of acquaintances rather than close personal friends.

The underside of this, as Dawidoff shows us, is that Berg seems to have been aware of a void in his life which could only be filled by establishing a close personal relationship. The tragedy of this is that by the time he came to this realisation he was so far removed into his obsession for secrecy that he could no longer even create the illusion of normalcy for an extended period. As a result, a kind of desperate loneliness fell upon an uncompromising Moe Berg which created some behavioural indiscretions which can best be euphemistically described as unfortunate.

What Dawidoff has done with *The Catcher was a Spy* is shatter the myth of the amazingly brilliant catcher/spy which has long been the accepted tale of Moe Berg. In the process of shattering this myth he has replaced it with a truth that is far less romantic but also far more intriguing. The real Moe Berg may not have been fluent in seven languages and capable of learning Japanese in two weeks, but he was a man who lived a life unlike that of any other. As Dawidoff closes, "In the end, there are few men who find ways to live original lives. Moe Berg did that."

I have only one small complaint with the book. There are a number of grammatical stylistic errors which I found occasionally frustrating, but this complaint is nit-picking in the extreme.



Nina Botten

### Acknowledgements

Dan Lukiv submitted "The Graveyard Shift at 7-Eleven" by mail all the way from British Columbia. He has published poetry, fiction and articles in *The Canadian Children's Annual*, *Ahoy*, *Mamashee*, *The New Horizon*, *Too Do*, *Quesnel Writers*, *Prime Areas*, *Cariboo Observer*, *The Poet's Corner*, *Pierian Spring*, *Repository*, *Origins*, *Alpha*, *Waves*, *Quack*, and *Education Perspectives*.

This is Nina Botten's second year submitting cartoons to *Distractions*. Nina is a 3rd year Anthropology major at UNB, and says she gets ideas for her drawings from "weird people on the street."

Larry Ellis is a SMU graduate, a displaced Ontarion currently living in Halifax. He has travelled across Canada and Europe with his camera, and is presently, among other things, taking photography courses at NSCAD.

Mark Savoie is a Bruns veteran, currently doing graduate work in history at UNB. Mark's unique and knowledgeable perspective on *The Catcher Was a Spy* comes from his background in history of sport, which he studied at the University of Western Ontario.

Mike Dean is a second-year Brunsie and Photo Editor. In his spare time is completing a BA with a major in Anthropology.

### Ask Apricot

Advice for the loveless, the hopelessly lovestruck or just the hopeless. Whatever your problem, Apricot's been there. Pour out your hearts, kids — I won't laugh, promise. Submit letters to The Brunswickan, room 35 of the SUB, or email to [bruns@unb.ca](mailto:bruns@unb.ca).

Do you have a photograph, poem, short story, cartoon, or stray thought that you would like to share with the world? *Distractions* is your psychic link to the other lost souls, and it won't cost you \$4.99/minute. Bring your stuff to Room 35 of the SUB and leave it in the 'distractions box,' which one of our helpful staff will point out to you, or you can virtually get a hold of me, the editor-in-charge-of-distracting-stuff, by emailing [q13h@unb.ca](mailto:q13h@unb.ca), if those money-grubbing-people-in-charge-of-hooking-up-email-accounts will forgive me for having no money, or you can call 453-4983 and ask for Mary. It's easy, so don't delay, call now!

## CAMPUS

CONTINUING, ADULT, MATURE & PART-TIME UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

## UNB Zoomers Elections

Continuing, Adult, Mature and Part-Time University Students — UNB Zoomers

When: Wednesday, October 4<sup>th</sup> from 4:00P.M. to 7:00P.M.  
Thursday, October 5<sup>th</sup> from 10:00A.M. to 7:00P.M.  
Friday, October 6<sup>th</sup> from 10:00A.M. to 2:00P.M.

Where: Sub Lobby & D'Avray Hall Lobby

Student Identification Required

Open to All Part-Time and All Full-Time Mature Students

Candidates are requested for the following positions  
President, Vice-President, Secretary,  
Treasurer and 4 Directors

(Orientation, Social & Promotional, Student Union, -at-large)

Letters of intention to run for any of these positions must be signed by a nominee and a seconder and submitted to the Returning Officer, Judith Potter - Department of Extension and Summer Session, on or before September 29<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

For more information on the duties of officers, call the C.A.M.P.U.S. Office at 453-3596

## TRAVEL CUTS

Canadian Universities Travel Services Limited

506-453-4850



A Flight for two

Fredericton to Montreal and Two nights accommodation

Air Atlantic Canadian

Distinctly Atlantic Canadian



Eligibility

Just book and pay in full by 24 Nov. 95 any reservation with Travel Cuts, UNB Fredericton, on Air Atlantic/Canadian Airlines, or a Best Western Hotel and receive one ballot toward a draw to take place on 27 Nov. 95 for Air Travel for two, Fredericton to Montreal, and two nights accommodation at any Best Western Hotel in Montreal.

Note: Flight and dates and hotel locations subject to availability. Cannot be awarded as a cash value.