

“Why I Should Attend a Luncheon with Giants Managing Partner Bill Newkom”

by

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Short Version (less than 100 words)

Everyday, including summer vacation, I combine two great loves of my life—teaching physics and baseball. What better way to make the abstract ideas of physics come alive than with our nation’s pastime? If there is a teacher who creatively combines these topics to a greater extent than I do for the benefit of their students, their parents, and their community, I would certainly like to meet him! For me, it has been one of the most satisfying and rewarding endeavors of my 35-year teaching career.

Long Version (greater than 100 words)

My wife, biotech educator and author Ellyn Daugherty, and I are both *big* Giants Fans. When I was in Little League, I saw Willie Mays play center field at Kezar Stadium. I saw Mike McCormick pitch, Willie McCovey play 1st base, and Jimmy Davenport spear line drives on 3rd base at Candlestick Park. I saw Juan Marichal and Stu Miller go toe to toe with Sandy Kofax and Don Dysrdale. I’ll never forget the thrill of seeing Will Clark hit a homer into the upper deck the very first time I took my son Brian (Class of 2000 and MVP catcher at SMHS) to Candlestick Park when he was 8 years old. I saw Barry Bonds hit his first home run as a Giant. To this day one of my biggest disappoints was having Barry Bonds, Will Clark, and Matt Williams—a veritable “murderers row” on one team—only to lose to Atlanta the last day of the season. We have had season tickets since 1993, and Charter Seats since 1997 in ViewBox 317, and as of today we are the proud owners of Row A seats in the Club Level, Section 214! Ellyn and I were married in Giants uniforms in 1997. We were there when they dug-up home plate and flew it via helicopter to PacBell Park in 1999 (the closest I’ve come to a heart transplant). We were there when Barry hit #500, #600, #660, #700, #715, and #756. We were there when Barry hit #71, #72 and #73. We attended every World Series Game in 2002 in San Francisco—we did not sell our tickets. Game six to this day still smarts.

While you probably don’t need more convincing of my love of baseball, as a teacher I use my knowledge and passion for baseball to spark the interest of my students. I’ve taken them on field trips to tour AT&T Park (we were the first group to see the new HD scoreboard operate), and arranged for 3rd Street Bridge to be raised and lowered for them (my grandfather used to run and operate the bridge back in the early 50’s). I was featured on a FSN Giants Pre-Game Show on the physics of baseball in June, 2003 and featured on the front page of the SF Chronicle with an article about my studies on splash hits. Lee Hammer introduced me to Jon Miller and Kruk and Kuip (Lee’s son Ryan was my student) who are the best in the business since Russ Hodges and Lon Simmons. I held a tailgate for 150 physics teachers from all over the world who were attending a national physics teachers conference in Sacramento in the summer of 2004. In June 2007, I was featured on KQED’s science program *Quest* on the physics of baseball which was nominated for an Emmy. During the All-Star Week I was featured on *Jim Lehrer’s Newshour* describing the physics of home runs. I have created a DVD on the physics of

baseball that has been widely distributed at science conventions. My website (www.laserpablo.com) is one of the most popular ones on the physics of baseball. In May of 2008, I attended the 2-day conference sponsored by Sportvision on Pitch Fx and have been collaborating with them since. Marv White visited my classroom this fall and they donated a sophisticated radar system that my Advanced Placement students are using to analyze the motions of pitched balls at San Mateo High. My lab activity, “Anatomy of a Homer” is published in the lab manual I authored that accompanies *Conceptual Physics*—one of the most widely used high school texts in the nation. My boat, *Robinson Cruise-O*, is one of the regulars in the Cove and was the first boat requested by the Giants to be sanctioned by the Coast Guard to be in the Cove during the All-Star Game. During the game May 16th, I am hosting a party on *Robinson Cruise-O* in the Cove as a fundraiser for our school’s baseball program. I give lectures and workshops on the physics of baseball at state (CSTA) and national (NSTA and AAPT) science teacher conventions to encouraging other teachers to incorporate baseball into the physics and science lessons. With David Kagan (professor of physics at CSU, Chico) and Paul Doherty (of the Exploratorium), I am authoring a book on how to teach physics using baseball that is tentatively titled “*Pitching Baseball—A Great Way to Learn Physics*”.

Like Babe Ruth, I battled throat cancer 10 years ago. But unlike poor Babe, I was lucky enough to survive. Like Lou Gehrig, I consider myself to be one of the luckiest people in the world, to incorporate two of my greatest passions—physics and baseball—into my teaching career. It has helped enrich my life, the lives of my friends and colleagues, my community, and most importantly those of my students. I can’t imagine a career more rewarding than that.

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