

---

MARCH 2022 | ISSUE 16

# Joyce's Journal

A monthly dispatch from Joyce A. Miller, Writer

---



## WILL MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL START ON TIME THIS YEAR?

A GLIMPSE OF  
WHAT'S INCLUDED:

### Fanned out?

Technically spring training is not canceled this year, but it must start by the beginning of March in order for the teams to get in 4 weeks before the season starts on March 31st. What would the Moon have thought about this lockout? Maybe he would suggest fans watch their minor league teams like his Bay City Beavers or Chattanooga Lookouts. Many baseball fans enjoy supporting their minor league teams. In Richmond we have the Flying Squirrels, part of the Eastern League, and the Double-A affiliate of the San Francisco Giants. Their games are always a lot of fun!

On Feb 8th, I attended the Town of Brookhaven, NY's senior citizen writing class on Zoom as their guest. Several of the students in attendance read **Joe Harris, the Moon** and had questions for me about it, and the instructor had questions for me about my writing process and how one goes about writing a novel. I listened to them read their stories and I commented on them. One lady wrote a story about getting her first car, a 1957 Chevy and then racing it against her other teenage friends on Jones Beach around the clock tower.

Another lady wrote about walking on Jones Beach, picking up sea glass and watching the young seals frolic in the water around their parents. All the stories were very nice to listen to; and I hope I gave them some encouragement.

**Joe Harris, the Moon** was mentioned in the February 17th episode of the podcast, **Get Booked**. Here is the link to the episode, "Is Cute, Has Secrets."

<https://omny.fm/shows/get-booked-1/is-cute-has-secrets>

Something I thought about when working with the writing class in Brookhaven is the research that goes into writing a historical fiction novel. As a bonus for March's newsletter, I'm enclosing a pdf with a story about Jackie Mitchell. I came across her interesting story when researching Joe Harris, the Moon. Let me know if you enjoy it by dropping me an email [joycemiller1959@gmail.com](mailto:joycemiller1959@gmail.com). I'd love to hear from you!

I live in the Church Hill section of Richmond, VA with my husband and my retired racing greyhound. Before I started writing, I worked for 30 years at a nuclear physics research laboratory.

## Show up and shine!



JOYCE A. MILLER, WRITER

[www.joyceamiller.com](http://www.joyceamiller.com)

@JOYCEAMILLERWRITER on Instagram

## Fanned Out On Purpose?

One of the issues that arises when writing historical fiction is that one may have too much research and feel compelled to include everything. The writer gets so excited about all the new things he is learning and wants to tell his readers all about it. This did come up for me when writing my debut novel, *Joe Harris, the Moon*. Since this novel is based on family history, I had a story with which to begin. But I learned so many new items when researching the story further and I wanted to include everything. But how much is too much?

Here is a story that did not make it into my novel but that I found fascinating. In 1931, about the time my novel's hero Joe Harris was retiring from baseball, a young left-handed pitcher named Jackie Mitchell had her pitching debut for the Chattanooga Lookouts, a team Joe played on. That female pronoun is not a typo—Jackie Mitchell was one of the first women in America to sign a professional baseball contract. Few people took Jackie seriously when it was announced that she would be on the Lookout's lineup.

Mitchell was a skilled pitcher. She often pitched consecutive games for weeks on end. But if she pitched well, it was assumed the opposing team went easy on her. If she pitched poorly, she was just a girl who didn't belong in the game. Exhibition games that she played were considered publicity stunts and hoaxes. But just like Joe, it was Jackie's sincere hope that she would be able to play in the World Series.

Jackie's love of baseball began when she was 5 years old. Her constant playmate at the time was the son of Dazzy Vance of the Brooklyn Dodgers. Vance spent much of his time when he was home playing catch with Jackie and his son. Vance drew attention to the fact that the little girl was left-handed and would make a great pitcher someday. Jackie took it to heart and her childhood desire was to become a great pitcher. Jackie's mother would reprimand her for playing ball with the little boys in the neighborhood. "They'll be a man short if I don't play," Jackie would tell her.

Jackie's value as a box office draw was evident. The night before Jackie pitched in Raleigh, NC there were 18 paid admissions and the club didn't even have enough money to turn on the lights. The following night when it was advertised that Jackie would be pitching, the gate receipts were 3000.

Although Jackie excelled at a man's game, she played the piano and fancied getting into the kitchen to try her hand at cooking when she was at home. When she wasn't playing baseball, she enjoyed swimming as a conditioning exercise.

Citing that baseball was "too strenuous for women", Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis reportedly banned Jackie Mitchell from Major League Baseball based on her very first professional outing—her 1931 pitching debut for the Chattanooga Lookouts. The game was an

exhibition game against the then 3-time World Series champion New York Yankees, and she struck out the first two batters she faced in 7 pitches--Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig.

Jackie's father was waiting for her in the dugout in that first game. Jackie asked him of her pitching to the Babe, "Daddy, do you reckon he really tried to hit that ball? I'd rather he knocked it out of the park than to think he fanned out on purpose."

When we're writing that we don't have to tell every tale as part of our bigger story. The ones who go down swinging are still part of the team. And Jackie's story could be a novel all on its own.



## Jackie Mitchell picture



Clipped By:

**joycemiller1959**

Wed, Feb 16, 2022