



# The Sentinel-Record

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## Inaugural Baseball Weekend gaining global attention

### LEFTY GROVE: A baseball immortal comes to the Valley

BETH REED  
The Sentinel-Record



Submitted photo

**SULTAN OF SWAT:** Major League legend Babe Ruth sits on the steps of the Hot Springs Country Club during one of his many stays in the Spa City. Members of Ruth's family will be in Hot Springs for the inaugural Historic Baseball Weekend. Photo courtesy of the Garland County Historical Society.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is the third in a series of articles about the birth of Major League Baseball spring training in Hot Springs by baseball historian Bill Jenkinson, in conjunction with the inaugural Hot Springs Baseball Weekend Friday and Saturday, when Lefty Grove will be one of the final two additions to the Historic Hot Springs Baseball Trail.

**SPECIAL TO THE SENTINEL-RECORD**  
When baseball historians think about a flame-throwing, fiercely competitive pitcher, they do not picture anyone from the modern era. In their mind's eye, they see Robert Moses "Lefty" Grove. Although largely forgotten by contemporary fans, for those who know best, Lefty Grove is the embodiment of the one pitcher whom nobody wanted to face.

"Groves" (as his name was originally spelled) was born as the seventh of eight children on March 6, 1900, in the coal-mining town of Lonaconing, Md., situated in the western panhandle of that state. Like many boys from that background, young Lefty grew up playing baseball as the primary release from his, otherwise, hard-

scrabble existence. He also matured with an attitude that said, "Don't mess with me." By the time he reached adulthood, no one did.

Grove came from good stock. Both parents traced their lineage back to ancestors who fought in the Revolutionary War. His father worked in the mines for 54 years, but, miraculously, lived in good health until age 92. At age 18, Grove himself survived the worldwide influenza pandemic, but his hair began to prematurely turn gray as a result. He also survived a host of physically punishing jobs, including a short spell down in those mines. It is believed that his early work experiences motivated Grove to pitch with savage intensity to escape a life in the darkness and coal dust.

By age 19, Grove had grown into a 6-foot-3-inch athletic demon who could throw a baseball like a bolt of lightning. He was very slender, but notoriously powerful, nonetheless. After pitching for local teams for a few years, Grove turned pro in 1920, performing briefly for Martinsburg, W. Va. His talent was so unmistakable

that the International League Baltimore Orioles soon signed him to a contract. They were just ahead of a host of hungry Major League clubs.

Although not a Big League franchise at that time, the Orioles were one of the premier baseball clubs in the nation. As of 1920, they were owned and managed by former Major League pitcher/infielder Jack Dunn, who had discovered Babe Ruth six years earlier. Both native-born Marylanders, Lefty Grove and The Babe were destined to become, arguably, the greatest man-to-man rivals in baseball history.

At age 20, Lefty Grove could throw his fastball roughly as fast as his boyhood idol, Walter Johnson of the Washington Senators. Although we don't have scientifically established speeds from that era, it is likely that those two old-timers were among the few fastest-throwing starting pitchers in the history of the game. However, just like Johnson, Grove had trouble with control early in his career. Yet,

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Hot Springs' Historic Baseball Weekend Friday and Saturday is gaining global attention for the new resources becoming available to document the Spa City's role in the history of the sport.

Descendants of Babe Ruth will be in Hot Springs along with Hall of Famer Ferguson "Fergie" Jenkins and player-turned-broadcaster Al "The Mad Hungarian" Hrabosky.

The final two plaques honoring legendary Arkansas-born catcher Bill Dickey and pitcher Robert Moses "Lefty" Grove will be dedicated at 11:30 a.m. Friday as part of the Historic Hot Springs Baseball Trail, which traces the locations and history surrounding the hundreds of Major League baseball players and staff who trained in Hot Springs long before spring training became associated with Arizona and Florida, according to a news release by Visit Hot Springs.

A ceremony celebrating the

**BASEBALL, PAGE 6 A**

## Board OKs funding for mayor's Japan trip

DAVID SHOWERS  
The Sentinel-Record

Sister City Program supporters told the Hot Springs Board of Directors Tuesday night that benefits the city receives from the cultural/educational exchange warrant using taxpayer funds to send the mayor to the celebration honoring the silver anniversary of the city's kinship with Hanamaki, Japan.

The board unanimously adopted a resolution approving funding for Mayor Pat McCabe to attend the 25th Sister City Anniversary Celebration in Hanamaki. McCabe, citing a conflict of interest, abstained. The resolution designates him as the board member who will represent the city in Japan.

Sister City Program Executive Director Mary Zunick told the board the mayor's travel expenses to the September event won't exceed \$4,000. The city budgeted \$22,000 this year for board travel.

The resolution was moved from the consent agenda to new business after concerns were raised about the propriety of using taxpayer funds for the trip. Mark Toth told directors Tuesday night that

**TRIP, PAGE 6A**

## CHAMPION RACER



The Sentinel-Record/Grace Brown

Arkansas Hare Scramble women's champion, Mackenzie Burns, 12, rides her dirt bike through a shallow creek bed in a wooded area off Mill Creek Road on Tuesday. Burns has been racing competitively since the age of 4.

## 2nd annual pickleball tourney begins

REBEKAH HEDGES  
The Sentinel-Record

More than 400 pickleball players from over 30 states are set to compete beginning today at Bank of the Ozarks Arena in the Mid-America Indoor Pickleball Championships.

The second annual championship has seen growth in excitement and numbers, Sandy McPherson, Hot Springs Village resident and co-organizer of the event, said Wednesday.

"Pickleball can be a social game or it can be as fierce a competition as your talent will allow. Picture tennis played with high-tech sawed off composite graphite paddles and a wiffle ball," McPherson said.

This year's championship has seen a 100 player increase and a 400 match increase from the previous year, McPherson said, noting it will be amazing to see 1,000 matches take place in the span of three days on the 24 courts.

She said the sport was born in Washington over 50 years ago, when half of a family's tennis court was

**PICKLEBALL, PAGE 6A**

## HS police continue investigation into woman's 2013 homicide

REBEKAH HEDGES  
The Sentinel-Record

Five years ago this week Katie Marie Lavender was found murdered in her apartment and Hot Springs police and

her family are still hoping for justice as the investigation into her death continues.

Lavender, 21, was found deceased in her apartment at 515 Higdon Ferry Road on March 19, 2013, around 7 p.m.,

and after her body was sent to the state crime lab in Little Rock, it was determined her death was a homicide.

Police Officer 1st Class Joey Williams said the department has exhausted all

leads in the case, but hopes to generate new leads through recent news exposure and information posted through the department's Facebook page on the anniversary of Lavender's death.

The last information given about the homicide back in 2013 involved a white four-door sedan belonging to a

**INVESTIGATION, PAGE 2A**

## With SWAT near, suspected bomber blows himself up

JIM VERTUNO  
WILL WEISSERT  
The Associated Press

PFLUGERVILLE, Texas — As a SWAT team closed in, the suspected bomber whose deadly explosives terrorized Austin for three weeks used one of his own devices to blow himself up. But police warned that he could have planted more bombs before his death, and they cautioned the city to stay on guard.



Conditt

Mark Anthony Conditt, an unemployed college dropout who bought bomb-making materials at Home Depot, was tracked down using store surveillance video, cellphone signals and witness accounts of a customer shipping packages in a disguise

that included a blonde wig and gloves. His motive remained a mystery.

Police finally found the 23-year-old early Wednesday at a hotel in a suburb north of Austin known as the scene for filming portions of "Friday Night Lights." Officers prepared to move in for an arrest. When the suspect's sport utility vehicle began to drive away, they followed.

Conditt ran into a ditch on the side of the road, and SWAT officers approached. That's when he detonated a bomb inside the vehicle, Austin Police Chief Brian Manley said.

Police discovered a 25-minute video recording on a cellphone found with Conditt, which Manley said he considers a "confession" to the bombings. It described in great detail the differences among the bombs, he said.

**BOMBER, PAGE 2A**



The Associated Press

**AUSTIN BOMBINGS:** Officials remove a car of the suspect in a series of bombing attacks in Austin from the scene where he blew himself up as authorities closed in Wednesday in Round Rock, Texas.

### Weather

**MOSTLY SUNNY.**  
**HIGHS AROUND 70.**  
**LOWS AROUND 50.**  
SUNRISE: 7:15 A.M.  
SUNSET: 7:26 P.M.



**FRIDAY:**  
HIGH 72° LOW 60°  
**SATURDAY:**  
HIGH 77° LOW 56°

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### Quote of the day

"Do not the most moving moments of our lives find us without words?"  
**Marcel Marceau,**  
**French mime (1923-2007)**

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