
1948

A pick-up game is played somewhere by a group of artists—Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, Philip Pavia and Jackson Pollock included. It continues as an annual family picnic and softball game. Loosely played, recorded only in memories.

1954

A group of East End Artists play in Wilfrid Zogbaum's front yard. First grapefruit thrown, actually two and a coconut. Philip Pavia goes 3 for 3 on the unusual objects. Barney Rosset claimed it was the funniest thing he ever saw. "It was all downhill from there." Other players include Franz Kline, Leo Castelli, Joan Mitchell, Howard Kanovitz, Harold Rosenberg, Elaine de Kooning and Esteban Vicente.

1966

The Game moves to Syd Solomon's Georgica backyard and the battle line between Artists & Writers is drawn. Artists include: Jim Dine, Kyle Morris, Ray Parker, Warren Brandt, Esteban Vicente, Norman Bluhm, Ben Heller, Bill King, Larry Rivers, Herman Cherry, Sam Cohn and Howard Kanovitz. Writers include: Terry Southern, David Myers, Arthur Blaustein and Jerry Leiber.

1967

Game held at Syd Solomon's. De Kooning gets a hit and runs up the third base line. Writers win.

1968

Game moves to Herrick Park in the EH Village. It is supposed to be for the benefit of participating artists or Senator Eugene McCarthy's presidential campaign depending on who you ask. McCarthy tells Leif Hope that he would rather be remembered as a great 1st baseman than a senator. Saul Bellow, Neil Simon, Murray Kempton and Jack Graves of the EH Star play for the writers. Artists include Victor Caglioti, Adolph Gottlieb, Ray Parker, Syd Solomon, Ibram Lassaw, Esteban Vicente and Carlos Montoya, the Spanish guitarist. Writers win in a blowout 21-2.

1969

Senator Eugene McCarthy played 2nd. Dan Rattiner slid safely into 2nd. No detailed record found—an article in the EH Star in 1971 says the writers won that year.

1970

Game played for the Bob Gwathmey legal defense fund. He had been charged with desecration of the flag for flying a flag with the peace sign stitched over the stars. \$500 was raised. The case eventually goes to the Supreme Court. Gwathmey prevails. Writers win 9–8.

1971

Elaine Benson and Leif Hope manage for the Artists. The Writers line-up includes Peter Stone, Jack Newfield, Arthur Herzog and Woody Allen. Anne Jackson was there. Peter Dohanos, playing for the Artists, strikes out in the ninth with men on first and second. Jack Graves wrote “for the fifth straight year the Writers’ bats spoke louder than the Artists’. . . . Leif Hope, the third baseman, went 3-for-4 with a solo home run in the fifth. . . . With Artist runners at second and third, Peter Dohanos struck out to end the game, which was won by the Writers 10–6. . . . Leroy Friedman, the Writers’ cleanup hitter and third baseman, went 3-for-5 with three runs batted in, Eliot Asinof [“Eight Men Out”] went 3-for-5 also and drove in two runs. . . . Lee Minoff, Esteban Vicente (as dignified on the mound as in real life), and Bill King, the lanky sculptor, pitched for the Artists. Arthur Blaustein pitched for the Writers. Jimmy Lipton, the Writers’ second baseman, said it was the third year the Game had been played as a benefit. He said the middle-aged men would be glad to play a benefit “for anyone except Hitler, Franco, the Greek Colonels, and the D.A.R.” EH Star and New York Times’ music critic Ted Strongin wrote that one up. Gwen Verdon subbed for Arthur Schlesinger Jr. as the ball-and-strike umpire.” Writers win 10–6.

1972

Game played as a benefit for George McGovern’s Presidential campaign. The first woman to play in this modern formation of the game is Silvia Tennenbaum; though a writer by trade, she plays for the Artists. Other artists include Dustin Hoffman, Eli Wallach and sluggers Andy Mallone and John Johnson, who made their living as auto body painters. Leif Hope manages for the Artists. George Plimpton hits a grapefruit pitched by real artist Herman Cherry who entered the game to relieve Hoffman. Anne Jackson and Gwen Verdon are umpires. Disputes are rampant. Writers win 7–5.

1973

Abbie Hoffman, one time hippy icon and author of “Steal this Book” plays for the Artists wearing very tight bell-bottoms. He is reportedly a very good ball player. Elaine Benson manages the Artists. The “Serpico” scribe Peter Maas plays for the writers. Betty Freidan is the third base umpire. Head Start Day Care Center receives \$600. Writers win 13-12.

1974

Artists win for the first time. Senator McCarthy scores the Writers’ only run. The Star mentions the score of the game in an article about the senator’s poetry reading. Artists win 10-1.

1975

Peter Matthiessen, Wilfrid Sheed, Clifford Irving, Eugene McCarthy and Carl Stokes, former mayor of Cleveland, play for the Writers. Stokes hits a home run, collides with Howard Kanovitz at home knocking off his mask and cutting his nose. Writers win 18-14 in a game for the ages.

1976

The year of the woman; Florence Fabricant, Sara Compton, Linda George, Nancy Kelley, Beverly Shanzer and Susan Ringo among them. Willie Morris pitches for the writers. Writers win 5-4. Sag Harbor Softball is founded by John Leo—a group of mostly writers determined to play every Saturday from Memorial Day until Labor Day. The players are sworn to media silence.

1977

Word spreads that PEOPLE Magazine has a reporter in the crowd. Leif Hope, the Artist’s manager ushers in the ringer era by secretly flying in 2 national-caliber women’s softball players from the Hartford Falcons. The pair, identified as folk singers from Omaha, take over the pitching in the ninth inning as the Writers seem to be about to tie the game. Writers are furious, but Hope claims they started it by bringing in 2 lawyers who only wrote legal briefs. Artists win 13-7.

1978

E.L. Doctorow is the Writer's catcher. Writers win 9-8.

1979

Ken Auletta and Carl Bernstein play for the Writers. Avery Corman plays for the Artists, as does Paul Davis, in a rare appearance. The EH Police tow spectators cars from Newtown Lane. Writers win 13-8 or 11-8; no one is sure.

1980

John Irving and Clifford (no relation) play for the Writers, who are managed by Dr. David Pearce. Gael Greene plays in spiked heels. Ben Heller is a stand out player. Artists win 11-7.

1981

On a Sunday raindate, Howard Stringer, along with John Scanlon deliver fine performances of epigrammatic play by play and Scanlon will be named MVP during ceremonies that follow at the Laundry Restaurant. John Leo, a TIME Magazine editor, is the losing pitcher and also suffers the indignation of making the last out at bat. Artists win 9-7. Two in a row!

1982

Crushing any chance of an Artist's "three peat," Clifford Irving gets the game winning hit. Mort Zuckerman, the real estate magnate and publisher of the Atlantic Monthly—which it is alleged that he bought so he could play in the game as a writer—appears in his first game. Writers win 8-6.

1983

No one remembers to line up umpires or bring homeplate and bases: sections of the NY Times are used instead. Dick Cavett shows his stuff. Victor Caglioti makes like the Babe and triples deep to left for the Artists. John Irving blasts his own triple in the top of the fourth. Writers win 12-6.

1984

In the top of the first Eric Ernst smashes an opposite side of the field home run to set the tone for the Artists. Later, John Irving drops an Ernst fly ball for an inside the park homerun. Cigar and beer in hand, James Brady offers the play by play. Artists win 6-1.

1985

Pitching for the Writers, Mort Zuckerman silences the bats of the Artists' power hitters. Gael Greene enters the game barefoot as a pinch runner. Writers win 10-4 (or maybe 9-4; no one knows).

1986

Ken Auletta contributes 3 singles for the writers. Uri Berliner, of the Star, is MVP. Jeff Meizlik, Larry Castagna and Leif Hope get RBI's for the Artists in the top of the eighth. Peter Maas is the winning pitcher. It was Paul Simon's first year. Writers win 7-4.

1987

The US Government's \$20,000 contribution to the EH Day Care Center is cut. The Artists & Writers Game raises \$16,000 for the Center. Game is delayed one hour in a permit mix up with Ultimate Frisbee players. Norman Lear is among the writer's outfielders. Paul Simon is MVP. Writers win 11-8.

1988

Bill Clinton, the Governor of Arkansas, is the home plate umpire. Mr. August, Mort Zuckerman, is the MVP. Zuckerman is also the target of a protest by members of local 525 of the Washington DC chapter. They display signs demanding “Justice for Janitors.” Sports columnist Mike Lupica smashes a two-run triple over Paul Simon’s head. The Game was said to have been played before a record crowd of 2,000. It was estimated afterward that it had netted between \$20,000–\$25,000 for the East Hampton Day Care Learning Center. Suzanne O’Malley had come up with a winning idea, an auction of A-R-T-I-S-T-S posters. Eric Fischl’s “I,” of a golfer (back to the viewer) hitting the ball with his “nine iron,” resulted in a bidding war involving Bianca Jagger and Marvin Friedman, an art dealer. Friedman left the park thinking he’d made the winning bid of \$8,000. He wanted it signed. Ms. Jagger said she’d take it unsigned for \$8,200. Writers won 15–1. A spectator was overheard saying, “You know, you’d think with all the money that’s here, a collection could be taken up for a machine that would teach the Artists how to play ball.”

1989

The game was played after a one week rain delay. Heavyweight boxer, Gerry Cooney played for the artists. Why? “He does his best work on canvas,” says Hope. Paul Simon drove in Christopher Reeve in the bottom of the ninth, treating the Artists to a 7–6 win. Uri Berliner (who now is NPR’s business editor) said his throw from left field had Superman nailed at the plate, but that Mort Zuckerman had ill-advisedly intervened. Tom Clavin wrote: “The ball arrived ahead of the runner, Mr. Reeve slid at and then past home plate, no tag was applied as Mr. Zuckerman and the Writers’ catcher, Roger Podd, juggled the ball, the crowd roared and cameras clicked as Mr. Reeve leaped up and jumped onto the plate . . . and the Artists had a stunning win.” For his heroics, Mr. Reeve was named as the Game’s MVP. “It was one of the best games we ever had,” said John Leo, Ken Auletta’s co-manager. “I congratulate the Artists. This time they used only 10 ringers on their team instead of the usual 22.”

1990

A one-game winning streak is usually not grounds for bragging rights, but local artists painted such a bright picture of last year's 7-6 win in the annual Artists-Writers softball game that you'd think they'd achieved a major breakthrough. However, on Saturday, at East Hampton's Herrick Park, the Writers once again ate the Paletteers' dreams, and made the perennial underdogs eat humble pie. The score was 10-3 Writers. . . . John Scanlon was on the top of his game behind the PA mike. 'He doesn't appear to have his good stuff today,' he quipped as writer after writer teed off on Walter Bernard, the losing pitcher. 'Look at him, 76 years old and running with two fake hips and an artificial liver,' he said of Leif Hope. But the best line of the day was delivered by one of the 500-plus spectators when the fire whistle wailed late in the game. "It's probably the vice squad coming down to clean this bunch up." Ed Tivnan is named MVP for his flawless work at 3rd base. John Leo managed the writers. Jay McInerney, Mike Lupica and John Paul Newport all notch hits. George Plimpton, Ken Auletta, Richard Reeves and Ben Bradlee played for the writers. Sam Robards played for the artists, his mother Lauren Bacall called out raffle tickets.

1991

"With 10 runs on 17 hits—one for every defeat the Writers have wreaked since 1968, the year the storied softball game was first played as a benefit—the Artists smeared their prosaic counterparts at East Hampton's Herrick Park Saturday in convincing fashion. The Game was a mirror image of last year's score. Leif Hope said he'd predicted it during a locally-televised panel show on the Game last week. "People are now asking me to pick lottery numbers and who I like in the fifth at Belmont," said Hope, who disavows dynastic ambitions as "unpainterly. . . . It's the writers who are plagued by seriousness." Only twice before in the 24-year modern era series have the Scriveners (who hold a 17-7 lead) had so little to write home about. . . . The importance of being Ernst was also evident as the Artists' center fielder, whose first name is Eric and who played in the Game as a youth some 20 years ago, chipped in with four singles and made the game-ending catch. Others, besides the Game's MVP, Dennis Lawrence, who helped shape the Artists' victory were Jeff Meizlik, Stu Sleppin, Ed Hollander, Bill Hoffman, Roy Scheider, Sam Cohn, Regis Philbin, Patsy Powers, Lori Singer, John Alexander, Vic Caglioti, and Peter Rennert. Dick Cavett and Peter Boyle warmed the Artist's bench."

1992

Saturday's Artists-Writers softball game, the 24th contested as a fund-raiser, yielded, besides the obligatory celebrities, a tension-packed and well-played game that, amid some controversy, was won by the Artists for the second straight year. It was the Paletteers' eighth victory in the modern-day series; the Scribblers have won 16. In the end, it was the play of Billy Hofmann and Eric Ernst, painters who can wield a bat almost as well as a brush, who clinched the 5-2 win. The game opened with a curve ball thrown by the crafty Artists' manager, Leif Hope, in the form of four members of the national champion women's softball team who took the field in the top of the first inning. It was apparent from the first pitch, launched like a rocket by Pat Dufficy that these young ladies could play. Their team, The Raybestos, of Stratford, Conn., went 51-1 this season, ending with a national-championship win over the Redding (Calif.) Rebels. Dufficy recently recorded her 400th win. Roy Scheider, Peter Boyle, and Pele show up for the Artists. Peter Jennings, the ABC-TV anchor and Bridgehampton resident, was the first Writer to face the cannon. "Better get a chest protector," yelled a teammate, Mike Lupica, the New York Daily News sports columnist, as the first ball whizzed in. Jennings, however, crossed up the Artists by laying down a perfect bunt single. Dufficy, aroused, then blew away Mort Zuckerman, who, according to the announcer, John Scanlon, "owns everything," Lupica, and the former Washington Post editor, Ben Bradlee, to end the inning. . . . The crowd roared with the appearance of the comedian Chevy Chase in the fourth. Though he was hors de combat—"His wrist was bandaged, but he said he elbow was injured," mused a writer—Chase posed for pictures with the actor Alec Baldwin, and autographed balls that later were auctioned off, some for as much as \$100. The Artists, who have always welcomed performing artists into their fold, responded as if on cue to take the lead for good.

1993

The pen again proved mightier than the palette knife Saturday as the Writers won the Artists-Writers game for the first time in three years. Seven homers, steady pitching, and some heads-up defense helped the Writers to their 9–6 victory. According to the Game’s impresario, Leif Hope, the game raised over \$36,000, an unprecedented sum, for the East Hampton Day Care Center and the Retreat, a shelter for battered women and children. . . . When the clock struck 2, the Writers were nowhere to be seen. Maybe they were huddling. Or maybe, as the announcer, Howard Stringer (CBS-TV), quipped during the Writers’ explosive fifth inning, writers just don’t wake up until the late afternoon. . . . “Do I qualify as a writer-producer?” one man was heard asking Hope before the game. “I’m a partner in an ad agency, so I’m an artist too.” Mort Zuckerman, the publishing and real estate magnate, pitched with an increasingly steady hand throughout the game, despite ribbing from the broadcast booth. “Guess what, ladies. Mort Zuckerman is still single . . . Mort’s doing what he’s best at, acting in an underhanded way. . . .” The Writers’ home runs were authored by Mike Lupica, Zuckerman, Jay McInerney (the game’s MVP), Scott Silverman (WEHM’s sports announcer), Lee Minetree, ad manager for the Independent, Jack Graves, the Star’s sports editor, and Brett Shevack (a tape measure job that hit the foul pole abutting the tennis courts). Alec Baldwin commits a throwing error at third base, nailing a spectator in the chest, but plays all nine innings. Lauren Bacall reads winning ticket numbers.

1994

A crowd estimated at about 3,000, ringing the Herrick Park diamond off Newtown Lane, looked on, mostly with amusement, but at times with admiration, as the Artists brushed the Writers off 6–5. The first pitch is thrown by Tony Randall. The benefit series picture now stands at 17–9 in the Writers’ favor. . . . The Writers outhit the Artists 15–12, but the Artists had the big extra-base blows, a two-run home run by the actor D.B. Sweeney in the top of the sixth inning, and a solo shot by Jeff Meizlik, a sculptor who every year makes the trip up from Maryland, in the eighth. Sweeney, who played Shoeless Joe Jackson in “Eight Men Out,” a film about the Chicago Black Sox scandal, was definitely in character. The Artists were trailing 4–2 when he got all of a Mort Zuckerman 2–0 pitch, sending it way over the center field fence, scoring Ellamae Gurney, an East Hampton High School senior, and the crowd favorite, ahead of him. Howard Stringer, president of the CBS television network, has proved to be a worthy successor to John Scanlon, with whom he used to share the mike. An Englishman by birth, Mr. Stringer brings a slightly off-beat touch to The Game. Some Stringerisms follow: “Mort Zuckerman wouldn’t know a salary cap if he were wearing one . . . That’s Walter Isaacson, a man known for being on the cutting edge of the passe. His biography of Henry Kissinger was on the best-seller list. For 25 minutes. . . . Jimmy Lipton is now catching for the Writers. It suits him to a tea. . . . [After Sam Robards, the Artists’ third baseman, caught Paul Simon in a rundown] People will go a long way to catch Paul Simon. . . . Paul Simon switched sides this year and plays for the writers. Leif Hope is crushed. Wesley Walker, of the NY Jets, plays for the Artists to try to make up for the loss of Simon. Jerry Della Femina is one person who looks better with a catcher’s mask. . . . Time is running out on the Writers, but isn’t it always?”

1995

The Artists-Writers Softball Game, played at East Hampton's Herrick Park Saturday to benefit the East Hampton Day Care Center, the Retreat, and East End Hospice, was no-contest from the start as the Artists sculpted a huge lead in the early going. After two-and-a-half innings of play, the Paletteers led 8-1, thanks to a seven-run second inning in which Ed ("The Brothers McMullen") Burns blasted a three-run home run, and Jeffrey Meizlik and David Belafonte each drove in a pair. Alec Baldwin bats .667 by going four for six for the Artists' squad. Roy Scheider is the victorious pitcher. Meizlik, a sculptor, who went 4-for-4, was the game's most valuable player, winning a \$2,000 TAG Heuer watch. The Writers got on the scoreboard late in the game, but by that time the Fat Lady had sung and left the park. The final was 17-11, or thereabouts.

1996

Not since Superman bowled over Roger Podd at home plate with two out in the bottom of the ninth in 1989 had such an exciting Artists-Writers Game been played, everyone agreed. The annual game had everything—a Ruthian clout by Marty Lyons, the former Jets' linebacker, that tied the score at 5-5 in the top of the ninth; several confabs among the four umpires, one of them, Stephen Breyer, a United States Supreme Court Justice; two bone-crushing collisions, one at the plate, one at first base, and an exciting finish that had the Writers, who hadn't won in the past two years, jumping around like Little Leaguers. "I've never seen Mort Zuckerman so happy—he was like a wild man," Leif Hope, the Game's impresario and the Artists' manager, said afterward. Also extremely pleased with the come-from-behind 6-5 win was Mike Lupica, the Daily News sportswriter, whose error at shortstop leading off the game and a failure to charge a subsequent grounder helped the Artists to an early lead. . . . Lyons's blast in the top of the ninth had the crowd gasping as one as the mushy ball rocketed over the 20-foot-high fence that encloses the park's tennis courts and landed at the base of one of the nets. "When you're a Jet you're a Jet all the way," sang the announcer, Peter Stone, as Lyons trotted around the bases. "Jesus, what a smack," said Hope. "Definitely the longest I've ever seen in an Artists-Writers game." Hope had hailed Lyons as "an artist on the football diamond" in announcing his recruitment to the Artists' banner. Gerry Cooney, a friend of Lyons's, who also played for the Artists, was said by one wag to have "spent a lot of time on the canvas." In the top of the seventh, Cooney knocked the Writers' first baseman, Andrew Lack, the president of NBC News, into next week, setting off a row amongst the opposing teams and causing a lengthy delay during which Lack, implored by Stone not to lose his temper, repossessed his wits. "Two of the umpires said Lack's foot was not on the base," Hope said later. "He moved into Gerry's line. He's 250 pounds, you know, so it's hard to stop." Jerry Della Femina gets a base hit.

1997

The Writers made it two in a row at the annual Softball Game played in muggy heat before a large crowd of about 3,000 at East Hampton's Herrick Park Saturday, scripting a 16–7 victory at the Artists' expense. Following Eartha Kitt's slambang rendition of the national anthem, the Artists, who had lost the coin toss, began with a breakthrough of sorts, scoring three runs off the Writers' pitcher, Mort Zuckerman, in the top of the first. The Writers, however, riposted in the bottom half with seven runs on six hits, the big blows being two-run doubles by Ken Auletta and Zuckerman. And so it went. The hapless Paletteers were limited to just one run—the result of a sac fly by Stu Sleppin in the top of the ninth—over the course of their last five at-bats. John Alexander played for the Artists. The Artists, as it turned out, outhit the Writers 19 to 14, but they committed four errors to the Writers' three, and Roy Scheider walked four while Zuckerman walked none.

1998

Displaying awesome power, the Artists won Saturday's Artists-Writers Softball Game 11–8, thus taking a 6–5 edge in the hugely popular benefit games that have been played since 1948. The Writers cling to a substantial 19–12 lead since The Game began to be played as a benefit at East Hampton's Herrick Park in 1968, but clearly the Artists, whose lineup has been bolstered in recent years by hard-hitting film actors and former pro ball players, are in the ascendance. The fact creates a problem for The Game's impresario, Leif Hope, an artist himself, who has always maintained that artists, because of their natural bonhomie, are better losers than the writers, closeted loners, who, when in the public eye, tend to be viciously competitive and vitriolic. Tom Clohessy of the Artists was named the game's most valuable player, yielding a TAG Heuer watch said to be like the one Bruce Willis wore in "Armageddon," a fact that was not lost on the Writers. Richard Wiese was the MVP for the losers, a designation that yielded a fine fountain pen. Eli Wallach, an Old-Timer feted in pre-Game ceremonies along with Philip Pavia, Lou Trakis, and David Slivka, threw out the first ball.

1999

“What a game!” everyone was saying after Saturday’s annual Artists-Writers softball game—an agon played out under darkened skies before a good-sized crowd undeterred by the soggy weather. The bottom of the eighth inning proved to be key in the Writers’ 10–7 win, which knotted the modern-era mark at six wins apiece, but upped the Writers’ margin to 20–12 since the Game has been played as a benefit. . . . Leif Hope, the Game’s major domo, had assembled, for the crowd’s entertainment and the Writers’ chagrin, a very strong team of college and high school female softballers, though their playing time, on the Artists’ behalf, was limited to the bottom of the third and the top of the fourth. Laura Maloney, a Hampton Bays High School windmill, after Brett Shevack, the Writers’ leadoff hitter in the third, lined one of her fastballs into the glove of Corrine Vish at second, was told to take it easy—a disconcerting restraint that she managed to overcome, retiring the Scribes without a run.

2000

The Paletteers erased the Scriveners 11–10 in the annual agon Saturday, overcoming a five-run deficit in the bottom of the ninth. . . . Down to their last out and trailing by four runs, the Artists set about overturning the generally held view that they have feet of clay. A base hit by Michael Cane brought two in, for 10–8, and a smash by Dennis Lawrence sent Randy Rosenthal, who’d come in to pinch-run, to third. That brought up Billy Strong—with two out and runners at the corners. Strong drove the ball hard down the third baseline, sending Brett Shevack, who speared it, to one knee. As Rosenthal headed for the plate with the Artists’ ninth run, Shevack threw across the diamond, but the ball got fumbled by Ken Auletta, and David Beucher, pinch-running for Lawrence, came all the way around to score what appeared to be the game-tying run. Apparently thinking the ball was dead, Auletta hesitated in retrieving it, but, covering his bases, the first baseman threw home over the heads of spectators as Strong rounded third—a throw that arrived in time to cut down Strong as he slid home with what the Artists hoped would be the winning run. A huge, benches-clearing debate ensued, during which Dan Rattiner, the first base umpire, who reportedly had initially ruled the ball in play, was persuaded by the Writers that indeed the ball had been dead, and that therefore, in observance of the ground rule limiting runners in such cases to the base they were headed for plus an extra base, Beucher, who had been on first, should return to third and Strong should return to second. When play resumed, the score had been rolled back to 10–9 Writers, Beucher was standing on third and Strong on second, Stu Sleppin was up, and there were still two outs. Sleppin, as Eric Petersen and Eric Ernst before him, worked Harry Javer for a walk, loading the bases for Tom Clohessy, who, after taking a strike and sending a long fly ball out of play down the left field line, brought down the house with a hot grounder between third and short that scored Beucher with the tying run and Strong with the game-winner. “Javer’s on suicide watch,” said a joyous Sleppin amid the tumult and shouting. “If there’s a hole in this field, he’s in it. And don’t forget my walk. That was huge. That loaded the bases and set up Tommy.”

2001

'Writers Carry Through On Threat To Trounce Artists' —The Game's defining moment came in the bottom of the seventh inning as Tom Clohessy, the 1998 MVP, strode to the plate with two outs, bases loaded, and the Writers leading 10–6, prompting a Writers' conference on the mound. The big filmmaker, in whose power it lay to tie the game with one stroke, smashed a Mort Zuckerman delivery down the third baseline, but Brett Shevack, who was to be named the game's MVP, dove, made the stop, and, on his belly, reached out and tagged the bag for the inning-ending force out. That really was to be the Artists' last hurrah. . . . When Zuckerman, a real estate and publishing mogul, faced Clohessy in the ninth, some of his teammates urged caution, but Richard Reeves was heard to observe from the sidelines that "Mort didn't get where he is by being dumb." "We did, though," said Bruce Weber, a feature writer for The New York Times. It fell to Dale Berra, a former Major Leaguer, who had stroked a double off the fence for a 1–0 Artists' lead in the first, to make the last out on a long fly that sent Harry Javer, the Writers' center fielder, to the warning track. The younger Berra had come to the game with his father, Yogi, who caught the first ball, thrown to him on one hop by the actor Eli Wallach. Oh, the final score was 16–8 Writers.

2002

'Artists Snatch Defeat From the Jaws Of Victory' —The Paletteers had to dig deep to lose this one, but dig deep they did, snatching a 9–7 defeat from the jaws of victory in crunch time of Saturday's Artists-Writers Softball Game, which was played as a benefit for the East Hampton Day Care Learning Center, the Retreat, and East End Hospice. Kristin Davis, the primmest of the "Sex and the City" quartet, chauffeured East Hampton Day Care kids to the mound for the pre-game ceremonies and threw out the first ball. . . . Rick Wiese earned co-MVP honors for his game-winning home run in the top of the 10th.

2003

'The Men of the Pen Eat Artists' Dreams' —The Artists, who have customarily been painted by their manager, Leif Hope, as far less hung up than the Writers when it comes to such prosaic matters as winning and losing, proved to be every bit as fierce and competitive as their Scrivener foes in Saturday's benefit softball game played at East Hampton's Herrick Park. The Writers won 11–9, as is often the case, but they had a close brush with defeat, Jeff Hilford's two-out home run in the top of the ninth inning, which tied the score at 9–9, serving as prologue to a dramatic conclusion in the 10th.

2004

'Deluge Ends It at 9-9' —The deluge that had been forecast for Saturday afternoon couldn't have come at a more dramatic time. The Artists, who had been done out of a run in the third inning because it had been scored by a member of an all-star traveling women's softball team, had tied the count at 9-9 in the bottom of the fifth on a leadoff home run by Jeffrey Meizlik, a sculptor, and a two-out single to left field by Tom Clohessy, a two-time former MVP. But like the weather, the Writers, whose first two batters were retired by the Artists' pitcher, Roy Scheider, threatened in the top of the sixth. With Mike Lupica on second, and Lee Minetree, who had homered earlier, on first, Brett Shevack, the third baseman, hit a hot grounder to short. Eric Ernst came up with it, and fired the ball to David Geiser, Mercedes Ruehl's husband, at first after missing the force at second. Shevack beat Ernst's throw, but Geiser's relay to Randy Rosenthal at the plate arrived in time to nail the sliding sportswriter just as the rains came. So, for the first time in the storied Artists-Writers history, the Game of 2004 went into the record books as a tie. Bert Sugar, the boxing and baseball announcer, said later to some spectators huddled under Herrick Park's restroom passageway, that "It wouldn't have mattered if Lupica had scored. The game would still have been a tie because the Artists didn't get their at-bats." Looking out at the parking lot afterward as the rain continued to come down, Sugar said, "I hope this ends soon. I've got to be somewhere Wednesday."

2005

'Artists' Pretty Picture' —It seems of late that the Writers and Artists are trading psyches, for it was the Artists this year who seemed hell-bent on winning, and the Writers who took the 11-5 loss philosophically. A drummer, Eddie McCarthy, whose band, Notes From the Underground, is working on "10 half-finished songs," led the way. Not since Marty Lyons has anyone hit the ball so far as this East Hamptoner, who took the Writers' pitcher, Mort Zuckerman, deep in the top of the second, and effectively wrote finish to the Scribes' hopes with a grand salami in the sixth that put the Artists up 8-3. . . . Larry Brown, the new New York Knicks' coach, put in a brief appearance on the Writers' side. "He signs contracts," Ken Auletta said by way of explanation. Rudy Giuliani, New York City's mayor, who called the balls and strikes, cleaned up the strike zone, but, in the end, it mattered little to the Writers and their publishing mogul pitcher, Mort Zuckerman, who became yesterday's news.

2006

'A Walk in the Park' —The Writers wreaked revenge upon the Artists in Saturday's Artists-Writers Softball Game at East Hampton's Herrick Park to the tune of 17–9. A crowd-pleaser however ineptly or eptly it was played, the annual agon was a benefit for East End Hospice, East End Day Care, and Phoenix House. . . . Roy Scheider, who, despite having had cancer, pitched through the first six innings for the Artists, a stint that Mike Lupica, Brett Shevack, Walter Bernard and everyone else polled afterward said merited the most valuable player award. "What he did was amazing," said Lupica, the Writers' feisty leadoff hitter. . . . When Mark Green, the state attorney general candidate, turned on an inside pitch and splattered the area in front of home plate with pieces of grapefruit, Bert Sugar, who usually broadcasts boxing matches, said, "Roy Hobbs! Mark, I've always said you have appeal." A bench-clearing Talmudic discussion took place in the bottom of the eighth after the Artists' John Longmire, who had singled, and had run to second on an overthrow of first base, had been tagged out by Lee Minetree when he overran the bag. Giuliani had called Longmire out, but the Artists argued that the ball was dead inasmuch as the overthrow had "gone under the yellow line" behind first base. The Writers, "for the first time in history," according to Tom Clohessy, one of the Artists' stalwarts, yielded on the point, and Longmire was allowed to go back to first.

2007

'The Artists Show Their True Colors' —The Artists, who like to paint themselves as insouciant underdogs, showed their true colors at East Hampton's Herrick Park Saturday, rejecting the Writers 13–5 in what was said to be the 59th anniversary of the Artists-Writers Softball Game, which traces its roots to zany carryings-on in the front yard of the late sculptor Wilfrid Zogbaum in Springs. While the Writers dominated the game in its early days, earning for themselves a reputation as winning-obsessed, the teams have been on a pretty equal footing for the past two decades, a span in which the Writers have won 10 and the Artists 9. The 2004 game ended in a 9–9 tie. Before the Artists, who lost the coin toss, took the field, East Hampton Village Mayor Paul F. Rickenbach Jr. presented Leif Hope with a proclamation that cited his untiring work on behalf of the the game's three charities, and proclaimed Aug. 18 as Leif Hope Day. "At least for two or three hours," the self-effacing Artists' leader said afterward.

2008

The Artists and Writers softball teams played so well at East Hampton's Herrick Park Saturday afternoon that a huge crowd, used to zany miscues, expansive strike zones, Talmudic rules controversies, and un-authoritative hitting, was stunned. It was the 60th anniversary of the Game and the 1st pitch was thrown by America's Top Model Kim Stolz. When the dust had settled, the Artists, whose three-run fifth inning painted over an early Writers' 2-0 lead, had won 4-2, and thus had evened the count at 10-10 (with one tie) in benefit Artists-Writers softball games played over the past 21 years. It's been a long while since the Writers, who still lead by half a dozen games since the Game began being played as a benefit for charity in the late 1960s, were the stuff of legend.

Meanwhile, the Artists, once lowly and insouciant, have undergone a renaissance, their numbers swelled by well-sculpted stars of stage and screen, collectors, musicians, boxers who have spent time on the canvas, and politicians practicing the art of the possible. Ask Leif Hope, the Game's impresario and the Artists' manager, about his players' bona fides, and he will tell you that "the Writers started it a long time ago when they brought in two lawyers from California who 'wrote legal briefs.'" It's still a bit of a mystery as to why the East Hampton Village police chief, Gerry Larsen, played this year for the Artists. When questioned, Hope shrugged his shoulders, and said, "He wanted to play. What am I going to do? Tell the chief of police he can't play?" Actually, the chief, whom one would have thought the Writers would have claimed since he has in his career written tickets and has helped to uphold the social contract. He did something artistic when he circled the bases in the bottom half of the fifth inning to score the Artists' first run. . . . Bert Sugar, announcing the game with James Lipton, whose 'Inside the Actors Studio' interview show is once again an Emmy nominee, said, barely able to credit the verdict of his own eyes, "It's the top of the ninth, two outs, and the Artists are winning 4-2." The mighty Richard Wiese was at bat for the Writers, always a threat to rewrite the script. The Artists' Lori Singer and Brenda Siemer Scheider shimmied and cried out, 'Richard! Richard! Look at us!' Wiese fouled off Joe Sopiak's first pitch into the crowd off the right-field line. Then came ball one and ball two. Wiese swung mightily at Sopiak's fourth delivery, popping the ball up just a few feet in front of him down the first baseline. Tom Clohessy tried desperately to get around the batter to make the catch that would have ended the game, but, with the Writer blocking his way, could not, and the ball fell to the earth as the Artists, whose abstract expressions had turned beet red, cried, "Interference! Interference!" After weighing the prose and cons, Dan Rattiner, the ball-and-strike umpire, who had been besieged by importunate Writers and Artists, decided on a do-over. Wiese stood back in and Sopiak toed the rubber as the players and spectators held their breath. And the pitch. . . .

A high fly ball to right, well within the field of play. . . .

With the catch, Brenda Scheider, whose late husband, Roy, had been the Artists' perennial pitcher, gleefully raised her arms and embraced Lori Singer. The artfully played Game of 2008 was in the book.

2009

The Artists-Writers Softball Game Saturday was marred by beautiful catches, timely hitting, and heads-up play. French actor, Jean Reno made his debut by throwing out the first pitch. Hockey legend, Rod Gilbert joined the writers. However, a walk-off error in the 10th inning decided it in traditional fashion as Benito Vila, who'd been on first base, came all the way around to score when the Artists' third baseman, Tom Clohessy, who had bobbled Rick Leventhal's one-out grounder, and the Artists' first baseman, Jeff Meizlik, exchanged errant throws across the diamond. Practically the entire Writers team trailed Vila, the sportswriter for The Sag Harbor Express, down the third baseline to home plate, where he emphatically put a 12-11 win in the book for the Scribes, who had been bettered by the Artists in the last two epics. The never-say-die Writers authored four runs in the bottom of the eighth to make it 11-10. (Ronnette Riley, the Artists' scorekeeper, protested that they were batting out of order, but, as usual, to no avail.) The Artists tied the score at 11-all in the top of the ninth, and behind the pitching of Joe Sopiak, shut the Writers down in the bottom half. The Artists had runners on first and second with two outs in the top of the 10th, but Mike Pellman's head-over-heels catch of Gregg Bello's blooper over third was, for the Artists, most unpalettable. "When it comes to character, the Artists won," Leif Hope said later at a party at the Lodge, where it was announced that the Game had raised around \$70,000 for its beneficiaries—the East Hampton Day Care Learning Center, Phoenix House, and East End Hospice. Mike Lupica, who went 4-for-6 in the Writers' leadoff spot, was named the MVP. Bert Sugar, the boxing commentator, agreed with Hope that the game had been a knockout. A caption under a photo of Carl Bernstein at bat said, "Looking like a man in charge, Carl Bernstein left the Artists with their hearts in their throats as he went deep."

2010

'Artists Hang One on Writers in the 10th' —Well, yet another well-played game. And yes, it was fun, but if this keeps up, the joshing having to do with Scrivener and Paletteer ineptitude will have to stop. The Artists won the annual agon at East Hampton's Herrick Park Saturday afternoon 15–14, in 10 innings. The Writers, if you remember, won 12–11 last year, also in 10. Things started in typical fashion when Kim Terrero, the Phoenix House director, which is one of the three beneficiaries, was beamed by an errant throw during batting practice as she stood behind the plate with a group of others who were about to participate in the opening ceremony. . . .With a two-run, two-out double in the top of the 10th, Ed Hollander gave the Artists the lead for good. . . . It was Lupica's turn at bat with the Writers down by one, and with two outs and a runner at first, in the bottom of the 10th. Jeff Hilford, who had batted out of order in the fifth, and who would have done so in the ninth had the Artists not decided to finally exhibit their rage, strode into the batter's box. The count went full as players and spectators held their collective breath. Would Hilford eat the Artists' dreams? It had happened before. And the pitch. . . . A high fly ball to left. Josh Charles, star of Good Wife, gathered it in, and that was all she wrote. The rookie, Charles, was named MVP.

2011

'Barbaric Yawps Sounded Over Roofs as Writers Win' —Going into Saturday's 63rd Artists-Writers Softball Game, the opposing camps were in a dead heat in games played since 1988, with the Writers (who lead 25–18–1 in the modern era) and Artists each having won 11, with one tie. Real Housewife, Countess LuAnn took the mound for the Artists and gave up 5 runs in as many minutes. Pulled from the game, the real play began.

. . . . It was anyone's ballgame going down the stretch after Eddie McCarthy in the top of the eighth authored a three-run shot (his second home run and fifth run batted in of the afternoon) that brought the Artists to within 11–10. Ken Auletta, the Writers' player-manager, looked pained as the ball left McCarthy's bat, but lived to have the last laugh as the Writers came back with six runs of their owns in the bottom of the eighth, effectively breaking the 23-year tie. "You have to consider this a moral victory," said Ed Hollander, on the Artists' behalf. "First, they jumped out to that big [8–0] lead, they had a New York Yankee [Jim Leyritz, a hero of the Yankees' 1996 World Series win] in their lineup, and a college all-American."

2012

'A Happy Ending for Writers' —No longer a comedy of errors, the Artists-Writers annual softball game has become discomfortingly well-played in recent years, this past Saturday's mano-a-mano struggle in East Hampton's Herrick Park, being no exception. In the end, the Writers' egos were spared serious bruising as they emerged from the dogfight as 12–11 victors in 10 innings, thus taking a 26–18–1 lead in modern times, and going up 12–11–1 in the post-modern era. More likely than the Writers to treat victory and defeat as the imposters they are, the Artists took the loss philosophically. "It's still fun, though we gave it to them," Billy Strong said, with a smile, as he left the field, his bat and mitt slung over his shoulder. He was referring to an unaccountably unclaimed two-out pop fly to center field in the top of the third inning that led to three Writer runs, and to a leadoff ground rule double under the center field fence in the 10th that "should have been caught." Its author, David Baer, last year's MVP, and a former East Hampton Star intern, had initially thought it was a homer, but was called back to second. He scored soon after with the tie-breaking run, and the Writers, again with two outs, appended two more, including the game-winner, sandwiched around a huge round of applause and the wonderment that greeted a most famous spectator, former President Bill Clinton, who helped umpire the 1988 Game when he was governor of Arkansas. The Game was played with a one week rain delay. Many celebs were not able to come. Off the roster were Lawrence O'Donnell, George Stephanopoulos, Mort Zuckerman, Ali Wentworth, Giada DeLaurentiis, and Katie Lee. Clinton saved the day for the crowds. Royal Pains star, Mark Feuerstein was the rookie of the year for the artists.
