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**"The Westport Jets meet the Beatles: A Baby Boomer
Adventure" by Peter Jedick**



Paperback Writer: Author Peter Jedick's 'Westport Jets Meet the Beatles' mines Fab Four CLE lore

By [Peter Chakerian, cleveland.com](https://www.cleveland.com)

CLEVELAND, Ohio — Picture it: 1964. The transistor radios are buzzing, the world's gone mad for four lads from Liverpool and in one corner of Cleveland, a ragtag Pony League baseball team called the Westport Jets hatches a plan so audacious it borders on myth.

They're going to meet The Beatles. Not just see them — *meet* them.

That's the setup for longtime Cleveland writer Peter Jedick's new novel, "The Westport Jets Meet the Beatles: A Baby Boomer Adventure" — a nostalgic romp that feels equal parts "Stand by Me" and "A Hard Day's Night." It's the kind of story that crackles with innocence, mischief and the sense that anything was possible before adulthood came calling.

Jedick, who's been chronicling Cleveland stories for decades, pulls from his own West Park backyard memories here. The neighborhood feels lived-in, full of corner stores, baseball diamonds and summer afternoons that stretch out for days. The boys — the Jets — are dreamers, schemers... and all heart.

When they hear that The Beatles are coming to Cleveland, they cook up a plan that only 13-year-olds in the throes of

Beatlemania could imagine: sneak, charm or stumble their way into the Fab Four's orbit.



Police Inspector Carl Bear of Cleveland's Juvenile Bureau, left, orders George Harrison and the other members of the British pop group The Beatles, off the stage of the Public hall, Cleveland, Ohio, Sept. 16, 1964 as teenagers rushed the stage.
AP

It's a premise that sounds simple, but Jedick uses it to capture something rare — that shimmer of youth just before cynicism sets in.

After he finished publishing two Cleveland history books (“League Park” and “Cleveland: Where the East Coast Meets the Midwest”) he decided to try his hand at writing novels.

“I had the idea to write one about how cool it was playing little league baseball when I was growing up because I loved baseball,” Jedick told Cleveland.com and The Plain Dealer in a recent interview.



Jedick's father's drawing of the young baseball enthusiast when he was 11 years old. "Note the ever-present baseball cap," he said. Courtesy of Peter Jedick

“But I needed a plot. I thought it would be fun to have us kids fight off some big developers who wanted to build more streets on top of the baseball field that our parents built for us growing up,” he added. “That was our original field before they built the Puritas Boys Baseball League fields for the local little league.”

It’s where I-480 and I-71 intersect today but they weren’t built yet, he said.

In 1993 when the movie “The Sandlot” came out, Jedick was “mad, I thought they stole my idea,” but I never gave up on the idea of writing about that neighborhood baseball team.

He’s right to compare the book to adventures had by Sawyer and Finn as he did in the preamble before its release: there’s a same sense of adventure, mischief and moral innocence. His writing has a local, plainspoken charm — no literary pretense, just heart.

You can feel his affection for the characters, for the music and for a Cleveland that still had drive-in theaters, radio DJs with nicknames and dreams that reached all the way to jolly ol’ England.

For Baby Boomers — or anyone who’s felt that jolt of discovery when music changed their world — the nostalgia hits hard.

Jedick nails the fever of Beatlemania: the haircuts, the hysteria, the sense that a new world was unfolding in 4/4 time.

But he also keeps the story small, rooted in friendship. The Jets’ bond — full of teasing, loyalty, boyish bravado — gives the

book its pulse. The Beatles are the catalyst; the friendship is the reward.

“All the adventures in the book are based on things we actually did, except actually meeting the Beatles,” Jedick confided.

“Although I had to change the details to make the plot work, once I committed to the Beatles, the book practically rolled out of my mind. It only took a couple months to put it together.”

Jedick thanks Cleveland rock and roll photographer George Shuba for his role and inspiration. When he was inducted into the Cleveland Press Club Hall of Fame, Shuba gave Jedick a couple of his Beatles photos, which hang in the author’s office.

“I look at them every day so the Beatles are always on my mind.”

Why do the Beatles still endure? Jedick thinks it’s because their music is easy to listen to.

“You can sing along with them, their lyrics are pure genius and they kept evolving as the years went by,” Jedick said of the Fab Four’s musical trajectory. “For about 20 years they kept producing hit after hit after hit. Not many bands can match them, if any.”

The beats of the story — the planning, the mishaps, the big moment — are like the group’s early songs: more comforting than surprising.

You get a sense he wrote it for folks who still haul out their Cleveland Beatles tickets (and their kids and grandkids who do the same with their McCartney stubs). But that's sort of the point.

This isn't meant to be gritty realism or literary experimentation. It's meant to make you smile, remember your own impossible dreams and hum "She Loves You" under your breath as you read.

And in that, Jedick absolutely succeeds. He gives readers a soft-focus snapshot of a time when baseball gloves smelled like oiled leather, AM radio was king and meeting your heroes wasn't impossible — just improbable enough to make the dream worth chasing.

So while "The Westport Jets Meet the Beatles" may not break new ground, it doesn't need to. It's a love letter — to Cleveland, to youth, to the moment the Beatles landed and changed everything. In Jedick's capable, good-natured hands, it feels like coming home.



The Pony League "Westport Jets" were inspired by a group of little leaguers, including Jedick. He's second from the left in the front row "holding my Woodie Held baseball bat. I'm the only 8-year-old with a bunch of 10–12-year-olds." Courtesy of Peter Jedick