To: All MSBL/MABL League Members

I have some very exciting news to share with you about the evolution of the Men’s Senior Baseball League (MSBL) and the Men’s Adult Baseball League (MABL) in this, our 25th anniversary.

To start our 25th year and build a foundation for the future of MSBL/MABL, we have decided to transition from hard print, HardBall Magazine to a new online Web Portal.

HardBall Magazine, the official magazine of the Men’s Senior Baseball League and the Men’s Adult Baseball League, has chronicled the amazing growth of the MSBL from its roots, with four teams on Long Island 27 years ago (1986), to over 3,400 teams nationwide today. Through stories on its players, growth of its leagues, calendars of events, tournament coverage, wonderful personal league stories and the many generous occasions where they support each other, HardBall helped create a strong sense of community from across the country. We need to overwhelmingly thank Jackie Piro and Jeff McGaw for their continued excellent work and contributions that will always be remembered.

Many decisions in life are very difficult. With the onset of our 25th year anniversary (1988-2012), and with the changing time in technology, we are now making a very significant investment in our new website. This decision was reached with input and consultation from over 40 league Presidents who unanimously felt the timing was right and will benefit all members. The same staff and resources that brought you HardBall Magazine will be involved with our new site.

(Continued inside)
MSBL is looking to utilize and leverage the advances in the social media field and other technologies to give our members even more value and a stronger sense of community moving forward. In concert with Essent Corporation of Easton, Pennsylvania, the MSBL is creating a new, interactive website that will do everything that HardBall did, only better. On top of that, it will roll in all of the things that the original MSBL website did, aspired to do, and could not do. All of these features and more will be rolled out through the course of 2012.

One big difference is when we write stories, due to the time-consuming process of accumulating information, writing it, editing and printing, you won’t have to wait four to six months before you read them.

Everything will be based and motivated by content. It will be intended to be read as a “current” magazine with new stories each week, including the same extensive tournament coverage, individual league/player features and opportunities for all leagues to submit their own current stories. Examples of the stories/sections for the new site include:

| Newly designed Hall of Fame and Lifetime Award winners recognition sections | On-Line Polls |
| Players and Videos of the Week | St. Louis MSBL acquiring its own field |
| League of the Month | Columbus league raising $5,000 for charity |
| LABL expands to 70 teams – Why? How? | Product specials featured weekly to our members |
| Faces in the Crowd | Calendar of events |
| President and Manager password-protected section with detailed information materials |

In addition, you will gain access to much of the excellent archived HardBall features, instructional articles, etc. from past issues.

In 1991 HardBall founder, the late Dan Piro, and MSBL founder Steve Sigler wanted to create a magazine that would be a source of pride to members and put all that MSBL has to offer on display. In many ways we delivered to that vision. A similar vision drives the current move toward that end. With Essent’s technology expertise leading the way, we are currently building the complicated framework that will support our new and improved site. At the same time we are defining, refining, and creating content that will drive members to the site. We intend it to be richer and more comprehensive than the printed magazine.

People of diverse professional backgrounds come together every week on MSBL/MABL diamonds across the country. The league is teeming with stories of universal interest than can inspire, entertain and inform. We plan on painting the pictures of what MSBL is all about, both on and off the field, through stories and features on our new website.

HardBall was the premier amateur baseball publication in the country, and we believe this new website will be all that and more. We can’t wait to unveil it and to show you why, once again, MSBL is the premier amateur baseball organization in the country.

Thank you for your continued support and participation. 25 years – Wow!!

Steve Sigler
President, MSBL National
SPORTS STORE

On behalf of Anaconda Sports, I would like to congratulate MSBL on the upcoming 25th Anniversary of this great baseball organization. Additionally, a special thank you goes out to Jackie Piro and Hardball Magazine for their great support and friendship.

Bill Carey

**BBCOR BASEBALL BATS**

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<th>SKU</th>
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<td>$199.95</td>
<td>Slugger 2012 TPX Omaha BBCOR Adult Baseball Bat. -3oz., 2-5/8&quot; Barrel, 31-34&quot;</td>
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<td>BB12EX2</td>
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**GLOVE CLOSEOUTS**

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<td>VRPRO1200</td>
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<td>Reebok VR6000 PRO Ballglove Series 12&quot; Infielder/Pitcher Baseball Glove.</td>
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</table>

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- $160.00

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CONTACT: BILL CAREY EXT: 145 (877) 448-6725

www.msblsportsstore.com
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Above: Long-time MSBL member Jim Tamarack of the Savannah Steamers in Africa in 2010. Read all about his “Baseball 4 Africa” Charity on page 40 of this issue.

PHOTO CONTEST WINNER: Janet Abbott
(See inside back cover)
TO: Editors HardBall Magazine

Thanks for Coverage

Thank you for the great pictures, and please thank Jason Skoda for his report in Hardball Magazine for my Southbay Zephyrs 45+ Woodbat Cactus Division 2010 MSBL Championship. My team loved everything about the article. We waited a long time to get a championship, and both Jason (Skoda) and Jeff (McGaw) showed my team honor, and class. Thank you again.

Antone Henley
Manager, South Bay Zephyrs
anthony-henley@sbcglobal.net

Stan Duke on Dealing With Grief

I am so thankful for you and all others who played a role in the article in the Winter 2010 issue of HardBall. You don’t know how much this means to our family and to T, who is looking down from above (see issue #85, pages 4 and 72).

The first picture taken of my son Tyler as a baby was with a little baseball uniform on and a baseball and bat next to him. He started playing organized ball at age 5. I coached, he played, and continued to play through high school (Farragut Admirals). By the time he graduated in 2006, they had won two state championships in the three years he was on the team, and we had spent untold hours together with him learning baseball and me learning to be a parent. The scene in the movie “Field of Dreams” where Ray and his dad have a “throw” together pretty much sums up our time. Above all else we would go out in the back yard and throw.

On the night of Tyler’s celebration service, Jason Ritchey and the other baseball guys that I had played with over the last 15 years were there. I told Jason that if he got a team together that I wanted to play. I guess in some primal way, it seemed to be a way of connecting with T and I knew that he would appreciate this from his new vantage point….To be able to play baseball again was a way to honor his life and legacy, and it was the fact that we both shared a love for the game that made it tremendously special.

The finality is almost overwhelming and knowing that it will not and cannot change has left us somewhat broken for the time being.

If you want to get the real gist of who Tyler was, go to Facebook and type in Tyler Duke Foundation. Thanks,

Stan Duke
Knoxville Royals

Correction

While it’s true that the Chicago Skyliners’ Wes Monty did experience a “brush with death” while playing senior baseball, and did come up with the big hit that propelled the Skyliners to the 65+ Wood National Division championship at the 2010 MSBL World Series, the photo on page 53 of your Winter 2010 issue (see below) which identifies Monty as the shortstop deftly turning a double play is actually that of Monty’s much better-looking teammate (and, as it happens, best buddy), Dave Schultz.

Dave Schultz
Chicago Skyliners

LETTERS
STRIKE ZONE
THE VIPER BASEBALL CLEAT FROM 3N2
# 2012 MSBL/MABL Regional Tournament Schedule

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<th>DATE</th>
<th>HOST CITY</th>
<th>CONTACT</th>
<th>PHONE</th>
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<th>55+</th>
<th>MABL (18+)</th>
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<td>March 10–12</td>
<td>Las Vegas, NV – Kickoff Classic</td>
<td>National Office</td>
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<td>TBA</td>
<td>Grapefruit Classic - Florida</td>
<td>National Office</td>
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<td>April 27-29</td>
<td>Birmingham, AL – Bama Bash</td>
<td>Bill Blake</td>
<td>205-368-1044</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Atlanta, GA – Billy Townsend Memorial</td>
<td>Don Pike</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Dpike3163@aol.com">Dpike3163@aol.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Las Vegas Open - National Tournament</td>
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<td></td>
<td>South Jersey - Wood Bat</td>
<td>Neil Houseman</td>
<td>856-983-0896 <a href="mailto:1eechph@comcast.net">1eechph@comcast.net</a></td>
<td>40+ wood</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Tri Cities, WA</td>
<td>Mike Risek</td>
<td>509-308-8347</td>
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<td>July 4th</td>
<td>Portland, ME - Down East Classic – Wood</td>
<td>Jim Doran</td>
<td>207-602-8722 <a href="mailto:jldoran001@maine.rr.com">jldoran001@maine.rr.com</a></td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>Wood</td>
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<td></td>
<td>REBL Wine Country Classic</td>
<td>Rick Cantor</td>
<td>707-328-5553  <a href="mailto:rick.cantor@rebl.org">rick.cantor@rebl.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seattle, WA – Emerald City Classic 6/30-7/2</td>
<td>Scott Dilling</td>
<td>425-210-4809 <a href="mailto:dill8015@yahoo.com">dill8015@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>50+</td>
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<td>19+</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2-5</td>
<td>Chicago, IL – “Windy City Blowout”</td>
<td>Max Reising</td>
<td>773-769-2213 <a href="mailto:kathimack@sprynet.com">kathimack@sprynet.com</a></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 9-12</td>
<td>Chicago, IL – Father/Son Tournament</td>
<td>Max Reising</td>
<td>773-769-2213 <a href="mailto:kathimack@sprynet.com">kathimack@sprynet.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Labor Day</td>
<td>Albany, NY</td>
<td>Quentin Jensen</td>
<td>518-512-3748 <a href="mailto:Qjensen19@yahoo.com">Qjensen19@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>Wood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 3-5</td>
<td>Atlanta, GA – Rosie Shootout</td>
<td>Don Pike</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Dpike3163@aol.com">Dpike3163@aol.com</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Charlottesville, VA – Wood Bat</td>
<td>David Hash</td>
<td>434-531-5254 <a href="http://playballva.com">http://playballva.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greenville, SC – Shoeshine Joe Jackson</td>
<td>Dale Ray</td>
<td>864-404-0011 dale <a href="mailto:ray@asrmnet.com">ray@asrmnet.com</a></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Wood</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Indianapolis, IN (for PCF)</td>
<td>John DeCosta</td>
<td>317-626-1290</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Huntsville, AL – Rocket City Classic</td>
<td>Phillip Ellis</td>
<td>254-837-8490 <a href="mailto:pellis@knology.net">pellis@knology.net</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Louisiana Cup - Rumble on the Red</td>
<td>David Pratt</td>
<td>318-773-9710 <a href="mailto:redriverbaseball@gmail.com">redriverbaseball@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>San Antonio, TX – Alamo Classic 8/31 - 9/3</td>
<td>Skip Bradley</td>
<td>210-269-6725  <a href="mailto:sanmbl@aatr.net">sanmbl@aatr.net</a></td>
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<td>Best in the West , Woodland Davis, CA</td>
<td>Nathan Passantino</td>
<td>530-681-0755 <a href="mailto:nathanpassantino@hotmail.com">nathanpassantino@hotmail.com</a></td>
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<td>September 24-26</td>
<td>St. Clair Shores, MI - Michigan Cup</td>
<td>Steve Piskorowski</td>
<td>586-883-3093 <a href="mailto:stevenpiskorowski@yahoo.com">stevenpiskorowski@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<td>Late September</td>
<td>Columbus, OH – Capital City Classic – Wood</td>
<td>Rick Fryman</td>
<td>419-592-1000 <a href="mailto:Rfryman38@hotmail.com">Rfryman38@hotmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>October 5-7</td>
<td>Wisconsin State Championship - Kenosha, WI</td>
<td>Tom Carlson</td>
<td>847-878-9735 <a href="mailto:tomc@affile.org">tomc@affile.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>October 6-7</td>
<td>Liberty Bell Classic – Philadelphia, PA – Wood</td>
<td>Nick Chiuchiotti</td>
<td>215-534-4770 <a href="mailto:Nchiuchiotti43@asrmnet.net">Nchiuchiotti43@asrmnet.net</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>October 6-7</td>
<td>Southern New Hampshire</td>
<td>Paul Brooks</td>
<td>603-969-7960 <a href="mailto:snhmbl@gmail.com">snhmbl@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td>October 6-9</td>
<td>Chesapeake, MD - Columbus Day - Wood</td>
<td>Duane Cordrey</td>
<td>410-980-2096 <a href="mailto:dcheps@asrmnet.com">dcheps@asrmnet.com</a></td>
<td>Wood</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 15-16</td>
<td>Delaware County, PA</td>
<td>Dan McNeely</td>
<td>610-636-8927 <a href="mailto:dmcneely@springfieldpd.com">dmcneely@springfieldpd.com</a></td>
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**NOTE:** List is as of 12/1/2011. For most current listing, go to msblnational.com
Which one of these 6 JUGS® Hitting Packages best fits your needs?

1. Albert Pujols
   Baseball Backyard Package™
   - Curveball Pitching Machine
   - Backyard Batting Cage™ Net #7
   - 119-lb. Breaking Strength Net #7
   - Outdoor Frame for Cage Net #7
   - FIXED-FRAME® L Shaped Screen
   - FREE Backdrop & Pitcher's Trainer
   - Back-Saver™ Tall Bucket
   - (4) Dozen Yellow Dimpled Sting Free® Baseballs

   “Taking batting practice off a JUGS machine will give you the confidence you'll need to face the toughest of pitchers, no matter what league you play in.”
   —Albert Pujols, 2005, 2008 and 2009 N.L. MVP

2. Youth League Package™
   $2,833
   - Jr™ Baseball/Softball Pitching Machine
   - Portable Free-Standing Sports Cage™
     (50' x 11' x 11')
   - FREE Backdrop & Pitcher's Trainer
   - (3) Dozen Yellow Dimpled Sting Free® Baseballs
   - (3) Dozen Game-Ball™ Yellow Dimpled Sting Free® Softballs
   - Your choice of either the FIXED-FRAME® L Shaped or Softball Screen

3. Toss Package™
   $462
   $507 with remote
   - Instant Screen®
   - Toss Machine
   - Throw-down Home Plate
   - Toss Machine Drill Book
   - (2) Dozen Sting Free® Baseballs

   “Successful coaching involves the teaching of fundamentals combined with regular practice. The JUGS Hitting Packages enable the coach to teach and practice efficiently with ease.”
   —Coach Jack Dunn, 2009 Inductee ABCA Hall of Fame

4. Lite-Flite® Machine Package™
   $952
   - Lite-Flite® Machine
   - Rechargeable Battery Pack for Lite-Flite® Machine
   - Lite-Flite® Protective Screen
   - (1) Dozen Lite-Flite® Baseballs
   - Throwing Down Home Plate
   - Lite-Flite® Drill Book
   - Durable Vinyl Carrying Cases for Machine and Screen

5. 5-Point Hitting Tee™ Package
   $273
   - Instant Screen®
   - 5-Point Hitting Tee™
   - (1) Dozen Sting Free® Baseballs

6. Baseball Backyard Net Package
   $1,247
   - Backyard Batting Cage™ Net #7
   - 119-lb. Breaking Strength Nylon
     (65' x 11' x 11')
   - Outdoor Frame for Cage Net #7
   - Fixed Frame™ L Shaped Screen
   - FREE Backdrop & Pitcher's Trainer

To order, call toll free: 1-800-547-6843.
Visit us online at: jugssports.com

SAVE 10% ON ALL JUGS HITTING PACKAGES
The speed with which technology has overtaken us takes my breath away. When my late husband Dan Piro and I first started producing HardBall Magazine for the MSBL in the early 1990s, I had to send the files on disk to a local output house and the photos to another place to be halftoned. I pasted the halftoned photos onto the pages on my dining room table with something called a waxer, then drove the finished pages back to the output house to have them shot to film negatives, which then had to be picked up the next day, examined on a light table, and overnighted to the printer. Up to a week later I’d get a proof back from the printer and only after I reviewed and Fed-Exed back the approved pages would they proceed with the actual printing.

Fast forward to today’s “direct to plate” technology: this final issue you are reading was laid out and formatted entirely on my laptop computer. Once finalized, I only needed to upload each page to our printer’s FTP site, and was able to proof and approve each page online almost immediately. Incredible.

Now the age of print is coming to an end. People want their news immediately and on their mobile devices. The new MSBL website will achieve that, and you will be reading the types of stories and viewing photos that used to appear in HardBall Magazine on your laptop or perhaps on your tablet. I’ll still be involved, but in a much more limited way.

I am sad to see the magazine that I have worked on for 20 years go away, but proud to have been a part of it and of the MSBL...

—JP

From the Editor

In 2007, some 21 years after playing my last game for Chico State University and earning my journalism degree, my passion for baseball and writing finally collided: I became the editor of HardBall—the official magazine of the Men’s Senior Baseball League.

In those intervening decades I witnessed astonishing changes in communication. Typewriters gave way to PC’s. Dial phones gave way to cell phones. Film gave way to digital images, and news began travelling almost at the speed of light.

What does it have to do with HardBall? A lot.

For the better part of 20 years, HardBall Magazine, created by the late Dan Piro, informed and entertained MSBL members. It helped create a strong sense of community among players far and wide—and it did it despite coming out only about four times per year.

Now it is abundantly clear that the future of MSBL communications is just beginning.

With our new on-line publication we’ll have more stories, more updates, and more ways for leagues to get the coverage and recognition they deserve. We’ll have more of everything and we’ll have it faster.

If you liked HardBall, you’ll love this new MSBL website. While it will not arrive in your mailbox anymore, the machinery that cranked out HardBall will be churning harder than ever.

I’m still playing ball, and I’m still writing. I am closer than ever to the game I love. I, for one, cannot wait for the future to begin.

—JM
From the President

Concluding our 1st Quarter of a Century

Twenty-six years ago, I placed a small advertisement in my local Long Island newspaper in the hope of finding 20 to 30 guys my age who wanted to play baseball. From a modest experiment involving four teams, the Long Island MSBL/MABL has grown to 120 teams and 1,800 players. And the Men’s Senior Baseball League has become a national organization with 320 local leagues and 42,000 players.

In the Beginning…

During our early years, we created many local affiliates from scratch. I would receive a call from someone who wanted to play baseball but had no league in his area that was suited to the older player. I would encourage him to start a league and offer to help. Every step was an adventure. How would we find fields? Would enough players attend the workouts? Where would we find the umpires? How would we organize teams? Many times I would leave work and catch a flight halfway across the country to meet with a couple of dozen brave souls who wanted to play baseball in an organized league as badly as I did.

As time passed, we learned from our mistakes, and starting a new league became a manageable task. We slowly acquired a solid reputation as a national organization. Finding players, fields, and umpires became much easier. I turned my attention to helping to foster a real national organization that would undertake activities that were beyond the scope of the local league.

Tournaments

The first step I took at the national level was to create the MSBL World Series. This began modestly enough in 1988 as a tournament with one division for players 30 and over and another for players 40 and over. In 1991, we established the Fall Classic in Florida. Both tournaments have continued to grow and expand. Every year you and your fellow members would tell us what you liked, what you didn’t like, and what you wanted us to do next. We did our best to provide what you wanted, and you showed us your approval by attending in greater numbers.

This year, the World Series crowned champions in 31 different major divisions from 18+ to 70+ and Father/Son. The Fall Classic had champions in eleven different divisions. Most importantly, nearly one-sixth of our members will play in a national tournament this year. Over the course of our first two decades, more than one-third of our members have attended at least one national tournament. Thanks to your support, we have the largest baseball tournament in the world, and look to set new records every year.

We did not limit our activities to sponsoring two national tournaments. We encouraged local leagues to hold regional tournaments, and established a program to provide support for all sanctioned regions. Our 2012 schedule lists a total of 35 regional tournaments and 6 national tournaments.

HardBall Magazine

One of the most important steps we took was to establish Hardball Magazine for you. It is the only baseball publication written exclusively for you and about you and the sport you love. From your letters to the editor to tournament reports, to tips on playing the game, each issue was our opportunity to visit you in your home to bring you up-to-date on all the many things happening in our baseball world. How can we ever thank Dan and Jackie Piro for bringing this to you?

What else does your national organization do for you?

In addition to the tournaments, the national organization serves you in many other ways, including the following:

• Provides you and your league with outstanding liability and comprehensive medical insurance at a dramatically reduced rate
• Provides every team in your league with an official MSBL/MABL scorebook
• Provides substantial discounts thru our corporate partners (3n2 Sports, Liberty Mutual, Sprint PCS)
• Provides our membership with a full online sports catalog with significantly discounted prices and discounted quality Rawlings baseballs
• Provides a full media package with sample sponsor letter and sponsorship summary kit to help leagues and teams secure local sponsorship
• Provides your league president the ability to create and order personalized brochures and posters for league and team use to assist in advertising
• Provides fully interactive and user-friendly website with tools for league presidents, team managers and players to communicate, learn and make the most of the membership in MSBL/MABL
• Limits your annual membership dues to only $26

New Improved Website

One of the changes we are introducing to mark the end of our first quarter-century and the beginning of our second is to introduce our new website and retire Hardball Magazine. Our new website will provide our members with current and timely reports on everything from national tournament stories and results to local league stories. It is our hope that the new msblnational.com will provide a community feel for our members and the continuous updates of content and photos will give everyone a reason to continue to visit it.

As we go forward together, you have my assurances that I will remain true to my goal of making MSBL and MABL baseball the very best programs they can be for you. It is a task I undertake every day. I truly appreciate your support, encouragement, and advice as we strive to make our baseball organization a world-class operation.

Sincerely,

Steve Sigler
President, MSBL National
MSBL Unveils New Improved Website, Online Magazine

by Jeff McGaw

After two decades and 87 issues HardBall, the official magazine of the MSBL, is being retired, but the wheels that cranked out the glossy, photo-filled quarterly publication will continue turning faster and more efficiently than ever before.

The MSBL is investing in a major technological upgrade to create a new Web portal that, when accessed, will lead the user first to an online MSBL news magazine with regularly updated content, and later to powerful league organizational tools.

In a proactive effort to keep the MSBL relevant as it enters its second quarter-century, MSBL President and founder Steve Sigler signed a deal with Easton Pennsylvania-based Essent Corporation, a business solutions and custom software design company, to create the complicated infrastructure of change.

When that project ultimately is complete, MSBL members will be better informed, better equipped to run leagues, and will enjoy access to content never dreamed about in the age of HardBall.

The online publication that will replace HardBall will anchor the new portal and will be the most visible sign of modernization. It will include regularly updated news stories, features, instructional pieces, photographs and many more areas of content—some of which will even be supplied directly by leagues.

More exciting changes will be rolled out over time and could eventually include tools to improve registration, scheduling, web page development and marketing for leagues.

“This web portal will be everything HardBall was and more and will help the MSBL become a smarter, more efficient and responsive organization overall,” said Sigler.

Sigler consulted some 40 league presidents from around the country prior to finalizing the decision and asked them about ways the MSBL could better serve the needs of its members. Though some said they would miss flipping through HardBall’s pages, they overwhelmingly embraced the move toward technology and touted the advantages the move would create both for consumers of MSBL and baseball-related news and league organizers and participants.

RIGHT: The home page of the new revamped MSBL website, as it looked during the development stages.

ABOVE: In September 2011, MSBL National Coordinator Brian Sigler and HardBall editor Jeff McGaw and publisher Jackie Piro met with Essent at Coca-Cola Park in Allentown, Pennsylvania. From Left: Ron Cahill, Brian Sigler, Eric Alessi, Mike Smull, Adam Taylor and Jeff McGaw. Photo by Jackie Piro.
The advantages are numerous. “HardBall was integral in being able to communicate to our members and in making them feel like they are part of the community,” said Brian Sigler, the MSBL’s national coordinator and son of its founder Steve Sigler. “Members always looked forward to seeing the reports, the instructional pieces, and the heartfelt stories about MSBL members.”

The downside was that HardBall came out an average of four times per year over its nearly 20 years, and most news was old news. “I don’t want to wait four months for the information and I don’t think our members do either,” Brian Sigler said. “This is going to allow us to push information out to our members in a much more timely way.”

Consider this example:

It took nine months for HardBall readers to learn that a group of 40 guys from the St. Louis MSBL had set the official record for the longest baseball game ever played in October, 2007. One issue of HardBall was filled with World Series and Fall Classic coverage. The next issue was the yearbook edition which was filled cover to cover with the season-ending recaps from leagues all over the country.

By the time the story about the long game was to be printed, the new record had itself been eclipsed by a group of players from Long Island.

The MSBL has relied largely on the technologies and systems available to it upon its founding in 1986, including paper, print, snail mail, stuff in filing cabinets, and telephones. That the organization grew as rapidly as it did in a world without desktop computers, cell phones and the Internet is something of a marvel.

The technological upgrade will allow the MSBL to merge from the two-lane informational boulevard and onto the information super highway. That’s welcome news for guys like Gerry Mecca, President of the North Texas Adult Baseball League and one of the presidents who weighed in on the matter. “HardBall was a tangible benefit of belonging to the MSBL,” Mecca said, adding that the upgrades being talked about would be legitimate improvements to the current system. “I just want (running a league) to be administratively painless,” he said. “I don’t want to take checks from people and hand contracts to them and take their email addresses a million times.”

Having the ability to build schedules, process registrations, provide on-line statistics, and see automatic team rankings would be great tools for league presidents, according to Mecca.

The Essent-MSBL Connection

For the past 30 years, the company that eventually became Essent Corporation gained a solid reputation in the business community by helping process intensive industries such as factories and warehouses solve efficiency problems. By streamlining workflow, introducing innovative technology, automating repetitive tasks, utilizing best practices, and, in later years, designing custom software for companies, its customers improved their bottom line.

Later, the company expanded into creating packaged software solutions used by many clients to improve business processes including managing and communicating information. “Managing and communicating information is exactly what we have in front of us today with the MSBL portal,” said Alessi.

The lynchpin between Essent and the MSBL is a baseball-loving guy named Ron Cahill, Executive Vice President at Essent and President of the Lehigh Valley MSBL.

In 2005, Cahill took over a fractured 18-team league. Teams were leaving and allegiances were divided, but Cahill optimistically predicted a happy, healthy, 60-team league would eventually result. “People thought I was nuts,” Cahill said.

It wasn’t some weird pipe dream. Cahill’s optimism was fueled by his strong background in sales and marketing, his understanding of the local demographics, and his professionally-honed ability to understand problems and solutions— including those that plagued his own league.

The New Jersey native instituted a league draft to fortify existing teams and add new ones, automated the record keeping, established a strong board of directors, improved league marketing, simplified the scheduling process, and brought clarity to the rule book. There are now 42 teams and counting, and the Lehigh Valley MSBL is Pennsylvania’s largest MSBL league.

“He’s totally turned around a somewhat stale and floundering league,” Steve Sigler said. “He solicited me and said ‘I think we can do so much more for you.’”

“He’s astute and understands the MSBL and his business as well,” Brian Sigler said of Cahill.

A meeting of the minds was held last May. “We went in there and said ‘here’s everything we can do,’” Cahill said. “We painted a picture.” That picture depicted a strong organization with 50,000 or more members that are highly interested in baseball. “We see a community of like-minded individuals,” Alessi said. “Our vision was to use technology to further unite that community and, through that process, to find ways we could also more efficiently do the business of the MSBL. We painted a picture that resonated very highly with Steve.”

“I felt a very good connection,” Steve Sigler said. “They get everything that I’m looking to accomplish. I feel the real drive on their part is that it’s a team effort to succeed.”

To Change Or Not To Change

The MSBL is a healthy organization. It’s been around for 25 years, publishes a magazine, offers an insurance plan with medical coverage for players, and organizes hugely popular tournaments on pro fields in Arizona and Florida and elsewhere, and at last count had some 34,000 players nationwide. The actual number of players who have played in the MSBL ranks dwarfs the current total.

Ford Motor Company was healthy when it was building the Model T, but remained healthy by producing other cars like the Mustang and the F-150 pickup. That is the driving spirit behind the momentous makeover of HardBall and the MSBL, Sigler said, and that is where Essent comes in.

(Continued on next page)
The move to abandon a print publication was part of the natural evolution of things, Alessi believes.

Armies of calligraphers gave way to the early printing press. The quill gave way to the typewriter. Typewriters gave way to big, monochromatic, main frame video display terminals (VDT’s) and now desktop computers are king.

“It’s not inherently that the previous processes didn’t work,” Alessi said. “It’s that technology made the process better, and over time it became available to allow you do to the same process more efficiently,” he said. “The MSBL has identified that now is the time to take advantage of newer technologies,” Alessi said. “My approach is to try to do it as first class as I can. I think that attracts more people.”

The thing that really makes the MSBL click is “passion and the feeling of camaraderie,” said Sigler. “The zeal for the game is as prevalent as it was 24 years ago. We just don’t play baseball; it’s more than that. It’s people who get together for a common purpose. We want to put out a good product,” Sigler said.”

Jackie Piro, publisher of HardBall Magazine, announced a new photo hosting site that will be linked to the redesigned MSBLNational.com website created by Essent.

“Phanfare.com is a photo hosting site that I signed up for in 2010 to give our HardBall Magazine photographers at the MSBL World Series an easy way to upload their photos to us,” Piro said. “It allowed us to share the uploaded photos with the team managers immediately and easily so we could get accurate captions. It was only after using Phanfare for awhile that it became obvious to me that the site had many uses beyond that.”

Piro said that what sets Phanfare apart from other photo hosting sites she’s seen is the ability it gives premier subscribers to create unlimited photo and video albums AND “subsites” and to assign public “drop boxes” for each subsite. Albums can be published to multiple subsites with a few clicks of the mouse. This gives the site administrator the ability to collect and organize photos in any number of ways with minimal effort, and to use the site not only for displaying photos, but for storage as well, and it automatically sorts the albums by year. The drop boxes allow for easy and organized file transfer. “MSBL will now be able to collect photos from MSBL and MABL members and to archive them almost effortlessly,” said Piro. “Now when the webmaster needs a particular photo, we’ll simply direct him to the photo album online where he can download whatever photos he wants. As site administrator, I can opt to make the photos downloadable or not, and restrict or watermark copyrighted photos from professional photographers if required.”

For the average MSBL player, the online albums will allow leagues, teams and individuals to upload and share their photos with MSBL National and the entire MSBL community, and have the photos viewable almost instantly to anyone.

“Emailed photos tend to get lost; photos uploaded this way never do,” explained Piro. “Once someone uploads their photos to our drop box, I get an email announcing the fact. Any new photos dropped off will be in an album called “Dropped off by ___” with the name and email of the person who uploaded the photos. I would then review them and “publish” the album to the appropriate subsite(s). I can then rename the album, or move the photos into another album. I can keep albums private, but most often they will be public.”

Viewers can download photos for free, share them on Facebook, Twitter, or order prints or gifts made from them, which is something MSBL players and league administrators are bound to appreciate. Each photo album includes a slideshow viewing option set to customizable music. The albums are also available for purchase on a DVD. Selected albums allow comments to be posted by viewers.

“We’ll be using this method to select photos to display on the home page of the new MSBL website, to use in articles on our blog, and in our Photo of the Week,” said Piro. “To view albums created so far, go to http://hardballmagazine.phanfare.com. To drop off your own MSBL-related photos, go to http://hardballmagazine.phanfare.com/MSBLLocalLeaguePhotos/dropbox.”

Above: One of the many photo albums that will be incorporated into the new MSBL website. This one is for the MSBL World Series. See hardballmagazine.phanfare.com for more or look for links at msblnational.com.
Welcome New Leagues

Cleveland MSBL

Tony Martin, Commissioner
www.clevelandmsbl.com

Amateur adult baseball in Cleveland was growing, but all was not well. Lopsided games, sometimes erratic play, longer games with higher score differentials were symptoms of a growing divide—a natural phenomenon in amateur adult ball. On one side were the recreational players who, regardless of experience and pedigree, enjoy playing ball on Sundays. On the other side are players, maybe former college or even pros, whose skills are perhaps more developed.

There is room for all, but some iniquities needed to be addressed, according to longtime league player and new league Commissioner Tony Martin.

In meetings held last November, Martin and fellow coaches agreed that they would spin off a new, more competitive league and, in April, the Cleveland MSBL—eight teams and about 170 players—kicked off its inaugural year. The 25-and-over wood bat league schedules games between late April and September. It operates games, sometimes erratic play, longer

Scores

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TOTAL: $34,569

Prostate Cancer Foundation

DONATIONS as of 12/14/2011

HOW TO DONATE TO PCF: The Prostate Cancer Foundation (PCF) is dedicated to finding a cure for prostate cancer. Individuals, teams or leagues wishing to donate can make checks payable to “Prostate Cancer Foundation” and mail them to MSBL, One Huntington Quadrangle, Suite BMD, Melville, NY 11747. You will receive a letter of acknowledgement from PCF.
an operations manager for Clear Channel Outdoor, a billboard company, knows the value of providing good customer service and following through, and the benefits of persistence in convincing municipalities and school districts that the league will be a good neighbor. “We’re adults,” Martin said. “Responsible adults. Give us one game and let us show you.” he will say. “A lot of the athletic directors get it,” he added. “We are just as interested in keeping it nice as you are. Raking. Tarping. No problem at all. We’re glad to do it,” Martin emphasized.

“I want all teams to work together for a common goal. We want this thing to work.”

**West Texas MABL**

**Alex Garcia, President**

For almost 50 years, amateur baseball teams in Northwest Texas towns like Midland, Odessa, Alpine, Fort Stockton, Seminole, Monahans, and even Carlsbad, New Mexico, had been playing each other. Informally it was known as “the Old Timers’ League,” but after just six years of playing in it, Alex Garcia said the league seemed just plain “old.” Part of the problem was a seeming lack of shared enthusiasm. Garcia’s teams would dutifully drive an hour or two to play a Sunday doubleheader in the hot Texas sun, but their opponents wouldn’t always return the favor when it was their turn to travel. And a Sunday without baseball is like a day without sunshine—even in triple-digit Texas heat.

So last October, Garcia, Old Timers President Jessie Carrasco and a few other Midland-area coaches decided enough was enough. They wanted a local league with national ties, a strong insurance plan, a good reputation, a history, and significantly reduced drive times.

After calling a couple of national amateur baseball organizations and weighing the pros and cons, the decision was made to affiliate with the MSBL/MABL, and the West Texas MABL, a 25+ wood bat Sunday league, was born. “The Siglers were great as far as follow-up and customer service and providing guidance,” Garcia said.

In its inaugural season, which started last April, the West Texas MABL had seven teams. The league now has interest from at least three more teams, Garcia said. When the 24-game inaugural campaign had closed, and the post-season round robin tournament concluded, the Midland Doyers were crowned the first champions of the new West Texas MABL.

The seven teams averaged about 15 players per team. Each player paid $125, which covered everything but the uniform. That worked out to about $1,800 per team. Next year’s fee will jump up to about $2,500, or about $166 per man, because the league will have to offer some greater incentives to local field operators. That’s just the price of doing business, according to Garcia.

Typically the schedule calls a doubleheader (seven innings each) each Sunday afternoon with games starting at...
12:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.—the most hellishly hot part of the day. “We’re in the bible belt,” Garcia explained, dismissing the possibility of an earlier, cooler start on Sundays. “We don’t want to compete with the Lord above.”

Heat and the threat of damnation ranked third on the list of concerns and well behind the task of finding capable, willing umpires. Midland and Odessa are big softball areas, Garcia explained, and most of the available officials were used to a different game.

By season’s end, Garcia was able to acquire the services of six umpires, each of whom was paid $50 per game. In 2012, Garcia hopes to attract more umpires and teams.

**Magnolia MABL**

Brandon Rut, President

www.magnoliaadultbaseball.webs.com

Brandon Rut and a few buddies are doing their level best to provide baseball to yearning, sometimes creaking, masses.

Rut’s Jackson, Mississippi-based Magnolia MABL has created a league for guys 25-and-over of all skill levels. “Just because a person is 18, 28, 38, 48 or over doesn’t mean that he loves baseball any less,” said Rut, the new League President. “The goal was to create an atmosphere where players could bring their families and friends out to the ballpark to enjoy a great game of baseball,” he said.

From conception to kickoff was a mere 30 days. It began with a Google search for “adult baseball leagues.” The search yielded several MSBL sites, and ultimately Rut found MSBL headquarters in New York.

“Steve Sigler was very helpful and immediately sent me a package with guidelines and suggestions to get my league up and going. I read through the package and benefits of MSBL membership and decided that affiliation of our new league with MSBL was the way to go.

“The help provided by Steve and Brian Sigler at MSBL/MABL National was crucial in getting this league up and going,” Rut said. “Their advice and support definitely helped make it possible to put together an organized, professional product in such a short period of time.”

Intelligent administration of league details also helped the league jell quickly. Roster sizes were mandated at anywhere from 11 to 14 players. Uniform purchases were handled by individual teams. Games were scheduled in the late afternoon and evening to avoid church and youth sports conflicts.

Holidays were off limits, but teams sometimes played a mid-week game prior to or following a holiday weekend. The schedule was concentrated initially on one field and more as they came on line.

The MSBL’s solid reputation and its excellent insurance plan helped when it came to securing fields. “At these meetings (with field operators) I tell them about our local league and our national organization of MSBL/MABL. This is where reputation and professionalism can really benefit you,” Rut said.

The Magnolia League’s inaugural season concluded when the Mississippi Drillers (managed by Lee Pickett) defeated the Madison Expos (managed by Brian Powers) 6-4 in the title game. The league also held its inaugural All-Star game at Smith-Wills stadium.

**Perris MABL**

Carlos Patino, President

Elmer Reiger* would be proud. Back in 1910 the 21-year-old right-handed pitcher put Perris, California on the major league baseball map when he played his first major league baseball game for the St. Louis Cardinals at Robinson Field in St. Louis. He was, and still is, the only player from Perris to make it to the bigs.

Now, over a century later, Carlos Patino and his wife Patty are putting Perris back on the baseball map. The Patino’s, who are dedicated youth baseball volunteers, sometime softballers, and bona fide baseball junkies, spearheaded the creation of a new, eight-team league—the Perris MABL—last spring.

Perris, California, population 51,000-plus, sits about 85 miles east of Los Angeles, 80 miles north of San Diego, and 60 miles west of Palm Springs. Carlos Patino, an airplane mechanic, loves baseball and had a strong hunch he wasn’t the only one. Based on that, he decided to start an adult league. When municipal officials advised the new league to affiliate with a national organization, the Patinos researched amateur baseball organizations and ultimately found the MSBL. The rest is history.

Season one saw games every Sunday between April and September. Games typically started at 9 a.m. and went all day at Skydive Park. The metal-bat league is for players 18-and-over. “He loves the game,” said Patty of her husband. “We’ve been involved with it for years.”

The hardest part about starting the league was getting people to commit. “We have good coaches,” said Patty, adding that the coaches are good at motivating their guys.

Now that renovations to Bob Long Memorial Park are complete, the league will have access to two fields next year.

The Patino’s website (magnoliaadultbaseball.webs.com) sports news, standings, photos and videos. Word of the league has spread so far mostly by word-of-mouth advertising. “People drive by on Sundays and they see us and they want to come out,” Patty said.

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*Editor’s Note: Perris native Elmer Reiger of had the classic “cup of coffee in the bigs” story. It started April 20, 1910 and ended July 20, 1910. He finished with 21 innings pitched and a 5.48 ERA. Reiger spent most of his 16-year career in the minors, primarily AA, in cities including St. Paul, Minn., Salt Lake City, Utah, Portland, Or., and Vernon, California, according to BaseballReference.com. He did have one brush with fame: on Feb. 24, 1907, while pitching for Los Angeles of the Southern California League, Reiger lost a 4-1 decision to the Anaheim Oil Wells and a young pitcher by the name of Walter Perry Johnson. Reiger died in 1959 at the age of 70.*
Gary Brown, Southern New Jersey MSBL

If there’s a spotlight out there, you will not likely find Gary Brown in it. “He’s not extremely extroverted,” said MSBL Founder Steve Sigler. Brown isn’t a camera hog. He keeps a low profile. In fact it’s hard to find a picture of the guy, but there is nothing quiet about his contribution to the MSBL in New Jersey Sigler said.

Brown took a floundering, 25-team league in 1995 and turned it into a flourishing, 76-team league, four-division, two-season league today. “He’s maximized the area, and very few presidents can make that claim. Brown shepherded his league even while experiencing personal turmoil. “He’s very responsible,” Sigler said. “Despite setbacks, he’s never left. It’s unbelievable. Everybody makes excuses, but not this guy.”

Doug Johnson, San Diego North MSBL

Johnson, a military veteran, has been the man behind the scenes of the North County MSBL, for the past 17 years. The 45-team North County League experienced growth at a time when the economy was not conducive to growth, according to MSBL Founder Steve Sigler. “It’s fortitude,” Sigler said. “What drives Doug is a feeling of responsibility to teammates and players. He has a passion for baseball and a passion for the MSBL. His involvement in our organization has made an indelible impact. It really makes for a great combination. He almost never complains….He’s universally well-liked and respected.” Sigler added. “I think the North County MSBL really appreciates his work over almost two decades. I know I do.”

Jim Durham, Columbus MSBL

“Oz has spoken.” That is one of Jim Durham’s favorite expressions. He simply means that matters are discussed, decisions must be made, in the best interest of the league. Durham has been doing that for 17 years as President of the Columbus Ohio MSBL. Unlike the fictional Oz who relied on smoke and mirrors, Durham simply works hard to create success for his league. “He’s so dedicated. He senses what the membership wants and needs and goes well above the call of duty to get it,” said MSBL founder Steve Sigler. “He’s passionate and compassionate and totally driven. “There could not be a more consummate MSBL League President.”

Mike Zamba, San Jose MSBL

He made it to Double-A ball with the Pirate organization, was a member of the Utica Blue Sox team immortalized in Roger Kahn’s “Good Enough to Dream,” and the author of a perfect game in the San Jose MSBL in 1993. It’s Zamba’s off-field contributions as the President of the San Jose MSBL, however, that have earned him the league’s highest honor. Zamba is one of only two league presidents in San Jose, according to MSBL founder Steve Sigler. He took over that position in 1996. Zamba credits the many people around him for any successes on his watch. “I hate talking about myself,” he said.

Steve Boudreaux, NW Arkansas MSBL

With a creative marketing effort, Boudreaux forged valuable relationships with local field providers and grew his league to 14 teams, with a championship game each year at Arvest Ballpark, home of the Naturals and the baseballparks.com “Park of the Year” in 2007 and 2008.

Wayne Munney, Antelope Valley MSBL

“The goal has always been to get as many people to play as possible and to keep it affordable,” Munney said. All new players enter a draft and the needy teams draft first. “We don’t turn anybody away. We will find a place for them,” Munney said.

Rick Cantor, Redwood Empire MSBL

Since 2003, Cantor has grown the REBL from 16 teams to 35 teams in five divisions. He established an annual golf tournament, awards banquet, and All-Star game. His league hosts its the Wine Country Classic and donates to local youth and high school baseball programs.

World Series Hall of Fame Inductees

Greg Schienda, Connecticut Navigators

Connecticut Navigators Manager Greg Schienda has been involved with MSBL since 1990, and has been managing 16 years. He enjoys coming to Phoenix to compete each year aided by co-managers and friends, John Bennett and Dave Sacco.

Darren Fleming, SoCal Blue Jays

Ex-pro Darren Fleming has managed the powerhouse Blue Jays since 1993 and been an MSBL member since 1992. He has participated in the MSBL World Series in 18+, 28+ 30+, 35+ and now 45+ Division. Fleming was also a Player/Coach on the MSBL team that won the Nike World Games in 1998.

MSBL National Hall of Fame Inductees

Don Pike, Atlanta MSBL

This ex-marine has not missed a Sunday of baseball since 1995. His credo is “it’s about the league,” and Pike has worked selflessly and tirelessly to make adult recreational baseball available in Atlanta and to strengthen the league’s reputation in the community.

Nick Chichilitti, Bux-Mont MSBL

Since taking over as league President in 2004 Chichilitti has seen the Bux-Mont league flourish from nine to 26 teams in two divisions. His Liberty Bell Classic regional tournament has become one of the best regional tournaments on the East Coast. “I love baseball,” he said. “I’m just giving back.”

Ron Cahill, Lehigh Valley MSBL

Ron Cahill assumed Presidency of this fractured, shrinking, 18-team league in 2005. There are now 42 teams, making it Pennsylvania’s largest MSBL league. Its All Star game was played at Coca Cola Park, home to the Lehigh Valley IronPigs, and was attended by 3,500 fans in 2011.

Fall Classic Hall of Fame Inductees

Mike Steinhauser, Southern Maryland

As Southern Maryland’s League Commissioner Steinhauser has sent 4-7 teams each year to the Fall Classic. This was his 14th year managing a team. His teams have won twice and made it to the finals multiple times.

Milam Clark, Umpire-in-Chief, Fall Classic

Clark has been head umpire at the Fall Classic since 1993. His loyalty and his commitment to excellence are but a few of his admirable traits.

Bob Cuff, St. Petersburg

Pitcher, St. Pete Hurricanes, one of the winningest teams in Fall Classic history.

Jim Kearschner, St. Petersburg

Kearschner has won a total 11 MSBL Fall Classic Championships with a variety of teams since 1991, with four second place finishes. He has pitched in every Fall Classic.

Photos and more info on each inductee posted on msblnational.com
**The Honor Roll**

*In Recognition of the Contributions of Local League Officials*

by Jeff McGaw

Will Aguilar, Central Arkansas MABL

Every team needs a good hitter to be able to come off the bench in a crucial moment. Similarly, every league needs someone who can pick up the reigns if need be to keep the league moving forward—and the Central Arkansas MABL has that person in Wilfredo Aguilar.

Three years ago, when the President of the Central Arkansas MABL departed for health reasons, Aguilar, a good player who was among the league leaders in hitting in 2009, was asked to jump into the driver’s seat.

Aguilar, 26, played at Jacksonville High School in Arkansas in 2001 through 2003, and played with the Jacksonville American Legion from 2001-2004. In 2006 he joined the MSBL. He ranks among the best hitters in the league as a member of the Conway Indians.

Like most who run leagues, Aguilar’s primary motivation is that he simply enjoys the game—a game that has given him a lifetime of memories already. His greatest personal highlight was during his senior year in high school when he had the game-winning hit in a 19-18 barn burner in which both teams had 10-run last innings.

Single and with no kids, Aguilar said he has some extra time to devote to administrative duties. The telecommunications professional has simple goals for the league. “I want to grow the league and increase the number of college players in the league,” he said. The league usually has between six and eight teams, and this year is holding steady at seven. An aggressive radio advertising campaign is helping increase league awareness, as did a recent on-air news story about the Central Arkansas league. The Central Arkansas league also has an MSBL division which means that there’s no excuse for old ballplayers to get back into the swing of things after college.

Curtis Dancy, Shreveport-Bossier 40+ MSBL

Curtis Dancy does it because he loves the game.

Dancy, 54, is the President of the four-team Shreveport-Bossier 40-and-over Men’s Senior Baseball League. He served as league vice president for five years before that.

A sales representative for Roofing Supply Co. in Shreveport, Louisiana, Dancy joined the Shreveport-Bossier league in 1992 and still pitches, catches, or plays a corner for the Shreveport Riverdogs. His on-field highlight reel stretches back a ways. For five straight years from the eighth through 12th grade, the Summerfield High graduate was named to the All District team in Summerfield, LA. He was an All-State pick in two of those years. He eventually played college ball for Southern Arkansas, and graduated later from Louisiana Tech.

His greatest baseball memory came while standing on deck in a State championship game between Summerfield High School and Promised Land Academy in 1976. That’s when his youngest brother, Billy Roy, scored the game-winning run from third base to give Summerfield a 5-4 win and a title.

Nowadays Dancy’s highlight reel goes beyond the white lines.

The four-team league was originally for the younger divisions, Dancy said. “When we started getting older I formed the 37-and-over league to keep us playing. I do everything from being President to getting the field ready for game day. I do it because I love the game.”

The league even turned to YouTube to promote itself. (Go to youtube.com and search on Shreveport Bossier).

Another source of satisfaction comes from the work the league now does with Bossier High School. “We have got really involved in helping out a high school team who has no money and no booster club,” Dancy said. “It’s basically an inner city school. We’ve made great improvements to their facility,” he said. Moreover, the culture of the school’s baseball program has been...
transformed, he believes, as a byproduct of the relationship. The kids “want to work hard to win…. Last year that high school program made its first trip to the playoffs in several years,” he said.

**Bobby Winstead, Valdosta MABL**

A co-worker from Memphis told Robert Bryant (Bobby) Winstead about the MSBL in 2000, and even though back surgery derailed his on-field exploits, Winstead still impacts his league, the Valdosta MABL, as its President.

Winstead played for the Memphis Cardinals in 2000-2004 until he moved to Huntsville, Alabama. He played with the Huntsville Titans from around 2005-2008. The next stop was Valdosta, Georgia, where, Winstead says, “I quickly learned there was no baseball.”

Oh the horror.

“Once you finished high school or college baseball you had to convert to softball only. So my journey began: to form a league, to try to gain interest.”

In 2009 Winstead christened the Valdosta MABL with only 4 teams. “As everyone knows, finding fields is still a challenge. In 2010 I started the season with 9 teams and so far the 2011 season may grow even bigger. In the beginning of 2011 I formed a non-profit organization call Community Baseball League, Inc. Our plans are to work with the special needs kids who have a passion for baseball but struggle to play the game,” said Winstead.

Winstead’s greatest baseball moment came when playing ball in Memphis. “My mom showed up for a game in Memphis to witness me hit the winning run in. She was always my support coming up as a kid in baseball. Even today she gets excited when we talk of the game he loves—and in deep.

Oh the horror.

“I never really thought baseball would be a part of my life again,” said Cameron Locke Wheeler, 30, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Partly because of injuries, Wheeler walked away from baseball during his junior year of college, but thanks to the MSBL he’s back in the game he loves—and in deep.

Wheeler, a husband and father of two young kids, is going on his seventh year as the Commissioner of the Redstick Amateur Baseball League in Baton Rouge. That league has 14 teams in three divisions currently but has seen as many as 20 teams in the past.

Keeping the league viable in the wake of hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Gustav was a major accomplishment, Wheeler said. “We have raised the level of competition in our MABL division and have all but eliminated forfeitures and poor management in our teams. We have a very competitive and well organized travel team.”

Wheeler got involved in league leadership because he thought he could make a difference.

“The previous commissioner was stepping down and the President couldn’t maintain both MSBL and MABL divisions,” he said. “After Hurricane Katrina, his work and personal life became more demanding and he needed a MABL commissioner. I took over because I knew I had the leadership and organization skills and I was willing to try it in order to have a league to keep playing baseball.”

Wheeler finds satisfaction in leading. “I stay on because of what it provides me personally. I have made life-long friends, networked all over our area and regionally. This league gave me back baseball, and I love being able to do that for other guys with stories similar to my own, year after year.”

Wheeler and a group of volunteers started a Collegiate Summer Developmental wood bat league. Nearly 70 prospective collegiate athletes from over a dozen colleges and universities were represented. “I believe as many as 10 prospective players got an opportunity to join a collegiate team for the 2011 spring season,” Wheeler said.

“Combating attrition and increasing community involvement and cooperation are major considerations for the league,” Wheeler said. “We are engaging in new marketing and advertising strategies for this; I talk to people weekly that have never heard of our league and are excited about its possibilities for them or their peers. We also need more community buy-in. We need businesses to be willing to purchase sponsorships and we need local facilities to become more open to working with us on getting contracts to use these facilities. Our organization has made strides, but we need to be seen as more of an asset to the community and people will want to be involved in all of these areas, participation and support.”

“I want to be able to do more for our league than just what is available through player participation fees,” Wheeler said. “I want our league to be able to give back to the community.”

**David Pratt, Red River Adult Baseball League**

Without guys like David Pratt there sometimes is no baseball.

Pratt, 35, is in his third year as President of the Red River Adult Baseball League near Shreveport, Louisiana. That league, for players 23-and-older, was formerly part of the Shreveport-Bossier MSBL.

Pratt is an estimator and project manager for Whitlock & Shelton Construction, Inc. in Shreveport, but it was his former job as the assistant athletics and sports information director for the nation’s smallest division one school, Centenary College, that best prepared him to preside over the league effectively.

“Our league was going through a rough patch,” Pratt said. “We were losing players and teams as well as fields and umpires, and I felt like I could lend my expertise in sports administration to help the situation,” he said. “When I joined the league as a player in 2002, we had 10 teams and I thought it was the greatest thing ever,” Pratt said. As time went on there was some unrest, and by 2008 the league was down to four teams.Pratt caught the league by the bootstraps, secured all four teams to return for 2009 while lowering the age requirement from 27 to 25 to come in line with the national organization.

Advertising, a new logo, and a plan to give coaches half their league fee back for successfully fulfilling their coaching duties boosted appeal.

The league also had to raise the fee almost 25 percent from $150 per player to $195 to get back in the black, a difficult but necessary decision, according to Pratt.

Pratt secured a new umpire assignor and gained the cooperation of Southwood High School, whose baseball team was coached by MSBL’s Mitch Fant and Brian Harvey. In 2009 the league picked up a fifth team, and in 2010 it grew to seven teams.

These changes improve morale, Pratt said. “We have gone two-plus years without any squabbling and we are all on the same page as to why we are all out here. We have a very democratic league now and what the board votes to do is exactly what we do. Happy players make for a happy league and that leaves players with no reservations about going out and recruiting their friends to the league.”

Pratt was an all-district shortstop at Hastings High School in Hous-
ton, Texas, in 1994 and a member of the TCU Horned Frogs baseball team in 1995 and 1996. Nolan Ryan, whose son Reese played on the team, was the assistant coach. Phil Garner’s son Eric, Art Howe’s son Matt, and current major league pitcher Scott Atchison were also on that team.

Pratt transferred to Alvin Community College then finished up at Centenary earning Defensive Player of the Year honors at shortstop.

In 2002 a friend invited Pratt to play in the local MSBL league and he’s been playing ever since. His team, the Hounds, have won the regular season title four years running and won the league world series in three of the past four years. The team also attends the Birmingham Bash and the Texas Cup regional tournaments.

**Gerry Mecca, North Texas Adult Baseball League**

Everything is big in Texas, but the North Texas Adult Baseball League, formerly the Dallas MSBL, with ample population and baseball resources, was shrinking. By 2010 it had dwindled to about 11 teams. The league needed to change with the times, and Gerry Mecca was the face of that change. Under Mecca the league reorganized, upgraded, modernized and set some ambitious goals. It wanted 30 teams by spring, 2011, and 50 teams by spring 2013.

Under the reorganization, Mecca replaced longtime commissioner and MSBL Hall of Fame member Sam Kayea, and Kayea, also an umpire, was able to focus his energy on working with and scheduling local umpires.

Mecca, an MSBL member since 1992, and one-time president of that league’s 25+ Division, was Kayea’s understudy for several years and was a natural pick for the job. He served on the league’s advisory group, handled Web site duties, wrote press releases, promoted the Texas Cup, secured sponsors, and was more or less the league’s public relations guru. His fresh, innovative approach made an immediate impact. Electronic registration, on-line payments, on-line schedules, standings and statistics—“everything was revamped,” Mecca said. The on-line payment for players was, he said, one of the biggest improvements.

“I didn’t want to have trouble collecting money,” Mecca said. “If you don’t pay you don’t play. If you want to get drafted, you don’t get picked until you pay.” Previously, players would try out, get drafted, and coaches would have to beg them for the money. Now, Mecca said, “Coaches didn’t have to chase anybody and managers didn’t have to worry about money....It was a huge change, but it worked.”

**Ron Alexander, Easley MSBL**

They do things a little differently in the Easley (SC) MSBL, but as MSBL founder Steve Sigler said, “They do it well and they do it for the right reasons.”

Don’t hang around for a Sunday game in Easley. Its 11-team, two-division league plays twice a week Mondays through Thursdays. Friday, Saturday and Sunday is family time, said league President and founder Ron Alexander.

Forget about the traditional, 18-and-over as well. Easley has one of the only 17-and-over leagues in the country. Some families cannot afford the exorbitant fees associated with travel ball, Alexander said.

“So we give them a place to play,” he said. “It’s really enjoyable.”

While many leagues start in April and finish in late August or September, that’s not the norm for Easley. Its 24-game season starts in July and extends through October so that there is virtually no layoff between the end of its season and the start of the Fall Classic in Florida.

Alexander, a self-employed electrician, coaches a team in both the 35- and 17-and-over division and spends four nights a week at the ballpark. He handles league business at night.

The league has a good relationship with the City of Easley, which runs the Red Owens Complex—a 104 acre, three baseball field facility that also hosts the Big League World Series featured on ESPN. It also uses Fluor Field, which is next to the Shoeless Joe Jackson Museum and Library in Greenville.

Every team in Easley pays $3,550, which includes umpires, baseballs, fields, insurance, and championship jackets for the winners. It also includes the cost of two big All Star games and league picnics.

“It’s going well,” Alexander said, while noting it could be better. There is room for more teams, but Alexander said his biggest challenge is finding people to step up to manage new teams.

**Mike Martin, St. Louis MSBL**

The St. Louis MSBL was a mess, said Mike Martin.

Angst was high, morale was low, fields were in decline, accounting was out of whack, and league scheduling process was all jacked up.

“It was driving me nuts to see how deplorable things were,” Martin said. “I was tired of guys griping.”

The St. Louis MSBL is a big league with 47 teams, five divisions, some 700 players, nearly 600 games, and an umpire expenditure topping $70,000 per year. There’s a lot to keep track of and a lot to do and, for a variety of reasons, it wasn’t getting done.

Martin, appointed commissioner of all divisions in 2010 and elected later that year, went on a mission. First, he sent out a questionnaire asking managers for their thoughts on what was right and wrong with the league. There were many issues, but ultimately there was consensus on three league priorities:

- schedules, umpires and fields
- accounting
- scheduling

So Martin went to work. He eradicated the cronyism, or the appearance ofcronyism, and included more people in the schedule making process. “When I let them do that they bought into it,” Martin said.

He tightened up some gaps in accounting. In some cases the league paid for umpires for games not played, or paid the incorrect rate. Martin implemented tighter controls and the problem virtually vanished.

Finally, Martin took the bold step of abandoning the cruddy fields, including facilities with skin infiel ds, and went to facilities with grass infiel ds. Though slightly more expensive, feedback was positive. Martin said. He also got the league invested in the revitalization of Sauget Field, the former home of the Gateway Grizzlies of the Frontier league. That field now is a league jewel and hosts about 240 league games per year.

Martin, a Maplewood, Missouri police sergeant, also brought back something that had been missing, and missed, for five years: the league All Star game at T.R. Hughes Ballpark.

It was a raving success. The event drew an estimated 500 people.

Food? About $700 for the event.

Admission? A buck.

A healthy, problem-free, well-officiated league celebration at a beautiful ballpark?

Priceless.

(Continued on next page)
John DeCosta, Indianapolis MSBL

Nearly 60 years after lacing them up for the first time in the Palatine Little League, John DeCosta is still lacing them up as a member and President of the thriving, 22-year-old, 34-team, four division Indianapolis Adult Baseball League.

DeCosta lived on the diamonds of Palatine until joining the Army in 1962. He served with the Marine Scouts of the 3rd Infantry Division and the US Army Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (Airborne) in Germany until 1966. After he got out of the service he played in semi-pro baseball leagues in Chicago area 1971-1972.

That’s about the time life—the kind with diapers and bosses—caught up with him. “I had to give up baseball in 1972,” DeCosta said.

In 1994 he re-enlisted with the national pastime, and in 1998 his team, the Arrows, joined the local MABL. In 2001 DeCosta was chosen as a league vice president, and in 2009 he ascended to the presidency. Though well run, the league had room for improvement, DeCosta said. He helped revamp the league rule book, and advocated for greater use of the internet as a recruiting and public relations tool. “I wonder how we survived without (the internet),” he said.

Thanks in large part to his efforts, the IABL is connected with Play Ball Indiana—a non-profit organization currently involved in numerous projects to improve youth baseball programs and facilities throughout the city. That program works with the RBI Program of Major League Baseball.

The league has also helped out ALS research, Riley Children’s Hospital, the Prostate Cancer Foundation, and is establishing a $1,000 baseball scholarship to be awarded to a deserving player from one of the schools that hosts IABL games. DeCosta said he’d like to establish a mentoring program so that league members can reach out through baseball. “If we have a positive influence on just one kid, then we will have served our community well,” he said.

None of these projects would be possible without an excellent supporting staff, DeCosta said. “ Contributions by Past President Wayne Edwards have been significant,” he added. “Secretary/Treasurer Marc Rueffer has played a vital role for years, and the division directors—Dan Taylor (18+), Don Pollard (28+), Ken Menser (35+) and the ever-steadfast Wally Brant (45+)—allow me to concentrate on the entire league. Vice President Damon Grothe is my good right hand (well he’s actually a lefty), sounding board, advisor and friend.”

So is Andie, DeCosta’s wife of 41 years. They have four kids—Frank, Dionne, and twin sons Sean and John II—and seven grandchildren. “It is thanks to her love, patience, understanding and indulgence that I’ve been rewarded with some outstanding experiences and been blessed with valued friendships that I wouldn’t otherwise have had.”

For more information on the Indianapolis Adult Baseball League go to www.indianabaseball.com.

Mike Whatley, Western Mass., MSBL

Mike Whatley delivers in more ways than one.

Most obviously, he works as a mailman in and around Springfield, Massachusetts, but in his spare time he delivers the national pastime to baseball-hungry amateurs in Western Massachusetts as President and founder of the Western Massachusetts Wood Bat League.

That six-team league was founded in 2009 by Whatley and others. “I got involved because several players from the league that I was playing in as well as me knew that there was a higher quality of baseball than what we were playing,” he said. “There were not any wood bat leagues in the area with the help of the other players we started our own league.”

Whatley, who is married to wife Julie and who has three boys aged 24, 21 and six, followed a typical baseball path: he started playing when he was five years of age, moved to Little League, Babe Ruth, four years of high school ball, and Senior Babe Ruth.

In 1982, at age 18, he joined the Somerville Red Sox, an amateur team in the Inter-City League in Boston, and played most of his eight years there with the Medford Mustangs. In 1993 he joined the Medford Mets of the Roy Hobbs League, and later played for the Somerville Angels and Senators.

After seven seasons in Hobbs, Whatley and his Senators team made the leap to the Boston MSBL and stayed there for six seasons. In 2007 he made another switch to the Valley Wheel League in Springfield, Massachusetts, then in 2009 he started the new Western Mass. Wood Bat League with the Senators as a charter member club.

The new league started with about 30 players, but has since grown to more than 90. A new team was added for 2011 and merger talks are under way with another nearby over-30 league. The two leagues have had scrimmage games and hope to get an inter-league All-Star game together. “Our goal is to become the premier league for Over 28 baseball in Western Massachusetts.”

The young, growing league remains active in the community under Whatley’s guidance. “Last year we helped sponsor a league player who was attempting to run 100 miles in 24 hours to assist the Parkinson’s Disease Foundation. We plan on donating to the Prostate Cancer Foundation as well as the National MS Society. We are also trying to establish a local scholarship fund for the schools in the towns that our league plays in,” Whatley said.

John Means, Southern Senior Baseball League

Add another group of guys to the “I did it my way” club.

John Means and the men of the Southern Senior Baseball League (SSBL) based in Huntsville, Alabama definitely have their own way of doing things.

In 2011, their 16-team league included a six-team 45+ division and a 10-team division referred to as the 25/35 division—and that is the “my way” part of this story. While one might safely assume 25-and-over would be sufficient in defining eligibility, one would only be half right. In the SSBL’s 25/35 division, you can play when you’re 25, but you can’t pitch until you’re 35, and coaches cannot bat players less than 35 back-to-back. These safeguards allow all players over 25 to play, but squelches their ability to dominate the proceedings, said Means, who has presided over the league for four years.

It seems to work, he added. “Parity was the best it’s ever been,” he said. Out of 10 teams, seven won 10 or more games. The top team won 14 games. “Those teams could go out and beat any other team on any given day,” he said.

The format evolved somewhat naturally. There weren’t enough young players to start an entirely separate 25+ division. Some under 25 players sought the more intense competition offered by a non-MSBL league populated by current and recent college players. Others simply did not crave that level of competition, Means said. And then there were older guys like Means, a 54-year-old former college player who, despite his experience, just didn’t feel a burning desire to play against current college players. The 25/35 division allows both types comfortably, Means said.
The workload—from extra outs. “We were stressed during the 2010 season,” Linden admitted. “It was by far our most challenging season,” Linden said in his year-end report to HardBall. Surviving it all was only possible, he said in that report, due to “all of you who stepped up to the plate to see what you could do to make things happen.”

Linden took over as President in 2008 and carried on a great Mid-Iowa tradition that began with the formation of the league in 1994. The 15-year league veteran and avowed baseball junkie says he gets much back in return for his participation. “Baseball is still the greatest therapy a player can have,” he said. Friendships and relationships formed in baseball are profound too, he said. “Six years ago, my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. Teammates from our traveling club banded together and got us a sizable gift certificate to the local grocery store. I could pick up carry-out food or pizzas and take care of the kids while Nancy was going through chemo and neither of us had to worry about meal preparation. I can’t thank my team enough for what that pick-me-up did for us at the time.”

Linden grew up in Sioux City, Iowa. He played slow- and fast-pitch softball until he became aware of the MSBL league at age 37. He is most proud of the league’s solid reputation in the community and the access it has to nice fields, including Southeast Polk High School, where Scott Belger is head coach, and Simpson College, where Ben Blake (older brother of MLB player Casey Blake) is the head coach. “Ben has mentioned how great the relationship is with Mid-Iowa Baseball. Rather than having their infield bake all summer long and weeds overtake it, their field is in playable shape for fall ball every year, since we play well into the start of their fall season.”

Another feather in the Linden administration cap is the league’s relationship with the AAA Iowa Cubs turf crew. The league paid the crew to build clay mounds and clay batters boxes on some of the area fields that they rent. “We hope to continue that relationship and replace all the mounds of the fields that we use,” Linden said.

Linden manages the printing and print marketing division of Robert Half International for the U.S. and Canadian branches. He attended Iowa State University, where he met and married his wife Nancy 31 years ago. “Most of our anniversaries (June 21) have been spent on the ballfield. Nancy is a saint,” he said.

Linden’s son Tanner will graduate from Wartburg College next spring and daughter Kristina will graduate from high school.

Tim Dunderdale, Northern Illinois MABL

There are winners and losers in baseball games, but there are no losers in baseball—at least not if you do it right.

That’s what Tim Dunderdale believes. It’s part of the reason he coaches baseball at Johnsburg High School, part of the reason he joined the Northern Illinois MSBL when he was 29, helped that league form its MABL league three years ago, and now currently presides over it.

The 44-year-old, married father of two believes baseball’s intangibles can be a stabilizing force in society and, specifically, in his little corner of McHenry County. “I want the young men in our community to be involved with something, donate their time, have a sense of something bigger than themselves,” he said. That can all be achieved through baseball, he continued.

“It’s imperative that the younger community has a place to go, a place to land, a place to talk to other guys,” Dunderdale said.

Dunderdale, who owns Revcore Radiator, an automotive repair shop where he fixes car radiators, gas tanks and air conditioners, was a high school player who never quite got his fill of baseball. In 1996 the then 29-year-old saw an advertisement for the Northern Illinois MSBL and joined. He played for the River Bandits first, and later joined the Johnsbury Tigers. The league had three divisions at the time, for players 25, 35, and 45-and-older.

But the 25’s were losing steam and the 18-24 either weren’t playing, or they were driving over an hour away to play in MABL leagues in Chicago. “They were burning up their paychecks on gas,” Dunderdale said. “I could see what had to happen,” he added.

Dunderdale helped lead the charge to drop the age of the league’s youngest division to 18, and then took the reins. That division grew from 10 teams in 2010 to 14 last season. It expects 16 for the 2012 campaign.

Dunderdale emphasizes good community relations. “I try to establish a goodwill feeling among baseball field owners,” he said, adding that previous abuses by other people and organizations led field owners to become justifiably cautious. The goal, he said is “to turn their hearts. We are a solid organization and members of our community and we want a relationship with you long term.”

Relationships of this kind are mutually beneficial. The league has fields to play on, and the fields often get improvements—fences, sod, and manpower—that don’t come out of the owner’s budget.

Dunderdale also touts the league’s positive effects on the community on and off the field—a sort of big brother effect. “You’ll have an 18-year-old on a team with a 30- or 40-year-old guy and if he’s there for any length of time he’ll possibly have a few mentors. When he has a problem with his career, taxes, relationships or whatever, he’s going to have some guys to talk to” Dunderdale said. “That’s the way our communities are supposed to be,” he added.

“I am blessed to be able to play the game of baseball with these men,” he said, “and I think the more men we get together, the better our communities are going to be. Those ties will deepen.”

Dunderdale gives his wife Heidi all the credit. “If it weren’t for my wife, I wouldn’t be doing what I’m doing. Her support and grace are amazing. My wife believes my involvement in the community is a great thing.”

And as big as that mission is, there is one bigger. “There is no better privilege than being involved in my sons’ lives. There is nothing I would trade for that. And I’m very excited to have the opportunity to teach them about this amazing game!”

Means operates his own business—Total Vision, a personal finance company that helps clients manage their finances more effectively. “I try to teach people how to use money and how to use it wisely. I try to help them do the best they can with what they have.”

Prior to running Total Vision, Means owned a furniture store for 26 years.

John Linden, Mid-Iowa Baseball League

If you’re one of the guys who just likes to show up on Sunday to play baseball—and that is most of us—take a moment to appreciate the efforts of guys like John Linden, President of the Mid-Iowa Baseball League.

The league has 33 teams in four divisions (18, 25, 35, and 45) and nearly 500 players. That’s a lot of testosterone to manage at the best of times, but preserving the union amid atmospheric chaos—primarily rain—is an even more admirable feat.

That was the case in 2010, when record rains led to 112 rainouts. “We were stressed during the 2010 season,” Linden admitted. The workload—from extra field preparation, hours on the phone, the search for playable fields, the rescheduling of umpires—amplified the grief. “It was by far our most challenging season,” Linden said in his year-end report to HardBall. Surviving it all was only possible, he said in that report, due to “all of you who stepped up to the plate to see what you could do to make things happen.”

Linden took over as President in 2008 and carried on a great Mid-Iowa tradition that began with the formation of the league in 1994. The 15-year league veteran and avowed baseball junkie says he gets much back in return for his participation. “Baseball is still the greatest therapy a player can have,” he said. Friendships and relationships formed in baseball are profound too, he said. “Six years ago, my wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. Teammates from our traveling club banded together and got us a sizable gift certificate to the local grocery store. I could pick up carry-out food or pizzas and take care of the kids while Nancy was going through chemo and neither of us had to worry about meal preparation. I can’t thank my team enough for what that pick-me-up did for us at the time.”

Linden grew up in Sioux City, Iowa. He played slow- and fast-pitch softball until he became aware of the MSBL league at age 37. He is most proud of the league’s solid reputation in the community and the access it has to nice fields, including Southeast Polk High School, where Scott Belger is head coach, and Simpson College, where Ben Blake (older brother of MLB player Casey Blake) is the head coach. “Ben has mentioned how great the relationship is with Mid-Iowa Baseball. Rather than having their infield bake all summer long and weeds overtake it, their field is in playable shape for fall ball every year, since we play well into the start of their fall season.”

Another feather in the Linden administration cap is the league’s relationship with the AAA Iowa Cubs turf crew. The league paid the crew to build clay mounds and clay batters boxes on some of the area fields that they rent. “We hope to continue that relationship and replace all the mounds of the fields that we use,” Linden said.

Linden manages the printing and print marketing division of Robert Half International for the U.S. and Canadian branches. He attended Iowa State University, where he met and married his wife Nancy 31 years ago. “Most of our anniversaries (June 21) have been spent on the ballfield. Nancy is a saint,” he said.

Linden’s son Tanner will graduate from Wartburg College next spring and daughter Kristina will graduate from high school.
Awards Banquets

2011 World Series

All photos this page by Brad Feinberg Photography, LLC. Hundreds more banquet photos are posted online and are available for viewing and purchase at http://worldseries2011.powervision360.com.
## 2011 MSBL/MABL World Series Scoreboard

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<td>Southern California Snappers 5, Tacoma Tugs 1</td>
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<td>Jesse Smith, Adam Geery</td>
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<tr>
<td>18+ MABL Federal</td>
<td>Orange County Wolves 12, Southern California Reds 4</td>
<td>Jason Kocov / Nick Gontmaher</td>
<td>None named</td>
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<tr>
<td>18+ MABL Central</td>
<td>SoCal Scrappers 11, Long Island Cardinals 1</td>
<td>Justin Bray / George Rhein</td>
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<td>25+ Federal</td>
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<td>25+ Wood National</td>
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<td>Westside Bandits 11, Las Vegas Dirtbags 6</td>
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<td>Las Vegas Bears 5, Colorado Bandits 2</td>
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<td>Ries Orlakski</td>
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<tr>
<td>45+ Central</td>
<td>So Cal Sun Devils 13, Rochester Red Wings 0</td>
<td>Dennis Swartout / Vernon Van Sliger</td>
<td>None named</td>
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<tr>
<td>45+ Wood National</td>
<td>Team Victory 3, Tri-Victory 40’s 2</td>
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<td>45+ Wood American</td>
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<td>San Antonio Reds 2, Tri-Victory Cardinals 1</td>
<td>Phil Galloway / Michael Ching</td>
<td>To be announced</td>
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<tr>
<td>60+ Wood National</td>
<td>Berry’s Athletic Supply 5, L.A. Athletics 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>60+ Wood Mountain</td>
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<td>65+ Wood American</td>
<td>San Diego Mudcats 7, Sacramento Solons 4</td>
<td>Mike Briggs / Irven Scott</td>
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<td>70+ National (FINAL CANCELLED)</td>
<td>South Dakota Rushmores and San Diego Padres</td>
<td>John Larson (Rushmores), Joe Maiden (Padres)</td>
<td>Teams were named co-champions</td>
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<td>Father Son Central</td>
<td>Texas Blue Jays 4, Washington State Nationals 3</td>
<td>Rick Wright / Shannon Capps and Eric Sawyer</td>
<td>None named</td>
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## 2011 MSBL/MABL Fall Classic Scoreboard

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<tr>
<td>18+ Wood</td>
<td>Coral Gables Athletics 6, Coastal Stingrays 5</td>
<td>Miguel Garcia / Jonathan Batts</td>
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<tr>
<td>25+ Metal Bat American</td>
<td>Asheville Angels 10, Puerto Rico Lobos 5</td>
<td>Jeremy Bullman / Joe Negron</td>
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<td>25+ Metal Bat Central</td>
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<td>35+ Metal Bat Central</td>
<td>Connecticut Top Hats 7, Suffolk Indians 4</td>
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<td>35+ Wood National</td>
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<td>Maine Diamond Dogs 4, Suncoast Suns 0</td>
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<td>45+ Wood American</td>
<td>Puerto Rico Royals 5, New Jersey 40’s 3</td>
<td>Jose Castillo / Rick Bailey</td>
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<tr>
<td>52+ Wood National</td>
<td>Rhode Island Salty Dogs 7, Chicago Seadogs 3</td>
<td>Noah Clark / Darnel Thomas</td>
<td>Gary Raymond</td>
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<tr>
<td>52+ Wood American</td>
<td>Southern Maryland Titans 4, Long Island Yankees 1</td>
<td>Mike Steinhauser / Bernie Ellison</td>
<td>Frank Watson</td>
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Recaps and team photos on following pages; full reports online at msblnational.com
2011 World Series

MABL 18+ National Division
Southern California Snappers 5, Tacoma Tugs 1

Winning Manager: Frank Sansone
Runner-Up Manager: Ray Bala
Game MVP: Jesse Smith
Tournament MVP: Adam Geery

Recap: Jesse Smith allowed two hits over 8-and-a-third innings while tournament MVP Adam Geery had two hits, including a double, to lead the Snapper offense. Marcus Faulkner’s ninth-inning sacrifice fly accounted for the Tugs’ only run. —Jason Johnson, HardBall

October 23 at Salt River Fields Stadium

MABL 18+ Federal Division
Orange County Wolves 12, So. California Reds 4

Winning Manager: Jason Kovac
Runner-Up Manager: Nick Gontmaher
MVP: None named

Recap: Starter Ryan Clear threw eight strong innings for the win. Ryan Keys rapped two hits and two runs scored. Catcher Bobby Sears also added three hits and an RBI for the Wolves. Eric Martin went two for four for the Reds. —Jason Johnson, Hardball

October 23 at Salt River Fields Stadium

18+ Central Division
So Cal Scrappers 11, Long Island Cardinals 1

Winning Manager: Justin Bray
Runner-Up Manager: George Rhein
MVP: Eric Lungren

The Scrappers scored six times in the first inning and coasted the rest of the way. Ryan Schwen pitched a complete game for the win and tournament MVP Eric Lungren had a pair of hits including a triple. The win avenged last year’s championship game loss to the same Cardinals team. —Rodney Johnson, Hardball

October 23 at Tempe Diablo Stadium
25+ Federal Division  
San Jose Brew Crew 9, Long Island Mariners 8  
Winning Manager: Brian Feduk  
Runner-Up Manager: Rob McDermott  
MVP: Ryan Becks and Matt Flaherty  
Recap: Brew Crew reliever Matt Flaherty worked out of a bases-loaded jam in the ninth inning to preserve a Brew Crew victory and its first World Series title. The right hander entered after the Mariners had already scored three runs. Johnny Angleson’s two-run single capped a three-run rally in the sixth to give the Crew a 9-4 lead. —Jason Skoda, HardBall  
October 29 at Salt River Fields Stadium

25+ Wood National Division  
SoCal Buzz 3, Dallas Modocs 1  
Winning manager: Anthony Bautista  
Runner-up manager: Steve Hahn  
MVP: Wilver Perez  
Recap: Michael Kesten threw a complete-game seven-hitter with six strikeouts. The Buzz broke a 1-1 tie in the sixth on Sergio Alvarado’s run-scoring single. They added an insurance run in the eighth. Charlie Griffin allowed two runs on eight hits in a losing effort. —Doug Haller, HardBall  
October 23 at Hohokam Stadium

25+ Wood American Division  
Westside Bandits 11, Las Vegas Dirtbags 6  
Winning manager: Rob Luna  
Losing manager: Kris Barber  
MVP: Josh Morey  
Recap: Hugo Hernandez had three hits, including a home run and three RBI. Josh Morey added two hits and scored three times. The Bandits stole 11 bases. For Las Vegas, Gator Quaney had two hits and drove in two. —Doug Haller, HardBall  
October 23 at Hohokum Stadium
25+ Wood Central Division
San Antonio Titans 3, Manhattan Beach Reds 0

Winning Manager: Doug Rosini
Runner-Up Manager: Gary Walsh
MVP: Kelly Skeens

Recap: The Titans won their second straight title and third overall since 2006 as right-hander Mark Pircher threw a one-hit shutout with seven strikeouts. Pircher faced one over the minimum. Kelly Skeens' sacrifice fly in the first inning and two-run single in the third accounted for all of the runs. — Jason Skoda, HardBall

October 23 at Maryvale Stadium

35+ Mountain Division
Chicago North Cubs 9, Tri Valley Sox 3

Winning Manager: Tony Niezyniecki
Runner-Up Manager: David Lewis
MVP: None named

Recap: Jim Balian pitched a complete game for the Cubs while teammate Javier Gamboa was 2-for-4 with a double, triple and two runs scored. White Sox catcher Oscar Samano was 2-for-3 with a double, a triple, and three RBI. Eric Pickett tripled for the Sox. — Jason Johnson, HardBall

November 5 at Salt River Fields Stadium

35+ Central Division
Utah Pirates 6, St. Louis Tigers 5

Winning Manager: Randy Miles
Runner-Up: Gerry Gerkins
MVP: Ray Clinton

Recap: MVP Ray Clinton threw a complete game and drove in Wes Kroon with the winning run in the bottom of the eighth inning. Kroon turned a key double play in the ninth to end a Tiger threat. Cale Shepherd had three hits including two doubles. — Jeff McGaw, HardBall

November 5 at Tempe Diablo Stadium
35+ Wood American Division
L.A. Reds 6, Scottsdale Finest 4

Winning Manager: Martin White
Runner-Up Manager: Bob Parness
MVP: None named

Recap: Former Major League pitchers Shane Bowers and Chuck Crim scattered 10 hits while teammate Mark Martin drove in the go-ahead run in the sixth inning to lead the Reds past the Finest. Another pair of former pros did well in a losing effort. Carlos Reyes went the distance on the mound while Jason Conti rapped out three hits. —Rodney Johnson, HardBall

October 22, 2011, Hohokam Park

35+ Wood Mountain Division
Montebello Angels 6, Inland Empire Dawgs 1

Winning Manager: Robert Oskin
Runner-Up Manager: Jason Gopperton
MVP: Gabe Carmona

Recap: Cisco Vega allowed one run on two hits through six, and Mario Chavarin earned a save. Eric Orue had three hits and three RBI while Rudy Burrell had an RBI and several clutch plays in center field. The Angels finished a perfect 7-0. MVP Gabe Carmona had two complete game shutouts and a save. —HardBall Staff Reports

October 22 at Maryvale Stadium

35+ Wood Central Division
Las Vegas Bears 5, Colorado Bandits 2

Winning Manager: Mauricio Molina
Runner-Up Manager: Freddy Martinez
MVP: Ries Orlaski

Recap: John Levine allowed five hits and a run through six innings. James Goodman had two hits and Scott Hanish had two RBI to lead the offense. Ries Orlaski was named MVP for the Bears. The Bandits earned a playoff berth despite a 0-4 start. —Jason Skoda, HardBall

October 22 at Tempe Diablo Stadium
**35+ Wood Cactus Division**

Ventura Dodgers 12, Murrieta Mutiny 0

Winning Manager: Brad Milner  
Runner-Up Manager: Anthony Zaia  
MVP: Julio Lopez

Recap: Righthander Jason Schmidt struck out seven in a complete-game shutout and singled in two of his three RBI with a single in the third inning. The Dodgers scored five runs in the second inning. Shortstop Chad Bletscher added two hits, two runs and a RBI. The Mutiny’s Steve Rader was the only able to manage two hits in the losing effort. —Jason Skoda, HardBall

October 22 at Tempe Diablo Stadium

**45+ Central Division**

So Cal Sun Devils 13, Rochester Red Wings 0

Winning Manager: Dennis Swartout  
Runner-Up Manager: Vernon Van Skiver  
MVP: None Named

Recap: Dave Morrow threw a complete game shut-out for the Sun Devils, who turned six double plays on defense. Rochester pitchers helped the Devils with six hit batters. Sun Devil slugger Pervis Cowens was 3-for-4, and center fielder David Bird, who had a fractured right wrist, had a bunt single and a double down the left field line. —Chris Errington, HardBall

November 5 at Phoenix Muni Stadium

**45+ Wood National Division**

Team Victory 3, Tri-Valley 40’s 2

Winning Manager: Rafael Fuentes  
Runner-up Manager: John Sellick  
MVP: Chuck Crim

Recap: Tournament MVP Chuck Crim pitched all 10 for the win. Darryl Morhardt stroked a walk-off, bases-loaded single in the 10th inning to score Ken Henry with the winning run. Eddie Delzer threw well, allowing five hits over seven innings but was tagged with the loss. —Gabe Chavez, HardBall

October 28 at Maryvale Stadium
45+ Wood American Division
Team Easton 4, Central Coast Tigers 3

Winning Manager: Dirk Deem
Runner-up Manager: Sean Knoph
MVP: Billy Minnis

Recap: Billy Minnis fanned 10 batters and scattered 10 hits in a complete-game win. The Tigers tied the game in the top of the ninth on an error and RBI singles by Bill Uelman and Bob Lord. Tiger reliever Doug Wolff hit Easton’s Marty Orozco to push in the winning run in the bottom of the ninth. —Gabe Chavez, HardBall

October 28 at Maryvale Stadium

45+ Wood Central Division
San Antonio Reds 2, Tri-Valley Cardinals 1

Winning Manager: Phil Galloway
Runner-Up Manager: Michael Ching
MVP: TBD

Pat Bonney went the distance and limited San Antonio to just one run on three hits to earn the win. David Thrall’s two-out single in the sixth inning drove in the deciding run. Scott Blakeway pitched a complete game five-hitter in a losing cause. —Rodney Johnson, Hardball

October 28 at Tempe Diablo Stadium

45+ Wood Cactus Division
Halo Baseball Club 5, Seattle Blues 4

Winning Manager: Gaston Escuderon
Runner-Up Manager: Jeff Naranjo
MVP: Steve Moritz (Halo Baseball Club)

Tournament MVP Steve Moritz was the winning pitcher and drove in the decisive run with an eighth inning single. The Blues had taken the lead with two runs in the sixth before the Halos answered with two of their own in the eighth. —Rodney Johnson, Hardball

October 28 at Tempe Diablo Stadium
2011 World Series

50+ Wood National Division
Sacramento Giants 6, San Jose 2

Winning Manager: Javier Campos
Runner Up Manager: Mike Zamba
MVP: None named

Recap: John Yandle allowed two hits through nine innings, but a determined Sacramento Giants team scored four in the 10th to claim a third straight 50 National title. Jerry Toman threw all 10 and had the game-winning RBI for the Giants. — Jeff McGaw, HardBall

November 5 at Hohokam Stadium

50+ Wood American Division
New Era 5, Dallas Rangers 1

Winning Manager: Ralph Proulx.
Runner-Up Manager: Jerry Castaneda
MVP: Phil Torcivia

Recap: An eighth-inning RBI single by Tony Frescura and a sacrifice fly by Ed Warnke catapulted New Era ahead to stay. Right-hander Phil Torcivia allowed just five hits in the complete-game win over the top-seeded Rangers. — Jason Skoda, HardBall

November 5 at Tempe Diablo Stadium

50+ Wood Central Division
Fort Worth Phillies 9, Houston Baseball Club 8

Winning Manager: Frank Phillips
Runner-Up Manager: Steve Booker
Tournament MVP: David Palumbo

Four hours after it was supposed to start, and four innings after it was supposed to end, this marathon game ended, when Frank Phillips’ infield single scored Dan Sosa with the winning run as the Fort Worth Phillies hauled in the 50+ Central Crown with a 13-inning, 9-8 win over the Houston Baseball Club. — Jeff McGaw, HardBall

Nov. 5, 2011, Tempe Diablo Stadium.
55+ Wood American Division
Sacramento Giants 16, San Diego Stars 8

Winning Manager: Javier Campos
Runner-Up Manager: Gino Suter
MVP: Dave Deitrich

Recap: The Sacramento Giants erased a six-run deficit with an eight-run sixth inning, stretched the lead with Dave Deitrich’s three-run single in the eighth, then put it out of reach with a five-run ninth inning. The top-seeded Stars, who defeated the Giants earlier in the tournament, rallied in the ninth but fell short. — Rick Sorci, HardBall

October 22 at Goodyear Stadium

55+ Wood Central Division
Chicago North Indians 6, D.C. Classics 1

Winning Manager: Rick Sorci
Runner-Up Manager: Charles Heatley
MVPs: Billy Alvarez and Mike Schmadebeck

Recap: In the springtime home of the Cleveland Indians, the Chicago North Indians completed a perfect journey by beating the DC Classics 6-1. Johnny Johnson’s fourth inning triple highlighted a two-run fourth inning. Tribe starter Billy Alvarez went the distance scattering eight hits and fanning seven. — Rick Sorci, HardBall

October 22 at Goodyear Stadium

60+ Wood National Division
Berry’s Athletic Supply 5, L.A. Athletics 2

Winning Manager: John Enright
Runner Up Manager: Bob Sherwin
MVP: None named

Recap: Jimmy Allen pitched a five-hitter and Berry’s Athletic Supply Baseball Club broke open a tie game with a pair of runs in the fifth inning to capture the 60+ National Championship with a 5-2 victory over the L.A. Athletics. The World Series title was Berry’s 14th overall and 13th title in the past 15 years at this tournament.

November 5 at Salt River Fields Stadium
2011 World Series

60+ Wood Mountain Division
Greenwood Ridge Dragons 14, Sacramento Solons 5

Winning Manager: Allan Green
Runner Up: Lanny Ropke
MVP: Terry Fail, Dragons

Recap: The Dragons scored seven runs in the third to take a commanding lead. Larry Hendrickson threw all nine. Mark Adams and Randy Olsen had two RBI apiece in the win. Tony Shimetz and Mark Fess had three hits apiece. — Jeff McGaw/HardBall

November 5 at Hohokam Park

60+ Wood Central Division
El Paso Texanos 8, Tucson Golden Aces 6

Winning Manager: Mike Barraza
Runner-Up Manager: Mike Morales
Game MVP: Jesus Martinez
Tournament MVP: Team

Recap: A five-run seventh inning and a strong outing from starting pitcher Jesus Munoz pushed the El Paso Texanos to victory. Roberto Padilla was 3-for-3 and scored three runs for the winners. Chuck Milo was 2-for-4 for the Aces. — Jason Johnson, HardBall

November 5 at Tempe Diablo Stadium

65+ Wood National Division
Chicago Skyliners 5, Detroit 65’s 0

Winning Manager: Bart Zeller
Runner-up Manager: Mike Hendrie
MVP: Dan Korvas

Recap: MVP Dan Korvas pitched a complete game six hitter. Chicago’s Darryl Johnson broke up Gary Sovey’s no-hit bid with a fifth-inning single and the Skyliners never looked back. Third baseman Mike Spratt had two RBI to lead the Skyliner attack. — Gabe Chavez, HardBall

October 30 at Salt River Fields Stadium
65+ American Division
San Diego Mudcats 7, Sacramento Salons 4

Winning manager: Mike Briggs
Losing manager: Irv Scott

Recap: The Mudcats jumped to a 5-0 first inning lead with the help of three Sacramento errors. The Mudcats were led by Frank Weishaar with two hits. Ron Damschen reached base three times. Rob Walberg went the distance, scattering seven hits for the Cats. Gary Ewbank, Don Frantz and Lanny Ropke each had two hits for Sacramento. — by Doug Haller

Oct 30, Salt River Stadium

70+ National Division
San Diego Padres 5-1 and South Dakota 3-2 declared Co-Champions

San Diego Manager: Joe Maiden
South Dakota Manager: John Larson

RECAP: The 70+ matchup between two veteran MSBL teams, the South Dakota Rushmores and the San Diego Padres, was cancelled due to wet fields on November 5. The teams were declared co-champions.

Five teams competed in this division. The standings are below:

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<th>Team</th>
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<td>San Diego Padres*</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Dakota Rushmores</td>
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<td>Classics</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Diego Mudcats</td>
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<td>California Bears</td>
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*Padres played one extra game due to unequal number of teams in their division.
Father/Son American Division
Maine Diamond Dogs 5, Athletics 2
Winning Manager: Clair Crandall
Runner-Up Manager: Bob Sherwin
MVP: Matt Crandall
Recap: Matt Crandall’s two-out three-run double in the third inning provided the winning margin for the Diamond Dogs. Marc Powers pitched five innings to earn the win. Ian Feummeler went the final four inning for the save. —Rodney Johnson, Hardball

Father/Son Central Division
Texas Blue Jays 4, Washington State Nationals 3
Winning Manager: Rick Wright
Runner-Up Manager: Shannon Capps/Eric Sawyer
MVP: None Named
Recap: Chris Barnet earned a win, and Tyler Rucker a two-inning save. Scott Grau stole two bases and scored, and Mitch Grau added a hit and an RBI for the Jays. Tyler Campbell doubled, tripled, scored, and had an RBI for the Nationals. —Jason Johnson, HardBall

Former major league player Bobby Grich was the guest speaker at the October 29 awards banquet at The Pointe in Phoenix.

Former major league player Mike Gallego spoke at the November 5th awards banquet. Gallego is currently the Oakland A’s third base coach.

Photos from both awards banquets are available for viewing and for purchase at http://worldseries2011.powervision360.com
Diamondbacks’ New Facility added to MSBL World Series  

by Jeff McGaw/HardBall

It is heaven, according to Dave Dunne, but it isn’t Iowa.

It’s the Salt River Fields at Talking Stick, the new Cactus League home to the Arizona Diamondbacks and Colorado Rockies, and a new stop for teams at the MSBL World Series in October.

With no disrespect to Hollywood’s “Field of Dreams,” W.P. Kinsella, Kevin Costner, or the multitude of deceased but still quite athletic former pros lingering in Iowa’s corn, Salt River Fields at Talking Stick is probably as close to baseball heaven as most will get—and it’s Dunne’s job to keep the facility running smoothly. Dunne certainly has the experience; he has managed operations at Hohokam and Fitch Park for the City of Mesa for years.

The new 140-acre facility features an 11,000 seat stadium, 12 perfectly manicured practice fields and two 85,000 square foot office and clubhouse facilities for each pro team. It is the first major league baseball facility to be built on Tribal lands and the third point in a tourism triangle that shares the “Talking Stick” name along with Talking Stick Golf Club, a two-course facility that has hosted many PGA events, and Talking Stick Resort, a 500-room hotel with five-star amenities.

Developers believe it will be a magnet for further development and jobs. The Cactus League alone features 15 major league teams, draws upwards of 160 million fans, and brings $359 million annually to the state.

The name “Salt River Fields” refers to the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community who designed and built the facilities. The “Talking Stick” is a historical reference to a traditional Pima calendar stick on which carvers recorded significant events and milestones. The Salt River Fields logo—a snake angled and bent into the shape of a mountain range (Diamondbacks and Rockies) is based on a concept by Pima artist Royce Manuel.

“I love baseball,” said Dunne, who oversees everything from security and parking to ticket, food and merchandise sales, and grounds maintenance at the new baseball complex. The best part of the job is “when people come here for the first time and see this stunning development, beautiful architecture, and their jaws drop. I enjoy hearing the comments,” Dunne said.

“This is really baseball heaven here,” said Dunne. “If you’re a baseball fan or like to work in the game there is no better place than right here.” With instructional league, rookie league, high school, college and other amateur tournaments, not to mention non-baseball events like concerts, the facility will be in use year round.

Dunne, a Chicago native and 1980 Arizona State University graduate, was named the Spring Training Operations Manager for the Arizona Diamondbacks and Colorado Rockies in November 2009. He is the official club liaison for the D-backs and Rockies in working with the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

From 1996 to 2009 he managed the Chicago Cubs’ Spring Training operations at Hohokam Stadium and Fitch Park for the City of Mesa. He oversaw the renovation of Hohokam Stadium prior to the 1997 Cactus League season, which enabled the Cubs to have the most successful Spring Training operations in Major League Baseball. The Cubs collected MLB’s top four all-time single-season Spring Training attendance records under Dunne’s watch in 2004 (189,692), 2005 (193,993), 2008 (181,280) and a MLB-best 203,105 fans in 2009. Hohokam Stadium also annually led all MLB Spring Training facilities in revenue, including $7.5 million in 2009.

Though summers can see triple digit temperatures, October—MSBL World Series Time—tends to be perfect.

The new fields are located about 20 minutes from Hohokam, Phoenix Municipal, and Tempe Diablo Stadium, well known stops on the MSBL Fall tour. Dunne worked each year with Steve and Brian Sigler to bring the MSBL World Series to the Valley. “After the Cubs the MSBL was always a customer every year,” Dunne said. “There are a ton of games, a ton of people, and they are renting fields, cars, going to restaurants and hotels. It’s a well-organized, well run event.” Dunne said.

For more information and photos, visit www.saltriverfields.com.
2011 Fall Classic

18+ Wood Bat Division
Coral Gables A’s 6, Coastal Stingrays 5

Winning Manager: Miguel Garcia
Runner-Up Manager: Jonathan Batts
MVP: Jose Zabala and Jason Privett

Recap: Alvaro Gomez scored the game-winner on a passed ball in the bottom of the 10th inning to give the A’s their first Fall Classic title. Mike Schaetzoe’s two-run single in the ninth tied the game. Jason Privett earned a gutsy, complete-game win. — Jeff McGaw

November 14 at Roger Dean Stadium

25+ Metal Bat American Division
Asheville Angels 10, Puerto Rico Lobos 5

Winning Manager: Jeromy Pullman
Runner-Up Manager: Joe Negron
Tournament MVP: Bryce Rivenbark

Recap: Most Valuable Player Bryce Rivenbark threw a complete game and helped himself with two hits and one RBI. Eight different Angels collected hits and scored as manager Jeremy Pullman led his Angels to their first Fall Classic title. The Angels lost two of their first four round robin games. — by Dick Sanford

November 19 at Roger Dean Stadium

25+ Metal Central Division
Long Island Sun Devils 7, Venezuela 2

Winning Manager: Joe Luparello
Runner-Up Manager: Magdiel Sanchez
MVP: E.J. McVetty

Recap: Dom McNulty’s seventh inning grand slam highlighted a five-run seventh inning and vaulted the Long Island Sun Devils to a second straight 25 Central title. Right hander Kevin Willi repeatedly worked out of trouble as Venezuela stranded nine runners. Willi tossed 21 consecutive innings in winning both the semifinal and championship game for Long Island. — Frank Schoeffer, Hardball

November 19 at Digital Domain Park
35+ Metal Bat American Division
Delco Cobras 13, 4, 12, Chicago Grays 2, 7, 8

Winning Manager: Mike Lieberman
Runner-Up Manager: Greg Rieves
MVP: None named

Recap: Former minor leaguer Fernando DaSilva earned a complete-game win in game one and closed out game three of this best-of-three matchup. Rob Kloska was 4-for-5 with four RBI for the Cobras in the final. Cobra teammates Frank Chandler and Sam Bartoletta had three hits apiece for the Cobras. Bobbi Hutchins had three hits for the Grays in game three. — by Jeff McGaw

November 19 at Roger Dean Complex

35+ Metal Bat Central Division
Connecticut Top Hats 7, Suffolk Indians 4

Winning Manager: Bob Manowitz
Runner-Up Manager: Corey Franklin
MVP: Robert Ayala

Recap: Tournament MVP Rob Ayala went 3-for-3 and Bob O’Brien completed a scoreless week to earn his third save for the 7-0 Top Hats. Despite being limited to nine players and trailing 4-1 after two innings, the Top Hats roared back with single runs in the fourth and fifth, and a pair of runs in the sixth and eighth. — by Chris Errington

November 19 at Roger Dean Complex

35+ Wood National Division
East Coast Cardinals 4, Atlanta Bulls 2

Winning Manager: Dave Hash
Runner-Up Manager: Jeff Boyar
Tournament MVP: Jason Baker

Recap: The East Coast Cardinals scored three runs in the first inning and never looked back. MVP Jason Baker had two hits including a double and a run scored. Paul Chasse allowed two runs on just four hits and a walk while striking out six. The Cardinals, managed by Dave Hash, also won in 2008. — by Dick Sanford

November 19 at Roger Dean Stadium
35+ Wood Bat American Division
Puerto Rico Gigantes 4, So. Maryland 3
Winning Manager: Bobby Cuevas
Runner Up Manager: Joe Rhoads
MVP: Omar Figueroa
Recap: Mario Greenaway stole home in the bottom of the 11th inning to give the Gigantes their first Fall Classic title. Greenaway had four hits on the day. Shortstop Omar Figueroa capped an all star defensive week by being named MVP. Harry Carrion threw eight solid innings, but Luis Rodriguez earned the win in relief. A catcher’s interference call in the second inning sparked a two-run Gigantes rally.— Frank Schaeffer, HardBall

45+ Wood Bat National Division
Maine Diamond Dogs 4, Suncoast Suns 0
Winning Manager: Clair Crandall
Runner-Up Manager: Pete Moran
MVP: Marc Powers
Recap: Marc Powers tossed a four-hit, complete-game shutout—his second in as many days—to lift the Diamond Dogs past perennial power Suncoast. The 46-year-old righty tossed 18 consecutive scoreless innings allowing six hits, a walk and one hit batsman over the final two days. Maine iced the championship game with a two-run fourth which featured a pair of bases-loaded walks by Suncoast starter Bob Cuff. —by Frank Schaeffer, Hardball

45+ Wood Bat American Division
Puerto Rico Royals 5, New Jersey 40's 3
Winning Manager: Jose Castrillo (Fall Classic Hall of Fame, 2010)
Runner Up Manager: Rick Bailey
MVP: None named
Recap: Jorge O’Jeda pitched eight-plus innings of four-hit ball with four strike outs. Wilson Rayes got two out with the bases loaded in the ninth to earn the save. Jose Delgado and Leonor Perez each had a pair of hits for Puerto Rico. — by Chris Errington

November 19 at Roger Dean Complex, Marlins 7
45+ Wood Bat Central Division
New Jersey Reds 4, Tennessee Volcanoes 2

Winning Manager: Andy Vasquez
Runner-Up Manager: Jason Richcy
MVP: None named

Recap: John Crillo’s two-run double highlighted a three-run first inning and the New Jersey Reds never trailed. Brian Tobias scored twice, including a key sixth-inning insurance run that pushed the lead to 4-1, while John Dragos and Jeff Hall made key defensive plays in the fourth and sixth to halt Volcanoes’ scoring opportunities. —by Chris Errington

November 19, Roger Dean Complex, Marlins 4,

52+ Wood Bat National Division
Rhode Island Salty Dogs 7, Chicago Sea Dogs 4

Winning Manager: Noah Clark
Runner-Up Manager: Duryel Thomas
Tournament MVP: Gary Raymond

Recap: The Salty Dogs scored five runs in the eighth inning to claim a second 52-and-over title. MVP Gary Raymond’s three-run double keyed the rally. Dave Palumbo earned the win with two innings of relief and struck out the side to end the game. —Jeff McGaw

November 12 at Roger Dean Stadium

52+ Wood Bat American Division
Southern Maryland Titans 4, Long Island Yankees 1

Winning Manager: Mike Steinhauser
Runner-Up Manager: Bernie Ellison
Tournament MVP: Frank Watson

Recap: Bob Englemeyer scattered nine hits for the complete game win. Maryland slugger Alex Brunet doubled and scored in the second inning, and added an RBI single in the sixth. Frank Watson, a late pickup, was named tournament MVP for Mike Steinhauser’s Maryland squad. —Jeff McGaw

November 13 at Roger Dean Stadium
Orlando, Florida, January 2011—His NFL playing days may be over, but Doug Flutie isn’t finished competing.

The Heisman Trophy winner and six-time Canadian Football League Most Valuable Player, who retired from the NFL five years ago, is back in uniform—playing baseball in the MSBL.

But don’t call this a comeback. It’s more like a reunion of sorts, and it all started with a simple Christmas gift.

“Bill, Darren and I played a lot growing up,” Doug said. “They were both excellent baseball players and I was just an athlete who played baseball. The first Christmas after I retired, I bought them baseball gloves and we’ve been playing ever since.”

Together, the Flutie brothers contacted guys they grew up playing with and put together the Natick Knights, a 30-and-over team from Massachusetts. They play in the Boston MSBL during the regular season.

“We all played together through Little League, Babe Ruth, American Legion and high school baseball,” Bill Flutie said. “Doug and Darren played football. I played baseball and was captain of the baseball team at Brown.”

On this particular weekend in January, Doug Flutie, 47, and his brother Bill, 49, were in Orlando participating in the MSBL’s 2011 Disney Holiday Classic at ESPN’s Wide World of Sports complex with the Boston Wolfpack team, managed by Boston MSBL President Steve Wolf. Darren Flutie, who travels for an orthopedic supply company, was unable to make the Disney tournament. “Darren works,” Doug explained. “Plus, his kids are at that age where they have a lot going on.”

Doug Flutie, who had back surgery in December 2009, says in addition to playing alongside his brothers, he is motivated by his desire to compete.

“This gives me my competitive fix without killing myself,” he says. “But it’s not like there aren’t quality players out here. There are a lot of ex-major leaguers and guys who played Double-A, and Triple-A ball who play in these events. It’s quite competitive.”

Flutie’s mother Joan was in the stands during the Disney Holiday Classic watching Bill and Doug play.

“She’s still mom,” Flutie said. “She’s great. You know, she comes up to the dugout, like she used to when we were young and she asks do you need a water or something? You say ‘no mom, I’m fine.’ Then five minutes later, she’s back with a drink and a hot dog. It’s great. It’s like we’re in Little League all over again.”

For someone who has accomplished so much in his life, Doug Flutie is far from ready to retire in the traditional sense.

He’s raised millions for his autism foundation (see sidebar), serves as a college football analyst for ABC and even finds time to play drums in the Flutie Brothers Band, which performed in Dallas during the 2011 Super Bowl.

And, yet, he still finds time for baseball.

“I wish we could get our guys together for more tournaments like this,” Doug said. “It’s so much fun. You play the game all day, go back to the hotel, eat and just talk baseball.”
Fernando Gonzalez strolled anonymously past the Florida Marlins’ spring training diamonds at the Roger Dean Complex in Jupiter, Florida, his roundish features, graying hair, and creases giving no obvious clues as to his real identity.

There was no swagger, no bling, and no entourage. There was nothing about his mannerisms would make him a blip on the radar of conceit or superiority. Gonzalez seemed for all the world like a normal guy—and in fact, friends will tell you he is a pretty normal guy with one exception: he has been to the mountain top.

For eight years through 1980, Gonzalez played pro baseball with the Pirates, Royals, Yankees and Padres. He played at the game’s highest level, and in its most hallowed arenas. He competed with and against the game’s biggest stars. Gonzalez, now 60, is even the answer to a New York baseball trivia question, and made a cameo in a rock video.

He was teammates with the likes of Dave Winfield, Ozzie Smith, Gaylord Perry, Rollie Fingers, and the greatest Puerto Rican to ever don spikes, Roberto Clemente.

“I never thought I was going to be in the big leagues,” Gonzalez recalled. Similarly, Gonzalez probably never thought he’d be in something called the Men’s Senior Baseball League—but in it he is, and in a big way.

He played with the Detroit 60’s who won the 52+ American Division title at the 2010 MSBL Fall Classic right there in Jupiter. A month earlier, he won two rings at the 2010 MSBL World Series in Phoenix, one each with the 60+ Wood Bat National Rhode Island Salty Dogs and the 25+ Wood Bat American Rhode Island Cardinals.

Gonzalez can flat-out hit, say most who play with and against him. Players like MSBL tournament junkie and MSBL Hall of Fame member Tony LaGreca. LaGreca and Gonzalez met years ago in the Caribbean Winter Baseball Championships in Puerto Rico. “He was the only guy going three-for-four all the time,” LaGreca said. The two became acquainted in those many battles and Gonzalez eventually joined LaGreca’s team.

It’s been a fruitful relationship. The two have enjoyed a combined 15 championships between the World Series and the Caribbean Winter Baseball Championships. “He’s a real good guy,” LaGreca said. “He’s a money guy. When it comes to actual playoff I can count on him when I need the big hit.”

Gonzalez is as comfortable at the plate facing a wily, 55-year-old veteran with an ageless curveball as he is with a 28-year-old former college stud with a blazing, youthful fastball. Either way, he’s seen better from the likes of Tom Seaver, Steve Carlton, J.R. Richard, Rick Wise, and Tug McGraw.

Gonzalez was born in Aricebo, Puerto Rico on June 19, 1950. As a bat boy for the Aricebo Lobos of the Puerto Rico Baseball League, Gonzalez was exposed to great players, including the legendary Roberto Clemente. As the story goes, Gonzalez, then in his late teens, was working out with the Lobos in 1968 when he made a spectacular, running catch during batting practice. As fate would have it, a scout from the Seattle Pilots witnessed the event, was dazzled by the energy, and eventually signed him to play.

Gonzalez signed originally with the Seattle Pilots as an amateur free agent in 1968. The Pilots moved to Milwaukee and became the Brewers. They released Gonzalez in April, 1970, but he wasn’t unemployed for long. In 1971 the Pittsburgh Pirates organization gave him a job with the single A Salem Pirates. Soon he shipped out to the Pirates AA affiliate in chilly Sherbrooke, Quebec.

After a miserable, 0-24 start in AA, Gonzalez went on a tear and was selected as MVP of the Eastern League in 1972, beating out the likes of Ken Griffey Sr. and Dan Driessen for the honor. Then mostly a third baseman, Gonzalez batted .333 with a .389 on base percentage and a .493 slugging percentage. He won the Eastern League batting title and led the league in hits that year with 172 including 42 doubles.

In September, 1972, a 22-year-old Gonzalez was called up from Sherbrooke to the big club, where he was greeted by the greatest player to ever step off of the island of Puerto Rico—Roberto Clemente.

“He was great to me when I got there,” Gonzalez said, adding that he would often talk with Clemente about how to approach the game at the major league level. “He took care of me.”

Just three months after their introduction, Clemente perished in an airplane crash in December of 1972 while attempting to bring humanitarian aid to the victims of a huge, Nicaraguan earthquake.

Gonzalez went on to become what he described as a “good utility player” for several clubs. His travels eventually took him to San Diego, where his teammates included Gaylord Perry, Mickey Lolich, Rollie Fingers, Gene Tenace and Dave Winfield. Gonzalez started 94 games at second base that season and turned double plays with another budding legend by the name of Ozzie Smith. It was one of the first seasons that the Padres finished over .500.

A lot of his MSBL teammates ask him what it was like up there in the pros, Gonzalez said. “Tom Seaver and JR Richards… it wasn’t easy to face those guys,” he said. Richards was the toughest pitcher he ever faced. “He used to throw right from the top and it looked like it was going to bounce on the dirt out in front of the plate but then it would be a strike at your knees,” he said. “I hit him pretty good,” he said, “but I don’t ever remember ever getting around on one of his fastballs.”

Gonzalez had a locker in Yankee Stadium and played before crowds of 40,000 or more. “When there’s so many people in the stands it brings out the best of you,” he said.

About two seconds of Gonzalez’ eight-year career are immortalized in a “Dire Straits” music video now featured on You Tube. The song, “Walk of Life,” shows brief footage of pro athletes experiencing humble, on-field moments. Gonzalez, wearing number “9” for the Padres, is seen violently colliding with teammate Oscar Gamble, number 17, while attempting to catch a fly ball behind second base during a game.

Gonzalez is a part of New York baseball trivia too. He hit a third-inning grand slam off of Mets hurler Mike Wegener to give the Yankees a 9-4 win in 1974 Mayor’s Trophy game, an annual preseason ruckus between the subway rivals. It was the only grand slam in the history of that series.

Gonzalez said there’s nothing better in baseball than to hit with men on base. Just hours earlier that day at Jupiter, Gonzalez drove in the winning run for the Detroit 60’s in their 3-2 win over the Long Island Cardinals. “I had a chance to hit today with men on base and I got the winning run in,” he said proudly.
Jim Tamarack of the Savannah MSBL had a dream: he wanted to retire to Africa and teach baseball. So in 2004, after a 35-year career as a zoologist and naturalist working at places like Zoo Atlanta, Lion Country Safari and the Bronx Zoo, Tamarack set his dream in motion: he and a companion hopped on a plane bound for Africa with a duffel bag full of baseball equipment and a loosely formed plan to just “drive around on a photo safari and stop and teach baseball wherever and as often” as he wanted. “The idea was to help me decide how I was going to establish a baseball program long-term,” he explained. “I had no grand ambitions to produce the first African major leaguer,” he said. His goal was simply “to share the game as I have enjoyed it.”

Baseball 4 Africa
That initial foray lasted 100 days and spanned 11 countries: South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Swaziland. “Whenever the mood hit me, we would turn into a school or small village and announce that I was there to teach baseball,” recalled Tamarack. “I quickly learned that I only had to give instructions in the language of baseball, as no one had ever heard of the game before and the novel concept required no translation.”

Word of Tamarack’s activities spread locally, and led to an invitation by Kenyan school officials to set up a baseball program for them. Today, thanks to Tamarack’s “Baseball 4 Africa” charity, over 300 boys in 13 schools in Kenya are playing the game of baseball, and there’s a waiting list of schools wanting to form teams. Tamarack makes the trip to Africa each year, in September and October.

An MSBL Connection
Tamarack has at times had help from friends and relatives, and in 2010 he put out a notice for volunteers but did not get much response. However, a serendipitous series of events brought help from an unexpected source: Dave Frederickson, an MSBL player from Northern California, was visiting Nairobi, Kenya with his church’s “Missions of Hope” group. As it turned out, the aunt of their mission’s leader happened to be Jim Tamarack’s girlfriend. She told Frederickson about the tournament being run by Tamarack and their need for umpires. Frederickson and his wife Mia decided to check it out.

“We were already heading that way, so we drove down three hours to this tournament, met Jim and took part in it. I umpired a few games, and it was just amazing,” said Frederickson. “They’re playing in bare feet and sandals and some ragamuffin equipment, but man, they were just having so much fun. It was great to be a part of that.”

Frederickson, who has his own impressive MSBL and baseball resume, hopes to return to Africa in 2012. “That country is moving very slowly forward and there’s a lot of Americans over there doing a lot of really good things, and Jim’s one of them,” he said.

As for Tamarack, he was already planning his 2011 trip when HardBall contacted him. “I’ll just introduce one new school, and do clinics, and then carry them through to their national championship,” he told me. “I’ll probably end up with 14 teams this year. I welcome volunteers,” he added, “but I don’t have any absolute plan.”

He encourages donations of new or used baseball equipment: hats, jerseys, pants, bases, balls, bats, helmets, gloves, catchers gear—all are needed. To sponsor a new team, the cost to provide everything to get them started is about $1,000. MSBL players who would like to donate can contact Jim via email to baseball4africa@aol.com or via regular mail to Baseball 4 Africa, P.O. Box 1766, Richmond Hill, Georgia 31324.

The Savannah Steamers
Tamarack played high school and college ball in the Atlanta area. After college he played in an 18-and-over recreational league. Then, at age 30, he read an article in Sports Illustrated about a new national recreational baseball league for men his age and older called the Men’s Senior Baseball League. He called MSBL headquarters in New York to find out more. On the other end of the line was MSBL founder Steve Sigler. “Steve inspired me to try
to put together a team in Savannah,” recalled Tamarack.

In 1992 Tamarack and Charlie Davis formed the Savannah area’s first MSBL team, the Savannah Steamer. With no MSBL league nearby at that time, the players had to drive out of state to play in the two closest leagues: Jacksonville MSBL in Florida and Charleston MABL in South Carolina. When the Savannah MSBL was formed in 2006, the Steamers finally had a local home base.

Today, Tamarack is still on the team, but limits his involvement to playing in tournaments and hanging out with the team. “I’m too old and dead to compete,” he said, “so I coach first and tell stories on the bench and pat everybody on the back when they do well…and every so often I’ll get up there and take a swing.”

Tamarack’s blog at http://www.daimarsadventures.blogspot.com. Here are some excerpts:

**Dai Mar’s Blog**

For more information about Baseball 4 Africa, visit their website at: http://web.me.com/ckchip/Baseball4Africa/Home.html.

You can also find more descriptions and photos of the 2010 trip in the archives of Dai Mar Tamarack’s blog at http://www.daimarsadventures.blogspot.com. Here are some excerpts:

**September 18, 2010**—“The quality of baseball here in Kenya is a drastic improvement from 5 years ago when I was last here. It is a testament to Jim coming back year after year, all the people who have donated and helped out in America, and the fact that the older students are now passing down knowledge of the sport to younger students.

“Pitchers were throwing strikes, hitters were putting the ball in play, and incredibly the fielders were catching fly balls and throwing runners out at first base. I would say definite ‘bad news bears’ quality, which is a big step. They were all very eager to learn and I’m hoping to show them some real baseball games on the computer to give them an idea of the level to aspire to.”

“The field is as you would expect. Big rocks and uneven dirt vastly outnumber the non-rocky level places. The school’s water tank looms in the background behind our backstop which is made out of an old soccer goal. Tons of students and bystanders from the village stop by to watch this new game...until a foul ball hits too close and then they scatter.”

**October 12, 2010**—“Baseball 4 Africa 2010 has come to an end. And what an end! We brought 8 different schools together for a tournament this past Saturday. Mukaa secondary school was hospitable enough to host of the tournament and they did a fine job having two baseball fields lined and ready to play on. Jim and I were anxious to see how our hard work preparing the baseball teams would pay off…After some big hits and a couple of nice defensive plays Kiong Wani took the title for the 3rd consecutive year. There was some pretty incredible celebrating which ended in the team carrying the trophy away from the school running thru the street thru the village until we could no longer see them.

“The tournament was a huge success. National media came and covered the event and Nairobi connections were made to help spread baseball in Kenya even more… And in amongst the bad hops, bad throws, missed catches, and overrun bases there were moments of real, quality baseball. It was truly amazing to see.”

**Right:** Kenyan student player shows off his catcher’s gear. Below: Dai Mar and Jim Tamarack with Kenyan officials.

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Editor’s Note: Tamarack emailed us as we were going to press. He played with the Triad Jaguars in the 52+ Wood Bat Division at the Fall Classic. Photos are online at our new photo hosting site http://hardballmagazine.phanfare.com/MSBLLocalLeague/Photos
Faces in the Crowd

Gary Sellergren: “I thought I’d never pitch again”

Thanks to the wonders of modern orthopedics, Chicago North MSBL’s Gary Sellergren was able to come back from a serious shoulder injury successfully.

His story is familiar; he joined the MSBL at the age of 42 after not playing at all for 17 years, and fell in love with the game all over again.

The Bradley University alumnus and former star for Main East High in Park Ridge, Illinois, was 3-0 for the 28+ Dodgers in the Chicago North MSBL. The following year, he ate up more innings and even threw for the 38-and-over A’s from the same league.

Life was good, baseball was fun and the comeback was on track.

And then, in his first start of the 2007 season, something happened.

“It felt like my arm got a flat tire,” said Sellergren. He didn’t know it at the time, but his bicep tendon had torn. Sellergren’s response was to keep throwing through the pain, and hit the weights in hopes that great shoulder conditioning could compensate for any problems.

That, however, turned out to be the worst thing he could have done. It was like pulling the loose thread on a favorite old sweater, and by season’s end the entire thing had unraveled. Sellergren’s rotator cuff was frayed, his labrum was torn, and he had developed a painful bone spur. Sleep was becoming difficult to come by and worse yet, “I thought I’d never pitch again,” he said.

So in January, 2008, Dr. Richard Erickson of SportsMed Wheaton Orthopaedics Ltd. in Carol Stream, Illinois operated on Sellergren’s shoulder. A generation ago, doctors would have made a mammoth incision with tons of collateral damage. Nowadays, orthopedic surgeons work through tiny incisions and with amazing accuracy. Even with advanced tools and techniques, Sellergren was under for nearly four hours. “There was a lot going on in there,” said Erickson with an award-winning conciseness that does not come naturally to most surgeons.

What makes Sellergren’s case fascinating isn’t that it’s particularly rare. It’s not. Musculoskeletal problems are the number two reason for physician visits, according to statistics published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Over seven million people visit doctors each year because of shoulder problems, which rank third behind back problems (21 million) and knee problems (12 million).

What makes this story unusual is that Sellergren was able to return to the game by August, 2008. In 2010 he moved to a new team—the Blue Jays—coached by league president and MSBL Hall of Famer Max Reising. Sellergren pitched for the Jays’ 35+ and 45+ teams.

“Gary previously had played for me in several regional tournaments over the past six years,” said Reising, “So I had a pretty good idea as to what we were getting both as player and team-mate...Gary brings a quiet leadership and confidence to the teams he plays for and is one of our most supportive members of both squads,” Reising added.

He brings something else too.

Since coming back from shoulder surgery, Sellergren has compiled a 26-3 record for the two Blue Jays teams and been an indispensable part of their success. Counting playoffs, he had a combined 23-3 record for the two Blue Jays teams in 2010 and threw over 180 innings, believed to be among the highest total of wins and innings pitched in the entire MSBL last year.

The 45+ Jays, a perennial sub-500 team, finished 18-8 and went deep into the playoffs with Sellergren eating up about half the innings. The 35+ Jays beat Sellergren’s old team, the A’s, in the 2010 title game. Sellergren had been a part of the A’s championship teams in 2007, 2008 and 2009.

While accepting praise for his role in Sellergren’s case, Dr. Erickson is quick to point out what he thinks could be real keys to success: “Genetics and desire. Gary has both.”

“My therapist really knew what she was doing,” Sellergren said. “I did exactly as she instructed and asked her to push me and only pushed myself in her presence. I also made sure I religiously did my at-home exercises that she gave me. I was three times a week in rehab for four months, then twice a week for two more months,” he said. Resistance bands, small weights, stretching and range of motion exercises dominated the recovery.

“I owe an awful lot to Max Reising for giving me the opportunity to prove myself,” Sellergren, a husband, father, healthcare administrator and founder of the DuPage Film Group.

Baseball can be hard on the body, and throwing is a particularly violent activity on the shoulder, orthopedists say. “If you can do it (play baseball) into your forties it’s because God gave you a body that you could do it.”

There are less orthopedically toxic pursuits, Erickson said. “You can play golf instead.” —JM

LEFT: Sellergren pitching. RIGHT: Max Reising with Sellergren.
MSBL player donates kidney to fellow member

by Jackie Pirro

Chicago, IL—In July 2010, Chicago North MSBL players received an urgent email from league president Max Reising. One of their own, Greg Kuhs of the 45+ White Sox, was in need of a kidney transplant. The email asked people who might be willing to be donors to contact the Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Kidney Donation Foundation.

Dan Jacenko, of the 45+ Cubs, felt compelled to respond. Although he did not know Greg Kuhs personally, Jacenko knew who he was and remembered playing against him. And he knew a little about living organ donation. “I thought, ‘I feel good. I would hate to see somebody in need of that lose his life. And it was somebody in our league, it wasn’t somebody I didn’t know altogether,’ Dan explained.

Jacenko called the hospital and was put on the list of possible donors. In September, the hospital called him in for blood tests. By November 2010, after a lengthy screening process, he was told he was a match. The surgery was scheduled. There was no turning back.

At this point, Dan, who is divorced and has a 19-year-old daughter, had not yet told his family of his plans. Neither had he contacted Greg Kuhs, who was unaware of his donor’s identity. When Dan finally told his daughter, she was supportive. “She turned out to be one hundred percent on my side,” he said. At Thanksgiving dinner, he broke the news to the rest of his family. “They had a lot of questions,” he said, “But they were amazed, and also very supportive.”

He also gave his nurse permission to finally reveal his identity to Greg Kuhs. Shortly after that, “I’m sitting in my office and I get a call,” recalled Dan, who works at a large security firm in Chicago. “And a voice said ‘This is Greg Kuhs,’ and one of the first things out of his mouth was ‘Dan, I just don’t know what to say.’ It was very emotional.”

The surgery took place December 17, 2010. “We met about seven in the morning, said a little prayer before going in to the surgery, and everything went well from there,” said Dan. “It was a very neat experience. I was only there for one night. He was only there for two nights. My recovery went really well, I had one bad day. I think. Just normal pain, nothing major.”

And how is Greg Kuhs doing with his new kidney? “I’m feeling great,” the 55-year-old Kuhs told us in May 2011. He has returned to his job as Director of the Wood Dale Park District—which he described as “similar to a Recreation Department in most cities.” He is back enjoying life with his wife Darla, to whom he has been married thirty-one years. The couple have two children in their twenties: daughter Emily, a school teacher, and son Kyle, with whom Greg has competed in the MSBL Father/Son Division in Arizona.

“Generally speaking, I have more energy than I had before,” Greg told us. “I feel better. I lost 25 pounds, which is good—I’m a pretty good-sized guy and it doesn’t hurt to have that extra weight off. I feel comfortable batting…I have my lifetime fee waiver, in honor of his most generous gift of life to Greg.”

In Memoriam

Dennis Viegas
1957-2010

Dennis Gene Viegas lived for baseball and died on the diamond. Those who knew him as a tenacious competitor said he wouldn’t have had it any other way.

Viegas, who was featured on the cover of HardBall after the 2010 MSBL World Series, died suddenly of a brain aneurysm September 21 in center field during the first inning of a game in Auburn, California. News of the tragedy spread quickly.

“Everybody knew him,” said one former teammate, past Sacramento MSBL President Lanny Ropke. “He was a high profile league personality.

In 2006 Viegas became complex manager at Dan McAuliffe Memorial Ball Park—the jewel of the Sacramento MSBL—and took pride in creating a premier baseball facility and venue for SMSBL, local high schools and tournaments. He was involved in scheduling, and was Sacramento MSBL president Jim Tygrett’s right-hand man.

Viegas won seven MSBL World Series rings and played on nine MSBL Championship teams from California to Florida. He left Phoenix in 2010 as the three-time defending champion of the 55+ National Division. Only a week before his death, he was inducted into the Sacramento MSBL Hall of Fame.

“During his induction speech Dennis mentioned that the rings were secondary to all the friends he made nationally while playing in Phoenix and Florida,” recalled Tygrett.

Viegas was born in Sacramento on Oct. 18, 1957, and was well known in Sacramento and surrounding areas, where he played organized baseball since 1965. In 2000, Viegas was instrumental in helping rebuild Tahoe Tallac Little League in the area he loved so much. His father, Dan Viegas Sr., died on Oct. 10, 2010, not quite a year before his son.

Friends and teammates say Viegas’ baseball motor never really slowed down. He played on several teams and he always played hard.

Viegas was a beloved husband to Shari Viegas and father, devoted son, brother, uncle, nephew, godfather, friend and teammate.

A memorial service was held for Viegas at McAuilffe Memorial Ball Park on October 10. “We had the memorial at our complex in the pouring rain and literally hundreds showed up,” said Tygrett. “And his teammates are all wearing his number, #4, on our hats or jerseys….The SMSBL would like to thank all of you across the country who offered your condolences via phone calls and emails,” Tygrett added. “We will miss him forever.”

As a final tribute to Dennis, members of 2011 World Series champion Sacramento Giants scattered some of his ashes on the infield dirt at several of the spring training complexes in and around Phoenix.

See photos and videos of Dennis at smsbl.com

—JM

After the News

MSBL player donates kidney to fellow member

by Jackie Pirro

For information on organ donation, visit Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s excellent website at http://www.nmh.org/nm/transplant.

Another great resource is Livingdonorsonline.org, which has bulletin board where you can talk to others who have already gone through the procedure.
MSBL Player and Pro Scorekeeper has slice of baseball history

Roy Halladay was cooking up a playoff no-hitter on October 6, 2010 and MSBL player and Phillies’ official scorekeeper Mike Maconi was feeling the heat.

Superstition holds that you never, never talk about a no-hitter during a no-hitter, but scorekeepers like Maconi have a different burden: should a goofy play occur at or near the end of the game, it is up to the scorekeeper alone to rule hit or error. That decision determines whether a game fades into obscurity as a one hitter, or gets recorded in baseball’s bold print as a no-hitter.

So there was Halladay band-sawing the Redlegs into the late innings, when Maconi started hearing from a snicker- ing minority of the sports writers in press row. “Hey Mike, you scared yet?” “Hey Mike. You getting nervous?”

“I felt everybody looking at me,” Maconi said.

Then it happened: with two out and two strikes in the top of the ninth inning, Reds’ speedster Brandon Phillips hit a 10-foot nubber in front of the plate. An already difficult play was complicated by the fact that Phillips’ bat nestled itself between catcher Carlos Ruiz and the baseball. Maconi’s heart skipped a beat.

“Thank God for Ruiz,” said Maconi, recalling how he felt as he watched the play. Ruiz made the difficult play look easy and threw the speedy Phillips out from his knees. The play could have been flubbed by a lesser man.

And what if he had failed at any of these? What if he had rifled the ball down the right field line or into Phillips’ back?

“That’s easy, Maconi said. The longtime catcher and MSBL tournament-hardened veteran was unequivocal. “I would have scored it as an error. I’ve got to be honest with you. Catchers—and I’m a catcher—make throws from their knees all the time. That’s the natural play for them.”

Halladay’s no-no was only the second post-season no-hitter in history. Yankee pitcher Don Larsen was the first. He perfect-oed the Brooklyn Dodgers in game five of the 1956 World Series at Yankee Stadium.

Scorekeepers, Maconi included, keep a professional distance from the stars they cover, but this was different. After securing the proper clearances from the Phillies and Major League Baseball, he left the book with the club house officials, who had it signed for him.

Asked what he would do with the page—now a piece of official baseball history—Maconi said “I’ll leave it in the book.” —JM

Capital District MSBL Players help Charity Feed Needy

Members of the Capital District (Albany) MSBL helped a local non-profit feed thousands over Thanksgiving in November 2011.

The volunteers helped move large pallets of items to a church in Albany, moved furniture, laid plastic wrap over carpet and helped with setup for the 42nd Annual Equinox Thanksgiving Community Dinner, an event that feeds almost 9,000 people who are in need.

The non-profit, Equinox, Inc., is dedicated to providing social services to individuals and families, including homeless youth and victims of domestic violence.

The Capital District MSBL was established in 1990 with 4 teams. The league now has more than 500 players on 47 teams in five divisions and has been doing volunteer work in communities for many years. CDMSBL has players from throughout the Albany area as well as Vermont and Massachusetts.

Submitted by Jim Konstantakis, CDMSBL
For more information about Equinox, Inc., see their website at equinox.org.
For more information about the Capital District MSBL, see their website at cdmsbl.com.
Ohio MSBL to Manage Thurman Munson Memorial Stadium

Joe Sidor, President and co-founder of the Ohio MSBL, announced that his OHIO MSBL Management Group LLC signed a 5-year contract with the City of Canton to manage the city’s historic Thurman Munson Memorial Stadium. Revenue from the facility will be shared between the two entities. Canton Mayor William J. Healy II said that the “public-private partnership (will allow) this stadium to be revitalized and again be a very active...part of our community.” OHIO MSBL is leasing the facility for $1 a year, and will be responsible for maintenance, renovations, employee costs and most utility bills for the property, according to Derek Gordon, a management assistant in the mayor’s office. Sidor plans to turn the stadium back over the city in 5-10 years in much better condition. “It’s a labor of love,” he said of the endeavor, explaining that OHIO MSBL wanted to ensure the stadium would be preserved for baseball.

Two Fields to be Added

Sidor said the league plans to renovate and expand the Stadium into a three-field complex, with the two new fields scheduled to open in 2012. “That means that we will be able to host many more mid-season tournaments, with all games being played at the same site and the same time.” In addition to the Ohio MSBL, Malone University will continue to use the facility, and local high school tournaments will continue to be held there.

Sidor estimated that the construction project would be valued at $100,000 to $150,000. However, that figure will include donated labor and materials, he said. Sponsorships will also be sought. Stadium improvements will be phased in over time, he said. First on the list: improved dugouts and about $3,000 worth of new dirt placed on the infield. The OHIO MSBL has filed for not-for-profit status, Sidor said. Money generated through the stadium will be used to pay operating expenses or invested back into the facility.

Field Rich with History

Local baseball lovers still remember the days when future major league stars played at the Stadium—people like Albert Belle, Manny Ramirez and Jim Thome. The Stadium, which opened in 1989, boasts a major league quality baseball field, concession stands, picnic area, press box, lighted scoreboard, locker rooms, offices, clubhouse, and public rest rooms. It is located off Route 77, south of downtown Canton, not far from the NFL Football Hall of Fame.

The Stadium was named in honor of Yankee great Thurman Munson, one of Canton’s most prominent citizens. Munson died in a plane crash in 1979.

Parties interested in using the stadium can contact the management group office at 330-671-3339 or info@munsonstadium.com. Further information is available on their website at munsonstadium.com or at ohiosmsbl.com. —JP

Lucky Winner in Pennsylvania

Did you ever hear about those guys who miss the Mega Million lottery jackpot by just one number? Ken Atticks of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania always wondered how that must feel. He even thought about it on the night of January 5th, 2011, when he heard on the local news that some poor schmuck from Harrisburg missed the $380 million jackpot by just one number.

But then Atticks, a player in the Harrisburg-based Pennsylvania Midstate Baseball League, checked his own lottery ticket, bought a day earlier at the local Super 7 store, and discovered that HE was the shmuck who barely missed.

Atticks, 43, hauled in $250,000.

It would have been nice to win millions, he said. It would have been nice to replace the crappy sound system in the high school gym, or get a fancy new tractor for the baseball association. It wasn’t a life-changing amount, but it was enough to finish the basement, build a nice deck and patio, upgrade the auto, invest, and generally create some breathing room.

So how does it feel to be that guy? “It feels good,” he said.

—JM

East Metro MSBL River Rats Set Record

The East Metro Baseball League River Rats set an all-time MSBL/MABL record in 2011 by going 82 consecutive games without a loss. Their winning streak started in 2008 and ended in 2011 when they lost to the Diamondbacks 11-8 in a playoff game. “To my knowledge, this is the longest unbeaten streak in MSBL history” President Steve Sigler said in 2010, when their record stood at a mere 60 games.

The River Rats were recruited by manager Brian Owens and subsequently managed by Chris Hays and Brad Moody. Tied three times during the streak, they came back from deficits repeatedly, each time wiggling out of trouble and winning. “It got so if the Rats got down by a bunch of runs, even their opponents figured they’d find a way to win it,” said EMBL President John Gambs, who added, “They had eight quality pitchers, quality fielding, and almost everyone on the squad smoked home runs.

“It was a great run with a great group of guys, the core group of 10 guys remained the same throughout, with a few other guys mixed in and out,” said team founder Owens. “We were led by our pitching staff of Matt Stubbs, Kyle Melvin and myself, and the hitting of Chris Hays, who hit over .450 with 35 home runs during the streak, and Carl and Casey Rider who both have hit over .400. Danny Hartman and Todd Thompson were mainstays of the best outfield in the league. Brad Moody was our outstanding defensive catcher. We have also been lucky enough to send two former players on to college scholarships and one, Barry Fowler, turned his stint with the Rats into a professional independent league contract.”

For more info, see www.embl.net.

—JP
25+ Aluminum Division

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Semifinal
So Cal Snappers 11, Chicago Seminoles 0
Fresno Dodgers 10, Salt Lake Devils 9

25+ Aluminum Championship Game
So Cal Snappers 26, Fresno Dodgers 1

25+ Wood Bat Division

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Quarterfinals
Team Las Vegas 8, Big Foot Baseball 2
Westside Bandits 17, West Coast Heavy Hitters 7
Fedlock Falcons 8, Long Island Cubs 3
Brooklyn Sports Fever 5, Montebello Angels 3

Semifinals
Westside Bandits 9, Team Las Vegas 1
Fedlock Falcons 8, Brooklyn Sports Fever 7

25+ Wood Bat Championship Game
Westside Bandits 12, Fedlock Falcons 2

35+ National Semifinals
So Cal Knights 5, Stanislaus Indians 4
LA Matanzas 8, Long Island Blue Jays 7

35+ National Championship Game
So Cal Knights 4, LA Matanzas 2

35+ American Playoffs

Round 1
Calzona Aztecs 12, LA Rocks (wildcard) 1
San Antonio Bulldogs 11, N. Colorado Diamondbacks 1
Balltown Jays 7, Colorado Orioles 5
Las Vegas Bears 6, Utah Rockies 3

Round 2
Utah Black Sox 11, Calzona Aztecs 0
Las Vegas Senators 10, Balltown Jays 1
Las Vegas Bears 12, San Francisco Giants 11
San Antonio Bulldogs 5, Phoenix Tube 2

Semifinals
Utah Black Sox 19, Las Vegas Senators 5
Phoenix Tube 5, Las Vegas Bears 4

35+ Wood Bat Division

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35+ American Championship Game
Las Vegas Senators 9, Utah Black Sox 1

45+ Wood Bat Division

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45+ Wood National Division

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45+ Wood National Championship
Team Victory 5, Boston Wolfpack 3

45+ Wood American Division

Playoffs
San Diego Mariners 16, Huntsville Dirty Dozen 8
Puget Sound Rangers 20, Las Vegas Rattlers 7
Utah Padres 5, Wisconsin Rovers 4
Midwest Mudcats 13, Tri Valley Nasty Boys 8

Semifinals
San Diego Mariners 6, Midwest Mudcats 5
Puget Sound Rangers 13, Utah Padres 4

45+ Wood American Championship
San Diego Mariners 5, Puget Sound Rangers 4

50+ Wood Division

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Semifinals
So Cal Fire 6, Arizona Diamondbacks 5
Boise Senators 16, Inland Pacific Apache 9

50+ Wood Championship Game
So Cal Fire 17, Boise Senators 15
Memorial Day Weekend 2011

18 + MABL Division

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18 + Semifinals
Hayward Pirates 12, Montebello Dodgers 4
Dorados 17, So Cal Mayhem 3

18 + Championship Game
Hayward Pirates 13, Dorados 7

25+ Wood Division

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25+ Wood Play-in Game
PSSBL Ravens 9, West Coast Heavy Hitters 1

25+ Wood Semifinals
Des Moines Bruins 3, PSSBL Ravens 2

25+ Wood Championship
Replay Arenas 17, Des Moines Bruins 8

35+ Wood National Division

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Round 1 through Round 5
Las Vegas Senators 14, LA Matanzas 5
Mezcal 11, LA Matanzas 4
Las Vegas Senators 10, Mezcal 8
Mezcal 9, Las Vegas Senators 1
Mezcal 3, Las Vegas Senators 0

35+ Wood American Division

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Quarterfinals
Montebello Angels 13, Tampa Tides 4
Las Vegas Bears 17, National Indians 4
Team Victory 7, So Cal Reds 6
Ventura Dodgers 13, Utah Rockies 4

Semifinals
Las Vegas Bears 13, Ventura Dodgers 1
Montebello Angels 13, Team Victory 3

35+ Wood American Championship
Las Vegas Bears 9, Montebello Angels 1

45+ Wood National Division

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Division 2

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<td>Arizona Diamondbacks</td>
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Quarterfinals
Salt Lake Evil Empire 12, Sonoma Sea Wolves 4
Bethlehem Stars 15, San Diego Mariners 5

Semifinals
Salt Lake Evil Empire 11, South Bay Stars 10
Central Coast Tigers 9, Bethlehem Stars 8

45+ Wood Championship Game
Central Coast Tigers 13, Salt Lake Evil Empire 12

45+ Wood American Division

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Division 2

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Semifinals
Las Vegas Rattlers 12, So Cal Fire 2
Sonoma Sea Wolves 7, Tax Pro Titans 3

45+ Wood American Championship
Sonoma Sea Wolves 7, Las Vegas Rattlers 3

55+ Wood Division

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Semifinal
Sacramento Tribe 19, San Antonio Texans 6
LA Athletics 10, Paladin 55’s 7

55+ Wood Championship Game
Sacramento Tribe 11, LA Athletics 5
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Winner receives: $50 from HardBall Magazine and a pair of VICTORY custom pro pants of their choice.

HARDBALL MAGAZINE PHOTO CONTEST WINNER

WINNER. Winter 2011/2012 issue. Janet Abott of Greensboro, North Carolina wins with this photo she took at a Triad MSBL playoff game in September 2011 at NewBridge Bank Park, home of the Greensboro Grasshoppers. [Janet is the wife of Indians’ catcher Greg Abbott, who has played with the Indians for six years]. Safe at home is Jeff Simone of the Indians. Catcher is Jeff McGuire of the Braves. Watching at third base is Matt Akers. Congratulations Janet!

RULES: Photos must have been taken by you of MSBL or MABL-related games or events. Supply detailed caption (names of people in photo, names of leagues, when/where taken, description of action). Send submissions to HardBall Magazine, 4949 Lassen Drive, Oceanside, CA 92056 or email to info@hardball.net. Publisher is not responsible for lost or damaged photos. HardBall Magazine retains publication rights. Payment is upon publication.
1988: First MSBL World Series held in Arizona with 38 teams playing in 30+ and 40+ Divisions.

July 1988: Sports Illustrated publishes story about MSBL; MSBL featured on Today Show and Good Morning America.

First MSBL Kickoff Classic held in Las Vegas, with 17 teams in two divisions (30+ and 40+).

Fall 1999: MSBL World Series Hall of Fame established.

Fall 1991: First “Southeastern Fall Classic” tournament held in Florida.

Spring 1991: First issue of HardBall Magazine is published and mailed to members.

Fall 1991: First “Junior” Division formed (future MABL) for ages 23-29.

1990: “Junior” Division formed (future MABL) for ages 23-29.

1990: Father-Son Division debuts at MSBL World Series.

1997: MSBL Hall of Fame established; 10 MSBL members inducted; New MSBL Logo unveiled.

First MSBL Kickoff Classic is held in Las Vegas, with 17 teams in two divisions (30+ and 40+).

2003: MSBL National introduces improved Liability/Medical Insurance for member leagues.

2007: 60+ Division added to MSBL World Series; 52+ Division debuts at MSBL Fall Classic.

2009: 70+ Division debuts at MSBL World Series.

2010: First MSBL Lifetime Achievement Award presented to Val Lewis of Sacramento MSBL.

2012: New remodeled MSBL National website is unveiled; MSBL celebrates its 25th anniversary.

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