

BLEACHER CREATURE

A Monthly Conversation Among Baseball Fans

ISSUE # 133

NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

JUNE, 2005

Zephyrs Home Schedule

June 4	Round Rock	6:05
June 5	Round Rock	5:05
June 6	Round Rock	7:05
June 7	Round Rock	7:05
June 9	Oklahoma	7:05
June 10	Oklahoma	7:05
June 11	Oklahoma	6:05
June 12	Oklahoma	5:05
June 21	Omaha	7:05
June 22	Omaha	12:05
June 23	Omaha	7:05
June 24	Omaha	7:05
June 25	Memphis	6:05
June 26	Memphis	5:05
June 27	Memphis	7:05
June 28	Memphis	7:05

See You at the Ballpark!

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- Hector Maldonado talks with Ron Maestri – pg.7

Zephyrs Bats Perked Up in May

After the 2005 season's first 45 games, the New Orleans Zephyrs were at 21-24. In late May, with roster moves coming fast and furious under the direction of the major league affiliate Washington Nationals, the Zephyrs were still trying to learn the knack of winning at home. In the early going in 2005, the Z's were holding their own in road games with a record of 12-11. At Zephyr Field, after the first 22 home games, New Orleans was just 9-13.

A particularly successful (8-4) trip to Albuquerque, Fresno and Sacramento had manager Tim Foli's club flirting with the .500 mark. The Zs stumbled, however, at home against Colorado Springs, dropping three of four to the Sky Sox.

In May, the Zephyrs added centerfielder Brandon Watson, who arrived from Double-A and immediately joined Tyrell Godwin at the top of the New Orleans lineup. In his first nine games for the Zephyrs, Watson, batting second in the batting order behind Godwin, was hitting over .400 and playing a solid center field. Godwin, hitting in the leadoff slot, was batting .327.

The Zephyrs were also getting good production from the right



field position, with the addition in May of major league veteran Melvin Nieves. In his first 15 games with New Orleans, Nieves was hitting .289, with 4 homers and 11 RBIs.

On the aforementioned 12-game western road trip the Zephyrs' bats came alive. Over the 12-games, although the Zs outscored their opponents only 78-69, they won eight of the twelve games.

Starting pitching continued to be one of the Zephyrs' strengths. Their 4.58 team earned run average ranked fifth in the league, and opponents' batting average of .264 was also fifth best. Sunny Kim was New Orleans' outstanding starter with a 4-2 record and an ERA of 2.79 in his first 8 starts of the 2005 season.

Inconsistency in the bullpen cost

– continued on page 2

Father's Day to a Baseball Fan

I have experienced baseball in different stages in my life. At the age of five, I played tee ball. I was a stereotypical overweight kid who they put at catcher. Why do you need a catcher in tee ball? The next couple of years I tried to play little league. I think they have gold stars on the benches where I spent most games. It got to the point where after about four years of not playing that I got tired of it and quit. I was always a fan of the sport after little league but not actively involved until my college years when I discovered slow pitch softball. I loved playing slow pitch softball. I played pretty regularly until about three years ago, when after a shouting match with the Baptist deacon coach (terrible coach and probably a Redbirds fan), my wife put me into retirement.

This winter our daughter came to us and said she wanted to play baseball. She is just 3 years old, and I thought she must have seen characters on a cartoon playing baseball. She kept on saying she wanted to play baseball, so we decided we would look into a tee ball league for 3 and 4 year olds. My parents and sister

thought I was pushing her to play, but that was not the case. We signed her up in the local league, and then we spent the next couple of weeks buying equipment piece by piece. I was thrilled to be looking at bats and gloves again. I broke out the old softball glove (very dusty and a hint of tear stained leather) and showed her how to catch the ball in her glove. I was disappointed that our league was only going to use major league team gear. I pushed strongly for the mini Zephyrs!

Baseball has taken a new meaning in my life, as now it has become a hobby that I can share with my daughter. She will get one of my Boudreaux hats and wear it while we practice at home. I help coach the team and have a blast each practice and at each game. I realize that these are special times that I will never get back. I don't know how long she will play past this season, but she has discovered the joy of the game of baseball that I have known for many years.

Happy Fathers Day

—John Bowlin



Eugene Witek

Zephyrs...continued from pg. 1

the Zephyrs a few games in May. The ever-changing rosters, a fact of Triple-A life, were factors in keeping the division well bunched after the season's first month and a half. Four and a half games separated first place from fourth in the PCI's American South Division. With games coming up at Zephyr Field in June against division rivals Round Rock and Oklahoma, Foli's Zephyrs were in position to gain some ground.

—Bill Catalanello

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Major League Single Season Batting Records—Updated through 2004

Here is a look at fourteen major league single season record holders updated through the 2004 season. Two players, both active, hold multiple season titles. Ichiro Suzuki holds the season record for both base hits and singles. Barry Bonds (currently on the disabled list) holds the season record for both home runs and bases on balls. One other active player is on this list. Adam Dunn holds the season record for strikeouts.

The longest standing records on this date back to 1894. That was the season that Billy Hamilton scored 196 runs, and Hugh Duffy finished the season with a batting average of .440. The best post-1900 performances in these categories were Babe Ruth, who scored 177 runs in 1921, and Nap Lajoie, who batted .426 in 1901.

Five of these records have been set since 2001: base hits, singles, home runs, walks and strikeouts.



Major League Single Season Batting Records

Category	Player	Club/League	Number	Year
Games	Maury Wills	Los Angeles (NL)	165	1962
Batting Avg.	Hugh Duffy	Boston (NL)	.440	1894
At Bats	Willie Wilson	Kansas City (AL)	705	1980
Runs	Billy Hamilton	Philadelphia (NL)	196	1894
Hits	Ichiro Suzuki	Seattle (AL)	262	2004
Singles	Ichiro Suzuki	Seattle (AL)	225	2004
Doubles	Earl Webb	Boston (AL)	67	1931
Triples	Owen Wilson	Pittsburgh, NL	36	1912
Home runs	Barry Bonds	San Francisco (NL)	73	2001
RBI	Hack Wilson	Chicago (NL)	191	1930
Total Bases	Babe Ruth	New York (AL)	457	1921
Bases on Balls	Barry Bonds	San Francisco (NL)	232	2004
Strikeouts	Adam Dunn	Cincinnati (NL)	195	2004
Stolen Bases	Ricky Henderson	Oakland (AL)	130	1982

SUPPORT ZEPHYRS BASEBALL AND HAVE FUN AT THE BALLPARK!



Every Sunday Home Game is Kids Day at the Zephyr Field. Saturday games are followed by Live Music and lots of Giveaways. Friday Games are followed by huge Fireworks Displays. Every night is a fun night at The Shrine on Airline. See you at the Ballpark!

Memorable Baseball Feats on Opening Day

By S. Derby Gisclair

Among the many things that distinguish baseball as the National Pastime is the ritual of Opening Day. With the beginning of every season, each player starts with a clean slate and each team begins its march to October. It marks the beginning of spring. It offers a sense of adventure – perhaps a turnaround for a favorite team or player, perhaps the first game in a new ballpark, or perhaps the continuation of a traditional rivalry like the Red Sox and the Yankees.

The fans never know what to expect on Opening Day. There have been several spectacular performances that occurred on Opening Day.

- In 1900, Morris “Doc” Amole opened the American League season with a no-hitter for Buffalo against Detroit. Since the American League was not yet considered a major league that year, Amole’s performance has largely been forgotten.
- On April 16, 1940 Bob Feller threw the only Opening Day no-hitter on record against the Chicago White Sox at old Comiskey Park. The 21-year old braved 35° temperatures, a scant two-day rest, and a test of will against Chicago’s Luke Appling, who fouled off 15 pitches in a single at-bat before he was retired.
- The New York Giants’ Red Ames nearly threw a perfect game on Opening Day in 1909 until his bid for history was broken up by Brooklyn in the 9th inning with one out. The following two seasons Ames flirted with making history on Opening Day, throwing seven no-hit innings in 1910 and six no-hit innings in 1911. Incredibly Ames lost all three of these Opening Day games.
- Babe Ruth owns several remarkable Opening Day performances. As a pitcher he won three Opening Day starts in 1916, 1917, and 1918. As a hitter he became one of only twelve men to hit 5-for-5 on Opening Day on April 13, 1921. He also hit the first home run in the history of Yankee Stadium – a three-run shot on Opening Day in 1923.
- Ted Williams enjoyed Opening Day more than most hitters. He compiled an Opening Day record of .449 with three home runs and 14 RBIs in 14 games. He also collected at least one hit in every Opening Day game he started.
- Hank Aaron tied Babe Ruth as the all-time home run leader, clouting homer number 714 on April 4, 1974 in Cincinnati’s Riverfront Stadium.

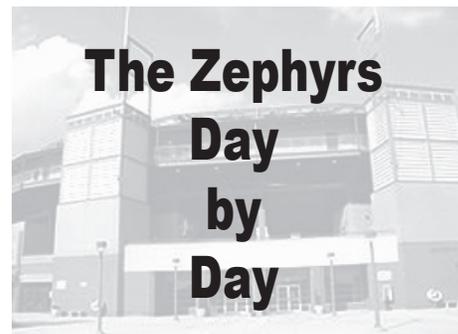


President William Howard Taft was the first President to throw out the first ball of the baseball season on April 14, 1910. He threw a pitch to the Washington Senator’s Opening Day pitcher, Walter Johnson.

Opening Day took on special significance in Washington, D.C. when President William Howard Taft threw out the ceremonial first pitch on April 14, 1910 at old League Park in the nation’s capital. While he was not the first sitting President to attend a major league baseball game – that honor goes to Benjamin Harrison, who watched Cincinnati beats Washington on June 6, 1892 – Taft established a tradition that still exists today.

Since Opening Day 1910 there have been eleven U.S. Presidents who have thrown out the season’s first pitch. Only one president has failed to throw out an Opening Day pitch while in office – Jimmy Carter. Franklin D. Roosevelt holds the record with eight Opening Day tosses. Republicans boast a 13 – 10 record in presidential openers while the Democrats are 11 – 13. Richard Nixon was the last president to throw out a first pitch in Washington, D.C. until the 2005 season opener when George Bush will help the Washington Nationals open their inaugural season.

–continued on page 6



4/07: NASHVILLE 7 New Orleans 3
4/08: NASHVILLE 14 New Orleans 5
4/09: New Orleans 5 NASHVILLE 4
4/10: NASHVILLE 5 New Orleans 3
4/12: New Orleans 3 MEMPHIS 1
4/13: New Orleans 2 MEMPHIS 1
4/14: MEMPHIS 3 New Orleans 1
4/15: Nashville 5 NEW ORLEANS 3
4/16: NEW ORLEANS 7 Nashville 2
4/17: NEW ORLEANS 6 Nashville 5
4/18: NEW ORLEANS 3 Nashville 0
4/20: Memphis 5 NEW ORLEANS 1
4/21: Memphis 4 NEW ORLEANS 2
NEW ORLEANS 9 Memphis 1
4/22: Memphis 14 NEW ORLEANS 3
4/23: ROUND ROCK 2 New Orleans 1
4/24: New Orleans 7 ROUND ROCK 0
4/25: ROUND ROCK 6 New Orleans 2
4/26: ROUND ROCK 5 New Orleans 4
4/28: NEW ORLEANS 4 Albuquerque 3
4/29: Albuquerque 14 NEW ORLEANS 7
4/30: NEW ORLEANS 2 Albuquerque 1
5/01: Albuquerque 9 NEW ORLEANS 4
5/02: Round Rock 8 NEW ORLEANS 6
5/03: Round Rock 4 NEW ORLEANS 2
5/04: NEW ORLEANS 3 Round Rock 2
5/05: Round Rock 5 NEW ORLEANS 4
5/06: New Orleans 7 ALBUQUERQUE 2
5/07: ALBUQUERQUE 7 New Orleans 3
5/08: New Orleans 5 ALBUQUERQUE 3
5/09: New Orleans 14 ALBUQUERQUE 10
5/10: FRESNO 6 New Orleans 5
5/11: New Orleans 5 FRESNO 0
5/12: FRESNO 6 New Orleans 1
5/13: New Orleans 2 FRESNO 1
5/14: SACRAMENTO 5 New Orleans 4
5/15: New Orleans 12 SACRAMENTO 7
5/16: New Orleans 11 SACRAMENTO 8
5/17: New Orleans 9 SACRAMENTO 8
5/19: Colorado Springs 10 NEW ORLEANS 5
5/20: Colorado Springs 5 NEW ORLEANS 1
5/21: Colorado Springs 6 NEW ORLEANS 1
5/22: NEW ORLEANS 8 Colorado Springs 7
5/23: NEW ORLEANS 7 Salt Lake 6
5/24: Salt Lake 9 NEW ORLEANS 5

Yanks' Spud Chandler 109-43, 26 Career Shutouts

Most baseball fans have more than a passing knowledge of the greats of the game—the Hall of Famers and/or superstars from certain eras. And with the passage of time, more and more attention is paid to such players, and less and less to a merely “great” player from the past. One former star who falls into the latter category is New York Yankees pitcher Spurgeon Ferdinand “Spud” Chandler.

The Carnesville, Georgia native was born on September 12, 1907 and was a 1932 graduate of the University of Georgia, where he starred in football and track and field as well as baseball. Upon graduation he signed his first contract and then toiled for seven different teams in five minor league seasons. His minor league statistics did not foretell the success he would have at the major league level.

Finally, in 1937 at the age of 29, Chandler left spring training as a full-fledged member of the pinstripers and would remain so through the 1947 season. Spud was armed for the baseball wars with a 90-m.p.h. fastball, curve, forkball, screwball (his change-up), and a slider that he learned from teammate Red Ruffing in the early 1940's. He also threw an overhand sinker and an occasional knuckleball. Though not a strikeout pitcher, Spud was efficient with his control and quite stingy when it came to allowing base hits. He finished with a career WHIP (walks plus hits per inning pitched) of 1.21.

The high water mark of Chandler's career occurred in 1943, when the righthander led the American League in wins (20), ERA (1.64, the lowest ERA ever for a Yankees starting pitcher), winning percentage (.833), WHIP (0.99), complete games (20), and shutouts (5). For his outstanding season he was named the A.L. Most Valuable Player, the only Yankee mounsmen to date to be so honored.

His career totals seem even more remarkable when you consider that Chanler was limited by a variety of injuries from 1938–1941 (including a broken ankle suffered while training for the 1939 campaign.) In

addition, he made only five total appearances in 1944-1945 due to military service. In 1947, he sustained a career-ending injury. Despite these setbacks, he was a model of consistency—that is, he never had a big league season with a losing record. When he finally



Spud Chandler

hung up his spikes for good, he possessed the highest winning percentage (.717) of all pitchers with 100 or more victories. This mark had not been seriously threatened until the coming of Pedro Martinez, who, for now has bettered Chandler's record.

Although he hurled for some of the greatest Yankee squads, won twenty games twice and appeared in four All-Star games, perhaps his highest accolade came from Hall-of-Famer and native Louisianian Bill Dickey. Dickey longtime catcher and batterymate of Ruffing, Waite Hoyt, Lefty Gomez, Herb Pennock, Burleigh Grimes, Wes Ferrell and Stan Coveleski, simply said that Spud Chandler was “the best pitcher I ever caught.”

Spud Chandler's Career Year by Year

Year	W	L	Pct.	G	GS	CG	IP	H	BB	SO	ShO	ERA
1937	7	4	.636	12	10	6	82	79	20	31	2	2.85
1938	14	5	.737	23	23	14	172	183	47	36	2	4.03
1939	3	0	1.000	11	0	0	19	26	9	4	0	2.84
1940	8	7	.533	27	24	6	172	184	60	56	1	4.60
1941	10	4	.714	28	20	11	164	146	60	60	4	3.18
1942	16	5	.762	24	24	17	201	176	74	74	3	2.37
1943	20	4	.833	30	30	20	253	197	54	134	5	1.64
1944	0	0	–	1	1	0	6	6	1	1	0	4.50
1945	2	1	.667	4	4	2	31	30	7	12	1	4.65
1946	20	8	.714	34	32	20	257	200	90	138	6	2.10
1947	9	5	.643	17	16	13	128	100	41	68	2	2.46
Total	109	43	.717	211	184	109	1485	1327	483	614	26	2.84

Terry Cullen is a long time contributor to *Bleacher Creature* and a member of SABR.

Vern Law, Sandy Koufax, John Smoltz Share a Place in Baseball History

Of the nearly 7,500 pitchers to take the mound in a big league game from 1876 through the 2004 season, 440 toed the rubber in an All-Star game, and 867 participated in a World Series. A total of 61 different pitchers have won a Cy Young award.

Only three, however, have won an All-Star game, a World Series game and a Cy Young award, all in the same season.

Pittsburgh Pirates righthander **Vernon Law** accomplished this rare trifecta in 1960. Dodgers Hall of Fame lefthander **Sandy Koufax** did it in 1965. Braves righthander **John Smoltz**, who accomplished the feat in 1996, is the only other member of the club.

Law was the first pitcher ever to attain this triple coup. He had a career year in 1960, going 20–9, to go along with a league high 18 complete games and an ERA of 3.09. Walter Alston, who served as NL All-Star manager, picked Law to start 1960's second All-Star game at Yankee Stadium. Law had a masterful touch for his

two-inning outing as he shut out the American League starters, allowing one hit and striking out one. The National League scored two runs in the top of the 2nd on their way to a 6–0 victory, making Law the winning pitcher. Law capped a dream season with Pittsburgh by winning two games against the Yankees in the 1960 World Series. He won Game 1 in Pittsburgh's Forbes Field and Game 4 back in Yankee Stadium. After his outstanding season, Law was named winner of the Cy Young award.

In 1965, **Sandy Koufax** ran away with the Cy Young award and finished second to Willie Mays in the National League's MVP balloting. Koufax put up 26 wins for the Dodgers, with an ERA of 2.04. So dominant was Koufax that year that he finished the regular season with a career-best 382 strikeouts and 27 complete games. He held opposing hitters to a .179 batting average while pitching a league-leading 335 innings. In the 1965 All-Star game in Metropolitan Stadium in Bloomington, Minnesota,

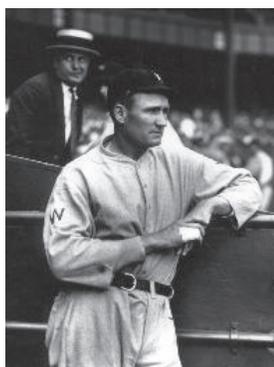


Koufax pitched a scoreless 6th inning in a game that was tied 5–5. He picked up the win when the NL rallied to push across the go-ahead run in the 7th on Ron Santo's infield single. The final score was 6–5. Back in Minnesota in October for the 1965 World Series against the Twins, Koufax was the starter and losing pitcher for the Dodgers in Game 2. In Dodger Stadium, with the Series even at 2 games apiece, Koufax pitched a 9-inning, 4-hit shutout, 7–0, in Game 5. He came back on two days rest in Metropolitan Stadium for the deciding Game 7. Koufax pitched another complete-game shutout, besting Twins ace Jim Kaat, 2–0. The Dodgers were champions, after dropping the Series' first two games.

In 1996, **John Smoltz** had a breakout year for the Atlanta Braves. He led the National League in wins (24) and strikeouts (276). Given the honor to start the 67th All-Star game in Philadelphia, Smoltz was credited with the victory after hurling two shutout innings. He was the first Atlanta pitcher, in fact, to win an All-Star game. As the starter for the opening game of the 1996 World Series in Yankee Stadium, Smoltz gave up just two hits and one earned run in six innings of pitching, as the Braves blasted the Yankees' pitching for a 12–1 victory. With a 24–8 regular season record and a 2.94 ERA, Smoltz was voted the NL Cy Young award. He received 26 of the 28 first-place votes cast, to win in a landslide.

GISCLAIR...continued from page 4

Taft threw out his first pitch to long-time Washington Senators pitcher Walter Johnson, who has the distinction of having started more Opening Day games for his team than any other pitcher (14). His record was later tied by the Phillies' Steve Carlton. Included in Johnson's Opening Day feats were seven shutouts. His final Opening Day appearance was a 15-inning marathon on April 13, 1926 against the Philadelphia Athletics that the Senators finally won, 1–0.



Walter Johnson

S. Derby Gisclair is a SABR member and the author of *Baseball in New Orleans*.

The following conversation is excerpted from *Vocero News*, a bi-lingual newspaper in the greater New Orleans area. Our thanks to Hector Maldonado, who sat down with New Orleans Zephyrs Executive Director and COO Ron Maestri about a month into Maestri's first Zephyrs season. The complete interview is available in *Vocero News*.

Who are some of the people who have helped you become a success?

I was fortunate to have two great parents. If I had any success I owe it to them. They always got me involved in athletics. We didn't have a whole lot growing up, but my parents always were there for us when we got into athletics. They were a great influence. We lived above our grandmother's house, where she had a little apartment above the garage that she rented to a baseball coach. I really admired this coach (Don Davis) for what he was doing. I just got a real feel for wanting to be a coach and a teacher. He had a tremendous influence on me. Along the way, Chancellor Homer L. Hitt who hired me at the University of New Orleans. I owe a lot to Chancellor Hitt for what he provided for me at this great institution.

Your most memorable accomplishment?

In life, the birth of your children, when you get married—these are special events. Athletically speaking, I think the most exciting part of what I was doing was to see young people who played for me go into a profession and have success in the profession that you were in, have the success and work with young people. That has given me the most excitement and satisfaction throughout the years. Right now we have a lot of young people here in this organization, and one of my goals is to help them in some way to attain their goals as to what career they would want to get into. I really would enjoy that very much.

When and where was your first coaching job?

It was at Princeville High School in a small farming community outside of Peoria, Illinois. It was about 25 miles each way from Peoria. When I interviewed for the job I asked where could I live since there weren't any apartment buildings in town. They said there was only one room available and it was above the funeral parlor. I said, "No thank you, I will commute." There were only two coaches and we coached all sports. For a young kid coming out of college it was a great job, because it afforded me the opportunity to try to instill some of the things that you had



Maestri: "As soon as I get out of my car it feels like fun coming to the ballpark. That has been my whole life."

experienced as a player or from the coaches that you had. I know I made a lot of mistakes but by the same token it was an enjoyable and memorable year.

Have you established any goals for yourself?

I know this is a challenge. When I first got hired the media wanted to know if having to put people in the stands was going to be a big challenge and bring pressure on me. I really don't feel any pressure. The way I look at it is simple. This is life, and if every day you worry about making a mistake, then you are not going to get something done. I look at it as coming out here to do something I love. Somebody asked me the other day if I can keep up this pace. As soon as I get out of my car it feels like fun coming to the ballpark. That has been my whole life. When I was coaching it was so much fun getting out onto the field and working out with young kids. I said that when I was hired here. I feel like I was reborn because I am around young people; they invigorate, they energize. They have a lot of enthusiasm. When I come to work here every day I'm excited. I hope I can do this for a while, and, if we are successful it's not because of me, but because of everybody here in our organization...if you have fun at what you are doing it is not work.

What is your number one priority?

The number one thing I was hired for was to turn this thing around. There is no secret our attendance has been declining. But the main thing, the charge that I have been given is to look at outside revenue. The Zephyrs have the right to all this property out here. Now we want to develop other projects that might bring revenue to the Zephyrs organization. Of course, I oversee everything that goes on out here.

Do any of the coaches or players go out to the community and spend time with young people?

We have a community outreach program. Just recently, John Wilson, one of our catchers went to Ellender Middle School where they had an 8th grade career day. His theme was "Keep Progressing." John talked about what

it was like to be a professional player, how he grew up, how he got interested in baseball, his goals, the importance of good grades, and the importance of staying in school.

Do you have some programs to promote the Z's among young people?

All Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday games will be Youth Baseball Nights. Any fan 16 years old or younger that is wearing a baseball jersey or shirt from his or her team will receive a \$2 ticket, while parents of youth baseball players will receive a \$5 ticket. We have a commitment to the youth in our community and to giving back to a community that has treated us so well over the years. We want to afford young people the opportunity to come out and see professional baseball. The new program will help us to increase our attendance, and will give young baseball fans a great experience to enjoy a ballpark that they may aspire to play in one day.

Have you written a book?

I like to read, but I am not one to put it down on paper. I don't have the patience that is required from a writer. I admire people who can write well. That's a real skill to be able to convey a message through the writing. I'll never forget a few years ago in New Jersey, I was called as an expert witness by a young kid who was hit in the head by a baseball in a hitting facility and it almost killed him. I was going up to evaluate the facility and the lack of supervision. When I got called to the witness stand I had been declared by the attorney that was defending the case as an expert witness. I gave my testimony, and the other attorney then asked me if I had ever published a book and I answered no. Then he asked "So, Mr. Maestri, what makes you an expert?" "Well," I said, "I owned a business that had batting cages and I have coached all my life." Now it was the judge's turn and he said "The testimony stands, and I declare Coach Maestri an expert witness". I said, "Thank you, judge but I have never published a book nor written a paper."

Pasadena Rose and family were traveling in late May when we went to press with our June issue. She promised us The Amen Corner will return in our July issue.

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BLEACHER CREATURE

A Monthly Conversation Among Baseball Fans

We publish the region's ONLY all-baseball monthly. We support our home town Zephyrs, and we're also into the wit, wisdom, stats and history of our national pastime. This is NOT an online newsletter. We serve up our monthly publication with ink and paper. We're baseball fans. Our newsletter is for our fellow fans of the Zephyrs and baseball in our region.

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