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Minor League Baseball Is A Great Family Value

By Kadence Buchanan

More families are opting out of the great American pastime of attending major league baseball

games than ever before. Some are staying home and watching the games on television, but growing numbers of families are flocking to minor league ballparks. Minor league baseball attendance has grown every year, reaching a record high 39 million during the 2005 season. Major league attendance has continued to decline in many markets.

Although many explanations have been offered by Major League Baseball including changing demographics and competition from other sports and entertainment venues, cost is an undeniable factor in lagging attendance. The average cost for a family of four to attend a major league baseball game in 2005 topped \$170.00 for tickets, refreshments and souvenirs but not including parking. The cost for that same family to attend a minor league baseball game in 2005 was \$80.00, less than half the cost of attending a major league game.

For that price, minor league fans are treated to performances by up-and-coming young stars who may be tomorrow's Barry Bonds or Alex Rodriguez. Minor league baseball follows the same rules as major league, and most minor league teams are associated with a major league team. Because of this association, minor league fans may occasionally be treated to an appearance by a major league star rehabbing from an injury in the minor leagues. Additionally, in some parts of the country, minor league stadiums play host to major league teams during spring training. Thomas J. White stadium in Port St. Lucie, Florida is the home of the Single A St. Lucie Mets during the regular season, but in the spring it's the New York Mets training facility.

Fans often sit right along the baselines with nothing separating them from players but a railing. Players frequently sign autographs before and after the games. Because of the growing popularity of minor league baseball, teams have been able to build increasingly attractive stadiums with amenities that rival their major league counterparts. Roger Dean Stadium in Jupiter, Florida was built with the same architecture and amenities as larger stadiums like Baltimore's Camden Yards and Turner Field in Atlanta but offers fans an intimate experience that is not available at the larger parks.

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For more casual fans, minor league teams offer entertainment like performances by local music artists, fireworks and special promotions like disco night or Christian night. Some parks, like Hammons Field in Springfield, Missouri, have children's play areas near the bullpens and on-field activities for children including running the bases, games and contests.

Kadence Buchanan writes articles for

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My Baseball Story

By Aron Wallad

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My Baseball Story

I love this game. It has been half century since I started to fall in love with baseball. The romance is still going strong. Playing, coaching, watching, listening, and reading about baseball has been part of my every day life sine I was 15 years old. Even in the dead of winter when baseball is on the back pages of the newspaper I will find out what new development has occurred or who has been signed or traded.

I want to write and read about all types of baseball stories that are inspiring. Why not? Isn't being inspired a great way to live? Isn't offering others an expression of what you love the ultimate gift?

I discovered my need to write and gather inspiring stories about baseball as I drove on route 80 in Northern New Jersey in February 2004. I started thinking about the movies I have seen and the stories I have read that I loved. Like The Lou Gehrig story Pride of the Yankees. or stories about Babe Ruth. Why did I like these stories? What was "My" definition of a great story? I was fixed on finding an answer .I started thinking about the movie Field of Dreams, one of my all time favorites. Why did I like this corny movie so much? Was Field of Dreams a metaphor for living out of your field of dreams? Was creating a clearing done to ALLOW the dreams to show up? In the movie they cleared away a crop of corn to build a baseball field. Do we need to clear away some of our own corn fields to see the dreams that capture our hearts and then create a path to reach those dreams?

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It was then I decided to open up a new road for myself. The direction I was meant to travel on. I love baseball. Oh I said that. I love great stories. I said that as well. Let me fuse these two passions, together. Sounds good." I said to myself. I guess I am pretty corny, huh. That is the birth of Baseball's Pride and Joy. Talk about a labor of love. This baby has been living inside me for over 30 years.

What could be better than finding your love and then nurturing it. I have discovered my essence. Pretty good. When I write these words I see that I am on the field I want to play on. While I am not a N Y Yankee, I am playing fantasy baseball through these stories.

A fantasy I had 40 years ago was to play baseball for the New York Yankees. While I did not make the Yankees or Mets or any other team I have always remained a baseball lover. I am making my fantasy baseball story real by giving people the opportunity to write their Major League baseball story. Whether your story is NCAA Baseball or Minor League Baseball or from high school. It does not matter. Write your inspiring baseball story.

Now I can provide a place for others to tell their tale of baseball inspiration. Tell your Field of Dreams or be like The Natural even if you are The Rookie.

Make your story sing.

Make it vibrant.

Aron Wallad has been a baseball lover for over 40 years. Writing about his favorite subject, baseball, has been a blessing. You will enjoy the heartwarming stories, the unusual statistics and inspiring quotes. But mostly you will love the heartwarming stories that hit a home run to your heart. Join his ezine <http://www.baseballspideandjoy.com/index.php?tag=goart>



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