Hello everyone and thank you for taking the time to read the Official Newsletter of ASA/USA Softball.

Inside this month’s edition of the “Inside Pitch”, you’ll notice a lot more content regarding our local associations and their members. I want to thank all of those who submitted their content and encourage more of you to submit an item for next month’s version. What a great way to promote what is going on locally and show the many benefits of being an ASA member!

By now, hopefully all of you have had a chance to look at the new USAsoftball.com. Julie, Steve and their crew did a fantastic job of transferring all of the information over to the new site, and it really helps with our brand recognition in that ASA/USA Softball are one in the same. You can find a lot of great resources on the site, including National Team history, About ASA/USA Softball and how to Play ASA. Take a look if you haven’t yet, you won’t be disappointed.

I also want to point out that we have a new membership newsletter: “The Register”. Nancy Teehee, the editor, and the RegisterASA staff has worked diligently on providing helpful information to all of our ASA members, and this is a great membership resource.

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ASA/USA Softball is proud to announce the return of the Super Slow Pitch division with the first-ever Men’s Super Slow Pitch Invitational Championship. Slated for August 23-25 in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn., this special event is a resurgence of the ASA Men’s Super Slow Pitch program, which held its last National Championship in 2003. The Men’s Super Slow Pitch Division is an open-roster event which differs from the Men’s Class A, currently the highest level of Championship Play where each team can have no more than five players on the ASA restricted slow pitch players list.

“It is appropriate as we celebrate our 80th Anniversary that we return to our roots and offer an open championship where teams are allowed to assemble and bring their best players to compete in a National Championship,” said ASA/USA Softball Executive Director Ron Radigonda. “ASA Softball was built on this concept. Our founding fathers established the ASA to conduct National Events to crown a National Champion without classification restrictions. The Men’s Super Slow Pitch Invitational will crown the best Men’s Slow Pitch Team in the United States at this event in Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN.”

Bracket play for the Men’s Super Slow Pitch Invitational Championship will be played in Minneapolis/St. Paul area while the Semi-finals and Championship Game will take place at the historic Midway Stadium in St. Paul, Minn., home of the St. Paul
Eight things we bet you didn’t know about ASA/USA Softball!

To celebrate 80 years, ASA/USA Softball will feature a monthly segment in The Inside Pitch in which we give eight fun facts that you may or may not have known about our association. Do you have any interesting stories or moments from ASA’s history? Send them to Codi Warren, and you could be featured in the next issue of The Inside Pitch!

1. ASA/USA Softball’s relationship with Coca-Cola dates back to 1941 when the company sponsored the ASA during WW2.
2. 1933 was the first year that a Women’s National Team Selection camp was held.
3. The National Softball Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony was held in conjunction with the National Council Meeting for the first time in 2001.
4. The National Umpire Staff was founded in 1967.
5. The 18-Under GOLD National Championship was introduced in 1994 as a method of developing young athletes in preparation for the National Team.
7. 1973 marked the first year that slow pitch players could be inducted into the National Softball Hall of Fame.
8. ASA launched its first website in 1997.

A note from The Inside Pitch editor
Codi Warren

Hello everyone and welcome to the April 2013 issue of The Inside Pitch, the official newsletter of the Amateur Softball Association of America (ASA) and USA Softball.

Where has the time gone?! It’s hard to believe that the month of May is already upon us! We’ve had a busy Spring here at the National Office and are gearing up for what we plan to be one of the best summer seasons yet. Just last weekend we held our biggest tournament of the year thus far with 48 youth teams participating in the Spring Challenge. Although severe weather threatened to shut down the tournament, Rich Cress, Chris Sebren, Tracy Schneweis (our new Turf Manager) and their staff did a tremendous job of keeping the fields playable.

As many of you already know, Julie Bartel, our Director of Marketing/Communications, will be out for the summer with baby Bartel No. 2, so Steven and I will be holding down the fort for our department. While our plates will be full, we’re both excited to rise up to the challenge.

Have you all checked out the new items at Softballoutlet.com? Sarah Finn has done an amazing job in designing new apparel and softball related gifts.

Thank you all for your continued support of ASA/USA Softball!

The Inside Pitch
Official newsletter of ASA/USA Softball
2801 Northeast 50th Street • Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73111
Phone (405) 424-5266 • Fax (405) 425-3855
Web site www.asasoftball.com

Editor Codi Warren • E-mail cwarren@softball.org
Assistant Editors Julie Bartel and Steven Embree

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“Super Slow Pitch”

Saints professional baseball team. Fans who are unable to attend will get the opportunity to catch the Semi-finals and Championship games on the CBS Sports Network via tape delay on Tuesday, August 27 and Wednesday, August 28. The invitational will feature 12 of the top teams in men’s slow pitch, who will compete in a double-elimination bracket with no “if-game,” which will determine the champion. Bracket play will begin on Thursday and will continue through Friday evening. Each team is allowed 16 home runs per game, with each home run hit after that recorded as an out.

This marks the first time since 2003 that the Men’s Super Slow Pitch program has had a tournament. The first Men’s Super Slow Pitch National Championship took place in 1981 in Burlington, N.C., where Howard’s/Western Steer (Denver, Colo.) claimed the inaugural Championship and Hall of Fame member Rick “The Crusher” Scherr took home the MVP title. Throughout the 22-year existence of the Super division, 12 teams were crowned champions, with Ritch’s Superior (Windsor Locks, Conn.) and Steele’s Silver Bullets (Grafton, Ohio) leading the pack with four championships apiece.

Tracy Schneweis hired as ASA Hall of Fame Complex Turf Manager

On April 1, ASA/USA Softball hired Tracy Schneweis (Roanoke, Va.) as the turf manager for the ASA Hall of Fame Complex in Oklahoma City.

“I’m very excited and honored to be given the chance to work at the legendary ASA Hall of Fame Complex,” said Schneweis. “It’s a wonderful opportunity to work at one of the top softball facilities in the world, and I look forward to continuing the legacy at the ‘Mecca of Softball’.”

Schneweis served as the Head Groundskeeper for the Salem Red Sox Minor League Baseball squad out of Salem, Va. from 2004 until his promotion to Assistant General Manager/Director of Facilities in Sept., 2011. During his time with the Salem Red Sox, he maintained the playing surface on the field, prepared the grounds for all home games, international baseball and softball events, and assisted with the day-to-day operations of the stadium, including staffing and scheduling.

He has previous experience with ASA/USA Softball as he helped prepare the facilities for the USA Softball Women’s National Team during their 2011 exhibition tour in Virginia. Prior to his work in Salem, Schneweis served as the Assistant Groundskeeper with the Myrtle Beach Pelicans out of Myrtle Beach, S.C. from Oct. 2002 through March 2004 and was the Assistant Director of Stadium Operations for the Augusta Greenjackets out of Augusta, Ga. from March-Sept. 2002. He graduated from Fort Hays State University in May 2000 with a B.S. in Physical Education and received his Master’s Degree in Health and Human Performance from Fort Hays in December 2001.

Tracy’s primary responsibilities will be working with the four fields at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex as well as the common grass areas of the award winning facility. He will also manage the facility’s grounds crew.

“We are excited to have someone on board at ASA/USA Softball with the background that Tracy has,” said Chris Sebren, Assistant Director of Membership Services. “He is coming to ASA/USA Softball focused and driven to take our fields to a higher level and comes highly recommended from people in our industry.”

Schneweis jumps straight into softball season at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex as the 2013 season continues this weekend with the Combat Capital City Classic, which is part of the ASA 2K Series. The stadium will also host many other prestigious events, including the NCAA Women’s College World Series (WCWS) (May 30 - June 5) and the World Cup of Softball and Border Battle V (July 11-14).
“Bright Light” applications being accepted

Applications for the 2013 Bright Light Award presented by ASA and Musco Lighting are now being accepted. Created in 2011, the award honors an ASA registered Junior Olympic (JO) team that has shown a commitment to its community through service and volunteerism.

To download the application, click here.

The Bright Light Award winning team will receive $2,000 towards registration fees for any 2014 ASA sanctioned tournament in the United States. The winners will also be honored with 20 "Bright Light" T-shirts for their roster and staff as well as a banner for display. The award presentation will take place on Sunday, November 10, 2013 in Oklahoma City, Okla., at the ASA Annual Meeting Opening Session. (Winning team will receive one hotel room for two nights; must pay own travel costs.)

The deadline for submission is August 31, 2013, and the winning team will be announced on September 13. Applications must be submitted via email or mail to Codi Warren at cwarren@softball.org or ASA National Office, Attn: Codi Warren, 2801 N.E. 50th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73111, and must be received by August 31, 2013.
Metro Detroit Hosts Annual Umpire Breakfast

The Metro Detroit umpire staff hosted their annual umpire awards breakfast on Sunday, April 7, at the Cultural Center in Plymouth, Mich. Fifty attendees enjoyed a buffet breakfast followed by a brief informational session that included a presentation on 16-Inch Softball. During the awards ceremony local league assignors recognized eight individuals for their dedication and service to the ASA umpire program with a unique plaque. Those umpires and their league affiliation included: Perry Proffer (Westland), Brad Lewis (Waterford), Scott Straub (Saint Clair Shores/Sterling Heights), Tony Hool (Independence Township), Steve Scharf (Rochester/Avon), Ralph Briese (Novi), Rick Kaczander (West Bloomfield) and Kerk Philpott (Lakes Community).

Six individuals received Medals memberships for their participation in their first national tournament or for attending their first National Umpire School in 2012. Those umpires were: Jason Clark, Gus Dumlao, Don Gillette, Brandon Pappas, Scott Straub and Doug Quick. Joan Klimek was also presented with a Medals membership for her exceptional volunteer work at the Northern National tournaments in 2011 and 2012.

Service pins were presented to seven National Indicator Fraternity members for their continued service to the MDASA umpire program. Those NIF umpires and their years of ASA registration are: Rick Fields (10), David Jakubowski (10), Marc Drouillard (25), Bob Allen (30), Arnie Gray (35), Ted Younce (35) and Clark Lawrence (40).

The Metro Detroit umpire staff also presented National Indicator Fraternity trophies to Larry Klimek and Rodney Stachurski in recognition of their membership in this national organization. Congratulations to all of the 2013 Metro Detroit honorees.

This is the tenth year that Detroit ASA has hosted an awards breakfast. During that time over 100 Medals Program memberships, 96 Umpire Plaques and 53 Service Pins have been presented. Also recognized were 11 MDASA umpires who completed the requirements for membership in the National Indicator Fraternity, nine who qualified for the Elite Umpire program and 10 exceptional umpires who were inducted into the Metro Detroit ASA Hall of Fame.

Idaho ASA holds Umpire Clinic

The Coeur d’Alene Recreation Department, North Idaho Umpires Association and Idaho ASA hosted the 2nd Annual Inland Empire Umpire Clinic at The Coeur d’Alene Casino and Resort. Over 75 umpires from Idaho, Washington and Montana attended the Clinic.

Idaho State Umpire-in-Chief (UIC) Gary McCarney and Regional UIC Bill Silves put together the two day training program for both fast pitch and slow pitch umpires. Instructors at the annual clinic included John Wright from Washington ASA, Tom Mahoney for Montana ASA, Russ Lacey and Glen Slocum Idaho ASA.

Steve Anthony, the Idaho ASA Commissioner, remarked that this is great opportunity for both new and returning umpires to receive quality training from experts in the field and it also provides a fellowship among the attendees.
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ASA/USA Softball at work around the country

The Missouri ASA held both fast pitch and slow pitch mechanic clinics in Rolla, Mo.

So Cal ASA athletes got the opportunity to meet Arte Moreno, the owner of the Angels, during the ASA Day with the Angels.

L to R: Steven Embree, Codi Warren, Cynthia Winston, Julie Bartel, Shirley Adkins and John Miller participated in the OKC Litter Blitz, which was held around the OKC Adventure District.

Tyson Miller of DGC at-bat during a tournament in Minnesota over the weekend of April 26-28.

Welcome back Malcom Boyles! Malcom (right), pictured with Mike Hodge, umpired his first fast pitch game since his cancer treatments.
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ASA/USA Softball recently announced the selection of Craig Cress (Edmond, Okla.) as the next Executive Director for the National Governing Body (NGB) of Softball in the United States. Cress, who currently serves as the association’s Director of Membership Services since May 2002, will begin duties as Executive Director effective November 15, 2013 at the ASA/USA Annual Council Meeting in Oklahoma City.

“I am very humbled, honored and excited for this tremendous opportunity,” said Cress. “ASA/USA Softball has a storied history and there are many individuals who helped build and maintain this outstanding association. It has definitely been my privilege to have served ASA/USA Softball for over 35 years in many different roles and I look forward to being part of the future by serving as its next Executive Director. I appreciate the support and confidence of the ASA Board of Directors, the Membership and the National Office Staff - we will need everyone as we create the next chapter of this historic organization!”

Cress has been involved with the ASA for over 35 years serving in several roles as a player, umpire, district commissioner, Umpire-In-Chief, league administrator, as a council member, and National Office staff member. A native of Terre Haute, Ind., Cress started his involvement with ASA Softball as a player and spent many years behind the plate umpiring at all levels including National Championships and International Softball Federation Women’s and Men’s Fast Pitch World Championships. He served on the ASA National Umpire Staff for four years and in 2005, he was nationally honored for his years of expertise as an umpire by being inducted into the National Softball Hall of Fame in the umpire category.

“ASA is honored and proud to name one of its own as the next Executive Director of ASA/USA Softball,” said current ASA/USA Softball President ET Colvin (Mississippi ASA Commissioner). “Craig has come from the local ranks as a district commissioner, local umpire-in-chief to one of the best umpires in the nation. He came to the ASA National Office as Director of Membership services and has led that department and the ASA umpire program. He has the experience and knowledge at all levels to be a very successful Executive Director. Over the past few years Craig has been involved in the grass root programs of all 76 local associations and worked closely with all of ASA’s local Commissioners. He will provide the leadership and guidance that will continue to move ASA forward and keep us as the leader in the sport of softball.”

In the interim, Cress will continue his duties as Director of Membership Services and will work alongside current Executive Director Ron Radigonda who announced his retirement in December of 2012 after 14 years leading the organization.

“Craig will bring a wealth of knowledge and softball expertise to his new role in ASA,” said Radigonda. “He has progressed through various levels and roles within our association and has excelled in all of his endeavors. He has gained valuable experience in his most recent role as our Director of Membership Services and has had direct contact with our 76 local associations for the past decade. He is well versed in all aspects of softball and our association and will provide outstanding leadership to ASA for many years to come.”

Prior to his work in Oklahoma City as Director of Membership Services, Cress served as the Executive Director of the Wabash Valley Family Sports Center in Terre Haute, Ind. and supervised over 20 employees who provided services to over 2,000 members and volunteers. He conducted several fundraising events annually that generated revenue and exposure to the Sports Center in Indiana.

In May of 2002, Cress began his tenure with the ASA National Office in OKC overseeing the Membership Services department who supply services and benefits to all members of ASA. In addition, the Membership Services staff oversees the ASA Hall of Fame four-field complex that hosts over 30 events annually including the NCAA Women’s College World Series and the World Cup of Softball. He coordinates and leads the ASA Equipment Testing and Certification Committee who regulate equipment for the game of softball. Cress works closely with staff in budget preparation and operation for the association and has been an integral aspect of ASA’s success over the past decade.

Cress and Karrie, his wife of 28 years, currently reside in Edmond, Okla. and have two sons, Rich and RJ, who also reside in Oklahoma.
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— Mike Candrea, two-time U.S. Olympic Team Head Coach
Detroit Commissioner Wins State’s Highest Parks and Recreation Award

Stuart Alderman, Metro Detroit ASA Commissioner, recently received the Michigan Recreation and Park Association’s (MRPA) highest honor, the Fellowship Award, at its annual conference.

The award is presented to a member who consistently demonstrates significant investment, support and guidance to fellow professionals. Honorees exemplify the highest level of professionalism in all aspects of our profession, in his or her own organization and within the membership. Honorees must be a MRPA member for 20 years or more.

As a 34-year member of MRPA, Alderman has demonstrated outstanding leadership and made incredible contributions in the development of programs and facilities on the local, state and national level. He has taken an active role with the MRPA, serving on several committees, on the Board of Directors and as the President of the MRPA. Alderman was instrumental in the revitalization of the National Punt, Pass and Kick (PPK) competition, which celebrated its 25th Anniversary in 2011.

With the Metro Detroit ASA, Alderman has been involved in a number of different roles. In addition to being the Commissioner since 2009, Alderman served as Tournament Director of a Men’s 35-Over and Women’s Slow Pitch National Championship, Player Representative for the Great Lakes Region and was the Associate Commissioner prior to his Commissioner role.

Combat Capital City Classic a success

The ASA Hall of Fame Complex hosted it’s first adult slow pitch event of the 2013 season with the Combat Capital City Classic and Men’s Class C National Qualifier, April 6-7. Twenty-eight teams competed in three different divisions (Men’s Open, Women’s Open, Men’s Class C) during the three-day tournament.

The Women’s Open division, which was comprised of five teams, concluded play with the Lady MVP’s taking home the Championship trophy. They also received a prize pack from Combat.

Five teams comprised the Men’s Open division, which ended with Buzinis/BWW/Worth claiming the title and the Combat prize pack.

Eighteen teams competed in the Men’s C National Qualifier for the chance to earn a berth to the Men’s Class C National Championship. J&R Logistics took home the title, and earned the berth and a $500 travel certificate and Combat prize pack.

To find a complete bracket and more tournament information, please visit Tournamentasa.com.

The Combat Capital City Classic also served as a sanctioned tournament for the ASA 2K Series. Now in its sixth year of existence, the ASA 2K Series consists of designated ASA tournaments that each award a travel certificate to the first place team to help with travel related costs to the Men’s Class A National Championship. The Men’s Open winner and Women’s Open winners also receive a prize pack from Combat. The Men’s Class C champion will receive a berth to the Men’s Class C National Championship, a $500 travel certificate and a Combat prize pack.
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References

ASA Official Portable Fence; NCAA Women’s Fastpitch “World Series” Division I, II & III Championships Series; City of Woodland, City of Santa Maria, Salem VA, etc.
Nike extends contract with Women’s National Team

ASA/USA Softball and Nike announced that the company has extended its contract as the exclusive apparel and footwear provider of the USA Softball Women’s National team program through 2016.

A partnership dating back to 1999, Nike and USA Softball have teamed up for over a decade now outfitting Team USA through three Olympic Games and most recently at the 2012 International Softball Federation (ISF) World Championships where the U.S. took home the silver medal. As the exclusive provider, Nike is the official sponsor of all travel, training, podium and on-field apparel as well as footwear, accessories, headwear and bat bags.

“Nike’s commitment to USA Softball has been a footprint and foundation of our program dating back to the 90s,” said Ron Radigonda, ASA/USA Softball Executive Director. “They truly believe in assisting our elite athletes to be the best when they take the field to represent our country. The product, dedication and support of Nike has had huge impact on our program and we can’t thank them enough for their loyalty.”

In addition, Nike has been a supporter of USA Softball PINK OUT game that has taken place every summer since 2008 with autograph auction proceeds of over $50,000 benefiting the Central and Western Oklahoma Susan G. Komen Foundation. Their generosity and support has helped promote breast cancer awareness to softball fans and athletes across the globe.

New in 2013, the USA Women’s National team will be sporting a new look on the field with a brand new Nike uniform style that mirrors the company’s look of the Nike sponsored NGB’s in London 2012 Olympic Games. The USA Women’s 2013 summer schedule will be announced in the coming weeks including participation at the World Cup of Softball in OKC July 11-14. To purchase tickets, click here.

ACE Coaching Certification reaches 9,000

The following ACE (Achieve, Certify, Educate) Coaches have received prize packs from ASA/USA Softball, Pocket Radar™ and Powerchalk™. In an effort to thank and award those coaches who achieve an ACE Certification, the ASA has teamed up with sponsors Pocket Radar™ and Powerchalk™ to provide ACE coaches with a prize pack. Every time the ACE Program reaches an odd-numbered 1,000th milestone, ASA will award that coach with a Pocket Radar ($200 value) and the next coach with a custom Powerchalk account ($100 value).

The following is a list of the latest recipients of the Pocket Radar™ and Powerchalk™ prize packs:

Name, Hometown, Prize

- Laura Spencer Manley (Oregon City, Ore.) – Pocket Radar
- Brody Archibeque (Queen City, Ariz.) – Powerchalk Account
- Mark Manzaneres (San Lorenzo, Calif.) – Pocket Radar
- Greg Hernandez (Missouri City, Texas) – Powerchalk Account
- Lenora Slatcher (Broken Arrow, Okla.) – Pocket Radar
- Douglas Daniels (Madison, Miss.) – Powerchalk Account

“The ACE program is great because it provides information for anyone interested in broadening their knowledge of the game of softball,” said Manzaneres. “The online tools/videos are excellent resources I use throughout the season. ASA/USA Softball has a great organizational structure in place, which gives me a peace of mind that we’re a part of a high-level organization.”

The ACE Certification program is online and you can access the tests by login at www.REGISTERASA.com. More detailed instructions are located on the homepage.

“The benefits that are most important to me of the ACE program are the teaching videos,” said Slatcher. “The ACE program gives me the tools to be a better coach, and helps me to mentor my brand new coaches and bring up a new coach starting softball.”

These coaches bring the number of awarded ACE coaches to 10. Previous recipients of the complimentary Pocket Radar and custom Powerchalk account are Warren Painter (Antioch, Calif.), Robert Edmonds (Ossineke, Mich), Brandon Meyer (Argenta, Ill.) and Heath McVay (Loveland, Colo.).
ASA of PA holds Spring Meeting

The ASA of PA held its annual Spring meeting and Hall of Fame Banquet March 1-3, at the Holiday Inn in Grantsville PA. ASA National Office guests were Mr. Craig Cress and Mr. John Miller, who had the opportunity to take part in several of the break out sessions. Future goals, tournaments, legislation, classification, JO, umpires and State and advanced play tournaments were among the many topics discussed during the weekend.

The highlight of the Spring meeting was the Hall of Fame Banquet. Over 400 people attended the banquet to honor the 2013 class of inductees.

The 2013 Hall of Fame Inductees are:

- **Charles “Jack” Ohl** - Ohl’s career started at the young age of 13 pitching in the Allentown Men’s League. Jack was noted for his slingshot style of pitching and playing second base. He pitched 22 no-hitters, 13 perfect games and pitched and played in more than 36 league or play off championships. Jack would go on to excel, winning many awards including the Lehigh Count MVP Pitcher Award in 1960, 1963 and 1967. In 1970 he took the opportunity to help develop younger players and began coaching. Jack was very dedicated to the sport of fast pitch softball.

- **Charles “Charlie” DiMarco** - DiMarco played fast pitch, modified and slow pitch softball beginning in 1960 in Chester, Del. and Montgomery counties. Charlie played first base, second base, out field and pitched in modified softball. He was a member of 18 softball championship teams from 1960-1992. Charlie also played for a traveling team in senior softball giving him seven decades of competition. Career highlights include 22 home runs in the 1977 season and 120 games played in 1967.

- **Michael Ohl** - Ohl started his first year playing shortstop, but halfway through his first season his pitching career began. Mike pitched for the Allentown Patriots, Sunners, Hershey Equipment, Dominos Pizza, Ski Brother, DC Tire, Apple Auto, Millersville Merchants and Kreider & Flick. He pitched 19 no-hitters and two perfect games, won three state titles and two ASA National Championships. Mike was selected 1st team All-American and Tournament MVP in 1997 and 2004. After 25 years of playing fast pitch softball Mike retired after the 2005 season.

- **Bernadette Murphy** - Bernadette began her career with the ASA of PA playing softball for Briarcliff AA in 1965. While playing softball, Bernadette began her umpiring career in 1970 and continues to umpire. Bernadette was inducted into the ASA National Indicator Fraternity in 1996 after umpiring in five National tournaments. Bernadette had the honor to umpire at the ISF Junior’s World Cup in 2001 and the ISF Junior World Championship in Nanjing, China in 2003. Bernadette has served as a Special Olympic Umpire Coordinator from 1988 to the present and became a member of the Elite Umpire Program in 2003.

- **Thomas Schadt** - Tom has been a “Sponsor” for 44 consecutive years. Tom has sponsored teams including: St. Paul Lutheran Church, Phoenix Sons, Genesis and multiple Spring-Ford AA Senior teams. Tom has had 80 Spring-Ford AA Senior teams play ASA advanced play for 14 years with a total of 950 games. Spring-Ford AA has won National Championships for 50+ -55+ and 60+.

Others receiving awards were:

**Dick Millhouse Umpire Award:** Bill Polito
**Degenstein Award:** John Beaugue
**ASA Service Award:** Andrew S. Loechner Jr
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NEW and improved USSAsoftball.com!

ASA/USA Softball is excited to announce the launch of the new and improved www.USASoftball.com. A complete redesign under the digital platform of the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), the new website offers a rewarding experience for the end user and the ultimate fan of ASA/USA Softball.

Redesigned under the template followed by several NGB members of the USOC, the new site features updated and improved news stories, photo galleries, athlete bios and USA Softball history, including all-time rosters of the Olympic Games, Pan American Games, and International Softball Federation (ISF) World Championships. This site will also be your home for information like stats, game results, and event information for all the teams that take the field for the Red, White and Blue.

Featured navigation titles include an ABOUT section detailing information about the NGB as well as contacts, frequently asked questions and the process to be selected to a USA Softball National team. In addition, the COLLEGE CORNER title dates back to the early days of the ESPN.com/USA Softball Top 25 poll with information from 2006 and beyond including weekly poll listings, former Player of the Week honorees, and how the Top 25 Division I Collegiate teams perform each week.

“We are thrilled to be launching this new look and facelift to the ASA/USA Softball brand and image,” said ASA/USA Softball Executive Director Ron Radigonda. “As we continue to develop and learn more about the platform, we are anxious to provide a very user-friendly experience to our fans and audience on usasoftball.com.”

A RESOURCES center is available as well for usasoftball.com users with information from partner Liberty Mutual Responsible Sports that provides tools, resources, tips and advice you need to help youth athletes experience the best that youth sports have to offer.

The user can browse the SHOP center to take home Team USA and generic softball apparel while also learning about SPONSORS and the up and coming USA Softball LEGACY Club driven from memberships. The PLAY ASA center describes the assets of registering ASA and the benefits including equipment testing and insurance.

Stay tuned for more information regarding event streaming through this new site and be sure to bookmark it to follow all USA teams (Women, Men, Junior Women, Junior Men and Slow Pitch) throughout the entire season.
Recruit, Train, Retain – Seattle Style

By Kayleen Dunson, Seattle-Tacoma UIC

We’re having a great year in the Seattle Tacoma area. By the end of April, the Seattle Metro Softball Umpires Association (SMSUA) will have recruited and trained over 30 new umpires, increased our membership meeting attendance by over 30%, publically recognized over 30% of our regular members, sent 30 umpires to a National Umpire School, inspired a two-minute television feature that aired on an ABC station during the 6 pm news, and begun observing all of our slow pitch umpires.

Whew! How in the name of the Triple Play are we able to do this?

The short answer is we have an awesome team, are not afraid of a ton of work, get fantastic support from our ASA leadership team and our Association Board, and even when we’re busy we never lose our passion for inspiring umpires.

The long answer is we’re doing it Seattle Style – with a professional, personal, and passionate approach to inspiring umpires at all levels. Here’s what we did:

**We Got to Know Our Umpires**

As a brand new Umpire-in-Chief, I made it my goal to try to understand what made our current umpires happy, and what made them unhappy. We created a nine question online survey asking members how they liked to be recognized. We kept the questions brief and nearly 40% of our membership completed the survey. We took what we learned from the survey to create a set of goals for the next year. I also made it my priority to meet one-on-one with each of the umpires in our Association to get to know them as people, to talk about their umpiring goals, and to get a sense of what might motivate them in the future. It took over three months, but by the first General Membership meeting I had conversations with nearly everyone in our Association. Seeing them at that first meeting was like running into old friends.

**We Developed a Leadership Team**

I knew there was no way I could help nearly 200 umpires reach their goals all on my own. So I put together a team of leaders who would help me. I established three Deputy UICs: Sean Wells – Training; Charles Coburn – Fast Pitch; Don Hough – Slow Pitch. I also created a group of Advisors – former UICs like Mike Sepe and Tom Henderson; high school and college experts like Gerald St. Clair and Shelley Douma; and umpires working both fast and slow pitch like Kevin Nishikawa, Jerry Forkner, and Lou McCaffery. I picked umpires who had a contagious passion for inspiring umpires and would gladly share their expertise with me, the Umpire Development Team, and all the umpires. In the “off-season” we met several times to set our own positive tone for our work and establish goals for the coming year.

The SMSUA created a contest called “Gas for Knowing”. Umpires who scored 100% on a Rules Quiz were entered for a chance to win a can of gas.

**We Committed to Establishing Measurable Goals**

We learned from our survey and from my one-on-one meetings with umpires that we had a bit of a culture of negativity and inaction in our association. Members didn’t feel very involved, slow pitch umpires felt ignored and fast pitch umpires got burned out. Many umpires felt only the “good ole boys” ever got the good assignments or special recognition, so just stopped trying. Changing a culture is a long, hard process but what I chose to focus on for the coming year was simple: 1) Be positive first – always find something good to say about an umpire; 2) Find ways to more often recognize more “rank and file” umpires; 3) focus on getting our slow pitch umpires trained, engaged, and excited about umpiring again; and 4) get EVERYONE more involved in the Rule Book. The Umpire Development Team signed on to support these goals and we had tremendous support from our Association Board our ASA Commissioner, Mike Rabin.

**We Found Ways to Recognize More Umpires**

We started recognizing the established award winners for the ASA Medals programs, National Indicator Fraternity, and others, but we also publically recognized other umpires for their work in other aspects of the association – like for volunteering to umpire for Special Olympics or helping out at the Regional Clinic. We also started a new program called “Pinch Trainers” where a panel of three umpires were given 10 minutes to “train” the rest of the umpires on a Rule Definition; and a new program called “Gas for Knowing” where umpires who scored 100% on a Rules Quiz were entered to win a can of gas. We had at least four and almost always more umpires who hadn’t been recognized before standing in front of a group of their peers getting recognized.

**We Got More Umpires**

It may seem strange that this topic is nearly the last one on our list, but I was convinced that if we had a re-motivated membership, it would be easier to recruit and retain new umpires. Through our recruiting efforts we had over 60 umpires express an interest in umpiring. About 40 of them came to our first training meeting, and about 30 have made it all the way through the training process. Numbers matter – get as many potential recruits as you can. Here’s what we did

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20
Bob Nicholas helps league attempt a new world record

Members of the Big Balls Kickball league of St. Louis spent 69 continuous hours playing kickball to achieve a new world record and raise over $5000.00 for the Wounded Warrior Project (the current record stands at 51 hours). The event took place April 18-21 at Jefferson Barracks Park in south St. Louis County with Bob Nicholas from the St. Louis Metro ASA Umpire's Association supervising the event. Officials must first confirm the event’s length before it officially becomes a record.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

“Seattle Style”

to get these numbers:

We built a professionally designed website – www.smsua.org

We control all the content for the website. With this amazing tool (thank you Erin Peterson) we have a place where we can direct potential recruits so they can get most of the information they need. The content is fresh, the layout is professional, and it may be the biggest recruiting tool we have.

We paid a very little for advertising

Bradley Scott was our Recruiting Chair and he placed Craigslist ads in all of the areas where we umpire. More importantly, when someone responded to the ads, Bradley called them back to determine their true interest in umpiring, invited them to our training, and then passed them on to me who also gave them a personal welcome.

We got free media coverage when we went Micro-Media

It’s hard to get free feature stories in major newspapers, but every neighborhood or city has local media outlets that are always looking for content that is relevant to their area. I live in an area that has a very well respected on-line news outlet. I wrote a brief story about my experience of umpiring in the community and that I had become the UIC and was looking for more local umpires. They ran the story with a great photo and that generated 10 new potential recruits. Better yet, because it was a respected news source, the local ABC television station picked it up and contacted me about doing an on-air piece. Find your micro-media and write a short story about a local umpire.

We trained new umpires to survive their first year

I believe we have the best training program in the country. Our first and second year umpires go through five sessions of classroom presentation, two gym and field mechanics sessions, they must take and pass the ASA exam, and they must be evaluated in four games for fast pitch, and two games in slow pitch before we turn them loose on the field. This year we started incorporating take home quizzes and in-class mechanics sessions to keep everyone involved. It's A LOT OF WORK and A LOT OF TIME and Sean Wells has done an excellent job over the past 4 years of getting our new recruits ready to survive their first season.

We Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

The key to keeping umpires engaged is consistent and frequent communication. For two years now we’ve been producing a monthly e-newsletter, we have a strong Facebook presence with three active administrators, we add fresh content to our website’s “Blog” whenever a new story comes up, we use the notification system on Arbiter Sports (our assigning program), we use mass email messages for important time-sensitive information and we even still use the good old-fashioned phone to make personal connections. The key to “communicate, communicate, communicate” is to be consistent and professional, and for us in Seattle, we’re also trying to keep it positive and personal.

I love my “job” as UIC in Seattle. I love the team of umpires here who are giving back to ASA, our association, and especially all the umpires in the Seattle area. I love my ASA leadership team – Commissioner Mike Rabin, Regional UIC Wild Bill Silves, and Deputy Supervisor of Umpires Malcolm Boyles. Most importantly, I truly love each and every umpire in our area. Corny, but true.

If there is everything I can do to help another association or umpire, please just ask.

Always true ASA Blue, Kayleen.
Valuable Youth Sport Grant and Resources

Responsible Sports Community Grant
The Responsible Sports Community Grants program is a competition-based fundraising program that is designed to reward youth softball clubs and organizations with one of fifteen $2,500 grants. All you have to do is complete the online course and quiz. Credit your favorite organization and then connect with your family and friends to rally their support.

The top 15 organizations with the most quizzes at the end of the grant period will earn a $2,500 grant.

Get your club or organization started at:
ResponsibleSports.com/Grant

Fundamentals eNewsletter
The Responsible Sports Fundamentals eNewsletter delivers the latest news in responsible sport parenting and coaching once a month right to your inbox. You will receive in every Fundamentals:
• An engaging feature article on youth sports topics
• Access to the latest athlete podcasts and videos
• Key dates and events

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Check out our
Ask the Sports Experts forum
and submit a question today!

Like us on Facebook
Facebook.com/ResponsibleSports
The Spring Community Grant period is quickly coming to a close on May 31!
Have you registered your softball team or organization? It’s not too late - visit the Spring Community Grant details page for more information on how to get started.
Also, make sure to check out the Tell-A-Friend Tool. It is a free and easy-to-use email tool that helps you spread awareness about your Community Grant effort. All you have to do is enter your contacts. Then sit back and let us handle the heavy lifting. Each of your entered contacts will receive a one-time, personalized email from you, urging them to help you and your youth sports organization earn a $2,500 Community Grant. You and everyone in your organization can also rest assured that no recipient data is collected, and no future emails will be sent – unless the address is entered by you or another user into the input form.
And don’t forget to check out the Community Grant Toolkit for more helpful resources!
Wondering how your competition is doing? Check out the Spring Community Grant Leaderboard.

**Illinois ASA Hall of Fame Banquet**

The Illinois ASA conducted their annual Hall of Fame Banquet and induction ceremony Saturday, April 13 at the Decatur, Illinois Hotel and Convention Center. Illinois ASA State Commissioner Don Brewer served as master of ceremonies as a crowd of 350 enjoyed dinner and a ceremony that enshrined nine players and five teams into the ASA state Hall of Fame.

Players inducted were Roberta Secrest, Avon Indiana (womens fastpitch player); Craig Behne, Bettendorf, Iowa (mens slopitch player); Rocco Ramsey, Bowen (mens fastpitch manager); Barry Dalmasso, Mt. Vernon (mens fastpitch pitcher); Rick Minton, Cerro Gordo, (mens fastpitch player); John Radloff, Strasburg (mens fastpitch player); John Marker, Mahomet, mens fastpitch player; Chris Long, Sigel (umpire) and Brad Friese, Strasburg (mens fastpitch player).

Selected in the team category were mens fastpitch teams Pinckneyville Celtics Decatur Perfect Window Cleaners and Sadorus Woodworth Trucking; womens fastpitch team West Frankfort Cardinals and the Milan Aces Junior Olympic organization.

The Illinois ASA Hall of Fame was established in 1971 and Banquet and induction ceremonies are held annually. Attendance has ranged from 300 to 505 since the inaugural event in 2002.
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ASA/USA Softball recently announced the Top 25 Finalists for the 2013 USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year, which will be announced at the opening of the 2013 NCAA Women’s College World Series (WCWS) in Oklahoma City. This award, which is considered the most prestigious honor in Division I women's collegiate softball, is designed to recognize the outstanding athletic achievement by female players across the country.


Click here for the complete list of the Top 25 Finalists for the 2013 USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year Award.

This year’s Top 25 is comprised of 11 seniors, eight juniors, four sophomores and two freshman. The student-athletes selected represent 17 NCAA Division I universities and five athletic conferences. Alabama leads the way among universities with four athlete representatives, followed by Oklahoma and Tennessee with three apiece, Texas with two and Arizona State, Arkansas, California, Florida, Louisville, LSU, Michigan, Missouri, Notre Dame, Oregon, Penn State, South Florida and Washington each have one member among the Top 25 Finalists.

Just prior to the start of post-season play, on May 8 the list will be narrowed to the Top 10 Finalists. The Top 3 Finalists will be announced May 22, while the winner of the 2013 USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year award will be revealed on May 28 prior to the start of the NCAA WCWS in Oklahoma City.

The USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year award is voted on by coaching representatives from 11 Division I Conferences in the 15 ASA Regions as well as members of the media who consistently cover Division I Softball across the country.

In addition to bestowing the USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year award, ASA/USA Softball is now in its 11th season of presenting the ESPN.com/USA Softball Collegiate Top 25 Poll and the USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Week, which are announced Tuesdays during the regular season. A complete history of the USA Softball Collegiate Player of the Year Award, past Top 25 Polls and Player of the Week honorees are available at Teamusa.org/USA-Softball/College-Corner.aspx.
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Hosted by the Southern California Amateur Softball Association
Phil Gutierrez, Commissioner       Jim Gibilisco, Umpire-in-Chief

The National Governing Body of Softball

Amateur Softball Association
Fast Pitch Camp (Advanced Umpire School)

June 11 - 16, 2013

Location:    Lancaster City Park
43063 N. 10th Street West
Lancaster, California 93534

Registration Fee:  Fast Pitch Camp          $425.00
                    ISF Course                   $  75.00

Meals will be provided as part of your registration fee.

In 2013 SoCal ASA is privileged to host the ASA Fast Pitch Camp (Advanced Umpire School). This camp is for fast pitch umpires who are interested in developing their skills and mechanics to the ultimate. Included in the four-day schedule (five-days if attending the ISF Seminar) are daily plate drills and base mechanics, lectures on rules and positioning as well as in-depth philosophy behind umpire mechanics. There will be group discussions with leaders of the ASA umpire program, and assigned games that are video taped for evaluation. (This camp also serves as an ISF "certified" rating seminar. Umpires applying for the ISF certification seminar must meet the requirements for ISF certification.)

ASA Instructors: National Umpire Staff Members (Ratio of one instructor per 10-15 students)

ISF Instructors: Bob Stanton, ISF Umpire In Chief
Kevin Ryan, ASA Supervisor of Umpires

HOST HOTEL - SPRINGHILL SUITES, Lancaster. 1811 W. Avenue J12, Lancaster, California 93534. Phone: 661-729-2390.
$99 double occupancy, continental breakfast included. Umpires must make room reservations through Jim Gibilisco to receive the special rate. You may request a specific roommate on your school registration.

For more information contact:
Jim Gibilisco: 619-251-7312  jimgibilisco@hotmail.com
Laura Head: 562-221-4540  laura_head@hotmail.com
ASA in the 1960’s

Carol Spanks, a member of the Hall of Fame, speaks during the 1969 Women’s Major Fast Pitch National Championship. The Lionettes would go on to win the National Championship.

RIGHT: Jean Daves (right) and Rita Horky at a 1965 tournament. LEFT: Ray Ernst (center) with members of the Pharr Yarns, the 1961 Men’s Industrial National Championship.

RIGHT: A photo of Morgana Park in 1962. George Dickstein talking to a class during a clinic in 1965.
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ASA umpires around the world

March 21st was the start of a ten-day trip of a lifetime for ASA/ISF Umpire John Wright (Olympia, Wash.) as he was selected to umpire the Chinese National Games in Xishuanbanna, China. The games were held at the Nanjing New City Sports Competition and Training Base located in the south end of the Yunnan Province. This is one of the great benefits of being an ASA Umpire!

The Chinese umpires were very open to having an outsider on their crew both on and off the field. Even though most did not speak English and for all his efforts John spoke very little Chinese, they communicated well on the field. Off the field lots of hand actions, photos from phones and translation apps proved to make getting to know each other fun and a great learning experience.

About the food John commented, “The food was great and if you liked it you just ate it and didn’t ask. The duck head split in half and placed on my plate was not on my hit parade but the pineapple stuffed with rice and then steamed was great! And yes, like all good tournaments, they put on a fabulous umpire dinner. Need I say more?”

How did he feel about the trip? “Not only did I get to umpire on an international crew but I was able to visit several cities and villages and experience the Chinese culture first hand. And, with the use of Facebook, I was able to share my day to day experiences with my softball family, my family and friends.” You can see John’s travels on his Facebook page, ‘John N. China’.

Spring Challenge a success in Oklahoma City

The ASA Hall of Fame Complex in Oklahoma City and Wildhorse Park in Mustang, Okla. hosted 48 teams at the ASA Spring Challenge. April 26-28. Girls fast pitch teams at the 14-Under, 16U and 18U levels will first compete in pool play before moving onto bracket play Saturday evening through Sunday.

Click here for the completed Spring Challenge bracket.

The 14U and 16U events kicked off with each division (comprised of 16 teams apiece) competing in pool play until Saturday afternoon at both facilities. Bracket play games started that evening and concluded Sunday afternoon with their respective championship games, which were held on the Stadium Field at the ASA Hall of Fame Complex. The Oklahoma Athletics 14U took home the gold in the 14U division while the Oklahoma Athletics Childers brought home the title in the 16U division.

In the 18U division, 16 teams competed for the Spring Challenge title. Pool play began Friday at Wildhorse Park and continued through Saturday. The title game, held at 4:45 p.m. on the Stadium Field concluded the tournament and the Tulsa Elite ’95 took home the Championship trophy.
Being a family member of Team USA has its benefits.

Take advantage of partnership travel discounts.

United has flown Team USA for over 30 years, and we strive to be the airline of choice for Olympic family members as well. That’s why we offer discounted fares for USOC/NGB associated events. Go to united.com/USOC to book your flight, or to learn more.