



# SPRING FLINGS

**Newsletter of the SABR Spring Training Committee**

**Volume 8, #1**

**June 2009**

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The Colorado Rockies and Arizona Diamondbacks have made it official – they will both leave Tucson after 2010 Spring Training, and will likely partner with each other at a new complex either in the Phoenix area or in Scottsdale. Rockies had the lowest average attendance of all the Cactus League teams this past March, and a move would make it easier for Rockies fans to reach Phoenix by air than it would be had they remained in Tucson. The move will leave Tucson with no spring baseball beginning in 2011, and will concentrate all 15 Cactus League teams in the Phoenix metro area.

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Tucson is looking into the possibility of luring the Baltimore Orioles to Arizona for 2010, along with Sarasota, FL, and Fort Myers. Apparently players and umpires were complaining about the state of the Orioles' Fort Lauderdale Stadium this Spring, so much that complaints were filed with Major League Baseball regarding the poor conditions of the facility. Baltimore has until the end of October 2009 to notify Fort Lauderdale officials of their intentions for 2010. City of Palms Park in Fort Myers is emerging, though, as the front-runner to lure the Orioles for 2010 and beyond.

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A surprise team is on the radar now for Sarasota – the Chicago Cubs, who have trained in Mesa, AZ, continuously since 1979, and have a history in Mesa dating back to 1952. One hitch – the Cubs would require the building of a completely new facility and stadium in Sarasota, and are not interested in playing at Ed Smith Stadium, which was just vacated by the Cincinnati Reds' move to Arizona for 2010. Another remote possibility for the Cubs in Florida is Naples, in Collier County. Should the Orioles relocate to Fort Myers and the Cubs somehow move to Naples, it would give baseball 4 teams in the southwestern Florida area.

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The new Boston Red Sox facility in Fort Myers will include a stadium with dimensions matching Fenway Park (including a Green Monster) as their Spring Training ballpark. The facility will be located near Southwest Florida International Airport in Fort Myers. Talk is also going around that the Red Sox will also seek to replicate at the new spring training stadium the seating areas currently in existence at Fenway.

Minor League Baseball took over the operation of Dodgertown in Vero Beach on June 1, and will be using the facility for events such as tournaments at all levels of play as well as for adult fantasy camps. Plans are also in the works to turn the practice infields into Little League fields, and to install lights on the other full-sized practice fields.

Attendance was down approximately 16% for Cactus League games in 2009. Average attendance dipped to 6,396, compared to an average of 7,436 in 2008. Total attendance increased, though, from 1.3 million in 2008 to 1.6 million this year, due to the addition of the Los Angeles Dodgers and Cleveland Indians to the Cactus league lineup.

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Attendance was relatively flat for the 2009 Grapefruit League, dropping an average of only 448 fans per game. Average attendance in 2009 was 6,030 per game, compared with 6,478 in 2008. Over 1.5 million fans came out to see spring training baseball in Florida in 2009, the 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that total attendance has exceeded that figure, despite the fact that the Grapefruit League lost 2 teams to Arizona this season.

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## **FROM THE CHAIR:**

Just a reminder, the SABR 39 National Convention is slated for the last week in July, and the Spring Training Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 30, at 5 PM.

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Kevin Saldana, Chair

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## **REMINDER**

Save the date!

SABR 39 will be at the JW Marriott Hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington DC

**July 30 to August 2, 2009.**

### **Hotel Reservations**

For the convention, SABR has negotiated a rate of \$179/night plus tax (currently 14.5%) at the JW Marriott Pennsylvania Avenue, one of Marriott's finest hotels. The SABR rate will be in effect between July 27 and August 5.

Please make your reservations online at: <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/sabr2009>

To make reservations by phone, call 800-266-9432 or 506-474-2009. Tell them that you are making your reservations at the [JW Marriott Pennsylvania Avenue](#) for the Society for American Baseball Research -- SABR 2009 Annual convention.

All reservations must be accompanied by a first night room deposit or guaranteed with a major credit card. **Deadline for reservations by attendees is Monday, June 29, 2009.**

Members can now make early bird registration and save at least \$30. Head to <http://store.sabr.org> and register today! (Offer ends December 31, 2008).

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Please submit stories or ideas to [davenemetz@yahoo.com](mailto:davenemetz@yahoo.com)

**Deadline for entries for the December 2009 issue is November 21, 2009**