

# Let's play ball!

By Jennifer Ehle  
Evansville Grove Society

The Evansville Grove Society, the local historical society for Evansville, will feature baseball this summer with special programming and exhibits (see sidebar). The theme for the summer will be "Let's play ball!"

Evansville had two baseball players who played in the Major Leagues: Stan "Pop" Sperry and Bernie Golz. Both returned to Evansville to their families and the Evansville Home Talent Baseball Team. Sperry was a local businessman and Golz was a coach at Evansville High School. An abundance of newspaper clippings, photographs and artifacts have survived. Other families loaned items for the summer's exhibit.

There was a strong rivalry between Evansville, Albion, Utica, Edgerton and other neighboring towns.

The museum will open on Saturday, June 2, at 1 p.m. with its new baseball exhibit and other exhibits about Evansville's historic

park and rich circus history. On the grounds, there is also a survivor of Evansville's Tourist Camp era (1920s-1950s).

The museum will be open on Saturdays, June 2 through Aug. 25, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. It is also open by appointment throughout the year. The museum's location is the Historic Baker Office Building and Antes Cabin in Leonard-Leota Park in Evansville.

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Legendary Major League Baseball slugger Babe Ruth can be seen in the middle of the front row (sixth from right) of this 1940 photo taken at a summer training camp in Florida. The photo is part of the new "Let's play ball!" exhibit, which features baseball memorabilia. (Photos courtesy of Evansville Grove Society)

## Grove Society events showcase America's national pastime

Submitted by Jennifer Ehle  
Evansville Grove Society

Baseball, America's most celebrated national pastime, is the featured theme this year for the Evansville Grove Society, which is Evansville's historical society. The society is sponsoring a number of summer events and is featuring baseball as one of its exhibits in its museum.

Here is a listing of the events and exhibits. All meetings are free and open to the public.

**Saturday, June 2, 1 p.m.: Grand opening of Antes Cabin and Museum at the Historic Baker Office Building for the summer.** Come and celebrate the Society's new accomplishments: a new floor at the Antes Cabin, a re-organization of the archives department with new steel shelves, and a major spring cleaning. You will be impressed! There will be new exhibits at the Museum and several programs scheduled this summer about baseball. Location: Antes Cabin and Museum are located on the grounds of the Historic Baker Office Building, Leonard-Leota Park, Evansville.

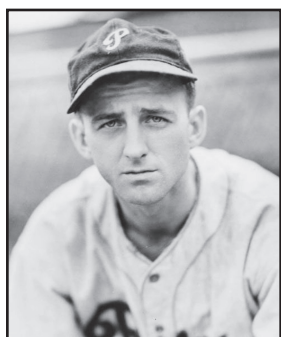
**Monday, July 16, 7 p.m.: Let's Play Ball!** Newspaper editor Dave Zweifel, a Cubs fan

since his dad took him to Wrigley Field for the first time back in 1948, looks back at decades of heartbreak that was finally rewarded by the team's first World Series win in 108 years. He explains why baseball is his favorite sport and the influence that his father, a New Glarus farmer who retired from farming and bought the bowling lanes in Evansville in 1959, had on Dave's love for the game. Cloyence was a longtime and feisty Home Talent League player and manager in his own youth and the League still confers an award in his name to a deserving recipient after each season. Location: Horse Shelter at Leonard-Leota Park. Alternate location will be at Creekside Place, same time, 102 Maple St., Evansville, if weather is not appropriate for an outdoor activity.

**Wednesday, Aug. 8, 6 p.m.: Let's Play Ball! Baseball's Negro Leagues: An Introduction.** Presenter John Graf of Janesville is a former local sportswriter who is a member of the Society for American Baseball Research and involved with SABR's Negro Leagues Committee. He has been a presenter at the committee's annual Negro Leagues Conference and was the conference's trivia champion two years ago. His introductory talk about what at the time were called the "Negro Leagues" will

survey the history and literature of black baseball in the pre-Jackie Robinson era. Location: Creekside Place, 102 Maple St., Evansville.

**Sunday, Sept. 9, 1 p.m.: Third Annual History in the Park. "Stan Sperry: A Career in Baseball."** Presenter John Graf of Janesville is a former local sportswriter (see more details on him in previous calendar entry). His interest in Stan "Pop" Sperry, the former major leaguer from Evansville, grew out of his friendship with Stan "Peck" Sperry, Pop's son. Peck Sperry and Graf work together for the State Assembly at the Capitol in Madison. John's research into Pop Sperry's professional career took him to Pennsylvania several years ago where he examined press coverage of the elder Sperry's career in the Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper. He also discovered, during a trip to Cooperstown, New York, that there is a file on the former Philadelphia Athletics and Phillies infielder at the National Baseball Hall of Fame. John's presentation will cover Sperry's career drawing upon those sources, as well as Peck Sperry's collection of memorabilia relating to his father. Location: To be determined, hopefully at the horse shelter, Leonard-Leota Park or at Creekside Place.



STAN "POP" SPERRY



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