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This Texas Ranger Doesn't Take Batting Practice

By John M. Wilkes

ARLINGTON, Tex. (BP)--Charlie Wangner of the Texas Rangers Baseball Club didn't take batting practice before the 1975 season opener.

He wasn't signing any autographs nor shaking hands with fans either--He had severely sprained two fingers weeks earlier and they were still swollen.

But then Charlie never takes batting practice with the team.

When he shakes hands it may be over a stadium service contract. And he injured those two fingers while representing the Rangers in a bowling tournament.

For Charles F. Wangner, director of business affairs for the Texas Rangers, the baseball season started several months ago.

While the players were sweating out contract renewals and starting positions in spring training, he was sweating out the budget, letting contracts for Arlington Stadium concessions and lining up ticket sellers and ground crews.

His playing field is a huge desk just across the hall from the press boxes at the club's home base here.

"When the team gets back from spring training, everything must be ready," he says. But he neglects to mention that getting everything ready may include some bizarre complications.

For instance, a helicopter hired to hover over the turf of Arlington stadium to dry the field enough for play opening night dropped too low, went out of control and crashed on the outfield.

With scant hours before the Rangers were to open against Minnesota there was barely time to haul the 'copter off and replace the grass it had dug up.

The game started without delay however, with country star Charlie Pride singing the national anthem, and the band from Hardin-Simmons University, a Baptist school in Abilene, on hand to keep the fans encouraged.

Wangner has experience in getting things ready. He has been with this club for four years, starting in Washington when it was known as the Senators, and here in Arlington (in the metropolitan Dallas-Fort Worth area) since the 1972 season.

He also has gained experience in Baptist churches. At Arlington's North Side Baptist, though a comparative "newcomer," he is a departmental Sunday School superintendent and lends his accounting knowledge as chairman of the church finance committee.

Back home in Hyattsville, Maryland, he attended the First Baptist Church nearly thirty years and was a trustee, usher, music committee member and Sunday School general superintendent.

He was baptized there, at age ten, after his older sister had become active in the church and his parents began taking their family to Baptist services.

And it was there years later that he met Nancy at a church retreat. She is now Mrs. Wangner and the mother of their four children, ranging from 5 to 14 years.

Then, however, Charles had just finished a degree in accounting from the University of Maryland and had his first job with a company in the D.C. area.

Nancy came to the retreat as a member of Avondale Baptist Church. They were introduced by a mutual friend but before they could get a courtship going, Charles was drafted.

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Even this, he reminisces, seemed to be part of the master plan for his life.

"Doors always have opened for me at the right time," he claims, "and each time they did I felt this was the way I ought to turn."

A scholarship opened doors to the University, "Otherwise I could not have gone to college; and when I was graduated (in 1956) I found work--in spite of my draft status--in a field largely closed except to veterans."

"And in the service, I was able to get into Third Army Soldier's Chorus and sang in chapel choirs while assigned to Germany for 18 months." His chorus won the all-Army contest in 1957-58.

Charles wrote to Nancy during his Army days, and when he came home from overseas he interrupted her college career with a marriage proposal.

Now Nancy sings--in their church choir--while Charles "baby-sits" in the congregation.

"Because we believe it is necessary for her to serve our church in some way, I help then with our family," he explains.

Some new doors opened for the Wangners when Charles was a civilian and back again with the firm he had worked for when just out of the university.

The new franchise of the then Washington Senators selected his company to do its 1961 audit and Charles was sent to set up the books.

"The manager said it was because they could read my writing," he laughs.

"But after a few months they asked if I would come on as comptroller. Now, after fourteen years and three complete changes of ownership, I'm still with the franchise."

After ten of those years the club was not doing well and disappointment hung over the organization.

"Our problems were only due to growing pains," he remembers now, "but like at home if things aren't going right, everyone gets a bit cranky."

The Wangner family started praying again about their future, as he recently shared with his Sunday School department.

"We had really been looking for direction, when Mr. (owner Dan) Short was faced with either selling the franchise locally or moving away. Then he was given the opportunity to move it to Texas, and our family knew this was the answer, this is what we were to do." It was a good move," he adds.

Wangner sees no incompatibility in applying his Christian faith to his contacts in the baseball world.

"The approach I take to my work has to be based on my convictions," he says, "so I treat people by respecting them as individuals."

"As a person matures, his compassion and understanding of people increases. Hopefully, with what I do, what I believe is shown in action by the way I handle the job."

If there are difficulties, he takes them in stride.

"Of course, you have to respect the wishes of the ownership--not that that is contrary in my case--but if I ever saw a conflict with my beliefs I would not hesitate to change jobs."

"I've noticed no conflict yet and think if such ever came I'd be led to know what to do about it."

"Baseball is a glamorous business and because of that people probably recognize the position I hold more than if I were treasurer for some large corporation," Wangner admits. But he makes some "down-home" comparisons:

"On the field, the product you see is teamwork--people using their physical abilities to try to win a game. Every player is expected to do his best with whatever talent he has."

This "baseball businessman" has a positive attitude toward the Rangers; "Billy (Martin) has helped them believe in themselves and if they win, it will be a team effort."

"There is a spirit of competition as long as each team does the best it can and strives to improve...and that's really what we all are trying to do with our life, isn't it?"

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**New Opportunities Urged
For Baptist Lay People**

MEMPHIS (BP)--The Foreign Mission Board needs to provide thousands of new opportunities for Southern Baptist lay people to serve on the mission fields during the next 25 years, the top executive of the SBC missions agency was told here.

Baker James Cauthen, executive secretary of the mission board, received the suggestion along with 21 others while conducting an inquiry session at the annual four-day Brotherhood Leadership Conference.

The SBC agency is conducting a series of inquiry sessions throughout the United States this year in an effort to learn what "bold new plans" a cross section of Southern Baptists want to see unfolding before the end of this century.

Cauthen told the 50 state Brotherhood leaders and members of the Brotherhood Commission staff he expects to get similar information from more than 2,600 Southern Baptist missionaries serving in 83 countries "by the end of this summer."

The inquiry session was one of the features of the Brotherhood evaluation and planning conference which included addresses by C. B. Hogue, director of the evangelism section of the Home Mission Board, and his renewal evangelism associate, Reid Hardin.

Speaking on the concepts in lifestyle evangelism, Hogue said he hopes every individual and agency in the Southern Baptist Convention "would do evangelism."

Hogue described evangelism as "what a man is and does."

"My concept begins with an experience, leads to a development of maturity, and bears fruitful response in what people do naturally."

"I don't think this means running up to every person you see on the street, grabbing his lapels and shaking him until his cage rattles."

"But neither is lifestyle evangelism just living the good life. It's life sharing. A good life is no excuse for locked lips."

"We must encourage people to be normal and natural evangelists where ever they are," he told the Brotherhood leaders. "This man does because he likes to do it."

In one of his first appearances in recent years at the Brotherhood Leadership Conference, Cauthen told the men he sensed a quickening of the pace of the laymen in Southern Baptist churches in evangelism, missions, stewardship and "in many other directions."

Cauthen expressed appreciation for recent Brotherhood efforts in enlisting 350 lay volunteers to build homes, schools and churches in Honduras and to provide food following the devastation of Hurricane Fifi last September.

"The thing I liked best was that these men also offered their services for any future emergencies," he recalled.

Several state Brotherhood leaders told the foreign missions executive that gifts to the Cooperative Program climbed significantly in their states following the return of their lay volunteers from the Central American country.

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In the inquiry session, Glendon McCullough, executive director of the Brotherhood Commission, expressed the hope the mission board would make it possible for up to 50,000 lay persons to serve overseas each year in the interest of Christian missions.

"It's my feeling that this great lay involvement could lead Southern Baptists to provide funds and personnel to reach a goal of 10,000 career missionaries."

In light of improved transportation and health facilities, the board also was asked to scale down its health requirements for missionaries.

Other proposals included a national network television spectacular on foreign missions every three months, utilization of global communications technology, better use of Baptist servicemen overseas in mission work and development of a student exchange program for high school-age boys in the SBC's Royal Ambassador (RA) program and foreign students.

The board also was urged to support the education of more men and boys in foreign missions, particularly Royal Ambassadors.

In a recent commissioning service for foreign missionaries, about 75 percent of the men testified they received their call to become missionaries through the Royal Ambassador program for boys, sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission, a state Brotherhood leader said.

A final suggestion called for "a single world mission board to communicate missions to Southern Baptists."

In a business session, the Brotherhood leaders took 42 actions dealing with training, mission support, World Missions Conference promotion, associational Brotherhood materials, planning for the 1980's, Brotherhood reporting and records, development of three books, publication of a new magazine for Pioneer Royal Ambassador officers and leaders, and a Brotherhood emphasis in 1977-79 entitled "Focus On Ministry."

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New Asheville Book Store
D icated; Manager Named

Baptist Press
4/29/75

ASHEVILLE, N. C. (BP)--A new Baptist Book Store has been opened in Asheville, N. C., completing the first segment of a five-point plan for enlarging and reorganizing the Baptist Book Store structure in North Carolina.

Currently, the book store division of the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, operates 55 Baptist Book Stores and two Lifeway Book Stores in 21 states through six regions covering the United States. Eleven regional mail order centers are also planned for completion by 1978.

The Lifeway Stores, which will be increased over the next several years, are designed for persons who would probably not patronize a Baptist Book Store. They carry no materials directly related to church programs as do Baptist Book Stores.

Ben Rentz, manager of the Baptist Book Store in Mobile, Ala., since 1967, will manage the Asheville store and take responsibility for the operation of the store at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center. The Ridgecrest store was previously the responsibility of the Atlanta, Ga., book store.

The plan to reorganize and enlarge the book store operation in North Carolina was approved in February, 1974, by the trustees of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. All points in the plan are expected to be completed last this year.

Besides opening the store in Asheville, the plan calls for opening a new store in Greensboro, relocation of the Raleigh store, continuation of the Raleigh Lifeway Store and establishment of a regional mail order center in Greensboro, which will be separate from the sales store there.

This makes a total of six book stores in North Carolina, including the already existing stores at Charlotte and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, and one regional mail order center.

The Asheville store, consisting of 5,000 square feet, is located in the new Asheville Mall. This marks the first time a Baptist Book Store has been located in a mall, according to Bill Graham, director of the board's book store division.

Rentz, a native Louisianian, has worked in the book store operation since 1950. He has been employed by stores in Fort Worth, Tex., and Charlotte, and served as manager of the Indianapolis, Ind., store before managing the Mobile store. He received the bachelor of science degree from the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, and the bachelor of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

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