

## **A sports marketer and a wanna-be comedian becomes a successful concessioner**

The Andrew Fischer that made more than \$50,000 by selling ad space on his forehead is not the **Andrew Fischer** who is the **SSA General Manager at the Monterey Bay Aquarium**.

But that gimmick could well have been something Andrew would do. After all, he was a NBA mascot for one day! And if he didn't have his current job, he said he would like to be a stand-up comedian or a NBA referee.



Andrew has been the GM at the Aquarium since September 2004. He shared that the most rewarding part of working for SSA is the commitment that he sees in wanting both the business and their partners to succeed and grow – as well as knowing that he and his staff are a part of a bigger picture having an impact upon the community in Monterey. He added, “People have a connection to what is done here that can only help the future.” He described his most memorable experience with the company at the 2007 KM/SSA GM Summit in Las Vegas, where he helped his bowling team win with the highest combined score as well as having one of the individual top scores. “It was a blast to bowl with my team, and I really enjoyed the competition,” he added.



### **Fischer as a youngster**

After graduating from Arizona State University with a bachelor of arts in marketing, Andrew went to work in the sports world. It started with an internship with the Phoenix Suns and ended as Assistant Director of Retail Operations for the Staples Center. In between, he worked with many professional teams and their related businesses. Throughout the years, he had many unique experiences. At one venue, he coordinated the sale of \$100,000 in Los Angeles Lakers Bobbleheads, which are those collectible dolls with oversize heads, which bobble when lightly tapped. While in Seattle, he was Squatch, the team mascot for the Seattle Sonics. The regular mascot got sick, but Squatch still needed to make an appearance at a mall store, so Andrew donned the costume. While on this high-powered career track, Andrew moved nine times. He decided to leave the sports business as he was tired of moving, working 18 hours a day and not believing in the athletes he once admired.



However, there was one benefit of this cross-country travel, and it was the opportunity to meet his wife. While in Minnesota to spend Valentine's weekend with a woman he was dating, she jilted him. So Andrew called his good friend Jennifer to talk over the heartbreak, and they talked until 4 a.m. Jennifer became his wife eight months later. Andrew shares, "We just hit it off. We knew we were right for each other. I can't live without my wife. Love happened when we least expected it to happen." They got married on Jennifer's birthday as well as the birthdays of three of his nieces. Andrew claims that when he goes to the card store he has to take out a loan! Jennifer works as a human resources consultant.

Andrew appreciates that Jennifer loves sports as much as he does. When he has the time, he likes to spend it in his garden. "I like getting out of the house and getting my mind off work, plus I like cutting flowers to give to my wife." Other hobbies include swimming and shopping at estate sales and other



interesting places, including museum stores after visiting a museum. Both Andrew and his wife enjoy traveling to Hawaii and the Northwest as well as Canada. If Andrew could travel anywhere he would like to visit Antarctica or Alaska to see the animals that live in those habitats as well as observe the untouched parts of the world. "I would need a very, very warm coat, of course," he said.

He values the ring that his grandfather gave to him as a child. Even though he doesn't wear it now, it connects him to some big moments in his life, like college and his marriage.

Andrew shared that he thought his friends and family would describe him as a personable and sensitive guy who tells corny jokes. He blames his dad and grandfather for this ability.

Andrew was born in Philadelphia and moved to Phoenix when he was 13 years old. As a child, Andrew described himself as a silly, precocious and sensitive kid who liked sports, but was not very good at playing them. He played basketball; he claims he had a good outside shot even though he's only 5'4" tall. While working for the Seattle Sonics, he managed a dunk shot – only due to assistance from Seattle pro Steve Scheffler lifting him up!

While young, he also enjoyed making models and spending time with his dad in their rose garden. Andrew remembers that his favorite toy was the colorful interlocking plastic Legos, and he also liked both Tinker toys and Lincoln Logs – all toys that allowed and inspired him to use his imagination.





While young, Andrew did sing, but he wished he could play a musical instrument. Two of his nieces are professional musicians – so he figures that is enough musical talent in the family.

### **Fischer faves**

Andrew claims that New Year's Eve and Day are two of his favorite holidays. He has interesting memories of his parents going out while he tried to stay up as late as he could. Also, he enjoys watching the bowl games.

He doesn't have a favorite book as he's not a major reader as he's more visually orientated. His favorite TV show is *Saturday Night Live*. He grew

up watching it and claims he remembers the shows from the first year it debuted in 1975. (He was eight years old.) He used to buy old scripts and act out all the parts. Andrew someday plans to have a SNL Halloween party where everyone would come dressed as their favorite character. "I'd love to have on a shark costume and come knocking on the door," he said.

Andrew said that the first *Star Wars* movie is his favorite. Since his dad owned a pharmacy, he was one of the first to purchase the *Star Wars* trading cards.

Baseball Hall of Famer Roberto Clemente is Andrew's hero. Clemente played 18 seasons for the Pittsburgh Pirates. He was involved in charity work both in Puerto Rico and other Latin American countries, often delivering baseball equipment and food to them. He died in an aviation accident in December 1972 while en route to deliver aid to earthquake victims in Nicaragua. As Andrew explained, "He died caring for other people. How many athletes can say they do that today?"



With Andrew's love of humor, it's not a surprise that he would like to have lunch with Mel Brooks, best known as a creator of film farces and comedy parodies. And if he was recuperating in a hospital, he would like to have talk show hosts/comedians Conan O'Brien or Jon Stewart in the bed next to him.

As Andrew would joke: "Why are fish so smart? *Because they live in schools!*"