



ED BETZ/The Associated Press

Hal Richman (right) who invented Strat-O-Matic baseball, presents the first copy of the 2002 edition to Katrina Marino on Friday. Marino accepted on behalf of her husband Kenny, a New York City firefighter who loved the game and was killed in the Sept. 11 attacks.

Strat-O-Matic faithful begin 40th season

Albany Beach Post Wire Services

Just days before pitchers and catchers report, Strat-O-Matic baseball loyalists lined up in a railroad station parking lot in Glen Head, N.Y., on Friday for opening day of the popular game's 40th season.

Over the years, the game has attracted a loyal following. Some customers are celebrities. Moviemaker **Spike Lee** and actor **Tim Robbins** are players. So are sportscasters **Bob Costas** and **Jon Miller** and ex-major leaguers **Jim Kaat**, **Dale Murphy** and **Cal Ripken, Jr.**

An hour before the faithful were allowed in the small building to pick up their games, **Hal Richman**, the game's inventor, unveiled a 3-foot mock-up of the new **Barry Bonds** card — the most prolific offensive card in the game's history.