

DUGOUT CHATTER

ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION OF THE GOLDEN SENIORS SOFTBALL CLUB OF SACRAMENTO (WWW.GSSCS.ORG) -- SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2010

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: LET'S BUILD ON VERY GOOD YEAR

As the new board of directors took office at our Sept. 18 general meeting, I am excited to begin work on the next season and to build upon our very good 2010 season.

I will be meeting with the board immediately to map out plans for the coming season. I do not see any big changes in the near future for the club but rather a refining of rules in place to adjust to the changing times and culture of the Golden Seniors.

One of the most important items we need to improve on is communication. I believe in it and practice it at all times. We will be as transparent as possible so the membership can be privy to all the information that the board rules on or a committee might recommend.

This club was here and running way before I came along and my goal is to keep it as close to the vision that the founding members had -- not to change the vision but to stay the course and improve where needed or just keep us on the right track.

I will be blending recruitment of new, younger players while retaining existing members to keep the flow of players constant as players move to other leagues.

I will be reporting to you on a regular basis and, if need be, will contact you through your league commissioners and team managers.

I have to tell you I cannot thank Dante Ciardella and Benny Benson enough for what they have done for the club. The picnic is always a great success under their leadership.

That brings me to my last point. In order for this club to continue in the great fashion that it has over the years, there are three things that are mandatory:

RECRUIT PLAYERS. RECRUIT SPONSORS. AND VOLUNTEER, VOLUNTEER, VOLUNTEER.

Please e-mail me at ceshill@aol.com. I want your input. But be careful as I might ask you to volunteer as a committee member or just come to the general meetings and vote.

Go Seniors,
Bill Hill
President

AWARD OF MERIT: McNAMARA AND HAVRILLA ARE 2010 HONOREES

Two long-time club members were honored with the club's Award of Merit for 2010 at the Sept. 18 picnic and general meeting: Bob Havrilla and Jim McNamara.

"I have one other honor," Havrilla said as he accepted the award, "and that is becoming a member of this club." Introduced by Ernie Kidwell, the committee of former winners of the Award of Merit (formerly Man of the Year) selected Havrilla for his record of service to the club since joining in 1988. He has served as a vice president, a league commissioner, manager in several GSSCS leagues and as chairman of the club's board of directors nominating committee.

McNamara, a GSSCS member since 1984, said he was surprised by the honor, bestowed for his five years of service as L-1 commissioner. He also managed Virga's team for seven seasons. Jim was introduced by Ken Wallenberg, a former club president, who noted that he and McNamara had been a double-play combination in the past. McNamara was a Sacramento Bee All-City infielder as a senior at Christian Brothers High School. He signed his first pro contract with the Pacific Coast League Sacramento Solons. The slick-fielding McNamara, who hails from a prominent Sacramento baseball family, was sold to the New York Giants, only to be stuck behind others at his position, such as Alvin Dark and Eddie Broussard. With the Golden Seniors, McNamara has enjoyed success as both a player and manager, including an undefeated season in 1988 when the club played at Tahoe Park. Jim said he has played softball about 22 years and his proudest moments include his two All-World Senior Softball selections, in 1984 at Las Vegas and 2000 at Winnipeg.

Incidentally, Havrilla is succeeding McNamara as the L-1 commissioner for 2011. #

MOODY AND O'BRIEN GAIN L-1 HONORS

American Medequip's Jerry Moody and Richard "O.B." O'Brien of Merrill Bookkeeping were singled out for honors by Monday L-1 managers.

George Hodsdon announced at the Sept. 18 picnic that Moody was named the league's most valuable player. "Jerry was not only a very good pitcher but an excellent fielder, batter and fast baserunner," Hodsdon wrote.

O'Brien, who joined the club in 2009, was named the most improved player for L-1 for his play in which he started out as his team's catcher, moved to right field and ended up as the full-time second baseman. Hodsdon said O.B. started the season batting very low in the lineup, and worked his way up to batting fifth, with about a .500 batting average. #

League Championship Playoffs

THE VICTORIOUS MR. & MRS. SMARTT

There were unprecedented results from the Golden Seniors Softball Club of Sacramento's 2010 league championship playoff games, such as the first league championship victory managed by a woman. And it occurred on the same day that her husband handled the reins of victory in another league title game.

Maita, managed by Trudy Smartt (also the pitcher), held on as the top seed in L-3 (Tuesday night) against Livingston Concrete, 15-14, with a four-run rally in the bottom of the seventh inning. Tom Mosher's two-out, bases-loaded single was the winning hit. One oddity noted by scorekeeper Sandy Begg: leadoff hitters for both teams rapped triples in the first inning: Patrick Morrison for Maita and Manager Bob Jones for Livingston. Morrison, who is Trudy's brother, also tripled in the decisive final inning.

Meanwhile, in the L-5 championship, Bob Smartt was in charge as substitute manager of Visions Eyecare in a 13-9 win over Bill Hill's California Energy Services (CES) squad. Visions Manager Greg Leurgans had a conflict and chose to play in the L-2 title game at the same time. CES' Mike Viduya's three-run shot over the left field fence was the only over-the-fence homer in any of the championship games. (By the way, Viduya is Trudy Smartt's brother-in-law. No kidding.)

Bob Smartt also is an infielder on his wife's Maita squad, giving him two league championship victories on the day, while Trudy was on the losing side of the L-2 title game, an 11-5 triumph by Curtis Holcomb's Jolly Rogers, with Leurgans making several nice catches in the outfield, over Jim Wait's RAMBIT. Leurgans noted that Jolly Rogers, due to missing tournament players, would have been down to seven players without him and Darrel McRorie. And his Visions Eyecare would still have 10 players without him and Darrel, so they decided to play with the team that needed them most. In the end, both were winners.

Livingston shortstop Jack Wabinga, though hampered by sore leg muscles, starred in three night league championship games, winning two. He led Visions Eyecare in L-5 and was outstanding for Cottonwood Estates, the 15-10 L-4 winner over Bertolucci's Body and Fender.

Cottonwood, the fourth-place team in the regular season, had lost to Bertolucci's 17-12 in the league's third week of playoffs, but had earlier knocked off top- seed California Energy Services #1 by a score of 17-8. Wabinga went four for five with a double and triple for Cottonwood Estates in the championship game. One of his hits banged high off the fence in left-centerfield.

In L-1 (Mondays), George Langan's Nielsen Real Estate Appraisal defeated the Joe Klein-managed I Forgot, sponsored by Al Cross, 12-7. Langan, a non-playing manager in recent years due to diminished eyesight, had a six-way bypass and pacemaker installed early in the year but came back to direct his team from the bench.

In L-7, Tuesday days 70+, Auburn Oaks Senior Living edged Arnold Properties 12-11 with a five-run final inning.

Uptown Cafe, managed by Victor Torres, whipped Mark White DDS, managed by Leurgans, 20-6, in the 60+ select L-6 playoff. (Thanks to scorekeepers Sandy Begg and Colette Barnes for scores and details.) #

SUNSHINE AND HEALTH REPORT

Life Member **JACK PRESLEY** passed away on Sept. 16 after a lengthy illness, according to his wife, Helen. He was about a month shy of his 89th birthday. Jack, who was almost a charter member of the club, having joined in 1983, was honored as the club's Man of the Year in 1993. He was one of the first to start the Golden Seniors use of computers. He also started batting practice at Howe Avenue Park for seniors recovering from injuries or illness and paid the total fees out of his own pocket.

MARY ZANZE, 80, widow of Bill Zanze, passed away on Sept. 19. She was known as a "baseball wife," according to her obit in The Bee. Bill played with the Golden Seniors and sponsored (Zanze Bakery) a team from 1989 to 1999, before he passed away.

KEN STERGION, who played on four national championship teams as an avid baseball and softball player, died suddenly on Aug. 1. He was 74. Ken, who joined the Golden Seniors in 2000, played this year on Al Tirapelli's L-7 team, sponsored by Denny's. L-7 Commissioner Larry Campbell said Ken went to watch a tournament at Rusch Park in Citrus Heights on Aug. 1 and "seemed to be in great health to match his positive, happy personality." His buddy, Roland Stiarwalt, had to leave early when he became ill. "Roland is out for the rest of the season with a mysterious malady that has been troubling him for most of this season, but it is Kenny who is out for good," lamented Campbell in an e-mail. Ken's teammates hung his jersey on their team bench on Sunday morning, Aug. 2.

RON REDDING, 64, passed away on Sept. 15. He joined the club in 1995, playing three years in the Tuesday night league, then moving to Thursday night. He left the club in 2000.

The family of **ART GRANUM**, an original Golden Senior who passed away this summer, has made a donation to the club in memory of Art. The Golden Seniors appreciate the gesture. Those who wish to honor Art with such donations should send them to GSSCS in care of Treasurer Glen Cole, 8725 Lake Nimbus Drive, Fair Oaks, CA 95628.

The club also is accepting donations in the memory of **JERRY JODICE**, former club president, team manager, player and Dugout Chatter editor, for whom the Board of Directors has established the Jerry Jodice Safety Fund. Jerry served as the club's safety coordinator and did an outstanding job setting up life-saving training for club members and equipping the club's "crash carts" with defibrillators. Donations should be to the Golden Seniors Softball Club of Sacramento and sent to Glen Cole, GSSCS treasurer, 8725 Lake Nimbus Drive, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. Write Jodice Safety Fund on the check. #

NEW BOARD IS INSTALLED

Newly elected President Bill Hill and six other members of the Board of Directors were sworn into office at the Sept. 18 picnic/playoffs day general meeting by the club's outgoing president, Ray Mendonsa.

Hill, whose California Energy Services business sponsors teams in two leagues, was elected in August. The club's fiscal year begins Oct. 1. He brings experience as the chief executive of a senior softball league in South Placer County and pledges to make communication with members one of his top priorities as he encourages more members to offer to volunteer for various club duties.

Also new to the board is first vice President Dick Latimer, who used the occasion following the swearing in to urge members to help him find more team sponsors. New Club Commissioner Bruce Gilmore was already rounding up volunteers for the club's rules committee. New Player Agent Linda McCollum-Greene creates a majority of new members on the board, joining the re-elected second vice president, Pete Ward, Treasurer Glen Cole and Secretary George Lamb.

Members expressed gratitude for the work of the past board, including Mendonsa, Club Commissioner Bob Smartt, Player Agent Tom Sansone, and First VP Fred Fischer.

Among the highlights of the meeting was the introduction of three Golden Seniors who say they owe their lives to teammates who came to their rescue after suffering heart attacks. They include Louis Mahiney, a L-4 outfielder who collapsed on the field in August and was resuscitated with the use of the club's defibrillator and CPR. (See story in the August issue of the Dugout Chatter.) Also revived from cardiac arrest in 2002 at a Golden Seniors game: Ray Merrill, who was recognized as the club's Sponsor of the Year. (See story elsewhere in this newsletter). The third Golden Senior who was stricken on a playing field (in Yuba City) and revived by CPR: Bob Havrilla, honored this year as an Award of Merit recipient.

Lou Coppola introduced the trio and also recognized Golden Senior members who have undergone CPR and AED (defibrillator) training arranged and financed by the club through the Red Cross. These individuals can be identified by the red hats they are allowed to wear at games. (Meanwhile, Treasurer Cole received at least one check made out to the Golden Seniors and earmarked for the Jerry Jodice Safety Fund, which is the budget line item to support club spending on safety equipment and training. Jodice, the former club president who dedicated himself to the club's safety program, died earlier this year.)

The club's picnic co-chair, Dante Ciardella, introduced Danny Viegas, who has been associated with the club for nearly two decades, initially as a little kid picking up bats at Tahoe Park games. Now a talented baseball player with collegiate experience, Danny still watches over members' bats and, when asked, gives batting tips to help seniors break out of their slumps and has assisted Steve Lawrence's Muckrakers rack up a rec league slo-pitch championship or two. "Like Bret Favre, I'll go for 20 years," Danny said. Some GSSCS night league managers have solicited his advice in rating skills before annual player drafts. #

RAY MERRILL IS SPONSOR OF YEAR

Ray Merrill is a real “feel good story” for the Golden Seniors Softball Club of Sacramento. He feels lucky to be a member of the club and the club’s membership sure should feel fortunate that he is a part of it.

Ray was recognized as the winner of the inaugural Sponsor of the Year award during the Sept. 18 picnic and general meeting at the Sacramento Softball Complex. He wore his familiar maroon Merrill’s GSSCS jersey. He also is known as a player who nearly died of cardiac arrest on the playing field in August of 2002.

As a bookkeeper for some 40 years, he would seem a natural to serve the club as its treasurer. But Merrill recalled that he could not afford to give time during the hectic January-April tax season. Even at age 74, he remains active with his businesses. But he felt he could give back to the Golden Seniors in other ways.

Especially after Golden Seniors teammates or fellow members saved his life. A photo on the front page of Spectrum newspaper for seniors later in 2002 showed Merrill on the ground with Ron Lack, a former Sacramento fire chief; the late Gil Mashburn, a former Sacramento firefighter, and Ron Peck, a former Highway Patrol officer, “beating on me.” They brought him back to life with CPR. This was before the club had acquired a defibrillator to shock hearts into beating again.

“They worked on me for about 40 minutes and brought me back to life,” he said of his GSSCS comrades and paramedics.

After his cardiac arrest of 2002, he returned with a pacemaker in his chest. He had a triple bypass a dozen years earlier.

So Merrill, who had been sponsoring one team (Merrill Bookkeeping) since 1991, said he felt he had to do more for the club whose members saved his life. In 2003, he added a second sponsorship, RAMBIT, which stands for Raymond A. Merrill Booking and Income Tax service.

In addition, he said at the end of the season he has been giving his players \$20 gift certifications to a restaurant. With two teams, that’s about \$400 a year.

Fred Fischer, who stepped down this year from his post as first vice president for sponsorships, urged the club to recognize Merrill’s contributions. “I am probably more aware than most of Ray’s story,” Fischer wrote in an e-mail. “I can still visualize how he staggered and then collapsed on the field right in front of me, and I witnessed the attempts of our first aid people and then the paramedics to revive him. When he was placed in the ambulance, it appeared that he was not breathing and had no pulse. One week later, I almost collapsed myself when I looked up and saw him walking on the field with the assistance of his wife (Karen). He came over to me and had me place my hand on his chest to feel the newly implanted medical devices. He took the rest of the year off, but was back playing the following year.”

Merrill also tries to recruit prospective players who come into his office for bookkeeping or tax service. He said he can’t say exactly how many, but estimates he has recruited “six or seven” players for the league. One is Pete Ward, who serves as a club vice president. He said he keeps a copy of the Dugout Chatter in his office, so he can make copies for interested clients.

Merrill, who had played slo-pitch softball for many years, including at Aerojet before being laid off in 1971, recalls being a founder of the PONY youth baseball program in Orangevale. There he met Joe Saiz, a neighbor known for his backyard "Field of Dreams." Joe told Ray that he must try senior softball. Ray joined the club in 1989, when he was about 52.

Ray signed up this year to play in L-1 and L-2. This has been a difficult year for Ray as he has taken time away from the game to tend to the health of his wife.

Yet he still finds time to give to the club, explaining his loyalty: "I wouldn't be here today without the Golden Seniors and this is what I want to do in return." #

BOARD OF DIRECTORS -- 2010-2011

President **Bill Hill** ... 804-2243

First Vice President ... **Dick Latimer**
363-9555 (Responsible for team sponsorships.)

Second Vice President **Pete Ward** ...
989-4722 (Responsible for team uniforms.)

Treasurer **Glen Cole** ... 966-4561

Secretary **George Lamb** ... (530)
681-8070

Player Agent **Linda McCollum-Greene** ... 391-5559 (Responsible for player applications, player substitutes, waiting lists.)

Club Commissioner **Bruce Gilmore** ...
424-0920 (Responsible for enforcement of playing rules, oversees league commissioners.)

TELEPHONE HOTLINE

Club Answering Machine

(managed by Don Shank):
491-1721 for meeting news and field conditions.

Phone or Address Changes:

Henry Low 391-3938

Player Applications: Linda
McCollum-Greene 391-5559

Sunshine & Health: Trudy
Smartt 973-8269

GSSC #3912 Blood Bank:
456-1500

Safety: Curtis Holcomb
600-6065

Entertainment: Lou Coppola
444-6138

Dugout Chatter: Ron Roach,
editor 422-2500

(coachrwr@comcast.net)

Planning: Dave Vargo, contact,
dvargo@frontiernet.net
689-7061