

Vermont Old-Timer Baseball News

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Montpelier Wins Lower Division

The Montpelier Monties defeated the Caledonia Bucks, 12-11, to win the Lower Division championship, which was contested by teams which finished the regular season below 8th place.

The Monties trailed early by 4-0 and 10-5, but 3 Caledonia hurlers issued 11 walks to keep giving the Monties chances, and they caught the Bucks and went ahead 11-10 in the bottom of the 7th inning, with Steve Chase's two out, bases loaded single driving in 2 runs. After the Bucks tied the score at 11 all, Ron Trucksess drove in the winning run in the bottom of the 9th with a solid single to left field.



Rear, left to right: Steve Chase, Rob Chase, Tim Bigelow, Earl Smith, Glenn Ehret, Pete L'Esperance; **Middle row, left to right:** Will Forest, Bill Perrault, Ron Trucksess; **Kneeling, left to right:** Jim Higgins, Lewis Franco, Manager Charlie Barasch, Bob Stanton

Mad River Valley is League Champion

Mad River Valley beat Morrisville, 5-0, on September 22, to win the league championship.



Unexpected shaky fielding by Morrisville allowed MRV to grab a 3-0 lead in the first inning, and then ace Gary MacDonald shut down the potent Morrisville bats, just as he had done to Killington in the semifinal game 2 weeks before.

The team backed him with 2 double plays, and he pitched out of a bases loaded jam in the bottom of the 6th inning by getting Monte Mason to pop out to second base to end the

inning.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	R	H	E
Mad River	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	5	9	1
Morrisville	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	4

Morrisville threatened again in the bottom of the 9th when they had runners on first and second with two outs. Stu Maynard, who had singled earlier in the game, hit a smash down the third base line that Rick Marrier managed to knock down, and then Marrier lunged forward and tagged the base just ahead of the oncoming runner, for the final out.



Back row, left to right: Sal Spinosa, Ron Graves, Dale Whitney, Mike Riccardi, Joe McSoley, Eric Moffroid, Rick Marrier.

Front row, left to right: Steve Gross, Chris Clements, Manager Doug Bergstein, Gary MacDonald, Kevin Farley.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	R	H	E
Enosburg	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	9	1
Mad River	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	6	1

State Championship Game a Thriller

Imagine you're at bat in the bottom of the ninth; the bases loaded; 2 outs and your team down by a run. Everyone who has ever played has fantasized this situation. Mad River Valley's Rick Marrier actually lived it in the second annual state championship game.

However, the result wasn't what he hoped for as Marrier took a ball low (see photo), then swung early on a changeup and popped up to third baseman Randy Ferguson to end the game.



Marrier had already put in a full day's work with 2 of his team's 6 hits, plus a putout and 7 assists from his third base position. He also made a bad throw on a ball that would have ended the top of the second inning with no score for the visitors. Instead, the next batter, Roddy Churchill, tripled to drive in the game's first 2 runs. Nobody knew those early runs would be so important.

Gary MacDonald wrapped up a superb post season for Mad River Valley with another complete game, walking none and striking out 4. However, Enosburg's Kenny Kane, who also went the distance, was the winner.

After yielding only one hit and one walk in the first five innings, Kane started having trouble. Steve Gross led off the bottom of the 6th with a bunt single. With one out Kevin Farley walked; with two out Sal Spinosa walked to load the bases, however Joe McSoley grounded out to first base to end the threat. MRV broke through an inning later when a walk to Doug Bergstein and a double by MacDonald put runners on second and third with one out. Mike Riccardi singled to drive in a run. Marrier singled to drive in another. Kane then got Dale Whitney and Steve Gross to pop out.

After getting through the eighth, Kane retired the first 2 batters in the ninth, then walked Bergstein, yielded a hit to MacDonald and walked Riccardi to set the stage for Marrier's at bat.

Mad River Valley's win over Morrisville earned them the right to represent our league against Enosburg of the Green Mountain MSBL. The game was played at Montpelier's Recreation Field.

Final Regular Season Standings

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Killington	13	1	.931	----
Morrisville	13	2	.867	.5
South Royalton	11	4	.733	2.5
Lake Region	10	5	.667	3.5
Mad River Valley	9	6	.600	4
Jericho	8	6	.571	5
Newport	8	6	.571	5
Champlain	7	7	.500	6

Chelsea	6	8	.429	7
Winooski	6	9	.400	7.5
Kingdom	6	9	.400	7.5
Montpelier	6	9	.400	7.5
Burlington	4	10	.286	9
Caledonia	1	13	.071	12
Northfield	1	14	.067	12.5

Notes: Chelsea had 2 byes, all other teams had one bye. Games rained (or snowed) out and not rescheduled: 4/28 Newport at Killington, 4/28 Caledonia at Jericho. Tie game: 5/26 Champlain 7, Burlington 7.

Playoffs - round 1, Aug. 25

Upper Division (teams 1-8)

Killington 8, Champlain 4
 Morrisville 14, Newport 5
 Jericho 5, South Royalton 3 (10 inn.)
 Lake Region 5, Mad River Valley 2 (changed after appeal to win for MRV due to ineligible player)

Lower Division (teams 9-15)

#9 Chelsea had a bye
 Northfield 12, Winooski 6
 Caledonia 22, Kingdom 13
 Montpelier 12, Burlington 0

Playoffs - semifinals, Sept. 8

Upper Division

Mad River Valley 7, Killington 0
 Morrisville 7, Jericho 6

Lower Division

Montpelier 9, Chelsea 1
 Caledonia 12, Northfield 11

Who Are Those Guys, Anyway?

The Green Mountain MSBL is a competing league started by teams which broke away from our league in 1995. They had 6 teams this year, as follows: Enosburg, Fairfax, Milton, Missisquoi, Underhill, Westford.

Their rules are essentially the same as ours, except that they permit 3 innings per game to be pitched by players 42-44 years old, and they permit baserunners to take a lead before the pitch and try for the next base on a pickoff throw.

The state championship game was initiated in 2001, when Missisquoi defeated Killington by 13-6 to claim the title.

For the state championship game a compromise on rules is used in which the game is played using their pitching rules but our baserunning rules. The leagues will alternate turns as the home team.

Interview: Ray Foley

Killington pitcher Ray Foley, who is 51, is typical of many players in our league in that he played ball in school and then didn't play for almost 20 years while he pursued other interests, such as trying to make a living. But the job he has is unique. Check out his web site at rayboston.com



VOTBN: What was your baseball experience as a youngster and through school years?

Ray: Baseball started for me when I was just a little kid playing ball in the back yard with my big sisters friends. They all said I'd be in the majors some day. I had no idea what they were talking about. But playing sports was always fun, even though I had to practice and try harder then everyone else just to be good enough to play.

In college at Northeastern University everyone had a scholarship to play baseball. When I went to tryouts I promptly got cut. So I went to the coach and said he made a mistake and he told me to stick around and maybe he'd find an opening on the team. Half way through the season I got my chance and pitched a shutout against New Hampshire. I pitched the next three seasons for Northeastern. My Junior and Senior years our team made it to the regional playoffs and came one game from going to the College World Series in Omaha.

VOTBN: Did you have another job before you realized people would pay you to sing?

Ray: After graduating from Northeastern I worked as a Recreation Director at a youth center in Bridgeport, CT for nine months. I left the job because I wasn't having any fun. I took my guitar, with my limited repertoire of songs and headed down to Cape Cod. I haven't worked a day since.

After bumming around the Cape for the summer with limited success, I picked up some dates playing guitar in Ludlow, Killington and Castleton for the fall. For the winter I had seven days a week

continued next column

in Killington and the following summer it was back to the Cape. After a few years I started to play at colleges as well as the clubs and bars in Killington and the Cape. Today I only play at colleges and I'm amazed the students still have fun with what I do. Of course now I bring along \$500 in stuff to give away at the end of my show and they cannot win the stuff unless they have a good time singing and dancing. I might be old, but I'm not stupid.

VOTBN: Why did you start using the name Ray Boston?

Ray: I picked up the name Ray Boston when I was in Colorado. I ran out of money and a friend suggested I go to the local bar and audition. I did, I got the job, but when the bar owner said "what's your name" my friend said, "that's Ray Boston". And it stuck.

VOTBN: Did you pitch for Killington when it was in the old Central League?

Ray: Yes, and the first game I pitched for Killington, in 1991, was exactly 19 years to the day from the last time I had pitched!

VOTBN: Do you have any memorable moments in our league to share?

Ray: Winning the championship game last year. But over the years, since 1991 I've had several memorable moments. I've been fortunate enough to pitch many shutouts and one game I struck out 16 batters. Our team won the Central League three times and in one of those wins I pitched nine innings for the win after pitching four innings the day before.

VOTBN: What do you think of the move to wood bats starting next year?

Ray: Great. My pitching isn't getting any better. ♦

Got a computer? If so, please let us know your e-mail address.

In case you didn't know, our league has a web site with the complete schedule and results, updated weekly throughout the season: baseball.neknetwork.com

If you received this newsletter in the mail but you have an e-mail address, please let

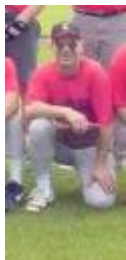
your manager and the league know about it so you can get future issues and other notices sooner.

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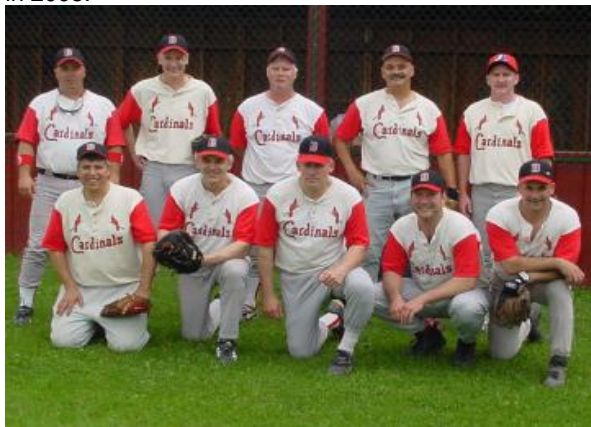
In 2002 We Lost One Player And Added Five New Teams



The season began with the sad news of the untimely death of Chelsea's Mike Sherlock, in January. A game between Chelsea and South Royalton, a team for which he had played in the past, was dedicated to his memory. The league contributed \$50 to the memorial fund set up in his honor.

NEW TEAMS: The league expanded from 11 to 15 teams, adding Burlington, Caledonia, Morrisville, and Northfield, while Mad River Valley replaced Pour House, retaining some of the same players.

The **Burlington Cardinals** won only 4 games, but one was against Morrisville. With 2 pitchers just having reached the minimum pitching age of 45 they should post better results in 2003.



The **Caledonia Bucks**, led by manager Dave Recchia (below, right side of first row, #44) get the prize for best custom uniforms, but it wasn't enough to help outscore the opposition more than one time during the regular season. But in the playoffs they were a terror, defeating Kingdom and Northfield to gain a berth in the lower division championship game, losing to Montpelier by 12-11.



The **Morrisville Merchants** had the best results of the new group during the regular season, finishing in second place with a 13-2 record. They advanced to the championship game, but were stopped by Mad River Valley, 5-0. Below, Rick Emery scores the winning run in the bottom of the 9th in a playoff game against Jericho.



Mad River Valley pulled a stunning upset when they easily beat defending champion Killington, 7-0 on Sept. 8, as Gary MacDonald held the Saints to only 3 hits. Then the team repeated the feat by blanking Morrisville, 5-0, to win the league championship, again behind MacDonald.



Northfield won the first game they played, coming from behind to defeat Newport 6-4 on May 5. But following that auspicious start the North Stars proceeded to lose 13 games in a row! However, they recovered to beat Winooski, 12-6, in the first round of the playoffs. Below, Erik Nielsen pitching; the first baseman is Gordon Bock.



Above And Beyond The Call Of Duty

By Mike Wagner

I would like to take this opportunity to call attention to two teams which took the idea of good sportsmanship to a higher level.

They offered to help but got a raw deal

The **Chelsea** team volunteered to swap opponents and take the bye during the final week of the season, when the team which originally had the bye requested a change.

By coincidence they also happened to finish in 9th place, which automatically gave them another bye for the first round of the playoffs. Right after those two byes was the Labor Day weekend, when nobody played.

The result was that Chelsea had 3 full weeks off and then went into their semifinal playoff game against Montpelier, which beat them, 9-1.

I think the Chelsea team deserves some thanks and commiseration for their willingness to volunteer and the tough scheduling which they inherited.



Today looks nice, let's play two

On August 11, **Kingdom** played their regularly scheduled game at Morrisville, losing 5-3, and then traveled to Northfield to make up an earlier rained out game.

Northfield had a bye that day, so they were rested for this game, but Kingdom won, 10-5.

Hats off to manager Herb Shafe, whose idea this was, and to all the Kingdom players who went along with it, just so they wouldn't miss out on any game on their schedule.



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Steve Wright's \$30,000 Haircut



The last issue of this newsletter featured an interview with veteran Lake Region pitcher Steve Wright. He mentioned that he had a brain tumor removed in 1990. Unfortunately, the tumor returned this year. Steve went to Boston and had an operation to get rid of it again. He is back home, and this is his take on the whole business. "A \$30,000 haircut" was his phrase when he got home.

Late this spring I summoned the courage to tell my primary care doctor that something was wrong in my head again. I was feeling a lot of internal pressure -- like someone blowing up a big balloon in my head -- and more head noise -- shrieking actually, all the time. So, he said, "Well, let's get you an MRI so we know it's not another brain tumor." I mean, damned few people get one acoustic neuroma (about 1/100,000) and repeat cases are much rarer.) So, I went to Central VT Hospital on May 14 and had an MRI -- magnetic resonating imager. For those of you who have not had this procedure, you are lucky. If you find you need it, and you know you are claustrophobic you are wise to tell the technicians so they can give you lots of valium. Having an MRI is a lot like being a torpedo readied for firing. You are the torpedo and they keep you in the firing chamber for a half hour or longer. It's a small place. You can't move. Now you know why you need the valium.

When I got out of the MRI, I told the technicians that I needed an extra set of prints for my doctor, but actually I just wanted to have my own look since I knew my own brain. Well, it was pretty simple. I walked away from the torpedo tube with the X-ray negatives under my arm, went out to my car, sat down and held each picture up to the sky. The new tumor was easy to see - and I was bummed.

I had the surgery at Mass General in Boston on August 2. Having someone digging around in your head with a Boy Scout kit can really mess you up. This was no exception. The surgery itself takes 12 hours, a long time to be anesthetized, bolted down, have your head shaved, cut, bored into, scraped out, and other stuff. I left the hospital for home four days later and began my longer recovery

process within the bounds of my home in Craftsbury. My face is more numb, my equilibrium is really a mess, and I have little or no energy. But, all that is improving and if I can keep my head in a good place -- no pun intended -- this is gonna work out alright

I'm still struggling with certain emotional components of this experience and acceptance of physical realities. For example, I may not play ball again, ever. This is a reality we all face sooner or later and deserves more space than I can accord it now.

I cannot imagine how difficult it would be to face a major illness without friends and family for support. No exception here. Included in this network were all my teammates and many of their families. They provided a framework of emotional support crucial to my recovery. What a privilege. And all from a game for 'little boys'. Thanks to all of you.



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Everything You Always Wanted to Know About SABR, the Society for American Baseball Research

By Brian Stevens, Burlington Cardinals

Concerned that baseball comes to an end when our playoffs are done? Or when the Red Sox are finally mathematically eliminated? You can join a group of addicted baseballers who share your interest in the game and who also share the fun and passion in learning more about it through membership in SABR.

What is SABR?

Founded in Cooperstown in 1971, SABR (Society for American Baseball



Research) brings together teachers, students, farmers, policemen, accountants, programmers and, yes, even lawyers to exchange thoughts and information on players and teams from baseball's history.

You can also join specific committees in your area of special interest. These committees include ballparks, minor leagues, baseball records, umpires and rules, and even a committee headed up by our own hard-swinging centerfielder, Tom Simon, the Deadball Era committee. You can also share information and opinions with fellow members across the nation through on-line groups.

To get a better idea of SABR, just visit the web site at www.sabr.org. There you'll find a complete information and updates on SABR benefits and resources, including a calendar of events, publications information, news about the organization and its members, and pages of interesting baseball information.

Annual National Chapter Meetings

Each summer, members of SABR gather from around the country to attend research presentations, participate in panel discussions and trivia contests and meet others who simply share in the love of the game. The most recent meeting was held in Boston this past June, where over 40 presentations were delivered on topics ranging from a discussion on Ted Williams (including Dom DiMaggio and Johnny Pesky) to an analysis of whether a hitter derives an advantage from having a base stealing threat on first base.

continued next column



In 1998 the Larry Gardner Chapter of SABR, in conjunction with the UVM Athletic Department, installed a Vermont State Historical Society marker in honor of Centennial Field's rich history.

Over 700 SABRites attended the event, which also included the Red Sox-Braves game at Fenway. Our local chapter was well represented in Boston - I especially enjoyed the walking tour of Fenway, the Old South Park (former home field of the Boston Braves), Huntington Grounds, and old Braves Field. Next year's meeting will be held in Denver, and we're looking for another strong contingent from our local chapter to attend.

Local Chapter

But the best part of SABR membership takes place on the local level. Our own Vermont group, the Gardner-Waterman Chapter, has been involved in many projects since its inception in 1993.

These projects have included:

- erecting historical markers in historically significant baseball locations across the State
 - producing a regional meeting centered around both the old Northern Leagues in Vermont
 - assisting in creating the "History of Baseball in Vermont" exhibit with the State Historical Society held in Montpelier in 2000 and 2001
 - the construction of "Little Fenway", a 1/3 scale whiffle-ball field in Essex Junction
-

- research and publication of “The Green Mountain Boys of Summer”, a book of all major league players born in Vermont

So this next winter, as you begin to tire from moving the woodpile again and are thinking you couldn't be further from the Vermont Old-Timers League opening day, you can live the national pastime through your membership in SABR.

For further membership info, you can either call me, Brian Stevens, at 899-4815, and I'll mail you an application, or go directly to the SABR website at www.sabr.org .

For those interested in the game's place in history and American culture, you'll find oiling your glove just can't compare with SABR. ♦

Catamounts Prepare for MSBL World Series in Phoenix, Oct. 27 – Nov. 2

This year, for the first time, the league is going to be represented at the annual MSBL World Series. We have entered a team called Vermont Catamounts in the age 38 and over division.



16 brave baseball players have volunteered to take the plunge and represent the league at the tournament in Phoenix, Arizona, from October 27 through November 2.

The team first got together at the MSBL Regional Tournament in Albany NY over Labor Day weekend. They lost all 3 games, but picked up valuable experience in the ins and outs of tournament play. These games include leading off base, base stealing, advance on passed ball or wild pitch.

The roster:

Unif. No.	Name	Regular Team	Pos.
21	Craig Armstrong	Jericho	of,p,c
1	Bill Bauer	Killington	if
2	Ken Bean	Kingdom	if,p
5	John Clark	Killington	of,if
3	Kim Duggento	Milton	p,of
9	Jeff Emerson	Morrisville	p
45	Ray Foley	Killington	p
28	Jay Holzinger	Killington	c,3b
6	John Kalinen	Lake Region	2b,ss
8	John Martin	Winooski	3b,1b
4	Monte Mason	Morrisville	of,p
7	Mike Rowe	Killington	p,if
17	Sal Spinosa	Mad River	1b
24	Neil Stanzione	Newport	p,1b
23	Maury Tinker	Lake Region	of
33	Mike Wagner	Newport	of,c

Here, Monte Mason and Jeff Emerson model the new uniform shirts and hats. Aren't they spiffy? (the uniforms, that is)



Reminder, Use Wood Bats in 2003



At the July 21 league meeting, the teams voted to use only wood or composite bats starting with the 2003 season.

Given the possibility of needing to purchase 1 or 2 dozen bats per team, the league invited a representative from Mills & Greer to discuss bulk purchases of Rawlings bats at the meeting.

No consolidated order has yet been made. The league appointed South Royalton player Rocky Harlow to be in charge of the effort to solicit bids from suitable bat manufacturers and suppliers. He is targeting some time in October to receive those bids and to determine what the next steps will be.

If you want to be involved, or just let Rocky know about your team's requirements, give him a call at 802-482-5220 or send him an e-mail message at: hrockster@adelphia.net

Letters to the Editor



Send letters by email to baseball@neknetwork.com or by regular mail to P.O. Box 10, Newport, VT 05855. Every letter must be signed, but your name will not be printed if you so request.

To the Editor,

Can you please tell me the reasoning behind the league rule for the 3 hour time limit on games? It doesn't make sense to me. Thanks.

Rob P.

Rob: That rule has been on the books for a long time, so you need to ask one of the old guys, not me ☺

It's either to keep the game moving along briskly or to prevent dehydration due to being out in the sun too long. Keep in mind that it doesn't apply if the score is tied, then the game continues beyond 3 hours.

Feel free to ask your manager to bring it up at the next league meeting, maybe the majority of teams want to repeal the rule. At a minimum we should say it doesn't apply during the playoffs.

The next meeting will be the 2003 opening meeting, in February. ♦

Age 18+ League Gets New Life

The independent Country Mountain League has been around for over 20 years, and has provided players who are at that awkward age – 18 and up but not yet 35 – a chance to keep playing baseball. But it has slipped in recent years and has been on the verge of collapse.

Now, however, under the leadership of John Grearson, the CML has taken steps to create a more substantial structure. The CML's current 4 teams will be increased by 4 more teams from Burlington down to Middlebury, due to the response to ads placed by Tim Hanley, and recruitment efforts by Jim Mitchell.

The league will become affiliated with Mens Adult Baseball League (MABL), which is the age 18+ branch of the same national organization to which the Old-Timers league belongs.

Old-Timers President Floyd Brown has favored having a strong younger league to provide a bridge for players who will eventually join the Old-Timers league. However, there will continue to be no upper age limit for CML.

At a meeting in Montpelier on September 15, Grearson and Frank Tedeschi of the CML Gusto's Baseball Club met with Hanley, Mitchell, and an official of the Old-Timers league to discuss how a league is set up within the MABL/MSBL framework. The new league will have its own web site and e-mail address, officers, and rules. Any assistance provided by members of our league will be voluntary on their part. However, the leagues might share an information display or cooperate in other common areas, such as arrangements for tournament participation.

The CML will use full rules, with stealing bases, etc., and allow metal bats up to -5 length minus weight differential.

If you know of someone who is age 18 or older who would like to keep playing baseball, here is the contact information:

John Grearson: 802-476-5187 Johnny4453@aol.com
Jim Mitchell: 802-878-9612 trooper351@adelphia.net
Tim Hanley: 802-388-2131 gunera31@sover.net
CML e-mail: cml@neknetwork.com
CML web site: <http://cml.neknetwork.com>

Other CML teams:
Barre Mariners, Dan Randall: 802-288-8004
DRandall@Nationallife.com
McGillicuddy's Irish Pub, Dan Winters: 802-229-0979
Krippler60@yahoo.com
South Burlington Black Sox, Daren Cassani: 802-660-0454
Whammyc@hotmail.com ◆

My Turn At Bat By Mike Wagner, Editor

This was the newsletter's first season, and this is the third and final issue of the year.

The goals of the newsletter were to enable all league members to stay informed about issues, to see the team standings and playoff format, and to learn more about some of the other players whom they meet on the field. From my perspective, all these goals were met, and the response has been very positive.

The continued existence of the newsletter depends on the willingness of the membership to accept an increase in dues to pay for it. This season's 3 issues were paid for out of a small surplus which developed due to the increased number of teams, augmented by dipping into the reserves built up in previous seasons. Earlier this year the teams voted to pay for 2 umpires at all playoff games, and the additional expense for that further reduced the reserves.

In 2003 I would like to publish the newsletter 4 times; the first issue, before the season starts, would report the results of the February league meeting, and include the schedule and introduction to any new teams, as well as a player interview and a call for participation in the MSBL World Series. The other 3 issues would be scheduled at similar intervals to this year's issues at the end of May, July, and September.

This year's experience shows that the cost works out to about \$1.00 per issue per player, after taking into account that an online version of each issue was also created, and is accessible through the league's web site. Therefore a dues increase of \$5 per player would cover the cost of the newsletter, with \$1 left over to be applied toward the increased cost of umpires for playoff games.

The league dues of \$10 per player have not changed for at least 6 years. The \$5 increase in 2001 was an increase in the MSBL dues, not our league's dues.

Let your team manager know that you want the newsletter to continue, and are willing to pay the proposed dues increase. It will be voted on at the next league meeting, in February. ◆



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