

DUGOUT CHATTER

ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION OF THE GOLDEN SENIORS SOFTBALL CLUB OF SACRAMENTO (WWW.GSSCS.ORG) -- FEBRUARY 2011

2011 CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS AND PICNIC SHIFT TO HOWE PARK

The Golden Seniors Board of Directors has approved a proposal to move the club's season-ending six league championship games and picnic from the Sacramento Softball Complex to the Howe Avenue Park. The date would be changed from Saturday, Sept. 17 to Saturday, Sept. 24.

The club still suffers financially by higher-than-budgeted and expected picnic expenses at the Complex the past four years, as well as a lack of flexibility in choosing any other Saturday in September for the picnic at the Complex. Dave Vargo, representing the club's Planning Committee at the Feb. 7 board and general meeting, said the club could stage the annual picnic at Howe Park well within a \$4,000 budget. That would be about \$2,000 less than picnic food and drink have cost annually at the Complex in recent years, he said.

Also, the Complex, due to other commitments, can only provide the fields for play on Sept. 17, a date on which a number of Golden Seniors players and team managers are expected to be with their traveling tournament teams in Oregon.

The Howe Avenue Park's two fields and picnic area are available to the Golden Seniors on Sept. 10, 17 or 24, and a unanimous Planning Committee prefers Sept. 24.

The club's League 1 on Monday mornings plays at Howe Avenue Park and George Hodsdon, assistant commissioner of that league, said players are "almost unanimous" in support of shifting the playoffs and picnic to Sept. 24. This also would allow this nine-team league to play a full three-round schedule. It also would allow an extra week for make-up or playoff games for the other leagues that play at the Complex, Vargo said.

At the Howe Avenue Park, Vargo added, field rental would be \$300-\$400, and use of the picnic area would be \$70. There would be a \$30 fee to bring in beer. Hank Fontes, planning committee member and picnic co-chair, estimates that 320 fast-food meals could be purchased for \$1,500, and increasing the food budget to \$2,200 would allow an upgrade to include ribs and chicken. For \$500, the club could provide unlimited water, soft drinks and cans of beer (no kegs). (See Page 2)

**NEXT
GENERAL
MEETING:
MONDAY, 7:30
P.M., MARCH 14
AT THE VFW
POST 67 HALL
ON STOCKTON
BOULEVARD**

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honored at February
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*Club history through
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Sunshine Report

Club Sponsors

**2011 GENERAL
MEETINGS (7:30 P.M.
AT THE VFW POST 67
HALL, 2784
STOCKTON BLVD.)
MARCH 14 ... MAY
16 ... JULY 11 ...
AUGUST 15 ...
SEPTEMBER 24 (IN
CONJUNCTION WITH
ANNUAL PICNIC/
PLAYOFFS)**

Feb. 7 Meeting News (from Page 1)

A possible downside mentioned by Vargo is parking at the Howe Avenue Park, which has over 200 spaces, plus some street parking. With an anticipated turnout of 300, that would require some carpooling, he added. Also, Howe Avenue Park would not be closed for exclusive GSSCS use, as others could be playing tennis or walking dogs in other areas of the park.

Since the club has suspended L-7 (for 70+ players), having six leagues would allow playoffs at 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. and requiring just two fields.

EARLIER SEASON START. President Bill Hill said the club plans to open the regular season the last week of March, after one practice game. By shifting the championship playoffs from Sept. 17 to Sept. 24, schedules could allow more makeup games or an additional round of playoff games. (Note: L-1 usually begins its season earlier, eschewing practice games.)

RULES. Club Commissioner Bruce Gilmore said the club's 2011 Rule Book went to press on Feb. 4 and should be in the hands of all players before the season begins. There are what he called "minor" rule changes, such as a change in the "hat rule" so that if players are wearing safety equipment (protective masks) they do not have to wear hats when on the field. They would still be required to wear a club-issued hat at bat. And a player with skin cancer concerns can wear a brimmed hat.

Gilmore said that except for the 70s leagues, substitute players cannot have courtesy runners.

He said he appreciated the work by all Rules Committee members and especially the contributions of Dave Vargo and Larry Campbell.

Gilmore also said that he has had further contact with Don Barney of the Complex on the use of a bat compression tester and "it is highly unlikely that bats for the seniors will be tested this year ... " Concern had been expressed, mainly by Larry Campbell, that the testing is unfair to the Golden Seniors, particularly those older players whose bat speed is considerably slower.

BETTER BALLS. Club 2nd Vice President Pete Ward displayed the new ball that will be used in 2011. The better-performing ball is costing \$3.75 (plus tax) each, and the Complex has agreed to give GSSCS a \$3 credit per ball in the field rental agreement, (See Page 3)



Pete Ward, club 2nd VP, displays the improved ball that Golden Seniors will use in 2011. Net cost increase to the club is about a buck a ball.

The club board approved use of the new ball at the January general meeting, responding to loud complaints from members about having to use balls that were overly limited in their performance.

(From Page 2 -- February General Meeting News)

thus the net cost for the better balls will be “about a buck a ball.” It is the Stote Trump Evil ball, within the ASA limit of .44 core, 375 compression. Ward: “I do not think there is a better ‘ASA’ softball available.”

SPONSORSHIPS. Club 1st VP Dick Latimer reported that “we are doing quite well” in lining up team sponsors for 2011. There are at least six new sponsors: Fuddruckers (brought in by Bob Jones), Executive Limousine (John Mohamed), Reinwald’s Health and Dental Insurance (Bob Reinwald), 9th & X Self Storage (Bill Hill), Show Business Productions (Joe Kline), Jerry Jodice (Jamyn Jodice). (See Sponsor List elsewhere in this newsletter.)

NEW PLAYER WORKOUTS AND DRAFTS. L-1 had new player tryouts on Feb. 7 and is scheduled to hold the player draft on Feb. 22. As of Feb. 4, reported George Hodsdon, L-1 has nine teams of 13 players. Two players are over 90 this year (Fernando Navarro, 90, who drives over from Fairfield each Monday, and the club’s oldest player, Dinny Watson, 91, who plays right field or right-center. Ted Holms, 90, is a coach for Joe Kline’s team. L-1 has 53 players age 75-79; 39 age 80-84, 8 age 85-89.

NIGHT LEAGUES. Tryouts for the night leagues were scheduled for Feb. 16 at 6:30 p.m at the Complex. League drafts are scheduled later in the month.

MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS. Henry Low said there were 77 non-playing and 63 playing life members. There were 120 signups for L-1, 83 for L-2, 76 for L-3, 65 for L-4, 66 for L-5, and 67 for L-6. Seventy-four players from 2010 had not responded to renewal letters. Twenty-five players are new to the club. The total roster of 501 could be reduced by 74, the number of 2010 players who had not responded to renewal letters.

There are 139 life members, 83 of them players; 56 non-players.

Eighty-six multi-league players are filling 200 spots on various teams.

TOYS FOR MILITARY DEPENDENTS. The club agreed to serve as a collection point at the September picnic for donations of toys for the children of military service men and women. #

CLUB “HOTLINE” SOURCE FOR NEWS, INFORMATION

Operated by Don Shank, the club’s hotline provides recorded information for members, such as the general meeting schedule. It also is where players can call to make sure their games are going to be played as scheduled due to threatening weather or other events that make the fields unplayable, such as water main breaks or thefts of copper wire that prevents use of lights for night games. These things have happened, so even if the weather looks balmy, and you can’t be reached by your manager, you might be advised to give the “hot line” a jingle at 491-1721.

#

BLAST FROM THE PAST (OR ONCE UPON A TIME)

Golden Seniors 2011 Sponsors

PATRONIZE OUR SPONSORS

(* = New Sponsor)

AMERICAN MEDICAL EQUIPMENT
AVALON HEARING
BERTOLUCCI'S BODY AND
FENDER SHOP
CALIFORNIA ENERGY SERVICE #1
CALIFORNIA ENERGY SERVICE #2
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ESPANOL ITALIAN RESTAURANT
*EXECUTIVE LIMOUSINE
GEREMIA POOLS
GREATER SACRAMENTO SOFTBALL
ASSOCIATION (GSSA)
*FUDDRUCKERS
HARPER PROPERTIES
I FORGET
*JERRY JODICE
JOLLY ROGER
L&S SURVEYS
LIVINGSTON CONCRETE
MARK WHITE DDS
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SILVER CATS
SPORTS LEISURE VACATIONS
VFW POST 67
RICHARD WILL ATTORNEY
WION'S BODY SHOP
*9TH & X SELF STORAGE
#

From Larry Campbell

(Source: Golden Seniors archives)

Our club began as a result of Ted Larson's efforts. When he retired in 1971, he read about how "Changes in Aging" were increased by inactivity. He saw a photo of retirees playing softball in St. Petersburg, Florida and a flow of mail began between them. He told local seniors that oldsters in Florida have been playing softball since the 1930s and we should start playing the game in Sacramento. In the spring of 1976, the City Recreation Department issued a call for players over age 50, and the club began with 14 players.

From the first 14 players in 1976, one is still an active player today, 35 years later -- Don Wilson. In 1977, the players were issued orange and white jerseys and caps. It was felt that the high visibility color was best for seniors who might run into each other if the color was less visible. Their team was admitted into the Women's Media Softball League composed of six teams from radio stations KRAK-KWET, KSFM, K-108, and TV stations Channel 6 and 40; and into the Adult Twilight League Class D division. They won every game against the women and lost every Class D game, ending the season with a 9-23 record. (Perhaps in fairness and chivalry we should admit all young women since they were most generous in admitting our senior men in our beginnings.)

In 1979, bylaws were adopted to formally organize. Jim McNamara assembled many old timers from the Sacramento Bushers Baseball Players Assn to play against the Golden Seniors. Their list of trips around the country and social activities are very impressive. Players still active in the club, Harley Doughty and Jack Jacinto joined in 1980. Jack remembers that new members were issued jersey with their member number, which was 72 in his case. Dante Ciardella, Ralph Congdon, and Dinny Watson (our oldest active player) joined in 1981. Any of you long-timers still have your original cap or jersey with your membership number? #

NEW GSSCS LIFE MEMBERS ARE HONORED



New Life Members: Front, L-R, Clint Armstrong, Andres R. Serna, moderator Jim Lortz, Paul Thompson, Donald Toyama. Rear, L-R, Steve Pegos, Ray Merrill, Rick Barsuglia, Ron Middlekauff.

It was an evening of cake and poetry as Paul Thompson quipped about how nice it was to be recognized for being old. Emcee Jim Lortz recited poetry written by Ray Merrill's wife, Karen, as she has witnessed many of Ray's games. To wit:

THE SOFTBALL GAME -- OBSERVATIONS OF A WIFE
I WENT TO A SOFTBALL GAME TODAY
TO WATCH THE OVER 70'S PLAY.

THE GAME SEEMED TO MOVE REAL SLOW
BUT EACH WENT AS FAST AS HE COULD GO.

IT TAKES 90 MINUTES FOR A ONE-HOUR GAME
BUT THEY SEEM TO ENJOY IT JUST THE SAME.

THEY THROW AND CATCH AND RUN EVERY BASE
EACH WITH A SMILE UPON HIS FACE.

SO NO MATTER HOW OLD THEY GET TO BE
THE BASEBALL DIAMOND'S THE PLACE TO BE
SO I GUESS I'LL WATCH THE GAME SOME MORE
MAYBE UNTIL HE'S 94. -- Karen Merrill.

Merrill, Thompson and 13 other members of the Golden Seniors Softball Club of Sacramento were honored at the club's February 7 general meeting, introduced by Lortz as the latest to have the life membership honor bestowed. Cake and coffee were served.

Some told stories and others sent their regrets that they could not attend the meeting and ceremony. All were applauded for their achievements as ballplayers and teammates. For some who were not at the meeting, Lortz said he could recall them as among those with whom he shared "stories and liquids" after games.
(See Page 6)

From Page 5 -- Life Members

Lortz opened the ceremony: "As I said last year and I'll say it every year, but it bears repeating again and again: A life member in clubs like this usually means only the few and the lucky. But, these ballplayers here this evening have proven to be the exceptions!"

To be eligible for life membership, a member must be at least 75 with 15 consecutive years in the club, or 80 with 10 consecutive years of membership.

The new life members, some of whom were not present and did not respond to a request for some biographical information:

Clint Armstrong, 75, a 21-year member who stepped down this year after 15 years as treasurer of the Tournament Players Association.

Rick Barsuglia, 75, a 26-year member who recalled managing a team on Thursday nights in 1988 and serving as the club commissioner when there was one commissioner for all four leagues and 48 teams. He said he devoted 100 hours to rewriting the club rule book and paid for its printing of 650 copies for the 1989 season. In 1990, he and Norm Blackwell Sr. staged the club's first umpire clinic.

Sammy Blalock, 75, a 26-year member.

John Chatfield, 80, a 15-year member, manager of teams in League One for over 10 years. "I've totally enjoyed my years in senior softball ... I have made many close friends over the years," he wrote in a note to Lortz.

Leon Juarros, 81, an 11-year member.

James C. Lucas, 78, a 16-year member.

Raymond A. Merrill, 75, a 22-year member who played many games -- on teams he sponsors, Lortz said. "Ray is a legend" who has "done so much for this club just being Ray." Then he read some of Karen Merrill's poetry. Merrill was honored at the club picnic last September with a special Sponsor of the Year award.

Ron Middlekauff, 75, a 21-year member, described by Lortz as being "always willing to help." Ron said his membership has "enriched my life."

Steve Pegos, 75, a 25-year member, said he came from Brooklyn where he had never played softball -- just stickball in the streets. He said he has "enjoyed every minute" of the 25 years in the club and is grateful to "everybody who showed me what to do."

Floyd L. Ransom Sr., 75, a 23-year member, expressed special thanks to Norm Blackwell Sr., with whom he played ball at McClellan Air Force Base and "when I came of age, Mr. Blackwell brought me to the Golden Seniors."

Andres R. Serna, 80, a 14-year member, said he was asked why he would drive so far to play softball (carpooling from Yuba City). "Over there we had just one league, just 50s, and I wanted to play with guys my own age. We used to have three car pools. Now I'm the only one" making the drive.

Ernest D. Shaffer, 75, a 25-year member, who someone said was out of town as an employee of the University of San Diego setting up classes. (See Page 7)

(From Page 6 -- Life Members)

Paul I. Thompson, 80, an 11-year member. He said he was 70 when he started playing again and thought he could play as well as he did in his late 40s. Then he discovered, "I just wasn't very good then, either. I got this award for being old." He added that it "is an honor to be in a league that respects ALL players."

Donald Toyama, 75, a 25-year member. "Two more years!" he vowed.

George H. Wehmeyer, 75, a 25-year member. "Those 25 years went by too fast." He added that it was not "all play and no work." He served as the club's player agent for two years in the 1990s. #

CLUB RULES COMMITTEE FOR 2011

Club Commissioner Bruce Gilmore has named members of the Rules Committee to consider changes for 2011: Night Leagues -- Bill McMahon, Ed Frantz and Bill Greene. Day Leagues -- Rich Edwards, Bob Havrilla, Curtis Holcomb, Larry Campbell and McMahon. Chief Umpire Freddie Miller provides technical advice. #

SUNSHINE & HEALTH

PROBLEMS, PROBLEMS, PROBLEMS ... Trudy Smartt, club Sunshine chairwoman, filed this "off-season" report with the Dugout Chatter:

Ed Campini underwent a knee replacement on Oct 19 ... Paul Thompson had two knee replacements ... Dinny Watson had a TBD hernia fix ... Joe Smith had a September stint and gall bladder removal ... Don Maciel had a leg injury in August ... Larry Utberg had knee arthroscopy in July ... Ted Hanson had prostate cancer treatment ... Ken Cramer tore up a knee or leg.

Club 1st VP Dick Latimer said that while recovering from one knee surgery he found he needs surgery on his other knee, keeping him from the playing. At least this time the operation will be arthroscopic, he added. #

SAFETY NEWS

FOR INFORMATION ON STATUS OF THE CLUB SAFETY PROGRAM, CONTACT CLUB SAFETY CHAIRMAN CURTIS HOLCOMB AT 600-6065. HE HAS ISSUED A CALL FOR ALL MEMBERS WHO ARE QUALIFIED TO ADMINISTER CPR/AED AID THROUGH THEIR EMPLOYERS TO CONTACT HIM. RED CROSS TRAINING CLASSES ARE ANTICIPATED FOR GOLDEN SENIORS MEMBERS THIS WINTER. CONTACT HOLCOMB TO EXPRESS YOUR INTEREST IN SIGNING UP FOR A CLASS TO BE CERTIFIED AND QUALIFY FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE CLUB'S "RED HAT" CREW. YOU JUST MIGHT SAVE A TEAMMATE'S LIFE.

LEAGUE COMMISSIONERS FOR 2011

Nominated by Club Commissioner Bruce Gilmore and approved by the Board of Directors, the club's League Commissioners for 2011:

L-1 Monday Day, 70 and older: Bob Havrilla -- 285-5413 (George Hodsdon, assistant)

L-2 Tuesday Day 9 a.m., 60 and older: Curtis Holcomb -- 600-6065 (Jim Wait, assistant)

L-3 Tuesday Night, 50 and older: Jerry Toenyas -- 354-4126 (Brent Korff, assistant)

L-4 Wednesday Night, 50 and older: Bill Greene -- 391-5559

L-5 Thursday Night, 50 and older: Allen Riker -- 485-9567

L-6 Tuesday Day 10:30 a.m. Select, 60 and older: Rich Edwards -- 483-1293

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NEXT DUGOUT CHATTER: MARCH 2011. READ THE DUGOUT CHATTER ONLINE AT WWW.GSSCS.ORG WHERE NEWS UPDATES AND PHOTOS ARE PUBLISHED AS THEY BECOME AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. FOR THOSE WHO HAVEN'T ALREADY DONE SO, YOU CAN REMOVE YOUR NAME FROM THE DUGOUT CHATTER MAILING LIST AND READ THE NEWSLETTER ONLINE, SAVING THE CLUB POSTAGE, PAPER AND INK. TO GET OFF THE SNAIL-MAIL LIST, CALL HENRY LOW AT 391-3938. APRIL-THRU-AUGUST ISSUES OF THE NEWSLETTER ARE GENERALLY AVAILABLE ONLINE WITH SOME PRINTED COPIES AVAILABLE AT FIELDS (SEE SCOREKEEPERS). THE ONLINE EDITION IS USUALLY ACCESSIBLE DAYS OR EVEN WEEKS BEFORE THE PRINTED EDITION ARRIVES VIA SNAIL MAIL. THE ONLINE EDITION ALSO MAY CONTAIN MORE INFORMATION AND PHOTOS. # ADVERTISING: CLUB SPONSORS MAY RUN ADS IN THE DUGOUT CHATTER (\$50 FOR HALF-A-PAGE OR LESS, \$75 FOR A FULL PAGE. NON-SPONSOR RATES ARE HIGHER.) CONTACT LOU COPPOLA, 444-6138. #

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