



1111 Echoes

Winter 2003/04

A newsletter from the R. I. Reds Heritage Society

Important Notice for Members

Paid members: For those who already have paid their \$20 membership dues for the 2003/04 season, your new membership card is enclosed.

Unpaid members to date: For those who haven't paid their membership renewal as yet, enclosed is another renewal flyer. Please renew as soon as possible. For a non-profit group with limited resources like our Society, it is expensive and time consuming to send out past due reminders. Thank you. We value your membership and appreciate your cooperation.

4th Annual Reunion Reminder

- Sunday, July 25, 2004, 12 noon until dusk
- Goddard State Park, Warwick RI
- More players and Reds memorabilia
- 300 or more players and fans expected
- Great food, music and laughter
- Dozens of raffle prizes

What's Inside?

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Reds Heritage Society Announces 1st Annual "Lunch & Crunch Day"

Lunch followed by
a P-Bruins Game
Sunday, March 7, 2004



12:15 PM "Lunch": Lancellotta's Restaurant, 1113 Charles St., North Prov., RI. Lunch menu: Family-style, all you can eat – soup, salad, pasta, oven-roasted potatoes, and both roasted chicken and strip sirloin steak, plus coffee. Liquor purchases not included. There also will be a brief speaking program featuring Joe McDonald, hockey writer for the *Providence Journal*.

4:05 PM "Crunch": Dunkin' Donuts Center, Providence, RI. Crunch menu: an AHL game between the Providence Bruins and Portland Pirates, coached by Tim Army, a Rhode Island native and Society member. This contest features two of the best teams in the league in a game that will offer skillful play, fast skating, and some "Crunch" hitting by many future NHL stars.



Total cost for the March 7th

"Lunch & Crunch" event:

Only \$30 per person

Reservations limited to 120 persons

Please make check payable to:

**R. I. Reds Heritage Society
and mail to:**

P. O. Box 167, Barrington, RI 02806

Deadline for reservations: February 18, 2004

Note: Both Luncheon passes and Game tickets will be distributed at the restaurant. Everyone is responsible for their own transportation and also parking at the game.

For further information call 401-247-2666 or E-mail

UNH1959@aol.com

1951-52: A Season to Remember

Editors preface: Alan Sanderson of Danielson, CT, a devoted member of the R. I. Reds Heritage Society, suggested quite awhile ago that the R. I. Reds team of 1951-52 and its accomplishments be recognized in 1111 Echoes. Due to space limitations, it has been postponed until now. And we agree. It is time. Yes, 1951-52 was quite a season, as you will see.



Veteran blueliner: Pat Egan, became a Red through the trade.

After a dismal last-place finish the year before, the first half of 1951-52 looked as it were to be a repeat season. At the end of December the Reds had played 35 games, won only 14, lost 19 and tied 2. Their meager 30 points deadlocked them for last place with both Syracuse and Buffalo.

But just before the new year of '52, owner **Lou Pieri** worked out what was to become a momentous deal with the New York Rangers. The trade sent star winger **Jack Stoddard**, who at that time was second in

AHL scoring, to the Blues in exchange for two veterans, defenseman **Pat Egan** and winger **Jean Paul Denis**, along with a young 22-year-old right-winger named **Zellio Toppazzini**.

That exchange turned about to become one of Pieri's most important ever. It brought to the needy Reds a combination of solid depth, veteran experience and a young player who was to eventually make his mark as R. I. Reds "Player of the Century."

The Reds started off the new year on January 2nd at home with a resounding 7-2 victory over Hershey, with all three new faces chipping in offensively. Denis had a goal and an assist, Toppazzini a goal, and Egan an assist. Few could imagine then that the Reds might be on their way to a second place finish in the AHL's Eastern Division.

With the newcomers complementing the high-scoring line of **Ray Powell** (center), **Barry Sullivan** (right wing) and **Paul Gladu** (left wing), the Reds second half earned them a record of 18-14-1. And the last game of the regular season was perhaps one of their most dramatic comebacks.



A kid named "Topper": Zellio Toppazzini began a record setting career in Providence.

It was Sunday, March 16, and late in the third period the Hershey Bears held a commanding 3-1 lead. But **Kenny Smith**, a veteran winger, gave the Reds some life with a goal at 13:06. But with the clock winding down to the last minute the Reds still trailed by one. Then at 19:07 Sullivan took passes from Powell and player-coach **Terry Reardon** and punched a score past Hershey goaltender **Gordon "Red" Henry** to tie the game a 3-3.

The Auditorium crowd of 4,989 went wild, but even wilder a few seconds later when Egan fed Powell a smooth pass and the slick, stick handling center cleverly outmaneuvered the Hershey defense and slipped the winner past Henry at 19:52 — just eight

seconds before the final buzzer.

Powell's goal was his 35th of the season and combined with his 62 assists he finished with 97 points, highest in the league. He later was named the AHL's most valuable player. Was all of this a sign of things to come in the playoffs?

Entering Calder Cup playoffs, the final regular season standings for 51-52 were:

Eastern Division	GP	W	L	T	PTS
Hershey	68	35	28	5	75
Providence	68	32	33	3	67
Buffalo	68	28	36	4	60
Syracuse	68	25	42	1	51
Western Division	GP	W	L	T	PTS
Pittsburgh	68	46	19	3	95
Cleveland	68	44	33	5	93
Cincinnati	68	29	33	6	64
St. Louis	68	28	39	1	57
Indianapolis	68	22	40	6	50



Ray Powell: Acquired from the Chicago Blackhawks, Ray did his play-making magic and won the AHL scoring title, first team All-Star and Most Valuable Player honors.

Despite a second half rebound that placed the Reds as runners up in the Eastern Division, they were a team with a slightly less than .500 winning percentage. Conversely, the Western Division race for first had been a dogfight between Pittsburgh and Cleveland, with the Hornets barely beating out the Barons by 2 points. Both those teams played at a nearly .700 clip for the season.

In those days, points did not rank the teams. So, for some inexplicable reason, the AHL always paired East against West: 1 vs. 1, 2 vs. 2 and 3 vs. 3. Therefore, the playoff pairings went like this:

Series "A" Pittsburgh vs. Hershey, best of 7

Series "B" Cleveland vs. Providence, best of 5

Series "C" Cincinnati vs. Buffalo, best of 5

Series "D" Winners of series "B" and "C", best of 5

Series "E" Finals, winners of series "A" and "D", best of 7

The Reds had been humbled all season long by the mighty Cleveland Barons, who sported such all-star talent as goalie **Johnny Bower** (lowest GA average), outstanding defenseman **Tommy Williams** and forward **Steve Wochy** (top AHL goal scorer). A cast of other valuable veterans including **Jackie Gordon**, **Ed Reigle**, **Ike Hildrbrand**, **Cal Stearns** and **Eddie Olson** also supported the Barons.

Could the Reds seriously compete with Cleveland in the first round of the 1951-52 Calder Cup playoffs?

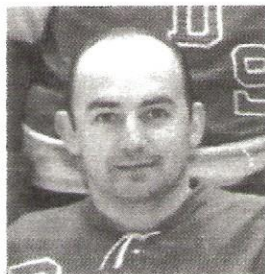
(To be continued in the Spring 2004 issue of 1111 Echoes)

Backchecking and Forechecking

“Backchecking and Forechecking” is a regular feature of *1111 Echoes*. It is intended to bring readers up-to-date on the “whereabouts and goings on” of former R.I. Reds players and associates. This edition features profiles of individuals who took a few minutes to fill out and return the questionnaire contained in previous editions. These updates are published as they are received and as space allows. If you have not already submitted yours, please do so.

Backchecking

Gil Mayer undoubtedly was one of the greatest goaltenders in American Hockey League history. With the Pittsburgh Hornets, a farm team of the NHL Toronto Maple Leafs, he won the “Hap” Holmes Award five times—an AHL record—as the league’s goalie with the lowest GA average. He was selected a first team All Star three times. Gil later played for Hershey and Cleveland, and then finished his 14-year career with 2 years as a Red.



Forechecking

Gil and **Marielle**, his wife of 51 years, also decided to settle in Rhode Island, like so many former Reds players. The Lincoln couple has a son, Andre, and two grandchildren. After two seasons with the Reds in the early 1960s, Gil retired and went on to become a Rhode Island State building superintendent. His hobbies include golf and he is an accomplished woodworker. *Gil, could you help build us a museum exhibit?*



Charles “Chuck” Scherza was a standout forward for the Reds during the team’s late 1940s and early 1950s. A skilled playmaker and penalty killer, too, Chuck was a major factor when the Reds finished first and won the Calder Cup in a thrilling 7-game final series against Hershey in 1948-49. In 10 seasons with the Reds, Chuck played 649 games, scored 139 goals, 297 assists and 436 points—fourth highest in team history.



Chuck and his wife **Anne**, married 61 years, have raised 5 children, and have 9 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren. Early on they decided to make their home in Pawtucket, RI. After a serious eye injury ended his career, he worked for a local liquor distributor and was an AHL linesman and youth hockey referee. Today he is an active recruiter of members for our Society. *Keep signing up those old teammates, Chuck!*

Former Reds players: *We need your help!*

Recently the Society sent you a complete directory of ex-Reds players, spouses, children, executives and employees who are enrolled as members of the organization. We hope you will find this directory helpful in keeping you in touch with your old hockey friends.

Additionally, the Society provided you with a list of about 80 former Reds players whose addresses and telephone numbers were uncovered through about 8 months of hard work and research.

Here’s where you can help. There must be a few names on that list of 80 who are former teammates and friends. We’d like you to contact them and, as Player Ambassadors for the Society, explain who we are, what we are doing and the benefits of becoming a member of the R.I. Reds Heritage Society. You can become an “Ice Breaker” (no pun intended) in our player recruitment efforts.

If you are able to recruit a new player-member, please call Buster Clegg at 401-247-2666 and the Society will contact the player and provide him with a membership form that explains our mission and goals in complete details.

Our goal is to add at least 10 new former players during this, our fourth year. Please help us reach this objective.



(Adaptation of Famous World War II Recruitment Poster)

Postscripts from Reunion 2003

Our special thanks to **Billy "V" Vigeant**, a member of the R. I. Reds Heritage Society's board of directors, for videotaping special segments of our last reunion held at Goddard State Park on July 27. Billy and his camera crew spent the entire day filming and doing interviews that were aired later on public access TV in Rhode Island.

Billy is president of Good Sports & Entertainment, an award winning nationwide sports marketing and media reporting company that has been leading the way in assisting corporate clients and organizations in their marketing since 1992.

You can reach Billy at 401-421-5044 or E-mail www.billyvsports.com.

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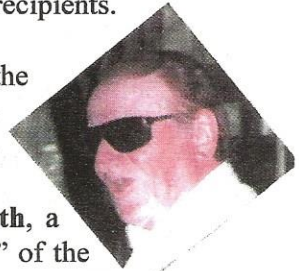
More thanks, too, for public proclamations presented by

Mayor **Stephen Laffey** of Cranston and former State Senator **William Castro** from East Providence that honored the 2003/04 Tops Award winners, **Harvey Bennett** and **Buster Clegg**. They were greatly appreciated by their recipients.

* * * * *

Finally, who is this stranger behind the black mask? "Return with us now to those Thrilling Days of Yesteryear!" Is it The Lone Ranger?

No. It's the great **Bronco Horvath**, a worthy adversary and one-time "killer" of the Reds who was a special guest at the reunion. He made a lot of new friends that afternoon. Hope you'll come back to see us again, Bronco.



"The Chicken Wire"...with "Red Rooster"



Welcome to back to "The Chicken Wire," the column in your *1111 Echoes* newsletter that invites questions and recollections about the old Rhode Island Reds from our members. Please submit your queries or memories and **Red Rooster** will try to fill in some details.

Remember the old chicken wire around the boards at R. I. Auditorium? We hope this column will bring back memories. Fact is, the old **Red Rooster** hates Plexiglas, but is in this 21st century with television and Internet cable "wire" service we have to keep up with the times. So "wire" us.

John "Skip" Danforth, Barrington, RI: I'm a new member and am trying to learn more about the old R. I. Reds. My question: How did your great newsletter get the name "1111 Echoes?"

Red Rooster Recalls: Good question "Skip." New members ask that all the time. Thanks for submitting it to us in writing.

The old R. I. Auditorium, where the Reds played from 1926 through 1972 (46 years in all) was located at 1111 North Main Street in Providence. Hence the "1111." "Echoes" refers to the memories we all recall from watching Sunday night games in the old barn that seated about 5,500. It was a glorious place to watch pro hockey and its finest players.

In, the fall of 1972 the Reds moved into the Providence Civic Center downtown and, unfortunately, the old Auditorium was laid to rest by bulldozers in 1989. Today 1111 is a parking lot for Miriam Hospital. But drive by it about 10 PM some Sunday night. Some say there are still echoes of crowds cheering a Reds goal.



R.I. Auditorium: 1111 North Main Street

Emile Francis (former great goaltender, coach and executive), West Palm Beach, Florida: Dear R. I. Reds Heritage Society: Nice to hear from you and all about your activities. What you are doing is a wonderful idea and you've done a great job in organizing and growing this project. I'm proud to be a member.

Red Rooster Recalls: Emile "The Cat" Francis was a fierce, competitive goaltender who unfortunately for us never wore a Reds uniform. It was more like New Haven, Cincinnati and Cleveland. Boy, did he kill us some nights. But later on, as a leading hockey executive, he was general manager of the New York Rangers and arranged an affiliation with the Reds that brought a number of future NHL stars to the Providence Civic Center. Emile, we're honored to have you as a member.

Eddie Ellsworth (former Reds' business manager), Barrington, RI: Here's one for the book. A fan attended an auction several years ago and observed the name "Art Michaluk" stamped on the shaft of an old hockey stick. Recognizing the name, the fan bought old-time defenseman's stick for \$5.00 bucks. When the fan heard that Art would be at last July's reunion he brought the stick along so Art could autograph it. Upon carefully examining the artifact (circa 1948) Art said, "My name is on it. It's a lefty stick; it's my lie and taped exactly the way I used to tape. It's hard to believe that I haven't had this old piece of lumber in my hands for 55 years!"

Red Rooster Recalls: Eddie, thanks for the great story. That "fan" you refer to is none other than **Arnie Bailey** who, like yourself, is a member of the R. I. Reds Heritage Society's board of directors. Arnie is an avid collector of memorabilia and writes an outstanding, informative weekly column about the sports collectibles in our own *Providence Sunday Journal*. Everyone should read his articles.



Emile Francis

Paul Larivee: In Memorium

The Rhode Island Reds Heritage Society recently lost one of its own, finest players and persons.

Former Reds "Hall of Fame" center and team captain **Paul Larivee** died unexpectedly of a cerebral aneurysm at his home in Bury, Quebec, on Monday, December 8. He was 73.

Paul joined the Reds in 1953 at age 22 and went on to play 10 outstanding seasons in Providence as a creative, playmaking center, scoring 217 goals, 322 assists and 539 points — second highest on the Reds all-time scoring list.

Popular with teammates and fans alike, he centered perhaps the greatest line in team history between wingers **Zellio Toppazzini** and **Camille Henry**. The trio helped lead the Reds to both the regular-season and Calder Cup championships in 1955-56. That season he was voted to the AHL's second All-Star team. The next year he received first team honors while leading the league in goals with 46.

After many years away from this area, Paul returned to Rhode Island last July to attend the R. I. Reds Heritage Society's 3rd annual reunion. There he rejoined old friends and teammates from the '55-56 championship team: **Aldo Guidolin**, **Bob Robertson**, **Ray Ross**, **Bruce Cline**, **Harvey Bennett** and **Ivan Irwin**.

"Paul Larivee was a great hockey player and a wonderful, kind human being," says **George Patrick Duffy**, who was publicist and radio broadcaster for the Reds in the 1950s. "Everyone who knew him will miss his friendship."

Buster Clegg, president of the Heritage Society, vividly remembers his first meeting ever with Paul. "I was the rookie publicist with the team, just out of college." Clegg recalls. "It was training camp in September 1959 and I walked into the

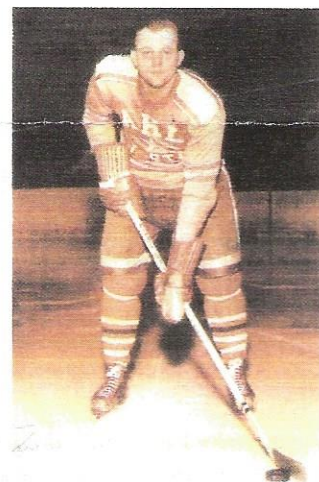
team's locker room, a little tentative about how I would be received by the players."

It was then that **George Army**, the team's trainer, introduced Buster to the team captain. Just off the ice from a conditioning session — exhausted, dripping wet with perspiration and his skates half unlaced — Paul stood up from his locker room seat, extended his hand and said, "Welcome, Buster. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help you get started here."

"That's the way I first met one of my boyhood heroes, Paul Larivee," says Buster. "What a first impression. And it was everlasting. He never, ever changed. Paul was truly a terrific player and, more importantly, a great person."

Larivee leaves his wife of 48 years, **Denise**, two sons, two daughters and 9 grandchildren. After his playing days, Paul served 22 years as analyst on the French-speaking television productions of "Hockey Night in Canada."

In his memory, donations may be made to the **Heart and Stroke Foundation of Quebec**, 1434 Ste. Catherine St. West, Bureau 500, Montreal, Que. H3G 1R4, Canada. Please note Paul Larivee's name with your memorial gift. Reminder: USA postage to Canada is 60 cents (not 37 cents).



Paul Larivee is pictured here in uniform for the 1956-57 AHL All-Star game. He was always "First Team" to his family and friends.

New Business Start



What a great logo!

John Kraunelis, a member of the Society and head hockey coach at Barrington High School, has opened his own insurance agency after 10 years experience at another firm.

The Kraunelis Insurance Agency caters to clients seeking affordable business, home and automobile insurance.

He welcomes visits from old friends, relatives and new prospective clients to his office located at 450 Veterans Memorial Parkway # 8 in East Providence, RI, 02914.

Stop by and visit John for a cup of java, serious insurance talk, and some fun hockey stories. His phone is 401-434-7776; mobile 401-474-1862.

Early Donors Launch Our "Museum Builders Club"

With the Society now declared a federally tax exempt non-profit organization, a number of members have made generous, tax-deductible donations towards building a lasting exhibit in honor of the R. I. Reds at the Heritage Harbor Museum.

First Donors to our "Rooster Booster" giving level are:

Richard Bartlett

Steve Bianchi

Frank Ciccone III

Edward Ellsworth

Levi Greene

Paul Godin

Bob Leduc*

Robert Maguire Jr.

Donald McKenzie

William Peckham

George Ranieri*

Richard Reniere

Robert Spanziano

Jan Spieczny

Russ Taylor

Anthony Vito

**former Reds player*

We thank all of you for your support and generosity!

Society Receives Tax-exempt Status



Now, you can make a donation to the R. I. Reds Heritage Society and benefit from a tax deduction for your gift.

That's because the Society has been approved as a not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization, which means that, by law, donations are now deductible for tax purposes.

The Society earned its tax-exempt status - one of its strategic goals since its founding three years ago - through a carefully regulated application process with the federal Internal Revenue Service. Special thanks are extended to **Santino Martinelli**, a Society member and Providence attorney who engineered the process "pro bono" for our association. Santino's law office can be reached at 401-454-7700.

The tax-exempt designation is especially timely as the Society proceeds with plans to create a permanent exhibit commemorating the 51-year history of the Reds at the new Heritage Harbor Museum that is being established on the Providence waterfront.

A leadership grant of \$15,000 from former team owner **George Sage** has been received to help create the exhibit and serve as a catalyst to secure additional donations. Now, donors who give either funds or artifacts can enjoy the benefits of tax deductions for their charitable acts.

The Society is forming a special exhibits and collections committee to plan and organize the exhibit which will be designed to preserve and illustrate the team's history, its fans and the culture that fostered the Reds through more than a half century as a professional hockey franchise in Rhode Island.

Donors can provide funds to help create the exhibit or to benefit other Society programs and activities, such as its "Tops" Awards and the annual reunion events. In addition, donors can give Reds memorabilia to begin to build the Society's artifacts collection, which will support and enrich the planned museum exhibit. Gifts of memorabilia - items such as old uniforms, sticks, photos, programs, tickets, remnants of the old R.I. Auditorium, etc. - can be deducted for tax purposes at their fair market value as determined by a third-party appraisal.

Donations by check can be made outright, or to honor, memorialize or commemorate an individual - either the donor or someone else of the donor's choice. All donations will be acknowledged and, with the donors' permission, recognized in an appropriate way. Such recognition will include identification within the museum exhibit, through the Society's ongoing newsletter, *1111 Echoes*, or at the organization's annual reunion event.

R. I. Reds Heritage Society

P. O. Box 167

Barrington, RI 02806

(401) 247-2666

e-mail: UNH1959@aol.com

website: www.rireds.org



Although donations of any size are helpful, the Society is establishing five special giving levels to recognize leadership donors to the "**R. I. Reds Museum Builders**" campaign:

- Louis A. R. Pieri Founders Club - gifts of \$5,000 or more
- George M. Sage Sponsors Club - gifts of \$1,000 to \$4,999
- Judge James E. Dooley Donors Club - gifts of \$500 to \$999
- 1111 North Main Street Club - gifts of \$100 to \$499
- Rooster Booster Club - gifts under \$100

In addition, many businesses have corporate matching gift programs. By including the Society in these programs, donors can maximize their own giving and provide additional assistance to the organization and its programs.

Checks should be made out to The R.I. Reds Heritage Society. Questions about charitable donations - including how to give, what kinds of memorabilia are appropriate, etc. - should be directed to the Society's president, **Buster Clegg**, telephone 401-247-2666 or E-mail UNH1959@aol.com.

Museum News Update

The Heritage Harbor Museum, now scheduled for a phased opening to begin in December 2005, will be the first statewide historical repository in Rhode Island and a new model for the museum world. It is a unique consortium of 19 historical and cultural organizations

that will present the state's history in a 250,000 square-foot facility. Preliminary renovation work already has begun at the decommissioned South Street Power Plant that was donated for the project by the Narragansett Electric Company.

The project's architect, Schwartz/Silver TAMS of Boston, is in the process of phase 1 design, working closely with the museum's construction consultant, Gilbane Building Company. The project received a boost when the state's voters approved a \$5-million referendum and the museum organization is in the midst of an ambitious capital campaign for construction and endowment funds. The Heritage Harbor Museum is a New England affiliate of the renowned Smithsonian Institution.



Next Issue

The next issue of *1111 Echoes* will come out in late April or early May 2004. It will include more "Backchecking and Forechecking" profiles, a pictorial account of the "Lunch & Crunch" event, the conclusion of the fabulous 1951-52 season saga, and, of course, more "Chicken Wire" clucks from our readers.