



1111 Echoes

Fall 2003

A newsletter from the R. I. Reds Heritage Society

Membership Renewal Time for 2003-04

This issue of *1111 Echoes* concludes the R. I. Reds Heritage Society's third year in existence. As one of our 412 members, it is time for you to renew for the 2003-2004 hockey season.

Annual dues remain at only \$20 (USA). With your renewal you will continue to receive three, full-color newsletters over the next year and an invitation to attend our fourth annual reunion.

Please don't let your membership lapse. You can renew easily by completing and mailing in the enclosed membership form.



4th Reunion set for next July 25, 2004

- Same place: Goddard State Park, Warwick, RI
- Same time: 12 noon 'till dusk
- Even more players expected
- Added memorabilia to be displayed
- Close to 300 persons projected



What's Inside?

Pages 2, 3, 5 and 6: More reunion news and photos

Page 4: Forechecking and Backchecking
The "Chicken Wire"

Page 6: Society now tax-exempt
"Topper" Ornament

It was a Sparkling 3rd Annual Reunion

More stars than ever before came out on Sunday, July 27. Not celestial stars. Hockey stars. Thirty-one ex-Reds and other pro players showed up at the R. I. Reds Heritage Society's third annual reunion at Goddard State Park in Warwick that day.

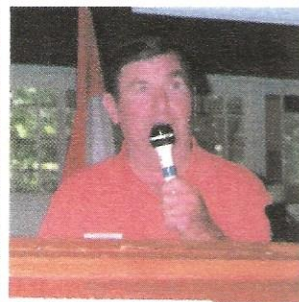
Players from the 1940s, '50s, '60s and '70s made their ways from all over the USA and Canada to join the largest turnout ever — 280 in all — for what has become the "event of the year" for the Society and its 400-plus members.

The weather was warm in the mid-80 degrees, the sun shown brightly, and everyone enjoyed the occasional refreshing cool breeze that drifted in over Greenwich Bay, just off the shores of the park.



National anthems belted out by the great Rene Rancourt.

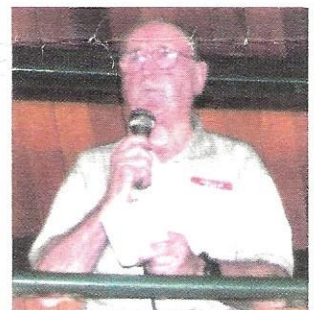
Leading off the program were heart-rendering versions of the Canadian and American national anthems, delivered in his own dramatic, animated fashion by none other than Rene Rancourt. Of course, he is famous in New England for singing "Oh, Canada" and "The Star Spangled Banner" for the Boston Bruins since 1976. "It brought a lump to my throat" said one ex-Reds player, once noted for this hard-nosed play.



Harvey Bennett receiving his 2003/04 "Tops Award."

The program proceeded smoothly with the on-stage introduction of ex-Reds players (see team picture on page 2) and presentation of the "Tops Awards" for 2003-04 to Harvey Bennett, the great former Reds goaltender, and to Buster Clegg, ex-team publicist and general manager. The awards are given annually for service to the Reds and the boarder community in memory of Zellio Toppazzini, Reds all-time leading scorer and "Player of the Century."

It would not have been a Society Reunion without George Patrick Duffy, former Reds broadcaster, climbing the ladder to the carousel's balcony to provide a "press box" account of a mock game. This year he brought the audience back to the 1948-49 seven-game Calder Cup victory over the Hershey Bears. As usual, the 82-year-old Duffy received rousing applause from his attentive audience.



"Press Box" game recreation by George Patrick Duffy.

Fine barbecued food, music from the 1950s and 1960s, a raffle of nearly 40 donated gifts, renewed friendships among players and fans, old stories (may exaggerated) and laughter filled the afternoon festival.

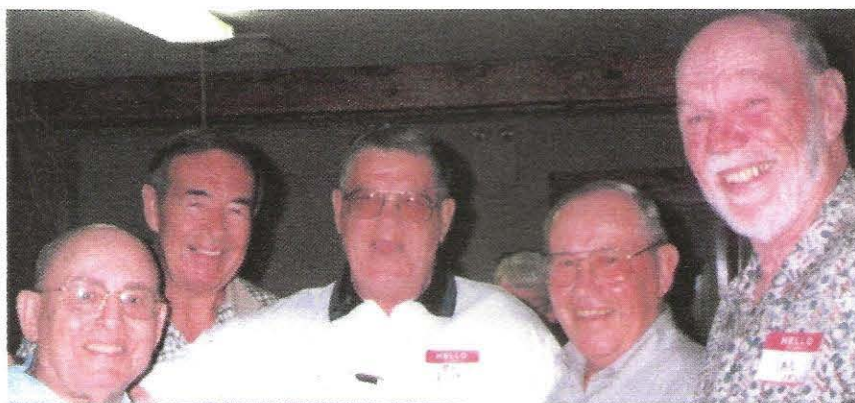
"This was the best reunion yet," praised Ray Ross, former Reds forward who has made all three reunion events. "See you next year," bubbled Billy Warwick, a forward from the 1940s, who plans to bring his wife along too from Edmonton,

continued on page 6

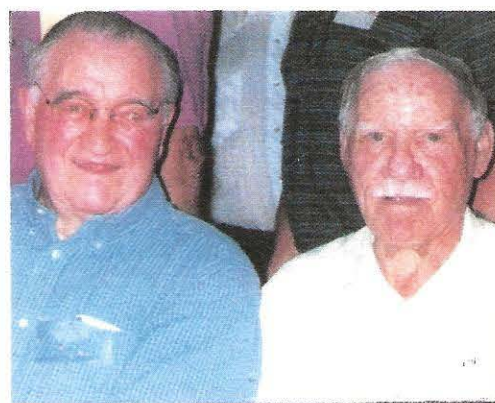
A "STAR STUDDED" 3rd Annual Reunion



"Team Reds" 2003: Very front, Tom McDonough, sick boy and MC. Row 1 (from left): Ferny Flaman, Paul Larivee, Ivan Irwin, Bob Robertson, Gil Mayer, Bo Elik, Chuck Scherza and Billy Warwick. Row 2: Nick Polano, Harvey Bennett, Ray Clearwater, Bobby Leduc, Andre Peloffy, Stan Baluik, Serge Boudreault, Ray Ross, Bruce Cline, Buzz Deschamps, Ross Brooks, Aldo Guidolin, Al Bentley, Don McKenney, Wayne Muloin and Art Michaluk.



The gang's all here: (l-r) Eddie Ellsworth, Ray Ross, Bo Elik, Bruce Cline and Ivan Irwin



56 years later: Teammates in the mid-1940s and still fast friends, Chuck Scherza (left) and Billy Warwick, in from Alberta.



Still champions: Members of the Reds 1948-49 Calder Cup title team, Chuck Scherza, Harvey Bennett and Art Michaluk (seated).



All smiles: Bill Castro (left) with Kelly McAvoy and his mom, Doreen, who flew in from Alberta.



A "Topper Tribute": Patti (Toppazzini) Butler (left) and her mom, Shirley, sport a dramatic photo of Zellio that was recently restored by the Society.

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 you can be featured in a future newsletter.

Backchecking

George “Dusty” Blair was a standout left-winger for the Reds during the team’s mid-50s glory years. A fine playmaker and penalty killer, too, Dusty was as major factor in the Reds finishing first and winning their last ever Calder Cup in 1955-56. The following season he helped the team to another first-place finish. Dusty finished out his 13-year pro career with Calgary of Western League and Sault Saint Marie in the Eastern Pro League.



Forechecking

Dusty and his wife Lilian will be married 53 years this December. They have a married daughter Terri and a granddaughter Sarah who will tie the knot next July. After hockey Dusty worked 28 years for Fleet Aerospace in his hometown of Fort Erie, Ontario. The company makes parts for commercial airliners and sonar equipment. Dusty’s interests are daily library visits and reading Westerns. *Hop on your horse and visit us soon, Dusty!*

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Matt Ravlich spent three seasons with the Reds in the early 1960s. They were outstanding years for the slick-skating defenseman who helped the team to three straight visits to the Calder Cup playoffs. In 1964-65 he began an 8-season tour of duty in the National Hockey League, starring for the Chicago Blackhawks for 5 years and three more with Detroit, Los Angeles and Boston. He later coached the Boston Braves of the AHL.



Today Matt is a real estate broker and manager of sales at the Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort in Hancock, MA. He and his wife Geri have been married for 19 years. Matt has one child by a first marriage and he and Geri have another. The couple definitely enjoys visits from their three grandchildren. Matt’s hobbies are golf, reading and roller lading. *Still got that smooth skating style, Matt?*



“The Chicken Wire”...with “Red Rooster”

Welcome back to “The Chicken Wire,” a new 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.

Ray Ross (former Reds player), Hamilton, Ontario: Just wanted to thank everyone for a wonderful time at the 3rd annual reunion. More players than ever showed up, the hotel accommodations were excellent, and, of course the weather cooperated. My son, two friends and I had a great time. It was the best yet of all three I’ve attended. The Heritage Society’s staff did a great job again in organizing the event. I’ll try to get “Dusty” Blair to attend with me next year, since I do not live far from his residence.

Red Rooster Recalls: Ray, thanks for your kind words. The Society was thrilled having you, your family and friends attend our 2003 “Reunion Weekend.” We look forward to seeing you

and, hopefully Dusty, at next year’s event, July 25, 2004. Incidentally, Ray was honored at the AHL’s Calder Cup finals in Hamilton, Ontario, his hometown, by being selected to drop the first puck in the first game of the series.

Billy Warwick (former Reds player), Edmonton, Alberta: (His message came by phone and is paraphrased) Thanks to the R. I. Reds Heritage Society for presenting a wonderful weekend for all of us — players and fans alike. Greeting old teammates and friends was a tremendous experience. When I think back that I was able to renew some old friendships, it almost brings tears to my eyes. I never imagined your reunion could be so great. In fact, I’m hoping to bring my wife Jacqueline to next year’s event.

Red Rooster Recalls: Billy, everyone enjoyed sharing time and memories with you at “Reunion Weekend 2003.” You certainly proved you are a supporter of the Society and are never short of great, old hockey stories and nostalgia.

Billy and our own Chuck Scherza have been close friends since they were youngsters in the N. Y. Rangers’ system in the early 1940s. He also played on the same line with his brothers Grant and Dickie on the famous Penticton Vs that won both the Allan Cup and World Championships in Russia in 1955. The late George McAvoy, who played for the Reds in 1955-56, was part of that team.

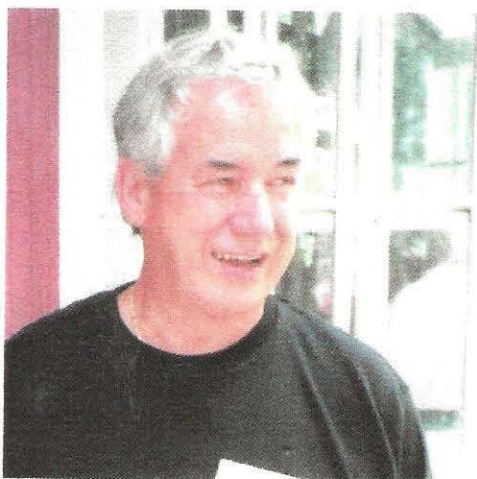
More Reunion stars, more fun!



Buzz Deschamps (Long Island) enjoying the party.



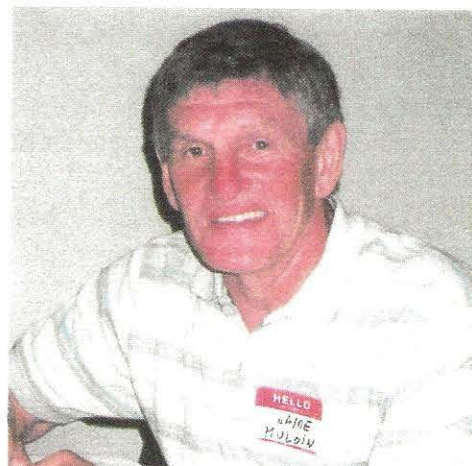
Stunning Couple: North Carolina's Andre Peloffy and his wife, Debbie.



Serge Boudreult (Rhode Island), still plays "Over 60 hockey."



Third time reunion guy: Bob Robertson (Ontario) enjoys an old Reds story.



In great shape: Wayne Muloin (Ohio) looks like he could don the blades tomorrow.



2003/04 "Tops Award" winner Buster Clegg accepts his honor with Shirley Toppazzini looking on.



Oldies and goodies: Classic Reds' uniforms from the 1940s through 1970s were on display.

“Old Roosters and their Chicks”



Stan Baluik and Marg
(Rhode Island)



Bruce Cline and Elyse
(Quebec)



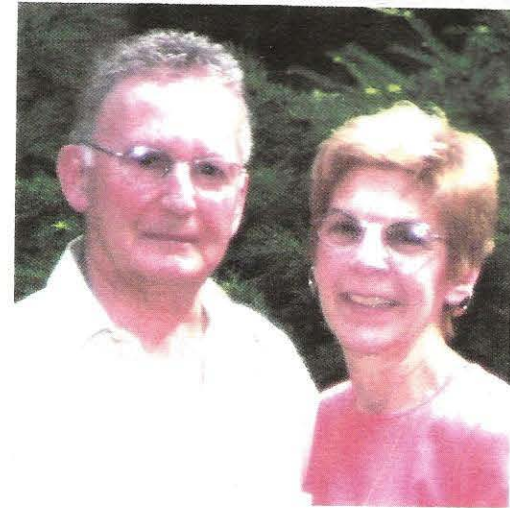
Bo and Jacky Elik
(Ontario)



Aldo and Phyllis Guidolin
(Ontario)



Paul and Denise Larivee
(Quebec)



Gil and Marielle Mayer
(Rhode Island)



Don and Margie McKenney
(Massachusetts)



Art and Jo Michaluk
(Manitoba)



Nick and Elva Polano
(Michigan)

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.

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.

More complete information will be published in our *1111 Echoes Winter 2003-04* edition.

Reunion *(continued from front page)*

Alberta, next year.

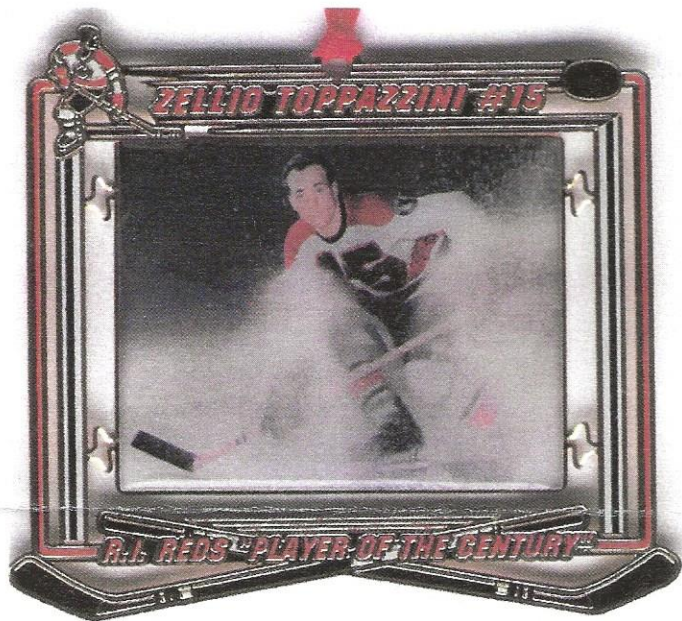
Traveling in afar from Canada were Warwick and the late George McAvoy's family (Alberta); Art Michaluk (Manitoba); Bo Elik, Aldo Guidolin, Ivan Irwin, Bob Robertson and Ross (Ontario); Bruce Cline and Paul Larivee (Quebec).

From distant points in the USA were Wayne Muloin (Ohio), Andre Peloffy (North Carolina) and Nick Polano (Michigan). Closer to home included Ray Clearwater (Connecticut), Buzzy Deschamps (New York); and Ferny Flaman and Don McKenney (nearby Massachusetts).

Local Rhode Island ex-Reds in attendance were Stan Baluik, Harvey Bennett, Al Bentley, Serge Boudreault, Ross Brooks, Mart Gateman, Bobby Leduc, Gil Mayer and Chuck Scherza. The family of the late Zellio Toppazzini was there as well.

Other ex-pro players present were Tim Army (Maine) and Bronco Horvath (Massachusetts), plus Rhode Island residents Bill Bennett, Jim Bennett, Harvey Bennett, Jr., and Rich Pumple.

Former Reds owners Louis A. Pieri and George Sage and Gordon Anziano, a consultant to the American Hockey League, also took part in the reunion celebration.



Shown Actual Size

The "Topper" Ornament: A perfect Holiday gift for only \$12

The R. I. Reds Heritage Society is proud to present its third annual commemorative ornament, a full-color portrait of Zellio Toppazzini, the Reds all-time leading scorer who is acknowledged by the Society as the greatest player in the team's history.

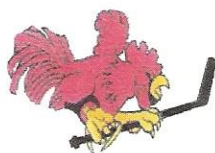
Perfect for trimming your holiday tree, the Reds newest collectible is framed within a delicately etched brass border, finished in sparkling 24kt gold and silk-screened with the inscription: *Zellio Toppazzini, #15, R. I. Reds "Player of the Century."* The reverse side is etched with Topper's lifetime scoring statistics. The ornament is a limited edition.

This priceless piece is handsomely ribboned in red and gift-boxed in gold, and includes a handy stand that allows you to display and enjoy your ornament on a desk or tabletop year-round.

To order yours, simply complete the enclosed form and mail with check or money order. Orders must be received by December 1, 2003 to ensure holiday delivery.

Next Issue

The next issue of *1111 Echoes* will come out in late December or early January. It will include more "Backchecking and Forechecking" profiles, a look at the fantastic Reds "underdog drive" to the Calder Cup finals in 1951-52 and, of course, more "Chicken Wire" clucks from our readers. We'll also review some of the specific benefits of our new federal tax-exemption and how it pleasantly affects donors to our museum exhibit.



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