



# 1111 Echoes

Fall 2004

A newsletter from the R. I. Reds Heritage Society

## It's Membership Renewal Time for 2004-05

This issue of *1111 Echoes* concludes the R.I. Reds Heritage Society's fourth year in existence. As one of our 515 members, it is time for you to renew for the 2004-2005 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 invitations to attend our 5<sup>th</sup> annual reunion and 2<sup>nd</sup> "Lunch & Crunch" event.

Please don't let your membership lapse. You can renew easily by completing and mailing in the enclosed membership form. Upon your renewal you will receive your new membership card. This year's card will give you the password to the exclusive "Box Seats" section of our new internet website: [www.rireds.org](http://www.rireds.org)

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## 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion Set for next July 31, 2005

- 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 guests projected

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## What's Inside?

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## Milt Schmidt Becomes 500th Member at 4th Annual Reunion

A record gathering of 285 provided a long and very loud standing ovation as the legendary Milt Schmidt was introduced to receive the Rhode Island Reds Heritage Society's 500<sup>th</sup> membership award at the organization's 4<sup>th</sup> annual event at Goddard State Park in Warwick on Sunday, July 25.

"I've been to hundreds of functions but never saw or heard a welcome like that given to Milt," said George Patrick Duffy, former radio voice of the Reds. "It raised goose bumps on a lot of people." The applause was clocked at nearly one minute, 40 seconds.

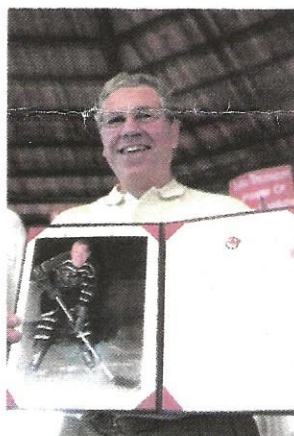
Schmidt, now 86, had a splendid NHL career with the Boston Bruins after playing his first pro games with the Reds — at age 18 — back in 1936. His 16 remarkable seasons that followed as a Boston Bruins' standout center earned him a place in the Hockey Hall of Fame in 1961.



Milt Schmidt accepts his membership plaque #500.

### Other highlights of the reunion:

- Thirty ex-Reds paraded onto the guest stage, backed by organ music playing "Roll out the Barrel," the song that always accompanied the team's entrance onto the ice the old R. I. Auditorium. To that tune the 285 attending sang the words and clapped their hands in honor of the old Reds.
- Rene Rancourt, singing voice of the Boston Bruins, rendered the American and Canadian national anthems, donned in a replica Reds' jersey provided by Ross Brooks.
  - Duffy did his traditional, brilliant mock play-by-play game recreation in which Bob Robertson scored the winning goal in overtime. "This is the first time ever that I've scored the winner in OT," he chuckled in his post game interview.
  - The Honorable Donald L. Carcieri was presented a certificate marking Rhode Island's Governor as our 501<sup>st</sup> member. A really good sport, he laughed heartily when viewing his face superimposed on the torso of an old photo of Chuck Scherza.
  - As usual, the food and music were great, the day's weather was perfect, and the camaraderie between players and fans super. A raffle consisting of 40 excellent donated gifts culminated the afternoon.
  - New Jersey Devils 2003 Stanley Cup hats were given to each guest, courtesy of Devils GM Lou Lamoriello. Thank you again. Lou.



Governor Carcieri sports membership #501. Note the Gov's photo on his certificate.

Pictures are worth a thousand words, as you'll see throughout this newsletter.



## Heroes of Our 4th Annual Reunion



**R.I. Reds "Team 2004"** - *From left, front row:* Milt Schmidt, Ferny Flaman, Bob Robertson, Serge Boudreault, Ray Clearwater, Buzz Deschamps (foreground), Gil Mayer, Ray Ross and George Ranieri. *Back row:* Harvey Bennett, Billy Warwick, Chuck Scherza, Don McKenney, Wayne Muloin, Ross Brooks, Al Bentley, Rick Middleton and Marty Gateman.

## Duffy's "Field of Dreams" Comes True

Mayor James Doyle and the City of Pawtucket paid tribute to local sports personality George Patrick Duffy on May 15 by naming the fields at Slater Park in honor of the 83-year-old legend, who is also a founding director of the R. I. Reds Heritage Society.

That Saturday afternoon was a glorious day, saluting one of our "Greatest Generation" figures. George was a star athlete in high school back in the late 1930s early '40s, a World War II Coast Guard veteran of distinction, a public relations executive serving many roles in sports and entertainment, and most importantly, a coach and personal mentor for thousands of young kids throughout his many years of dedication to youth sports. Many of his hours of service were at the Slater Park athletic fields.

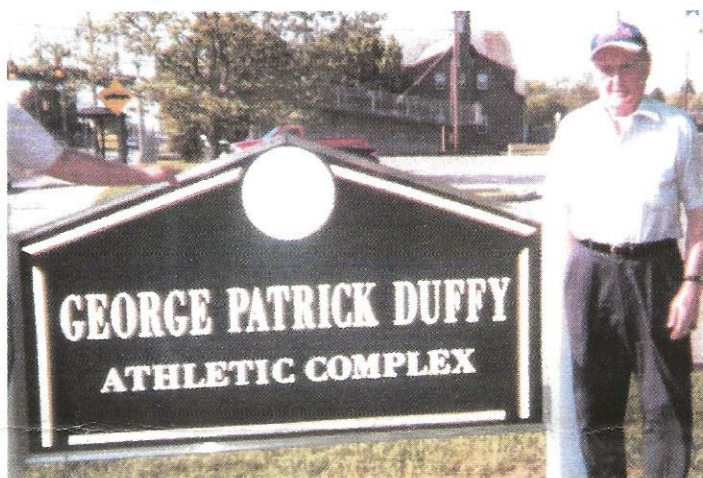
The sun shown brightly and the weather was perfect at the complex that day as George accepted his well-deserved tribute. The gathering included hundreds of his many friends, former players and family members. Helen, his wife of 60 years, led their family of five children, 14 grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Mr. Duffy's achievements are too numerous to state in the small space we have here in *1111 Echoes*. But it must be noted that, as an octogenarian, George continues his coaching of kids, not to mention driving team buses to practices and games. "If the kids really knew my age, they'd probably jump out the emergency exit," he mocks of himself.

Yet, like an Energizer Battery, Mr. Duffy "keeps going ...and going...and going." During 50 plus years of coaching, his teams have won well over 750 games and many titles. Just this past August, Duffy led his group of 13-15 year old baseball players to a third-place finish in international competition in Detroit. "That means our guys ended third best in the world," he says proudly of his 15 players.

George, of course, spent much of his working career as the PR director and radio voice of the old R. I. Reds during their heydays in the late 1940s and '50s. His radio sign-off is still remembered: "You can keep the sports parade moving, by being a good sport!"

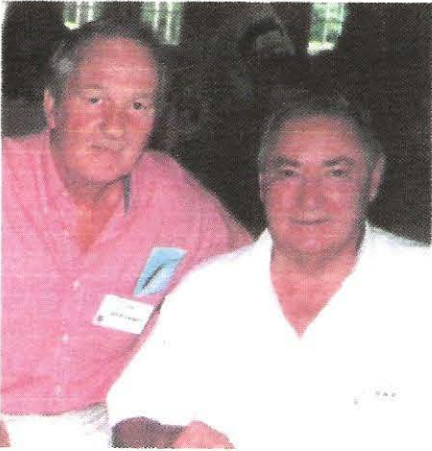
Mr. Duffy, by example, you best personify that adage.



**A sign of the times:** The George Patrick Duffy Athletic Complex



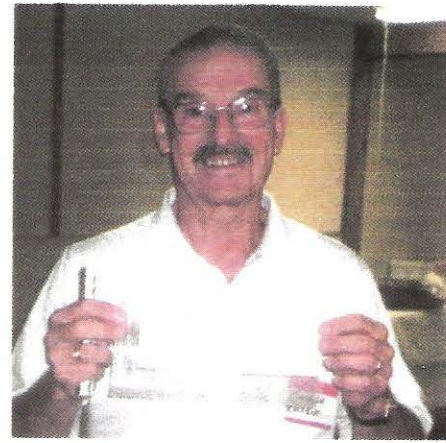
## More Stars of 2004



**Old Bruins' buddies:** Don McKenney (left) with Ferny Flaman



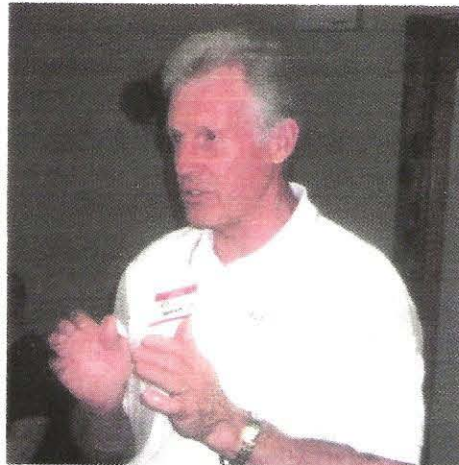
**Pals since the 1940s:** Chuck Scherza and Billy Warwick



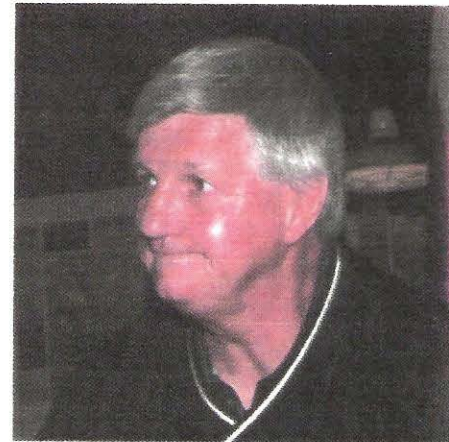
**George Ranieri** sports a copy of a check for \$2,500 paid by the Reds to the Boston Bruins in 1959 to obtain his contract



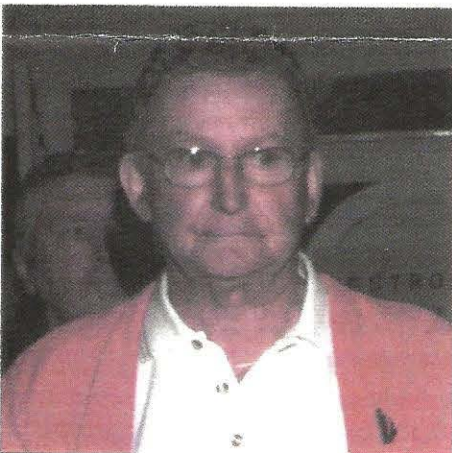
The late Zellio Toppazzini's family was well represented by wife Shirley (right) and daughter Patricia Butler. Missing from photo was Kathe Toppazzini, who also enteded



**Ray Clearwater** explains the fundamentals of hockey. "First you have to have a puck. For newcomers to the game, a puck looks something like a Big Mac!"



**Buzz Deschamps**, looking somewhat like a digusted George Steinbrenner after a Yankee defeat



Always keeping his eyes glued for a flying puck, Gil Mayer



From the 1960s: From left, teammates Serge Boudreault, Stan Baluik and Ray Ross



# 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

Yves Locas was a high-scoring, left-handed shooting right wing throughout his 12 seasons in pro hockey. During his career he played for Hull-Ottawa (EPHL), San Francisco and Spokane (WHL) and in the AHL with Hershey, Pittsburgh and Springfield, before coming to the Reds. He scored career high 40 goals with Pittsburgh in '63-64 and in his first year of two with the Reds, 1968-69, he netted 30.



**Andre Peloffy**, known to his teammates as “Pelo,” played his first two pro hockey games with the Reds in 1971-72, and for the next two years was one of the team’s most effective centers and fan favorites. In '73-74 he was among the team’s top scorers, centering the great right-winger, Rick Middleton. From here he went to Richmond and then on to Springfield, winning the AHL scoring title in '76-77 with 42 goals, 57 assists and 99 points.



## Forechecking

Yves and his wife, Pierrette, have been married 44 years and live in St. Jerome, Quebec. They have two children — a son, age 43, and daughter, 40. The Locas also enjoy four grandchildren, two boys and two girls. After leaving hockey in 1970, Yves was a sales rep for Labatt Breweries for 25 years, retiring in 1994 at age 55. His hobbies: Golf and hockey (with the Quebec Hockey Federation). Yves, we should all work for Labatt!

In Providence, Andre met his future wife, Debbie, a Rhode Island native. They have been married 27 years and have two grown daughters, ages 25 and 23. After the AHL, he played 10 years in Europe and coached another 11 years in France and Switzerland. Retiring from hockey in 2002, Andre now resides in Morehead City, NC, where he owns a busy landscaping business. Hobbies: Golf, skiing and water sports. *No more ice sports?*

## “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 21<sup>st</sup> century with satellite television and Internet cable “wire” service we have to keep up with the times. So “wire” us.

**Don Mellor (former Boston Olympics, EHL, player), Cranston, RI:** Dear folks...Just a note to tell you what a great day my son Tom and I had at the 4<sup>th</sup> annual reunion. It’s nice to know there are people like you that are keeping these memories alive. The R. I. Reds and “1111” were a big part of our lives. Tom always said the Reds player were his heroes — and still are. Going to a Reds game was like going to a hockey school for a young boy. They were “Real Pros.”

**Red Rooster Recalls:** Don, in your own right you, too, were a “Real Pro.” And, of course, we can’t forget your son Tom, who had a magnificent high school, college and pro career of his own with the NHL Detroit Red Wings. I guess we all learned a lot from the hockey lessons taught to us by watching the old R. I. Reds.

**Anthony Featherstone, Princeville, Ontario:** Dear Red Rooster... I regret to inform you that I, Anthony Colin Featherstone, am not the Tony Featherstone you are seeking. I am a 51-year-old dairy farmer who immigrated to Canada from England in 1966. I have never played hockey, nor do I even know much about it. I am sorry that I cannot be of assistance to you. Good luck with your search.

**Red Rooster Responds:** Oooops! Once again egg splashes on the old Red Rooster’s beak. Is there anyone out there who knows how I can reach the real Tony Featherstone? Please advise and include a wipe-off.

**Emile Francis (former NHL GM and coach), West Palm Beach, FL:** Hi, Folks. Thanks very much (for the reunion invitation), but I will be in Saskatoon, Sask., June 26 through Sept. 10. Good luck, Emile.

**Red Rooster:** Thanks for the kind note, Emile. West Palm Beach to Saskatoon? Better you were in snowman’s land than face Hurricanes Charlie and Frances.

**Milt Schmidt (Hockey Hall of Famer, former Reds player and our 500<sup>th</sup> member), Westwood, MA:** Dear folks, Needless to say I had a great time on July 25<sup>th</sup> thanks to you and your friends. Plus, it was great to see many former players whom I haven’t seen for years. Thanks again and above all...good health!

**Red Rooster:** Milt, thank you for being such a gracious guest. We hope to see you again next year!



## Fun, Friendship and Fantasy



**He scorrerrrrres!** George Patrick Duffy doing his traditional mock radio broadcast. This year's hero was defenseman Bob Robertson, who won the game for the Reds with an overtime goal from the point.



**Bob Robertson**, towed down after is game winner, is interviewed in a post-game session with MC Tom McDonough. "I think that's my biggest goal ever," Robbie says. "Though I did net a few in practices...on my own goalie!"



**Just like old times:** Rick Middleton pictured with Lisa DiRaimo, whose dad once owned the Players Corner Pub in Providence, a favorite restaurant and watering hole for the Reds in the 1970s.

**Wayne Muloin** models his hat given to each player who attended the reunion. The hat bears the official logo of the R. I. Reds Heritage Society.



### In Memoriam

Jacqueline (Jacky) Elik, wife of Bo Elik for 53 years, died suddenly of a heart attack at the couple's home in Oshawa, Ontario, the morning of August 11. Jacky, who had just turned 75, is remembered as having a warm, bubbly and friendly personality. She leaves her husband, four children and eight grandchildren.

Donations in her memory may be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario, Donations Department, P.O. Box 7008 Station Main, London, Ontario, N5Y 5W7, Canada. The Society mourns her departure and sends its sincere sympathies to Bo and his entire family.

## The Auditorium Scoreboard and Clock: "Onnnnnne...Minute!" A great Holiday gift for only \$12

The R. I. Reds Heritage Society is proud to present its fourth annual commemorative ornament, a full-color, 3-dimensional replica of the old R. I. Auditorium scoreboard and clock. Accurate in every detail, the Society's newest collectible is delicately etched in brass, finished in sparkling 24kt gold and silk-screened in colors faithful to the original.

Perfect for trimming your holiday tree, this priceless piece is handsomely decorated with red ribbon and gift-boxed in black with white insert. It also includes a handy stand that allows you to display and enjoy your ornament on a desk or tabletop year-round. Cost is only \$12 per ornament, plus \$3 for shipping and handling and \$1 for each additional piece.

The Bulova game clock was introduced at the old Auditorium in 1945. Centerpiece for all sports events for 28 years, it clicked away its final seconds at the Reds' last game played there on April 11, 1972. This newest collectible ornament's inscription on the reverse side reads:

R. I. AUDITORIUM CLOCK AND SCOREBOARD  
1945-1972

ALWAYS ENHANCED BY JACK CLEARY'S  
PA ALERT, "ONNNNNE...MINUTE!"

R. I. REDS HERITAGE SOCIETY  
4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL COMMEMORATIVE

2004-05

LIMITED EDITION OF 250

To order yours, simply complete the enclosed form and mail with check or money order. To ensure holiday delivery, orders must be received by December 1, 2004.



Shown Actual Size



## 2004/05 Tops Award Winners Honored at Reunion



George Sage

George Sage, Tom Army and the late Louis A. R. Pieri were honored as recipients of the R.I. Reds Heritage Society's "Tops Awards" for 2004-05 at the organization's 4<sup>th</sup> annual reunion on July 25. The non-profit historical society also presented a group award to the 48 persons (35 players and 13 builders) elected to the original Reds "Hall of Fame" from 1963 through 1973.

Four years ago the society established and dedicated the awards in honor of the late Zellio Toppazzini, the Reds all-time leading scorer and "Player of the Century." The awards have been made annually by the society to recognize persons who have contributed outstanding service to the Rhode Island Reds hockey club and to the larger community.

Sage, a resident of Barrington, was owner of the Reds from 1969 through 1976. At the same time, as president of Bonanza Bus Lines, he was a powerful force in the development of downtown Providence by supporting the construction of the Providence Civic Center. In doing so he committed the Reds to move from the old, deteriorating R.I. Auditorium, built in 1926, to the sparkling, brand new facility in 1972.

Aside from hockey, Sage is well known for his many philanthropic contributions to the community, including a leadership role in creating a performing arts facility at St. Andrews School in his hometown. He is also a major contributor to the Heritage Harbor Museum planned for Providence, where he supports the R.I. Reds Heritage Society's effort to build a lasting exhibit to restore and preserve the team's 51-year history (1926-1977).

Army joined the Reds' publicity office in the mid-1950s, after starring as a high-scoring forward at Providence College where he captained the team in 1952-53. He served the Reds in several front office public relations capacities, including color analyst for the team's radio broadcasts, backing up the legendary play-by-play announcer George Patrick Duffy.



Tom Army

Army has been deeply dedicated to youth hockey for more than three decades as a coach, officer and board director. He also was one of the driving forces behind the establishment of

the R.I. Reds Heritage Society four years ago and now serves as its founding vice president. The group has grown to 515 members from throughout the United States and Canada. Army lives in East Providence.

The posthumous selection of Pieri and, as a group entity, the 48 members of the original R.I. Reds Hall of Fame, are further steps by the R.I. Reds Heritage Society to revive the history of the team. "Part of our mission is to educate and restore the history of the old R. I. Reds," explains Buster Clegg, president of the society. "These individuals were major contributors to the wonderful 51-year legacy of our team, and they all deserve this honored recognition." A complete list of the Reds' "Hall of Famers" is on the Society's website:

[www.rireds.com](http://www.rireds.com)

Pieri, of course, was the dynamic, colorful owner of the Reds from the late 1930s until his death in 1967. A graduate of Brown University, he was a high school teacher who turned his interests to entrepreneurial endeavors in the 1930s. Pieri first started as general manager of the old R.I. Auditorium and worked hard to eventually become owner of both the building and the Reds. During his tenure the Reds won four Calder Cups and he was lauded not only by his fellow owners, but also by his players, with whom he built many lifelong friendships.

Pieri was also a silent, but generous contributor to the community. He was an interested supporter of local youth, high school and college hockey. He also gave generously to Dean College in Franklin, MA, from which he graduated when it was a junior college in 1916. His financial donations to Dean are recognized to this day by having his name attached to one of the college's major athletic complexes, the Louis A. R. Pieri Gymnasium. His son Lou and daughter Lucille Martin graciously accepted Pieri's "Tops Award."



Lou Pieri and Lucille Pieri Martin



Reds "Hall of Famers"

### R. I. Reds Heritage Society

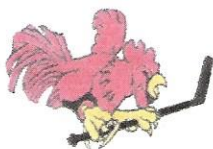
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### Next Issue

The next issue of *1111 Echoes*, Winter 2004/05, is scheduled for late January or early February. It will include more "Chicken Wire" questions and answers, "Backchecking" and "Forechecking" updates, news on our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual "Lunch & Crunch," and a picture quiz called "Who the heck is this guy, anyway?"