



1111 ECHOES

NEWSLETTER OF THE RHODE ISLAND REDS HERITAGE SOCIETY

FALL 2020

Save the Dates!

20th Reunion Rescheduled to Aug. 26-28, 2021

By Vin Cimini
Heritage Society Board of Directors

Until this year, our Septembers had been filled with memories of our annual August reunions. Of course, the exciting and refreshing changes planned for our 20th Reunion this past August were unavoidably postponed this year. Fortunately, there's next year.

Plan now to join us next Aug 26-28 in the air-conditioned comfort of the grand **Twin River Casino & Event Center** in Lincoln, RI. The new location offers a number of fun diversions, includ-

ing slots, table games, free live entertainment, and adult beverages.

We've also moved our Reunion headquarters to the brand new **Hampton Inn & Suites** location just a few minutes away. Our annual "Meet & Greet" will be held there Thursday evening.

Replacing our annual awards dinner will be an invitation to gather on Friday at the Casino Event Center with the many lo-



Buster Clegg

cal and national hockey notables who will be attending the **RI Hockey Hall of Fame's Annual Enshrinement Celebration & Dinner**. It's Rhode Island's major hockey event of the year.

The highlight of that event will also be your opportunity to pay tribute to our own **Buster Clegg**, who will be honored by the Hall of Fame for "Lifetime Achievement and Contributions to the Game of Hockey."

Please mark your calendar now to be with us to re-acquaint, reminisce, and pay tribute to Buster with your presence. We promise a rollicking good time.

A Special Message from Shirley Toppazzini

To our RI Reds Heritage Society Family:

This has been a year of great challenges for all of us and I sincerely hope that you and yours are doing well and staying safe.

As difficult as the year has been, the postponement of our Annual Reds Reunion with all of the exciting new changes that were planned was one of my biggest disappointments. Hopefully, this health crisis will be behind us next year and we can resume acquaintances and enjoy each other's company as we reminisce about happier times.

Meanwhile, please remember that we

are the caretakers of the Reds history. We owe it to ourselves and to future generations to keep those wonderful and meaningful memories alive. I ask you to please stay involved and continue your support of the Heritage Society and all of the good work it does for our community.

Please **RENEW** your Reds Heritage Society membership today using the enclosed form. Please also remember that, if you have not already provided it, **WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS** to send you future newsletters and communications.

Finally, please stay well and stay safe. I miss you all.



Shirley Toppazzini,
the First Lady of the
Rhode Island Reds
Heritage Society.

Reds Reunion Memories

By Donna Buck and John Finley
Heritage Society Members

In 2007, we spotted a Toronto newspaper ad inviting fans to join the “Bower Bus” to Providence, RI for a Reds’ reunion. John went for the hockey. I went for the adventure. My brother-in-law, Dave Creighton, was a former player-coach and GM with the Reds. My sister-in-law, Iris, had always shared fond memories of living in Slatersville.

This trip would become the first of many to Providence, first by bus, then a flight to Boston with a train to Warwick, and in the last few years, a direct flight from Toronto to T.F. Green Airport. Although lengthy, the bus rides were a lot of fun with many players and fans to get to know. It was always special to have a “Welcome Committee” to meet the bus as we pulled into the Hampton Inn.

The Meet & Greet on Friday evenings were most enjoyable. I have great memories of chatting and sharing laughs with Jeanne Flaman, Pierrette Locas, Yolande Paille, Marge Muloin and so many others. Saturday afternoons offered some free time and one time a group of us talked Dick Bartlett into taking us, in the limo, to Foxwood in Connecticut. What fun we had! There was always time, as well, for shopping. The Saturday night dinners and dances were entertaining with great food and music from the 60’s. The Mayers were always the best dancers! Sundays, in the park, included more time to socialize and enjoy a tasty barbeque



John Finley and Donna Buck have been attending the annual Reds reunion weekends for more than a decade.

while participating in raffles and auctions.

While Donna was enjoying the social life of these weekends, I began thirteen years of accumulating a treasure load of wonderful Reds’ history. Milt Schmidt, Chuck Scherza, Ferny Flaman, Gil Mayer, Bones Raleigh, Jerry Toppazzini, and so many others signed special pre-selected photos. These autographs were beautiful and often included personal anecdotes. In the 2019 reunion, I added Boston Bruins’ Rick Middleton and Noel Acciari to my collection.

My passion for autographs resulted in further acts of kindness. The McKenneys sent me a signed Christmas card sharing their memories of Toronto and the 1964 Leafs Stanley Cup. Bruce Cline treated me to a special Reds’ game program. Bob Robertson, Ray Ross, and Aldo Guidolin signed a beautiful 1955-56 championship tribute card. Johnny Bower gifted me an autographed J. B. vintage wine bottle. The fan gift of Reds’ hockey cards was ever so thoughtful. These items are all now in my personal hockey hall of fame.

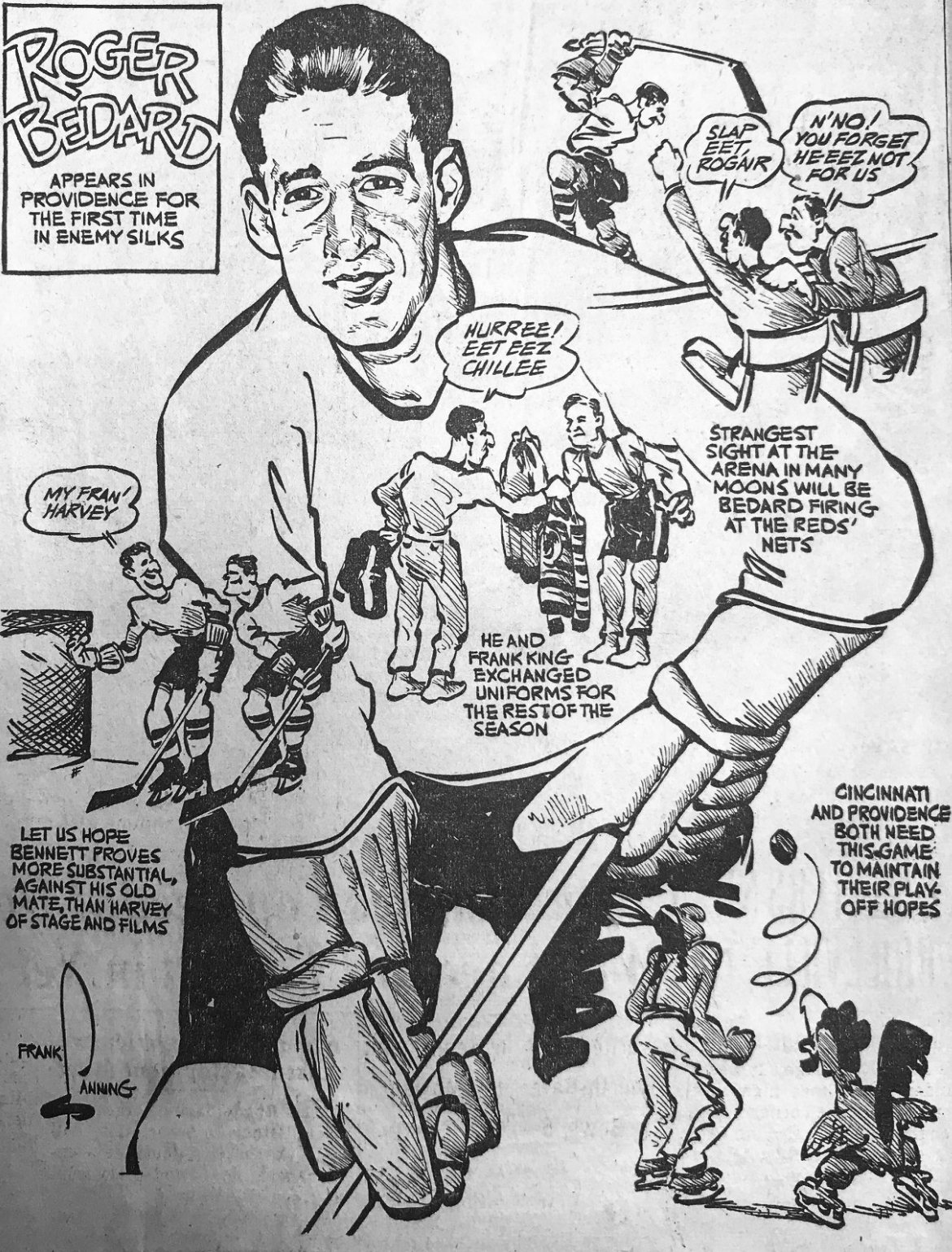
We will always treasure three particular memories: meeting the Pratts, speaking on stage, and our continued friendship with Huguette and Bruce Cline.

In 2008, we were joined at our table in the park by Clarence and Connie Pratt and their friend Wayne Brown, Reds’ fans from Coventry, RI. We chatted, got acquainted, and exchanged e-mail addresses. That was the beginning of a wonderful friendship and we spent five winters in California with Clarence and Connie. When it was announced that Dave Creighton was to receive the Topps Award in 2018, we were suddenly propelled to centre stage to speak. We stressed Dave’s fondness for his teammates. Over the years, we became good friends with Huguette and Bruce Cline. We have visited with them in Quebec and stay connected by phone and e-mail.

As fans, we have been blessed to have spent thirteen years in the company of such wonderful people. Your reunions have been truly memorable. We will treasure the friendships forever. Thank you Rhode Island Reds.

In Wolf's Clothing

—By Lanning



Cartoon Memories

For 46 years, Frank Lanning, the Providence Journal's nationally heralded sports cartoonist and creator of the Reds "Raging Rooster" logo, documented the exploits and history of our RI Reds. This cartoon, published in 1951, paid tribute to Roger Bedard, a Quebec native who played his schoolboy hockey locally at Mount St Charles Academy in Woonsocket and became a terrific scorer with our Reds. It welcomed Roger to his first game back in Providence after being traded to the rival Cincinnati Mohawks, only to return to the Reds the following season.



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The Reds Named

RED

By Vin Cimini
Heritage Society Board of Directors

While we're pretty sure there were never any St. Louis Blues named "Blue" or Montreal Maroons name "Maroon", there are a number of former RI Reds who went by the nickname "Red."

The first were Hugh "Red" Conn and John "Red" Doran, who played for our Reds in the 1935-36 season. Doran would return again in 1940.

Crossley "Red" Sherwood, a "Class of 1967" inductee into the RI Reds Hall of Fame, was a member of Providence's Calder Cup championship team in 1939. A veteran of five campaigns with the team (1938-1944), he scored 129 points with 45 goals in 236 games at 1111 North Main.

Two years later, another "Red" arrived – Bob "Red" Hamill, a 13-year NHL veteran who starred with the Boston Bruins and Chicago Blackhawks. Hamill notched 8 goals and 9 assists in his 40 games with Providence.

Perhaps the most famous "Red" ever to skate with our hometown team was the one who contributed the least on the ice but made the most significant sacrifice of any who skated here. He was Dudley "Red" Garrett.

If the name sounds familiar, it's

because the AHL's "Rookie of the Year" award is named after him. Garrett was held scoreless in his only 6 games with the Reds in 1943 before, like so many young men of the time, he answered the call to duty and entered the Canadian Navy. On November 24, 1944, Dudley Garrett was killed when his boat, the HMCS Shawinigan, was sunk in World War II.

Over the Reds' 52-year history, six Reds have been honored to receive the Dudley 'Red' Garrett Memorial Award, along with the Barons, the most of any AHL team during their time in the league – Bruce Cline ('56), Bill Sweeney ('58), Stan Baluik ('60), Rick Middleton ('74), Jerry Holland ('75), and Greg Holst ('76).

Garrett's time with the team was followed by three more "Reds" – Al "Red" Carr who played in 2 games in each of 2 scoreless stints with the Reds, and Bill "Red" Mitchell, who ended his career on Providence in 1948.

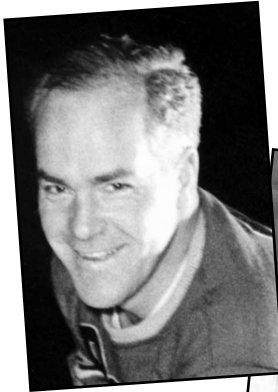
The last of the former "Reds" with our Reds was Norwegian-born Bill "Red" Johansen, a valuable and popular member of the team's legendary 1956 Calder Cup Champions. In his three seasons with the team, 1954 thru 1957, Johansen played in 125 games, scoring 81 points.



"Red" Conn



"Red" Doran



"Red" Sherwood



"Red" Hamill



"Red" Garrett



"Red" Johansen

By Vin Cimini
Heritage Society Board of Directors

They entered the Brown University gym warily – the Reds' Bob Leduc and Myles Marsden, a native Rhode Islander and founder of the State Ballet of RI. Along with them was Marsden's 8-year-old daughter, Ana. It was February of the 1967 hockey season, and they were there at the invitation of famed Providence Journal sports columnist, John Hanlon.

The plan was to measure the men against the most demanding level of the Royal Canadian Air Force's "Five Basic Exercises". For contrast, Ana, a ballerina, would take an equivalent test for ladies.

Both men stretched out – Marsden on a rail doing warm-ups typical of a classic ballet school and Bobby jogging in place for a few moments. In came Jack Heffernan, Brown's director of physical education, who explained each of the exercises and added that they were deceptively demanding. So, beware.

"I hope this doesn't kill me," Myles said. "I have classes to teach tonight."

"I've got a game tomorrow," Bob said worriedly. And worry he should. He had just returned to the lineup after a horrendous back injury sustained from an illegal hit in Baltimore. He was not in top shape considering his rehab in Baltimore included

two weeks suspended and periodically rotated to remedy his spinal injury.

First was a simple toe-toucher, which each passed, no trouble. Then came sit-ups – 50 of these in one minute. Each fell short of the mark. Bob did 46, Myles 40.

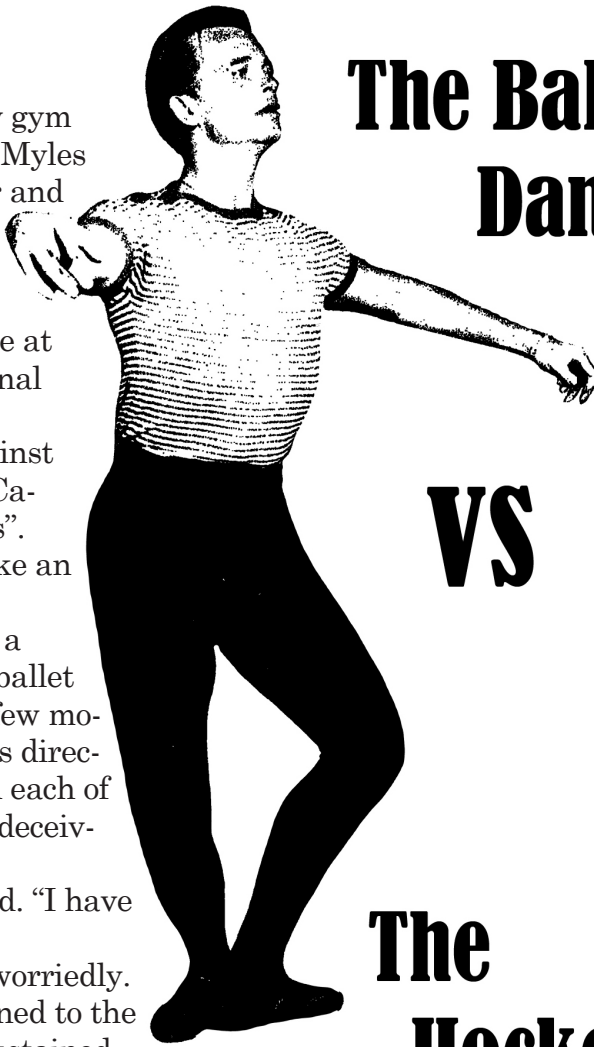
After the briefest rest, they were on their stomachs, making like rocking chairs - 40 "rocks" in one

minute. Each did it, but the perspiration was forming and the breathing was becoming harder.

Sitting next to her father, Ana asked, "Are you tired, Daddy?"

"No, Daddy is just working on a new dance," Myles said. "That's why he's shaking like this."

Ana, meanwhile, was skipping through her tests. In one leg-lifting drill, calling for 44 in one minute, she did it in perfect form in 38 seconds.



The Ballet Dancer

VS



The Hockey Player



Bobby Leduc

Now came push-ups with the cruel requirement of clapping the hands on the chest at each "up." Forty of these were needed in one minute. "Call off my classes," Myles said. Bobby said the same for his game. He did 35. Myles did 20.

Finally, they ran in place for 600 strides, the equal of a one-mile run, in 5:30 and each made it. Hanlon wrote, "Bob did his with the stride of a racehorse. Myles used a hopping step, as in an Irish jig."

Jack Heffernan's verdict was that each did amazingly well. Myles, as expected, excelled in form. Bob, eight years his junior, had the edge in endurance.

Ana? She passed everything - with honors.

Carl Liscombe and Johnny Chad: High-Scoring “Gentlemen”

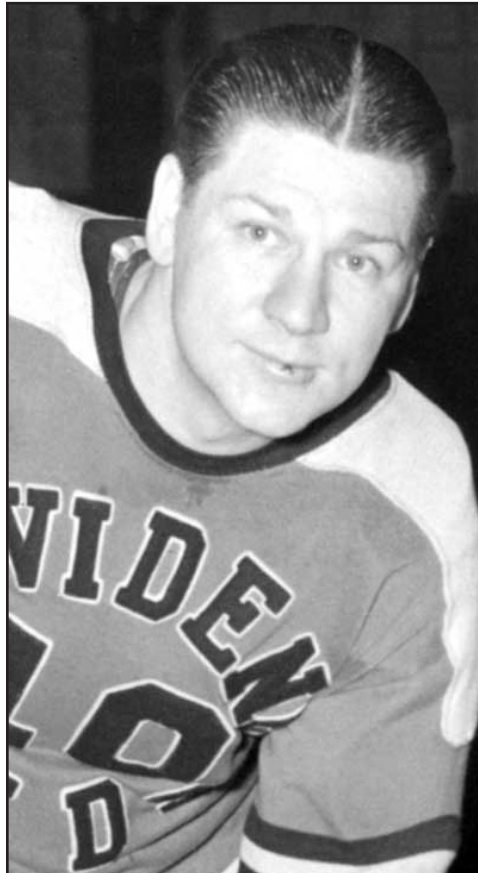
By Vin Cimini
Heritage Society Board of Directors

In 1948, the AHL established four awards, each carrying a \$300 cash prize: the *Leslie Cunningham Trophy* for “MVP”; the *Dudley Garrett Trophy* for “Rookie of the Year”; the *Jack Fox Trophy* for “Most Gentlemanly Player”; and the *Ice Capades Trophy* for the league’s “Top Scorer”. That’s right – the “Ice Capades Trophy”.

In their first year of presentation, the Reds’ Carl Liscombe got the prize package, winning MVP, Top Scorer, and, interestingly, the Most Gentlemanly Player trophies.

The *Jack Fox Trophy*, voted on by the league’s referees, was and still is the AHL’s version of the NHL’s *Lady Byng Trophy* - awarded to the player judged to have exhibited the best sportsmanship and gentlemanly conduct combined with a high standard of playing ability. Carl tallied an amazing 118 points and only 10 penalty minutes in 1947-48, the highest single-season scoring total in AHL history. In doing so, he became the first to eclipse the 100-pt plateau in a single season.

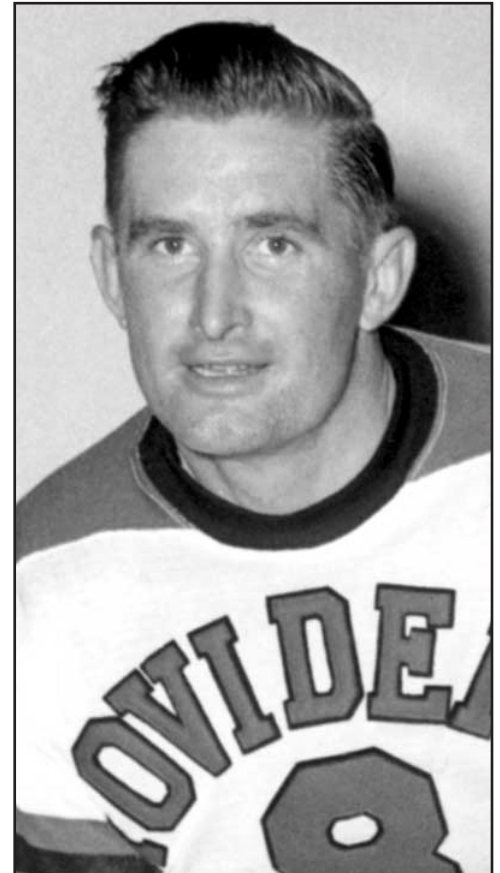
The following season, a Calder Cup Championship campaign, the Reds’ Johnny Chad made it two in a row when he captured the Fox Trophy on a unanimous vote after recording an impressive 90 points with only 2 penalty minutes.



Carl Liscombe

Liscombe’s Top Scorer award was supposed to be the *Ice Capades Trophy* but was (thankfully) renamed the *Wally Kilrea Trophy* before being presented. It was named so because Kilrea had held the AHL’s single-season scoring record at the time.

But now, Carl, the first recipient, had far surpassed Kilrea’s numbers with his record-breaking season. Thus, almost immediately after he received it, the league renamed it the *Carl Liscombe Trophy* and it remained so for the next six seasons. In 1955, it became the *John B. Sollenberger Trophy*, named in honor of the



Johnny Chad

Hershey Bears’ president and former Chairman of the AHL Board of Governors. It has remained so ever since.

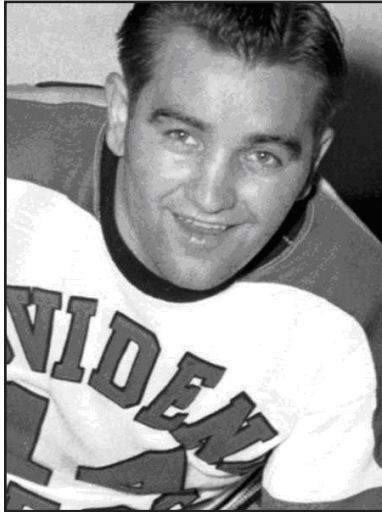
As you may know, Reds owner Lou Pieri, along with several other arena operators around the country, was one of the founders of Ice Capades. We’re confident in our assumption that Mr. Pieri, one of the greatest sports and entertainment promoters of the 20th century, had something to do with promoting the “Ice Capades Trophy” naming...and then thought better about it. For that we are thankful. **There are no toe picks in hockey.**

Did You Know?

By Vin Cimini
Heritage Society Board of Directors

Chuck Scherza

Did you know... in his early playing career with the Reds, Chuck owned and operated a pool parlor in his hometown of Brandon, Manitoba, which he purchased with his dad in 1944. Dad worked days. Chuck worked nights, doubling as the bouncer. Chuck related, "You know, when it gets to 50 below in Brandon, the boys usually come to our place and stay all night." Regulars included fellow Reds and native Manitobans, Pete Kapusta and Turk Broda, both of whom occasionally "stayed all night."



Frank Brimsek

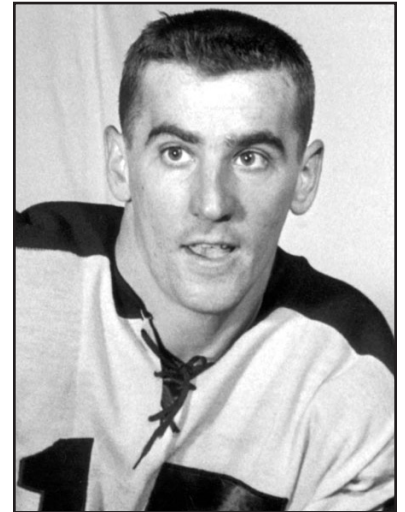
Did you know... on Nov. 16, 1938, the Boston Bruins traded goaltender Tiny Thompson to the Detroit Red Wings. Bruins' manager Art Ross was convinced that Frank Brimsek, who was starring with our Reds, was ready to take the reins in his place. When the future "Mr. Zero" read about the transaction that morning, he passed it off as mere rumor. In fact, he was so certain, he and a teammate headed to a movie matinee here in downtown Providence. But the trade had been made and the Bruins began the task of tracking Frank down, even checking with hospitals and police stations



when he could not be found. Finally, a friend saw him coming out of the movie house and the rest is history.

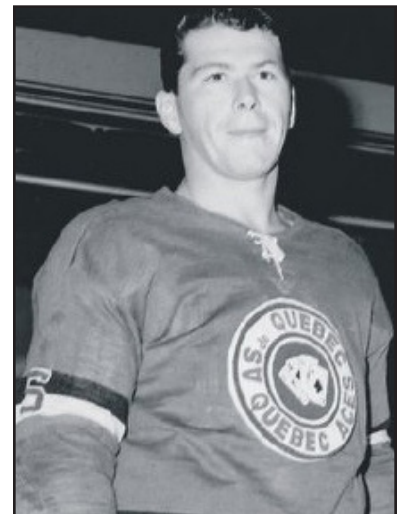
Danny Lewicki

Did you know... when former RI Reds farmhand, Danny Lewicki, was still a rookie in 1951, he completed his hat trick of championships. He was part of the Port Arthur junior squad that won the Memorial Cup in 1948; he was a key player in the Toronto Marlboros' Allan Cup triumph in 1950; and he had his name inscribed on Lord Stanley's silver chalice with the Maple Leafs in 1951.



Noel Picard

Did you know... back in 1967, Noel Picard, who was with the Reds for a cup of coffee in 1966, was a rookie rearguard with the expansion Blues. In a game against the Bruins one night, tired and ready for a shift change, he headed for a rest with his head down. The door to the bench swung open and he took his seat, and was immediately greeted with uproarious laughter. He had gone to the wrong bench. He sprang over the boards and made a beeline to the Blues' pines, dove in beside his comrades and hid from view. But his timing was doubly off. His retreat caused a "too many men on the ice" penalty. Pure Picard!



Make the Best of Your Time Inside: The Best Hockey Flicks Ever

Pop some corn, tap the keg, and grab your favorite candy bar. We're going to the movies.... hockey movies.

You've probably got your own favorite, like *Slapshot*, the 1977 comedy starring Oscar winner Paul Newman and the brawl winner Hanson Brothers, now cult favorites. Or, *The Miracle*, the 2005 salute to the dramatic and surprising U.S. victory over Russian in the 1980 Olympics. Or, *The Mighty Ducks*, any of three Disney one-ice versions of baseball's *Bad News Bears*. Or, *Mystery, Alaska*, a 1999 comedy that brought the fabled David & Goliath competition to a hockey rink; Or, more locally, *Ice Kings*, the 2006 documentary about Mount St. Charles Academy's unmatched 26 consecutive R.I. schoolboy championships.

But here are five others suggested by the staff of 1111 Echoes

Net Worth, a docudrama that tells the story of the bloody battle between the players and team owners led by heroic Detroit star Ted Lindsay and a small group of players (including former Reds' player coach Fern Flaman) over pensions and other benefits during the days of the NHL's "Original Six."

Keep Your Head Up, Kid: The Don Cherry Story, a two-part 2010 miniseries about the hockey life as player, coach, broadcaster, author and pundit Don Cherry, who's often as colorful as his attire. (If you can't find the movie, try one of the several



books "Grapes" has written with similar doses of history and history).

Red Army, the documentary of the relationship between hockey and politics in Russia as seen through the eyes of the great Soviet defenseman Slava Fetisov at a time when the game had become an extension of the cold war.

Goon, a 2011 comedy drama about a dimwit named Doug "The Thug" Glatt who becomes an enforcer for a minor league hockey team. Full of gratuitous violence and bathroom humor to excite and amuse you while you wonder how much better "The Thug" would be if he could only skate.

The Rocket: The Legend of Rocket Richard, a 2005 biopic about the great Montreal Canadian hockey legend whose icy glare, blazing speed, hurtful shot

and nasty streak made him the first to score 50 goals in a season and over 500 in a career.

Your filmography could feature dozens of other hockey related movies, and if you go back far enough you'll find some surprises. Like a 1937 movie titled **Idol Of The Crowds** about a fictional character named Johnny Hanson (no, he's not some long lost ancestor of the Hanson Brothers), a hockey playing chicken farmer who runs afoul (pun intended) of gangsters. Guess which movie star played Johnny Hanson? If you guessed John Wayne, you guessed right, Pilgrim. This was among the earliest of his 170 leading-man film roles, long before he perfected his macho drawl and swaggering walk.

All you need now is some popcorn or candy and definitely a cold six pack of Narragansett.