



# 1111 ECHOES

NEWSLETTER OF THE RHODE ISLAND REDS HERITAGE SOCIETY

WINTER 2024

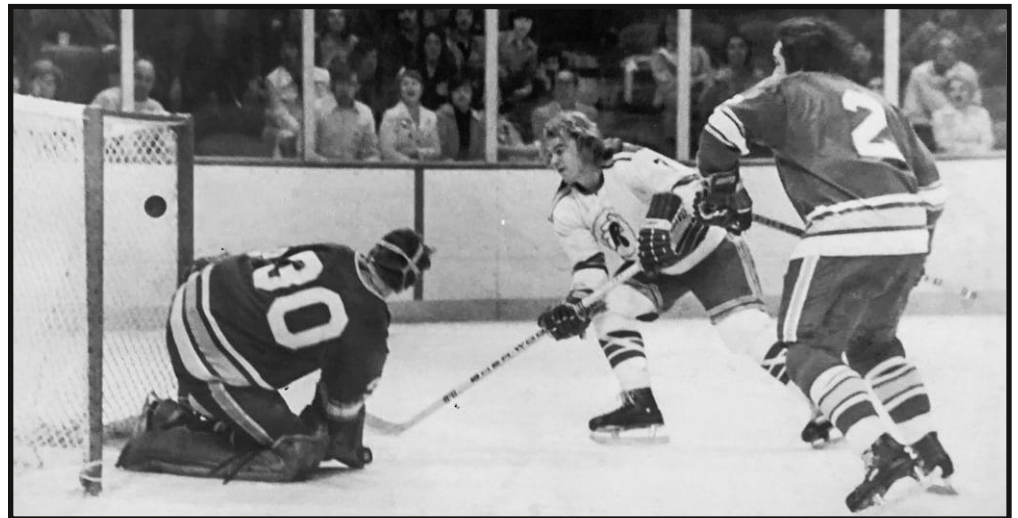
# NIFTY MEMORIES OF THE RI REDS

By Wayne Forrest  
Heritage Society Board

It has been 50 years since former Reds' right winger Rick Middleton made his professional debut, but the Toronto native's recollections of Providence remain vivid to this day. "I remember 1973 very clearly, probably because it was my first time away from home," he said. "I was only 19 years old and lived in Cranston with about ten single guys in an apartment building on Pocasset Avenue."

One of Rick's favorite haunts was the Player's Corner Pub, a stone's throw from the Providence Civic Center, where co-owners Sonny Russo and Jody DiRaimo called him "The Rook," short for rookie. "They took care of the players, made us sandwiches for our bus trips, and made sure we had a few beers on the bus," Rick said. "They also would keep the restaurant open when we were coming back late from road trips. They were super guys."

Goal scoring always came naturally to Rick. He led the Ontario Hockey Association with 67 tallies for the Oshawa Generals the season before the New York Rangers – the Reds' NHL affiliate – selected him 14th overall in the June 1973 NHL amateur draft. "I was thrilled to go to an Original Six team," he added. "The Rangers had a really great team and had played the Boston Bruins for the Stanley Cup the previous year. So I



*Rick Middleton lifts one past the New Haven goalie.*

ended up in Providence, but I never looked at it as a demotion. I looked at it as just another step on the ladder."

Rick, nicknamed "Nifty," led the Reds with 36 goals that season while paired with center Gerry Teeple (35 goals) and left wing Doug Horbul (34 goals). He earned the AHL Rookie of the Year and First-Team All-Star selection. The high-powered Reds went to the Calder Cup finals, but lost to the Hershey Bears in five games. Rick's game-winning goal in game four in Providence prevented a sweep.

"I scored in overtime to force a game five back in Hershey. The fans were going nuts, but I turned around and there were only like two Reds on the ice. I think all the guys had their trailers packed, ready to go home, and I disrupted that," Rick recalled with a

laugh. "So we had to go back to Hershey, lost game five, and that was that."

Rick wore Ranger Blue for the next two seasons before his now-famous trade to the Boston Bruins for Ken Hodge in May 1976. He donned the Black-and-Gold for 12 seasons and retired in 1988 after playing 1,005 games, scoring 448 goals, and registering 988 points. And after all this time, Rick still holds a place in his heart for Providence.

"My best memory is how nice everyone treated me and my family when we came to Providence," he said. "It was my first time away from home. I just wanted to win for the Providence Reds, do the best I can, and things fell into place. Providence was a great hockey town."

# Did You Know?

## Mayer's Mask was an AHL First

**G**il Mayer was the first AHL netminder to wear a goalie mask. "The Needle", as he was affectionately called, captured the Harry 'Hap' Holmes Memorial Award – (AHL-fewest goals against) – 1951, 1953, 1954, 1955 & 1956. A perennial All-Star and 3-time Calder Cup winner, Gil played his final two pro seasons as a member of the 1962 & 1963 Reds. He settled and raised his family in RI and was immortalized with his induction into the AHL Hall of Fame in 2007.



*Gil Mayer*

## Beveridge's 1933 Season Ranks with the Best

**B**ill Beveridge's 1933 NHL season may rank as one of the greatest, if not the greatest. Bill played two seasons with the Reds. In 1932, he led the Can-Am league with a 2.54 GAA. The following season he was called up from the Reds by the Ottawa Senators, playing in 35 of their 48 games. He faced an average of 36.36 shots per game, including 50 or more in five of those games, and two of those with at least 60. In one he faced 30 shots in a single period. Then, after all the dust had settled, Bill had recorded five shutouts and posted a 0.924 save percentage for the season – greatest of all time.



*Bill Beveridge*

## Giacomin Started as a Fill-in for Brother

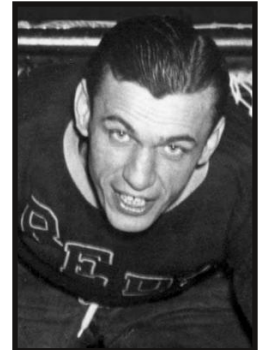
**E**d Giacomin's older brother was also a goalie. He played for the family's hometown Sudbury Sportsmen team. One night in the early 1950s, his brother took sick. Eddie filled in and played so brilliantly that it caught the eye of scouts. The rest is hockey history. Starting in 1960, he starred for 5 seasons with the Reds before the NY Rangers traded for him in return for Marcel Paille, Jim Mikol, Aldo Guidolin and Sandy McGregor. Eddie would go to play in 6 NHL All-Star games in 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1973.



*Ed Giacomin*

## Karakas was NHL's First American Goalie

**M**ike Karakas played seven seasons with the Reds and was the National Hockey League's first American-born and -trained goaltender and the first player of Greek descent when he started in goal for the Blackhawks in 1935. Born in Aurora, MN, he was raised in nearby Eveleth. Growing up, Mike and another former Red and Bruins star, Frank "Mr. Zero" Brimsek, were battery mates for their high school baseball team with Frankie pitching and Mike behind the plate.



*Mike Karakas*

## Lumley Set Record as Youngest Goalie

**H**arry Lumley played with the Reds throughout the 1958-59 season. He made his NHL debut with the New York Rangers in the 1943-44 season, when he was loaned to the Rangers for a single game. He was (and remains) the youngest goaltender to play in the NHL, as he was only 17 years old.



*Harry Lumley*

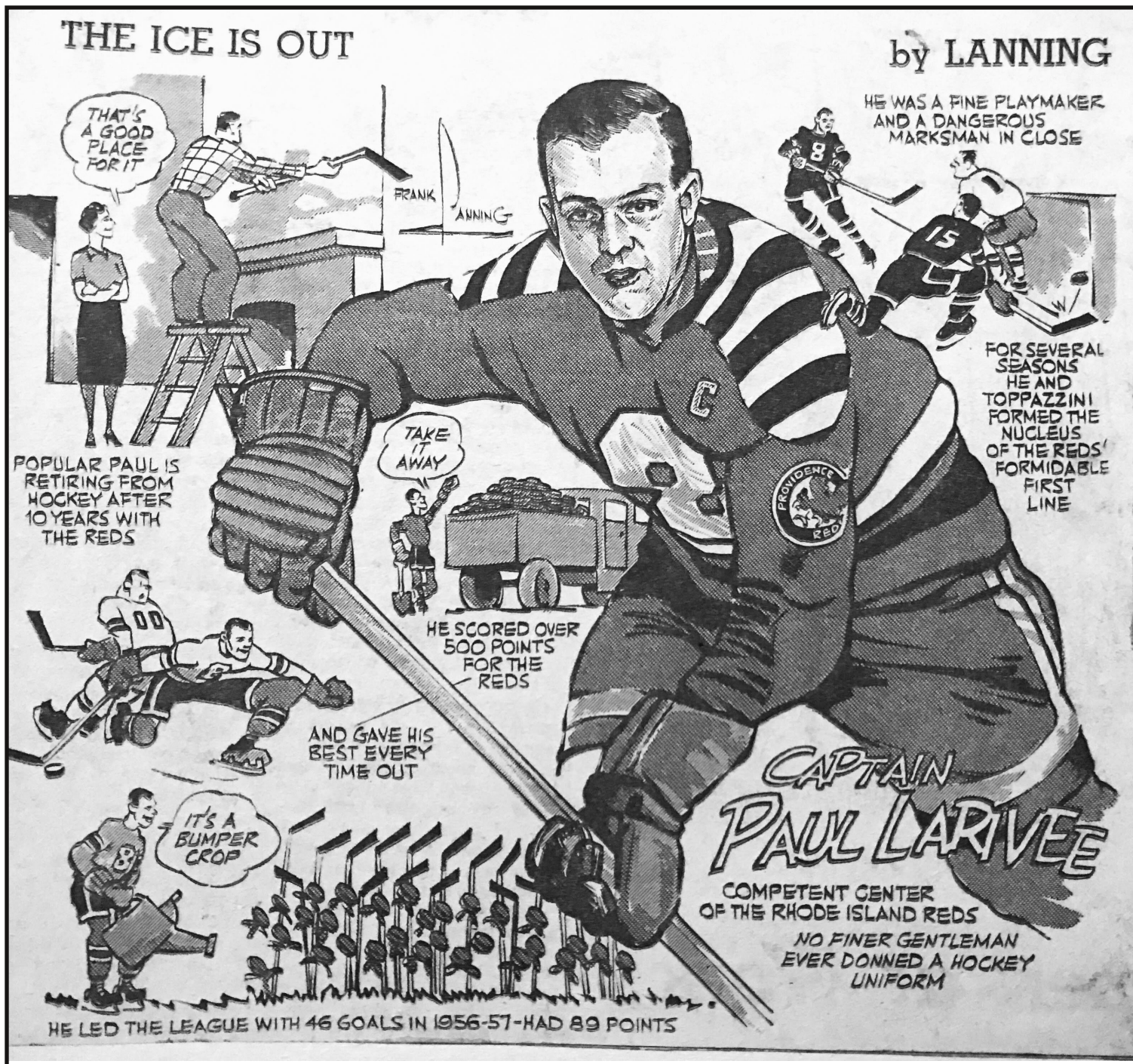
## Rimouski Rifle Won Consecutive MVP Titles

**P**ierre Brillant was nicknamed the "Rimouski Rifle" by then-Reds Publicity Director, Buster Clegg. His greatest claim to fame came several seasons prior to joining the Reds when he captured consecutive MVP awards in the International Hockey League skating for the Indianapolis Chiefs. Pierre flew up and down right wing for the Reds for seven seasons, 1962 thru 1968, becoming the team's 6th All-Time leading goal scorer with 165 tallies.



*Pierre Brillant*

# Cartoon Memories: A Brilliant Reds Career



A native of Montreal, Paul Larivee arrived in Providence in 1952. Paul had previously starring with the Reds' Trois Rivieres farm team. He played on one of the great lines in Reds and AHL history,

centering for Zellio Toppazzini and Camille Henry, and played a vital role on the Reds 1955 Calder Cup team.

Paul was a "Class of 1965" inductee of the Reds Hall of Fame. He is a second all-time in points (539), goals

(217) and assists (322) and third all-time in games (570) in Reds history. After his playing career, Paul served as the longtime color analyst on the French-speaking broadcasts of Hockey Night in Canada.



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PO Box 504, Lincoln, RI 02865  
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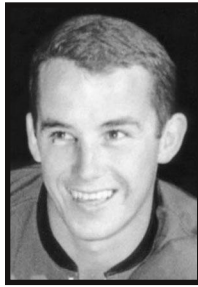
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# A Holiday Season Less Bright

The holiday season was less bright for the Reds' community with the passing of five alumni: Serge Boudreault at age 84 on Dec. 6; Hartland Monahan at 72 on Dec. 9; Randy Legge at 77 on Dec. 11; Gene Carr at 72 on Dec. 13; and Connie Madigan at 89 on Jan. 2.

## Serge Boudreault

Born in Mistassini, Quebec, Serge's speed and infectious smile made him a fan favorite from the very start of his seven-year tenure in Providence. The left winger made the team in 1961 and was paired with fellow rookies Pierre Brillant and Gerry Ouellette. The trio quickly became known as the "Rookie Rockets" and "gave the fans a terrific thrill with [their] speed and dexterity" and "set a torrid pace" early that season, according to the October 25, 1961 Providence Journal. Serge's best season came during the 1964-65 campaign, when he played in all 72 games, scored 15 goals with 24 assists, and racked up 68 penalty minutes. Serge settled in Rhode Island after his retirement from pro hockey in 1972 and remained very active on the ice mentoring young hockey players. He was head hockey coach at Cumberland High for 12 years and skippered several Bantam and Midget teams. His greatest coaching success came when he coached Edgewood to the National Midget Championship in 1984. He also found time to scout for the NHL's Anaheim Ducks. In 2005, the Rhode Island Reds Heritage Society bestowed upon him the "Tops Award" for his contributions to the Reds and the local community.



Serge  
Boudreault

## Hartland Monahan

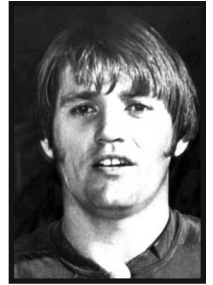
Hartland Monahan's pro career started in 1971 when the California Golden Seals selected him as the 43rd overall pick in the NHL amateur draft. He landed in Providence in 1974 through a trade by the Reds' NHL affiliate, the New York Rangers. Coach John Muckler welcomed the hard-charging forward, saying Hartland "will give our hockey club the muscle it needs on the right side." Hartland confirmed Muckler's instincts with the third-highest total for goals (28) and assists (42) in 70 games and 96 penalty minutes that season. His pro career ended in 1981 after skating in 334 NHL games with the Golden Seals, Rangers, Capitals, Penguins, Kings, and Blues. Hartland's passion for hockey was magnified by his father-in-law, the legendary NHL Hall of Famer Bernie "Boom Boom" Geoffrion. His son, Shane, continued the family's sporting legacy as a baseball player with the Seattle Mariners.



Hartland  
Monahan

## Randy Legge

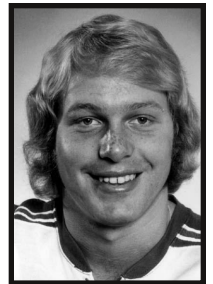
Randy Legge skated here for three seasons, donning the red, white, and blue as a New York Rangers' defenseman from 1971-1974. Randy was on the Buffalo Bisons' Calder Cup championship team in the 1969-1970 season, playing in all 72 regular season games and 14 playoff games. His durability carried over to Providence, where he played in 90 of the Reds' 91 games in the 1973-1974. Randy's NHL career included 12 games with the Rangers in the 1972-73 season, along with 61 games with the Reds. With the advent of the World Hockey Association, he held steady on the blue line for the Michigan Stags, Baltimore Blades, Winnipeg Jets, Cleveland Crusaders, and San Diego Mariners over three seasons. He hung up his pro skates in 1977 and returned to his hometown on Newmarket, Ontario, where he today is honored in the town's Sports Hall of Fame.



Randy Legge

## Gene Carr

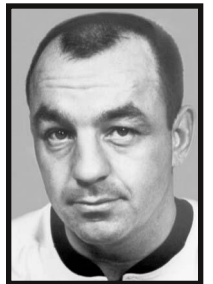
Gene Carr started his pro career with the St. Louis Blues as the No. 4 overall pick in the 1971 NHL draft, right after Guy Lafleur, Marcel Dionne, and Jocelyn Guevremont. Darn good company indeed. After 14 games in St. Louis, Gene was traded to the New York Rangers and came to Providence four days before Christmas 1973 on a rehab assignment following a November auto accident. Rated as one of the best skaters in pro hockey and comfortable at both center and left wing, Gene contributed four goals and ten assists and helped the Reds amass a 6-2-2 record in his ten games here. When he got the call back to the NHL in February 1974, he was on a plane to Los Angeles to begin a five-year career with the Kings.



Gene Carr

## Connie Madigan

Former Reds' defenseman Connie Madigan passed away at age 89 on January 2. The hard-nosed blueliner played 10 games and recorded 34 penalty minutes during the 1964-65 season, before he was sold to the Portland Buckaroos in the Western Hockey League where he played for 12 seasons. Connie finally broke into the NHL with St. Louis Blues in February 1973 and today remains the oldest-ever NHL rookie at 38 years old. Four years later, Connie appeared in the movie "Slap Shot" as Ross "Mad Dog" Madison, who expressed his appreciation to the fans with his one-finger salute.



Connie Madigan