

Elmwood Giants Baseball Club



Alumni & Friends **NEWSLETTER**

Winter Edition 2009

Our Cover Photo

Our cover depicts **Al Kinley**, a man who, we believe, requires no introduction to members of the Giants family. Many of us believe that without Al, there would be no Giants organization as we know it today. His impending induction into the Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame (MBHOF) as a **Builder** provides a unique opportunity to recognize his part in making the Giants organization what it is today.

A **VERY** short list of some of his accomplishments and contributions includes:

- Coach and manager of multiple minor-league teams that fed the reborn Giants organization in the late '70's
- Director of the Red River Valley Sports League that developed and continues to develop many of the players that have success as Giants
- One of a small group who restarted the Giants organization in 1977
- Has held many official titles with the Giants and has contributed untold hours to promote Club viability and the teams' successes
- Helped grow the Giants organization to include three successful teams
- Recruited numerous coaches and managers who have led Elmwood-based teams at many levels to city and provincial championships
- Coached and / or managed many Provincial Championship teams, several of which also represented Manitoba regionally and nationally
- Multiple titles as "MJBL Manager of the Year"
- Member of the Baseball Manitoba Honour Society (2003)
- Member of the MBHOF as a Coach (2006)
- Baseball Manitoba Volunteer of the Year (2007)
- Currently the Baseball Manitoba representative to the MBHOF
- Giants "*historian extraordinaire*" who has led the efforts to collect and collate the Club's significant archives
- Contributed to and led several successful nominations for Giants family members to be inducted into the MBHOF

A successful athlete in his own right in many sports, Al was a starting line-man on the 1969 and 1970 Vanier Cup-winning University of Manitoba teams and was a three-time Conference All-Star. His teaching career in Physical Education included duties as an administrator of various scholastic athletic programs.

As well, he has been a participant and leader in other sports (e.g., football, hockey, gymnastics, volleyball, lacrosse, etc.) and in other leagues (e.g., high school, university, etc.), coaching or managing teams to provincial and national championships in those disciplines as well.

We invite everyone to make plans to help the Club celebrate Al in Morden on June 5, 2010.

Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame Dinner

June 5, 2010

Mark Your Calendars!

As most of you are aware from earlier communications, several people with connections to the Giants will be inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2010. The official ceremonies will take place in Morden on June 5. Everyone is encouraged to make plans to attend and salute the outstanding accomplishments and contributions of:

- **Al Kinley**
- **Brock McConachy**
- **The Kollesavich Family**
- **The Fortin Family**
- **Morgan de Peña**
- **Hank Lemoine**

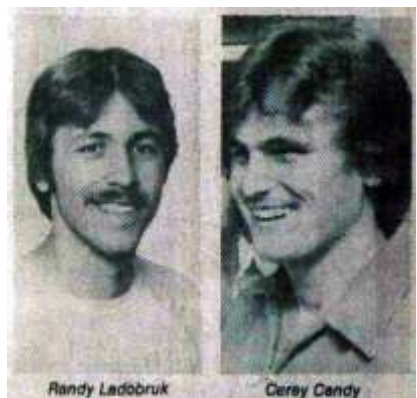
There are already plans in the works for some special happenings that evening that you will want to be a part of! We suggest you won't want to miss this once in a lifetime opportunity to be part of Manitoba Baseball history.

Notable Birthdays in the Giants Family

Carey Candy and Randy Labobruk *turned 50* in November. They each held special birthday parties that were well-attended by members of the Giants family.

The photos at right are from a press article about their respective selections to the 1980 MJBL All-star team in their final year of Junior eligibility.

How time flies!



Singles

- The **2010 Bud, Spud and Steak** is scheduled for June 19 at the Canad-Inns MyBar, Regent and Plessis. Contact a Board member if you have donations for the silent auction or other prizes.
- The annual **President's reception for 2010** will be held on Saturday, May 15 at the Elmwood Legion, 920 Nairn. In addition to being a great way to meet the Giants family, this will be an opportunity for the Giants family to honour their own as several people approach their official induction into the MB Baseball Hall of Fame (see our article elsewhere in this newsletter).
- Baseball Manitoba held its Annual General Meeting in Brandon in November. **Dave Olsen**, a current Giants Director, was elected as the **Baseball Manitoba Vice-President of Coach Development**.
- The Club expects to receive more details about a **planned MJBL Awards ceremony and dinner** to be held in late December. Watch the web sites for more details as they come available.
- The following people volunteered at the **Manitoba Lotteries Casinos Bingos** in November and helped raise money that will help the Giants meet their operational costs: **Bryan Hodgson (twice), Rick Dondo, Don Krasowski, Dave Kodak, Bob Kinley, Ray Shuel, Gord Menzies and Jackie Mitchell**. Ken St-Germain also attended as a spare for the event on November 10 as did Dave Olsen on November 28. More opportunities to assist the Giants cause in this way will be forthcoming. Contact Bryan Hodgson at 668-3317 if you want to add your name as someone willing to help out.

Giants Family Grieves Loss

The Elmwood Giants family takes this opportunity to offer long-time Director, volunteer and friend, **Mike Krykewich and son Alex** our thoughts, prayers and support following the loss of their wife and mother, **Catherine**, to illness on November 16.

Many members of the Giants family were in attendance at the funeral service held on November 21 at Augustine United Church. She will be missed by all who were privileged to know her.



BOSCH

Cash Calendars 2009: The results

The sale of the Cash Calendars is the single most important fund-raiser for the Elmwood Giants Baseball Club again this year. Without the monies raised through this year's sales, the Club would not be able to undertake some of the important upgrades described elsewhere in this newsletter.

This year, we sold 2000 Cash Calendars with a net profit after expenses of more than \$15,000. While substantial, this result put us below our sales last year of 2300 tickets and well below our goal of 2500. Our profit, although below our desired goal, will go a long way toward ensuring the continued viability of our Club. **Thank you** to all who contributed to this success!

We encountered a variety of reasons for the low sales, but two of the most telling were the fact that more than 400 unsold tickets were not returned, despite the fact the Club provided a postage-paid pre-addressed return envelope and some of our former top sellers sold fewer tickets.

On a positive note, the alumni sold over 600 and the Board of Directors alone sold over 400. **Don Krasowski** sold 117 tickets while **Reg Chopp** and **Ray Shuel** sold 70 each. The Corvette Club and the Dragon Boat team both sold well for us.

In the picture at right are Club President **Ken St-Germain** and Grand Prize winner **Mary Meisner** as she receives her cheque for the top prize of \$1000.



*** Annual General Meeting ***

On March 18, 2010 at 7:30 PM, the Elmwood Giants Baseball Club will be holding its Annual General Meeting at the **Elmwood Legion** at 920 Nairn.

This Meeting is open for Board Members, team representatives and players and any other interested Giants supporters. We will review Club results for last year and make plans for the one ahead. All are welcome to attend and participate in the work of making the Giants successful!



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Junior Team Event Planned

To coincide with the presence of many Junior players who are attending school out of town, the club will hold a celebration of this year's results. The **time and place will be confirmed** at a later date. Watch the web sites for details.

The Club will celebrate the 2009 Provincial Championship and honour team members who were cited for league awards. We will also celebrate those who were chosen to the League All-Star team.

2010 Junior Team Coaching Line-up

Al Kinley has stepped up (once again!) to act as Head Coach and Manager of the 2010 edition of the Elmwood Giants Junior team. The Club continues its search for assistant coaches.

To date, discussions have focused on graduating players **Adam Lachuta**, **Brian McIntyre** and **Keith Sigurdson** along with **Mark Babaluk** who was an assistant last year. Talks are also in progress with **Doug Grabowecky** and **Kevin McNeill** who have both expressed interest in helping the team.

Paul Lagimodière will return as statistician and bench coach.

Sponsorships Available

The Club is offering businesses the opportunity to connect with the Giants family and supporters through sponsorships in many forms. Examples are as follows:

- **Yearly Program:** \$30 to \$200
- **Newsletter and Web Site:** \$300 in quarterly newsletters for 3 years and on the three team web sites
- **Fence:** Rates available upon request
- **Red, Blue and Gold Levels** (with various other placements for relevant time periods): \$1500 through \$10,000

Contact **Dave Kodak**, Club Vice-President of Marketing at 668-6367 for all inquiries.



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Newsletter Costs

The Club Executive is pleased to provide this newsletter to all Giants alumni, friends, players, coaches and supporters. We take this opportunity to remind those who receive the printed copy that the Club incurs printing and mailing costs in its production.

The periodic newsletters are available electronically via the teams' web sites and, in the future, via the Club's own site; an option that reduces costs to the Club. If you received the printed newsletter and have not made a recent contribution, we ask that you help the Club cover the cost of production by making a donation of any amount that you may deem appropriate.

In coming weeks, the club will be taking active measures to reduce the mailing list for printed copies and will review several factors in deciding which names will remain on it. We encourage all of you who are able to take advantage of the copies on the web sites.

2010 Player Lineups to be Confirmed

All three Giants teams are looking to confirm their rosters for the upcoming 2010 season. Anyone interested in joining one of them should contact:

- **Juniors:** Al Kinley at 338-9603
- **Seniors:** Bryan Hodgson at 668-3317
- **Mudcats:** Mike Zurba at 799-7862



Our Web Sites

Watch our web sites for developments. We plan to update them over the coming weeks and months and hope to keep them current with all the latest events. We also plan to launch a Club site that will highlight the work done on behalf of all three teams, the field and the wider baseball community.

Juniors: www.ballcharts.com/elmwoodgiantsjr

Seniors: www.ballcharts.com/elmwoodgiants

Mudcats: www.ballcharts.com/kildonanmudcats



Pages From The Past

2002 Reunion Game

In September of 2002, the Giants held a Reunion Game to celebrate Giants history in general and the reestablishment of the Junior team in 1977 in particular. The photos below provide a souvenir of the shared experience of that day and the many years played on the field prior to the tribute game. They represent the post-1990 (top) and pre-1990 (bottom) teams fielded in the exhibition match.

Our archives include many other pictures from that memorable day. They have been incorporated in the Club slide show that plays at some Club events. Inquiries are welcome.



Birchwood

Field Update

As was agreed by the Club Board on October 17, a load of **Shakopee Shale** was ordered for Giants Field. The application of this material on October 31 along with subsequent work done to spread it more evenly succeeded in levelling the home plate and baseline areas. Some material was kept in reserve to help with local low spots that may develop next season.

The Club thanks **Bev Fisher, Tim Muron, Al Kinley, Dave Kodak, Gord Menzies, Rick Dondo and Paul Lagimodière** who helped out on their Saturday morning. Also contributing that day was **Don Krasowski**, who focused on ensuring the **Club's tractors** were ready for the harsh winter ahead in order to have them ready to go in the Spring!

Other work will be required to prepare the field for play in the **2010 season**. The field is key to providing a high quality baseball experience and maintaining it is a big job! Extra hands always make the work lighter. You are asked to watch for calls for volunteers in future newsletters and on the web sites.

The Club has reviewed the information returned to it by **Bev Fisher** about the costs for **putting up the scoreboard**. Based on this information, the Club is proceeding with plans to prepare the required infrastructure over the winter and with installation in the Spring. This will be a major upgrade to the field, made possible by many people over the past few years with their contributions to Giants fund-raising efforts. To everyone in the Giants family: **Congratulations! And Thank You!** And watch for more news as this work progresses.

Cash Calendars 2009: Sales Highlights

Here are some highlights from ticket sales results:

		Don Krasowski	117
		Reg Chopp	70
Alumni and Friends	638	Ray Shuel	70
Board of Directors	440	Paul Lagimodière	69
Giants Junior Team	267	Dave Kodak	64
50/50 Shared Groups	263	Al Kinley	64
Giants Senior Team	242	Gord Menzies	30
Mudcats Senior Team	150	Carey Candy	28
Total	2000	Ken St-Germain	26
		Ben McLeod	20
		Bill Kinley	20
		Murray Roscoe	20
		Barry Kjernestedt	20
		Kristen Kossack	20
		20 current players (of 45)	20



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Lessons from the Past: The Role of Fund-raising

Back in the 40's and 50's, men like **Alex Turk** and **Curly Haas** sponsored the Giants. After their sponsorship was gone in 1962, the Club folded. Despite the fact there was an abundance of players available, a thriving feeder system and a suitable playing field (Giants Field!), operations ceased; partly because there was no organization to raise the necessary operating funds that would make the experience affordable for the players and their parents. This is similar to the more recent experience in the North End, where the team sponsored by the 141 Legion ceased operations when the Branch withdrew its financial support in the mid-nineties.

Several attempts were made by various groups in the late sixties & early seventies to restart the Giants, but nothing lasted. Not until 1977 did a viable group come together to re-establish and operate the Giants. The goal was to put an organization in place that would ensure the longevity of the program.

During the 1970's and 1980's, men like **Joe Sandryk**, **Ted Nowicki**, **Ross Kinley**, **Al Kinley**, **Dave Olsen** and many others raised thousands of dollars to get the Club where it is today. Few people from the original group are still active but enough people have come on board over the years to allow the Giants to continue to operate.

Do you remember the Grey Cup pools, the socials, the meat draws, Bingos, umbrella sales, Jets and Bombers season ticket raffles, Spectator seats, etc? The off-field people worked hard so that the on-field player could have an enjoyable experience at a reasonable cost and so the Giants program would survive and thrive. Things are no different today. There are just different ideas and different people.

There is no doubt different financial circumstances dictate what each of us is able to do and some of us have no market to sell tickets. Some just buy their assigned tickets and to these people we say a special thank you. Even the purchase of one ticket at \$10 is appreciated! We know it is a way of saying: "**Thanks Giants! And I wish I could do more!**" To the active volunteers, it is disappointing to see the number of alumni who can simply write off the Giants, despite the benefits they received from their participation in the program.

To the current players: The off-field events are how we are able to keep the fees so low. Without more participation from the players, our only option will be to raise the fees for those who don't contribute.

In addition to positions on the Executive, there are opportunities for people to contribute in many other ways. If you can help or if you have any ideas on how to make the Giants a better organization and to help it avoid disappearing again, please contact a Director or attend the upcoming **Annual General Meeting**; planned meeting date, time and location are found elsewhere in this newsletter.

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We thank all our sponsors for their support!



Help us solve a mystery from our archives

The Club has a significant archive of photos, clippings and articles related to Club activities and Winnipeg baseball history in general. Unfortunately, not all of them are well documented.

Our own resources allow us to identify **Bob Smith** in the centre of the above photo and we expect it is from the 1950's. Can you help us put names to the other gentlemen?

Our only other suspicions about the picture are that it was taken on the evening of an All-Star game; we are not even sure what year or what division.

Editor's Note:

On our web sites, you can catch up on the results we obtained in archive mystery quests published in earlier editions of our newsletter.

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