

Hello to All Alumni

Hello to all our alumni friends and families. I hope you all had a good summer and are enjoying the fall weather. As I begin to write this, the Red Sox have just been eliminated from the AL East race (they hung in there a lot longer than I expected) and I'm sure that by the time this reaches you, the World Series will be over.

We have had a very busy Reading Baseball Alumni Club year with our annual Alumni Dinner, Alumni Game, a highly successful Alumni Golf Tournament, the Reading Baseball Scholarship Fundraiser, and the new Reading Baseball website. Also, we had another great year on the field and we will provide all the details of the 2000 season in this letter. So clear your calendar, find a comfortable chair, and get ready for a couple evening's worth of good reading! (just please remember to stretch properly before attempting to read this; we do not want any injuries)

November: Hall of Fame Banquet

The RMHS Athletics Hall of Fame ceremony was again a superb event and a highlight was the induction of Reading Baseball alumnus **Jim Murphy ('93)**. As you might imagine, Jimmy did a terrific job in his acceptance speech, showing poise, gratitude, and humor. Jim is probably most remembered for his incredible feats in football and basketball, yet we recall what an excellent baseball player he was. In Jim's senior year, he had a 7-1 record on the mound with a 1.33 ERA. He was named to the Middlesex League All-Star Team. Murph was a great guy to coach and I will always admire

his leadership, charisma, and competitive drive. It was great to see his good friends and 1993 teammates at the Hall of Fame banquet to support him. **Jon Cignetti, Greg Smith, Matt Peabody, Chris Cosenza, and Duane Sigsbury** were all at the event. As an aside, I got a phone call late this summer from Cigs who said that he was calling from "baseball heaven". Apparently, Cigs and some of his '93 teammates (I think it was Peabody, Murphy, Sigsbury) were, at that moment, at Wrigley Field watching the Cubs play the Reds. Cigs is friends with Reds' first baseman, Sean Casey. They became friends at the University of Richmond and remain pals today. I understand that the '93 guys got to go out with Casey after the game. The story I heard is that at the end of the night, someone said, "Gee, it was great to hang out with a famous pro athlete." To which Jim Murphy responded, "Yeah, I'm sure it was quite a thrill for Casey!" Just kidding, Murph. More on the '93 boys when we get to the golf tournament write-up.

It was also good to see **Rich Foohey ('89)** at the Hall of Fame banquet. Rich, who was captain of the '89 team, was there for inductee, George Watkins, who is a family friend. **Steve and Kevin Mello (captains from '79 and '84** respectively) were also there to see brother John's 1987 track team be inducted.

January: Alumni Dinner 2000

We had our annual Reading Baseball Alumni Club Dinner on January 9, 2000 at On The Border, in Woburn. We had a great turnout of 30 guys from across three decades! As usual, the younger guys enjoyed hearing stories from our players of the 70's and 80's and then went off into the night to explore other possibilities.

Our older (married?) guys stuck around much later, knowing there *were no other* possibilities to explore. Everybody had a good time and it was great to see such a widespread representation of players across the years.

The following alumni were at the dinner: **Mike Moscariello ('77)**, **George Fennelly ('78)**, Steve Mello ('79), **Joe Picano ('81)**, **Joe Hagan ('82)**, Kevin Mello ('84), **Scott Farris ('85)**, **Dave Johnson ('87)**, **Gary d'Entremont ('87)**, **Tom Zaya ('87)**, Rich Foohey ('89), **Jeff Donovan ('90)**, **Steve Tomasello ('90)**, **Pete McHugh ('92)**, Matt Peabody ('93), Jon Cignetti ('93), **Dave Zaya ('94)**, **Jon Whalen ('95)**, **Steve Langone ('96)**, **Mike Thompson ('96)**, **Bill Olsen ('97)**, **Jamie Severance ('97)**, **Ryan Carroll ('98)**, **Steve Rulison ('98)**, **Jamie Gath ('99)**, **Dave Polcari ('99)**, **Kevin Phinney ('99)**, **Dennis Gramolini ('99)**, plus Coach Bryson and Coach Mosc.

The following is the letter that was distributed at the Alumni Club Dinner on January 9, 2000 (by this time, however, some of the news is a bit old, so I updated it as I went along; *updates are in italics*):

"Happy New Year to all our alumni and welcome to the annual Alumni Club Dinner. This is always a great event, so I hope you all stick around and enjoy talking with your old teammates and meet some guys who played in years before or after you. You'll find that you've all had similar experiences and the same stories to share.

Here is some alumni news since our last newsletter:

Dave Johnson ('87) was married to Diana Jamieson of North Reading on November 21. They are living in Wakefield and we wish them the best of luck. Three guys from our '91

championship team are engaged. **Jason LaVita ('91)** will be married to Jodi in April (*already married by now!*) and they will live in Wilmington. Jason is teaching at Minuteman Tech in Lexington and coaching basketball in Bedford. **Bill Rooney ('91)** is engaged, as is **Fran McHugh ('91)** Fran will marry Candace Woolard of Woburn in June 2001. Fran's brother, Pete, is also engaged. He will be married this July 9 to Lonie Daniel (*update: Pete's wedding was great: his wife, Lonie, is terrific and those of you who know the McHugh's know what a special, supportive family Pete and Franny have*). Finally, Jim Murphy is engaged to Allison Troupe, whom some of us had the pleasure of meeting at the Hall of Fame induction, and they will be married in 2001. Good luck to all these alumni and their brides-to-be.

More miscellaneous news: I recently ran into **John Barrett**, ace pitcher of our 1984 team. John, his wife Haley, and their two children moved back to Reading this summer and live on Walnut Street. **Tom Quinn ('91)** has bought a two-family house on Salem Street. If you go to a Hockey East game, don't be surprised to see Tom on the ice; he is possibly the youngest official in college hockey. **Bob Macaluso's ('82)** Muhlenberg College baseball team had a very good year in Bob's first season at the helm. They started somewhat slowly but finished very strongly, to post the team's highest number of wins in many years. Good luck to Maco and the Mules in the 2000 season (*a recap of Maco's 2000 season is available online: just search "Muhlenberg College Athletics" and you can get to the varsity baseball site and even e-mail Coach Macaluso.*

Here is a correction from the Alumni Letter: I stated that Jamie Gath ('99 captain) was playing ball in his freshman year at Babson. Jamie is actually at Bentley, where he had an excellent fall. Unfortunately, he injured his knee and had surgery this winter. He is now rehabilitating and expects to be ready for the season (*Jamie did recover in time for the season and saw some playing time in the spring*). Thanks to **Bob Lucci ('87)** who is a Bentley baseball alumnus for pointing out my mistake. Jamie is at least our 4th alumnus to play ball at Bentley, joining Bob Lucci, **Chris Curley ('88)**, and **Darnell Canada ('89)**.

NO DEER RUNS, NO HITS, NO ERRORS. In the Alumni Letter, I wrote about our good luck over the years at the Deer Run Motel in Cooperstown. Well, about a week later, I received a letter from the owners that the Deer Run is closing its doors. The motel is going out of business; apparently it will reopen at some time, but not as a motel. That was such a perfect place for us: private, quiet, clean, with a restaurant on the premises, and lots of room out back for wiffle ball, bocci, fishing, and batting practice. I don't know where we will go this year, but there will never be a place like the good old Deer Run, where we have lots of good memories. In fact, I'm sure some of you guys have memories that I'll never know about! (*update: we found another place to stay, KC's Corner Restaurant and Motel. It was quite a luxurious place, earning a 4-star rating. Of course, New York uses a "100-star maximum" rating system for their motels. Actually, it was a decent motel with an adjacent restaurant, which is one feature that we required. And the best part is that KC's allowed us to break the jinx: in 7 previous trips, we had stayed at the Deer*

Run four times. Each of those times we won the game at Cooperstown and also won the league title that year. In the other three years at Cooperstown, we stayed elsewhere lost the game (or got snowed out) and did not win the league title. But, KC's came through: we had a beautiful day to play, beat Lexington, and returned home to win the title. A new era has begun: KC's is now the Official Motel of Reading Baseball!

Our line of Reading Baseball apparel is ever-growing. On display tonight we have a Reading Baseball sweatshirt, t-shirts, wind shirt, golf shirts, new denim shirt, and for the first time ever, fitted hats! Thanks to alumnus Joe Hagan's ('82 captain) suggestion, I have purchased fitted hats for the varsity this year. I always have hesitated to do so because it is impossible to size players in advance, not knowing who will be on the team. Joe suggested that if I buy a whole bunch, that whatever the varsity did not use, alumni may be interested in purchasing. So, after I hand out hats to players in March, I will make hats available to you. They are low-crown and range in size from 7 to 7 1/2. You can sign-up tonight to order a hat or any of these shirts (*We will continue to have such items available to our alumni. The hats came out great and players really liked them. We have come along way since the foam hats we had in the early 80's!*). We also have some scrapbooks from the '86, '91, '94, '95, '96, '98, and '99 seasons and a binder that has all previous alumni letters for your perusal.

Also, please see the list tonight to update your mailing and/or e-mail address. It is great to have so many of you on my e-mail address list; it makes it easy to keep you informed of events and news. We are still working on getting our

website going. It will be a Reading Baseball School website, but included will be an Alumni Club section (*this ends the notice that was distributed at the Alumni Dinner in January*).

Next Event: Alumni Dinner 2001

The next Alumni Dinner will again be (tentatively) on the first Sunday evening in January, the 7th. Hopefully we will return to On the Border. I will send all alumni a postcard in December confirming the date, time, and place. Hope you can all make it (actually, it wouldn't be good if you all made it, 'cause that would be about 150 guys and I would get stuck with a bar bill that would force me to sell my house. But 30-40 guys would be great!)

More Alumni News

In addition to the news that was distributed at the Alumni Dinner, here is some more happenings about our alumni. Another alumnus who will soon be married is **Chris Foley ('94)**. Coaches and players got to meet Chris' lovely fiancée, Victoria, as she and Chris came to Cooperstown this year to see the team play (maybe Chris had told Victoria about the game his team played in Cooperstown in 1994: that was a 13-0 win where Tom Fratto hit 3-homers, Langone threw a 1-hitter with 16K's game, played in 40 degree weather. I'll continue to digress as I think about that '94 team. That club won its first six games by a combined score of 74-0, finished the regular season at 19-1, and gave up only 27 runs all season. Opponents batted .149 against our pitching that had a team ERA of 0.99). Chris was our leadoff hitter and leftfielder on that

great team and he also helped us out this year as a volunteer assistant. It was a bonus for our program to have the benefit of Chris' work ethic and competitive nature. Best of luck to Chris and Victoria. Congratulations to **Brett Matthews ('84)** and his wife, Ginger, on the birth of their third child, Parker (now 11 mos. old). Brett, Ginger, and all three children (Skyler, age 5 and Sumner, age 3.5) were at the Alumni Game. It was great to see Brett who was one of Reading's premier football-baseball athletes and a terrific guy. Joe and Kim Hagan are expecting their fourth child. They already have three boys, Sean, Taidghe, and Daniel. They are great kids (which is not surprising, knowing their parents) and the older two boys regularly attend our baseball school. One of our very favorite alumni, Gary d'Entremont, and his wife, Nicole, are expecting their first child in November. d'Ent is one of the world's best people and has established a reputation as an outstanding teacher at RMHS. In addition to teaching and attending child birth classes, d'Ent also found the time to train for, and successfully run in a marathon. Gary ran the 26+ miles in under 4 hours, an amazing feat, especially when you realize that a marathon equals over 384 homeruns! (which, coincidentally is close to the number of homeruns that d'Ent's team ran at the beginning of one particular practice in 1987). Last but not least, **Paul and Diane Sumner ('91)** are expecting their first child in March. If s/he turns out to be smart, athletic, and good-looking, then Paul will have Diane to thank. Just kidding; we all know Paul is not only a great athlete, but an equally exceptional person. Congratulations and best of luck to all of our recent, and soon-to-be, alumni parents.

Probably all of you have fond memories of your playing days with Reading Youth Baseball. A couple alumni who are creating great memories for kids these days are **Dan Jones ('78)** and Dan Robinson. They are the coaches of the major league Indians and Giants, respectively. They each did a terrific job with their teams this spring. In fact, they faced each other in the World Series where Dan Robinson's Giants prevailed, two games to one. It makes an old coach feel good to see two of his former players doing an excellent job teaching and coaching the game we all love. I just hope the two Dan's remember to teach their teams the special bunt defense (you alumni remember "The Special", don't you? That's the bunt defense we practice every day and use it in games about once every ten years!).

You already read about Bob Macaluso's head coach position at Muhlenberg College. Well, at the end of that season, Bob headed to Cape Cod to be an assistant coach for the Brewster Whitecaps. Scott Farris and I had a chance to see Maco and his team play one night and it was great to see Bob in uniform. Maco is one guy that always looks good in the uniform; he just *looks* like a ballplayer should look. Anyway, after a slow start, Brewster came on strong as the season progressed, captured first place in their division and won the playoffs. Congratulations to Bob and his team for their great accomplishment.

Steve Rulison had to give up his playing career at Bowdoin because of chronic knee problems, but he has stayed very involved in baseball. In fact, Head Coach Mike Connolly has utilized Steve as an assistant coach. Steve helps with throwing some BP, hitting fungoes, and working with the outfielders. We are glad that Steve has

been able to stay involved in college baseball everyday. His exceptional leadership and enthusiasm can only help the players at Bowdoin.

I imagine many more of you are coaching at some level, as well. Let us know about it so we can report it in our newsletter or on the website.

April: Reading Baseball Scholarship

I believe you all know about The Reading Baseball Scholarship (which, I must humbly say, is actually named "The Peter Moscariello Scholarship") that was created last year by Eileen Woods. Eileen put together a committee who have done a tremendous job raising money for the scholarship (which will be awarded for the first time after the 2001 season). The major fundraiser was a dinner-auction-dance that was held at the Woburn Elks in April. The fundraiser event was a phenomenal success, as a great number of people attended and *a lot* of money was raised. The evening was a lot of fun and I was both honored and touched by the support for our program and the scholarship. I was especially pleased to see many of my former players at the event (thanks to those guys and to all of you who donated to the scholarship). The following is a reprint of the notice that I had printed in the Daily Times Chronicle and also posted on our website:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many friends, family members, parents, players, former players, and youth league baseball/softball coaches for attending the recent Moscariello Scholarship Fundraiser at the Woburn Elks. This was a terrific

evening and, in my opinion, a wonderful tribute to the Reading High School Baseball program, rather than to one individual. I am proud to know that so many people hold Reading Baseball in high regard and that our program has made such a positive effect on so many outstanding young people. My special thanks go to Eileen and John Woods for their thoughtfulness in creating the award/scholarship and all the hard work they have done to bring their idea to fruition. My further thanks to the entire Scholarship Committee: Ann & Charlie Hardy, Diana & John Halsey, Debbie & Dave Polcari, June & John O'Keefe, Lucille & Don Kaloyanides, Vivian Craig, and Phil Vaccaro. They all did a remarkable job to make the event at the Elks both memorable and enjoyable for my family and me.

I feel most fortunate to have been Reading High School's Baseball coach for the last 22 years where I have been able to do something I love while, hopefully, making an impact on my student/athletes. I am pleased to know that, because of the efforts of the committee and the generosity of our community, deserving Reading High School baseball players will benefit from the scholarship for years to come. Again, my sincere thanks to everyone.

---Pete Moscariello

June: Alumni Game

We held our annual Alumni Game at Morton Field on a beautiful Sunday morning, June 4. This is always my favorite alumni event, mostly because, once we are on the field, there is always the possibility that I can make someone

run foul poles. The field was in great shape and, surprisingly, so were many of the players. We had one of our largest turnouts ever and a representation of players from the three decades and this event was, as always, a lot of fun. The players who participated were: Mike Moscariello '77, **Greg Bernard '82**, Kevin Mello '84, Brett Matthews '84, **Billy Keefe '84**, Scott Farris '85, **Jim Lucci '85**, **John Macaluso '86**, Bobby Lucci '87, Chris Curley '88, Darnell Canada '89, Franny McHugh '91, **Mark Torrisi '91**, Pete McHugh '92, **Chris Foley '94**, **John Feudo '95**, **Josh Driscoll '95**, Steve Langone '96, **Erik Olson '97**, **Dan Foley '98**, **Greg Porter '98**, Dennis Gramolini '99, **Jamie Lynch '99**, **Tyler Worden '99**, and **Jason Zerfas '99**.

Also on hand were **Coach Bryson**, **Coach Nelson** (who is a '76 alumnus), and **Dave Blanchard**, who is coaching our freshman team with Duane Sigsbury.

The game featured, as usual, prolific hitting, outstanding defensive plays, daring baserunning and stellar pitching. In addition, a highlight was a long homerun over the leftfield fence by '86 alumnus, John Macaluso. In fact the players from the '80's seemed to have the (weight) advantage over the younger guys from the '90's. Just goes to show the value of experience and maturity.

We also held some highly spirited skill contests. Bobby Lucci won the "Throw to Second Base" contest, while Brett Matthews won the "Throw from Centerfield" contest. Each player received a fitted Reading Baseball hat as their prize. Dave Blanchard, who played ball for Melrose High through 1995, won the "Homerun Hitting"

contest, and earned the title of "Honorary Reading Baseball Alumnus" as his reward. We set up the batspeed machine and Dennis Gramolini won the contest for greatest batspeed (97 mph).

A couple more awards were granted: Bill Keefe won the "Most Likely to Pull a Muscle Award", although he played great and did not get injured, and Josh "Java" Driscoll won the "WTP Award" for his consistent warning track power. In a most unpopular decision, Jim Lucci got the MVP Award because he can hit like Williams (Robin) and run like Henderson (Florence). Jim arrived late to the game (foul poles?), but since he got robbed of the award last year, we decided to give it to him this time. Actually, Looch is still an excellent player, as he does very well in an over 30 *baseball* (not slow pitch softball) league. By the way, Bobby Lucci and Scott Farris also continue their baseball careers in that league.

A special treat for all of us was the number of sons and daughters (and wives and fiancées) of alumni who came to the game. I apologize for not remembering all the names of the kids, so I will just say that John Macaluso, Kevin Mello, Brett Matthews, and Coach Nelson all had their children on hand. Each of the youngsters got a chance to hit and run the bases. Since that was fun for the kids (and dads), I have an idea: we could have our next Alumni Game in June (avoiding the Memorial Day weekend seemed to work out well this year) and we could invite alumni and families. Then we could have a father/son/daughter game in addition to our regular (big boy) game and also have a cookout right there at the field. Let me know what you think.

August: Alumni Golf Tournament

We had our second annual golf tournament on Saturday, August 26 and it was a huge success, anyway you "slice" it. Seventy-six golfers, including 23 alumni, hit the links on an absolutely beautiful Saturday afternoon at the Bradford Country Club. Here is a summary of the winners (alumni and coaches appear in bold print):

1st place: 9 under par: **Jon Cignetti, Scott McKenna, Matt Peabody, Duane Sigsbury**
2nd place: 8 under par: Dave Bryant, John Bennett, Michael Dennis, Barry Donovan
3rd place: 6 under par: **Ted Bryson, Dick Gillis, Jeff Bryson, Jim Schulz**
Longest Drive: **Matt Peabody & John Lonergan**
Closest to the Pin: Tim Moynihan
Vegas Hole: John Whitney
Putting Contest: **Dave Zaya, Mike Flint, Chris Jennings, Tony DeVita**

It was satisfying that the winning foursome was the only one totally comprised of former Reading Baseball players. These guys from the '93 team can still play when the pressure is on. Their 9-under par score is especially impressive considering the near-fatal golf cart accident that they endured on the course. So congratulations to Cigs, Sigs, Matt, and Scott for winning the tournament (although many alumni want an official investigation of the results. Apparently, some alumni golfers don't believe that the '93 foursome could actually *flip over their golf cart* and still shoot 9 under).

A complete list of all alumni who participated: **John O’Keefe (’71), Dan Jones (’78), Pete Michelini (’81), Lennie DeAngelo (’81), Jon Drew (’81), Mike Spurr (’82), E.J. Stanton (’82), John LaLiberte (’82),** Tom Zaya (’87), Steve Tomasello (’90), **John Lonergan (’90),** Franny McHugh (’91), Pete McHugh (’92), Matt Peabody (’93), Duane Sigsbury (’93), **Scott McKenna (’93),** Jon Cignetti (’93), **Dan Robinson (’94),** Dave Zaya (’94), **Mike Flint (’94), Anthony Caporale (’95),** Josh Driscoll (’95), and **Chris Smith (’96).**

Coach Bryson participated in the tournament, and was on the 3rd place team. Several parents of alumni and current players also played: Al Robinson, Joe Giordano, Mario Caporale, Neal Driscoll, John O’Keefe, Dave Bryant, and Sully Moscariello. Also on hand were for the event were alumni Coach **Jeff Nelson (’76),** Mike Moscariello (’77) and Jim Murphy (’93).

Finally, everyone who took part in the tournament shares in thanking Dan Robinson and the entire Robinson family. Dan, for the second consecutive year, did a fantastic job organizing the tournament. Dan, his family, and Steve Tomasello all worked very hard to obtain the course, organize the cookout, keep the cost to players reasonable, recruit players, obtain hole sponsors, and get prizes. Dan’s effort and enthusiasm to make this a great event is much appreciated by alumni, current players, and coaches.

Alumni in College Baseball

In addition to the previously mentioned alumni who are coaching in college, we still have a few active players in the college ranks. Jamie Gath played his freshman year at Bentley College. As I write this, he just finished his fall season with the team and played very well, so, hopefully, Jamie will get a lot of playing time next spring. Dave Polcari had an outstanding freshman year at Merrimack College. Dave was the team’s starting first baseman where he led the team in innings played and hits. He had 4 homers and was 3rd on the team in RBI. His .355 batting average was 10th in the conference. As a result of his exceptional freshman season, Dave was selected as 2nd team All-Conference!

Erik Olson completed his junior year at Boston College where he helped his team make the Big East Tournament and set the team record for wins in a season. Erik then pitched for Braintree of the Cranberry League this summer and finished the summer with Bob Macaluso’s Brewster team on the Cape. I had the opportunity to see Erik in Fort Myers in April, as Coach Bryson, Scott Farris, and I went down there for a weekend to see BC play the Red Sox, and other college teams. It was great to spend some time, off the field, with Erik, Steve Langone, and **Scott Reinold (’96)** who goes to school at St. Leo’s and annually makes the trip to Fort Myers to see his former teammates play.

Billy Olsen was a starter, mostly at first base, for Wentworth College. Bill made the decision to return to baseball after a couple years off, and it paid off. The last I heard was that Billy was doing well with a couple homeruns to his credit.

Dennis Gramolini was on the pitching staff at George Washington University. As a freshman in a Division I program, Dennis got some

innings and then honed his skills pitching for Lowell in the New England Collegiate Baseball League this summer. Dennis is going to transfer to Fordham University in January where he hopes to be an integral part of their pitching staff.

The class of 2000 will have some ballplayers moving on to the college level. Jesse Woods had a very good fall season at Wheaton College and should see a lot of playing time at first base in the spring. Jamie Cerretani is playing tennis this fall at Brown University and planning on playing baseball in the spring. Good luck to two of our captains from the 2000 championship team.

Just to let you know I am not one of those “my sport is the only sport that exists” guys, I will mention that our third captain from last spring, Connor Hardy, is a freshman at St. Anselm’s where he is playing well for the soccer team. Another player from the 2000 team, Chris Condon, is at Tilton Academy and playing football for Reading Alumnus, **Ken Hollingsworth** (‘75). This, I believe, is Chris’ first time playing football and I hear he caught four touchdown passes in a recent game! Chris will also play basketball and will again play for Coach Hollingsworth in baseball in the spring. Maybe we’ll see Chris if Tilton comes down to scrimmage us this year. Also, **Erik Kaloyanides** (‘98) is a starting guard for the Syracuse Orangemen football team. Big (288 lbs.) Erik just played at BC and it was great to hear the TV announcers call his name for making some great blocks.

Steve Langone Drafted by Los Angeles Dodgers

The entire Reading Baseball community congratulates Steve Langone (‘96) and his family for his selection in the 21st round of the Major League Baseball draft on June 6. Steve was assigned to Yakima (Washington) Bears, the Dodgers’ short-season A level affiliate in the Northwest League. Steve was drafted as a pitcher as a result of the incredible career he just completed at Boston College. Steve, we believe, is the first Reading Baseball player to be drafted since **Mark Angelo** (‘78) was drafted in the 18th round by the St. Louis Cardinals in 1983. More on Steve’s first season in pro ball later in this passage. Steve culminated a tremendous career at Boston College where he led his team to a school record number of wins and the Big East Tourney in 2000. Steve was named first team All Big East as a utility player and to the second team as a pitcher; a rare combination. This past season, Steve had an 8-2 record and *led the entire nation* in ERA for Division I; not too shabby. Steve’s ERA was 1.54 while the average Division I ERA is over 5.00!. He led the Eagles in wins (8), ERA, innings pitched (76), strikeouts (65), saves (2), complete games (7), and walked only 6 batters. Offensively, led the team in games played (55), doubles (22), walks (23), on base average (.410), and RBI (34); he was second in batting average (.338), runs (48), hits (69), RBI (34), and slugging pct. (.559), and third in homeruns (7). Of course, this success was not unprecedented: while at Reading High School, Steve compiled a 29-3 record on the mound and established numerous all-time pitching, hitting, and defensive records. He was a Middlesex League All-Star 3 times and led the league in ERA for 3 consecutive years. In

1996, his senior year, his 10-0 pitching record helped Reading win the Division II State Championship. He was Middlesex League MVP and a Boston Globe Division II Player of the Year. His accomplishments and awards are too many to continue to list here. Those of us who know Steve well understand what an outstanding young man he is, both on and off the field. I always said that even if Steve never pitched one inning for us, he would still be one of the most remarkable kids I've ever known.

Steve spent his summer playing for the Yakima Bears and he helped his team win the Northwest League championship. He had a 5-4 record with a 3.00 ERA. He struck out 79 and walked 5 in 84 innings in the regular season. Pitchers were on a strict pitch count, so Steve generally was allowed to go about 7 innings in a start. Thus, he had 4 occasions where he had a lead when he left the game only to have the bullpen blow it. Steve pitched well in some big game situations, including a night when Tommy Lasorda was the team's manager for the night. Steve let up a couple early runs, then stifled his opponent the rest of the way and left the game after 7 innings and a 6-2 lead (this was one of the games the bullpen blew it). He also pitched in the regular season finale which the Bears needed to win to make the playoffs. He again pitched well and left with the score tied, 2-2. His team then broke the game open in the next inning to get a playoff berth. In those best-of-five playoffs, Yakima was down, two games to one and Steve was on the mound for the do-or-die 4th game. Again, he came through, pitching well and earning the win. His team then won game five the next night for the championship. Steve will report to spring training in Vero Beach, Florida in February/March and at some

point during spring training find out where he will pitch next year. It is possible that he will be on the east coast, maybe in Vero Beach or in Wilmington, North Carolina.

Coach Nelson Retires from Reading Baseball

Coach Jeff Nelson, after 18 years of great service to our program, has decided to retire from baseball to give more time to his young family. Jeff's plate is already full with his head basketball and head golf coaching duties, as well as teaching, conducting basketball camps, and being a great family man. So although we had to see him go, we certainly understand his reasons.

Jeff has been one of the main reasons why our program has been so successful. There are not many junior varsity coaches who take their position as seriously as does Jeff. He has done an outstanding job teaching players the proper baseball fundamentals and helping them improve throughout the year. He prepares his players well for the next step, varsity baseball. Jeff has coached the freshman team, JV team, and varsity team over his 18 years, and has compiled a remarkable record. His winning pct. is probably .800; he has had undefeated teams at both the freshman and JV level. More importantly, he has helped hundreds of kids develop and grow under his tutelage.

On a personal note, Jeff has been, and will continue to be, a great friend to me. He has supported me in many ways, for which I will always be grateful. I know how fortunate I have been to have him coach in our program and to have him as a close friend. All of us at Reading

Baseball, past and present, thank Coach Nelson for all he has done. We will miss him and his great sense of humor at Washington Park, on the bus, in the Field House, and in the coach's office.

2000 Season

We started the new millennium with a blast, winning the Middlesex League Championship. It was a season in which 4 or 5 key elements had to fall into place perfectly and, fortunately, they did. As a result, we had another great season. The following is a game-by-game description of the entire season.

Reading 9 Burlington 3

Opening day for Reading Baseball 2000 was at Burlington and lefthander Russell Hunt was on the mound. Russell pitched 6 strong innings, gave up just two hits, and struck out 11. He also hit a 3-run homer around the leftfield pole in the first inning.

Reading 15 Melrose 5

Next, we traveled to Melrose and had a big offensive day on the way to a 15-5 victory. Jamie Cerretani pitched 5.1 scoreless innings to earn his first win. The offensive highlight came in the first inning when Cerretani and Jesse Woods smacked back-to-back homeruns. Jesse also had two doubles and 6 RBI.

Reading 7 Lexington 2

Game three was our annual game in Cooperstown, NY vs. Lexington. Despite the early spring date (April 16), we had absolutely beautiful, 70 degree weather all weekend. That not only made for a great ballgame, but made it pleasurable to walk around downtown and to hang out at KC's Corner Motel. The team played well at Doubleday Field, combining strong pitching, solid defense, and timely hitting to win 7-2. Russell Hunt again pitched well, yielding just three hits and fanning 11. Dave Kaloyanides had three hits and two RBI and Danny O'Keefe continued his hot hitting (8 hits in 3 games) with two hits and two RBI's.

Reading 1 Belmont 2

Reading suffered its first loss of the year in a good pitcher's duel. Jamie Cerretani yielded just two hits in a complete game effort while Belmont's pitcher gave up only three hits. A triple by Dan O'Keefe followed by a sacrifice fly by Russell Hunt accounted for Reading's only run. Jamie Cerretani pitched an outstanding game but suffered the tough-luck loss.

Reading 5 Woburn 2

We needed to bounce back fast and we did with a big win at pre-season favorite, Woburn. We got more excellent pitching from Russell Hunt, who held a strong Woburn team to 5 hits. We got off to a shaky start and trailed 2-0 after one inning, but we got one run back in the 2nd and then took the lead with a 2-run 5th inning. In that inning, Tim Bryant singled, Cerretani tripled him home, and Jesse Woods drove in the go-ahead run with a sacrifice fly. In the 6th inning, Connor Hardy singled with 2 outs and Pete Croft followed with a walk. After a wild pitch, Bryant delivered a clutch single to score both runners.

Reading 11 Watertown 0

After the Woburn game, the weather turned bad and there was a full week between games. Fortunately, we were able to stay sharp by engaging in everyone's favorite activity: multiple practice days in the Field House. (Do you know how many tennis balls guys have to pick up during that time indoors: 200 swings per player each day times 16 players for six consecutive 3-hour practices? You do the math). Anyway, when we got back outdoors, Hunt was on the mound again and he turned in an historic performance. The lefthander pitched a perfect game which included 18 strikeouts! He struck out the first 12 Watertown batters and only 3 balls were put in play all day. This is the third perfect game by a Reading pitcher in the last few years (Matt Stinson in '94 and Dennis Gramolini in '98). Hunt's 18 strikeouts is a "modern-day" record and eclipsed Bobby Lucci's previous record of 17 K's (Bob did his in a 6-inning game against a potent Gloucester club). To make his day complete, Russell also hit a grand slam homerun. Jamie Cerretani connected for two long homers over the leftfield fence at Victory Field.

Reading 11 Wakefield 0

We played our best all-around game to date, displaying superb pitching, solid defense, and strong

hitting against the Warriors. Jamie Cerretani pitched 6 innings of 4-hit ball to record his second win of the year. Mark DeMasse pitched a 1-2-3 7th inning. Offensively, Cerretani led the way with 3 doubles and 2 RBI and Jesse Woods went 3 for 3 and drove in 2 runs. Chris Condon and Dan O'Keefe each had 2 hits. Coach Mosc was ejected for tackling the umpire over a questionable call (just kidding; wanted to see if you were still paying attention).

Reading 4 Stoneham 3

This was a typical Stoneham-Reading game that was hotly contested from start to finish. Sophomore lefty Mark DeMasse got his first start on the mound and pitched well for 4.1 innings, limiting Stoneham to 3 runs. Tim Bryant came on in relief in the 5th inning with two on and one out and struck out the next two hitters. Down 3-1, Reading came back with a run in the 5th as Jesse Woods' base hit drove in Jamie Cerretani, who had singled and stole 2nd. The Rockets pulled ahead in the 6th when Dan O'Keefe doubled and Hunt got on via error (scoring Paul Melanson, who pinch ran for O'Keefe). Pete Croft then delivered a clutch single to right to score Hunt with the go-ahead run. Bryant retired Stoneham in the 7th to earn his first win of the season, 4-3.

Reading 11 Burlington 0

We boosted our record to 8-1 with our 4th win of the week and, coincidentally, the 3rd win by an 11-0 score. Russell Hunt continued his dominant pitching by hurling 5 shutout innings, giving up only 2 hits. Tim Bryant and Dave Buntzen each pitched an inning to preserve the shutout. The Rockets' bats were hot, pounding out 15 hits, including 8 extra base hits. Cerretani led the way with 2 triples, a double, and 4 RBI. Tim Bryant knocked in 2 runs with 2 triples. Jesse Woods, Chris Condon, and Pete Croft also had doubles.

Reading 8 Melrose 1

Jesse Woods drove in 2 runs and Jamie Cerretani pitched a 3-hitter in a game that featured a rain delay in the bottom of the 5th inning. Melrose scored a run in the 1st but Reading came back with 3 in the bottom of the 3rd inning. Reading thus held a 3-1 lead after 4 ½ innings when a heavy shower forced a delay. After the rain, Reading came out ready to play and scored 2 runs in the 5th and 2 more in the 6th to put the game away.

Reading 4 Belmont 1

Reading avenged its only loss of the season to this point by winning a tight ballgame at Belmont. Russell Hunt was on the mound, matched up with Belmont's Justin Kittle, who had stifled Reading in the first meeting. Kittle was tough again, but Reading managed to jump ahead in the 2nd inning on an RBI single by Hunt. RBI's by Jesse Woods and Chris Condon in the 3rd inning made the score 3-0 and Pete Croft drove in another run in the 4th. Belmont came back with one run in the 4th to make the score 4-1. Hunt shut down Belmont the rest of the way, completing a 2-hit, 9 strikeout performance.

Reading 2 Lexington 3

Reading suffered its second loss of the season as Lexington played very well at Morton Field on a Friday afternoon. Jamie Cerretani pitched well in 6.1 innings, but yielded 3 runs in the loss. But Reading could not string together enough offense to pull out this game, leaving 11 men on base. The game was scoreless until the 5th when Lexington combined a walk, a strikeout victim that reached first base, and 3 hits to score 3 runs. We came back with two runs on RBI singles by Dave Kaloyanides and Dan O'Keefe. Neither team scored in the 6th and sophomore lefty Mark DeMasse came on in relief in the 7th with two runners in scoring position and got out of the jam. Reading managed to get the tying run on base in the 7th, but could not get him in, ending Reading's 7-game winning streak.

At this point, our record was 10-2 and our lead in the Middlesex League pennant race was now down to 2 games. Both Woburn and Winchester had 4 losses to Reading's two. With a 4-game week ahead, including one game with Woburn and two with Winchester, the league race was far from over. But you know me; no worries, Mate!

Reading 12 Woburn 0

Reading met the big game challenge versus Woburn, aided by 8 walks and 5 runs in the first inning on the way to a 12-0 win. Russell Hunt again pitched an outstanding ball game, limited Woburn's potent offense to just 3 hits over 5 innings. Tim Bryant and Matt Chasse, each pitched a scoreless inning in relief. The offense was led by Dave Kaloyanides (2

hits, 3 runs, 1 RBI), Connor Hardy (2 hits, 2 run, 3 RBI), and Dan O'Keefe (1 hit, 3 RBI).

Reading 8 Winchester 5

There was no time to savor the big win vs. Woburn as a make-up game with Winchester was on the very next day.

We sent Mark DeMasse to the mound for a very important start and he responded well, holding a strong-hitting Winchester team scoreless for 4 innings while his teammates built a 7-0 lead. Reading scored a run in the 2nd inning on an RBI by Connor Hardy and then got the big blow in the 4th inning. With two outs and the bases loaded, Jamie Cerretani drove a ball to deep left field, into the parking lot at Manchester Field for a grand slam. Jesse Woods, Chris Condon, and Dave Kaloyanides all followed with single for two more big runs and a 7-0 lead. But Winchester is a good-hitting team and began to come back. They scored one in the 5th and then got to DeMasse for 4 more in the 6th. Tim Bryant came on in relief to record two big outs and keep the score at 7-5. Reading got a key run in the 7th on Dan O'Keefe's single and then Bryant struck out the side in the bottom of the 7th to save the win.

As a result of wins vs. Woburn and Winchester, we were 12-2 and in a position to clinch at least a tie for the league title with our next win. With no days off, we traveled to Wakefield, intent to get a piece of the title.

Reading 9 Wakefield 4 (9 innings)

Well, it wasn't easy, but we did it! We broke open a scoreless game on a homerun by Jamie Cerretani, followed by a Jesse Woods triple and an RBI single by Dave Kaloyanides. Wakefield scored a run in the 4th to make it 2-1 and Reading got one in the 6th on a sacrifice fly by Cerretani. Wakefield came up in the bottom of the 7th down 3-1 and having mustered only 4 hits versus Cerretani's pitching. Jamie retired the first two hitters, but an infield hit and an error kept Wakefield's hopes alive. The next batter launched a triple to tie the game at 3-3. This was not a good thing for the Rockets nor for Coach's gastrointestinal system. Fortunately, Cerretani retired the next batter on a nice play by 3rd baseman Tim Bryant to send the game to extra innings. In the 8th Cerretani hit his second homer of the game, but Wakefield responded with a triple and sacrifice fly to again tie the game. In

the 9th, Reading's bats finally came to life as Dan O'Keefe led off with a triple. A walk, a nice bunt by Peter Croft, triples by Bryant and Chris Condon, and a double by Woods accounted for 5 big runs. Cerretani retired Wakefield in the 9th and Reading had it's most exciting win of the season and a piece of the Middlesex League Championship! We really hadn't had many truly exciting or close games, so I guess it was nice to clinch the title on a thriller like this one.

Reading 9 Watertown 2

Now we needed one more win to clinch the league title outright and we got it done with a win over Watertown at Morton Field. The Rockets scored in each of the first four innings to build a 9-0 lead for pitcher Mark DeMasse. The sophomore lefty pitched 2-hit ball for four innings with 7 K's before giving way to Matt Chasse and Dave Bunten who combined to pitch the final three innings. Reading had 8 hits and 10 walks; leading the way were Chris Condon and Dave Kaloyanides who each had two hits and an RBI. It was great to be crowned league champs at home in front of a big crowd of nearly 20 fans!

Reading 1 Winchester 2

With a record of 14-2 and the title under our belt, we wanted to continue to win and get our best possible tournament seed. Russell Hunt and Winchester's Dave Sullivan hooked up in the best pitcher's duel of the season and, unfortunately, Winchester came out on top. The game was scoreless through five innings as Hunt yielded just one hit and Sullivan just four. In the bottom of the 6th, Jamie Cerretani singled, stole second, and scored on Jesse Woods' two-out single to left. Reading took the 1-0 lead into the 7th and Hunt quickly retired the first two Winchester hitters. But the Sachems stayed alive with a bloop single to right center and the next hitter followed with a walk. Winchester's next hitter then drilled a double to left center to score two runs and give them a 2-1 lead. Pretty depressing: just like the Wakefield game, we had them with two outs and none on and ended giving up two runs. We gave it a shot by getting a runner to 2nd base in the bottom of the 7th, but couldn't score. It was too bad for Russell, who pitched brilliantly. But we just did not hit well enough to support our pitcher.

Reading 10 Stoneham 8

We wanted to avoid losing two in a row (do you know we have not lost two in a row in over seven seasons; something like 165 consecutive games? Seems pretty impressive until you figure the track team has gone 29 seasons without losing *one* in a row!). Anyway, we traveled to rival Stoneham to play a make-up game *on the day after the Senior Prom*, which is always an adventure. Somehow, just like Superman, our guys changed out of their tuxes and into their uniforms and came out flying! We had our biggest inning of the year, scoring 9 runs in the top of the first. Pete Croft led off with a single and after two walks and an error, Dave Kaloyanides singled home one run. Chris Condon followed with a long double to bring home two more runs and Tim Bryant's single scored two more. Croft then singled again, Russell Hunt drew his second walk of the inning and then Jamie Cerretani hit a 3-run double. Pete Croft led off with a single and after two walks and an error, Dave Kaloyanides singled home one run. Chris Condon followed with a long double to bring home two more runs and Tim Bryant's single scored two more. Croft then singled again, Russell Hunt drew his second walk of the inning and then Jamie Cerretani hit a 3-run double. Down 9-0, Stoneham came back strong in the 2nd inning with 5 runs and then scored 3 more in the 3rd, cutting Reading's lead to 9-8. Apparently, there was some Kryptonite in our rosin bag. Trying not to think about the possibility of blowing the game after a 9-run lead, the coaches called the team together to tell the players, "*Relax, it's only a game, and your Senior Prom memories are really what's important today*" (just kidding again; I hope this joke didn't make you guys who played in the super-intense 70's and 80's throw up). Back to the ballgame: Mark DeMasse came on in relief of Cerretani and was effective, preserving the precarious one run lead. Reading scored an insurance run in the 5th and DeMasse got out of a bases-loaded jam in the 6th to keep the score at 10-8. After we went down in the top of the 7th, DeMasse retired the Spartans in order in the bottom of the inning for a hard-earned victory.

We finished the Middlesex League season at 15-3, ultimately winning the league by three games over 2nd place Lexington.

Reading 8 Wilmington 3

This was the first round of the annual Wilmington Invitational Tournament. Tim Bryant got his first start

of the year and pitched well. Tim gave up 3 runs and struck out 7 in a complete game win. Jesse Woods and Dave Kaloyanides led the offense with 3- and 2-run homers, respectively.

Reading 3 Malden Catholic 4

We lost to MC in the finals of the Wilmington Invitational in a tightly played contest. Reading scored first as Jamie Cerretani doubled home Pete Croft, who had singled. MC responded with 2 runs against Matt Chasse, who was getting his first start of the season. After falling behind 3-1, the Rockets closed the gap to 3-2 when Paul Melanson's ground out scored Dave Kaloyanides. Russell Hunt relieved Chasse in the 4th and got out of a jam by picking runners off 2nd and 1st base, consecutively. But MC got to Hunt for an insurance run in the 5th inning. We made one last bid in the 7th, scoring one run and then getting runners to 1st and 2nd with two outs. But MC retired the final batter to seal a 4-3 win. This was a repeat pattern of our other losses: we pitched well, played good defense, but did not hit well enough. Each of our losses ended with the tying run in scoring position. Amazing and frustrating that it happened four times.

Nevertheless, we finished the regular season with a 16-4 record and another Middlesex League championship, our second in a row and our fourth in five years! *The Boston Globe* has us ranked in their Top 10 again this year. The team was seeded #3 in the Division II North tournament and waited to play the winner of the Gloucester/Whittier Tech game on Saturday, June 3 at Morton Field.

Reading 5 Gloucester 1

It is always great to play at home in the tourney and we drew the Gloucester Fisherman in the first round. The game was played on a beautiful Saturday afternoon at Morton Field. We sent our ace, Russell Hunt, to the mound and he gave another outstanding performance, yielding only one run on three hits, while striking out nine in a complete game performance. We jumped ahead in the second inning when Jesse Woods walked and Chris Condon reached on an error. Dave Kaloyanides singled to load the bases and Dan O'Keefe was hit by a pitch to drive in Woods. A second run scored on a double play ball, so we led, 2-0. Gloucester closed the gap to 2-1 in the fourth, but Reading responded with three

runs in the fifth inning: Peter Croft led off with a walk and Russell Hunt's sacrifice bunt was misplayed to put runners on first and second. Jamie Cerretani, who was not feeling well and was questionable then launched a triple into the trees in right center for two runs. Jesse Woods followed with an RBI single to make the score 5-1. Hunt retired the final six Gloucester batters in order to close out the win.

Reading 0 Stoneham 5

We followed the Gloucester win with a Sunday graduation and a Monday quarterfinal round game vs. arch rival Stoneham. We knew that this was a tough matchup because Stoneham had been playing well and we didn't get a practice day after the Gloucester game because of graduation. But no excuses; we had beaten them twice and had them on our home field in front of possibly the largest Morton crowd I've ever seen. But this day was to be Stoneham's. We fell behind 1-0 in the 2nd inning and the score stayed that way through four. We had runners in scoring position every inning but could not deliver the hit to tie the score. Stoneham broke the game open with four runs in the fifth, as we used three pitchers that inning to try to stop the rally. Stoneham held on to the 5-0 lead and advanced to the semifinals, ending our season earlier than we had expected.

Despite the early exit (we had reached the semifinals or further in each of the previous six years) we were proud to have accomplished our annual primary goal of winning the Middlesex League championship. This was a team that worked hard together and used excellent pitching, great defense, and timely hitting to go 15-3 in the tough Middlesex League. This year's seniors leave the program having won back-to-back titles and having made their mark in the rich history of Reading Baseball.

The players deserve the credit for performing well on the field, but none of it would be possible without the talents and effort of our assistants coaches. As always, Coach Bryson provided his wisdom, insight, and loyalty. Ace

does a lot of behind the scenes work that only those of us close to the situation understand and fully appreciate. Ted is adept at making suggestions during the ball games; always thinking ahead and anticipating when we might want to get a relief pitcher ready or try a hit-and-run. He has the ability to stay calm and rational in the tightest of spots. For example, when we were almost blowing our 9-run lead at Stoneham, the Spartans had the bases loaded, 1-out and had cut our lead to 9-8. Ace suggested a pitchout to stop a squeeze, and it worked perfectly, snuffing their rally and preserving our win. That's just one example of what Ace does every day. I always worry about him being under appreciated, but I think he knows how grateful we are for what he has done for all of us.

I already mentioned that Chris Foley did a nice job helping out this year, but I haven't yet written about Scott Farris' contributions. Scott would love to coach full time in our program (actually, I think he wants *my* job), but he owns a business which, as you might imagine, takes up much time and energy (Romano's Pizza, Salem, NH 603-898-0788: their pizza and calzone are excellent; give them a try. That's a free plug for Scott). Yet Scott helps us a couple times a week, as his schedule allows. He does a good job with our hitters, giving them individual instruction and attention. He also provides a good role model and work ethic for our players to emulate. Scott was an intense, driven player in '84-'85 who only cared about winning. He loves Reading Baseball and wants today's players to work at and respect the game as much as he does. He has developed a good rapport with the players and I believe his attitude is having a positive impact on them.

For those of you who want to know how the 2000 club stacked up against some of our other great teams, the statistics show that this was one of Reading Baseball's top seasons. The team batting average was .318 and the team recorded the 4th highest run total of all-time. The club also ranked in the top five teams all-time for doubles, triples, RBI, and Slugging Percentage. Defensively, the 18 team errors was the second fewest ever recorded, as was the .970 fielding average. The pitching was very strong with a team ERA of 1.79 and a strikeout:walk ratio of better than 3:1.

The top hitters, by batting average were Jamie Cerretani (.500), Jesse Woods (.424), Dave Kaloyanides (.397), and Dan O'Keefe (.333). The top RBI men were Cerretani (26) and Woods (25); Cerretani also led the team in runs (26), hits (31), doubles (8), homeruns (6), walks (16), slugging pct.(1.016), and on base average (.625). Kaloyanides led the team in stolen bases (8). On the mound, Russell Hunt led the team with a 7-1 record, 79 strikeouts, and a 0.78 ERA. Cerretani had a 4-2 record, Mark DeMasse was 3-0, and Tim Bryant was 2-0.

Reading Baseball players received well-deserved post season honors as follows:

Jamie Cerretani was selected as the Middlesex League's Most Valuable Player. He won the league's triple crown, as he led the circuit in batting average, homeruns, and RBI! He was also named to both the *Boston Globe* and the *Boston Herald* All-Scholastic Teams, and was chosen as the *Daily Times Chronicle*

Player of the Year. Jame set (or tied) Reading Baseball single-season records for Runs, Homeruns, On Base Average, and Slugging Average. His batting average, RBI, Hits, and Doubles were the second highest single-season total all-time. Jamie had arguably the best single-season offensive performance of any player in the last 24 years.

Russell Hunt led the Middlesex League in the Triple Crown categories for pitchers: Most Wins, Most Strikeouts, and Lowest ERA. He was selected to the Middlesex League All-Star Team and was named *Daily Times Chronicle* Pitcher of the Year. Russell finished his fantastic career tied for the second most career wins all-time (16) and is second in career strikeouts. He had an overall (including tournament) record of 17-2. He has the single game strikeout record (18) and is the only pitcher to throw two no-hitters in his career; one of them being a perfect game. Russell's 79 strikeouts this year were the 2nd highest all-time season total, behind Steve Langone's 82, and his ERA was 4th best. Russell came to our program with tremendous pitching potential and he reached that potential with a truly fantastic career.

Jesse Woods was voted to the Middlesex League All-Star Team as a catcher; Jesse made the team last year, as well. Jesse had a tremendous career as a 3-year starter and set all-time Reading Baseball career records for RBI (62), Times On Base (115), Doubles (14), and Most Chances Without an Error (301). Jesse is 2nd all-time in Hits and At Bats, 3rd all-time in Walks and Putouts, and

4th in Homeruns. His .402 career batting average is 7th all-time, but 2nd best (behind David George) for players who started for three years. Jesse was not only a prolific hitter, but also a very good defensive player at three positions, and a kid who loved Reading Baseball and gave us three years of dedication and great performances.

We held our annual post season cookout/awards at Coach's parents house and had a great time, as always. I got my chance to entertain the crowd with an assortment of old and new jokes which I confidently delivered despite constant heckling from the audience. I have given this much thought and have realized that my stand-up comedy routine is getting old. So I will try something new next year. Maybe a puppet show.

Later, at the awards ceremony, Jesse Woods was given the Reading Baseball Coaches Award, presented in memory of Albert and Elizabeth Olson. Danny O'Keefe received the Larry O'Keefe Basketball-Baseball Award. We presented the second annual Reading Baseball Contributor Award, given to an individual who has supported our program in extraordinary ways. Eileen Woods (Jesse's mom) was the recipient because of the great work she did to create and raise funds for the Reading Baseball Scholarship. The captains for 2001 were announced: Tim Bryant, Peter Croft, and Dave Kaloyanides.

Finally, we thanked parents and friends for their year-long support. The captains had a chance to speak and the coaches were touched by the gifts and kind words bestowed on us by the players. The cookout/awards ceremony is

always a highlight, not just because we celebrate another great season, but also because players and parents get to see how much the coaches care about our players and enjoy the opportunity to be part of their lives.

Subvarsity Seasons

Both the JV and the Freshman teams had excellent seasons, as has been the pattern for many years. Coach Nelson, in his final season, had another great year with his JV squad, compiling a record of 16-1-1. As you've read earlier in this letter, we will miss Jeff and his great contributions to our players and program. The Freshman team, coached by Duane Sigsbury and assisted by Dave Blanchard, had a super season, winning 16 consecutive games and losing only the finale, to Lowell. The 16-1 record was the best freshman record since Coach Nelson's 1984 freshman team went that went 17-0. Our group of freshman (now sophomores) have some talented kids, and Duane and Dave did a great job teaching them how to play Reading Baseball and getting them ready for the next level. I feel very, very fortunate to have subvarsity coaches that work so hard and are dedicated to our program and players. Unfortunately for our program, Duane has decided not to return to coach this spring (he is a varsity assistant in football and the head basketball coach in Woburn). Coach Sigsbury did a fabulous job as our freshman coach for two years and we will miss his enthusiasm and energy. We will miss him and will always be grateful for what he's done to help our program, both at RMHS and through various youth baseball programs. So thanks and best of luck to Coach Sigsbury from all of us.

Summer Rockets

The Summer Rockets were coached this year by Ryan Carroll and assisted by Greg Porter and Dan Foley, all 1998 teammates. These guys did a tremendous job handling a team of 20 players, getting them all playing time, teaching them about what we expect from Reading Baseball players, and then winning the league championship. The Summer Rockets to won the South Division title easily and then clean-swept the playoffs, beating Lowell two games to none and then beating rival Chelmsford in two straight. Many thanks to Ryan, Greg, and Dan for volunteering their summer free time to work with our underclassmen players and make a great contribution to our program. Incidentally, this was the 2nd straight summer championship for young coaches Carroll and Foley as they coached Reading's Pony League team to a championship the previous summer.

2001 Preview

After reading about the success we have had not only in 2000, but also in the past seven years, the question is "Can we do it again?" Well, I guess we *could* be in the hunt again this year if all goes well. But without Hunt, Woods, Cerretani, et al., it will be really tough. This is especially true because the league will be much better this year. Lexington, who finished in 2nd place, has virtually their whole team back, including an outstanding lefty pitcher. Stoneham has all their pitchers returning, and Burlington and Winchester will be good. We will need several players to really come through with big years, as often some of our seniors do. We will count upon our tricaptains, Pete Croft, Dave

Kaloyanides, and Tim Bryant, all of whom had good season last spring. But, a reality is that our pitching may not be as dominant as it has been in the past several years. I think Tim Bryant and Mark DeMasse who combined for five wins last year should do well, but we need to develop at least two more reliable pitchers. Our catching status is up in the air. We have a senior, a junior, and a couple sophomore catching candidates, but none with varsity experience. As always, we will have to play with a lot of intensity and enthusiasm to bring our abilities to a higher level. I know you are thinking, "We've heard this before, Coach is sandbagging, downplaying the team's chances again." But this time *I really mean it*. Honest.

2001 Schedule

Here is the 2001 Middlesex League schedule, hot off the presses. At this early date, it is still subject to change, so we will post the final schedule, including non-league games and scrimmages, on the website in the near future.

<u>Date</u>		<u>Opponent</u>	
4/11		Melrose	
4/16		Lexington	10:00 am
4/18	at	Belmont	10:00 am
4/20		Woburn	10:00 am
4/23	at	Wakefield	
4/25		Winchester	
4/26	at	Watertown	
4/30		Burlington	
5/2	at	Stoneham	
5/4	at	Melrose	
5/7	at	Lexington	
5/9		Belmont	
5/11	at	Woburn	
5/14		Wakefield	

5/16 at Winchester
 5/18 Watertown
 5/21 at Burlington
 5/23 Stoneham

This schedule is subject to change. We do not yet know if/when we will play Lexington in Cooperstown, nor do we have dates for our non-league games at this time. The finalized schedule will be posted on our website.

Improvements in the Program

We hope to have a few improvements in place for the 2001 season. We are pretty sure that we will have a new indoor cage, replacing our current one that has been hanging since 1978. Some of you older alumni will remember how we used to raise and lower the net: we had five guys go up to the balcony, untie ropes that were wrapped around the posts, lower the net, then tie off the ropes again. More recently, we have used the far more convenient method of cranking the net up and down. We will miss the old net which has served us well. Maybe we can sell little pieces of the net for ridiculously high prices like the Celtics did with the parquet floor of the Boston Garden.

There is a possibility that we may have some kind of storage shed behind the backstop at Morton. It may be similar to the one that the track team uses, stationed between the field house and the football field. Our shed would be used to store game bases, L-screens, and the wagon-full of equipment. Another change, although not necessarily an improvement, is the new bat regulations that go into effect in 2001. All bats now must have a barrel with maximum diameter of 2 5/8" (down from 2 3/4) and the difference between the bat length and weight can be no more than 3 (previously was 5). That

means that a 33 inch bat cannot weigh less than 30 ounces. Those extra two ounces of weight could make a difference in generating bat speed. Finally, we may have a scoreboard at Morton this year. Eileen Woods, whom you read about earlier, is spearheading a campaign to raise funds for the scoreboard. At this time, we think the scoreboard would be placed just beyond the fence in left-center field. I think a scoreboard would be a nice addition to Morton. I would like someday to have that field fenced in completely and to have dugouts installed. But, since Morton Field is considered a field hockey field with a baseball diamond attached, it may not be possible to put up a fence that does not interfere with field hockey. The Curse of the *Mimbino* strikes again!

Coaching Staff 2001

With Jeff Nelson's retirement and the loss of Duane Sigsbury, we had to replace two outstanding coaches. We were able to fill one spot immediately, naming Dave Blanchard as the new JV coach. Dave, who is also a varsity assistant football coach in Reading, did a great job working with Duane and the freshman baseball team last spring. Dave also is on our Reading Baseball School staff and is an excellent communicator and technician. He has a great rapport with kids and is on his way to becoming an outstanding young coach, so we are thrilled to have him on our staff. Now we hope to fill the freshman job sometime this month.

All-Time Records

Here is a nice, concise look at the individual player records that have been established between 1977 and 2000. They can't be called all-time records because there may be some better marks set prior to '77. but these are the records to which we have access. They are fun to look at, anyway, and represent some great accomplishments from some great players. The records appear in a table that doesn't fit well in this 2-column newsletter format, so the records appear on the last page of this letter (if you are reading this online, you can download "All Time Records")

Trivia Time

I know you love the trivia questions (even though nobody every writes, calls, or e-mails the answers to me), so here we go:

Question 1: We've mentioned the three Reading pitchers to throw a perfect game; can you name the only opposing pitcher who has thrown a perfect game against us?

Question 2: In this letter, we highlighted Steve Langone's early professional career, and also mentioned that Mark Angelo played pro ball. Name the two other Reading players since 1977 to play professional baseball.

Question 3: Dave Kaloyanides will be one of our captains next year and his big brother, Erik, was a captain in 1988. Name the other pairs of brothers who were captains in their respective senior years.

Contact me with your answers to win the following prizes:

First Prize: Tickets to a Patriots game
*Last Prize: Tickets to **two** Patriots games*

That's just a joke, but I will provide a hat, shirt, or something similar to the first person with the correct answer to all three questions.

Now how about some questions to really test your baseball knowledge. This is our first ***Who Wants To Be A Millionaire; Reading Baseball Edition***. No life lines allowed, so you are on your own!

\$100

What does the "R" stand for on our team caps?

- A. Reading
- B. Red Rovers
- C. Red Sox
- D. Yankees

\$500

Which of these pairs of our league championships were **not** considered "back-to-back"?

- A. 1980 & 1981
- B. 1996 & 1997
- C. 1999 & 2000
- D. 1991 & 1994

\$1000

Which of the following is one of our verbal signals for a pickoff play?

- A. "Let's get an out."
- B. "Let's get it on."
- C. "Let's get out of here."
- D. "Hey, Bobby, cover 2nd; we're gonna try to pick him off."

\$2000

Which is considered the "*Official Movie of Reading Baseball*"?

- A. Field of Dreams
- B. The Natural
- C. Bang the Drum Slowly
- D. Tommy Boy

\$5000

Which of the following nighttime activities probably *never* happened during a Coopertown trip?

- A. Wrestling in the motel room
- B. Putting magazine pictures in the coaches' room
- C. Sneaking out of the motel and onto Doubleday Field (1993)
- D. Getting a good night's sleep

\$8,000

Which of the following professional athletes did *not* appear in an episode of *Seinfeld*?

- A.. Paul O'Neil
- B. Derek Jeter
- C. Keith Hernandez
- D. Jim Murphy

\$16,000

In the famous Abbott and Costello's "Who's On First" routing, who *is* on first?

- A. Who
- B. What
- C. I Don't Know
- D. Jim Murphy

\$32,000

What do the following five players have in common: Jeff Miller, Mike Gibson, Keith Richards, Tom Fratto, Jamie Cerretani?

- A. They all hit two or more homeruns in a single game.
- B. They all are featured in Billy Blanks' new Tae Bo video.
- C. Have actually read their Reading Baseball Notebook.
- D. They all hit a ball into Mimville and lived to tell about it.

\$64,000

Which of the following is a famous line spoken by Tom Hanks' character in "A League of Their Own"?

- A. "There's no crying in baseball."
- B. "There's no lying in baseball."
- C. "There's no spying in baseball."
- D. "Hey, Madonna, wanna come up to my room and see my fungo bat?"

\$125,000

Which motel have we never stayed at in Cooperstown?

- A. The Cooperstown Motel
- B. The Deer Run Motel
- C. KC's Corner Restaraunt & Motel
- D. any place halfway decent

\$250,000

Which of the following has never been the coach of our JV team?

- A. Jeff Nelson
- B. Ted Bryson
- C. Bob Macaluso
- D. That guy with the really gravelly voice who plays the Indians' manager in the movie, "Major League"

\$500,000

What song did the players on the '93 team sing in the showers after practice (true story)?

- A. "Take Me Out to the Ballgame"
- B. "Centerfield" by John Fogarty
- C. "Talkin' Baseball" (the Willie, Mickey, and the Duke song) by Terry Cashman
- D. "Bohemian Rhapsody" by Queen

and for \$1,000,000:

Three of these lines were actually shouted at the opposing pitcher by one of our players during the bench-jockeying days of 1977-1982. Which one was not? (another true story)

- A. "Hey, Rag, you got a higher one?"
- B. "I hate you, Rag!"
- C. "I hope you are dead, Sucker!"
- D. "Why can't we all just get along?"

Website

I know that many of you have visited our website because I have had much positive feedback on it. I am glad that you enjoy it; I think it is really great. I enjoy providing announcements, photos, results, etc. and Dick Gillis does a great job posting our stuff in an attractive, readable manner. This letter will be

available to download and we will always post schedules, results, stats, news, and all matters of alumni interest. We also have some great photos of the varsity team and of the alumni. My current favorite is the one with Coach Nelson, Kevin Mello, John Macaluso, and Brett Matthews and their sons at the Alumni Game. Please visit the site at

www.readingbaseballschoo.com

and if you have anything you would like to have included on the site, let me know.

Seven Super Seasons

The decade of the 90's was certainly good to Reading Baseball, and the new millennium has started off pretty good, too. Here is a summary of how we have done in the past seven seasons:

5 Middlesex League Championships (and two 2nd place finishes)

7 tournament appearances, including six consecutive appearances in the Division II North Semifinals or Finals

7 times ranked in the Boston Globe's top twenty in Eastern Mass (all Divisions)

4 Wilmington Invitational Tournament Titles

1 Division II State Championship

110-16 (.873) Middlesex League Record

10- 3 (.769) Non-League Record

18- 6 (.750) MIAA Tournament Record

138-25 (.847) Overall Record

20 Years Ago

It was 20 years ago this past spring that our 1980 team won the Middlesex League championship in one of the most exciting, tension-packed seasons we've ever had. That club won its first 13 games (back then our teams were perennial slow-starters, but this team broke the mold) and finished at 17-3. To have an idea of how exciting and clutch this team was, of their 20 regular season games, 11 were decided by one or two runs and we won 10 of them! The team was led by tri-captains **Andy Hodges**, **Darrell Neuffer**, and **Jory McKinley**. Our usual starting lineup was senior **Dick O'Conner** (LF) leading off, senior 2nd baseman **Mark O'Brien** batting second, Hodges 3rd, either pitching or playing RF, McKinley behind the plate at batting cleanup (**Dave Powers**, who was to be the starting catcher on the '81 championship team, also started a few games at catcher when McKinley was out with a broken jaw), Neuffer played CF and batted 5th, senior **Terry Dennehy** (3b) batted 6th, junior shortstop **Larry Berg** hit 7th, **Penn Michelini** (either RF or pitcher) was 8th, and junior **Bill Tompkins** (1st base) was 9th.

This was a team with excellent pitching (Hodges was 7-1 with a 1.69 ERA, Michelini was 7-2, 3.29. Junior **Bob MacKay** was 2-0 and Neuffer was 1-0). They could hit, too, with Hodges leading the way at .463, followed by O'Connor (.379), Berg (.367), and Dennehy (.345). Defensively we were suspect (58 errors), but seemed to come up with the big play when we needed it (for example, both games against Belmont ended with us throwing out the potential tying run at the plate). I will always remember the title-clinching game at Watertown. We had the lead, 4-2, in the bottom of the 7th with two outs, a runner on 3rd, and two strikes on their hitter. Penn

Michelini threw a fastball that looked like it was strike three as we began to leave the dugout to celebrate on the field. But it was called a ball and their hitter eventually walked and the next guy hit a 2-run double to tie the game. Not to be denied, we got two runs in the top of the 8th and when the final Watertown hitter grounded out, O'Brien to Tompkins, the pig pile at Victory Field began. Now, some of the guys carried the celebration into the night (I still don't know, nor do I *want* to know all the details about the gallon of ice cream through the picture window) and into the next day. Some players took the day off from school to have a pool party at Larry Berg's house. But they figured I wouldn't be upset because they still came to practice on time. Good thinking. Nevertheless, the newly crowned champions ran a record number of homeruns at practice, and then all was forgiven. For we were league champs and it was on to the tournament! Back in the early 80's we played our home games at Washington Park, and that is where we met our first round opponent, Wakefield (who we had beaten twice and finished in 2nd place in the league). This was to be one of the most amazing games we've ever played as Wakefield was sticking it to us by the score of 8-2 after eight innings (back then, we were Division I and played 9-inning tourney games). Things didn't look so good as we batted in the bottom of the ninth. I remember we got a couple guys on base and Ace and I said to each other, "At least we are going down fighting." But our guys had no intention of going down at all, so they scraped, bench-jockeyed (this is when some of those lines from the "*Who Wants to be a Millionaire Quiz*" really were yelled at the other team), and hit their way to a 7-run rally to win the game, 9-8. The final blow was a 2-out, 2-run triple by

Jory McKinley that set off wild on-the-field celebration. Jory's quote in the paper the next day was, "I just waited and popped, waited and popped."

We played our next game against Somerville on the very next day and kept our hot hitting going, beating them 19-10. Terry Dennehy hit a bomb over the center field at Washington to lead the way. Then we went to the Emass Semifinals (back then there was no North and South brackets; everyone in Eastern Mass was grouped together) to play Milton at Brandeis University. They beat us, 2-1, in a great pitcher's duel. Our #3 pitcher, MacKay, was superb but we could not muster much offense that day.

But that didn't dim the glow of the great season it was. We had a bunch of guys who loved to play ball and did it with a lot of personality and enthusiasm. In those days bench jockeying was part of the game and we were the best; our bench was constantly on its feet and never stopped talking. There is no doubt in our minds that those 10 one- or two-run wins went our way because our guys were more intense and hungry than our opponent. .

Andy Hodges was named the league's Most Valuable Player, was a Boston Globe All-Scholastic, and chosen for the Emass All-Star Team. Penn Michelini joined Hodges as an all-league pitcher. Larry Berg was the all-league shortstop (he would repeat as a senior, as he led the league in hitting and played a spectacular shortstop), Terry Dennehy and Dick O'Connor were chosen to the 2nd team Middlesex League All-Stars. I must mention the rest of the roster, all of whom played important roles. Note that the underclassmen, with only two returning starters, were league co-champs in 1981. Seniors: Nate Robinson; Juniors: Joe

Picano, Pete Michelini, Jon Drew, Lennie DeAngelo, **Kevin Grundy**; Sophomore: Bob Macaluso.

I know I talk a lot about the success of our teams in the 90's, but we certainly had great teams in the early years, too. Those years were special times, full of interesting personalities and passionate players. I remember the end-of-season cookout where the players' parents gave my wife, May, and I a baby sweater with the words, "Assistant Coach" on the back. May was pregnant during that season and would give birth to Lea in August. For a young coach, that season was a lot of fun, and I still (20 years later and no longer a young coach) have vivid, happy memories of that season and the individuals who made it special

E-mail Addresses Needed

I recently had some work done on my home computer and, as a result, all my e-mail addresses were lost. I guess they are now floating somewhere in cyberspace. I had compiled over 30 alumni addresses and it was great to be able to send e-mail to you individually or as a group. I have recovered a few of them (the ones I had written down somewhere) but still have lost most of them. So, I am requesting that you send me an e-mail **petemosc@mediaone.net** so I can have your address for future correspondence. Thanks.

On a Personal Note

I don't want to close this letter without giving you an update on how my family is doing, as many of you are so nice to inquire. My wonderful wife, May, is busy teaching figure-skating year-round and she both enjoys it and is

good at it. She deals with many of the same issues that I do as a coach (e.g., motivating players, dealing with parents, etc.) so it is nice to be able to talk about common issues. Our daughter, Lea, is a 20-year old junior at UMass Amherst. She has chosen to major in communications, is doing well, and is happy. Lea is a great kid, and my wife and I are proud of the person she is. Our sons, Michael (18) and Jonathan (15) are both at Reading High School, something which we thought might never happen, considering their major disabilities. Mike is doing great; he has worked hard to deal with his disability, Asperger's Syndrome. We have been blessed that Mike has an incredible teacher in Dave Blanchard, who has enabled Mike to make tremendous progress. Jon also has an extraordinary teacher in Billy Tucker. Many of you guys know Bill for his fabulous football careers at RMHS and Bentley. But he is equally talented in working with special needs kids; Jonathan presents a package of unique difficulties and Billy is doing an amazing job helping Jon progress every day. My mother and father are healthy and active and doing well. But my father complains that his bad knees don't allow him to play handball at the level that he is used to. I say, "What's the problem, Dad, having trouble keeping up with *all the other* 76 year old guys playing handball?". I am lucky to have such terrific parents who have shared in all that we've done in Reading Baseball. My brother's are well; some of you guys probably see Mike more than I do through softball and his excellent work on cable TV. Older brother Tom is doing well living in Bradford. He and his wife, Terry, have two great kids (Andrew, 9 and Rebecca, 7). As for me, teaching math and heading the Math Dept. at RMHS is still interesting and

rewarding. A lot of my (and May's) free time goes toward helping our boys at home and school, but I still get time to see friends (and write long alumni letters). In fact, something I look forward to is our "baseball trips" with such friends as Ace, Scott Farris, Z, d'Ent, Steve Lane, my brother, Mike, Gil Congdon, my former coach, and others. We take a couple trips each year to places like Baltimore, Chicago, Montreal, New York City, and Fort Myers, Florida to see major and minor league baseball and have a lot of laughs. It's always a lot of fun with that group of baseball junkies and good friends. In addition, *The Reading Baseball School* season is coming up fast, and that always makes the fall and winter months very busy.

Well, the World Series has been over for a few weeks now and the holidays are coming up fast. I started work on this letter in September and plugged away at it here and there until completion in November. I think the letter got a way from me a bit as I seemed to have broken all the records for length and lame jokes. I hope that you didn't have to take a day off from work to stay home and read this thing.

Anyway, I hope you enjoyed reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it. Maybe that's why I take so long to write it: every time I sit at the computer to write this, I feel like I'm on the field with you guys again, and it brings back my fondest memories that now span 23 years. Let's finish with a couple good quotes:

"Every day is a new opportunity. You can build on yesterday's success or put its failures behind and start over again. That's

the way life is, with a new game every day, and that's the way baseball is."

-- Bob Feller

"If you're not having fun in baseball, then you miss the point of everything"

-- Chris Chambliss

I wish you all the best in the upcoming holiday season and always, and hope that you continue to call, write, e-mail, and visit. Take care and I must now confess that we coaches were lying when we used to tell you, "*Your schoolwork comes before baseball.*" (After all, you don't see me writing a 26-page "Math Alumni Club" newsletter, do you?).