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THE BASE BALL PLAYER'S CHRONICLE

Special Edition

October 19, 2016

A Quick Update About the VBBA Newsletter Status

You may have noticed that after a couple years of fairly consistent, and high quality newsletter production, that this is the first newsletter of 2016.

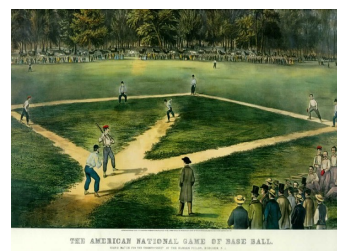
The Board knows that members rely on the VBBA newsletter as a way for the national organization to maintain contact with member teams and individuals. Besides being a perk of membership it our strongest way of making sure that members get news and are able to react to what the national organization is doing.

The fact is that we understand that the newsletter is important. This year has seen significant change on the board and for the newsletter editor. Because of the changes, one of the things that got a bit lost was the newsletter.

The regular editor, Andy Phillips, has done an excellent job of putting out the newsletter in 2015 and has been willing to continue in that role but professionally he is busier than ever. Because of this, I am going to attempt to fill his talented shoes for a few months. Please excuse any lapses in quality or changes in format of this publication for a few months until Andy is able to resume producing this means of communication with you.

The entire Board is pitching in to fill in and "get the news out."

So, on behalf of the board, we are back in the business of producing a newsletter.



The next newsletter will begin to include Nomination and Election materials.

If you have an interest in serving as a Board Member or as a Trustee please let a current board member know.



Information Regarding a Very Special 2017 BBA Conference Inside

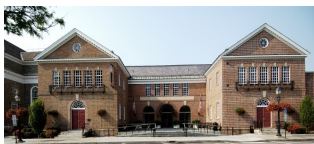
Be sure to look inside to see the agenda, registration information and location of the 2017 VBBA Conference.

This is going to be different than recent conferences in that the Planning group is going to be the National VBBA Board itself, not a member club.

The second difference is going

to be the location. If you have followed VBBA on Facebook, you already have a clue of the location, but the events at the conference will be truly special. Along with the Silent Auction, the Banquet, the Friday night pre conference event is that the banquet speaker has been associated, for many years, with the Baseball Hall of Fame. Shuman

& Martin will perform "Who's On First" originally performed on the vaudeville stage in the mid-1880's More info inside!!!!



COOPERSTOWN, NEW YORK MARCH 24-26, 2017
VINTAGE BASE BALL ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE FORMAT

Other Information

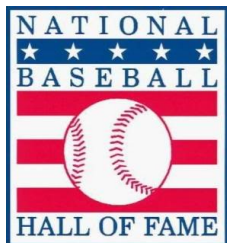
Locations not included will be in booklets included in Registration Pouch along with the Conference Schedule.

Members who are flying into Conference should fly into Albany, NY

Transportation from Airport, and around Cooperstown NY will be on your own.

For Members wanting to stay any extra nights, Otesaga Resort lodging will not be available.

Lodging will be available based upon openings throughout Cooperstown, including The Cooper Inn (an extension of the Otesaga Resort) in Cooperstown, NY - a 15 room inn with the price of \$122 plus tax - which Includes a Continental Breakfast. These reservations need to be made along with the Resort reservations



Friday March 24th **At: Otesaga Resort, 60 Lake, Cooperstown, NY** 800-348-6222
sales@otesaga.com, request VBBA Block

*Reserve by 2nd week of March. Price includes Breakfast Buffet, Sat & Sun.
 \$175.00 plus taxes single or double bed – max. 4 per room*

Time:

3:00 to 6:00 PM

Event:

Registration and Check In

6:00 to 10:00 PM

Meet and Greet-Spend Time Socializing with other teams and players
 Mel's 22 Chestnut Cooperstown, NY 607-435-7062
 Order off menu, No charge for parking in downtown Cooperstown about 2 blocks from the Resort
 Maps and Cooperstown locations in registration pouches.

Saturday March 25th

At: Otesaga Resort

Time:

Event:

7:30 - 8:45 AM

Breakfast Buffet (for guests staying at the Otesaga only)

8:45 – 9:00 AM

Welcome & Opening Remarks: Brad Shaw, President VBBA

9:00 – 9:30 AM

VBBA Rules and Custom Committee Presentation

9:30 - 12:30 PM

Touring on own National Baseball Hall of Fame
 25 Main St., Cooperstown, NY

12:30 - 2:30 PM

Lunch on own - Downtown Cooperstown book of locations included
in Registration bag

2:30 PM- 5:30 PM

All Star Base Ball Match, Clark Sports Center Field,
 124 County Highway 52, Cooperstown, NY 607-547-2800

5:30 pm - 6:30 PM

Private Time

6:30 pm - 8:00 PM

Evening Reception including Surprise and Exciting Entertainment

8:00 pm - 9:30 PM

VBBA Dinner Buffet and Keynote Speaker
 Tim Wiles, Former Director of Research of the National Baseball
 Hall of Fame, Director of the Guilderland Public Library, Albany, NY

Sunday March 26th

At: Otesaga Resort

Time:

Event:

7:00 am - 9:00 AM

Breakfast Buffet (for guests staying at the Otesaga only)

8:00 am - 9:00 AM

VBBA Executive Meeting

9:00 am - 11:00 AM

VBBA Annual Business Meeting
 2017 Elections/Roundtable

11:00 am - 11:30 AM

Closing Remarks

VINTAGE BASE BALL AROUND CINCINNATI

The words “base ball” and “Cincinnati” have been intertwined since the early days of the game. In the 1860’s, Cincinnati hosted more than 20 teams playing the game. Each neighborhood had a bunch of men who played games among themselves or against teams from other neighborhoods. Some of these teams would travel even further to play games with more distant teams. More than 120 years later a team called the Shamrocks would play the same game with the same rules against other opponents around Ohio.

The Shamrocks played in Heritage Village, one of the museums of Historic Southwest Ohio. The team formed in the late 1980’s. They played games with other Ohio teams like the Ohio Village Muffins in Columbus, the Clodbusters of Carriage Hill Farm near Dayton, the Great Black Swamp Frogs near Toledo, the Akron Black Stockings and the Canal Fulton Mules. At the turn of this century some members of the Shamrocks joined a new team – the 1869 Cincinnati Red Stockings. Since this new team formed in 2000, the team has played in more than 13 states. The Red Stockings had a lot of men looking to play this old style game. In 2001 another team was formed with another historic name from the early days of the game, the Cincinnati

Buckeyes. These two teams were members of the Cincinnati Vintage Base Ball Club.

As time went on, others wanted to play the game. With no room on the rosters of the Buckeyes or Red Stockings, other teams began to form. One team was the Norwood Highlanders, who now play as the Blackbottom Nine after their move to the Hamilton-Fairfield area. The Rising Sun, Indiana Historical Society invited the two teams of the Cincinnati Vintage Base Ball Club to play at events in Rising Sun. After several appearances by the boys from Cincinnati, Rising Sun formed the Belle River Base Ball club with help from several Cincinnati players. Another team started in Indiana – the Batesville Lumbermen with the help of another Cincinnati player. The next team to form in the area was across the Ohio River in Ludlow, KY. After several years, this team’s core moved back across the river and began play as the Losantiville Black Stockings. Another team was formed in southern Indiana along the Ohio River, the Vevay White Stockings. The river spawned several more teams. The Moscow Monarchs formed in that little village east of Cincinnati, followed by the New Richmond Generals just down the road.

The Cincinnati region was now a saturated market for vintage base ball, but there were still more teams to come in the region. 2016 marked the start of the first seasons of the Eastwood Iron Horses in the Dayton area and the Bluegrass Barons in Lexington, KY. Most of these teams have asked for help from the players on the Red Stockings and Buckeyes. And some of the players on these teams have helped others. It is a great example of the exceptional camaraderie found among vintage base ball players. This camaraderie is one of the attractions of playing vintage base ball. A player not only gets to meet new people and make friends, but gets to play the game of base ball by the old rules. Can it get much better?



*This Essay is by
Dave Brooks
and deals with
the historic
development of
base ball in the
Cincinnati area.
We are looking
for essays from
other
individuals
detailing how
base ball
started in their
region.*



Forming the Eastwood Iron Horses: Starting a Vintage Base Ball Team



Ryan and I parked at the local pizza place. It was chilly and overcast, suitable for eating an inside meal with friends. It wasn't a day for thinking of playing baseball – or base ball – outside. We'd seen a vintage base ball game at the Henry Ford in July and talked with players afterwards. We'd considered going out and playing for the Clodbusters for the next summer. Mike and his son, Ben, followed the Clodbusters and had similar thoughts. Bob had friends that invited him to sub for the Generals one weekend. I'd flooded him with questions afterwards: What was it like? How were the teams in personality? Is it hard to catch a ball bare-handed? How heavy are the wood bats? Did you have to sign any league roster? Were there league fees? I bugged him enough that when the Generals needed players for the Tipp Cup in late September, Bob put in a word for Dan and I. We played and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Now it was early November. Entering, the idea of forming a vintage team was a dream that could be erased through the simple act of waking. I brought some printouts on local history, notes on local parks and ball fields, and an 1860 rule book. Mike brought emails of responses from other local teams that offered encouragement. Several folks – Rufus Guy, Jim Mattingly, Corky Gaskell, Paul Cunningham, Shawn Sugden, and Dave Brooks, among others – were providing information.

In the next hour, we went from not being sure if we wanted to start a vintage team to maybe fielding a team in 2017 to wanting to play in 2016. We picked Eastwood MetroPark as a home field. It had a large open level field and picturesque stone bridges hinting of mid-19th century; thru-traffic for getting random visitors to take in games; and running water for bathrooms. It wouldn't require us to pay for or do our own maintenance, and it wasn't in low-level flood plain like many local ball diamonds. We picked a team nickname, the Iron Horses, based on what looked to be historical (and continuing) railroad presence nearby and a park sign for the Iron Horse Recreational Trail. We'd searched the VBBA website and noticed that the rail industry had room for growth of representation. And there was the other thing: at some level every kid seems to love trains and baseball.

Six of us decided to create a vintage base ball team. Whatever that meant. Whatever work load we were getting into. However a vintage team was put together. Between us, we had 11 games of vintage base ball experience, and we needed to teach a whole team we didn't have. We knew we needed more people, more experience, uniforms, a logo to go on the uniforms we didn't have, bats, balls, drinking vessels that looked period-accurate, some kind of team insurance, and a game schedule. In addition to base ball, we wanted to respect the historical aspects of the era. We needed to learn more about the local railroads and create a back-story for each player. There was a lot to do, and we were short on time to do it.

We found that we had less time than we thought. Scheduling meetings between teams for 2016 games happened before we organized. Getting in on the new team program with the VBBA required input by early December. There wasn't time to tackle one thing at a time. Progress needed to be made simultaneously in several directions. Early on, the Iron Horses gambled that social media could help us. A Facebook page helped reach potential players, family, and other members of the vintage base ball community, near and far. Softball seasons had wrapped up, and we were able to contact players that were curious about playing with through the page. We also found Mike's email contacts were active on Facebook, along with many others. We organized early practices and posted progress on getting our first bats and balls. We threw out questions on rules, getting answers from folks from across the country. We took the attitude that any input was good input, realizing our team would make final decisions on how the Iron Horses were built.

Fortunately, the winter was mild in Dayton, Ohio. The weekend after we met for pizza, we practiced at Eastwood. Members of the Clodbusters stopped by to wish us well. Dave Brooks came out, despite being ill, showing samples for ball cards, brochures, and hand-outs while going over rules, uniforms, and dropping a suggestion on acquiring players. He told us that vintage ball emphasized history and comradery in enjoying the celebration of base ball and emphasized getting people that shared that comradery. Nobody wanted to play with or against drunken, cocky, or belligerent teams. It wouldn't be worth our time dealing with such personalities on the team, and no other team would want to deal with us, either. As fall and winter progressed, players we knew from some local softball leagues came out. We slowly built the roster while players learned to catch bare-handed, understand the rules, and develop a team chemistry focusing on having pride in our community as gracious hosts and guests. When the weather didn't cooperate, we met at local places to eat, going over background stories for each team member – highlighting what their rail road job entailed – as nicknames were selected; did quizzes on period appropriate language; and read over handouts for spectators.

More issues were addressed between practices.

We found photos of a train from the 1860s era and had a team logo created. We put the logo on Facebook, intending to embroider it on our shirts. Instead, railroad fans pointed out our train would not have operated on Ohio gauge railways. It was our first historical inaccuracy to be fixed. The train was changed.

We noted nice vintage uniforms being made by companies, but the \$150-\$200 per person price tag was prohibitive. We went to local embroidery shops and found that was also problematic. Open areas and shading could be hand embroidered in the 1860s but computer-driven machines needed finite boundaries. We were also told that such an elaborate logo would not have existed in 1860. Fortunately, help came from outside the team. A local vintage ball player active in Civil War re-enactments pointed us to a shop with inexpensive period-style cotton shirts. Originally, the Iron Horses were to have maroon shirts, pants, and hats with white or gold trim. We quickly learned that being flexible was more important than sticking to an original plan, including team shirt selection. Looking at the supplier's available shirts, the team chose to go with white. We found old time railroad hats were a standard blue, not maroon. Team colors were switched to blue and white. Dickie's carpenter pants matched the hat color and gave a blue collar work cut, costing about \$25 a pair. The original train wouldn't be used in entirety, but a Victorian "E" in the background was selected to be put on the shirts. Describing what we were after a local fabric shop, one lady suggested using Button Stitching to attach a blue cotton fabric E from as an applique. Applique had been used for hundreds of years. Button Stitch was popular in the mid-19th century and was now a common sewing machine mode. My wife made the shirts using a cardboard cut-out E as a template for cotton copies that were glued onto the shirts after an initial wash and sewed in place. A local historical village provided all-cotton engineer hats in bulk, costing us \$7/unit. We could outfit each player for \$55.

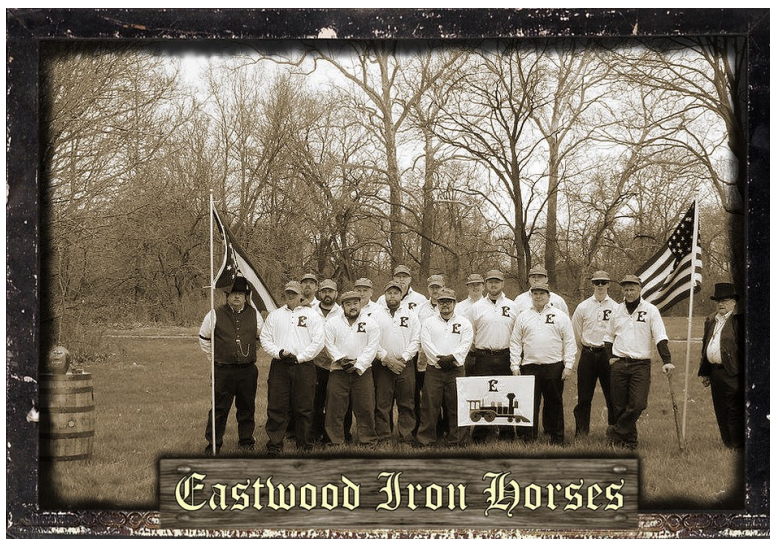
With my son and I proudly wearing our new uniforms, we went back to the pizza place for a meeting to hand the new uniforms out to team members. A lady selling soda said, "Don't tell me! I know! You guys are from Entertrainment Junction! RIGHT?!" It was a bit deflating. We hadn't thought of the nearby train-themed entertainment display starting with the same first letter, but it was encouraging that we were noticed for being railroad related. Given the time and effort putting into making the shirts, we weren't turning back. We joked about the Entertrainmentwood Iron Junction Horses getting our first team photo under electric lights and ceiling fans.

{continue to pg 6}

Equipment was contributed by several folks. Mike got bases, balls, and some bats. Garry made home and pitching plates. My wife made pennant flags that went on cheap wood stakes for foul poles. Tony got a sponsor to donate a wood barrel for bats, while his teen-age daughter designed our scoreboard. I made old-style railroad shipping crates for gear with the team E stained in the side. My mother-in-law stitched a flag with the train logo. Other team members chipped in for more bats, balls, drinking containers, and other items.

We continued to practice at Eastwood. We had been warned by Cincinnati area teams to make sure we were allowed to use the park for base ball. In their area, striking a ball with a bat on a non-baseball designated park area presented legal issues. Fortunately, there weren't similar restrictions in Dayton. The local MetroParks office helped us learn the reservation process, glad a community park was to be used for such family-friendly activity. We did find that we needed team liability insurance to complete the filing process, though – and such insurance was needed for other events we played. The Iron Horses would play mid-19th century base ball rules under 21st century legal rules.

Having a team forming was great, but we needed a schedule to play. Another new team, the Bluegrass Barons, were having similar scheduling issues, and we hooked up for home-and-away series. Local teams provided schedules, squeezing head-to-head matches, cre-ams – the Generals fins – added early also went outside Leagues have struggled in recent years, and we wanted a positive influence to help keep younger players in the game. We put out emails to several little leagues, offering to play coaches, staff, and parents in exhibitions. We also have a large VA hospital in the area, and we worked with the VA staff and our local elected officials to stage an exhibition as a fund-raiser for veterans. It took work and help from others, feeling like a minor victory for each game that was scheduled, but the team soon had over 30 games lined up for our inaugural season.



At the beginning of April, the Iron Horses met again. It wasn't for pizza. It was for base ball. There were 18 Iron Horses at Eastwood with another five that couldn't attend. It was a chilly April afternoon, barely above freezing with flurries almost sticking to the grass. Caleb, a pastor, blessed The Rail Yard, as we named our playing area – and our sycamore, Plinko, that hangs over the foul line. John, a veteran, raised our 1860 USA flag. Patrick, a high school actor, read aloud "The Defence of Fort McHenry." We set out our plates and bases, put up the foul flags, and drew cards that separated players into "Mad River" and "Lake Erie" squads, honoring the old railroad line we claim to work on, and played base ball. The weather was chilly for bare-handed base ball, but we wanted to get in five innings to make it an official game. The innings and tallies were marked on the new scoreboard as we cheered and jeered each other. Five innings became seven. Seven innings became nine. The time went faster than could have imagined, taking the game and ourselves back to our individual infancies – "reminding us of all that once was good and could be again." The Eastwood Iron Horses became a reality.

*An Open Letter to Those Who Play 1864 Rules Base Ball
(and especially the clubs who we play regularly)*

MOST OF YOU ARE DIRTY STINKIN' ROTTEN CHEATERS!!!!

Yes, you heard me. Not only that, but my club, the Flemington Neshanock, and myself are just as guilty (or more so because we know better).

No, I'm not talking about the usual inaccurate stuff we do like batting more than 9 or substituting freely. I'm talking about the way most of our hurler's deliver the ball to the striker and behind (if you don't know me, yes, I know the terms are incorrect).

In the 1864 Beadle's, Section 5 states the following:
The pitcher's position shall be designated by two lines, four yards in length, drawn at right angles to a line from home to second base, having their centers upon that line at two fixed iron plates, placed at points fifteen and sixteen yards distant from the home base. The pitcher must stand within the lines, and must deliver the ball as near as possible over the center of the home base, and for the striker.
The part I take issue with is the last sentence. Though your pitchers may be pitching the ball over home base for the pleasure of the batter, there is absolutely NO WAY most of you are doing so WITHIN THE LINES!

Within the lines means you must start and end the delivery of the ball, well, within the two lines of the pitcher's point 45 and 48 feet away from home. No part of your foot can be outside the lines until after the ball has been released to the batter. You can not start with any part of your foot over the back line nor end with any part of your foot over the front line.

This sounds intuitive, but after watching the 1864 game for many years I do not see most pitchers trying to adhere to this rule NOR most umpires trying to make them - and that unfortunately includes my club's pitchers and myself when I umpire.

I have noticed most pitchers playing 1864 rules take a full step forward when delivering the ball. Considering the distance between the front and back lines is only 3 feet, taking that step and following the rules is IMPOSSIBLE. To correctly follow the rules, the pitcher's step must be to the side.

The reason most do not adhere to the rules is most umpires do not call the infraction. Why alter your delivery if you are not told to do so? Damn the rules, full speed ahead!

This is, unfortunately, historically accurate. In the nineteenth century, umpires often turned a blind eye to pitching illegalities like pitching sidearm or jerking the ball. Maybe they also did not care if the pitcher's exceeded their dedicated boundaries.

Most of us do not use the required two fixed iron plates to mark the lines of the pitcher's position. I personally find them dangerous. Even if we did all use them, it is still difficult for the umpire to ascertain whether the pitcher is correctly staying within the lines. The point of this whole rant is
AN APPEAL TO MY FELLOW BALLISTS!!!!

Please try to pitch within the lines. It's OK if you occasionally go over, but please do not do it intentionally to gain an unfair advantage. If you are umpiring, please try to make sure the pitcher is adhering to the rules. You would not let the pitcher pitch overhand so why let him pitch outside this boundary.

Yes, cheating in 19th Century Base Ball was unfortunately historically accurate but I don't think there is any room for it in our 20th Century recreations. It gives our spectators the wrong impression.

Thanks and let's be accurate out there,

Brad "Brooklyn" Shaw
Flemington Neshanock

VBBA Association Financial Activity—2016

Balance, January 1, 2016			\$12,645.58	
Income				
Dues 2016	Individuals	21	\$240.00	
	Associates	9	\$335.00	
	Full Clubs	59	\$3,031.00	
		<u>89</u>		
Dues 2017	Full Clubs	9	\$450.00	
		<u>9</u>		
			<u>Total Dues</u>	<u>\$4,061.00</u>
Sale of Goods			\$385.00	
Donations				
Interest on Checking Acct			<u>\$10</u>	
Total Income			<u>\$4,446.10</u>	

MEMBERS FOR 2016 **Paid in 2016 or 2015**

Individual 34
Associates 11
Full Clubs 100

MEMBER CLUBS

2017 9
2016 111
2015 91
2014 65
2013 70

Expenses:

NEW SINCE LAST **REPORT**

Office Supplies	\$17.99
PayPal Transaction Fees	\$45.62
Communications	\$100.00
Promotional Items	\$608.73
Printing and Shipping	\$44.20

Pay Pal .96

2016 Conference Expenses

Marketing Expenses	\$100.00
Educational Materials	\$1,023.99
New Member Program Reimbursement	\$657.91
Insurance	\$1,529.00
Legal Fees, Fees –Sec. of	0
Design Fees, Web site	0
Total Expenses	\$4,583.94

Hotel \$100.00

Income over/(under) Expenses \$(137.84)

BALANCE AS OF 9/9/2016 \$12,507.74

**THE OFFICIAL
NEWSLETTER OF
THE NATIONAL
VINTAGE BASE BALL
ASSOCIATION**

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[https://www.facebook.com/
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**Find Us on the Web at:
www.vbba.org**

Plan to attend the 2017 National VBBA Conference to be held in Cooperstown, NY. If you have never been to the Baseball Hall of Fame, this is your chance. If you have been there, plan on coming back to visit. We are planning some extraordinary things for the conference and we would like to have you attend.

If you are interested in serving on the National VBBA Board of Directors as an officer or a Trustee, please let Doug Ernst know at:
quickstepsmanager@gmail.com

If you want to contribute an article to the next newsletter please send it to Doug Ernst at:
quickstepsmanager@gmail.com


Organization

Summary of Secretary Reports

Secretary Report Summary

The Board Meetings of the past 3 months have primarily focused on the development of the 2017 VBBA Conference in Cooperstown.

The major share of the credit for moving the development of the event must go to Trustee Helen DeGeatano of the Dutchers. She has spent many hours on the phones with individuals at the Conference Center, The Hall of Fame and the Chamber of Commerce.

Historian Eric Miklich has continued to deal with the Hall of Fame in an effort to get a good rate for individuals entering the Hall on Saturday morning. He is also working to get the curators to do something special for our group.

Treasurer Dave Brooks has distributed flyers for the event at the Ohio Cup and helped to generate a fair amount of enthusiasm for the event among teams and individuals.

President Brad Shaw has been working to promote authenticity and a better understanding of the roll of VBBA.

Secretary Doug Ernst is heading the procurement of Silent Auction Items and is also working as the Nominations committee to develop the slate of candidates to be voted on prior to the Conference. Besides doing the Minutes of the Board Meetings Ernst has also agreed to fill in as substitute Newsletter Editor.

Trustee Corky Gaskell has been diligently working to help new clubs become active members of VBBA with the New Member Program. He is also offering help and suggestions regarding the Conference since he spearheaded the National Conference in Rochester, MN a few years ago.

All of the Board members have been offering support, suggestions, and taking on leadership roles in an effort to make sure that the 2017 VBBA Conference in Cooperstown, NY will be memorable, bring new clubs into the VBBA and continue to move the organization in a positive direction.

New Member Program

Corky Gaskell has been heading the new Member Team Program and has identified a number of new groups which would be interested in forming teams. The new member program is specifically designed to help these new teams thrive and grow.

If you know of individuals or groups who would be interested in starting a team, please let Corky know. He can be

reached at:
cc.gaskell@gmail.com. The program has funds to help you purchase essential equipment and provide tutorials and education on how to develop your team and do it correctly. Authenticity is important and we want you to succeed.

