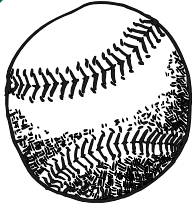
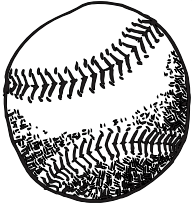




LEOPOLIS BASEBALL HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES



JULY 13, 2008



Hall of Fame Committee Members
Orlin Pederson-Chairman, Joe DeBaker-Secretary, Steve Conradt,
Tom Kristof, Jr., Pete Kucksdorf, Rick Otto and Roger Peterson.

LEOPOLIS BASEBALL HALL OF FAME



PAT KAZDA
JULY 13, 2008

PAT KAZDA

Born in 1905, Pat Kazda was the youngest of ten children born to Joe and Catherine Kazda. Pat's baseball career covered what some may say were the "golden years of Leopolis baseball," the late 1920s and 1930s when many championships were won by true grit and determination. Records indicate Pat was already on the 1922 Leopolis roster at age 17. Excerpts from April Malueg's book, "Take Me out to the Ball Game," show Pat was indeed a fine player. From her book, records indicate a quote about a game Pat played May 16, 1926. "Kazda was on second spearing every thing and any thing. High or low, in the outfield as well as in the infield, catching eight fly balls made it difficult for Tilleda to get on base." According to former Hall of Fame player Alex Sousek, Pat was "Good enough to play professional ball." Alex would know, as he was a teammate of Pat throughout his playing days in Leopolis. Records indicate Leopolis won championships in 1929, 1930, 1931 and 1933, while Pat was a part of the team.

Pat married the former Laura Wege of Pella. Together they had five children: Patrick Jr., two sets of twins Carolee and Nancy, and Sally and Judy. Nancy died in infancy. Pat worked on the family farm until 1934 when his family moved to Iron Mountain, Mich. It was actually his baseball talent that landed him a job at the Ford Hospital where he worked as a nurse. Ford also had a baseball team and Pat was part of that team also. According to his daughter Carolee Stohl, her dad continued coaching baseball after his playing days were over. She said her father instilled the love of the game in his players.

Carolee had some heart touching memories to her father, while providing information for this tribute. Her dad was her "best friend." She recalled she held her father's hand as he died. The Pastor told her after her father passed this would give her peace. Carolee indicated she never felt this peace until she learned her dad was receiving this honor. She said her father would have really appreciated this. Fishing, trapping and picking berries were favorite past times of her dad. Sacrificing for the love of his family was another of his attributes.

Carolee indicated the Joe Kazda family donated the land St. Mary's Church sits on. Pat died October 2, 1982. His wife Laura died December 23, 2005.

LEOPOLIS BASEBALL HALL OF FAME



VERONICA KRISTOF
JULY 13, 2008

VERONICA KRISTOF

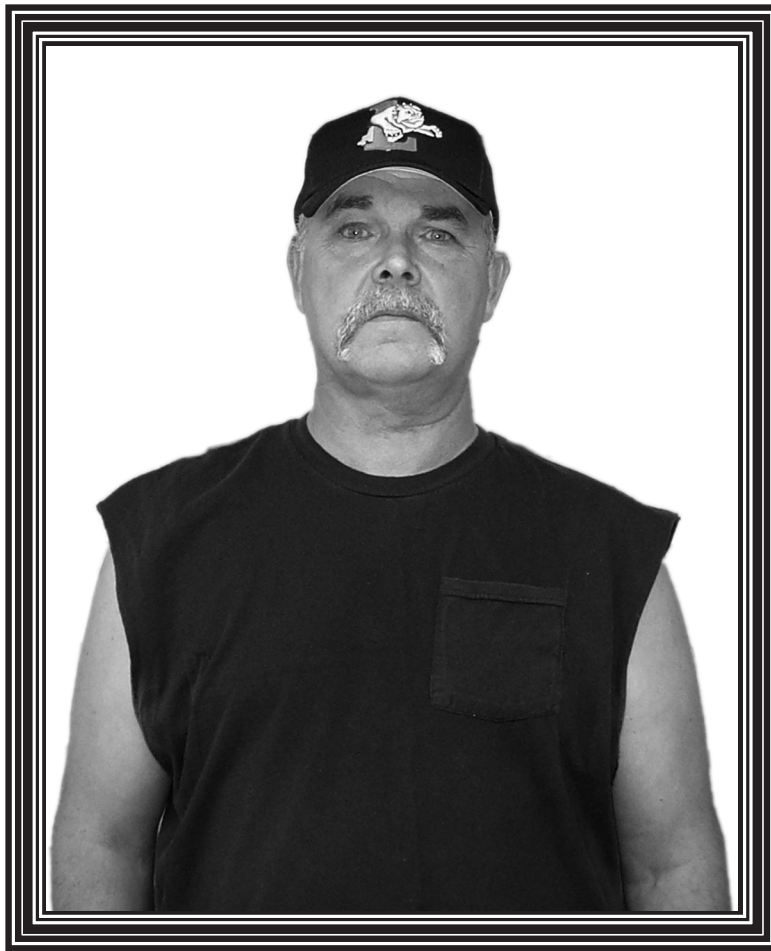
Veronica was born August 26, 1923. She's the daughter of Nick and Mary Stezenski of Gresham. Veronica enjoyed playing ball at a very young age. She remembers playing softball in grade school. Veronica graduated from Gresham High School and enjoyed playing throughout the various summer softball leagues.

Her brother Joe Stezenski was two years older than her. Joe played baseball for Leopolis and was part of the 1946 Championship Team. Veronica's husband Floyd Kristof was also playing baseball for Leopolis. Through Joe, she met Floyd and the rest is history. Married June 15, 1946 the two of them and baseball have been inseparable since.

Veronica recalls watching Leopolis winning the Championship in 1946 as one of her most memorable moments. From then on, it was baseball every Sunday as Floyd continued to play and coach. Veronica continues to be one of the teams' biggest fans, very seldom, if ever missing a game. Baseball has been a big part of the Kristof family. Having four sons who followed in the baseball tradition she now continues to watch the grandchildren and great-grandchildren play.

Veronica becomes a member of the Leopolis Hall of Fame, as did her husband Floyd, brother Joe, and sons Tom, Steve and Pete.

LEOPOLIS BASEBALL HALL OF FAME



RICK OTTO
JULY 13, 2008

RICK OTTO

In 1952, Rick Otto, the second of three boys, was born to Vern “Nails” and Rita Otto of Leopolis. Baseball was something everyone got together for in Leopolis when Rick was a child. Starting out his Leopolis career with little league in 1959 and the early 1960s, Rick learned the proper way to bat from a fellow Hall of Famer Swampy Steinke. Rick seemed to want to back out of the box when hitting. So, Swamp would lay a bat down behind his feet. If he stepped back he would fall over. Throughout Little League, Junior B.A.B.A. and high school, Rick played the infield. His B.A.B.A career started with Leopolis in 1971 and lasted through 1985. It wasn’t until 1976 Rick got behind the plate and became one of the best catchers in the league. Rick served in the United States Army from August 1972 through August 1974. Known as a tough catcher who dared players to take him out at home, Rick also proved worthy with the bat. Records indicate a lifetime batting average of .344, including batting .471 in 1983. Rick was nominated for many All- Star games throughout his career.

Rick has many fond memories throughout his career including: the game when tiny Leopolis beat the Green Bay Blue Ribbons in the Shawano Tournament, getting the winning hit against Shawano to drive in Steve Kristof in the 1982 play-offs and the 1-0 loss to Waupaca the next week to miss out on the Grand Championship game. Rick had a lively arm on his throws down to second. That arm also proved to be very good from the pitchers mound. Often called upon to pitch, Rick recalled pitching the Championship Game in the Tigerton Tournament against Tigerton. It was a one-hitter and Leopolis won.

Rick, and his wife Mary, had three children: Tracy, Jason and Jesse. Mary died in May 2003. Currently Rick has three grandchildren.

Rick also had the honor of being the 1999 Leopolis “Drag Queen.” A feat not accomplished by many former Hall of Famers. Rick is currently Chairman of the Board of Directors for Leopolis Baseball and serves on the Hall of Fame Committee.

LEOPOLIS BASEBALL HALL OF FAME



KEVIN THIEL
JULY 13, 2008

KEVIN THIEL

Born June 26, 1954, Kevin was the fourth of nine children born to Bert and Jean Thiel of Pella. Bert, being a former major league player, professional coach and scout, it was natural to pick up a baseball at a young age in this family. Kevin started pitching for Leopolis Little League at age seven. Winning at least three championships, his fastball, although it rather wild, caused many young kids not want to get in the batter's box. Having only lost one game pitching in Little League, it was on to Leopolis Junior B.A.B.A., Leopolis B.A.B.A. and Marion High School. Kevin maintained a 2.15-strikeout ratio per inning in high school, which caught the eye of many professional scouts. Kevin was drafted in the eleventh round of the 1972 draft by the California Angels, starting out at Idaho Falls in the Rookie League. In 1973, he started training camp and was assigned to Quad Cities of the Mid-West League, where he developed arm problems. He was sent back to Idaho Falls where Kevin didn't throw much the rest of the year. In 1974, Kevin was having a heck of a year at spring training and had some more arm troubles. He came home for Easter and had arm surgery. In those days, there wasn't the exercise or therapy regime there is now following this type of surgery.

Kevin started 1975 spring training, having what he thought was one of his best camps, but he was released. Kevin stated that came as "a real shocker." He remembers pitching against and striking out players George Brett, Jamie Quirk, Frank Tananna and Jimmy Collins. Kevin said the day he was released he was throwing against the Triple A Club when Mickey Rivers hit a line shot off his left thigh. Kevin picked up the ball and threw him out but the seams were imbedded in his leg for over a month.

Kevin then entered the business world and moved to California, and back to Wisconsin where he continued to play some semi-pro baseball. Including one of his most memorable games while pitching in Oconomowoc, throwing a one hit, 24 strike out performance. Kevin said he broke two catchers mitts in warm-ups and was charged twice on the mound but his catcher took them out before they could reach him. As far as Kevin's Leopolis B.A.B.A. career, he started suiting up at age 13 and started pitching around age 14. Records indicate his Leopolis career spanned ten years. Although the pitching records are not complete, he averaged a .256 lifetime batting average.

Another game he remembers is winning and throwing a one-hitter against the Green Bay Blue Ribbons at the Shawano Tournament. Another B.A.B.A. memory was when he pitched in a 13-inning 1-0 defeat against Waupaca for the right to advance to the B.A.B.A. Grand Championship in 1982. Kevin moved to Navarino in 1983 and helped Navarino win many championships. He was inducted into the Navarino Baseball Hall of Fame in 2007.

In 1996, Kevin came back to play for Leopolis. That was Kevin's last year in the B.A.B.A. He tried pitching for Bonduel in 1997 but stated, "My arm fizzled out."

Kevin joins his father Bert, and Grandfather Art Thiel in the Leopolis Hall of Fame. Kevin continues in the insurance business. Kevin, and his wife Deb, have two children: Patrick (11) and Jack (10). Kevin also has two adult children from a previous marriage Sarah and Chad.

