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Passion for baseball inspires club through the decades

By Chuck Tortella
Special to The Record Today

As you have seen in many Hollywood movies, baseball has been a unifying factor in the lives of many people in America. The same can be said of the BBC – the Billingsport Baseball Club.

Although nothing is official, we do have officers. Jack Robostello is the president and treasurer of the club because he is one of the founders, not to mention a Mets fan.

We have no official meetings, and the only time we meet is on our annual baseball trip to somewhere we have not visited. Membership is open only to true baseball fans and to people who like beer and expensive steak-houses.

As far as I can remember, this organization started in the 1960s with trips to Connie Mack Stadium to see our Phillies. We would meet at the bank on Broad Street, buy our hoagies, and get on a public service bus to North Philly. Those of us who went were probably only 10 to 15 years old.

Once we arrived, one call on a pay phone was made to notify parents that we made it. Some of us never told our parents we were even going! Can you imagine that happening today?

We tried to go to the "Bat Day" game so we could get free bats. When we returned home, a game usually followed on Mobil Field.

The trend continued to Veterans Stadium in the 1970s. We took Babe Morina as our guardian on many of these trips

as it seemed that he was able to keep the peace among some of our energized members.

By this time, we were able to drive to the park, but actually got smart and rented a school bus, as on some trips, getting home safely became difficult.

Getting older and wiser, we were able to expand our trips to New York to see our club president's beloved Mets. Many of these trips included the same members, but we always hired a driver for the vans that were usually filled with food and beverages.

The hired driver was always a friend that promised not to indulge on the condition that we feed him. Bruce was the only problem because we refused to buy the fruit that he always wanted. Health was not our major concern.

As the years have gone by, we have expanded our trips to cities that we can now afford, hiring a real bus and driver to take us to places like Baltimore and Paul's \$100-trip to Boston and getting on planes to Denver, St. Louis, Chicago, Cleveland, Kansas City and finally to Milwaukee this past July.

Many of our members' faces have remained the same, but many have changed through the years. The stories and laughs from these trips have kept us all grounded as "just kids from Billingsport who love baseball."

See photo of club members on their most recent trip to Milwaukee on page 15.

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Names in the News

Top recognition

Dr. Sherri Wilson Byrne (PHS '76) was among a select group of finalists in the category of academic educator for the 2017 March of Dimes Nurse of the Year Award.



Dr. Sherri Wilson Byrne

She was honored for her work in global health and previous medical missions involving children in Haiti at a gala event held at the Grand Marquis in Old Bridge Township on Nov. 15.

On Oct. 29, Byrne also was recognized for her work in global work in nursing as a Virginia Henderson Fellow in the Heritage Society of Sigma Theta Tau International Foundation for Nursing.

This recognition took place at Sigma's Biennium Conference in Indianapolis. A recognition ceremony and dinner took place at the Indiana State Museum.

Byrne and her peers inducted in this 2015-2017 biennium also will have their names etched in the glass panel wall at Sigma's headquarters located on the campus of Indiana University.

The Paulsboro resident is Nursing Chair and associate professor at The College of New Jersey and nurse practitioner in the Cancer Screening Project at MD Anderson Cancer Center at Cooper Hospital in Camden.

Election results

Greenwich Township

In Greenwich Township, Republican incumbent Mayor George W. Shivery Jr. (1,083 votes) was elected to a three-year term as mayor. He was opposed by Democrat Kenneth Ridinger (852 votes).

Duane Sarmiento (1,323 votes) was elected to a three-year term on the school board.

Paulsboro

In Paulsboro, Democrat incumbent councilmen Theodore Holloway (1,020 votes) and Joe Kidd (1,004 votes) were each elected to a three-year term.

Board of education members elected for three-year terms included Crystal Henderson (728 votes); Joseph Lisa (722 votes); and William Scott MacKenzie (684 votes). Barbara Dunn received 476 votes.

PHS student snapshots



Courtesy Photo

Week of Respect — PHS student members of the SURE organization (Students United for Respect and Equality) commemorated this state-wide event from Oct. 2 to Oct. 6 by inviting classmates to write and submit what respect means to them. Their notes were then posted in large outlines of the word "Respect" on the cafeteria wall for all to read.



Courtesy Photo

Supporting the cause — During the statewide observance of School Violence Awareness week Oct. 16-20, Paulsboro High school students made purple ribbons bearing photos of victims of school shootings from all over the country and placed them on every locker in the high school and junior high building. Sponsored by the SURE organization, the exhibit did not include victims from two school shootings in 1927 and 1966 because photos were unavailable.

According to club adviser and PHS art teacher Margaret LaDue, thankfully there were more lockers than victims in the United States, so photos were repeated. Students participating in the project were members of SURE. Pictured, from left, are Samaura Smith, Musharraf Khan, and Jaheem Ellison.



Photo by Teresa Colanero

A night of celebration — Left to right, Bob and Sarah Foulke and Stephen V. Colanero visit with winemakers Joanne and Jimmy DiGenarro and Domenick Chila at the Paulsboro Italian Wine Festival on Nov. 4. More than 325 people attended the annual event held at the Paulsboro Wrestling Building on Mantua Avenue.