



Gord Ness, a 42-year-old Stouffville lawyer, is Marvin Betz's choice for team announcer at the ballpark this season. Betz is team sponsor of the defending champion fastball team. Gord's humorous patter and creative one-liners keep the fans — and

players — entertained. His irreverence, however, is accompanied by a deep love of baseball. He's also an avid sportsman himself and indulges in hockey and skiing.

Ness entertains at Betz Pools' games

By BRUCE STAPLEY

He sits in the little wooden hut behind home plate at Stouffville's main diamond, microphone in hand. The Oshawa and District Men's Fastball League defending champion Betz Pools squad is warming up to do battle with the Greenbank Gamblers.

"Welcome to the ballpark ladies and gentlemen," he pipes up. "Tonight the Betz Pools team takes on the Greenbank Ramblers. Er, I mean Gamblers."

The opening lineups are announced, and there's a witty remark, a pun, or a double entendre that goes with each player's name.

Gord Ness is in his element once again.

The 42-year-old Stouffville lawyer is club sponsor Marvin Betz's choice for announcer at his team's home games this season.

And Ness' off-the-wall humor combined with Betz's new electronic scoreboard has kept both fans and ballplayers entertained like never before.

Ever the opportunist when it comes to taking license with a name, Ness informs the fans that the first three batters in the visiting lineup all bear the surname Till.

He then proceeds to turn Trevor, Terry and Brian into TooTall, Wait'n and 'his other brother Darryl.'

Reaching for his portable tape deck, he cues up a Spike Jones version of the William Tell Overture, and announces that he's going to play a few bars of it, which is named after the Till brothers' father, William."

The audience eats it up. Even the Greenbank team eventually comes to develop a grudging appreciation of the slapstick routine.

Ness tells the fans that it's only fitting that he entertain them with appropriate music for such rural people.

On comes a string of Gene Autry cowboy tunes, Walter Brennan dialogues and a selection or two from an obscure tape entitled *Dancin' Banjos*.

The moaning from the players becomes rather audible. But Ness just sits in the booth with an enormous grin all over his face. He's having fun.

The game begins, and as each batter comes to the plate, Ness gives the fans the player's name and an aside or two.

Fielding plays are acknowledged, and although he's not always accurate in his player identifications, he usually rectifies his errors.

Going down the Greenbank roster, he lights up as he sees yet another opportunity for insanity.

"Now batting, Neil Rodd, followed by Rod Real. He's not the real rod. Neil Rodd is the real Rodd."

Then it's the Betz club's turn to face the music.

Steve Brooks, whom Ness mistakenly believes to hail from Newfoundland, is announced as 'Corner' Brooks. Newcomer Rick Wells suddenly becomes 'Oily' Wells. Terry Bowles is Terry Toilet. Bowles, and on it goes.

Feeling it's time for a little culture, Ness proclaims at the end of an inning that he's about to play Beethoven's Worst Symphony.

"This features his first through seventh movements — all at once," he explains.

When asked about his approach, Ness says he's simply trying to give the fans something to laugh at and help them enjoy themselves.

"I just want to lighten up the game a bit, make it interesting," he insists.

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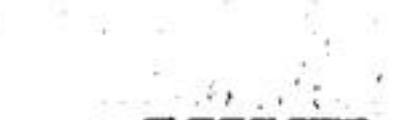
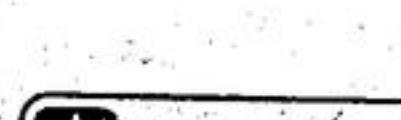
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