

Out in Write Field

Right Ball Out In Left Field



By Bruce Stapley

The chase for baseball's Holy Grail begins this week. But for one World Series junkie who has been following the Fall Classic since Jackie Robinson led the Brooklyn Dodgers to victory over the hated Yankees in the 1956 showdown, the action on the diamond could never match the thrill experienced down at the Rogers Centre during the Blue Jays last home stand of the season.

Actually, the magical turn of events had started a few weeks earlier when I took the family down to watch the Jays play the Cleveland Indians. We got there early so that we could head over to the seats just behind centre field to watch batting practice.

As always, we took our baseball gloves on the off chance a ball might come our way, and sure enough, I just happened to look up in mid-conversation with my son Drew to see a Cleveland player drive a batting practice lob in our direction. The ball just kept coming right at me as I reached up with my glove and snagged it - my first ever major league catch!

But apparently Lady Luck was just getting started with me. At the game against the Boston Red Sox a few weeks later we bought seats in the 100 Level outfield section in left field, directly behind the Blue Jays bullpen area.

We were able to watch the great B.J. Ryan and his cronies sit, spit, laugh and generally kibbutz about throughout the game. Just before the game started, Jays' pitching coach Brad Arnsberg flipped a ball up to my 10 year old son Griffin, producing an ear to ear grin.

"Pretty boring game so far," I said to my daughter Marissa as the Sox took a 1-0 lead into the third inning. A moment or so later, the Jays' feared slugger Troy Glaus cranked one skyward towards the 100 Level outfield section. And yes, once again, this one was coming right at me.

I stood up, nervously raised my glove and flagged the hurtling ball just as it was about to land in my pregnant daughter's lap. I sat there in a daze as nearby fans slapped me on the back and offered their congratulations. I passed the ball over to Griffin to examine and told him to make sure he didn't get it mixed up with the lesser ball he had been given earlier. This one was going in my trophy case.

But while the baseball gods had finally shone upon me after almost five decades of attending games, they weren't about to let me get away without showing me up for the selfish cad I truly am. On our way out of the stadium, a man spotted me and came up to offer his congratulations. "I couldn't believe the way you just stood up there and grabbed that ball," he

gushed.

"And then it was so neat how you gave it to the kid beside you." Oops! The guilt immediately set in as I didn't have the courage to tell him the kid was my son and that I was warning him not to mix up the Troy Glaus home run ball with his less important baseball.

Nothing like a little humility to bring you back down to earth.

Readers Write

An open letter to all election candidates

To the Editor:

Whitchurch-Stouffville has a vibrant performing arts community that includes Music Mania and newer companies like the York-Durham Academy of the Performing Arts, Men of Note and Bach to Blues. Our church choirs provide Christmas concerts for our seniors. Our schools provide music education and our community boasts several dance companies. Hundreds of local citizens and their children participate in these groups.

The York Durham Academy of the Performing Arts arrived in Stouffville five years ago to an incredible response from young people seeking to participate in a performing arts venue. Since its inception YDAPA has presented 16 musicals, many concerts and festivals, and has developed a children's choir, an adult choir, and a band. It has involved hundreds of children and community members and provided experience from acting and backstage crew to make-up and high tech crew. The children involved have been given extremely high-quality instruction in elocution, voice and choreography, and their productions have been second to none.

YDAPA has performed in many venues from theatres in other towns to churches, schools, even stages in a field! These dedicated people have worked very hard to provide superior training and appropriate venues for their performances.

But like all of the other performing arts groups in town, they are frustrated and disillusioned with the endless bickering at council over support for a performing arts venue in Stouffville. Without a home location, they have run a very professional organization out of multiple inadequate rehearsal locations, managed the administration from basements, and stored sets and costumes in barns and trailers. My fear is that, without a permanent place to call home, YDAPA will shut down and all of the young people who get such joy from their participation in this fabulous organization will be left with nothing... again.

The Town supports the hockey arenas, baseball diamonds, soccer fields and a pool for the sports community. I'm all for this. But when I have attended the council meetings about a new theatre, our councillors talk about operating in a "business-like" way as if a

hockey arena were "business-like" while a theatre is not. Well councillors, take a look at the revenues generated by performing arts in the wider world relative to sports and I guarantee that you will find that they generate far more tax dollars than sports. So if you really want to train young people to contribute significantly to the tax base in the future, build a theatre!

It's time for the Town to support the performing arts community by building the proposed theatre. Although a decision has been made to go ahead, as a community we need to ensure that this facility comes to life and does not get caught up in more bureaucracy as the municipal elections loom.

If you are seeking election in my ward, don't come to my door if you don't support a theatre. You'll be wasting your time because I won't vote for you unless you openly support it. I recommend that all citizens ask their candidates whether they support a theatre and give them your vote if they do. Let's finally do it!

Jennie Bangay • Stouffville

Together we can do this!!

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