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### Letter From the President/Owner

What a phenomenal 2004 season the Majors had. We went from a team that no one was worried about during the regular season to league championship finalists and a real giant killer in the playoffs; knocking off Kitchener in 7 games, Toronto in 5 games before finally succumbing to Guelph in the finals. It was a great feeling from being the owner of the team, but also from being a fan of the game. I can't even begin to describe the electricity in the air during our home games in the playoffs. For that brief period in time all the talk was about the incredible run that the Majors were on and speculating on far we were going to go. I can't wait to see the story lines being played out this season.

Last season's miracle run can be directly attributed to the commitment of the players, coaching staff, sponsors, volunteers and most importantly the fans. Without the fans being there to cheer on the home team the game is not quite the same. It loses something special; the passion of a story the way that only a fan can tell the story. Thankfully we had the ongoing support of our fans throughout the playoff and the media were there to pass along the message for the fans that were not at the ball park. Hearing the stories of some new fans, some younger fans and some die hard fans was exciting as they all had their very own perception of what made the game exciting. I'd like to think that there are many different levels to a ball game and hopefully our attempts to please people at different levels will feel them wanting to keep coming back for the experience.

I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to the fine people that help our team on and off the field. Without their support, all that we accomplished in my first year of ownership would not have been possible. To the fans that show their support and make our players want to play harder, to the sponsors that show their support by supporting their community team, to the City staff that supply us with the best facility in the league, to the media who spread the successes of the team to the rest of the community...I thank you!

It is that time again to start a new quest for the Intercounty Championship and we hope you enjoy the 2005 season!





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### Majors Game Schedule

### **Majors Home**

#### **Away**

	Printe die Helender-Authabeteite.						
Day	Date	Team	Time	Day	Date	Team	Time
Sun	May 15, 2005	Guelph	1:00 pm	Sat.	May 14, 2005	Brantford	2:00pm
Mon	May 23, 2005	Stratford	1:00pm	Tues	May 24, 2005	Guelph	7:45pm
Fri	May 27, 2005	Kitchener	7:30pm	Sat.	May 28, 2005	Stratford	2:00pm
Sun	June 5, 2005	Guelph 1/2	1:00pm	Sun	May 29, 2005	Toronto	1:00pm
Fri	June 10, 2005	Kitchener	7:30pm	Wed	June 1, 2005	Hamilton	7:30pm
Sun	June 12, 2005	Barrie	1:00pm	Thur	June 2, 2005	Kitchener	7:30pm
Sun	June 19, 2005	Brantford	1:00pm	Sat.	June 4, 2005	Barrie	1:00pm
Fri	June 24, 2005	Hamilton	7:30pm	Wed	June 8, 2005	Hamilton	7:30pm
Sun	June 26, 2005	Oshawa	1:00pm	Sat.	June 18, 2005	Oshawa	2:00pm
Fri	July 1, 2005	Toronto	5:00pm	Thur	June 23, 2005	Stratford	7:30pm
Fri	July 8, 2005	Kitchener	7:30pm	Wed	June 29, 2005	Brantford	8:00pm
Sun	July 10, 2005	Stratford	1:00pm	Sun.	July 3, 2005	Hamilton	2:00pm
Fri	July 15, 2005	Hamilton	7:30pm	Thur	July 14, 2005	Kitchener	7:30pm
Sun	July 17, 2005	Brantford	1:00pm	Sat.	July 16, 2005	Guelph	7:45pm
Fri	July 22, 2005	Stratford	7:30pm	Wed	July 20, 2005	Brantford	8:00pm





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\*\*\*\*\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* \* London Majors

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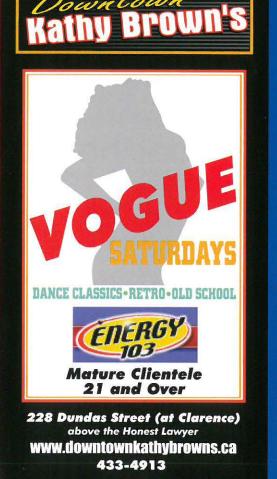
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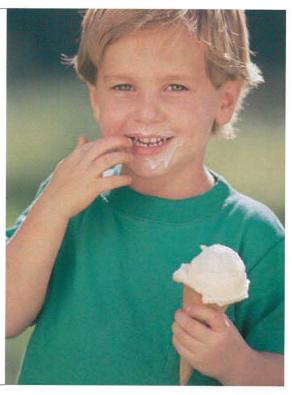


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### Let's Play Ball!

Written By: Ben Benedict

The sun is shining with a slight breeze blowing in from the south, crowds are beginning to gather, and the teams are walking onto the field. Welcome to London majors' Baseball.

I started working with the Majors' and going to the games last year. I was never much of a sports fan but my grandmother was and thus I spent much of my childhood with her enjoying whatever the game of the day was. I had an opportunity to take her to see the Jays against the Tigers in Detroit in 1997.

I played a bit as a kid but wasn't really all that good, a little clumsy and a little distracted but there was a thrill associated with the game. Fast forward too many years and here I am, sitting in the stands this time.

I never thought it would happen. It took me by surprise and it happened quite quickly. A couple of innings go by, go to the snack bar for something to eat and drink, and then slowly it starts to take over. The buzz in the crowd heightens, the play is at the plate, the pitch, the hit, the catch, you're out, home run, and I'm hooked. I have become a baseball fan.

I believe I was fortunate to be involved with the 2004 season. There were a lot of changes and excitement. Scott Dart purchased the team from long-time owner Arden Eddie. The team was considered an underdog but rose to become IBL Championship Series Finalist. For Dart's efforts on behalf of the team, he won the David E. Hastings Trophy as the IBL Executive of the year for the 2004 season.

This year should be more of the same or even better. The London Majors, who have been a part of the Intercounty Baseball League (IBL) since 1925, are celebrating 80 years of membership at historic Labatt Park, the world's oldest ballpark in its original location (since 1877).

There is a lot to enjoy at the park and at the games. Friends gather, cheer on their favorite players and team, and for three hours you get to be a kid all over again. Not a worry in the world but the action on the field. Joy when our team hits a home run, disappointment when it's there team but always with a glimmer of hope that "we'll get them next inning."

I never thought I would become a baseball fan, but sitting in the stands makes it addictive. The thrill of sharing something with friends and family only heightens the experience.

The 2005 season has started. Trips to the snack bar between innings or at least when the opposition is playing, cheering on the home team, chatting with friends about the play, the weather and season. I'm looking forward to cheering the Majors' all the way to champions of the IBL this year and I look forward to seeing you there with me.





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By Barry A. Wells

AS INTERCOUNTY LEAGUE FANS enjoy another season of fast-paced London Majors' baseball at historic Labatt Memorial Park, London's 150th anniversary as an incorporated city is the perfect time to revisit the history of our municipally owned baseball "paradise gardens."

Labatt Park (nee Tecumseh Park in 1877) is believed to be the "World's Oldest Baseball Park in continuous use in its original location."

The closest our American cousins have to Labatt Park, is Rickwood Field in Birmingham, Alabama, which was built in 1910. Still, on several official U.S. baseball Web sites, Rickwood Field is mistakenly referred to as the "World's Oldest Ballpark" on the specious rationale that the stadium still retains some of its original 1910 grandstand.

While Labatt Park is currently using its third main grandstand, the site and field is the oldest known ballpark in continuous use in the world (baseball was invented in North America). Nineteen-ten isn't even close to 1877.

Nestled at the Forks of the Thames River, our landmark field has been the centre for London and area's sports, recreational and cultural activities for 128 years.

Over the years, the park has been used for motion pictures, political rallies, civic receptions, public skating, soccer, baseball, fastball, softball, boxing, football, horse-jumping, the RCMP Musical Ride and even a 21-Gun Salute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II during to her visit to Victoria Park in 1997. In the summer of 2001, Labatt Park was the main baseball venue during the Canada Summer Games.

**1870:** According to Canadian baseball historian/ author William Humber, it's likely that this "commons" pasture land in London West was used for baseball (an adaption of the British game of "rounders") as early as 1870.

**1877:** The land was purchased by china merchant W.J. Reid as the new home of the semi-pro London Tecumsehs and named Tecumseh Park. The Tecumsehs, with star pitcher Fred Goldsmith (referred to in several newspaper accounts as the inventor of the curveball), won the International Association title, beating the Pittsburgh Alleghenies.

**1878:** The Tecumsehs beat the Chicago White Sox to win the International title and tour the U.S. without losing a game.

**1890s:** Tecumseh Park was home to the London Alerts of the amateur Canadian League and a variety of City league teams.

1892: A brick-dust track was built for amateur and professional bicycle racing.

1884: Pitchers are now allowed to throw "overhand."

**1895:** The first motion picture was shown in London after a bicycle race at Tecumseh Park. London-born and raised catcher, George (Mooney) Gibson

(1880-1967) went on to a stellar playing career with the Pittsburgh Pirates, winning the World Series in 1909.

**1911-15:** London joined the professional Canadian League, producing Earl (Greasy) Neal, who later starred with Cincinnati.

1919-22: The Tecumsehs join the Michigan-Ontario League, winning the pennant from 1920-1922.

**1924:** Charlie (Mechanical Man) Gehringer, who went on to become a star 2nd baseman with the Detroit Tigers, plays for the Tecumsehs.

**1936-37:** The park is purchased by the Labatt brewing family and donated to the City along with \$10,000 for improvements on the condition that the park be renamed the "John Labatt Memorial Athletic Field" and remain a public recreational park in perpetuity. The Great Flood of 1937 washes away the grandstand; A new grandstand and clubhouse (still standing) is constructed.

**1940s:** London ball hero Frank Colman makes it to the Bigs. During the war years, women's ball flourishes at the park. The London Army team wins the Canadian Sandlot title in 1943 and 1944. Renamed the London Majors,

Continued on next page.

\*

BASEBALL CORP.

#### 128 Golden Summers of Baseball at Labatt Park - continued

the Majors win the Intercounty title in 1947 and 1948. The 1948 Majors also win the Ontario title, the Canadian Sandlot title and the World Sandlot title in September of 1948, beating the Fort Wayne (Indiana) General Electrics in a seven-game series at Labatt Park.

1950s: The Majors, starring Stan and Bill Slack, win the Intercounty title in 1951 and 1956.

**1960s:** Russ Evon's London TV Cable fastball team, with star pitcher Dick Hames, is one of the best fastball teams in Canada. The London Pontiacs win the Intercounty title in 1969.1967, purchases the Majors in 1976 and moves the team back into the old clubhouse in 1977.

1980s: Hall of Famer Fergie Jenkins pitches for the Majors in 1984-1985.

1990: The London Tigers AA team wins the Eastern League title, the same year the park wins the Beam Clay Award as the best natural grass, minor league field in North America.

**1994:** The City designates the park under the Ontario Heritage Act with a special plaque unveiling on July 1 (Canada Day).

1996: The by-law "Reasons for Designation" of the park are amended to include the "Roy McKay Clubhouse."

1999: The London Werewolves win the Frontier League title during their first of three years in London.

**2000:** During the Werewolves' home opener on June 3, Wolves' pitcher Brett Gray pitches a record 25 strikeouts against the Chillicothe (Ohio) Paints. Following the season, the main grandstand (circa 1937) is demolished.

**2001:** A new, \$1.97-million grandstand is completed in the spring, prior to the Canada Summer Games. An interpretive plaque detailing the park's history is installed on the new grandstand.

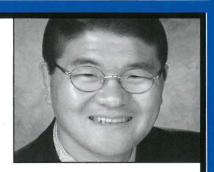
**2002:** The 1948 Majors are among the inaugural 10 inductees into the London Sports Hall of Fame at the JLC. **2003:** The London Monarchs of the fledgling Canadian Baseball League play part of the season at the park before folding due to financial difficulties.

**2004:** On Feb. 15, 2004, it's announced that longtime Majors owner-player Arden Eddie has sold the team to 36-year-old mortgage consultant, Scott Dart. Under Dart's tutelage, the London Majors enjoy an outstanding playoff run, finally bowing out to the Guelph Royals in the league final.

Barry A. Wells is the founder of the non-profit, volunteer group, The Friends of Labatt Park, and also a London freelance writer. Wells can be contacted at banddwells@execulink.com.

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10	Pos.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	AB	R	Н	RBI	SB	E
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Totals	H																

Pitchers	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	WW	W/L	Double Plays
									2ВН
									3ВН
									HR
									Passed Balls
									SH- SF-

- 1. Pitcher
- 2. Catcher
- 3. First Baseman
- 4. Second Baseman
- 5. Third Baseman
- 6. Shortstop
- 7. Left Fielder
- 8. Centre Fielder
- 9. Right Fielder
- DH. Designated Hitter
- Single —
- Double === Triple ===
- Home Run === Sacrifice - SH
- Walk BB
- Strikeout K Balk - BK
- Foul Fly F
- Fielders Choice FC Hit by Pitcher - HP Wild Pitch - WP
- Passed Ball PB Stolen Base - SB
- Force Out FO
- Double Play DP Error - E
- Sacrifice Fly SF

AWAY	Pos.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	AB	R	H	RBI	SB	E
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Pitchers	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	ww	W/L	Double Plays
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- 1. Pitcher
- 2. Catcher
- 3. First Baseman
- 4. Second Baseman
- 5. Third Baseman
- 6. Shortstop
- 7. Left Fielder
- 8. Centre Fielder
- 9. Right Fielder
- DH. Designated Hitter
- Single ——
- Double === Triple ===
- Home Run
- Sacrifice SH
- Walk BB
- Strikeout K Balk - BK
- Foul Fly F
- Fielders Choice FC
- Hit by Pitcher HP
- Wild Pitch WP
- Passed Ball PB
- Stolen Base SB
- Force Out FO
- Double Play DP
- Error E
- Sacrifice Fly SF

"Can you tell which way I ought to go from here?"

"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where," said Alice,

"Then it doesn't matter which way you walk," said the Cat.

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### About the IBL

The Intercounty Baseball League is comprised of 9 teams from across Ontario. Cities in the IBL are Stratford, Kitchener, Guelph, Brantford, Hamilton, Toronto, Oshawa, Barrie and of course your London Majors.

Since 1919 the league has been recognized as the best amateur baseball in Canada. The league includes a mix of veteran players, top prospects, and former major league baseball players. The league schedule is 36 games, plus playoffs; where the top 7 teams advance with the first place team receiving a bye. The season runs from early May to late August.



















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#### By Eric Bender

It's a storied team - these London Majors along with their symbiotic relationship with Labatt Park. Established in 1925, a full 80 years ago, the franchise has brought championships and some of the most famous and slightly infamous players to toe the rubber on the memorial park mound.

We're thinking of the likes of Denny McLain, Ferguson Jenkins and Mike Kilkenny. We're thinking of the 1948 Majors who won the National Baseball Congress North American sandlot championship in a thrilling series with turn-away crowds over Fort Wayne, Ind. It was a team recently inducted to the London Sports Hall of Fame.

But the mainstays were the heart of the Majors over the decades. Names such as Tommy White, Jack Fairs, Russ Evon, Whitey Lapthorne, Norm Aldridge, Dave Beyers, Larry Haggitt and Roy McKay come readily to mind among others. The team was once owned by former New York Yankee Frank Colman.

The Intercounty Baseball League has been another Majors' long-standing relationship. It was established in 1919, just six years before the Majors took the field.

The grass inside the fence is just as green at Labatt Park as the latest chapter of the Majors strides into its second season.

Last year Scott Dart took hold of this slice of London's heritage when he bought the team from Arden Eddie who was more than a stalwart in the IBL having begun play with the Majors in 1969 and purchasing the team in 1976 a year after the Majors had won their last league title. It was a franchise that outlasted the coming of the Detroit Tiger AAA affiliate London Tigers, the London Werewolves and, briefly, the London Monarchs.

The faces of the players on the diamond this year are sparkling with anticipation after a superb playoff run last year that caught the breath of the city and made other league cities take notice. In the end the squad bowed out to the Guelph Royals but not after knocking out the powerful Kitchener Panthers and the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Dart, who dabbled in the Intercounty as a player and is now headlong into it as an owner, eked out last year's success with a minimal staff on and off the field.

This year there's a devoted general manager in the fold in Shawn Gillespie, a pitcher originally from Zurich with wide baseball connections. And the new field manager is Harry Muir, a former Blue Jays farmhand, also a pitcher, who was pitching coach last year and responsible for massaging a short listed pitching roster to that incredible playoff run.

Watch this year for more depth on the mound, a bunch of new arms and the return of most of the infield that is the heart beat of the new era for the boys in the London pinstripes.



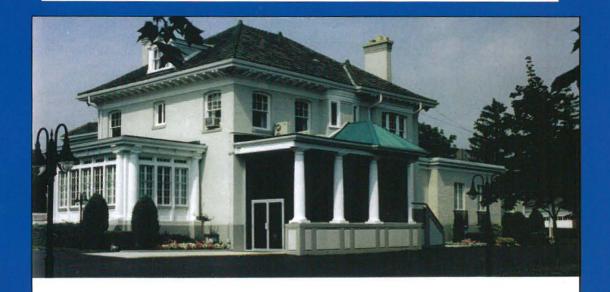






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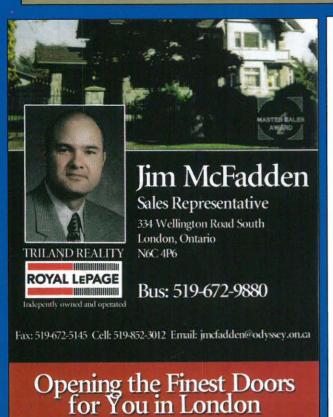
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Written 1888 By Ernest L. Thayer

On June 3, 1888, a ramshackle poem appeared in William Randolph Hearst's San Francisco Examiner. The author was Ernest Lawrence Thayer, a rich wool manufacturer's son who preferred turning out verse to talking over his father's mills. The publisher - who had known Thayer as a Harvard graduate - paid his old acquaintance five dollars for his poem. Thayer thought so little of it that he insisted that it appear under a pseudonym, "Phin," his nickname at Harvard.

Two months later, a young comedian and baseball fanatic named DeWolf Hopper recited it for a Broadway audience that included the New York Giants and Chicago White Stockings. He got such applause that he kept it in the act. In fact, he would go on to recite Thayer's poem more than ten thousand times. It was called "Casey at the Bat: A Ballad of the Republic".

The day wasn't brilliant for the Mudville nine that day; the score stood 4 - to - 2 with but 1 inning more to play. And then when Cooney died at first, and Barrows did the same, a sickly silence fell upon the patrons of the game.

A straggling few got up to go in deep despair. The rest clung to that hope which springs eternal in the human breast. They thought if only Casey could but get a whack at that - we'd put up even money now with Casey at the Bat.

But Flynn preceded Casey, as did Jimmy Blake, and the former was a lulu, and the latter was a cake; so upon the stricken multitude grim melancholy sat, for there seemed but little chance as Casey's getting to the bat.

But Flynn let drive a single, to the wonderment of all, and Blake, the much despised, tore the cover off the ball; and when the dust had lifted and the men saw what occurred, there was Jimmy safe at second, and Flynn a-hugging third.

Then from 5,000 throats and more there rose a lusty yell; it rambled through the valley, it rattled in the dell; it knocked upon the mountain and recoiled upon the flat, for Casey, mighty Casey, was advancing to the bat.

There was ease in Casey's manner as he stepped into his place; there was pride in Casey's bearing and a smile on Casey's face. And when, responding to the cheer, he lightly doffed his hat, no stranger in the crowd could doubt 'twas Casey at bat.

10,000 eyes were on him as he rubbed his hands with dirt; 5,000 tongues applauded when he wiped them on his shirt. Then while the writhing pitcher ground the ball into his hip, defiance gleamed in Casey's eye, a sneer curled Casey's lip.

And now the leather-covered sphere came hurtling through the air, and Casey stood a-watching it in haughty grandeur there. Close by the sturdy batsman the ball unheeded sped - "That ain't my style," said Casey. "Strike one," the umpire said.

From the benches, black with people, there went up a muffled roar, like the beating of the storm waves on a stern and distant shore. "Kill him! Kill the umpire!" shouted someone in the stand, and it's likely they'd have killed him had not Casey raised his hand.

With a smile of Christian charity great Casey's visage shone; he stilled the rising tumult, he bade the game go on; he signaled to the pitcher, and once more the Spheroid flew; but Casey still ignored it, and the umpire said, "Strike two."

"Fraud!" cried the maddened thousands, and the echo answered, "Fraud!" but one scornful look Casey and the audience was awed. They saw his face grow stern and cold, they saw his muscles strain, and they knew that Casey wouldn't let that ball go by again.

The sneer is gone from Casey's lip, his teeth are clenched in hate; he pounds with cruel violence his bat upon the plate. And now the pitcher holds the ball, and now he let's it go, and now the air is shattered by the force of Casey's blow.

Oh! somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright; the band is playing somewhere, and hearts are light. And somewhere men are laughing, and somewhere children shout; but there is no joy in Mudville - mighty Casey has struck out!



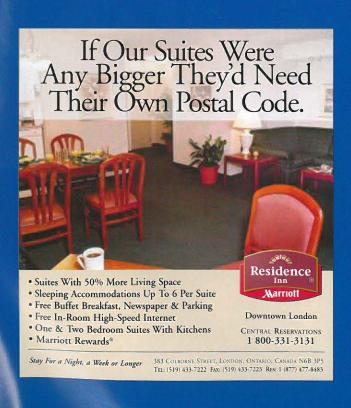
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