



The Pony Express

Morgan Hill Pony Baseball Newsletter

March 2005-OPENING DAY INFORMATION ENCLOSED

2004-2005

Board of Directors

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(all emails @mhpb.org)

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Less than a month before MHPB's big Opening Day ceremony and parade of athletes, I sure am excited, and hope you are as well.

First thing I want to say is Wow, what a start we've had so far. Chris Houle and his band of volunteers have done an excellent job getting the fields ready for play. They are in the best shape for this time of year that I can ever remember seeing them in. What a great guy and group of volunteers.

I am really hoping our volunteer efforts this year are as impressive in other areas as they have been for the fields. We are going to be relying heavily on volunteers in running the Snack Shack this year. Each division is going to be responsible for manning the Shack one day a week and floating for the Saturdays. We will see which division has the Esprit de Corp, and which do not. If the volunteers do a no show, then the shack will NOT open that day and the whole league will know who and why. Please be sure to fulfill your volunteer time this year. Last year, we had way too many people flaking out on us after promising to help.

As I am sure you noticed, we did not raise our registration fees this year. We were able to hold the fees stable since we felt we could get better volunteer help this year. When you signed the registration form, you also signed a line stating that you would volunteer or would pay \$\$ to MHPB. I am hoping that we do not have to come after anyone for not fulfilling the volunteer requirement.

However, what we did not plan for this year was a new requirement from the Morgan Hill Unified School District to pay for all the water used on the Britton fields for the months we use them. This can be as much as \$6,000 if we do not improve on the water usage over last year. Chris Houle has done a lot of work on the watering system out at Britton to improve the coverage and water usage.

If we had known when we set the registration fee that this new fee was going to be required by the MHUSD, I can assure you that we would have had to increase the registration fee to cover the cost. If it is \$6,000 like it was last year, then the cost will be about \$8.50 per player. So, given that we did not raise registration fees, we need to raise that \$6,000 in another way.

This brings me to our fundraiser, See's Candy. It is imperative that we blow the doors off of this fundraiser. Easter is early this year and we are worried that many of you will not have had the fund raising form long enough to get all your friends and family to participate. I am asking that you make that extra effort this year to make this fundraiser the best it has ever been. If we do not do at least \$6,000 more than what we normally do for this fundraiser, then we are going to be in trouble and will be asking you to donate money to the league in another way. If we can do at least twice what we normally raise, then we may not have to raise the registration fees next year. So, let's get the kids out there and make this candy sale the best ever!

One last thought before I close. As I write this, I am recovering from knee surgery, giving me some time to contemplate what got me into this situation. Given that I caused my injury pushing myself too hard riding my Dirt Bike, I drifted from that to how I push my kid to be the best he can be in sports. I realized pretty quick that I may have pushed my son too hard to be the best, because that is what I felt was the only way to do well in sports. The two sports that I enjoy the most are the only two sports that my son ever injured himself in. He damaged his elbow in baseball, and broke his back racing dirt bikes. Maybe I pushed him too hard, maybe not, but I never really stopped to think about what effect my drive might be having on my son.

Though it may be hard for some of us dads to admit, we may push our kids too hard to be what we think they are capable of being, even if it means hurting them in the process. Every year, I see parents who believe that their child has already been identified as the next Barry Bonds, even though they are only at the Mustang level now with private coaches, multiple teams, lots of practice and lots of parental support pushing them to try harder. Be careful that you do not push them too hard, not only for the fear of hurting them, but also so they do not burn out on the sport. Please remember, the success they have in Mustang, Bronco, or even Pony will have no impact on them being the next Barry Bonds, or whoever their idol should be. I have never seen a college or pro scout out at one of our league games. Let's make sure they have fun and learn the right way to play. That means playing fair as well as with proper form. For you managers, I am hoping that we see a lot more fair play and a whole lot less of the Win at Any Cost attitudes. I do not want our kids to get used up in MHPB baseball, let the High School and College coaches have something left to work with so that if there is a Barry Bonds in some of our kids, they will be fresh enough to show it.

Finally, welcome once again to the 2005 MHPB Season. I am looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible this year. Please feel free to stop me while out on the field. I am hard to miss, 6'7" tall, red hair and beard, it is hard to be inconspicuous. Plus the Green hat with President written on the back is another good indicator that you've got the right guy. I do not have any kids playing in the league anymore, so I have lots of time for you to tell me what you like about the league and what you think can or should be better and how we can make the improvements. I am looking forward to the season.

Let's Play Ball!!
Bob Morris



PLAYER AGENT'S CORNER

Well, here we are at the start of a new season. First of all, a reminder of a few of the rules:

1. NO DOGS ALLOWED ON SCHOOL PROPERTY, EXCEPT SEEING EYE DOGS
2. DO NOT DRIVE BEHIND THE GATE AT BRITTON WITHOUT PRIOR AUTHORIZATION.

I will call the police and have you ticketed if you park where you don't belong. This is a safety issue for the players on the field, as fire lanes are set for a purpose.

Now for the fun part! The teams are formed, kids are playing ball, and games will start soon. We put together some very good coach's clinics this year. Thanks to Rich Taylor, of Taylor Made Baseball, for stepping up and running the clinics. Also, we have the ABA training coming up soon and it is addressed elsewhere in this newsletter.

We have expanded the schedule in the Bronco and Pony divisions this year to provide more playing time and new challenges for everyone. We are going to try a new program for the selection of all-stars this year in most divisions, and we have totally revamped the Pinto division outline of play this year. Hopefully these changes will let everyone improve and have a much better time in the league.

Finally, please remember to step up and help wherever you can, fix the fields, pick up some trash, get your players to their functions on time and ready to play. This will go a long way to making everything run smoothly this year. Your coaches and managers have a lot on their plates, so please lend a hand. Also, throughout the year, take a look at the current board positions and think about running for the board so that you can help make this the league you want it to be.

See you on the field,
Gregg

Dear MHPB Community:

I am writing this letter to express my deep felt gratitude for all those parents (and kids) who showed up for the big field clean-up day on the weekend of 12/4 and 12/5.

This is my first year as Field Director and, from what I understand, it was one of the largest turnouts ever. I got to see a lot of old friends and I met a lot of new friends. There were also quite a few men who did double days. On Sunday, 12/5, we also finished Bronco field at Burnett School. What a mess! I went back on Monday and finished seeding and topdressing the Mustang I and Bronco field at Britton. We just beat the rains!

I would like to thank Greg Hall for coming out on the Thursday before and helping lay out lines for the infield. He provided specifications for all the ball fields and really helped coordinate crews on Saturday. I would also like to thank a few individuals for their help as well: Chris Blocker for contacting all the D.R.s (he was responsible for the big turnout), Kenny Palmer, Mike Thomasello, Jim Persons and Mike O'Connell. All these men along with many others brought energy and enthusiasm to a project that can demand so much from so many people. Let's all not forget who this is for – the kids! Let's face it, I think it's safe to say that most of us are blessed and have a lot to be thankful for. What comes around goes around so what's a couple of hours a week? We all need to continue supporting our community. Thanks to all who came out. I won't forget it. In January, we had a big clean up day which we distributed in excess of 100 tons of Gold Fines between Britton and Burnett. Thanks to Granite Construction and all the volunteers that helped. It was a great day!

A very special thanks to all my friends who donated so much material for absolutely no cost:

*A Tool Shed donated most of Rental Equipment such as Tillers, sod cutters and thatchers. Thanks Dave!

*My friend Vince, donated his time hauling Gold Fines (in cost only) and actually donated one load for free. Thanks Vince!

*Mike Johnson (from Johnson Lumber) donated all the lumber and hardware to repair the backstops and storage sheds for Mustang I and Mustang II for absolutely no cost. Thanks Mike!

(cont'd)

*My friend Jack who owns Hydro Turf (a wholesale Irrigation Supply Co. in Gilroy) donated 6 large grading rakes and 8 small landscape rakes for no cost to us. We can use these rakes for all of our maintenance sheds. – Thanks Jack!

*My friend and fellow landscaper, Mark Rizzo, donated 30 large Rainbird Rotor Sprinklers to help retrofit the infield irrigation. Thanks Mark!

*I would like to thank Bruce at South Valley Disposal for donating two 20-yard dumpsters for all the debris from the clean up day. We can always depend on South Valley for our disposal needs. Thanks Bruce!

*I went to Peninsula Building Materials and without any questions asked Rick Lynch to donate ½ of all soil amendments I purchased. – Thanks Rick!

(cont'd)

*Steve Nilmeyer of Nilmeyer Grading, a local grading company, provided their awesome Massey Ferguson tractor to grade all the Gold Fines. Steve also brought over his big blade grader and touched up the track around Britton, because he is so generous. Thanks Steve!

*My friend Erin Gil who runs the Grass Farm north of Morgan Hill donated 13 pallets of sod - no questions asked! What a tremendous act of generosity. His crew came out on Saturday morning to deliver it to us. Erin was actually present at the time of delivery to insure that no problems arose. That's service! Thanks Erin!

*And last but not least, Granite Construction came to the plate and donated in excess of 100 tons of Gold Fines! So, next time you have construction needs, call Terry at Granite Construction. Thanks Terry for your generosity!

The first clean up day started off with a few hitches, such as a flat tire on the skidsteer, a sod cutter going down and my tractor operator had a personal emergency and had to leave. Despite the adversity, we completed all we needed to accomplish. We could not have done it without all of you. Opening day you can hold your heads high and know you made a difference.

Sincerely,

Chris Houle
Grassguy
Field Director

TRAINING DAY

APRIL 10, 2005 AT BRITTON: All MHPB Managers, Coaches, & Players of Pinto through Palomino Divisions:

The first annual Training Day (not the movie with Denzel Washington!) for the coaches and players of MHPB will be held at Britton Middle School on Sunday, April 10, 2005. The instructors will be several coaches from the Aldrete Baseball Academy (ABA). ABA is a nationally known baseball academy based in Monterey. Most of the coaches played in the major or minor leagues. ABA has been instrumental in developing star professional, college, and high school players and has several traveling teams. ABA has been kind enough to supply the instructors free of charge to MHPB, with their only compensation coming from a portion of the modest admission fees that will be charged to the attendees.

The training will focus on all the necessary skills including hitting, pitching, throwing, fielding, and base running. The instructors will give useful tips to our coaches so they can, in turn, provide better instruction to the League's players during practices and games. All approved MHPB managers and coaches should make every effort to attend because you will not get better training anywhere else. Coaches, your players are counting on you to attend and pick up valuable coaching tips!

The event will be broken into two groups. Pinto, Mustang, and Bronco Division coaches and players will attend the morning session from 9:00 am to 12 noon. Pony, Colt, and Palomino Division coaches and players will attend the afternoon session from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. If a coach or player simply cannot attend the session designated for his Division, he can come to the other session. The Snack Shack will be open, so please plan to have lunch at the field if you can.

Admission fees are \$15 for coaches and \$10 for players. We will provide advance signup forms on Opening Day (March 19) and through the coaches. The League needs a good turnout so that our coaches and players can improve their skills and so ABA will want to help us again in future years. We will see you on April 10!

Opening day is almost here! The many volunteers in our community have made the ball fields look great as we head into the 2005/2006 Pony Baseball season.

Listed below are some key issues to remember as we use the fields this season:

After games, please remember to:

- Pick up all trash, bottles, etc from the bleachers, dug outs, and surrounding areas
- Recycle bins have been provided. Please use them!
- Make sure all equipment is accounted for, put away in the storage sheds and locked up properly.
- Please leave the fields the same way you found them (hopefully clean and groomed!)
- If you turn on water, please turn it off.
- Remember, safety first. Use common sense when operating any equipment and keep our kids safe.
- Report any potential hazards or liabilities immediately to your coach or league representative.

Our kids are only as responsible as the people who teach them. Let's teach them to pick up after themselves and respect other people's property and show them that a little work goes a long way. Let's make our baseball community proud. Have fun!

Chris Houle
Grassguy

SEE'S CANDY

See's Candy will be available for pick up opening Day March 19 at the Snack Shack/Store. Please have one team representative pick up the candy between 8AM and 2PM

SNACK SHACK

This year we are going to have each division "host" the snack shack one night a week and on rotating Saturdays (plus a few Sundays). Monday night will be Mustang, Tuesday- Pony, Wednesday-Bronco and Thursday-Pinto. There will be Snack Shack coordinators for each division who will help coordinate volunteers for each day, and also help with the opening and closing of the Snack Shack. Last year, the SS was the most successful in years, making over \$10,000. With your help this year, we will be even more successful. The SS committee would like to have special Barbecue days, a Chile cook off, a Cinco de Mayo fiesta theme, or any other creative idea you might have to help raise money for our league in a fun way. We also need help on opening day.

If you would like to play a bigger role with the SS this Year call Rob or Daniele Conlan 778-7052

MHPB STORE

Check out the store for some great deals on MHPB logo items.

MHPB 2005 PONY DIVISION

Welcome Pony Baseball players, parents, and coaches.

With the spring season just around the corner, we want to welcome each of you back to Morgan Hill Pony Baseball. We hope that everyone had a great off season, and you are getting ready for the new 05 season. We are looking forward to seeing the returning players, players moving up from Bronco, and new players to our league.

We know the 2005 season will be filled with special moments and great memories for the players and their families. Myself, James Neet, and Alan LaBranche will do our best to put together a great season for all Pony players.

As always, we are going to ask for help from each one of you, Snack shack, fields, Candy sales, wherever and whenever you can help is appreciated. Your participation *helps our players build confidence, camaraderie, and a sense of community*. We ask them to hustle, play hard, practice hard, and be a team player. That is what we are asking you to do. Be a team player, show some hustle, help out with the fields and cheer for all players.

We are proud to live in this community. We look forward to another rewarding season. All of our divisions advanced to sectionals and/or regional, with Pony 14 team going the furthest. We all like a strong sports community, we have an opportunity to impact our children's lives now and in the future, and we look forward to that challenge.

We look forward to meeting you during the season, and having an opportunity to serve this community. Enjoy the fun! Lets Play Ball.

James Neet, Pony Division Rep
Alan LaBranche, Pony Division Rep

BRONCO

This year the Bronco division is expecting a 12 team league. There will be to two 6 team divisions that will play an expanded 21 game season playing each division team 3 times the other division teams once with all games affecting the standings. Some weeks will feature 3 games per week per team, and with the 40 hour rest rule for pitchers, managers will be forced to utilize more advanced managerial skills as seen in post season play. We are expecting a fun and exciting season and hope to see all of you out there.

John Howard
Bronco Division Rep

- MHPB is looking for a slightly used propane BBQ. If you would be interested in donating one to the league, please contact Rob Conlan at snackshack@mhp.org.
- MHPB will be hosting the Hit-A-Thon fundraiser again this year. Please look for more information in future newsletters.
- We will be featuring lunch by Maui Tacos in Gilroy for Opening Day. This is a fundraiser for the league so please encourage participation.
- Again, please leave your dogs at home on Opening Day. It is against School District policy to allow dogs on the school grounds.

