

SCRAP IRON Softball



Spring 2022



Spring is here, sorta, most of us had our first tournament of the '22 season in Mesquite or Saint George, wasn't it great to get back on the field and start another season! I always call the Mesquite tournament the ice breaker, only problem was the ice was too thick for my team to break, we were so out of softball shape we needed a fire to melt the ice... as they say, wait till the next tournament.

In this issue we have a fantastic article from Mike Massong about two of our founders Bob Gryzmala and Murl Skalla, very good thanks Mike. We need more stories like this as we celebrate our 30th anniversary, please send them to me at firstbase17@me.com. Wishing everyone a happy and healthy 2022 season.

Congratulations on your 30th anniversary!!

What a pleasure it has been for me to work with so many of you to bring softball to Colorado. It has been an amazing experience. I enjoyed working in the very beginning with Murl Skalla -- and since that time it has been a true joy working with so many of you. I personally feel like I am part of your Scrap Iron fan club and that is an honor!

Here's to your next 30....

Frannie,

Fran Dowell - Executive Director
Senior Softball USA - SSUSA

Funny story time contest

Win a brand new 30th anniversary hat (below left) 1st place or 2nd place an original red/black retro hat right out of one of our founders (below right). Please send in a one or two paragraph funny story of something that happened at one of your tournaments. I will get three judges to pick the winners. Deadline is April 30, 2022. Please send to firstbase17@me.com.



Here's an example:

On our trip to Saint George I borrowed the wife's car and left her my Jeep, I love my Jeep but not for a 10 hour drive. Now, I very rarely drive her car and she has never driven my Jeep. We were driving through the mountains it was snowing and the dirty road mist constantly coated the windshield, problem is I didn't know how to turn on the wipers! I turned the knob, Marce who was with me turned the knob, the only way we could get it to work was to push down on the lever and get one swipe. Lots of traffic and not good conditions to mess around and distract my driving. Once out of the mountains and clear skies I called my wife and told her the windshield wipers were broken, I explained the problem and she said "lift up on the lever" to our amazement it worked. But that's only half of the story... later that day my wife called me and said the Jeep wouldn't start. Her and my granddaughter were all set to go shopping and it just wouldn't start. She said "I kept pushing the button" the key fob was in her hand. After a few questions by me we found out she was pushing the radio button. That was the second hard laugh Marce and I had that day.

Now it's your turn, send in those stories for the next newsletter

Maybe John will tell the story about his first lottery scratch ticket in Saint George. I'm entering Gary Jones's Story from our last newsletter "why he hates going to Reno", it's worthy!

I have wonderful memories of Scrap Iron. I began playing senior softball for Broomfield in 1989 when there were only about six teams in the league.

A couple of years later Murl and Kenny joined the team. They put together a traveling team that changed my softball life.

They had us playing in local D and some C leagues against all ages. We were playing a lot of ball. We entered the Broomfield recreation league on Sunday night and went undefeated.

In the early years Murl would recruit players from his younger teams that qualified. Very good players like Arlen Amundson, Tom Grubb, Dennis Lutz, Bob Wiltgen Billy Brown, Roger Wiedleman. We had a very competitive team.

We began playing in St. George and recruited some players from Vegas and won the 55 division two years in a row.

I remember Kenny Green showing us a drawing of the logo. Of course we all loved it.

When Bob Wiltgen, Arlen, Phil Field and I would travel to St. George we discussed how to structure the club. From all that talk it began to evolve.

Scrap Iron will always be wonderful memories for me and I look forward to hear about it's continued success.

I am very proud of what it has become.

Bob Gryzmala



Foundation of Scrap Iron:

By Mike Massong

A little history about Bob Gryzmala, one of the founding fathers of our Scrap Iron Club.

Back in the early to mid 90's I was asked to play on a softball team in Broomfield. I played outfield with Bob Gryzmala. Bob sponsored the team and also was involved with a group called Scrap Iron Softball.

Bob was a heck of a player, and for those that are fairly new to the club, Bob was one of the main founders of Scrap Iron. Not only has he contributed sponsorship donations every year since the 90's but also a huge contribution of his knowledge and leadership.

I learned a lot from Bob on the Scrap Iron organization and his views, and knowledge, of forming a group that would carry on the Scrap Iron legacy. Bob was a savvy businessman and brought his experience and organizational ideas to the club.

For you old timers you may remember Bob's original team which was RG Insulation. Here is the logo on one of our caps. I still have my jersey from this team. Not long after, we started wearing the Scrap Iron logo that we now all wear on our jerseys and caps.



A bit of history and humor about our Scrap Iron Club and a founding Father that set up a dress code called the "Murl Rule":

Back in the 90's we were playing in a tournament in Mesquite Nevada. Murl Skalla, our coach, wanted to go to dinner at Katherine's Steakhouse located in the Casablanca Casino – Hotel.

When we arrived we did not realize what a nice restaurant this was. It was pretty high class for a bunch of old ball players. Murl was his boisterous self and was loud at times, with all of us having a few beers, and telling stories. We were asked to keep it down a number of times and received some strange looks.

Murl did not like sleeves on his shirts. We, who knew him, saw his "guns" daily with his ripped off sleeves. Both on and off the field.

The next year we went back to the restaurant and noticed a sign by the front door. The sign, or plaque next to the door read:

OPEN AT 5:00 PM

CASUAL ATTIRE

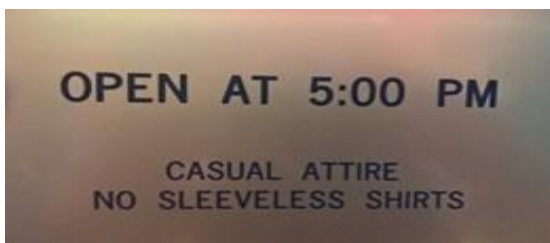
NO SLEEVELESS SHIRTS

I asked the lady at the desk about the sign, and she said that a while back there was a sleeveless group that was quite disruptive in the restaurant so they initiated the new rule about sleeveless shirts.

The sign is still there at the door, so check it out if you go to the restaurant. We call it the "Murl Rule" as we know how it was established.

Scrap Iron, once again, is historical.

Bat Boy Billy.



Dear Billy,

I was talking to my coach and he said each teammate has to contribute \$10-20 so our team can provide an item for the silent auction at the banquet. When is enough...enough? I pay \$250.00 dues, Plus I pay \$50.00 to attend the banquet and I purchase \$20.00 worth of raffle tickets,

I donate to the 50/50 raffle, it cost me \$20.00 to compete in the Aurora skills challenge, and I have to pay extra to play in the wood bat tournament. It feels like church! Every time I turn around there asking for more money! Why aren't we looking outside the club for donations? Many corporations have money to donate to causes like ours, it just seems like every fundraiser is designed to get more money from inside the club. Please don't get me wrong I love our club and I support all efforts to raise money.

Signed,
Empty Pockets.

Dear Empty Pockets,

My job here as Billy is to give advice, tell stories, and keep all of you straight on facts, this is above my pay grade so I turned this over to our president, here are his remarks, please let me know if this satisfies you, Billy

Funny you should compare Scrap Iron Club to your church. Both ask for donations, are non-profit, fellowship is a key aspect, and both believe the more you do for the organization, the more you get out of it. Scrap Iron Club fundraisers only benefit Scrap Iron teams where 40% of the team's costs are paid through fundraisers and not player dues. The best way to explain fundraising is to eat 40% of a players ice cream. Fundraising is the second most important aspect for Scrap Iron to exist. The first is softball players and the awesome team fellowship and long term relationships we share. The latter is what makes Scrap Iron Club so great. The club isn't just players, many bring significant others to tournaments, our greatest fans (and sometimes our worst critics J). Nothing has a better payback than the special human activity we share.

Only one of the donations to Scrap Iron Club is required, the player dues. All other fundraisers are optional and are monetary, participatory or both. The banquet is a breakeven cost. The additions of raffles and auctions make it a fundraiser. Teams adding auction items enhances the fundraising capabilities along with the additional friends and families in attendance, which we encourage our players to invite. Outside of the banquet, our additional fundraisers involve other senior softball players, friends and families. These include the Wooden Bat Tournament, Rocky Mountain Championship Skills contest, Kroger-Safeway-Amazon rewards programs, Super Bowl and March Madness Squares, and possibly a National Scrap Iron tournament next year. We will continue to look outside

the club for fundraising options. Meanwhile, EP, do what you can monetarily, physically, and relationally to support your team and the Scrap Iron Club. The return is phenomenal!

(Editors note, if you would like to comment on the above to the newsletter or the executive board, please send to me, Art [firstbase17@me.com](mailto:Artfirstbase17@me.com)



On the lighter side, I here's a story for your enjoyment, Billy

A Red Sox fan liked to amuse himself by scaring every Yankees fan he saw strutting down the street in an obnoxious NY pinstripe shirt. He would swerve his van as if to hit them, then swerve back just missing them. One day while driving along, he saw a priest. He thought he would do a good deed, so he pulled over and asked the priest, "Where are you going, Father?" "I'm going to give Mass at St. Francis church, about two miles down the road," replied the priest. "Climb in, Father. I'll give you a lift!" The priest climbed into the passenger seat, and they continued down the road. Suddenly, the driver saw a Yankees fan walking down the road, and he instinctively swerved as if to hit him. But, as usual, he swerved back onto the road just in time. Even though he was certain that he had missed the guy, he still heard a loud THUD. not knowing where the noise came from, he glanced in his mirrors but still didn't see anything. He then remembered the priest, and he turned to the priest and said, "sorry Father, I almost hit that Yankees fan." "That's OK," replied the priest "I got him with the door."



Thanks to all those signing into Amazon Smile, you purchase's last quarter got us a check for \$59.37. Not a lot you say... that's only a small amount of members using this feature. Our club receives 1/2 % of all purchases through the Amazon Smile program. It's one of the easiest things to do. Go to Smile Amazon, scroll through all the charities listed, select Scrap Iron Club. Every time you go to purchase something on Amazon sign in at Smile Amazon and shop as always. It will automatically give our club 1/2 percent of what you spend. It's Free money!!!

AmazonSmile has donated:

- **\$616.93** to Scrap Iron Softball Club*
 - **Over \$334 million** to US charities
 - **Over \$377 million** to charities worldwide
-

The baseball and softball season is upon us once again (or maybe it never stops). I know that I have more faith in Scrap Iron being ready for the New Year than I do for MLB or the Rockies. At Athletic Lettering we are trying to make sure that everyone is ready for the season with new jerseys and replacement jerseys for the player who might have lost a bit of weight during the off season and needs a new jersey.

I have had the pleasure of working with Scrap Iron for 20 years and every year I am more impressed with the professionalism of your organization. Your organization from the Board, Coaches and Players always presents a professional front when representing Scrap Iron. You should all be proud of the organization that you have built and the weight that it carries in the Senior Softball World.

I am please to be part of the organization that has been going strong for the last 30 years.

Be Safe, Play Hard and Hit 'em Deep,
Fred Jacobsen
Athletic Lettering.

(Editors note, we are very pleased with the wonderful service we have received from Athletic Lettering, and honored to have Fred in our Scrap Iron Hall of Fame).

Team News

Scrap Iron Storm

We headed into our first tournament of the year at St George with 14 players. Richie McDowell wasn't able to play as he is recovering from shoulder surgery but came and did a great job of coaching third base for us. We are still learning to find our rhythm so had a few tough losses. Our field manager, Norm Friedman, was kept busy juggling our lineup with three players having injuries. Our highlight was we won our last game on Wednesday which put us into the final eight teams for Thursday. Our top three hitters were Phil Brown (.850), John Beckner (.706), and Randy Drenning (.700). Great job guys! The team is looking forward to attending the Southwest Championship in Las Vegas in April and coming away with a few more wins. A special thanks to Michelle Schilling who is now our official scorekeeper. Rob Minner, manager

Scrap Iron Diamonds 65's

Like I mentioned above the ice was too thick for us to crack, however, we did have moments of greatness, Don Poulter laying out to make a fantastic catch, Lupe Pena pitched an outstanding game after not pitching for over a year, overall a great effort by all of us, that shows we have potential. The greatest thing about this team is the chemistry of a combination of great personalities. I would like to welcome our new players this year, Mike Gamble, Orville Strain, Jim Yester, and Jerry Vigil. By the time The SW in Vegas gets here we will be in awesome shape. I'll tell the guys to bring ice picks just in case.

Scrap Iron Diamonds 75's

As a team we won the Spring Worlds going 5-1. It was a different format with 7 teams competing in a round robin. We knew we had won it when we completed our 6th game that started at 9:30, even though there were games that were not scheduled to start until 12:30. We won our games by an average of 7 runs. It was truly a team win with everyone contributing and coming through when it counted.

We had two guys join us for the first time, Ken Armbruster and Warren Bailey. They both reminded us why they are perfect members of the team. First as supportive teammates and then with their solid play on the field and at bat. Rich Root joined us from MN and was important in helping with the running (and other coaching matters) and helped fill in for an injured player and ended up having a slugging percentage of 4,000% (ok it was one at bat).

Standing out in the batting department, Paul Auster batted 1,000% for the tournament!! He has now set a new standard for all hitters!

When it is a team performance, I hesitate to point out individuals (other than above), but here are a few. Tony McIlroy pitched every inning with Mike Edwards on the IR and had a minimal number of walks and varied the height of his pitches to keep the timing of the hitters off. With Paul Auster (3rd), Al Gallagher (SS), Ed Clark (Rover), Warren Bailey (all infield), Mike Ebbing (2nd) and Ed Berghuis (1st), double plays are a common occurrence. The fielders know they just have to get it close to first and Ed will snag it up. Ed does

provide a solid target for them to toss at, sometimes it is not headed where it was intended. One of the many plays that stood out was a play where a player foolishly thought they were going to score. Ed C. threw one of his rockets to home and Warren made a maximum stretch, somehow his foot stayed on the plate with the ball fully visible, but amazingly staying in his glove.

With the coach's shoulder hurting Alan Wiechmann moved from Short Stop to left center. All the outfielders, Kenny Hiat, Alan Wiechmann, Mike Anderson, Art McComber, Bart Prieve and Ken Armbruster provided solid play with backing up the normal. There never is a question if the ball was near the glove it was going in it to stay.

When it comes to the batting, I wasn't sure where to start. When you have someone struggling, it doesn't stand out because there are always others that are picking up the slack. We had Paul, Ed C., Tony, Alan, Warren and Al showing why you can depend on them. We had Ken A. reminding the 3rd and SS why they better stay alert or they might be spending the rest of the tournament on IR. Mike A. and Ed B. started off slow, but finished the tournament on fire. Art did the same and came through when needed. Mike E. showed his team focus when he hurt his hamstring, he took himself out and requested to be subbed for.

As a new coach it is a blessing to have the support of Deb to be keeping the score book, keeping us all in line and reminding me of all the stuff I space out. On top of that we have some terrific wives there for support, with Sharon making sure we have a good place to enjoy a meal together.



Scrap Iron 5280

After an impressive 6-0 first place finish as a new 5280' team we came back to earth in St George. We managed a few injuries, had a couple bad innings, played on the last day but our 5-2 record was only good enough for fifth place. We'll be back in Las Vegas and Dallas in April.



Is this your jacket???

Found at Cactus yards, in Arizona last November

You can thank Randy Huls, he picked it up, just say thanks mom!



For sale

Scrap Iron 30th anniversary Hats

Now taking orders through April 30.

Cost is \$20.00 per hat. Contact Art firstbase17@me.com



For sale

Original Scrap Iron hats (brand new old stock)

Very limited supply.

Cost \$15.00 per hat. Contact Art firstbase17@me.com

STAND BY YOUR TEAM

John Parisi

Scrap Iron President

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; For he to-day that sheds his blood with me, shall be my brother" Shakespeare, Henry V

Although not in a life or death battle, isn't your team a band of brothers with a loyalty that is fully committed to stand by each other, shoulder to shoulder, even if it means that you may lose in doing so?

We play a game with a dozen or more players. We rely upon each other, knowing that our actions are only a building block to success or failure, nothing more. We all want to be heroes but have to accept that only happens to the well prepared who stay within their limits. Most other times we are adding to our team's success and passing the mantle on to the next man up. Yet many of us feel the pressure and try to do more than we often can deliver. The result can be poor pitch choices, tightening up, swinging too hard or first ball swinging at a ball that is hittable but not driveable.

As a batter, remember your team and the man on deck. Maybe even look at the man on deck to get your mind right. Believe in them as you are not alone. Your primary objective is to get on base, drive it if you get the pitch. A walk is as good as a hit so take what is given and believe in your band of brothers.

As a brother, when the batter is up, give him encouragement not advice (hit coaching is for practice or pregame). Say things like, "come on Billy, it's just you and the ball", "take one for the team", "good swing you're right on it", "good eye or good take", etc. Don't start singing "Billy don't be a hero, don't be a fool with your life". If he causes an out, say "that's okay, we got your back", "next time, you got this", etc. Don't leave him hanging to sulk.

This also goes for the play in the field too. We need to be there for each other. We all want the same thing, to win, but tend to play solo more than we should. Be loyal, supportive and each other's wingman. I am not saying you should begin singing "Stand by your Man" for every pregame, but you get the idea. We are a band of brothers on the field and have a great opportunity to build some strong team character.

All the best to everyone in the 2022 season.

In closing I'm excited about our next issue, recently I have received some old pictures of the early days and a new story about one of our founders I'm anxious to share while we celebrate our 30th anniversary. On another note I'm sure you noticed that we only have team news from 4 of our 16 teams. Hopefully, more teams will be willing to share their experiences while on the field, really the rest of us are interested.

Also, we would like to thank Alan Wiechmann for volunteering to serve on the executive board for the remainder of the year due to a vacancy. Alan is and has always been a valuable resource to our club, we are honored to have him in any capacity.

Please remember to enter our funny story contest.