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## *Preserving the Sports History of Chautauqua County*

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## **Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame**

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*15 West Third Street - Jamestown, NY 14701*

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*November 2011*

### **Spotlight on Volunteers**



Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame. The officers and directors of the CSHOF give freely of their time without compensation, yet there is also another group of exceptional individuals, without whom the organization could not exist. The following people donate several hours each month to help keep our hall doors open: Vi Rewers, Dee Rewers, Patty Rewers, Nancy Huckabone, Don Long, Louise Long, Larry Marvell and Nancy

Schuyler. To them we say thank you. You are sincerely appreciated. **Photo left: CSHOF President Randy Anderson and volunteer Don Long at work in the hall .**

### **Axel W. Carlson Fund Donates to CSHOF Expansion**

The Axel W. Carlson Fund administered by the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation has made a grant to the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame exhibit hall expansion project. The money will be used towards the purchase of carpeting for the newly acquired exhibit space.

To further assist with the project, donors can make charitable contributions to the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame Non-Endowment Fund at the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation's website

<http://www.crcfonline.org/Donors/DonateNow/tabid/332/txtSearch/sport/ProductID/1070/Default.aspx>

## Inductee of the Month



**Tony LeVoie** was born in Providence, Rhode Island in 1930 and in the 1940s he won the New England junior 440-yard and 1500-meter freestyle championships. From 1951-53 LeVoie was in the Marine Corps and participated in swimming races and marathons. From 1953-56 he was swimming director at the Fox Point Boys' Club in Providence and received a scholarship to New York University where he took the Boys' Club short course in management and also found time to coach several championship teams.

In 1957 LeVoie was appointed swim director at the Jamestown Boys' Club and held the position until his retirement in 1979. In that time he taught thousands of youngsters how to swim. He also coached the Jamestown Boys' Club boys and girls swim team for several years and produced many individual and team national, state and local record holders.

Swimming grew in the area because of LeVoie's leadership and dedication. He is also responsible for many of the awards in the trophy case at the Boys' Club and marks in the record book.

In 1964 he was honored for his time and skills in teaching handicapped children how to swim. He also received the Dr. Frank Smeragliulo Memorial Award for his achievements in the service of youth. In 1977 Jamestown High School Coach Bill Rollinger established the "Tony LeVoie Award" in Jamestown because of LeVoie's 21 years of service and dedication in the area of sports and community service.

The same year he was recognized by the Fox Point Boys' Club as "Outstanding Boys' Club Man" and two years later he was inducted into the Fox Point Boys' Club Hall of Fame.

In 1979 he received the Niagara District AAU President's Award and in 1980 he received the NCCJ Brotherhood citation as "Mr. Boys' Club." He also received the Boys' Club highest award, the "Bronze Keystone" for 29 years of service.

Following his death in 1983, the Jamestown Boys' Club board of directors established the Tony LeVoie Educational College Scholarship.

Tony LeVoie was inducted into the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame in 1985.

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[www.chautauquasportshalloffame.org](http://www.chautauquasportshalloffame.org)

## **Jamestown Ironmen Hockey Promotion**



Craving some hometown hockey? Interested in supporting the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame? Well the Jamestown Ice Arena is where it's at!

You can order tickets online at the arena's website, [www.jamestownarena.com](http://www.jamestownarena.com). When purchasing your tickets, either online or in person, use the promotional code, CSHOF. With every ticket sold using this code, the CSHOF will receive a portion of the ticket cost.

Thanks so much for your support of the Chautauqua Sports Hall Of Fame and the Jamestown Ironmen. Go Ironmen!

## **Holiday Gift Ideas**

The CSHOF has a limited number of game-worn 1941 Jamestown Falcons throwback jerseys that have been reduced 25% to just \$75. Similarly, replica 1941 Jamestown Falcons baseball caps have been reduced to only \$20. Contact [randy28b@netsync.net](mailto:randy28b@netsync.net) or 716-763-2173 to place your order in time for Christmas.

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## **Becker Brothers Baseball Team Never Lost Game**

*The Post-Journal*  
by Frank Hyde  
October 22, 1969

Lewis Becker stuck out his hand and said, "Hello, I have been watching for you."

The firm-handed little man with the clear voice and sparkling eyes moved quickly into the living room of his neat home at 222 Richard Avenue in Falconer.

His was the quick stride of a one-time athlete who has retained his strength and reflexes to a surprising degree.

Lewis Becker, you see, is 91 years old and he is one of the four remaining members of the Becker Brothers baseball team, believed to be the only all-brothers team to ever perform on the diamond in this area.

"We didn't play a lot of games, but we never lost when we were all together," Lewis says proudly.

The Becker Brothers from Clark's Corners, east of Falconer, played together shortly after the turn of the century-between 1905 and 1910-as Lewis recalls it, but he added, "I was 70 years old when

I played in my last game. It was against the sons of the Becker boys and we beat them. I was so stiff I could hardly move for several days."

The Becker Brothers team was composed of Lewis, Pete, Jess, Alton, George, Fred, Frank, Joe, Tom and Marvin, the batboy.

Four are still living. In addition to Lewis, there's George of Allen Street Extension, Alton of Ivory and Marvin of Clark's Corners, all in the 70-80 age bracket.

One hallmark of success for the Becker Brothers on the baseball field was apparently the ability of all to play any position.

"At least five of us could pitch," Lewis remembers, "as far as the outfield or the infield was concerned, it made no difference to any of us."

Lewis cannot recall any specific games or the scores. "We played at Clark's Corners, Frewsburg, Gerry, Ellington, Falconer, Jamestown and most area communities where baseball fields were available."

One time a Buffalo promoter came to visit the boys and offered to put their team on the road as a barnstorming outfit. "We thought it over but one of my brothers was running a store and the rest of us were pretty busy, so we decided to pass up his offer," Lewis explains.

The Indian wars were still being fought in the West, automobiles were unknown and the horse and the train were kings of the transportation world when Austin and Jennie Becker were rearing their family of 14 at Clark's Corners.

The Becker Boys did what most boys did in those days in the absence of radio, television, public playgrounds and campus protests. They ran races, they wrestled and they were hunters and horseback riders. But mostly they were farm workers-long hours and no pay but with a lust for living that marked America's pioneer era.

"I guess it was natural we should start playing baseball," Lewis recalled. "We got some equipment together and played among ourselves for a time. As we grew older, we outfitted ourselves with uniforms of sorts and played other teams. That went on for quite a few years."

During those years, Lewis met a pretty young lady named Ella Walrod, also of Clark's Corners. Today they are looking back on their 68th wedding anniversary. "We reared four boys of our own," Ella, now 85 years old, says proudly.

Any recipe for longevity?

Ella, speaking for both Lewis and herself, said, "Well, we have never drunk or smoked and we have both worked hard all our lives."

It's a simple formula that seems to have paid big dividends in a day when life itself was simpler.

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**Thanks to CSHOF volunteer Don Long for sharing this article about his step-father and step-uncles.**