

BLACK & GOLD NEWS

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE STEEL CITY CONNECTION
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

AUGUST, 1999

Member News

The *Black & Gold News* took the summer off. While we had a great time, there is some catching up to do.

Happy Wedding Anniversaries: to John & Rosanne Merlot (7/11); Rick and Anne Boyle (7/13); and Bob & Frankie Smith (7/15).

June Birthdays: Walter Laird (6/1); Clifford Gordon (6/2); Anthony DiLucente (6/5); Rosanne Merlot (6/14); Don Barrett (6/17); Diane Chess (6/17); Tom Greer (6/17); Kelly Liptak (6/18); Erik McCandless (6/24); Angie McCandless (6/25); Kristi DuBois (6/26); Rick Penatzer (6/26); Ron Smith (6/27); Marissa Schiwtz (6/29).

July Birthdays: Carol Mitas (7/1); Karen Simon (7/1); Ben Parker (7/2); Pam Stevenson (7/2); Joe DuBois (7/3); Judy Barrett (7/6); Bill O'Bier (7/7); Dan Dixon (7/8); Barry Gwyer (7/9); Bonnie Riley (7/9); Paige Lawrence (7/12); David Lentz (7/15); Anne Boyle (7/18); Rebecca Stack (7/21); Joe Napoli (7/23); Tracy Garren (7/24); Ron Sleeth (7/26); Michael Jenkins (7/30); Eleonore Santarelli (7/30).

August Birthdays: David Rothrock, Sr. (8/2); Taylor O'Bier (8/5); Roy Newcomb (8/5); Keith Parknow (8/6); Johnny Schiwtz (8/6); Jen Szczerbinski (8/8); Carl Simon (8/9); Suzanne Woodside (8/10); Olga Gwyer (8/14); Dustin Rockroth (8/15); Dana Garren (8/15); Michele Andolina (8/17); Suzanne Schiwtz (8/20); Rich Golob (8/23); Bridget Verostic (8/28); Paul Mary (8/29); Taylor Liptak (8/30); Katie Napoli (8/30); Rosemary Mary (8/31); Nick Penatzer (8/31).

As of this printing, **ALBERTA WEBBER** is confined to St. Mary's Hospital with a serious illness. The last time we heard, she was responding well and was hopeful of returning home soon. Our thoughts and prayers are with you, Alberta.

We saw **MARK ALBERT** recently and he told us he was confined to St. Francis Hospital in Pittsburgh for a month for first gallbladder removal and then removal of an intestinal cyst. Mark's recovery was complete and he looks great.

BOB MESSINGER truly loved his Steelers and was a long-time regular at Mulligan's for Steeler telecasts. He invited us to St. Matthias Episcopal for a memorial service and garden dedication for his first wife, Blanche, who died in 1996. We were there again in 1998 to share his joy when he remarried. Then came the terrible news that Bob himself passed away August 7 following a brief illness. A few days later, we found ourselves once again at St. Matthias, sharing part of Bob's life and reliving old memories as we attended his memorial service. Our heartfelt sympathies are extended to his wife, Carole, and to the rest of his family. Bob was a gentleman with a sense of elegance and we will miss him deeply.

Golf Tournament

When we last communicated, plans for the inaugural Steel City Connection/Children's Hospital Golf Classic were breezing along. Then, as the June 14th tournament date drew closer, it became apparent that we would fall short of the 72 golfers needed to make the tournament a success. As we wanted this to be the first of a series of meaningful events, didn't want to run the risk of golfers participating in a poor tournament. With this in mind, we decided to postpone the tournament, regroup, brainstorm and solicit additional help. The help came in the form of former Steelers J.R. Wilburn, Ron Smith and John Hilton; former Pirate Gene Alley; and former 49er Ken Willard. These guys attended meetings with us in late June and early July. They gave us some great ideas and additional contacts. The result should be the type of tournament we were looking to have.

At their suggestion, we moved the tournament from The Crossings to The Hollows in Montpelier. In addition to taking advantage of their reputation for good food, the cheaper greens fees enabled us to establish a \$75 Individual Golfer's Package, which would be more attractive to the single golfer and still allow us to make a few dollars for the hospital. Then, we moved the tee time from a Monday morning to a Thursday afternoon. The event will now take place on October 7th, with registration at 11:00 A.M., lunch at 11:30 and tee time at 1:00 P.M. Finally, the former athletes are trying to line up a local personality for each hole, thus turning each foursome into a "fivesome." So far, their list includes, in addition to themselves, Weegie Thompson, Chip Tarkenton, Barty Smith and Walker Gillette.

All companies who signed on for the June event have agreed to stay on board for October. The appeal now turns to our membership. The changes we have made make the tournament more attractive. Hopefully, you golfers will step forward and enjoy a great day. Also, we all have something we can now carry to our employers for a corporate sponsorship, confident they will have a nice golf outing for a very worthy cause. Help us out! The kids at Children's Hospital are counting on it.

Baltimore Bus Trip

This is the fourth bus trip we have sponsored for a Steelers/Ravens game and it's the first time we've had trouble filling up the bus. We need 44 and, so far, we only have 16. The tour company tells us tickets are running out and they're getting down to the point where, after the week of August 16th, our unsold tickets will be "fair game" and the bus will be shared. The trip is Saturday, Sept. 18th and Sunday, Sept. 19th. Cost is \$179 per person and includes travel, motel and game ticket. Call Rosemary Mary a'

Paul Mary

Steelers Any Better in '99?

In three words or less: "I don't think so." In two words or less: "Doubt it." In one word or less: "No." Usually, at this time of the year, I'm still heavily into the Pirates as they get ready to put the twilight on another season. The pennant races are heating up to match the temperatures outside but I'm at least I'm usually starting to think about Steeler football and what's going on in Latrobe. After all, for almost 30 years we've all become accustomed to their being perennial playoff, if not Super Bowl, contenders and we can't help but feel anticipation and excitement as September draws near.

Not this year, though. The 1998 Steeler season left such a bad taste in my mouth that not even the strongest dose of "Cowher '99" will take it away. I guess it's one thing to see "The Boyz" have too many injuries to overcome or to see them lose close ones or have a run of bad luck. These are tangibles that any team can have to work through. But I don't think that was necessarily the case in 1998.

First of all, I don't care what Art Rooney says, free agency *did indeed* finally catch up with the Steelers last year. For six years they went to the well to overcome annual free agent losses and last year the well went dry. If no where else, it showed up in their lack of depth as injuries happened to key people, especially on the offensive line.

Second, they never got off the ground right from "Jump Street" and went downhill after that. To open the season, they squeaked by those two NFL "powerhouses," Baltimore and Chicago and then did a huge belly flop in the rain in Miami. By mid-November they were an unsteady 7-4 but, for all practical purposes, their season ended in Detroit on Thanksgiving Day. I don't know what we saw last year but it wasn't disciplined Steeler football. Two losses to Cincinnati; too much bickering; too much finger pointing; too much hot-dogging on routine plays; too many Kordell rumors. If this nonsense carries over into 1999 and they don't come together again as a cohesive unit, it won't make any difference what player moves they do or don't make.

Speaking of which, they made some but, did they really improve themselves or did they merely plug holes? Well, they signed Wayne Gandy to replace Will Wolford; Travis Davis to replace Darren Perry; Lee Flowers to replace Carnell Lake; Anthony Brown to at least try to replace Justin Strzelczyk. But they just traded with the Redskins for OT Shar Pourdanesh. That makes me think they're still worried about the offensive line. I think they just plugged holes.

Kicker Kris Brown looks good but he's a rookie and must get some distance on his kickoffs. Look for Hines Ward and rookie Troy Edwards to start at wide receiver. Jerome Bettis did some extra working out during the off-season but there is still some concern about his knee. Third round pick Amos Zereoue could be the steal of the draft and Chris Fuamatu-Ma'afala looks like a Bettis clone. CB Chad Scott is return-and is, we understand, better than ever. It looks like Bill Cowher is still treating Kordell Stewart like a Prima Donna.

Jacksonville, Tennessee and Baltimore all improved themselves and I look for them to finish one-two-three in the AFC Central. The Steelers? 8-8. Maybe.

1999 Steeler Schedule

PRESEASON			
	Date	Opponent	Time
Friday	Aug. 13	Chicago	Won, 30-23
Friday	Aug. 20	at Carolina	8:00 P.M.
Saturday	Aug. 28	Washington	7:30 P.M.
Saturday	Sept. 4	at Buffalo	7:30 P.M.

REGULAR SEASON			
Sunday	Sept. 12	at Cleveland	8:20 P.M., ESPN
Sunday	Sept. 19	at Baltimore	1:00 P.M.
Sunday	Sept. 26	Seattle	1:00 P.M.
Sunday	Oct. 3	Jacksonville	1:00 P.M.
Sunday	Oct. 10	at Buffalo	1:00 P.M.
Sunday	Oct. 17	at Cincinnati	1:00 P.M.
Monday	Oct. 25	Atlanta	9:00 P.M., ABC
Sunday	Oct. 31	OPEN DATE	
Sunday	Nov. 7	at San Francisco	4:15 P.M.
Sunday	Nov. 14	Cleveland	1:00 P.M.
Sunday	Nov. 21	at Tennessee	1:00 P.M.
Sunday	Nov. 28	Cincinnati	1:00 P.M.
Thursday	Dec. 2	at Jacksonville	8:20 P.M., ESPN
Sunday	Dec. 12	Baltimore	1:00 P.M.
Saturday	Dec. 18	at Kansas City	12:40 P.M.
Sunday	Dec. 26	Carolina	1:00 P.M.
Sunday	Jan. 2	Tennessee	4:15 P.M.

Mulligan's

Just a mention of something you should already know but we're going to share it anyway. We, of course, will be back at Mulligan's this year for the umpteenth season. We have always enjoyed the hospitality extended to us by Mark, Matt and the entire staff.

We will be informally gathering for the four Steelers pre-season games but we must do that in the dining room. The first two games against Chicago and Carolina are on Friday night and the last two against Washington and Buffalo are on Saturday nights. There are band activities going on in the "club." You need to know that, while Mulligan's brings the games in and they make a good effort to accommodate us, (we watched the Bears game) the dining room isn't exactly ideal for viewing, especially with that "boom, boom, boom" coming from the club.

Once the Sunday afternoon games begin, however, it'll be a different story but with both good news and bad news. The good news is we'll be back in our usual great place with the Steelers being Mulligan's #1 priority game. Great!! The bad news is, after three years of being able to truly enjoy the games, those annoying Browns' Backers are back.

Attention: Bowlers

Children's Hospital is pleased to announce their 7th annual Bowl-A-Thon is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 25th at AMF Shrader Lanes from Noon to 4:00 P.M. They are in need of 50 teams of five players each. There are no bowling fees. All they ask only that you collect sponsorships and have a great time bowling. Trophies will be awarded to the man, woman and team bowling for the highest average. For an entry brochure or more info, call Ashley Ermer at 228-5826.

The Steel City Connection

CELEBRATING OUR ELEVENTH ANNIVERSARY

OFFICERS

Paul Mary	President, Newsletter Editor
Richard Golob	Vice President
Carole Mitas	Secretary
Rosemary Mary	Interim Treasurer
Dale Jordan	Merchandizing
Michele Andolina	Marketing and Advertising
Todd McCandless	Game Official
Rosemary Mary	Game Official
Daniel Isbell, Jr.	Game Official

MAILING ADDRESS AND INFORMATION

Steel City Connection
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Richmond, Virginia 23231
Phone: (804) -
Fax: (804) -

VISIT OUR WEB SITE VIA THIS URL:

pc-wagner.syrres.com/s155.htm

VIEWING LOCATION

Mulligan's Sports Grille
8006 W. Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia
Phone: (804) 346-8686
Contact: Matt Hurley

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES

\$30 - New Membership (family or single)
\$20 - Family Membership Renewal
\$15 - Single Membership Renewal

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

The Steel City Connection welcomes anyone who wants to write an editorial for *The Black & Gold News*, place an ad or make an announcement for the general interest of the membership. To do so, mail or fax your editorial, announcement, letter or ad to Paul Mary at the above mailing address or send him an e-mail at

The Steel City Connection is a member of:
The Pittsburgh Steelers Fan Club
300 Stadium Circle
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15212
(800) 334-4005

The Steel City Connection is a non-profit organization of Pittsburgh Steeler, Pirate and Penguin fans living in the Richmond area. We gather for game telecasts and sponsor bus trips for fun and fellowship. In addition, we make annual donations to:

Richmond Children's Hospital
2924 Brook Road
Richmond, Virginia 23220
(804) 228-5826 Contact: Ashley Ermer

News and Views

Trivia question: *What's the top tourist attraction in Virginia?*
Answer below.....August anniversary: August 5, 1921 -- **HAROLD ARLIN** provided the first radio play-by-play of a major league baseball game, on Pittsburgh's **KDKA**.....Many baseball insiders agree that the Pirates will live to regret the trading of **JOSE GUILLEN** to Tampa Bay for **JOE OLIVER** and minor league prospect **HUMBERTO COTA**. At AAA Durham, Guillen batted .382 with three HR and 12 RBI in just 34 at bats and has since been promoted to the Devil Rays.....Jacksonville has signed ex-Steeler **TIM LESTER**.... The Pirates wore "futuristic" uniforms for their July 27th game against the Mets at Shea Stadium. Gosh, they were awful-looking. All the players needed were trick-or-treat bags. They'll wear them again at home August 20th..... Colorado manager **JIM LEYLAND** spent the first half of the season living with his family in a down-town Denver hotel. He since has set up sleeping quarters in the Rockies' club-house.....Through August 4th, the Pirates had 13 players on the DL.....We were really surprised to read of **DARREN PERRY**'s retirement on the eve of the Chargers' trip to Australia.....Fans can vote online for the Pirates' "Team of the Century" via <http://pirates.3points.com/century/>.....The Penguins went into the summer with ten restricted free agents but the housecleaning some feared never materialized. In fact, just the opposite has happened. The Pens have struck new deals with **C MARTIN STRAKA**, **RW ALEXEI KOVALEV**, **F ROBERT LANG**, **D JIRI SLEGR**, **D SVEN BUTENSCHON**, **LW MATTHEW BARNABY**, and **D IAN MORAN**. That leaves only **D DARUIS KASPARAITIS**, **C JAN HRDINA** and **LW KIP MILLER** remaining to bring into the fold. Thanks, **MARIO**.....The buzz wuzz just prior to the July 31st trading deadline, the Pirates offered **P JASON SCHMIDT** to the Toronto Blue Jays for **P RAY HALLADAY** but the Jays nixed the deal.....Believe it or not, In their 112-year history, the Pirates never had four players hit at least 20 home runs in the same season but they could achieve that milestone this year. **BRIAN GILES** already has 25. **ED SPRAGUE** (18), **AL MARTIN** (18) and **KEVIN YOUNG** (17) should all hit 20.....Speaking of **AL MARTIN**, he had three two-homer games during July. The last Pirate to do that was **DICK STUART**, in September of 1961.....Former Steeler head coach **CHUCK NOLL** has moved to Williamsburg.....**MARK McGWIRE** is the only member of the 500 Homer Club to have fewer than 20 triples in his career.....Pirate **RICH LOISELLE** is out for the year following reconstructive surgery on his right elbow..... The "Top 100 Players of the Century" has been published by the Society for American Baseball Research. Former Pirates who made the list are: **HONUS WAGNER** (10th); **ROBERTO CLEMENTE** (20th); **barry bonds** (65th); **PIE TRAYNOR** (70th); **PAUL WANER** (71st); **RALPH KINER** (89th); **WILLIE STARGELL** (93rd)..... On August 11th, the Pirates released both **TURNER WARD** and **FREDDY GARCIA**.....Many feel the Pens' first round draft pick, **KONSTANTIN KOLTSOV** may be the top skater in the recently-held NHL Draft.....The Steelers finally gave up on **OT JAMAIN STEPHENS**, who subsequently signed with Cincinnati.....**OT JUSTIN STRZELZYK** has been put on the physically unable to perform list, which officially puts him out for the year.....Trivia answer: *Potomac Mills*.