

To all Players of the Sacramento Men's Senior Baseball League:

Welcome to the 2009 season, the 26th season for this organization. As the new President of the league I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the past presidents that worked hard to start, organize, and build this league into; the two season per year, 50 teams, and 800 player organization that it has become. Not to mention the building of, maintaining, and improving, the best amateur baseball facility in northern California. These men include Val Lewis, Founder and President for six years, Jerry Karnow, the longest running president at 12 years, George Esposito, two years, and Jim Lortz, four years. Thanks guys for your work and dedication giving us such a great baseball experience.

Even with the great job done by the fine gentlemen mentioned above, many events that were out of their control brought our league to a vulnerable point four years ago. Now I want to concentrate on our last President of four years, Jim Lortz. Here is what 90% of you don't know. Four years ago Jim took over when the league and this facility were in what can only be generously described as a state of disarray. The league was \$60,000+ in debt, the books were a mess, funds were unaccounted for, the fields and infrastructure had deteriorated, the field equipment was old, broken or unusable, we were in arrears to SMUD by \$44,000 in light payments. There's more but you get the point. The league was in danger of folding; the facility was in danger of closing. There were players cheating and players not paying to play, to the tune of about \$20,000 of lost fees each year. Fees the rest of us paid.

Now after four years of leadership under Jim, we have paid off all the debt, caught up on the past due payments, and have a small surplus for emergencies. We have also been making extra payments on the cost of installing the lights and should have them paid off early, in about 11 months. The fields have been redone twice and brought back up to high standards. Thousands of dollars have been spent on new field equipment to help keep the fields nice. And, more thousands of dollars on new infield sod and mix. We have hired a full time field maintenance man to provide you with a great facility.

The rules, bylaws, and operating procedures have been updated to improve operations, address future problems, clean up the cheating, clean out the non payers, and improve the sportsmanship conduct of the whole league. These rules and by-laws are now posted on our web site for all to read. We have improved our communications with each player by improving our web site. The league starts 2009 on sound footing thanks to the incredible long hours and hard work of Jim Lortz. We all owe him a large debt of gratitude.

Well, this is going to be a hard act to follow. But, let me assure you I will continue to work to make this the best league in the whole MSBL organization. To all of you that come out to enjoy this experience, play by the rules, show respect for your teammates, your opponents, this great facility, AND the umpires, I say thank you, and I will do all in my power to perpetuate what we have. But make no mistake, to that 1% that can't seem to be nice and think rules are for others not them, who think they don't have to pay to play; there will be no change in policy or procedures. I have no intention of losing the ground we have made in handling these problem people. The good of the league and the other 99% of its players is what I will strive to maintain.

I hope your new year will be enjoyable, your Board of Directors will continue to work hard to keep this a quality league.

Lanny Ropke
SMSBL President
2009