

## **Memoirs**

### **Compiled From Fond Memories With Reference to the Ontario Minor Hockey Association Manuals**

March 1999

*The Ontario Minor Hockey Association would like to sincerely thank Mr. Jack Christie for his time and effort that he put towards his Memoirs. Most of all we would like to thank Mr. Christie for the fond memories he has provided for the Ontario Minor Hockey Association.*

*It is important that we remember where we come from so that we can understand who we are and where we are going. The Ontario Minor Hockey Association hopes that many people will share and enjoy these Memoirs just as much as we have for years to come*

*Sincerely*

*The Ontario Minor Hockey Association*

### **In the Beginning...**

Two men, Jack Roxburgh and Roger Matchett were responsible for the events that led to the formal organization of minor hockey in Ontario. They were the organizers of the Ontario Juvenile Hockey Association (O.J.H.A.), which became the Ontario Minor Hockey Association (O.M.H.A.) when merged with the Bantam & Midget Association.

### **A Farmer And A Dentist Hockey Enthusiasts**

**Jack Roxburgh** was a farmer. He was the owner and operator of a fifty-acre fruit farm just outside Simcoe. He was a member of the Simcoe Lions Club and an avid hockey fan. Roxy was so enthusiastic that when the teen-agers in Simcoe wanted to have a hockey team, Jack Roxburgh took charge. He volunteered to be the organizer, manager and coach of the Simcoe Juveniles.

**Roger Matchett** was his counterpart in Hamilton. Roger was an orthodontist who was enthusiastic about hockey and interested in helping boys play hockey. He became Manager and Coach of the Hamilton Juvenile Hockey Team.

### **Seeking Competition**

Roxburgh and Matchett arranged games between their teams and found additional competition against teams from Stratford, Waterloo, Dunnville, Tillsonburg, Brantford and St. George. It was inevitable that the leaders of these

teams would recognize the need for a formal structure to provide leadership for their games and an organization that could declare champions. They held a meeting in the YMCA at Brantford and the Ontario Juvenile Hockey Association was organized Tuesday, March 5, 1935.

They held subsequent meetings in a room over the Sam Manson Sporting Goods store in Hamilton. Mr. Manson was a prominent sporting goods dealer and a well-respected Hamilton sportsman. He was also a friend of Roger Matchett. At Matchett's request he offered the space over his store for meetings and it was there that they formulated plans for the progress of the O.J.H.A. Those pioneering sportsmen did not realize that they were developing an organization that would grow to be the largest hockey organization in the world.

### **Jack Roxburgh Launches an Impressive Hockey Career**

Bill Weller of Brantford agreed to become the first President of organized minor hockey in Ontario. Jack Roxburgh in turn agreed to be Secretary-Treasurer. This enabled him to continue the work he had been doing to assure the formation of an association that would arrange games and conduct an Ontario Juvenile hockey championship series. Neither he nor any of his associates realized that he was launching a career that would lead him to the highest hockey office in Canada, the Presidency of the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association (C.A.H.A.).

### **Stratford Won the First Ontario Minor Hockey Championship**

The fledgling O.J.H.A. had eight entries in its first season of operation. Teams came from Brantford, Hamilton, Ingersoll, Paris, Simcoe, Stratford, Tillsonburg and Woodstock. Seven teams competed for the championship that first year. The Stratford team gained the honour of being the first Ontario Juvenile Hockey champions. They defeated Roger Matchett's Hamilton team in the first-ever Ontario Juvenile hockey championship series.

They had succeeded in launching organized Juvenile hockey. As we are writing this in 1998, the Ontario Minor Hockey Association is preparing for a season with almost 2,500 teams competing.

### **Amalgamation – To Better Serve Ontario's Youth**

While Jack Roxburgh and Roger Matchett (and others) were operating their various Juvenile teams and organizing the Juvenile Association, another group of sports minded boys-work enthusiasts were operating the Ontario Midget and Bantam Hockey Association. Information is not available on which to base an accurate story of the events leading to the organization of that association, nor who was responsible for its being. It would be reasonable to assume, however, that among those most responsible were Ashton Morrison and J. Stanley Elliott

of St. Catharines. Also, prominently mentioned were Wilf Graystone of Preston and R. A. Dinniwell of St. George. Others who were active in this group by 1940 (possibly earlier) were Bill Taylor of St. George, Harold Dunk of Campbellford, V. P. Carswell of Trenton and Gordon Kidd of Wingham.

It was at a meeting held in Toronto on November 30, 1940 that representatives of the two associations met. They passed a resolution that stated for the best interests of boys' hockey in the province of Ontario the two organizations should amalgamate and be known as the "Ontario Minor Hockey Association" and operate as one organization. They did agree to retain their own slates of officers for the 1940-41 season and merge into one for the 1941-2 activities.

### **The Juvenile Association Was Led By Dr. Leon Hipwell**

In an effort to bolster the Executive, Roger Matchett recruited Dr. Leon Hipwell, a Torontodontist. Hipwell was the head of the St. Barnabas hockey program and coach of its Juvenile team in the Toronto Inter-Church Hockey League. He became President of the O.J.H.A. for the 1939-40 and 1940-41 seasons. The other officers of the Juvenile Association were Immediate Past President John Lauman of Kitchener; 1st Vice-President Clarke McGlashan of Niagara Falls, 2nd Vice-President Harold Luke of Oshawa and 3rd Vice-President Alex McIntosh of Midland, with an Active Executive" consisting of Jim Aspin (Kirkland Lake); Dr. Ken

Cooke (Hamilton); Max Jackson (Kingston); Ernie Goman (Kitchener); J. E. Smith (Listowel); Elmer Taylor (Hanover); Fred Waghorne Sr. (Toronto); Mayor Ken Waters (Clinton) and Bill Wood (London). They appointed Dr. Roger Matchett the association's first Life Member. During the 1937-38 season, Jack H. Stafford, a Toronto businessman had taken over as Secretary-Treasurer.

### **Ash Morrison Lead The Bantams & Midgets Into Amalgamation**

Listed as officers of the "Bantam and Midget Section" were President Ashton A. Morrison (St. Catharines); Past President Wilfred Graystone (Preston); Vice-President Wm. Taylor (St. George); and an Active Executive consisting of Harold Dunk (Campbellford); Stanley Elliott (St. Catharines); V. P. Carswell (Trenton) and Gordon Kidd (Wingham).

The only official records available reveal that for the 1938-39 season Wilfred Graystone was President. Ashton Morrison was Vice-president and Dr. R. A. Dinniwell of St. George was Secretary-Treasurer. The "Active Executive" Committee consisted of R. L. Kerr of London, Harold Dunk of Campbellford, Ernie Goman of Waterloo, Bill Taylor of St. George, Stanley Elliott of St. Catharines and Elmer Taylor of Hanover.

### **Presidents Agreed To Alternate**

The 1941-42 merger agreement was that they would merge the Officers under an arrangement that for the first two terms the office of President would alternate between nominees from the O.J.H.A. and the Midget and Bantam Association. As a result Dr. Hipwell served a third term as President but only one as President of the new O.M.H.A. Ashton Morrison succeeded him for a two-year term. From then on the officers and presidents were elected at large from nominations submitted by the members of both of the former organizations.

Harold Dunk, a member of the Bantam and Midget Association at the time of the merger, later became President of the Ontario Minor Hockey Association. He was President in 1948-49, eight years after the amalgamation.

**The Date to Remember  
Tuesday, March 5th, 1935**

<i>The Event</i>	The organization of:
	<b>The Ontario Juvenile Hockey Association</b>
	The Birth of Organized Minor Hockey In Ontario
<i>Place</i>	The Y.M.C.A., Brantford
<i>The Organizer</i>	Jack Roxburgh, assisted by Dr. Roger Matchett
<i>In Attendance</i>	Managers of teams from:
	Brantford      Hamilton      Ingersoll      Paris
	Simcoe      Stratford      Tillsonburg      Woodstock
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Champions</i>	Stratford
<i>1<sup>st</sup> Runners-up</i>	Hamilton

**The Ontario Bantam and Midget Hockey Association**

<i>Date of Organization</i>	<i>Unknown</i>
	Maybe Before, Maybe Later Than the organization of the O.J.H.A.
<i>Place</i>	St. Catharines
<i>The Organizer</i>	Ashton A. Morrison, assisted by Stanley Elliott

**The Ontario Minor Hockey Association**

The Ontario Minor Hockey Association came into being as a result of the merger of the Ontario Juvenile Hockey Association with the Ontario Bantam and Midget Hockey Association, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1940.

Dr. Leon Hipwell of Toronto, the presiding President of the Ontario Juvenile Association became the first President of the Ontario Minor Hockey Association. Ashton A. Morrison, the presiding President of the Ontario Bantam and Midget Association became the First Vice-president.

Ashton A. Morrison of St. Catharines, became the second President of the Ontario Minor Hockey Association in 1942, in accordance with the terms of the merger agreement.

### **Our Presidents Have Earned Our Appreciation**

Every person who has ever served as President of the O.M.H.A. has earned and deserved the everlasting appreciation of everyone interested in the welfare of our National game. The list of Past Presidents is a list of the elite of hockey supporters. Except during the earliest years one had to serve from ten to fifteen years to reach the Presidency. Before that there was service at the local level as Manager, Coach, Secretary and/or President. In addition, some served as Convenor and/or District Convenor for the O.M.H.A. Truly, theirs was a service for a lifetime.

Acknowledging that every President made every contribution required, and that no one was more important than any other, it is true that some were different and some made contributions others had no opportunity to provide. Because the pages are not a historical record, but memoirs of a sort, we can only report our memories of those we knew, and what we know of what they have done. Our apologies to those who came later.

### **Jack Roxburgh**

The first of course, was Jack Roxburgh. He started the association and was responsible for organizing minor hockey in Ontario. He served as Secretary the first year and was President 1936-37 and 1937-38.

### **Dr. Leon Hipwell**

“Doc”, as Dr. Leon Hipwell was known as, succeeded Jack Roxburgh and joined with Secretary Stafford and Roxburgh to negotiate the merger with the Bantam and Midget Association. He was President of the O.J.H.A. in 1940-41 and 1941-42 and the first President of the O.M.H.A. in 1942-43.

### **Ashton A. Morrison**

President in 1943-44 and 1944-45, Ashton was on the other side of the table during the merger negotiations. Without him there would have been no Bantam and Midget organization with which to merge.

### **O. H. Luke**

Harold was President in 1945-46 and 1946-47. His personal contributions started the Maintenance Trust Fund. The existence of the fund commemorates his memory.

### **Kenneth G. Waters**

Ken served as President for the 1947-48 season. He came onto the Executive Committee from Clinton but had moved back to Toronto by the time of his Presidency. He brought national prominence to the O.M.H.A. when they invited him to participate in the Hot Stove League show between periods of the Maple Leaf game. He was elected O.M.H.A. President in the morning and appeared on national TV that evening.

### **Herb G. Parker**

Herb was elected to the executive in 1944 and was President in 1950-51 and 1951-52. He never missed an annual meeting for more than thirty years after that. At the 1944 annual meeting (thirty-eight in attendance) Stratford had submitted five proposed amendments. Four were defeated and one was withdrawn. Jack Stafford turned to the head table and said: Stratford has lost every time, we better put their guy with the big nose on the executive. Herb "Snazz" Parker was elected and minor hockey and the O.M.H.A. were beneficiaries. The O.M.H.A. awarded him Life Membership in 1955. He received the Ontario Hockey Association (O.H.A.) Gold Stick award in 1973 and the C.A.H.A. Order of Merit in 1983.

### **Oscar M. Weichel**

Mike served as President in 1952-53 and 1953-54. When he was elected M.P. for Waterloo he used his O.M.H.A. experience to convince Prime Minister Diefenbaker to set up the first governmental support of amateur sport.

### **Jack L. Christie**

After thirteen years as Secretary, Jack Christie was honoured with the Presidency in 1956-57. He went on to be the first Secretary of the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association (C.A.H.A.). Minor Hockey Week Committee and then was Minor Hockey Secretary for the C.A.H.A. for a total of thirteen years. The O.H.A. awarded him the Gold Stick in 1951 and he received the C.A.H.A. Order of Merit in 1968.

## **Jack W. Oakes**

Although Jack preceded Frank Doherty as O.M.H.A. President (1957-58 and 1958-59) he was following in Doherty's footsteps and was next in line to be elected O.H.A. President. A heart attack ended his life and deprived hockey of a dedicated servant who had served the O.M.H.A. and the O.H.A. well.

## **Frank O. Doherty**

After being President in 1959-60 and 1960-61 he went on to be the second O.M.H.A. Past-president to serve as O.H.A. President. That was in 1972-73 and 1973-74. He also served a term as Director of Intermediate Hockey for the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association.

## **Albert Watkins**

Albert was President in 1963-64 and 1964-65. His valued service to hockey was recognized when he was awarded the O.H.A. Gold Stick in 1981 and the C.A.H.A. Order of Merit in 1988. As a Life Membership he seized the opportunity to become the "rule writer" for the executive, usually bringing harmony to divergent views.

## **Fred Mantle**

Fred's term as President was the 1984-85 and 1985-86 seasons. During Fred's Executive Committee service he represented the O.M.H.A. on the Ontario Hockey Council, a body formed following "The McMurtry Enquiry" report to the Ontario government. Fred Mantle served that body well. When the Council was reorganized, it was known as the "Hockey Development Council". He served as Chairman for some time and after that term continued as a valued member.

## **Jack Roxburgh**

### **The Man Who Started It All**

If we can credit any one person with being the founder of minor hockey organization in Ontario that person would be **JACK ROXBURGH**. J. M. Roxburgh was a fruit farmer with a 50-acre establishment a few miles Southwest of Simcoe, Ontario. He was also a busy citizen of Simcoe and a good citizen. Roxy was an active member of the Simcoe Lions Club and an active participant in civic affairs and sporting events.

Jack was also a hockey nut. He supported the Simcoe teams in the O.H.A. both by his presence and financially. More than that, he had his own team! When the young lads of Simcoe expressed a desire to have a Juvenile team, Roxy took them under his wing and became organizer, Manager and Coach. He also

arranged games for them. Most frequently they played a team from Hamilton managed and coached by Roger Matchett, a Hamilton Orthodontist.

Out of those games came a desire for other competition, and ultimately, a desire for an organization that could declare a champion. The idea of forming an Ontario Juvenile Hockey Association came from those desires. Roxburgh and Matchett set out to create such an organization. Roxburgh sent letters and made phone calls to other area people known to have teams. They arranged a meeting to organize a provincial association. That meeting was held in the Brantford YMCA on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 1935. The Ontario Juvenile Hockey Association was born at that meeting.

Jack Roxburgh agreed to act as Secretary of the new association and William J. Weller was elected the first President. That office was the first of many for Jack Roxburgh. In 1936 he moved into the Presidency of what was really "his" association. Jack was elected to the Executive of the Ontario Hockey Association in 1942, as Vice-President in 1945 and was President of the O.H.A. in 1950-51 and 1951-1952. In 1957 he was elected 2nd Vice-President

of the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association and became President of the National Association for the 1960-61 and 1961-62 seasons.

Jack Roxburgh was not only the father of minor hockey in Ontario. He was the only Ontarian ever to be President of the Ontario Minor Hockey Association, The Ontario Hockey Association and the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association. They made him a Life Member of the O.M.H.A. in 1950. In 1961 he was awarded the O.H.A. Gold Stick, and in 1971 the C.A.H.A. Order of Merit. The O.H.A. honoured him with Life Membership in 1973.

Having served hockey in every possible role and office and having received every available hockey honour, Jack Roxburgh moved to even higher service. His fellow citizens elected him Member of Parliament for the Simcoe, Ontario riding. He served his country as a member of the Lester B. Pearson Liberal government, the second O.M.H.A. Past-President to have been a Member of Canada's Parliament. His outstanding life came to a tragic end when he died of injuries the result of a boating accident in Florida.

Jack Roxburgh was a friendly person with an outgoing personality and many friends. One of his good friends was Conn Smythe, owner of Maple Leaf Gardens. That friendship brought him considerable kidding about friendly association with the pros. A short time after he painted his house blue and white, O.M.H.A. President Herb Parker and Jack Christie were in the Simcoe area and dropped around to visit with Roxy. Jack was not there. His visitors found a large

sheet of plywood painted white. A can of blue paint was also available. He returned home to find a 4' x 4' sign on his lawn.

*The blue and white sign read:*

## **MAPLE LEAF GARDENS!**

### **O.M.H.A. Secretaries**

*Whatever the designation, be it Secretary, Secretary Manager or Executive Director, as it has been over the years, the O.M.H.A. has been blessed with capable administrators. Another benefit was that their talents suited the circumstances of the time each held the office*

#### **Jack Roxburgh**

“Roxy”, as Jack Roxburgh was known, was the first Secretary of the O.M.H.A. He was also the driving force in the founding of the Association. As Secretary, he attended to the necessary communications, by mail or by phone. He arranged games and schedules by phone (probably at his own expense) and did what he could do to promote his game and his association. He worked at attracting teams into the O.M.H.A. as he learned of their existence. Because he was an active member of the Simcoe Lions Club, he had willing ears to listen when he approached Lions Clubs in other municipalities to support minor hockey teams. In addition, he ran his team as Manager and Coach, and provided an opportunity for Simcoe youngsters to play hockey. The Jack Roxburgh time as Secretary was the “get it organized - get it going” era.

#### **Dr. Roger Matchett**

After two years of service as Secretary, Roxy moved into the President’s chair. A reluctant Roger Matchett succeeded him as Secretary. Roger’s own words were that he was not the “secretarial type” and from his first day in the office he was seeking a successor. He also continued to manage and coach his Hamilton Juvenile team. Describing his time as Secretary as a period devoted to “keeping it going until we find someone else” would be fair. Shortly after the beginning of his second year as Secretary it was the team that led him to a successor.

#### **Jack H. Stafford**

One of the better players on the 1937-38 Hamilton Juveniles was a lad named Jack Stafford Jr. whose father was an avid follower of the team. Stafford Sr. was then a struggling small businessman in Toronto, selling syrups and foodstuffs to hospitals and other institutions. Roger saw him as a logical Secretary. Stafford’s first response was “No Way”! He was having nothing of such an office. He weakened when Matchett told him that if the league did not have a Secretary

it would fold and his son would have no place to play. The ploy was effective and they “blackmailed” Jack Stafford Sr. into becoming the O.J.H.A.’s third Secretary. His time of office was one of good management (bordering on dictatorship) and development. He served in the office from 1938 to 1943 and team membership grew from seventy-seven teams to 112 before falling back to seventy-eight. His business was growing and his hockey activities were interfering with his business.

### **Jack L. Christie**

Jack Stafford opened the door to his retirement when he recruited Jack Christie from the ranks of softball executives. Christie took over in the fall of 1943 and immediately set out to promote membership. By the time the season was under way membership had grown from 78 teams in the 1942 season to 122 in 1943. There were 359 when he retired to become President in 1956. When he took over as Secretary, the Association was in its first year of amalgamation with the Midget and Bantam association. He quickly recognized the unfairness of teams from small centres competing against city teams. That resulted in a process of developing a “B” series, first in Juvenile, then in all series. As membership justified “C” and then “D” series were added.

Christie’s tenure was a period of foundation building, organization, and development. One of the most satisfying accomplishments of his time in office was negotiation of the first-ever insurance policy for a sports organization. Such protection for hockey teams was the dream of Gravenhurst Executive Member, Jerry Simmons. The Secretary was designated to accomplish the project. Three years of assessing injury rates and costs led to a groundbreaking contract with Canada Health and Accident Insurance Co. in Waterloo. We might describe Christie’s tenure as one of “foundation-building, organization and development”. Although he had received honours from other organizations, the most appreciated of all occurred in 1998 when he was informed that the Executive had approved a recommendation that the renovated Boardroom be named the “Jack Christie Boardroom.”

### **Gary B. McLeod**

Dedicated to the continuing welfare of the O.M.H.A. and determined to assure continuity, Christie took several years to complete a retirement he had decided years earlier. He spent those years seeking for a sports administrator he felt would stay with the organization. In the end he returned to his roots, softball, and recruited Gary McLeod who was about to retire as Secretary of the Toronto Amateur Softball Association. Gary took over in 1956. The Officers of those days generally agreed that his dozen years in office could be considered as years of consolidation of the Christie policies and methods. Gary McLeod retired as Secretary in 1968.

## **Vern McCallum**

It was in Canada's Centennial Year (1968) that Vern McCallum took over as Chief Administrator and began a new era. Satisfied with the development and diversification of the Association, Vern determined to assure the financial viability and security of the association he had served as volunteer registrar for years. Not only did he build up the organization's assets, he set a record for Secretarial durability. When ill health dictated his retirement in 1992 he had completed twenty-four years as Secretary. He left "his" organization with assets compiled and protected so that the viability of the association was assured beyond the immediate future. Like each of his predecessors he left an organization regarded as one of the best administered sports organizations in the country. The O.H.A. recognized Vern's service to hockey when they awarded him the Gold Stick in 1984.

## **Michael McCauley**

Michael was the first Administrative Officer advertised for and hired from the open job market. The Selection Committee chose well and brought in a youthful Executive Director who proved his ability to provide modern professional management. Michael McCauley did that while specializing in his forte, the development of a communications system with modern equipment. He developed skilled staff with the ability and equipment to talk professionally with every member of the Association, Executive members and member teams. He prepared the Association for entry into the new millennium - years ahead of its time. In 1998 Michael retired to enter his own communications consultant business.

## **Graham Brown**

While we were writing these paragraphs, a Selection Committee was busy choosing a Director to succeed Michael McCauley. Graham Brown was introduced as the new Executive Director at the 1998 fall meeting of the executive. Graham brings to the O.M.H.A. a dedication to sports administration and extensive education toward that end. He studied Sports Administration at the University of Windsor and obtained his Master's degree in Sports Management. His first job was with Competitive Sports Travel Co. in Chatham, organizing domestic and international travel for sports organizations. During his Masters preparation he acted as consultant for various interests. One project was an extensive study and report on Harness Racing. Graham also spent time teaching Anatomy, Physiology, Biomechanics and Sports Therapy at the University of Windsor. We welcome Graham to the list of administrators dedicated to the advancement of the O.M.H.A. and minor hockey.

## **Richard Ropchan**

The Ontario Minor Hockey Association is pleased to announce the hiring of Richard Ropchan as its new Executive Director, effective August 1, 2002. The position became available when Graham Brown, the previous Executive Director moved on to become the Chief Operating Officer of Rugby Canada.

For the past three years Richard Ropchan has been working in the OMHA as Director of Development. Through Richard's leadership and guidance, OMHA Development programs have been strengthened and enhanced to the point of being recognized as benchmarks for other hockey associations. Richard is a strong supporter of the Initiation Program in developing fundamental skills for young hockey players to enjoy the game.

Prior to his employment with the OMHA, Richard owned and operated a very successful family business in Leamington for 26 years.

Richard's sound hockey background along with his business expertise has prepared him well for his new role as Executive Director of the Ontario Minor Hockey Association.

### **Secretaries How They Got to Where They Were**

#### **Jack Roxburgh 1934-1936**

Jack Roxburgh became Secretary of the newly organized Ontario Juvenile Hockey Association because he was the only one available. When they convened the organization meeting at the Brantford YMCA, the boys' hockey enthusiasts present elected Bill Weller of Brantford as President. Stories tell us that Roxy would have been President except that no one else would have been willing to be Secretary. As a result Bill Weller was the first President and Jack Roxburgh the first Secretary for organized minor hockey in Ontario. Roxburgh had been doing all of the organizing work up to that point and had been responsible for all correspondence that had been necessary. He was a good fit for the position.

#### **Dr. Roger Matchett 1936-1938**

Roger Matchett became the second O.J.H.A. Secretary in 1936 because Jack Roxburgh told him he would be. For reasons of his own Roxburgh had decided that he should be President after two years as Secretary. When Roger declined the office, Roxy told him that he had to be Secretary because no one else was

available. Reluctantly, Matchett agreed, still professing that he would find someone else to take the job.

**Jack Stafford Sr.**  
**1938-1943**

Jack Stafford's tenure as Secretary began because he wanted his son, Jack Jr. to continue playing hockey. Jack Sr., then a struggling small businessman, was playing the role of a proud father to a son playing for Roger Matchett's Juvenile team. First they enlisted him as a driver to help transport part of the team to games. His apparent acumen attracted Roger who saw him as his relief from the secretarial post. At first Jack would have no part of such a role. Roger drew to his attention that without a Secretary the league would fold; if the league folded there would be no team and without a team Jack Jr. would have no place to play. Jack Stafford became Secretary of the O.J.H.A. during the 1938 season.

**Jack L. Christie**  
**1943-1956**

Jack Christie came into the O.M.H.A. because Jack Stafford's business was growing and his out of town trips were becoming longer and more frequent. Because one of his employees, a Jack Adamson, was deeply involved in softball, Stafford approached him with his problem. He in turn enlisted another softball official, Jack Christie, to be of some help to his beleaguered boss. Christie met with Stafford and agreed that during the out-of-town trips, Christie would drop into his office and acknowledge the hockey mail.

Christie went to do that but did not stop at acknowledgement. When the letter enclosed a Juvenile entry, Christie wrote back suggesting a Midget and Bantam team. If it contained a Midget entry, the suggestion was for a Bantam. When Stafford returned from a three-week trip, he found more than a hundred teams entered and a record total in the office. He took note, but said nothing. He did ask Christie to attend an executive meeting so the executive members "can see the guy who is answering the mail." When he agreed to attend, Jack Christie changed the course of his life. At the meeting Stafford practically ignored him. Half way through the session Stafford surprised everyone by suddenly exclaiming "Oh, I forgot to introduce Jack Christie - he is going to be your Secretary after the Annual Meeting next week." The tradition of "railroading" O.M.H.A. Secretaries continued.

**Gary McLeod**  
**1956-1968**

Early in the 1950s, Jack Christie advised the Senior Officers that he was preparing for retirement. He promised to seek a successor and he would advise them when he had found one. In 1955 he learned that G. B. McLeod had

resigned as Secretary of the Toronto Amateur Softball Association. Mr. McLeod had been in that office for nine years. One of Christie's most serious concerns was that he might find a successor who would find the workload too heavy and quit in mid-season. He was also concerned about spousal approval of a job that now took all available time after work. When he revealed these concerns to McLeod, the response was "no problem", we cannot have an active social life. He then explained that living with him and his wife was an invalid mother-in-law who could not be left alone, thus he and his wife did not get out together. That had been the identical situation the Christies had been in when Jack assumed the office. Jack and Gary agreed that McLeod would become Secretary for the 1956 season. The last statement at the interview was Jack's: "I will be president, if you need any help call me". He never did.

**Vern McCallum**  
**1968-1992**

Vern's path to the Secretary's office was one of long volunteer service known to very few of the O.M.H.A. membership. As the association developed and workloads increased, another of Jack Christie's softball associates offered his help. That friend was Jimmy Whiston. We appointed Jimmy Registrar in 1952 as the number of teams continued to increase. The Registrar needed help and Jimmy enlisted the unofficial assistance of his brother-in-law. It was in this way that Vern McCallum began a long contribution to minor hockey. That arrangement continued in Jimmy's home for several years. When Jimmy passed away suddenly in 1963 Vern assumed the Registrar position. He was ready and available for the Secretary's position when the executive made the office full-time and Gary McLeod resigned in 1968. Vern brought business experience and financial acumen to the office. He recognized the need to build a financial foundation for the association. For the first time in its history, the O.M.H.A. was to be administered with an emphasis on the bottom line. Ill health dictated Vern's departure from the office in 1992. He left the association in a firm financial position with funds available for any successor to plan for stability and growth. It was under Vern's direction that the O.M.H.A. moved out of his residential basement office into more businesslike office quarters.

**Michael S. McCauley**  
**1992-1998**

Michael McCauley was chosen to fill the vacancy left by Vern McCallum's departure. Some O.M.H.A. Officers were acquainted with Michael, who had been Administrative Co-ordinator for the Hockey Development Centre for Ontario. Michael also had first hand experience at the competitive level. He had been associated with the Thornhill Minor Hockey association and had coached three Thunderbird teams. Born in Exeter, Michael played his minor hockey in Alliston. He also played Junior Hockey and was a member of the York University team. When he left the O.M.H.A. in 1998, he left the O.M.H.A. an even better

organization than when he entered. His tenure resulted in an association better equipped to communicate.

### **Graham Brown- 1998 - 2002**

A specially appointed Selection Committee chose Graham Brown as the Executive Director to succeed Michael McCauley. They introduced him to the Executive Committee at the Fall Meeting at Nottawasaga Inn August 28th, 1988. Graham is dedicated to Sports Administration. Graham has a Bachelors Degree in Sports Administration and a Master's Degree in Sports Management. Graham came to the O.M.H.A. with experience in Sports Travel and as a Sports Consultant.

### **They Also Served...**

Over the years we have benefited from the services of individuals who have been elected to the O.M.H.A. Executive Committee who, for one reason or another, did not have Presidential aspirations. They did their duties, contributed to hockey and to the O.M.H.A. and retired. We have had the services of eighty-five such members. Besides the eighty-five, we have fifteen currently on the Executive who are eligible and capable. They will have every opportunity to work their way to the presidency. Of the eighty-five who have served without presidential aspirations, a few served for only one season, others from two years to the seventeen years contributed by Doug Hearn of Picton and later Frankford. All have made their own contributions but some did services that left a special mark and contributed lasting benefits to minor hockey in Ontario. Some were involved in situations making for interesting reminiscences.

### **Jim Aspin**

Jack Stafford invited Jimmy Aspin, a resident of Kirkland Lake and a member of the N.O.H.A., to sit on the O.M.H.A. Executive and represent us in the North. He did so with no sign of interest conflicts and was responsible for northern teams entering the O.M.H.A. although they did not compete until we had declared southern winners. Technically, we granted them a bye through the O.M.H.A. play-offs and they played our winners in the "All-Ontario" finals. Jim served from 1940 until 1944. His tenure ended when the O.M.H.A. ceded the northern teams to the N.O.H.A.

### **Fred Waghorne Sr.**

Fred was the first neutral Referee ever appointed by the O.H.A. Mr. W. A. Hewitt, was Secretary of the O.H.A., and he told us about the days when the visiting team appointed a referee and the home team supplied the ice. He was faced with the problem of an important play-off game between two bitter rivals each accusing the other of supplying a biased referee. Fred Waghorne, who

refereed games for Toronto teams, volunteered to do the game. That was a radical departure from tradition, but Mr. Hewitt advised the teams that he was sending in a neutral referee. Fred accepted the assignment and after that he was regularly appointed to do problem games. That made him one-man O.H.A Referee staff. One of Fred's favourite stories was about a puck that split in half when the goalie stopped it with his stick. Half went in the goal, half stayed out. He declared it a goal. He explained that it was a goal because part of the puck went all the way over the line. After retiring as a referee, Fred was an O.M.H.A. Executive Member from 1940 to 1946 when we made him a Life Member.

### **Sam Curry**

The publisher of the Tweed News, Sam served on the O.M.H.A. Executive from 1948 until 1952 when he retired because of pressure of business.

One of his contributions was very important for the O.M.H.A. and made it possible for Jack Christie to remain as Secretary. During the post-war years telephone lines were almost impossible to obtain. Secretary Jack had moved to a home in a new subdivision where they had not installed lines. When Jack applied for a telephone they told him they were installing only business lines. Jack immediately agreed to have the O.M.H.A. take a business line. Bell's response was that the service would be in a house and not used during business hours, so the application was rejected. When we persisted, they told us it was impossible, because poles have not been installed on that street and they had not budgeted to do it. They rejected our offer to pay for the five poles.

When we told Sam of the problem he said "leave it with me." After several phone calls, Sam visited Bell's office in Toronto, with no success. About ten days later Bell advised us that they would install a phone within the week. When asked what he had done, Sam replied "I had to go to Montreal on business, so I took the President of Bell to lunch". Because administering the O.M.H.A. operation without a phone would have been impossible, Sam's successful intervention was invaluable

### **Jim Austin**

When Minor Hockey Week was in its formative stages in the mid-fifties, Jim Austin was an active member of the O.M.H.A. executive. The Stouffville Funeral Director used the week effectively to publicize minor hockey. He arranged events for every night of the week, in Stouffville and in surrounding centres. The wind-up or grand finale was a Church Parade to the Anglican Church in Stouffville, followed by a reception in the church hall. A reception followed for the visiting officials at the home of Jim and Verna Austin. Employed at a Stouffville Funeral Home, Jim left the Executive when he moved to Collingwood to enter a

partnership in a business there. While he was on the Executive Committee Jim made his presence felt. He made a substantial contribution to minor hockey.

### **Gerry Simmons**

G.V. Simmons was a Gravenhurst Druggist who served on the executive from 1949 through 1957. Although Gerry served well and represented the O.M.H.A. throughout cottage country, his primary goal was to provide insurance coverage for hockey teams. That is the mark Gerry Simmons left for minor hockey. He came to an Executive meeting with his proposal. Insurance for hockey teams was then unheard of but Gerry refused to be brushed off. A few letters to insurance companies brought no results. We told Gerry that it seemed impossible but he continued to pressure the O.M.H.A. office for action. Finally, we were able to come back with three quotations, one for \$15 per player and two for \$19. That was big money in those day and not acceptable to us. Remember, in those days OHIP did not exist. Most of the time parents paid injury bills. Some teams raised funds for such bills, and sometimes the local doctors provided free services for hockey injuries. The O.M.H.A. office took on the task of conducting an injury cost survey. We asked that every injury, no matter how minor, be reported, along with the cost involved. We even asked for reports of free service and what the cost could have been. After three seasons we distributed the results. Response was amazing. Three companies quoted five dollars per player, others were seven to ten, but one was THREE dollars per player. Negotiations began - Jack Christie and Jerry Simmons vs. the insurance companies. We signed our first contract for three years at ONE dollar per player. We agreed to stay with that company at increased rates if their experience was not satisfactory the first three years. In return they agreed to share the profits if the claims experience was less than an agreed percentage of the premiums. Gerry Simmons had succeeded - the O.M.H.A. was the first sports organization to offer its members insurance coverage.

### **Jim Trott**

Jim Trott, a partner with his father in a Collingwood furniture business, served on the Executive Committee from 1953 to 1957. He served an area that was large and at the time quite difficult to service. He never claimed to have done any special action or made any special contribution. Still, we do have a Jim Trott story. In those days the play-offs were all home and home games with one week to play. A horrendous snowstorm had delayed a Collingwood vs. Barrie series. A call to Jim brought the response "if I go to an upstairs window, I can see the roof of my garage". The next question was "what about the roads" and his reply was "the last I heard, the plows were up to Stayner". Those were the "good old times" when minor hockey's problems were different from, but as important to the participants as the problems we face today.

### **Jack Roxburgh Jr.**

The son of the association founder came to the Executive Committee but stayed for only two seasons. His decision not to return ended the old timers' dream of a "son-follows-father" presidential situation.

### **William Fitsell**

Bill Fitsell's first association with minor hockey was as an associate worker with Bert Hick in the Lindsay Minor Hockey Association. When he moved to Kingston to take a position with the Kingston Whig-Standard he became associated with the Kingston association. In 1967 we were in charge of the C.A.H.A.'s Centennial project, a Canada-wide Midget tournament we had awarded to Kingston. On one of our monthly visits to Kingston I found that the Program Committee was not functioning, as it should have been. We dismissed the Chairman and asked Bill Fitsell to take over. Bill agreed to volunteer and came to the rescue. He produced an excellent and profitable program. He was elected to the Executive in 1970 but business promotions caused his retirement in 1972. Bill was also a very active officer in the Hockey Hall of Fame in Kingston

### **Bill Rowney**

Bill became available to the O.M.H.A. through his activities in Milton minor hockey. He came to the Executive as a District Governor in 1972 and served in that capacity until 1976 when we appointed him Treasurer. As we write this in 1998 he continues to be the Treasurer and it appears that the O.M.H.A. will use his talents for some time to come, maybe forever.

### **H. McConnell**

Spike McConnell of Cambridge came aboard for the 1979-80 season and from the beginning he was dedicated to the improvement of coaches and officials. He made his first contribution as a member of the Referees and Clinics Committee under Chairman Albert Watkins. Spike was appointed Supervisor of Coaches and Clinics in 1984. He held that position until 1990. Spike McConnell's participation assured the improvement of the clinic program and every official benefited from his participation.

### **Doug Hearn**

Doug Hearn's name made its first appearance in 1973 as an appointed District Governor. He had earned that appointment because of his excellent work in Picton and surrounding area. In 1975 he was elected to the Executive Committee. He remained on the Executive until 1991, although his address had changed to Frankford in 1983. His retirement ended a career spanning eighteen years.

### **Jack Stafford**

This is a story that we must tell to give credit to a man that never did get all the credit he deserved. It is a story of a mental accusation followed by a deserved mental apology.

When we were visiting Jack Stafford's office to handle the hockey mail, there were days we found Mr. Stafford in his office. We sat by and watched as Mr. Stafford opened the mail and make comments intended to be for our benefit. We sat quietly and wondered what was going on as Stafford opened the mail, removed the entry fees, sorted the cheques from the cash and put the cash into his pocket. "What is this man doing, is he a crook?" that was our mental accusation.

After we became Secretary, we took all hockey material from Stafford's office to my home. These included minute books, cashbooks, and all other materials. Having read the minutes of every meeting since organization, we began to study the finances. Every annual financial report during Stafford's tenure showed a cash balance of \$150 to start the year. Every year ended with a cash balance of \$150. Intensive study of Stafford's list of receipts and of the bills paid showed that Stafford had been underwriting the association all of the years that he had been Secretary. Every year would have ended with a deficit had it not been for his anonymous generosity. Having made a mental accusation we then made a genuinely sincere mental apology. We also learned to admire the small businessman who, it turned out, was to become a millionaire, a famous race horse owner and the proud winner of racing's coveted Queen's Plate. That man was a former O.M.H.A. Secretary. With the publication of this story my conscience is now clear.

### **Some Members Aspire to Higher Office Others Do Not**

Those who do commit to a longer service time and accept greater responsibility. Those without higher aspirations commit to serve with the same dedication and skill but retain the right to end their participation. Each in his or her own way, those listed below made contributions to hockey and to the O.M.H.A. Their service periods varied from one , to fifty-five years. Thirty-one served more than five years. Ten contributed for ten or more years before leaving. Sixteen left after serving only one year.

*To provide a complete all-time Executive Committee membership list we have included and identified all Presidents and currently sitting members - c.*

Wm. J. Weller, Brantford - 1935-47

Dr. Roger Matchett, Toronto - 1935-87##

Jack Roxburgh, Simcoe - 1935-74##

John Lauman, Kitchener - 1936-49

Ash Morrison, St. Catharines - 1936-76 ##

O. H. Luke, Oshawa - 1937 -68 ##

J.H. Stafford, Toronto - 1937-80 ##

Wilfred Graystone, Preston - 1937-38 %

Dr. Leon Hipwell, Toronto - 1938-66 ##

Dr. Ken Cook, Hamilton - 1938-42

Ted Gregory, Toronto - 1938-40

Clarke McGlashan, Niagara Fall- 1938-40

Alex McIntosh, Midland - 1938-40

Wm. Marsden, London - 1938

W. Hughes, Belleville - 1938

Fred Waghorne Sr., Toronto - 1939-55 ##

Elmer Taylor, Hanover - 1939-41

R. J. Kerr, London - 1939

Ken Waters, Clinton - 1940-55

Harold Dunk, Campbellford - 1940-56

Stan Elliott, St. Catharines - 1940-2+

Gordon Kidd, Wingham - 1940-42

Ernie Goman, Kitchener - 1940

William Taylor, St. George - 1940

Jim Aspin, Kirkland Lake - 1940 -44

Max Jackson, Kingston - 1940-42

J. E. Smith, Listowel - 1940

William Wood, London - 1940

J. C. Mercer, Owen Sound - 1941-45

V. P. Carswell, Toronto - 1941

Otto J. Hardwick, Bolton - 1942-57

R. Kinchsular, Brampton - 1942-50

A.P. McAvoy, Port Colborne - 1942-47

Jack L. Christie, East York - 1943-## c

Erve Downey, Port Hope - 1943-48

Herb Parker, Stratford - 1944-93##

O. Mike Weichel, Elmira - 1945-61

Jack Binkley, Hanover - 1945-46

Fred Norman, Simcoe - 1946-63

Jack W. Oakes, Strathroy - 1947-68

Bert Hick, Lindsay - 1947-65

Vic Burr, Oshawa - 1947-51

Frank Doherty, Thorold - 1948-98##

Sam Curry, Tweed - 1948-52

Mike Buzek, Brantford - 1948-50

Ted Elmes, Galt - 1949-72

Gerry Simmons, Gravenhurst - 1949-57

Al. Watkins, Peterborough - 1951-93##

Frank Cudmore, Wallaceburg - 1951-57

Doug Patterson, Stirling - 1952-76

Jim Austin, Stouffville - 1952-58

Jim Trott, Collingwood - 1953-57

Jim Whiston, Toronto - 1953-1963

Bev Schram, Port Dover - 1955-61

Gary McLeod, Toronto - 1956-68

Gord Hawes, Whitby - 1957-78

Stan Stokes, London - 1957-77

George Haskett, Newmarket - 1957-65

Cliff Gabel, Preston - 1958-64

Wes Oswald, Forest - 1959-80

Jim Oakes, Welland - 1959-62

Lloyd Davidson, Chatham - 1960-82

Eric Wesselby, Owen Sound - 1960-62

Jim Kinkley, Etobicoke - 1961- ##c

Stu Reid, Bracebridge - 1961-63

John Roxburgh Jr., Simcoe - 1962-65

Vern McCallum, Toronto - 1963-67^

Al Moore, Guelph - 1963-88

Bill Burrell, Brampton - 1963-86

E. Bolger, Huntsville - 1963

W. Bennett, Niagara Falls - 1963

A. Lacey, Peterborough - 1963

Ron Smith, Galt - 1964-66

Lou Jeffries, Gananoque - 1964-69

Ken McDonald, Orillia - 1964-66

Tony Bloomfield, Grimsby - 1965-89

Charles Wilson, Peterborough - 1966-72

Dom Cardillo, Kitchener - 1966

Archie Blandford, London - 1966-72

Laverne Reynolds, Huntsville - 1967-74

Roy Beechey, Tillsonburg - 1968-## c

Al Shaw, Windsor - 1968-75

Bill Oldfield, Collingwood - 1969-73

Elmer McFadden, Woodbridge - 1970-96

Bill Mulholland, Campbellford - 1970-84

Bill Fitsell, Kingston - 1970-72

Fred Mantle, Paris - 1971-96

Don Hargrave, Burlington - 1971

John Slobodnik, Sarnia - 1972c

Bill Rowney, Milton - 1972- c

Jim Pollard, London - 1972-c

Ab Gould, Glencoe - 1972-78

Ed Grimshaw, Stouffville - 1973-92

Doug Hearn, Picton - 1973-89

Al Richardson, Meaford - 1973-79

George Kennedy, W.O.A.A. - 1974-77

Jack White, Thorold - 1975-c

George Dobson, Port Carling - 1975-80

Murray Syrie, Chatham - 1975-77

Al Smith, Bramalea – 1976

Ken Russell, Brampton - 1977- c

Hugh Hodges (W.O.A.A.) - 1977

D. Richardson, Port Dover - 1977

Don Benge, Merlin - 1977

Dave Cook, Windsor - 1978-86

Gerry Carey, Peterborough - 1979-87

Spike McConnell, Cambridge - 1979-91

E. Adams, Newmarket - 1980-83

JohnGross (W.O.A.A.) - 1980-83

A. Brown, South River - 1980

Mike Hammond, Thornbury- 1981- c

Bryan Zilkey, Simcoe - 1981- John

John Murgel, Gravenhurst - 1981-85

Bill Kerr,w.o.a.a. - 1983

Frank Howe, King City - 1984-88

RickMorphew, Guelph - 1984-91

Jim Muir, Parkhill - 1984-90

Ken Perrin, Woodstock - 1984-88

Ross Jewitt, w.o.a.a. - 1984

Bob Beaumont, Parry Sound - 1985- c

Vaughan Bray w.o.a.a. - 1985-88

Sharon Griffin, Lindsay - 1986-98

Bruce Cook, Chatham - 1986-88

John Archibald, Beeton - 1988- c

Jack Twolan, W.O.A.A. - 1988 - c

Pat Parlette, Amherstburg - 1988 - c

D. Montgomery, S.M.H.A. 1988-95

Phil Doyle, Thorold - 1988-90

Bert Clifford, Stratford - 1988-92

Keith Wilson, Oshawa - 1989-91

Ken Weaver, Brampton - 1989

Ted Bradley, Port Colborne, 1990-94

Wayne Pries, Georgetown 1990- c

Jim Lytle, Norwood - 1990- c

Terry McLean, Caledonia - 1991-98

Kevin Almond, Meaford - 1991- c

Dick Bennett, London - 1991- c

Phil Hendry, Stroud - 1994- c

Terry Parsons, Aurora - 1994- c

Mike Bergeron, Belle River - 1994- c

Ed Brown, Georgetown - 1994- c

Tom Armstrong, Fort Erie - 1994-97

Marg Ensoll, Ajax - 1996- c

Lou-Ann Hicks, Fonthill - 1997- c

Joyce Junker, New Hamburg - 1998 c

Tom Leathong, Burlington - 1998 c

Robert Ring, Collingwood - 1998 c

### **As of October 1998, the Figures Tell Us**

**Bill Rowney** is the longest serving non-President person on the Executive Committee. He was appointed District Governor in 1972 and continued in that role until 1976. They appointed him Treasurer in 1976 following the death of Past-President and Treasurer Doug Patterson.

**Doug Hearn**s recorded the longest time on the Executive Committee as an Area Representative. He sat on the Executive for eighteen years.

**Bob Beaumont** is the longest sitting member now on the Executive Committee. He was first elected in 1985 and has served for fourteen years.

### **O.M.H.A. Officers Also Serve Their Communities**

As if there were not enough politics in hockey government, many officers or past officers also contributed to their communities, and to the country, through participation in the electoral field.

Two Past Presidents, **Jack Roxburgh** and **Mike Weichel**, were elected federal Members of Parliament. Roxburgh served in the Lester B. Pearson Liberal government and Mike as a member of the John Diefenbaker Conservative government. **Ken Waters** was Mayor of Clinton and later an Alderman on Toronto City Council. **Bert Hick** served as Mayor of Lindsay and was also Lindsay area Campaign Manager for then Ontario Premier Leslie Frost.

**Otto Hardwick** was Reeve of Bolton for many years (some said "forever"). Indicative of how times have changed is Jack Christie's story of a telephone call to Otto's home - via a telephone operator in Bolton. Jack had placed the call through an operator in Toronto. When the Bolton operator came on the line she

asked, "Are you calling Mr. Hardwick?" Jack's affirmative response brought the reply: "He is not home, I will get him for you at the arena. "No need to push Number 3, or 5 or 6.

**Frank Doherty** had the most varied political career, **Bill Rowney** the longest and **Jack Christie** a notably long term. All three were involved with Hydro. **Frank Doherty** served the Town of Thorold as a member of the School Board, then as elected member of the Town Council followed by tenure on the Board of Education and finally, twenty-nine consecutive years as a member of the Hydro Electric Commission. **Bill Rowney**, first elected to the Milton Hydro Electric Commission in 1958, is in his fortieth year and is still an elected member of that Commission. **Jack Christie** served eight years on the East York Planning Board, some of that time as Chairman. He was elected to the East York Hydro Electric Commission in 1967 and later elected President of District 4 of the Ontario Municipal Electric Association. In 1985 he decided he would be "too old" by the time another term ended, so declined to run. He returned to the polls in 1991 and was re-elected. He lost that office in 1998 when the position disappeared because of the Toronto area amalgamation.

### **A Tribute to Frank Doherty**

**Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1998** was the date that the O.M.H.A. and hockey lost one who had contributed more than most to the sport, the association and his community. His contribution to hockey had started with involvement in all levels of the Niagara District and Thorold. He went on from there to serve Minor Hockey at the provincial level and was elected President of the O.M.H.A. for 1959-60 and 1960-61. He represented Thorold Junior hockey at the Ontario Hockey Association and after serving on that executive had a two-year term as President of the O.H.A. Only three O.M.H.A. Presidents ever went on to become President of the O.H.A., Jack Roxburgh in 1950-51 and 1951-52, Frank Doherty in 1972-73 and 1973-74 and Tony Bloomfield in 1990-92 (his title was Chairman of the Board). Jack Oakes was another in line but he suffered a fatal heart attack while still a vice-president.

Frank was another of the dedicated community hockey workers whose talents the O.M.H.A. office recognized and invited to come aboard as a member of the O.M.H.A. Executive. Frank was elected to the Executive for the first time in 1948 and became President eleven years later. He served with the C.A.H.A. as Director of Intermediate Hockey. Frank was honoured with O.M.H.A. Life Membership in 1970. In 1994 he was again recognized when he received the "Volunteer of the Year Award for Hockey" from the Province of Ontario.

Frank Doherty was the recipient of many hockey honours but he did not restrict his community service to hockey nor to sport. Because of his quiet nature, his hockey associates knew little of his contributions to the community at large until

we read his obituary. Then we learned what important contributions he had made to his community.

He had been a lifelong member of his Presbyterian Church and had been involved in every facet of the Church work. A long-time member of A.F. & A.M. they had honoured him with Life Membership. He served four years overseas with the Royal Canadian Engineers during World War II. On his return home he joined and worked for the Royal Canadian Legion and here too, he earned Life Membership. He served in almost every facet of elected political activity in Thorold. Frank was a member of the Public School

Board, then elected to Town Council, the Board of Education and for twenty-nine years was elected to the Thorold Hydro Electric Commission. The City of Thorold named him "Senior Citizen of the Year" in 1994.

O.M.H.A. officials attending Frank's funeral were very impressed with the tributes to their friend and associate. The church was packed to overflowing for the service and the funeral procession was the longest any of them had ever seen, much less participated in. They were even more impressed with the display of respect as the long procession went several miles out of town to the cemetery. Traffic in both directions pulled over and stopped, blinking their car lights in tribute until the entire procession had passed. We realized that we had lost more than a friend and hockey associate. We had participated in a sad but impressive farewell to an important and beloved citizen and a long-time friend.

## **Mike Weichel A Man Who Left His Mark On His Country**

It is not often that one can use participation in teen-age sport as the springboard for actions that will leave a permanent benefit to every sports organization and all athletes in the country. The late Mike Weichel was one citizen who accomplished that.

Mike Weichel's efficient management of the affairs of minor hockey in Elmira caught the attention of the O.M.H.A. office. Evidently, the Elmira contact man could contribute at the provincial level. In Elmira they knew him as the postmaster, a war hero, an entertainer and a good citizen. In 1945 Executive Member Herb Parker agreed with a recommendation from Secretary Jack Christie and the two journeyed to Elmira. Their purpose was to invite Mike Weichel to run for the executive of the O.M.H.A. He accepted their invitation, became a candidate and was elected to the Board. He went on to serve as President in 1952-53 and 1953-4. Later he accepted the Progressive Conservative nomination in the Elmira riding and was elected to Parliament to

serve in the John Diefenbaker government. Mike became the second O.M.H.A. President to serve his country as a Member of Parliament.

Resulting from his experience in the O.M.H.A., Mike had first hand knowledge of the volume and importance of the work being done by provincial sports secretaries. They were doing this important service after regular working hours and in improvised office quarters in their homes. Mike's frequently expressed example was Jack Christie operating an ever-growing provincial O.M.H.A. from his dining room table and later from space in his basement. Shortly after his election to Parliament, Mike approached the Prime Minister with a suggestion that the government provide support for amateur sports. He also proposed a new Ministry of Sports and Recreation. Prime Minister Diefenbaker listened but offered little encouragement. Mike Weichel persisted. Not only did he continue to lobby the Prime Minister, he began to line up support. He enlisted John Taylor, the member from Vancouver-Burard and later Bobby Macdonald, M.P. from Hamilton. They revised their proposal and asked for a National Sports Council with financial support.

The big moment for Mike and his associates came when Prime Minister Diefenbaker appeared at the Canadian National Exhibition to open the brand new Sports Hall of Fame. During his address he announced: because of the pressure brought to bear by my good friends Mike Weichel and John Taylor, my government has decided to support the administration of amateur sport in Canada and next year five million dollars will be set aside for that purpose.

That was the beginning of Sports Canada and the provincial spin-offs such as Sports Ontario and other provincial governing bodies. Organized amateur sport is forever indebted to Mike Weichel, a Past-President of the Ontario Minor Hockey Association.

### **O.M.H.A. Officers Recognized**

#### **O.M.H.A. Officers on Active Service, World War II**

- \*Major Roger W. Matchett
- Lieut. Clarke McGlashan
- Ted Gregory
- Robert Kerr
- Cpl. Ernie Goman

#### **O.M.H.A. – Awarded Life Membership**

*The Highest Honour that can be bestowed on an officer of the Association"*

- \*Major Dr. Roger Matchett – 1945
- \*Jack H. Stafford – 1945

- \*Dr. Leon Hipwell – 1945
- \*Fred Waghorne Sr. – 1946
- \* J. M. Roxburgh – 1951
- \*A. A. Morrison – 1951
- \*Herb G.Parker – 1956
- \*O. H. Luke – 1961
- Jack Christie – 1968
- \*Frank Doherty – 1970
- \*Albert Watkins – 1974
- Jim Kinkley – 1987
- Roy Beechey – 1992

### **O.H.A. – The Gold Stick**

*“For Outstanding Service to Hockey Over a Long Period of Years”*

- \*A. A Morrison – 1950
- Jack L. Christie – 1951
- \*Albert Watkins – 1981
- \*Jack Roxburgh – 1961
- \*Mike Weichel – 1964

\*Herb Parker – 1973

- \*Vern McCallum – 1984

### **O.H.A. – Life Membership**

*“For Invaluable service to Hockey together with Long and faithful Service to the O.H.A.”*

- \*Jack M.Roxburgh, 1973

### **C.A.H.A. – Order of Merit**

*“For Meritorious Service to Hockey”*

- Jack L. Christie - 1968
- \*Herb Parker – 1983
- \*Jack M. Roxburgh – 1971
- \*Albert Watkins - 1988

*\*Deceased*

## **Working With Others**

### **O.J.H.A. And The O.B. & M. Associations Decide To Work Together**

For a few years in the late 1930s, two minor hockey associations were operating in Ontario, the Ontario Juvenile Hockey Association and the Ontario Bantam and Midget Hockey Association. We do not know which approached the other, but they did meet and talk amalgamation. At a meeting in Toronto on November 30, 1940 the two organizations agreed to merge and call the resulting organization "The Ontario Minor Hockey Association." Delegates ratified the agreement at the annual meeting of the O.J.H.A. held in Toronto on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1941. Ashton Morrison, President of the Bantam and Midget Association presented the motion.

### **O.M.H.A. and O.H.A. Affiliate**

The new organization, O.M.H.A., stretched its muscles and established itself as part of the provincial sports scene when it successfully concluded an affiliation with the O.H.A., recognized as the hockey governing body for most of Ontario. The report to the annual meeting stated that the O.M.H.A. would not in any way lose its identity, or freedom of action. The affiliation did set up an agreement by which the two bodies could work in harmony and administer all organized hockey in Ontario. The two organizations agreed to recognize each others suspensions and transfers and clubs in the O.M.H.A. became eligible for payment by professional clubs when they graduated players to the pro ranks. The O.M.H.A. negotiating committee consisted of President Hipwell, secretary Stafford and Harold Luke.

### **All-Ontario Juvenile Series Negotiated With The N.O.H.A.**

In the early years of the O.M.H.A. the Northern Ontario Hockey Association did not officially operate any minor hockey. As a result, the northern teams entered the O.M.H.A. directly and had a bye to the Ontario finals. They were told when and where they would play the games, and they traveled south at their own expense. During the 1943-44 season Bob Crosby, Secretary of the N.O.H.A. and the O.M.H.A.'s new Secretary, Jack Christie, negotiated arrangements to have the series alternate north and south annually. They agreed that first charges against the gate receipts would be the travelling team's expenses. Because Juvenile hockey was a big draw in the north, this guaranteed that the southern team would have expenses paid and possibly share in a profit. St. Catharines Lions was the first team to travel north. They played the Timmins Holman Pluggers in the beautiful new arena in South Porcupine. The arena was sold out, including standing room, for the entire series before the first game. Timmins won the two out of three series when they scored three goals in the last five minutes of the third game. President Ashton Morrison, Secretary Jack Christie and Executive Member Jim Aspin attended and supervised the series.

## **O.M.H.A. and N.O.H.A. Reach Agreement**

During the 1944-45 season the O.M.H.A. and the N.O.H.A. negotiated an agreement that allowed the N.O.H.A. to assume control over Minor Hockey in their Northern Ontario area. This meant that Northern Ontario teams would no longer enter the O.M.H.A. It was agreed that the N.O.H.A. representatives would meet the O.M.H.A. champions in the all-Ontario finals.

## **The W.O.A.A. Enters The Scene**

When Tory Gregg approached the O.M.H.A. Secretary to discuss autonomy for the newly formed Western Ontario Athletic Association (W.O.A.A.), he anticipated an adverse reaction and an adversary situation. We pleasantly surprised him with the response: "we are both travelling the same road, there is no reason we cannot travel together." That discussion took place during a break at an O.H.A. Executive meeting in 1945. A short discussion resulted in an agreement that the W.O.A.A. and the O.M.H.A. would trade proposed agreements and work toward bringing the two together. Tory was to submit his proposed boundary lines and the O.M.H.A. representatives (Herb Parker and Jack Christie) issued one caution - they would not approve the proposed boundary line until they had polled all the centres on both sides of the line. Every team would be allowed to choose between in the O.M.H.A. and the W.O.A.A., and we would revise the proposed boundary line accordingly. The teams, not the association offices, would decide. The ultimate result was that the two organizations easily reached an agreement that was satisfactory to all teams. The executives of both organizations approved it. Friendly co-operation has continued ever since, despite occasional situations where differing opinions had to be ironed out. In 1974 they amended the agreement so that each association would have representation on the other Executive Committee. George Kennedy was the first W.O.A.A. representative to sit on the O.M.H.A. Board. The O.M.H.A. has benefited from the contributions made by W.O.A.A. representatives ever since. Mr. Kennedy served until 1976 when Hugh Hodges took over. John Gross served from 1980 through 1982 when he was succeeded by Ross Jewett who served for one year. Vaughan Braby of Clifford was the representative from 1985 to 1988 when Jack Twolan of Kincardine took over. Jack has been a valued contributor to the O.M.H.A. ever since and at time of writing continues to be an important member of the Executive.

## **An O.M.H.A. Concession Saved Junior Hockey**

During a conversation with Secretary Jack Christie, O.H.A. Secretary, W. A. Hewitt, expressed his concern about the serious situation facing the junior series. The war had severely affected all junior teams, which had lost many players to the armed services. The juniors were the age group most affected by war service. Following that discussion the O.M.H.A. offered to change its

juvenile regulation so that while war and post war conditions continued to affect rosters, we would allow Juvenile players to play an unlimited number of Junior games. We attached a condition, if schedules conflicted, the Juvenile player had to play for the Juvenile team for which he had signed. Mr. Hewitt and his Treasurer, George Dudley, were elated and thanked the O.M.H.A. for saving the junior series from extinction.

### **All The Bases Were Not Covered**

They intended the conflicting games' condition to protect O.M.H.A. teams. Generally speaking it did. However, it did not cover the situation created by the O.H.A.'s trade and replacement players' policy that led to the "Suitcase Sullivan" situation. A lad named Sullivan was the star of the Preston Juveniles. He immediately began to play "up" with Preston Juniors, but they were eliminated early. The Galt Juniors then began to call him up. That probably would have been all right, except that Galt traded their rights to Stratford and Sullivan began playing with Kroehlers Junior A team, while still fulfilling his obligations to his Juvenile team. By this time sports writers were filling the area papers with "Suitcase Sullivan" stories. The furor became province-wide when Stratford was eliminated and Waterloo Junior Bs exercised their OHA granted rights to pick up two players from any eliminated team. Sullivan was one they chose. Wartime regulations and concessions kept Junior hockey alive but created problems of their own. Juvenile teams expressed displeasure about having to play against a player "with all that Junior experience."

### **The O.H.A. Expressed Its Appreciation...**

For several years then Secretary Stafford and Doc Hipwell had been asking the O.H.A. for financial assistance, without success. They were surprised and pleased that same "Suitcase Sullivan" year when their new Secretary reported receipt of a letter advising that the O.H.A. had approved an annual grant of three hundred dollars. At that time three hundred dollar was about 20% of the O.M.H.A. annual budget.

### **Appreciation Expressed In A Different Way**

At the invitation of the United States Hockey Association, they held the 1949 Annual Meeting of the C.A.H.A. in New York City. We learned that the O.H.A. planned to propose an amendment to increase the Junior age limit by a year and reduce the Juvenile limit by a year. In order to express the O.M.H.A.'s opposition to the Juvenile change, the Secretary prepared handouts outlining our opposition and took off for New York to attend the meetings. During the preliminary social events he distributed his material to delegates from across the country. During

one of the preliminary gatherings the O.H.A.'s George Dudley approached us and asked for a copy. Quickly glancing through the material, he remarked I didn't know you felt so strongly about this and walked away. The amendment was never presented for consideration at the meeting.

### **Wartime Was a Time For Co-operation**

The war years and the post-war years were times of people working with people and organizations working with others. Organizations had to team with others to survive and support the war effort. They arranged special games and the gate receipts donated to the "British War Victims' Fund." Although sports' problems were minuscule in relation to the overall wartime picture, hockey did have its war-related problems. For the duration of the war and several years afterwards the existence of any activity not associated with the war depended on groups and organizations working together to continue their existence. Gasoline rationing caused serious problems. Because of gas rationing, teams found great difficulty convincing parents to drive players to out of town games. Somehow, they did. Gas Ration coupons were shared to provide gas for hockey trips. Another related problem was parents working in war industry and unable to volunteer. Referees and coaches were included among those who often had to miss games to work overtime. Coaches and referees were already scarce because many had enlisted and were overseas or in training camps. Enlistment had decimated junior teams. Nevertheless, hockey survived. The sport, like the Country, survived because of co-operation and because of the sacrifices by the armed forces members, so many of who had been important members of the hockey establishment before enlisting. Five members of the early O.M.H.A. Executive Committee went overseas.

### **Time Passes and Leaves Us With Many Memories The Maintenance Trust Fund**

Many will remember HAROLD LUKE as a President in his own mould. The Association will recall him forever as one to whom we will always be in debt. In that context we will remember him for his dedication to hockey and to the O.M.H.A. Like Mike Weichel, he was concerned that sport had to be directed from a dining room table. He wanted more for the O.M.H.A. His dedication to the welfare of the O.M.H.A. included a determination that someday the O.M.H.A. Secretary would be full-time. He demonstrated the sincerity of his determination by personally opening an O.M.H.A. Trust Fund into which he deposited a fifty-dollar Canadian Government Bond bought with his own money. Each year for several years he purchased and deposited in the fund that he had named "The O.M.H.A. Maintenance Trust Fund." When the O.M.H.A. negotiated the first hockey insurance policy, the Insurance Company agreed to reimburse the O.M.H.A. for doing the enrolment paperwork and claims processing. The officers decided that the money earned in that way would be part of the Maintenance Trust account. Years later, when Vern McCallum became the first full-time

Secretary-Manager, the fund was there to support his appointment. Harold Luke's determination and generosity combined with Vern McCallum's financial acumen to enhance the O.M.H.A.'s reputation for sports administration leadership.

### **Territorial Representation**

It is interesting that in the almost sixty-five-year history of the O.M.H.A. no municipality has sent more than two occupants to the O.M.H.A. Presidential chair. The list includes four with Toronto addresses, but Jim Kinkley entered O.M.H.A. ranks from Napanee and Ken Waters came to the O.M.H.A. executive while representing Clinton. In Clinton, Waters was involved in the Lions Club, Minor Hockey and politics. He was successful in all three. He became President of the Clinton Lions Club, Mayor of Clinton and eventually President of the O.M.H.A. During his years in the O.M.H.A. he moved back to Toronto to manage the family's florist business.

### **Simcoe The First Centre To Send A Second President**

The Town of Simcoe was the birthplace of what was to become the O.M.H.A.. \*Jack Roxburgh, in 1936 and 1937, was the second President of organized Minor Hockey. Eighteen years later Fred Norman was elected President and Simcoe became the first municipality to provide two O.M.H.A. Presidents. Since then two Presidents have served us from each of Brampton (Bill Burrell and Ken Russell), Campbellford (\*Harold Dunk and \*Bill Mulholland), London (\*Stan Stokes and Jim Pollard), and Thorold (\*Frank Doherty and Jack White), and Toronto (\*Dr. Leon Hipwell and Jack Christie).

### ***The First "Fall Meeting"***

The annual Fall Meeting has become a tradition with the O.M.H.A. Executive. \*Leon Hipwell originally proposed a fall meeting as an opportunity for the executive members to get to know each other outside the formal meeting atmosphere. It has developed into an important part of the executive program. While retaining much of the informal and social atmosphere, committee and executive meetings make up an important part of the agenda. Having the spouses involved contributes to the social atmosphere. It also helps to meld the members as friends and associates working for hockey rather than being merely representatives of a specific area.

The first fall meeting took place as a social weekend when \*Leon Hipwell invited us to \*Ken Waters' cottage near Gravenhurst in 1948. A surprised President, Ken could do nothing but confirm the invitation and warn his family not to visit the cottage that weekend. We have scheduled fall meetings ever since with accommodations varying from primitive to more appropriate. One classed as primitive was held at a camp near Tweed with Sam Curry as host. Others that fit

that description were held at Turkey Point and Puslinch Lake. Lakeside Lodge at Lake Simcoe and The Beacon at Jordan provided better class accommodations.

\* **deceased**

### **Adventures At Byrnell Manor**

We held two Fall Meetings at Byrnell Manor, near Fenelon Falls. One was in 1950 and the other in 1955. We had decided to invite spouses in appreciation of the sacrifices they make during the season. Byrnell was owned and operated by football great Annis Stukus and his wife Anna. We sent them into a state of near shock when they learned that all the bedroom doors were missing when the delegates finally decided the first day was over. Annis later told Secretary Jack Christie that the greatest surprise came after the delegates had left and he went to survey the damage. Annis and Anna were amazed to find that we had replaced all the doors and the premises were in perfect condition. The door removal had been the "inspiration" of Herb Parker and a couple of co-conspirators. The same culprits replaced the doors hidden overnight in an unused closet. We were invited to return and we did so in 1955. There were no problems with doors.

### **Toronto Meetings Also Provided Stories**

Another story that deserves "memoirs" rating involved a member from Eastern Ontario. A small town newspaper publisher, the member was a model of propriety at home but liked to enjoy himself when he got to the big city. Once he came to Toronto a day early and spent the evening at the Toronto Press Club. His next recollection was of being awakened from a sound sleep and calling down to the hotel desk to complain about the noise outside his room. When he demanded immediate action to stop the unearthly racket at six a.m., the operator calmly responded: "but sir, it is **six P.M.**" He had missed the meeting. Incidentally, it was Sam who reported that story to the Secretary.

### **The Sleepless Wonders**

Since the formation of the O.J.H.A. in 1935, the Executive Committee has always met the evening before the Annual Meeting. After we enlisted Jimmy Whiston to be our assistant, Jim attended the meetings regularly. When the Friday evening meeting ended (often about one or two a.m.) the two of us immediately prepared the minutes of the meeting just ended. Despite the late hour we typed copies for each Executive member. By then it was time for a shower and breakfast. From there we went to the meeting room to place a copy of the previous night's minutes at each member's place at the head table. We then attended the annual meeting and carried out our duties without having had any sleep. We accepted that procedure as routine.

## **Representation**

### **Province-Wide Representation Has Always Been The O.M.H.A.'S Goal**

The Ontario Minor Hockey Association has always been conscious of the need for province-wide territorial representation. In the formative years of the Association and because of its membership, the Presidents were drawn from the group of men who formed the organization, or whom they recruited. That process restricted the drawing area to Central Ontario and Toronto. These would be Bill Weller of Brantford, Jack Roxburgh of Simcoe, John Lauman of Kitchener and Leon Hipwell of Toronto.

### **Merging Associations Broadened the Representation**

The merger of the Juvenile Association with the Midget and Bantam group ended that regime and began a history of diverse regional representation that covered the whole O.M.H.A. territory. The organization had never officially decided to alternate between sections, but appointments were made when an area was under-represented. The democratic process provided almost equal numbers of presidents from the various areas of the territory. If the narrow strip generally north of Toronto and relatively close to Highways 11 or 400 is withdrawn from "west of Toronto" and added to east of Toronto, each section has had the same number of Presidents, thirteen. Ashton Morrison of St. Catharines, President of the Midget & Bantam Association in 1941 and 1942, assumed the O.M.H.A. Presidency in 1943. He was the first of four who have been from the Niagara Peninsula. The others were Frank Doherty, Thorold, Tony Bloomfield, Grimsby and Jack White of Thorold.

### **Toronto Contributed Its Share Of Presidents**

The list of Presidents shows Toronto as having had four Presidents but two, Ken Waters and Jim Kinkley were first elected to the executive from centres at opposite ends of the territory. Dr. Leon Hipwell and Jack Christie were the Torontonians who occupied the Presidential chair. Toronto might have some claim to Ken Waters who left the family business in Toronto and moved to Clinton, and then back to Toronto by the time he became President.

### **Presidents Have Been Evenly Distributed**

Describing the narrow strip north and westerly from Toronto as Central Ontario defines an area that supplied five Presidents. They were Otto Hardwick of Bolton, Bill Burrell and Ken Russell of Brampton, Elmer McFadden of Elmvale and Mike Hammond from Thornbury.

Using poetic license" to justify separation of the Central group from "Western Ontario" and adding them to "east of Toronto" results in thirteen Presidents. That is the same number as from west of Toronto. The eight who resided east of Toronto were Harold Luke of Oshawa, Harold Dunk of Campbellford, Bert Hick from Lindsay, Albert Watkins of Peterborough, Doug Patterson of Stirling, Gord Hawes of Whitby, Bill Mulholland from Campbellford and E. Grimshaw, Stouffville.

### **Excellence Marked Western Ontario Representation**

Herb Parker of Stratford was President in 1950-1951-1952, ten years after John Lauman, his "west of Toronto" predecessor. Others from western Ontario were Mike Weichel, Elmira; Fred Norman, Simcoe; Jack Oakes, Strathroy; Ted Elmes, Galt; Stan Stokes, London; Wes Oswald, Forest; Lloyd Davidson, Chatham; Al Moore, Guelph; Roy Beechey, Tillsonburg; Fred Mantle, Paris; John Slobodnik, Sarnia and Jim Pollard, London.

### **Regionally Elected Officers Signal A New Era**

Following a year or so of operations outside the jurisdiction of the C.A.H.A. and the O.H.A., the O.M.H.A. returned to the officially organized realm and became a member body in the newly organized Ontario Hockey Federation. With the federation came the division of the O.M.H.A. territory into six regions, each with two representatives on the Executive. Elected as the first regional representatives were Dick Bennett and Mike Bergeron (Region 1), Tom Armstrong and Terry McLean (Region 2), Ed Brown and Wayne Pries (Region 3), Phil Hendry and Terry Parsons (Region 4), Kevin Almond and Bob Beaumont (Region 5) and Sharon Griffin and Jim Lytle (Region 6). Newcomers were Tom Armstrong, Mike Bergeron, Ed Brown, Phil Hendry and Terry Parsons.

### **The O.M.H.A. Honour Award**

This award is set up to honour a person who has made an outstanding voluntary contribution to minor hockey for a considerable period of time. . . any officer or Executive Member of the CHA, OHA, WOAA, or the MTHL shall not be eligible. Also, any Life Member, Past President, Officer, Executive Member or District Convenor of the O.M.H.A. shall not be eligible.

When the Secretary recommended to the 1947 Executive Committee that we set up such an award, he expected immediate positive response. They surprised him when there was some opposition. My very good friend, Ash Morrison was one who felt that it was a not a good idea. He argued that with so many good people in Minor Hockey one would get an award and others, just as deserving, would not. When we persisted by responding to all of the negative answers, Ash finally said, "If Jack feels that strongly about it, I'm willing to support him." So, the O.M.H.A. Honour award came into being.

John Ovens of Kitchener was the first winner in 1948. John was a typical grass roots, help the kids guy, typical of the O.M.H.A. objectives of the day. Ironically, the second winner was Stan Elliott, Ash Morrison's best friend and co-worker in the Bantam and Midget association.

As set out above, the Executive made rules to assure that no one on the executive or in a similar role could win the award. They did not foresee a member leaving the executive to return to local hockey activities. If the continuing contribution earned the recognition of his local peers, he or she could be considered. Likewise they did not foresee the possibility of someone winning the award and later becoming a member of the Executive Committee. Both possibilities happened. Bill Fittell of Kingston won the award in 1967 and was elected to the Executive in 1970. Bob Ring from Collingwood was the Honour Award winner in 1995 and became an Executive Member in 1998. Two won after having been on the executive. Al Shaw of Windsor served on the Executive from 1964 to 1969 and was the award winner in 1980. Lou Jeffries of Gananoque was nominated and selected as winner in 1990. He had served on the Executive from 1964 to 1969.

These four "out of the ordinary" winners were recognized by their local co-workers and nominated, not because of their work on the executive, but for their local contributions before and/or after their provincial service.

### **Living with Attitude Changes**

Public Relations practitioners are guided by the precept that tells them "opinions can be easily changed, but attitude changes take longer." Between when we were Secretary (then) and the present time (now), definite and identifiable attitude changes have taken place in the hockey world.

When Jack Roxburgh and Roger Matchett formed the Ontario Juvenile Hockey Association, the objective was to have an organization that would arrange playoff games and enable the declaration of a champion. A by-product would be the promotion of hockey as a sport for boys.

When we took over some seven years later, our goal was to promote the growth of the association. Our attitude was to develop the association so that more teams would enable more boys to play. We operated our association to give boys a chance to play hockey. Development of players for the professionals was a by-product with a very low priority.

### **The Boy, the Sport, The Organization – In that Order**

The belief that every boy had the right to play hockey on a team in his own hometown was our guide. We also believed that it was our responsibility to operate for the good of the boy, the sport and the association, in that order. It

was also our precept that the good of the majority came ahead of the rights of any individual. We tried to say yes to everyone who called, providing we were not providing an advantage or adversely affecting any other individual or group.

That was our attitude. The members for whom we were working supported, and even applauded our approach. Today's O.M.H.A. Executive strives for the same goals, but decisions must be tailored to suit the conditions prevailing today.

### **Hometown Hockey was the Better Way**

We did not have to compete for players nor did we need to convince team managers that this organization was better than another was. There were players who were attracted to a team other than the one in their own town but our position was that the good players could not be drawn away from their hometown to the disadvantage of the other boys in that town.

Our opinion was that the rest of the players in Town A would be adversely affected. Because their star players had departed, the team might fold and the boys left behind would be out of hockey. The remaining players might be unable to form a competitive team, or there might not be enough of them.

### **Many Factors Contribute To Change**

Things are different now. Players want to, and do, move almost at will for a multitude of reasons. The other team offers more inducements than the local team. Another league seems to provide better competition. The other Association paints itself as a better place to be. The rest of the kids don't matter. One organization enforces all the rules; the other turns a blind eye, or may even help to circumvent the rules they do not like.

Whatever the reason, things are different. Attitudes have changed. Players are more strong-willed, parents are more aggressive, the must win mentality rules team management. Some feel they must operate at a profit - and that takes a winner. Attitudes have changed, and we find that we must operate in the changing world. The O.M.H.A. attitude has not changed, but decisions are reached after giving consideration to today changed attitudes. It is not always easy.

Opinions are divided about whether today's attitudes are good or not so good and opinions change, person by person, or day by day. Attitudes take longer. But they do change.

### **That Was Then and This Is Now**

## **Divisions Multiplied As The O.M.H.A. Developed**

When Jack Stafford left the Secretarial office to Jack Christie, we operated four series: - Juvenile A, Juvenile B, Midget and Bantam. Two years later the total was seven, Juvenile A, B and C, Midget A and B and Bantam A and B. (*During the 1997-98 season there were 80 Divisions*)

## **Teams, Not Necessarily Associations, Submitted Entries**

In the early years teams entered the O.M.H.A., for play-offs only, for group play, or as group winners. Only one team per series could enter the O.M.H.A. from any centre where a local association operated and only with the local association's permission. Local leagues could enter an all-star team for the play-offs. Executive Members helped in the organization of groups for the teams that entered for group play. For a few years, entry fees were two dollars per team. They raised the Juvenile fee to three dollars without dissent.

## **Delegates Demonstrated Their Support of Their Association**

The time came when the Secretary needed to advise the executive that we needed more money to operate the growing organization. He recommended a one-dollar per team increase for Juvenile and Midget, no increase for Bantam. That would have brought fees to four dollars for Juvenile, three for Midget and two for Bantam. The executive was cautious and decided that the Secretary would have to be the one to explain to the Annual Meeting the need for such an increase. He did the best he could and he, along with the executive members, was stunned when the first speaker supported the motion and the second moved an amendment to make entry fees five dollars per team in all series. The delegates unanimously approved the amendment, showing that they were solidly behind their association and its management.

## **The First O.M.H.A. Office**

Following its departure from Jack Stafford's location, the O.M.H.A. office was Jack Christie's home at 688 Coxwell Avenue, Toronto. The workspace was the dining room and the main desk was the dining room table. Our first office assistants were my wife Dorothy and young daughter Jacqueline. The phone number was Gladstone 0772. In 1952 we moved to 6 Glen Eden Crescent in East York. We built an office in the basement in a room across the back of the house. It measured about 11 feet by 21 feet. Along one wall in each direction workbenches were built with filing boxes beneath. Until recently two of those boxes still contained hockey materials. The phone number was Plymouth 3554. The current phone number is (416) 755-3554. Once set up in workable office space, Christie hired a neighbour lady to help. Within a short time we had three ladies working three hours a night, five nights a week. All of this after he came home from work in the printing plate business. After his retirement from the

O.M.H.A., that basement office became headquarters for the C.A.H.A. Minor Hockey Committee. Minor Hockey Week was organized and directed from there. The state-of-the-art equipment was an IBM electric typewriter with interchangeable type balls. That was before Michael McCauley's time.

### **The Arena Situation Was Different**

Every city and town, and almost every village, had an arena...an enclosed arena, with *natural ice*. We had a guideline that we used as a rule. Any centre that lost its ice (thawed) after February 10 could not schedule any more games in that arena. They had to play their home games at the nearest artificial arena. One example would be that Marmora had its choice of Belleville or Peterborough for home games. East of Toronto there were artificial arenas in Oshawa, Belleville, Peterborough and Kingston. West of Toronto artificial ice was available in Kitchener, Brantford, Stratford, Owen Sound and Collingwood.

### **Travel Was One Of The Problems**

In the "way back then" years, gasoline was twenty-nine cents a gallon (they changed to litres as the price per gallon neared ninety-nine cents). Not every family had a car, so not all Dads could help with the driving.

Most teams played their games on natural ice in an enclosed arena. Huntsville complained when they had to "go all that way" to Parry Sound for a second round play-off game. Ray Hermiston asked if he needed a passport when Stirling was matched with Powassan.

### **Playoffs Were Home And Home - Over Quickly**

Playoff arrangements were different, too. The office sent out the draw for the first round, for example Marmora vs. Madoc, Tweed vs. Havelock, etc. We allowed the teams seven days in which to play home-and-home, total goals series for which they arranged their own games and dates. When team managers could not agree, the Secretary told them who would have the first home game. They usually accepted his dictate with only disappointed murmurs. When the home team manager called the office to report the score of the first game, we told him the opponent for the next week. That would be the winner of the nearest series. All champions had to be declared by or during Easter Week. That was when the rinks took out the ice unless they had a junior team in the running. We never failed to declare champions in any series.

### **Operations Were On A Shoestring Budget**

Either the President or the Secretary, sometimes both, attended every game that could decide a championship. One of them presented the trophy to the winners. Other executive members were welcome of course and expected where

possible. They travelled at their own expense. Mileage rates were unknown in those days. They did, however, enter the rink free - with their O.M.H.A. identification. The first change toward compensation came when we advised the members that any who felt they were facing a hardship could submit a bill for actual gasoline cost.

### **Proving That It Takes Money To Sail A Good Ship**

The financial statement for the 1943 season showed a bank balance of \$150. Receipts for the 1947-48 season were \$4,791.47. *During the 1997-98 season the budget exceeded \$4,000,000 and about \$6,000,000 passed through the office.*

### **Another Demonstration Of Delegate Support**

When long-time O.H.A. Secretary passed away, O.H.A. officials advised our Secretary that they would expect a one hundred-dollar contribution from the O.M.H.A. to a Hewitt Bursary Fund being organized. His response was "Sorry, I cannot use O.M.H.A. funds that way - but I will see what I can do." He advised the delegates at the Annual meeting of that conversation, and suggested that they might drop contributions into boxes being set up at the meeting room doors. The O.H.A. officials were very pleased when \$528 was contributed to the W. A. Hewitt Memorial Bursary Fund. That took place at the same meeting where the delegates increased the executive's request for entry fee increases. That is one more reason this writer is proud to be associated with the O.M.H.A.

### **Sometimes The Secretary Had To "Fool The Public"**

Being an abstainer, although not a prohibitionist caused me some minor problems with the "one won't hurt you" crowd. My first solution was to order a drink and carry it around. George Dudley usually relieved me of it. My most effective solution was when I discovered that I could solve my problem by ordering a glass of ginger ale "with just enough coke to look like the others." By the time my tenure with C.A.H.A. was finished I could attend a hockey function almost anywhere in Canada and on entrance be greeted by some delegate shouting "one Christie cocktail coming up."

### **We Had To Be Quick With The Answers**

The teams in the Georgian Bay area were concerned. In fact, they were furious. Several team managers called us claiming that Hap Emms, owner and Manager of the Barrie Junior A team, was causing a situation that would adversely affect every Juvenile B team in Ontario. When we heard their story, we had to agree with them. They reported that Hap was importing top Juvenile-age players from Western Canada to try out for his Junior A team. Those who did not make the team but appeared to be good prospects would be sent to Midland to play

Juvenile for a year. That kind of stacking could create a team with which others could not compete.

It took us about two days to come up with a solution. We decided to change our residence rule. We would require a player to live in a town "at least one year prior to November 1<sup>st</sup> of that year." The complainants unanimously approved of our solution. Understandably, Hap vigorously objected to the proposal. He protested that we could not do that, except at the annual meeting. Our response was that with extenuating circumstances, the Executive could pass a rule for one season, but would have to go to the next annual meeting to have it confirmed or rejected. The rule stood, imports did not sideline Midland kids and the Juvenile B series was back on a level playing field (or rink). Collingwood won the Juvenile B championship by defeating Point Edward in an evenly matched final series

### **Your Secretary Was Considered A "Crackpot"**

Speaking to an annual meeting at Toronto's King Edward Hotel, we were commenting on the shortage of artificial ice arenas around Ontario. We mentioned that Toronto had only three, Maple Leaf Gardens, Ravina Rink and Royal's Rink, a curling arena. We went on to suggest that Toronto should have an artificial ice surface in every Ward in the city. That would have resulted in eleven arenas. The Toronto Telegram featured the proposal in the following day's paper and even comment editorially. The gist of the editorial was that it was a crackpot idea with no consideration given to taxpayers' concerns. The number of Toronto and area arenas is now in excess of four hundred, many times the number the "crackpot" had been proposing.

### **"Call Christie"**

During our term in office we were invited to many banquets. Dorothy and I tried to attend as many as possible. One we did attend was in Havelock in 1953. When they introduced the head table, they introduced me as "Call Christie." Whenever anyone referred to us it was as "Call Christie" which puzzled us no end. When the dinner was over the Chairman invited everyone to line up and shake hands with "Call Christie". Almost everyone did. Most of them remarked "Glad to meechea, "Call Christie." When we were in a position to ask for an explanation, they told us that the entire hockey following had been invited to share the cost of long distance calls. A different supporter paid for each call to Toronto. No one had to pay for more than one call. That explained why we received more calls from Havelock than from any other two centres combined. In Havelock it was "Call Christie" at the drop of a hat, or a puck.

### **A Fund For Better Speakers**

We will refrain from naming the centre involved in the next story. We can say that it was in Elmer McFadden's territory, which may explain it. As in many centres, one of the major Service Clubs sponsored and operated the minor hockey program. They also sponsored the banquet. After I had finished my speech, a member was delegated to thank the speaker. He presented me with an envelope and remarked, "we hope that will cover your expenses." The Mayor was the next speaker. While he was speaking I sneaked a peek in the envelope and was surprised at the amount. I thought it was more than a Service Club should be giving me. I quietly returned the envelope to the Chairman and suggested that the Club put the money to some good purpose. When the Mayor had finished his greetings the Chairman began to speak. He told the meeting what a great guy Mr. Christie was and reported that I had returned the cheque to be used for the good of the Club. Then he added "I have already decided what to do with it. I am going to put it in the new fund we started last month to get better speakers next year." The audience recognized the slip of the tongue with howls of laughter, as well they might. I did my best to alleviate the Chairman's obvious embarrassment. It did make for some fun and provide me with a story I think is worth telling.

### **Being Asked To Talk Too Long - Much Too Long**

When Jack Stafford retired as Secretary, his successor, unaccustomed to public speaking, was unable to say more than a simple "thank you."

After several years of reporting to meetings and presenting trophies we became able to address an audience without too much fear of the consequences. The banquet to honour the Oshawa Bantam runners-up provided the ultimate test.

We had developed a technique of talking from notes pencilled on the back of a business card. The card contained about a dozen subjects, any of which we could skip or delete if a previous speaker used that subject. We usually spoke for about ten minutes unless asked to make it a little longer. This night we were planning for ten minutes.

As we were about to finish, the Chairman slipped us a note that read: "The Guest Speaker has not arrived, can you keep going?" This caused a glimpse at our business card notes and the use of at least one more item. That one used, a glance at the Chairman told us to continue. This carried on for more than three-quarters of an hour, when the Chairman signalled relief with another note, "He's here."

At a reception after the dinner, Soup Campbell, the *Oshawa Times* Sports Editor said loudly: "Christie, at the King Edward when you were elected Secretary you couldn't have said butter if your mouth was full of it. Tonight I thought you'd never shut up." Thirty-eight were at that Annual Meeting, more than 200 at the Oshawa banquet.

## **Service Clubs Have Always Provided Strong Support**

From the time that Jack Roxburgh's Simcoe Lions-sponsored team helped form the Ontario Juvenile Association, Service Clubs have been strong supporters of Minor Hockey. The Lions Clubs of Ontario have always been very prominent with their support, but more so in our early days. When we were doing our best to encourage new towns and new teams to become involved, we regularly contacted the local Lions Club. They nearly always responded by forming a team, or even a whole town league. The Lions Clubs can be proud of their role in the development of minor hockey in Ontario. Others, like Rotary, the Canadian Legion, Kiwanis and Kinsmen have also contributed support. All of those organizations continue to participate and we thank them all. As we write, a new organization, Red Lobster, has joined them with its support of minor hockey. The popular seafood restaurant chain has taken on the role of community contributor. We welcome this newest version of a community "Service Club."

## **One Last Story...**

This memory is of an executive meeting called for a hearing into our first-ever melee with fans on the ice. Dr. Hipwell and Fred Waghorne had been there and they insisted that they had seen everything. In their report they told the secretary about the events as they occurred. They both named one specific player as the main cause. The referees' reports confirmed the Hipwell/Waghorne versions.

At the meeting, the referees verbally reported, as did the player specified, his team coach and the manager. It was then that Doc Hipwell spoke up and stated that the player was responsible for starting the fight that ignited the melee. The boy responded that Doc's story was "generally correct" but the accused player stated, "I did NOT start the fight."

Doc returned to the debate with the statement "I was there and I saw it all. YOU started the fight." The boy looked straight into Doc's eyes and retorted: "I did NOT start the fight - the fight did not start until he hit me back!"

## From the Author



*It has been a pleasure, even fun, putting these memories on paper so that they are recorded for posterity. We have tried to pass on some of what it was like during the "good old days." We do not pretend that these pages are the history of the O.M.H.A., although the contents are part of that history. These are memoirs of one who was privileged to be part of those early years, augmented by reference to my collection of the yearly manuals. My collection of books starts with the 1938-1939 book and is complete to date except for 1943-1944 and 1983-1984. If anyone can fill the blanks for me that I would very much appreciate that good fortune.*

*Because we label these musings "memoirs" we hope you will excuse us for having included some personal experiences, or "Christie stories." We do invite any of the "experienced" members or ex-members to add to these pages by contributing their own memories.*

*I express my appreciation to Jim Kinkley (who gets involved in everything) for the valuable contribution he made by agreeing to volunteer to be our proofreader. I am now able to disclaim responsibility for errors, omissions or inaccuracies. Thanks, Jim.*