

completely new set of league officers. In a spirit of ringing out the old and ringing in the new, On Deck presents interviews with the incoming and outgoing commissioners. Jeff Pike spoke with Jim Vierra and Warren Mitchell spoke with Gary Staples:

Stepping out

Jim Vierra

"No one knows you after one year (serving as commissioner). After two years, people are calling you 'Commissioner', the office becomes you, you are recognized as the office," explained Jim Vierra in a recent exclusive interview for On Deck. He then added, "people become nicer and friendlier." No doubt, Jim's popularity and success as commissioner derived from the integrity and dedication he brought to the office.

As he steps down from the position he held for two years, On Deck asked him to reflect on his job as commissioner and on the league in general (Jim needs little coaxing to talk softball).

"People need to define the goals of the league," Jim believes. The league needs to be "competitive to keep interest, but too much competition will drive out the marginal players. Then we'll lose community support."

Jim cited the "equality" in the league, the development of the 1270 Women's team, the addition of the Skippers team to the league, and the benefit games against the Boston Police as positive signs for the BSL. He praised his "dedicated officers" for their time and contributions to the league. And he chose George Martin (for his groundskeeping), Alan Sammartino (for redoing the scoreboard), and the guys at ON DECK as examples of how individuals can improve the league.

However, Jim feels "some league members expect too much of elected officials. Certain players come, play games, and leave. Personal (and career) lives affect the amount of time people can volunteer, but there are small tasks that need to be done: getting the bases and the scoreboard, and policing the stands after games. The same few shouldn't have to do everything."

Another point Jim made was about the continuity in running the league from year to year: "We always seem to have last minute planning. Yet the league events repeat." The lack of advanced planning as well as the shortage of volunteers are the prime reasons Jim sees for the BSL not hosting a tourney.

Did he have fun as commissioner? "Ask me later."

Did positive things happen in the league during his two years as commissioner? Sure, but at this point its the things that didn't get done (tax exempt status, rewritten constitution, Las Vegas night, and a tournament) that weigh heavily on his mind.

What next, Mr. Commissioner? Speaking tours or retirement? "Rest, bridge; maybe the phone will stop ringing!"

We get the hint, Jim. Thanks for your two years of service. Watch out batters, next year Jim will be able to concentrate on his pitching.

On Deck

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