

“PLAY BALL” AT JOE BRUNO STADIUM

by David Filkins



With summer approaching, the Tri-City ValleyCats are poised to provide another exciting season of baseball in 2004. The Valleycats are a Class-A affiliate of the Houston Astros, the Valleycats have spent the past two seasons in Troy, New York. Playing in Troy for the last two seasons has not only revitalized the ValleyCats organization, but also provided the Capital Region with a brand of baseball fans can be excited about. The organization moved to its former location of Pittsfield, Mass. in 1989, and at the time was playing as an affiliate of the New York Mets. Waconah Park was the home of the Pittsfield Mets for 12 seasons. Former Pittsfield Mets players include a host of former and current Major Leaguers, including Jay Payton, Terrence Long, and Jeremy Brunitz.

After 12 years of serving as an affiliate of the New York Mets, the organization began a player development contract with the Houston Astros in 2001. The team moved from Pittsfield to their current home in Troy the year after.

The move was due in part to the franchise's inability to reach a contract for a new stadium in Pittsfield. Hudson Valley Community College was willing to provide one, and the move was put

in place. Construction of the \$14 million stadium began in 2001, with a completion date set for the next year.

HVCC, which owns and operates the stadium, named it Joseph L. Bruno Stadium in honor of the State Senate majority leader. Construction was completed in time for the 2002 season. The 4,500 seat facility boasts many of the accommodations of today's major league ballparks; individual seating, luxury boxes, outfield grass seating, a picnic area, and a video scoreboard.

While moving from Pittsfield to Troy, management decided to do a thorough makeover in hopes of reinventing the franchise. The club would remain a Houston Astros affiliate, but would drop the Astros nickname in favor of something new. After a "name the team" contest, "ValleyCats" was finally chosen. In addition, public response was so far reaching that the team settled on "Tri-City" as a first name, rather than just Troy.

The arrival of a professional baseball team was a welcome addition not only for Troy, but the Capital District all together. Minor League baseball had flourished in the area throughout the 80's and 90's with the Albany-Colonie Yankees and the Albany-Colonie Diamond Dogs. 2002 marked the end of more than 20 years of baseball at Heritage Park in Albany, New York, as the Diamond Dogs franchise folded,

Ride for a day.

**American
Diabetes
Association.**
Cure • Care • Commitment



Call 1-888-DIABETES
or visit us at www.diabetes.org/tour

Share for a lifetime.

This spring, you can share your strength for a day.
Decide to ride in the Tour de Cure,
the nation's largest cycling event
to fight against diabetes.

Let Mildred Elley
get **you** started on
**the right
game plan.**

Business Management
Computerized Bookkeeping
Office Technologies
Information Technology
Paralegal Studies
Medical Studies
Travel & Tourism
Massage Therapy

Call (518) 786-3171 today to kick
off your new career.
Financial aid for eligible students. Weekend classes available.



Mildred Elley
What employers want.

mildred-elley.com

Latham Circle Mall, Latham NY
Also located in Pittsfield MA

concurrent with the ValleyCats arrival.

Although the ValleyCats struggled to a 27-48 record in their first season in Troy, the relocation was a success. More than 100,000 fans made it to the ballpark during its first season, ensuring that baseball in the Tri-City area

was alive and well. The team saw a drastic improvement in 2003, finishing with a 44-32 record, missing the play-offs by only 1.5 games. The Valleycats have now turned their attention to this season, and making it a success both on and off the baseball diamond.



Valleycats Schedule

JUNE

18-20 @ Lowell Spinners
21-22 @ Oneonta Tigers
23-26 vs. Brooklyn Cyclones
27-28 vs. Batavia Muckdogs
29-30 @ Vermont Expos

JULY

1-2 vs. Vermont Expos
3-4 vs. Lowell Spinners
5-7 @ New Jersey Cardinals
9-11 vs. Lowell Spinners
12-14 @ Oneonta Tigers
15-16 vs. Oneonta Tigers
17-19 @ Auburn Doubledays
20-22 vs. Staten Island Yankees
23-25 @ Oneonta Tigers
26-27 @ Lowell Spinners
29-31 vs. Williamsport
Crosscutters

AUGUST

1-3 vs. Vermont Expos
4-6 @ Mahoning Valley Scrappers
7-9 @ Hudson Valley Renegades
10-12 vs. Oneonta Tigers
13-14 @ Lowell Spinners
15-16 vs. Vermont Expos
18-20 @ Vermont Expos
21-23 vs. Lowell Spinners
24-26 vs. Jamestown Jammers
27-29 @ Vermont Expos
30-31 @ Aberdeen Ironbirds

SEPTEMBER

1 @ Aberdeen Ironbirds
2-4 @ Oneonta Tigers

GAME TIMES

Monday through Saturday - 7 PM

Sunday - 6 PM

***Tuesday, August 3 - 12 PM**

www.tcvalleycats.com ■ Phone (518) 629-2287

**Awards By Walsh's
& Creative Marketing**

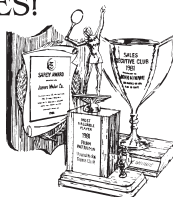
**NEW Location!!
BIGGER Showroom!!**

FAST RELIABLE SERVICE AWARDS • EMBROIDERY

Custom Engraving, Embroidery and Screen Printing
Advertising Specialties • Promotional Items

WE INVITE LEAGUES, CLUBS, ORGANIZATIONS
& SCHOOLS TO COMPARE OUR PRICES!

(518)235-6362



*1/2 off screen charge
or
Free sponsor plaque
with your first order!*

233 Ontario Street
Cohoes, NY 12047

www.awardsbywalsh.com ASK US ABOUT OUR ALL NEW EMBROIDERY ITEMS!



Albany Metro Mallers

Semi-Professional Football



2004 Schedule

July 17	Reading Renegades	Home
July 24	Syracuse Vipers	Home
July 31	Scranton Eagles	Away
Aug 7	Binghamton Green Machine	Away
Aug 14	Orange County Bulldogs	Home
Aug 21	Reading Renegades	Away
Aug 28	Syracuse Vipers	Away
	Labor Day Weekend	
Sept 11	Scranton Eagles	Home
Sept 18	Binghamton Green Machine	Home
Sept 25	Orange County Bulldogs	Away

THE ALBANY METRO MALLERS, A SEMI-PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM, WAS A MAJOR SPORTS VENUE IN THE 70'S, 80'S AND EARLY 90'S. THE NAME DERIVED FROM THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS WHO CONSTRUCTED THE SOUTH MALL. THE METRO MALLERS ARE A PART OF THE EMPIRE FOOTBALL LEAGUE, WHICH INCLUDED TEAMS FROM THE NORTHEASTERN PORTION OF THE UNITED STATES. THE SUMMERS OF THE METRO MALLERS WEEKEND NIGHTS WERE FILLED WITH EXCITEMENT, AND REASONABLY PRICED ENTERTAINMENT WITH MANY OF THE CAPITAL REGION'S PREMIERE ATHLETES.

IT IS NOW 2004 AND THE METRO MALLERS ARE BACK IN THE CAPITAL DISTRICT. THE METRO MALLERS ARE MAKING A POSITIVE COMBACK WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE CITY OF ALBANY AFTER 13 YEARS. LOCAL PLAYERS AS WELL AS PLAYERS FROM THE UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY, RPI, UNION, SIENA AND SYRACUSE UNIVERSITIES ARE BEING CONJURED TO CREATE THE NUCLEUS OF A NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM. SIXTY MEMBERS ARE BEING ASSEMBLED TO COMPETE FOR THE EMPIRE FOOTBALL LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP AND THEN THE AMERICAN FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP. COME JOIN THE EXCITEMENT THIS SUMMER DON'T MISS OPENING DAY WITH A PRE-GAME KICK OFF CONCERT FEATURING CAPITALLANDS FAVORITE BAND "THE REFRIGERATORS". GATES OPEN AT 4:00 PM.

**Tickets: Season Pass \$25.00 Adults \$6.00, Seniors \$4.00 Children 6-12 \$3.00 5 and Under Free
Phone: 518-479-0432 Web: metromallers.com Email: joe.barbagallo@metromallers.com**