

## ADLER FIELD

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First things first, the site was in need of fill — 17,000 yards of it. The volunteer Aaron Logsdon. Aaron had the know-how and dirt. The equipment to haul the dirt was provided by Baker County and Baker City. Under Logsdon's direction, baseball fathers, employees of the county, the city and the BLM began to fill the large gaping hole. Vollie Heeb, volunteered to level the entire playing field. Baker County hauled granite sand to the surrounding areas. Forest service employees volunteered surveying skills as the filling process continued.

Tiny Jones and Eastern Oregon Freight hauled fencing, screen and sign board from Portland and Seattle. Ben's Transfer moved bleachers and heavy equipment locally. No piece of equipment of Cascade Natural Gas, Britton Equipment Company or Clyde Ward & Sons was spared as the sprinkling system was installed by Francis Chaves and the Knights of the Columbus. The fence was installed under the direction of Art Chaves.

Ed Moeller spear-headed the all-volunteer effort to construct the grandstands with the assistance of Ed Lovelace, Henry Davis, George Smull, Bill Witham, Sid Johnson and Charlie Moeller.

All the materials and lumber were donated by the Burnt River Lumber Company and the Ellinger Lumber Company.

The painting was donated by Joe Mahoney, Everett Boorse and John Gatson. Tom Hasher wired the sign board, concession stand and press box. The Oregon State Highway Commission furnished the cinders, Farmaterials the seed, and First National Bank and the U.S. Forest supplied the trees for landscaping.

Aaron Logsdon excavated for the dugout. Tracy Eidson and crew built the dugouts and the press box. Commercial Welding Company made the flag pole, the septic tank and provided countless volunteer hours of welding assistance.

To light the facility, Idaho Power brought the poles to Baer freight-free and Morris Wells hauled them to the site. York Electric, Baker Electric, Tom Hasher Electric, Jim Ego, Bob O'Dell and Paul Curts, together with Harvey Witham, armed the poles and erected them. California Pacific Utilities Company then devoted its entire line crew and equipment to wiring and spotting the lights.

Deans Paint and Glass, Basche-Sage Hardware and Builder's Supply furnished materials and equipment. Artcraft Paint and Glass furnished its truck and manpower erecting the signboard. That sign was purchased by the Veteran's organizations of Baker County.

Howard Standford and Joe Vershnik of Baker Redi-Mix, Inc., furnished countless yards of gravel and sand. They completed the asphalt paving at a substantial loss to their business. Carl Holman photographed the finished product courtesy of Don Doyle's Flying Service.

June 21, 1966: The Dedication. It was on this day Leo Adler turned 71 years of age. It was therefore fitting the community again unite to celebrate his birthday and to honor the man who

rightfully had earned the name "Mr. Baker".

The dedication brought dignity to Baker including Oregon's Governor Mark Hatfield and Wade Williams. More than 300 members of the 28 Little League, Babe Ruth and Junior Legion teams stood at home plate during the opening ceremonies, along with the Elks Drum and Bugle Corps.

Little League and Babe Ruth President, LeRoy Merrick, Gene Rose, and Bishop Francis Leipzig, representing the Catholic Church and Academy, presided over the evening.

LeRoy Merrick gave special recognition to Art Chaves, Frances Chaves, Gene Rose, Harold McJunkin and Aaron Logsdon for their countless hours of dedication and hard work.

A special appearance was made by County Judge Lloyd Rea who had been away from county duties for two months as a result of surgery. He made a special effort to visit with his son, Jimmy Lloyd Rea, Jr., and his Babe Ruth team before he left the field.

Steve Bogart, former Baker County Commissioner, was one of those Babe Ruth players (a member of the Colts) there that evening. "We (the kids) were not really thinking about all the big names that were there. We just wanted to play baseball."

He continued, "I remember thinking how great it was to be on a brand new field," recalled Bogart. "There was a real pitcher's mound, mowed grass, dugouts and a concession stand. We were so used to playing on rock and dirt. It was terrific!"

Bogart remembers how many people spent countless volunteer hours making the field a reality. "In particular, I remember Nick McDonough, who worked for the Forest Service. He and his wife did not have children, but he worked so many hours helping to survey the field as they completed the fill."

That evening, Leo Adler paid tribute to the thousands of hours of contributed effort that he said overshadowed his contribution to make the park possible. "This is much bigger than I ever dreamed."

Perhaps that says it best when one considers the enormous community effort that went into the making of the Leo Adler Field. "Bigger than one ever dreamed."

Today, the field still stands. Bakers City Babe Ruth teams continue to compete in the game of baseball. Lessons are still being learned at home plate.

People like to use "spark" when it comes to Leo Adler and his impact on Baker County. When one looks around at all that has been accomplished as a result of Leo Adler community grants, and one thinks about the number of kids who have gotten a chance at higher education because of Leo Adler scholarships, perhaps "spark" does not adequately represent what Leo Adler has meant to Baker County.

Perhaps, just perhaps, we should consider the word "tsunami." Simply put, the landscape of Baker County has been forever changed as a result of Leo Adler.

Happy 121st Birthday, Mr. Baker!

*And now, Leo Adler, your spark has provided the flame to build a field for boys. On your field, a lesson in democracy will be taught every game, for baseball draws no lines of race, color or creed. Boys will become men, for when they walk to the plate, they must carry the bat alone — mom and dad can no longer help. These are the lessons your spark has provided, Leo Adler, and all who assisted on the field. To you and these people this community owes a debt of gratitude.*

- Excerpt from the program on the night of the Leo Adler Field dedication -

## CUBA: A Beautiful Country with Warm and Friendly People

By Gerald Hopkins

When Christopher Columbus sailed into Cuban waters in 1492, he described it as "the most beautiful island he had seen." Well, we're back from Cuba, and can add that it is a beautiful country with warm and friendly people.

We were a little apprehensive because we were told not to leave any negative notes in the room, leave suitcases open in the room in the event they might be checked, and not say anything negative. We had a little difficulty leaving Miami but finally found our travel group of eight other individuals. Two of them fled Cuba as teens during the Revolution. They wanted to go back and find their homes.

When we started to fly out, the crew asked us to move up or back from the seats so we could balance the plane (fairly good sized).

We were put up at a beautiful hotel, which was the same one that President Obama stayed while there. I looked around and saw six security people in the lobby. I thought there was someone important staying, but found it was just security for the hotel. We were near the ocean, but a fence kept guests from going to the beach. It reminded me of Thailand when we were first there in the later 70's with mildew smelling beds, and some smell from the toilet. Even though it was definitely hot and muggy.

We went to Trinidad, with beautiful cobblestone streets and colonial buildings. We again stayed at a five star hotel, but not quite as nice. The single elevator got stuck once while we were on it and had to ring the alarm bell for help out!

Ya'lla Tours was an excellent choice. Although more expensive, they keep the groups small (usually no more than 18-20) and everything is very organized. We had a great guide. Mariana was a 26 year old student finishing her second year of community service. She is required to do so upon finishing university. She was very accommodating and spoke excellent English. She even had the bus driver drive around to find the home of the Cuban couple in our group. The home that he fled was made into a military building, but was now a small cultural center. Mariana answered all questions openly, but was very cautious when it came to talking about the Cuban government and governmental issues.



Gerald Hopkins (right-front) in front of Cuban art building.

The meals were wonderful but always included black beans, rice, salad and choice of chicken, beef, pork, fish or lobster. Since we always had to drink bottled water, they served that or mahita (rum and mint), beer, or fruit juices.

The revolution led by Che Guevara and Castro immediately set up a socialistic government and ties with the Soviet Union. With the introduction of socialism, the drop in sugar prices in the 1960's, the loss of Soviet support, and an embargo placed on the Cuba by the United States, the country became stagnant.

Our traveling companions from Cuba said everything looked the same as it was fifty years ago. However, the beautiful colonial buildings, and those built during the tourist/casino days, have been crumbling and the country is obviously in shambles. The major highway had potholes and rough spots.

Tourism is still the biggest source of money; Europeans, Canadians, and South Americans being the largest groups. Agricultural products include citrus fruits, tobacco and coffee. Other products include pharmaceuticals, rum, cement, fertilizers, textiles and prefabricated buildings.

We had heard the myth that only old cars would be seen. Though prevalent, there are newer cars such as Fiat, KIA, Volkswagen, etc. from other countries. Due to poverty and high gas prices, traffic is not bad even in Havana, a city of two million.

We took a walking tour of old Havana and visited four major plazas. One can see music groups on every corner. They play and sing beautifully. We saw the Plaza de San Francisco de Assis and the 16th-century convent. We visited the Plaza de Armas, where the city was originally built in 1776. We had a chance to visit El Floridita Bar, birth place of the daiquiri and one of Ernest Hemingway's favorite bars (and he apparently frequented many!) We also had a short stop at the handicraft market where goods included leather products and art pieces.

It was on our second day that we visited the Convento de Belen, a center that serves Havana's poorest neighborhood. Its focus is on elderly and disabled children. We made our contributions as a part of the humanitarian visa that allowed us to go to Cuba.

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**June 24 - 30**  
**INDEPENDENCE DAY: RESURGENCE**  
PG-13  
Two decades after the first Independence Day invasion, Earth is faced with a new extra-Solar threat.  
FRI-THURS (4:00) 7:00 9:40

**FINDING DORY** PG  
The friendly-but-forgetful blue tang fish reunites with her loved ones, and everyone learns a few things about the real meaning of family along the way.  
FRI-THURS (4:20) 7:20 9:35

**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE** PG-13  
After he reunites with an old school pal through Facebook, a mild-mannered accountant is lured into the world of international espionage.  
FRI-THURS (4:10) 7:10 9:45

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