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President's Message / Brian Williamson

It is with heavy heart and great enthusiasm that I assume the position as your Carolina Hurricanes Booster Club President. Edith Creasy has opted to resign for personal reasons. Under Edith's brief tenure, membership has increased and club activities have been as exciting as ever. Edith will remain with the club as a very active member doing our membership badges and ID cards. It is my intention to build on the success of those that have come before me.

It is an exciting time to be a Hurricanes fan. As of this writing, our team holds first place in the Southeast Division by five points over the defending Stanley Cup Champion Tampa Bay Lightning. Our coach, Peter Laviolette, will be coaching Team USA in the 2006 winter games. Our club will be hosting meetings and events in 2006 that will not only provide a fun atmosphere, but will also help the community and contribute to our mission of raising awareness of our favorite sport and the Carolina Hurricanes.

Please be sure to read page 8 of this newsletter in great detail. We have a lot of events going on over the next three months and you will not want to miss out!

Let's GO CANES!!

Brian Williamson

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

November 16 (tentative)
CHBC members meeting, RBC Center

December 19
CHBC members meeting, RBC Center

January 15
Holiday Party after Buffalo game

February 11
Build-a-Bear for UNC Hospitals

Hurricanes' fast start slowed by injury bug

OK. When does the EPA roll into the RBC Center or the RecZone and start checking for groin injury inducing amoebas in the water supply?

The Carolina Hurricanes sure did find the injury bug of late, with Glen Wesley, Rod Brind'Amour and Ray Whitney all missing time due to injured groins. On top of that winger Josef Vasicek is out indefinitely with a knee injury, defenseman Oleg Tverdovsky is out with post-concussion symptoms after taking a clearing puck to the noggin, Nic Wallin is recuperating from wrist surgery and Andrew Hutchinson has missed time with a hip flexor.

Heck, I think Rudolph might be out with a red bulb problem pretty soon if things keep going the way they've gone in the Hurricanes' training room. Trainer Pete Friesen needs to be filing for combat pay at this point, not to mention that my spell checker has gone nuts with all the European names in this paragraph.

So the Hurricanes went from nine straight wins to a three-game losing streak, but managed to retain their lead in the Southeast Division. When you think about the big picture, that's still a commendable start to the season, and now we're up past the quarter pole on the season and things are looking pretty good. Not to mention that the depth of the Canes roster is now getting a chance to stretch its legs a bit after not seeing much action early on in the season. Guys like Andrew Hutchinson, Andrew Ladd, Kevyn Adams, Nik Nordgren and Craig Adams were either in the minors, on the healthy scratch list or playing limited roles back in October and early November. Now they're getting a chance to show what they can do with some additional responsibility on the ice, which will bode well for the long run.

Unexpected Contributions

Speaking of Andrew Ladd and Craig Adams, it's been nice to see those two guys step up to the NHL roster and contribute right away. For Ladd, it looked like a training camp injury had pretty much punched his ticket for a nice long development stint in the AHL. Instead, Carolina's injury problems allowed him the opportunity to play meaningful minutes with the big club much earlier than expected and he made a positive impression until himself being bitten by the injury bug. His physical presence and eagerness to mix it up along the boards helped take the sting from Vasicek's absence.

Craig Adams started the year in the Mighty Ducks' system, so to say that his return to the

Hurricanes roster is unexpected might be an understatement. Watching Adams fly around out there throwing his body around has been fun. Not only that, but he's given a boost of energy to a team that needed one as the injuries and the pace of the schedule began to pick up in November. I understand that Adams is now carrying a British passport (thanks to his parents' citizenship and his year spent in European hockey), so perhaps it's even more unexpected to see such a proper British gentleman throwing body checks in the NHL.

Shocking Player Movement

Around the NHL, we can now see pretty clearly how the new salary cap is influencing teams to make moves that we otherwise wouldn't expect. Anaheim started the ball rolling by shipping Sergei Federov to Columbus for a couple of supporting cast kind of players in order to give the Mighty Ducks some payroll flexibility. Then the Boston Bruins sent Captain and franchise building block Joe Thornton to San Jose for defenseman Brad Stuart and forwards Wayne Primeau and Marco Sturm. Now Stuart and Sturm are valuable young players and Primeau is an effective checking forward, but this move wasn't about anything other than how much of their cap room Boston was willing to tie up on one player. That's two moves that just wouldn't have happened prior to the salary cap era, and they aren't going to be the last.

There are several other teams (paging Atlanta, Tampa Bay and New Jersey) that are playing it pretty close to the cap ceiling. In fact the Lightning front office is engaged in almost daily roster moves between the NHL club and their AHL affiliate to shave nickels off of their daily cap number. There's more of this mind-blowing player movement to come, and it's not going to wait until trade deadline day either.

Christmas Wishes

Since this is the December edition of the Newsletter, allow me to pass on my best wishes for a Merry Christmas to all of you in the Hurricanes Booster Club. As NHL hockey fans of one degree or another, we're all sort of enjoying the early Christmas present that is the 2005-06 season, but life is about more than just hockey. I wish for you all an opportunity to slow down and appreciate the special time that is the Christmas season. God bless you, every one.

What's your favorite Ron Francis memory?

My favorite Ron Francis memory was at the 1999 Booster Club Holiday Party. For those that know me, this is the "stalker story."

My wife and my daughter and a lot of members I knew were at the table. None of us hockey fans could speak a word to the great Ron Francis because we were all in awe, but my wife (who was not a hockey fan) started a conversation with him about Pittsburgh and talked of my obsession for the sport. Ron Francis then looks right at me and says, "Are you stalking me, boy?" The table filled with laughter thanks to my wife breaking the ice, but I never truly knew if Ronnie was joking or if he was serious.

From that day on, asking Ron Francis for an occasional autograph was awkward to say the least. Ronnie was sick as a dog that day and probably had the flu. We could tell that he was not feeling well enough to stick around for too long. Prior to leaving, he made sure to check with everyone to make sure we got a group picture with him. It was a classy move that, in my mind, was the definition of who Ron Francis is: a class act all the way.

My favorite on-ice memory occurred while Ron Francis was in Pittsburgh playing with the Penguins. In a game against the Flyers in 1998, Ron scored his 1,000th assist. The game was special because it would be one of my last in Pittsburgh before moving to the Triangle and it was my daughter, Isabelle's first hockey game with me. Ron Francis signed with the Hurricanes that summer and this is the reason I became a Hurricanes fan.

John Gallagher

My favorite Ron Francis memory is also, in my opinion, Ron Francis' greatest moment as a Hurricane and, for that matter, the greatest moment (so far!) in Hurricanes history.

In Game 1 of the 2002 Stanley Cup finals versus heavily-favored Detroit, less than a minute into overtime, Ron Francis finds himself alone in front of the net, accepts the perfect feed from Jeff O'Neill in the right corner and chips in the winning goal over Dominik Hasek's shoulder. For a man who so often provided the perfect assist so that someone else could get the glory of the goal, it was fitting for gentleman Francis to have his turn at that defining moment.

Stephen Thompson

Ron Francis' overtime goal in Game 1 of the 2002 Stanley Cup Finals was obviously the greatest

moment in the history of the franchise's (and maybe that of "The Franchise" as well). We have a house full of pictures, but that photo – Francis flipping a pass from Jeff O'Neill over Hasek's shoulder – is the only photo we have TWO of. Both of them are large 16 x 20 shots, both signed by Ronnie. One's in my son's bedroom and one's in our basement.

But my personal favorite memory of Ron Francis is from a couple of years earlier. The Captain auctioned off his personal suite at a Kids 'n Community Foundation event in what was then known as the ESA for a game against the New York Rangers. We invited a dozen friends and loaded the suite up with food and had a wonderful night – except for the fact that Ronnie wasn't having his best game, and the Rangers' Mike Richter (at the time my younger son Addison's favorite player) was stoning the Hurricanes.

With help from our good friend Peggy Sue Hawkins, we had hoped to meet Ronnie after the game. But we were thinking he probably wouldn't be in a very good mood as poorly as the team played. Late in the third period, though, Ronnie scored a goal – it didn't help the cause that much, but we thought it might bode well for a meeting with him.

After the game, we went down near the players' exit and waited. Finally, Ronnie showed up – and was as gracious as he could be, meeting and greeting everyone in our party, signing autographs and posing for pictures. His wife was there, too, wanting to make sure we had everything we needed in the suite.

I think anyone who ever had any contact with Ron Francis knew that he exuded class. That's what I'll remember most.

Bill Horner III

Meeting the team at the airport after they won the Conference Trophy was unforgettable. Ronnie and Rod carried the trophy down the stairs from the plane and up to the fence to show the fans waiting behind, waving flags, cheering like crazy, and shouting "Let's Go Canes." Ron showed class before, after, and wayyyyyy after game time.

Ginny Paisie

CanePoll:

How many points will Eric Staal score this season?

Average result: 107 points
(Staal is on track to score 115)

Fighting Still a Has a Place in the New NHL

Even if you've never seen a hockey game, you've likely heard the one-liner about the fellow who went to the fights one night – only to have a hockey game break out.

Fighting, to a degree, is inherent in hockey. Mix that kind of speed and hockey's physical play in a contained area and you'll have, from time to time, the inevitable result of fisticuffs.

I'm not saying fighting's a good thing, something to be done for entertainment's sake. But in hockey, it's a necessary thing.

A casual observer might have the mistaken impression that fighting is encouraged in the National Hockey League. Hockey, for example, is the only sport where hits – many of which happen away from the puck – make up a statistical category. It's also the only sport where teams employ "enforcers," players who earn their keep by being tough guys. But fighting these days is just about as common as the word that used to describe those combatants: "goons."

In the "modern" National Hockey League – with its rule changes and new emphasis on skill – enforcers are now required to be more well-rounded. If they can skate and occasionally score, enforcers have a much better shot of staying with a team. Gone, for example, this season from the NHL are two of the leading sluggers from the 2003-2004 season, Krzysztof Oliwa (waived by New Jersey three games into the season) and Peter Worrell (playing in the minors after not sticking with the Avalanche). Donald Brashear has but 40-some penalty minutes after 30 games and even Tie Domi actually said "no" to a fight earlier this season.

And our own Jesse Boulerice? He had 127 penalty minutes in 76 games for the Hurricanes two years ago, but he's been a healthy scratch almost as much as he's played this year – and is on track to only play in about 50 games.

Still, Jesse's battle with Ottawa's Brian McGrattan earlier this year was one for the ages, and at least two of his five fights since the beginning of the season have been the catalyst for a come-from-behind win. (McGrattan, by the way, has 10 tilts already this season, leading the league.)



Pictured above: Jesse Boulerice is contained after protecting one of his own.

My first hockey experience – a Raleigh Ice Caps game back in 1995 – featured lots of fighting. What I remember most from that night were the three all-out brawls, two of which ended up with the ice crew coming out to literally scrape the blood off the playing surface; one player was taken off the ice on a stretcher en route to a hospital.

It's never quite been like that in the NHL, but even so,

fights continue to decline – down even further this year thanks to rule changes and the emphasis on skill players. You'd probably have to go to three or four games to see even one fight. Twenty years ago you'd see at least one, if not two, good brawls a game.

So why say fighting is necessary? It's a bit of a paradox. I'd compare it to fire fighters who start controlled burning to contain a forest fire, or milking a rattlesnake for its venom to treat snake bites. What makes fighting in the National Hockey League tenable is not what fighting provides, but what it prevents.

Quite simply, fighting is tolerated because if it weren't, we'd see more cheap hits and deliberate attempts to injure players.

Times have changed since the old days of bench-clearing brawls. The league continues to toughen its stance on fighting, but it won't ever go away. Skill players are more valuable than ever, but there's still room on the roster for a Jesse Boulerice, who has shown some offensive flair from time to time to go along with his toughness. A good fight can change the course of a game, and injury rarely results. In all the games I've been to, I never seen an injury from fighting, save a busted knuckle or bruised pride.

Some friends who know my family and I attend many Hurricanes games wonder how we justify "all the fights."

I usually ask, "What fights?" In more than 120 Canes' games I've attended since 1998, I've seen only about two dozen fights. And none resulted in injury or fine or suspension.

But when a team needs a pick-me-up, or the game gets chippy, it's the perfect – and appropriate – antidote.

Frozen Pond, the undisputed leader in the Autographed Hockey Memorabilia

If you are seeking a unique and customizable gift with a hockey superstar's signature this holiday season for the hockey fanatic in your life, look no further than the internet at www.frozenpond.com. Frozen Pond is a hockey memorabilia store located in Ontario, Canada. They offer the largest collection of signed collectibles from over 300 past and present NHL stars, including over 100 Hall of Famers. Among the big names are current superstars such as **Sidney Crosby** and **Alexander Ovechkin** to Hall of Famers of hockey's rich past including **Gordie Howe** and **Bobby Orr**.

I am a frequent customer of the establishment and I had a unique opportunity to exchange e-mails with Frozen Pond's owner, Hersh Borenstein.

Mr. Borenstein started out as a collector of hockey cards and evolved that passion to the next level in establishing Frozen Pond. Frozen Pond has earned their reputation as THE most trusted autograph outlet in the hockey world. They are an official merchandise partner of the NHL.

"The NHL came to us and asked us to join their family. It wasn't the other way around. They told me that they had been following our progress for a number of years and wanted us under the NHL umbrella." Said Borenstein. "Our customers know that when they buy an autograph from Frozen Pond, there is never any question as to its authenticity."

Frozen Pond's relationship with the NHL gives them table space at sanctioned events such as the NHL Entry Draft, All-Star Game, and the NHL Awards. Sean Riley, an Account Executive for Frozen Pond, was at the 2004 NHL Draft here in Raleigh showcasing several autographed photos.

The store has an impressive resume of hockey stars that have signed everything from pucks, photos, sticks, and jerseys. The process of getting them in the door is not always an easy one.

"When I am interested in a current player, I first call the NHLPA to find out who his agent is. Then I track him down and make an offer for an in-store appearance." Said Hersh. "We are always very fair with our offers, so we are usually successful."

Upcoming signings at Frozen Pond:

Kyle Wellwood (Leafs) – Sunday, January 15th
Eric Staal (Hurricanes) – Thursday, January 26th
Jeff O'Neill (Leafs) – Sunday, February 5th
Tomas Kaberle (Leafs) – Sunday, February 12th
Frank Mahovlich (Leafs HOF) – Saturday, February 18th

Sometimes players do not want to make a public appearance, so we get them to sign some stuff for us privately."

The top seller at Frozen Pond is not a premier autographed item, but it is the Don Cherry DVD's. Owning four volumes myself and considering the store location, it is easy to see why that is the case.

When it comes to the memorabilia in demand today, Hersh gave me some interesting current and former NHL superstars. The top five most requested current NHL players are **Rick Nash, Sidney Crosby, Alexander Ovechkin, Vinnie Lecavalier, and Joe Thornton**. It is important to note that Frozen Pond has an exclusive line of Rick Nash products. Among the retired players, Hersh lists **Patrick Roy, Gordie Howe, Bobby Orr, Rocket Richard, and Tony Esposito**.

Like many businesses that rely on the NHL, the lockout impacted the sales of signed memorabilia.

"The lockout prevented new rookies and superstars from emerging. There were no Eric Staal's or Jason Spezza's evolving into bona fide stars and no Crosby's or Ovechkin's to spur sales." Said Hersh. "We had to make our own market, which was an interesting experience."

The lockout did have a positive for the store because New Jersey Devils goaltender, **Martin Brodeur**, appeared in February 2005. Starved hockey fans started lining up nine hours before his scheduled appearance time. Over 1,000 people stood in line for 2.5 hours on average and Brodeur stayed for almost six hours greeting each person, posing for photos, and inscribed whatever fans wanted on their items. By evening's end, Brodeur had signed over 1,300 items.

(Continued on page 7)

Collector's Corner continued

"It was one of the benefits of the lockout – we normally would not have had a player of his caliber appear if there was a hockey season going on." Said Hersh.

The majority of the autographs at Frozen Pond are reasonably priced, especially if you purchase at the time of a public or private signing. For example, a signed puck or 8x10 photo of Hall of Famer Cam Neely would cost about \$49.00 in US dollars. Not many other sports would have recent Hall of Famers at a price like that. The prices are based mainly on the appearance fee and the demand for a particular autograph guest. For example, if the appearance fee for a player is \$10,000 and Frozen Pond knows they can attract 500 customers, their cost would be about \$20 per autograph and they would then sell to the public at \$25-\$30. It took a long time for Frozen Pond to get the customer base to have such a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

When purchasing from Frozen Pond, you receive a certificate of authenticity for your item. Your item will also have a foil embossed sticker attached to leave no question of its authenticity.

One thing I asked Hersh about was the differences in the buying habits of Americans vs. Canadians. In overall dollars, there is no noticeable difference suggesting that there are some people in the US that are just as passionate about collecting for the sport of hockey as there are in Canada. US fans tend to purchase more signed pucks while Canadian fans are more partial to signed photos.

"Americans probably correlate pucks to baseballs, which is the most-collected baseball item." Said Hersh.

As a huge collector of both pucks and photos, you can't go wrong buying either one. The one recommendation I would make is that if you are buying from a signing, have the player personalize the item to you. It makes the memorabilia that much special to you. The guys at Frozen Pond are a little familiar with, "To Southside Johnny, Stay cool dude," which is my normal request for having items signed.

While I have been a collector of hockey memorabilia for about 10 years, I always value the opinion of those in the business. He recommends staying away from the internet for signed memorabilia because

there are a lot of fraudulent signatures from dealers looking to make a fast buck.

"Either get the items yourself (in person), or buy through a reputable company, such as Frozen Pond." Said Hersh. "We are the only hockey autograph company that is endorsed by the NHL."

Even the Hurricanes have a presence with Frozen Pond thanks to a private Eric Staal signing scheduled for February. Because Staal's agents prefer not to have their young players doing public autograph sessions during the season, the Frozen Pond team will have to meet the Carolina star in Montreal.

"I'm sure Staal will be quite popular, especially if he's still in the scoring leaders at the end of January." Said Hersh.

If you're a fan of *Slap Shot*, the greatest hockey movie ever made, Frozen Pond has a spectacular selection of signed and unsigned movie memorabilia. Hersh was once the agent for the famous Hanson Brothers.

"We created and manufactured the first Charlestown Chiefs jerseys ever to hit the market." Said Hersh. "Now we're friends with a bunch of the characters – Denis Lemieux, Killer Carlson, Hanrahan, etc. All the guys were either hockey players or bit actors that knew how to skate. They're good guys."

One of the best reasons for doing business with Frozen Pond is the *Pond Chronicle*, their official merchandise catalog. What started as a labor of love for Hersh turned into a full-time job quickly. It takes about two months to complete the catalog so it is easy to see why Frozen Pond only does the catalog on an annual basis.

"I don't go out for two months. I don't speak to my friends, and I'm very agitated at work. It's not as simple as listing products – I have to create the vast majority of merchandise that is listed in the *Pond Chronicle*. I have to put together all the autograph sessions, I have to hire photographers to come up with images, I have to get the companies to custom make pucks and jerseys for us." States Hersh about the grueling publishing process.

If you are traveling to Toronto, visit the store. For me, it was almost as good as the Hockey Hall of Fame. You will not be disappointed.

Upcoming Events:

Sunday, January 15th Holiday Party

after the St. Louis game
RBC Center Arena Club

Cost of Admission: \$28.00

Note: Advanced reservations must be made by **Saturday, December 31st**. Stop by the CHBC Booth for further information.

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Dear Members of the Carolina Hurricanes Booster Club:

December 4th and 5th, 2004 was a weekend we will never forget. This is the weekend when members of the CHBC descended en masse on the Build-A-Bear Workshop at Crabtree Valley Mall in Raleigh, NC. We took over the establishment with our great numbers and sheer exuberance and we completed our mission: to build 140 bears for the young patients at the NC Children's Hospital. In fact, we exceeded our own expectations thanks to the generous contributions of time and talent by many. The final tally was 178 bears! Woo-hoo! We had enough to actually make a small delivery to Wake Med and their children's ward.

Everyone involved will tell you it was an amazing and rewarding endeavor and we're doing it again! On Saturday, February 11th 2006, from 10 am to 12 noon, the CHBC will meet at Build-A-Bear at Crabtree Valley Mall in Raleigh, NC where we will attempt to build another 140 bears to deliver to the NC Children's Hospital that afternoon. However, we need a lot of help both in volunteers and donations. For a mere \$20, anyone can build a cuddly bear, dress it, and make a child smile. These kids are sitting in this hospital, alone, afraid and fighting for their lives. If we can make their days just a little bit brighter or their nights just a little less scary, then we have accomplished something.

Due to pricing, we can only have two or three specific bears and a handful of outfits to choose from. The more money we bring in, the more variety we will have. And for anyone who joined us last year, you know the possibilities are limitless. So we are asking our membership to take this form from your newsletter, make as many copies as you can and hand them out to your friends, neighbors, co-workers, family members...anyone standing still. It's the least we can do to make these kids smile.

Thanks.

Annette Hutchens

CHBC Board Member