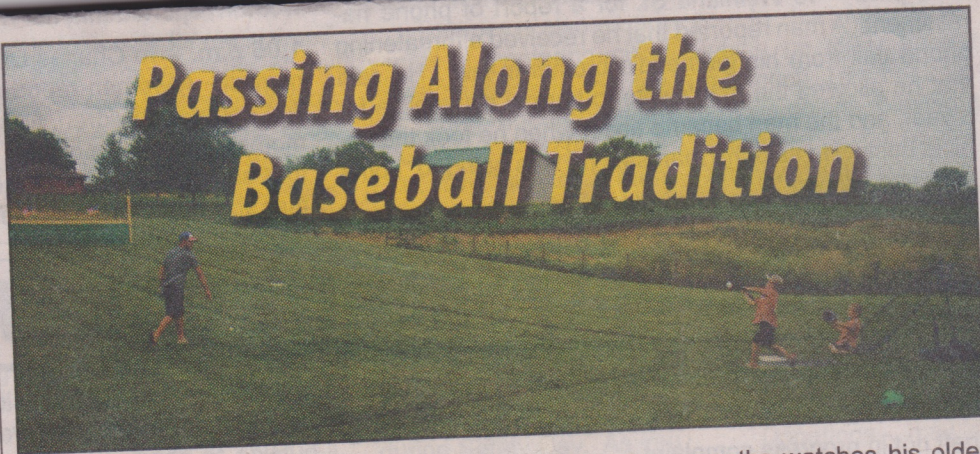


Passing Along the Baseball Tradition



BY SARAH ANNE CARTER

If you build it, they will play.

That is the reasoning of one father in New Carlisle who now has a baseball field in his front yard.

"They're only young once," said Brad Olinger.

Drivers on New Carlisle Pike will pass by his house and see not only a baseball field in his front yard, but green fence around the field adorned with American flags and lit up at night with three spotlights.

Olinger grew up in the house he now lives in and played baseball in the very same spot where his three sons now play.

"When I lived here, we marked the base lines with the mower," he said. "Home plate is still where it's at when I was a kid."

Olinger remembers

the field getting put in for the first time when he was about in middle school. His sisters and friends thought they needed a baseball field, looked at their flat yard and decided to mow the lines and put bases in. It has been a highlight of family gatherings every since.

Olinger played baseball at South High School and walked on to play at Wright State University for three years as a shortstop and 2nd baseman. His two sisters played softball in high school and the playing tradition spreads on through his cousins, too.

"Our boys are always out their playing," he said. "They love the game."

Two of Olinger's sons, ages 6 and 4, now play T-ball and his youngest at 18

months watches his older brothers and hits a ball off a tee. The boys wanted a fence added to their home baseball field.

"At first, I thought, 'I'm not putting a fence in the front yard,'" Olinger said. Then, when he acquiesced, he thought of just putting up a temporary fence to take down in the winter. However, his extended family had other plans.

"They thought it was a great idea," he said. "If you're going to do it, let's do it. They all came out and helped paint it."

So, the fence got painted green and Olinger's mother bought the American flags to line the top. They also bought house numbers to put the footage on the fence.

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