

Two Harbors Entrepreneur Acquires the newly renamed Pineville Porcupines

Former Agate and part-time Two Harbors resident Eric Fransen acquired a stake in the newly renamed Pineville Porcupines of the Old North State Baseball League.

By Julie Borshak

(Ramseur, NC) The Old North State Baseball League (ONSL) Announces that an entrepreneur, Eric Fransen, has acquired an Interest in the Pineville Porcupines, formerly known as the Mecklenburg Muscadines, based in Pineville, NC.

Eric Fransen owns Klik Marketing which is a North Carolina-based boutique digital marketing company that serves national clients and fulfills their needs through creative, analytics, and marketing. Klik Marketing also has a strong Two Harbors presence. Fransen, a former baseball player for the University of Minnesota-Duluth also spent summers playing for the Duluth Express. Fransen stated, "What the Allred Family has built with the ONSL is incredible. In a short period of time they have built up a 15-team league that covers the state of North Carolina. I'm so humbled to have the opportunity to be part of it."

President and CEO of the Old North State League, Alec Allred, touted the new partnership, "The Old North State League is very excited to welcome Eric Fransen as member of the Ownership group that operates the Pineville Porcupines. Eric is going to do an outstanding job as the GM and we are all confident with the partnership of Eric Fransen and Ballred LLC, that the Porcupines are going to take the Collegiate Summer Baseball Landscape by storm!"

Kyle Confer, Ballred Sports, LLC, COO added, "Ballred LLC is very excited to partner with Eric Fransen going forward in Pineville. In our preliminary discussions, Eric shared his incredible vision for the Porcupines and for the Pineville community. We are extremely confident that Eric, as the Operating Partner and GM, will establish the Porcupines as a highly successful franchise in the Old North State League!"

The ONSL Mecklenburg Muscadines were originally known as the Mocksville Muscadines in 2020 and 2021 before moving to Pineville in 2022 as the Mecklenburg Muscadines. Fransen explains, "At the end of last year we knew that we wanted to become Pineville's team not just in location, but also in name. To truly make it Pineville's team we wanted to give the people of Pineville an opportunity to choose a new name. The community came out of the woodwork to participate in online polling and the Pineville Porcupines were born."

The ONSL season runs from May to July. The Porcupines play at Jack D. Hughes Memorial Park which is located at 513 Main Street in downtown Pineville. The Old North State League consists of fifteen collegiate baseball teams in locations from the Appalachian Mountains to the Atlantic Coast.

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Jimmy's Pizza: The End of an Era

By Haley Searls

Amidst rumors of a possible sale, as of January 30, 2023, Jimmy's Pizza in Silver Bay remains under the ownership of the Roger Jacobson family, according to Jacobson's daughter, Alexis Jacobson.

Roger Jacobson owned and operated Jimmy's Pizza for seventeen years, until his tragic passing in December 2021 from cancer, seven months after his first diagnosis. Alexis Jacobson says, "He worked tirelessly to run his business during a time when staffing shortages are in abundance." After his passing, Jimmy's Pizza was left to his family. In September 2022, it was determined that the doors would close.

The building was listed for sale, and remains actively listed on multiple realtor sites. At this time, it remains under the ownership of the Jacobson family.

In the case of the building finalizing a sale, the seller is unable to share the identity and purpose of the purchaser.

My condolences to the Jacobson family during this time. I have fond memories of Jimmy's Pizza from my childhood - delicious calzones, chicken alfredo pizza, using the little white plastic stands in the pizza boxes for dollhouse furniture, and my fascination with the little railing running as trim along the ceiling.

The Long Way Home

By Steve Fernlund

There are six words that make me gnash my teeth in frustration and despair. They usually follow a question like, why are you/we doing this?

We've Always Done It This Way.

That sentence is uttered by people in organizations of all kinds. From small businesses to multi-billion dollar corporations. From schools to churches. From homeowner associations to city and county government.

It drives me nuts. No matter what group I've been involved with I've challenged those six words with a couple of other questions. What would happen if we didn't do this anymore? Is there a better way to do it? Who benefits from continuing to do it this way? Who would benefit if we stop?

A brief story from early in my executive career as I neared the high end of the corporate ladder at Twin Modal.

My company arranged freight transportation as a federally licensed broker. I explained to people who asked that it was like being a travel agent for truckload freight shipments. We put companies that needed to ship their products together with carriers that could most efficiently move them. They call it third-party logistics now, mostly because the word broker has negative connotations. But I digress.

In the 1980s, before email and when PDF meant, well nothing, my company used paper invoices for each shipment arranged.

As a fast-growing company, it was important that we be very efficient at managing the financial side of our business, especially cash flow and record keeping. Our lead accounting guy, who did that quite well, instituted a policy that had our billing people collect a delivery receipt, or proof of delivery (POD), for each shipment and

attach it to corresponding invoices we then mailed out.

Some customers, not all, required that proof before they'd pay--mostly to delay payment of freight charges as they managed their own cash flow. Others just tossed out the extra paperwork before processing a payment.

In those days we had a part-time employee, the sister of one of our accounting staff. She was a bright young woman working to help pay for medical school. Her job was to make copies of those PODs to mail with outgoing invoices. You'd often find her spending the better part of an afternoon in the copier room making and collating copies and stuffing envelopes.

One day I walked into the copier room to see her performing these tasks. I asked, "Do you know **why** you're doing this?" And she answered in a way that sets my teeth gnashing, "Because they told me to do it this way when I started."

So I did two things. First I explained **why** our policy of sending PODs to every customer came about. Every person in every organization should know the **why** of what they do. Second I asked her what she thought would happen if we didn't make and send all these copies.

Naturally, she didn't know. Frankly neither did I.

But it seemed to me we were using an excessive amount of paper, postage, and time to send invoices and backup documents to our customers. I thought we could stop doing it and get our invoices out to customers as much as 14 days earlier than we were doing--speeding up cash flow. We would also save on paper and postage.

While I wasn't quite a god at Twin Modal, more like a drunken high priest, my word did carry some weight. With the collaboration of the entire management team, from sales to operations to accounting, we stopped automatically sending PODs with our invoices. Turned out that only a few customers needed PODs so we managed for those exceptions.

We've always done it this way is never the right answer.

Steve Fernlund is a retired business owner, living in Cook County.
He was publisher and editor of the Cook County News Herald in the 90's.
Got a good Cook County story for him? Let us know.
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