

Hamby ...from Page 1A

learned that the very same manager had been transferred to head up another camp.

During the break, however, Hamby had applied for a number of positions back home to earn money in the off-season.

One of the positions he'd put in for was with the Georgia Department of Transportation, which ended up doing a better job of recruiting him than professional baseball.

"They'd wired me three times, and on the last time, they said, 'Are you going to come work with us, or are you going to play ball?'" said Hamby.

"Well, my daddy called me up, and he said, 'Son, you're making \$200 a month up there playing ball, and I know you've got some expenses.'

"And he said, 'You can come on home and go to work with the Department of Transportation for \$150 a month, and you'll have benefits.' Well, I thought about it, and I still had about three weeks to play with before I made up my mind.

"I'd just had such bad luck in baseball with communication, so it was just like it wasn't meant for me to do it. So, I come on back

home, went to work with them, worked more than 30 years and retired.

"Now, I've got a good retirement, and it's really helped me, since I've got a lot of ailments. But there's always that 'if' – always. And that's donned on my mind lots of times, always that 'if.'"

After returning home to work as a GDOT engineer, he married his wife JoAnn, now of 56 years, in September 1962, and they went on to have two children, Royce and Teresa.

He kept up with baseball as a hobby in the late '50s and into the '60s, playing for town baseball teams in Blairsville, Hiawassee and elsewhere. He even played alongside his friend Zell Miller on the Young Harris team.

In 1967, Hamby began his long association with youth baseball, coaching local Dixie Youth teams through 1980 to become the winningest youth baseball coach in the history of the county.

Hamby also umpired all the years he coached and beyond, into the early 2000s, both for youth baseball and for Northeast Georgia high schools as a member of the Georgia High School Association of Baseball Umpires.

He was the first umpire in Dixie Youth Baseball history to be selected to officiate games in the Dixie Youth Boys and Majors World Series – an honor historically reserved for host town umpires – in Rock Hill, South Carolina, in 1987.



A picture of the Young Harris Town Baseball Team, likely taken in the early 1960s.

For many years, he championed youth sports as a member of the Union County Recreation Board, and in 1997, Hamby was honored locally with a baseball field named for him in Meeks Park.

It was a fitting tribute to a man who had served as a mentor to younger generations for most of his adult life, fostering excellence in an untold number of youth ballplayers.

Shortly after he retired from his long career with GDOT in 1989, Hamby opened his regionally renowned Owltown Baseball Card Shop.

His friend Doyle Wade knew he had a large collection of baseball cards, and he "kept hounding" Hamby until he agreed to start up a shop.

"He found this place," said Hamby of the small building. "He stayed two weeks and left – couldn't handle it – and I didn't know whether I could survive with it myself or

not, but I tried it and did."

At first, it was hard for Hamby to let go of some of his cards. He'd been a lifelong collector, after all, and a collector's instinct is to hold onto his collection.

"Naturally, if I didn't want to sell them, that's what people would ask for," said Hamby. "So, I said, well, I've got to quit lying about it and telling them I didn't have it.

"I might not have put it out in the showcase, but I'd just say, 'If you don't see it in there, ask about it, and if I've got it, I'll dig it out.' So, I put everything I had up for sale.

"Phil Niekro, I had his rookie card, and I really didn't want to part with it, for he was one of my favorites ... I ended up selling it, but I didn't want to. For two or three years, I just wouldn't sell it."

He's got other Phil Niekro cards, of course, in his shop that houses over a million

baseball cards. Alongside all those baseball cards, he sells basketball, football, racing, soccer and hockey trading cards as well, plus coins, books and comic books.

There's also plenty of entertaining conversation to offer, though that's always free, and anybody who's anybody knows that nobody tells a story, baseball or otherwise, like Glenn Hamby.

Fortunately for everybody, Hamby can be found at his shop most days of the week. Just keep an eye out for his truck parked outside, Wednesday through Saturday.

And many years from now, when Hamby has spent his final day on earth, he said he's looking forward to taking on the ultimate job in baseball.

"I've asked the Lord several times that I hope he's got a team that I could coach if I get up there," said Hamby.



Glenn Hamby's Owltown Baseball Card Shop is located at the corner of Lower Owltown Road and Gainesville Highway, about three miles south of Blairsville. Photo by Shawn Jarrard



Dixie Majors, Blairsville 13 and 14-year-olds, in the late '70s. Standing L-R: Coach Glenn Hamby, Allan Forster, Randy Harper, Larry Potete, Randy Brown, Steve Mosley, Scott Cone, Tom Rhoten, Joe Collins and Coach Ray Rhoten. Middle Row L-R: Terry Young, Jeff Griffin, Chris Dyer, Jody Payne, Louis Tally, Terry Potete and Mike Parker. Mike Hemphill Not Shown. Bottom Row L-R, Bat Girls: Lisa Plott, Tracy Hamby and Avis Shaw.

Science Fair ...from Page 1A



The March 26 Fair was the first of its kind in Elementary School history.

And each student received a coupon that they could use at any time, in math or science only, to raise their lowest grade to 100.

The fourth grade was also rewarded with extra recess time for having the highest attendance of any grade at the Elementary School.

Teachers came up with the activities and experiments for the event, and nearly all of them were hands-on, allowing the students to participate.

Each grade put on three activities and the STEM teacher provided four activities.

"This was one of the best events that we've ever put on," Family Engagement Coordinator Becky Dyer said. "We're going to build on it and make it even bigger and better next year.

"Hopefully, we'll be able to hold it at a bigger location with more space, but everything next year will be all new and completely different from this year."

Despite drawing more than 25 percent of the student body and putting nearly 400 people into the cafeteria, the school hopes to improve on its Family Math and Science Fair in 2020.



Approximately 170 students and their families attended the inaugural Math and Science Fair.