

## Buckeye South Field to Become Chaney Field

By Cathy Tyson



Matt Chaney

Photo Cathy Tyson

Both the Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission and the Lafayette City Council unanimously approved naming the South Field at Buckeye Fields, “Chaney Field” for dedicated volunteer, Matt Chaney.

More than thirty glowing letters of support were submitted suggesting the name change, which was proposed by Lafayette Little League President Jon Ewing.

Chaney has volunteered for the Lafayette Moraga Youth Association Board and the Lafayette Little League Board. He also served as the Safety and Fields Manager and Groundskeeper for the Lafayette Little League and has volunteered at Burton Valley Elementary and at Stanley Middle School and put in a significant amount of time for soccer and rugby teams as well. Finally he has led weekly sing-alongs for Mulberry Tree preschoolers and is a leading fundraiser for ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis).

“I moved to Lafayette in 1998, and by the start of the 1999 season, I was shanghaied/coerced to participate as a Little League Board Member. At the time they were looking for a Safety Officer, dealing with ice packs and first aid, but it turned out to be a lot more. It kind of snowballed from there. I was on the Board from 1999 to 2004,” reflects Chaney on his service.

He continued, “I was diagnosed with ALS – Lou Gehrig’s disease -- at the end of 2000. It’s a neurodegenerative disease, now I have impairment in my upper extremities: my arms, shoulders, head and facial muscles. By 2004 it got to the point where I had done my time on the Boards and should allow some other lucky parent to have all the fun I was having.”

“It became more and more difficult to drive the tractor and keep up with e-mail. I just decided to move on. I had to give up coaching as well. I was unable to do the demonstrating,” he said referring to hand and arm movements necessary for the game.

He was genuinely surprised at the honor and said as much while

he was being photographed.

As noted above, there were many letters of support, here is just a small sampling:

“His sound commitment to this community, his family, children and friends is inspirational to us all,” noted Jon Ewing, President of the Lafayette Little League.

Jan Askin, Principal of Burton Valley Elementary, in her support letter said, “He promoted sportsmanship and fair play. His value as a role model is inestimable.”

Brian Griggs, Chairman of the ALS Association, Greater Bay Area Chapter, noted that he and Chaney served together as coaches, managers and Board Members of Lafayette Little League. “Matt and I shared the conviction that the league should be for children of all ages and abilities and through Matt’s involvement and leadership, the program’s success has continued to escalate.”

“I grew up in Lafayette, and though I know there have been hundreds of wonderful volunteers in this City, I know of no one who has affected the lives of so many people, adults and children alike as Matt,” said long-time friend and fraternity brother at Cal, Robert Gonser.

