

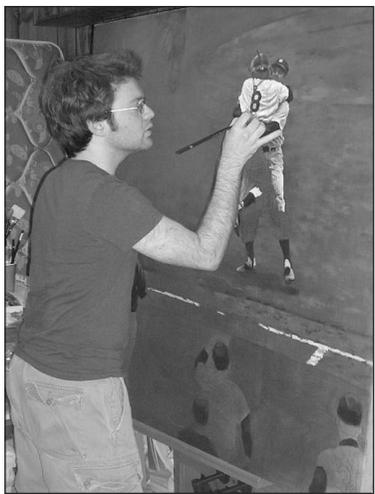
Family memories inspire baseball artist

by Ron Kaplan
NJJN Staff Writer

Fortunately for Graig Kreindler, his grandmother did not follow the cliché of tossing out his dad's baseball card collection. If she had, he might never have developed a love for the game that turned into a career as a highly-sought-after sports artist.

While other kids were mad for Mantle or cooing over Koufax, the 27-year-old painter preferred the likes of obscure Yankees such as Matt Nokes and Dan Pasqua. "I really loved the photographs on their cards," Kreindler said during a telephone interview. Those photos became the inspiration behind his work.

Kreindler, who was named by his father after Graig Nettles, the Yankees' all-star third baseman (1973-83), is hard at work on his latest project: a four-foot-square rendering in oil of Don Larsen leaping into the arms of catcher Yogi Berra upon the completion of the only perfect game in World Series history. The painting will be displayed at the Yogi Berra Museum and Education Center in Little Falls after major renovations are completed next year.



Portrait of the artist as an artist: Graig Kreindler works on his painting of Don Larsen's perfect game in the 1956 World Series for the Yogi Berra Museum. Photos courtesy Graig Kreindler

Kreindler said he would be embarrassed to think of the legends he has painted — such as Ted Williams and Joe DiMaggio — looking at his work. "I never feel like it does them justice. Maybe that's in my mind; it's just a perfectionist thing." He takes equal measures of pride and horror in his methods: He's been known to dis-

card drawings and start from scratch rather than try to make a fix.

"Baseball is so well documented visually," said Kreindler, who does a hefty amount of research to try to find the exact color to match a scoreboard advertisement or team uniform patch. His goal is "obviously to make it accurate to whatever reality I'm recreating, but with each subject it changes; some subjects are easier than others."

For those who saw Larsen pitch his perfect game and Berra's jump into his arms, said Kreindler, "hopefully the painting is a reminder of that, and it brings them back to the days when they were at the ballpark with their father or grandfather."

Kreindler enjoys bringing those memories to life for today's fans. His own Grandpa Abe, a fan of the New York Giants, was the inspiration behind what he considers one of his favorite works: a portrait of Carl Hubbell. "I like the idea that 60, 70 years ago, he was a household name and the fact that he's somebody that someone like my grandfather saw — that's also very appealing to me."

Kreindler is currently in discussions with the Commack, NY-



Kreindler considers his rendition of Lou Gehrig's farewell address his favorite painting.

based National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame and Museum on a project related either to Sandy Koufax or Hank Greenberg." He has already done a painting of Koufax preparing to throw the final pitch of his 3-0 no-hitter against the Philadelphia Phillies in 1964. The artist became fascinated with the Hall of Fame lefty after graduating from the

School of Visual Arts in Manhattan, intrigued by Koufax's reputation as a recluse and his quiet heroism. "And, of course, the Jewish angle was also appealing to me."

To see Kreindler's artwork, visit www.GraigKreindler.com.

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Meet your...Modi'in Miracle



Jamie Aimar, 24, played at Clifflin University, where he hit a grand slam during his last at bat of his college career...wants to be a head coach at a college or university when he retires as an active player.

Audy Alcantara, 26, played for the Everett Aquasox of the Northwest League in 2003.

Matt Bennett, 26, signed with the Brockton Rox of the Can-Am League in

2004...pitched for the New South Wales Patriots championship team in the Claxton Shield, an annual Australian tournament.

Dan Drori, 22, played outfield at York University...possesses strong arm, which makes runners think twice about trying to take the extra base...baseball goals include representing Israel in the 2009 World Baseball Classic and having a successful first professional season.

Craig Eagle, 22, recently completed his senior season at Cal State East Bay...led Cal State East Bay in strikeouts (78 in 79 innings) and held opponents to a .239 BA in 2007...possesses a live fastball, cutter, slider, and changes speed effectively...will graduate from Cal State East Bay in the fall of 2007 with a degree in geography.

Oren Gal, 19, is a sure-handed middle infielder who has won several tournaments in elite level baseball in both Canada and the U.S....played on the York University varsity baseball team.

Adam "Woody" Harwood, 21, is a quick shortstop who just finished a four-year career playing at Pace University.

Adam Kopiec, 22, recently finished a four-year career at Wesleyan University...played three years of semipro ball for the San Diego Mavericks...has a powerful bat and good glove behind the plate...paternal grandparents survived nearly two years of internment at Auschwitz (a picture of his grandfather hangs at Yad Vashem, and a book chronicling his military experiences prior to his confinement at Auschwitz was published in May).



Aaron Levin, 21, was the first overall pick in the IBL Player Draft...a first/third baseman, he played college baseball at Cuesta Community College.

Moish Lewis, 21, is a hard working outfielder...has good range, solid arm, and will be one of the fastest players in the IBL...has played baseball in Israel since age 12 and competed in several tournaments in Europe

for the Israel national team.

Steve Litvack, 22, is a solid catcher with a great throwing arm.

Greg Marlett, 22, is a well-rounded outfielder whose love for the game has brought him halfway across the globe.

Moko Moanarooa, 17, is an outfielder/first baseman...his laid-back attitude and style can be quite deceptive to the opposition...been consistent with the bat the past two years while playing baseball in Sydney, Australia...won the 2006 batting title with a season average of .485.

Maximo Nelson, 25, pitched for the Gulf Coast League Yankees in 2004, posting a 6-5 record with a 2.63 ERA in 12 games.

Ian Okorofsky, 21, played high school baseball with fellow IBL players Dan Drori, Josh Matlow, and Dustin Melanson for Thornhill Secondary School, Ontario, where they were the 1-2-3-4 hitters in the lineup in 2003...posted an 8-0 record with a 0.00 ERA, earning team MVP honors...played past season for the Oshawa Dodgers of the Intercounty Baseball League.

Adalberto Paulino, 25, played six seasons in the San Francisco Giants' farm system, including the ARL Giants in 2002-03 and the Dominican Summer League Giants in 2000-01...batted .261 in 13 games in 2003 and .263 with one home run and 18 RBIs in 2002...best season was 2000 when he batted .293 with a career-high 77 hits.

Jonathan "Junior" Ramoo, 22, is a control pitcher who keeps batters off balance.

Eladio Rodriguez, 28, brings veteran

leadership behind the plate...played last seven years in the Boston Red Sox farm system.



Nate Rosenberg, 17, has been playing baseball in Israel for 10 years...a right-handed pitcher, has also shown great potential in a variety of infield positions.

Dan Saltzman, 34, will showcase his talents in the outfield, while providing leadership and strategy for the Miracle as a coach.

Rafi Stern, 18, has command of the strike zone and an ability to change speeds that makes him a valuable asset on the mound...has played on several Israeli national teams and was a two-time team captain, winning an award for best pitcher in a tournament in Trieste, Italy, in 2004.

Andre Sternberg, 22, pitched for Wesleyan University and was most successful at inducing ground balls with his variety of pitches with late movement...uses an outstanding curve and a change-up to set up his fastball late in the count.

Noah Walker, 22, is slick fielding second-baseman with good hands and a strong arm...recently graduated Middlebury College with the second-highest career batting average (.397) and second-most hits, while scoring more runs than any other player in school history; also tied for the all-time lead for the most doubles, triples, and walks...named 2007 NESAC Player of the Year.

Manager: Art Shamsky

Coaches: Tony Ferrara, Dan Saltzman (Player/Coach)