

RINGER ROUND-UP

AUGUST, 2012

EDITION 2-2012

B.C. HORSESHOE ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION



Two Hall Of Famers – Bob Timothy 1998 – Murray Rayner – 2001

EDITOR: Sam Tomasevic

**7987 Graham Ave,
Burnaby BC
V3N 1V8**

Website: www.bchorseshoe.com

Telephone: 604-525-2186

Email: samtom@telus.net

The following information can be found on the BCHA website but I thought it would be a good idea to tell you about the two gentlemen show on our front cover. Both are BCHA Hall of Fame members, not to mention in the past they have either won or battles to win the Provincial Championships.

BOB TIMOTHY

Provincial Champion 1974 (57.2%), Runner-up in 1976, 1977 and 1978, finished third in 1971, 1973 and 1980.

B.C. International Men's "A" Champion 1976 (63.1%), finished 3rd in 1978

Three time Island Men's "A" Champion - 1971, 1972 and 1978

Bob finished 2nd in the Men's "A" championship class at the 1976 Canadian Championships (62.1%), not to mention numerous local tournaments which Bob captured

Bob also helped organize many clubs on the Island and has been involved in horseshoes for many years.

Murray was born September 17, 1929 in Saskatchewan, the exact city is not known, but we know it was around the Morse area.

Murray moved from Saskatchewan to Vernon, B.C. in January 1949, at the age of 19. After that Murray moved to Youbou in 1951 and currently lives in Nanaimo.

MURRAY RAYNER

Murray started playing horseshoes at an early age. His father would re-shoe their horses and the OLD shoes would be out into use for the "Horseshoe Games". All the family, 5 brothers and 6 sisters have all played the game at one time or another and even now, at any gathering you will hear the clang of shoes as another game is played with all the family, the children, the nieces and nephews, the grandchildren and the neighbors participating.

B.C. Mens Provincial Champion 1967 (56.5%), 2nd in 1968 (62.5% at that time set the record for the highest % at the BC Champs), 1st 1969 (54.8%), 3rd 1970 (55.5%), 5th 1971 (47.4%), 4th 1973 (52.3%), 3rd 1976 (61.9%) and 6th 1979 (53.3%).

Canadian Men's Championships: 3rd 1976 (61.9%), 3rd 1977 (63.1%).

B.C. International Men's Championship Class, 3rd Group-A2 1971 (55.5%), 2nd 1973 (54.5%), 2nd 1976 (57.1%), 2nd 1977, and 2nd 1978 (58.2%).

Vancouver Island Men's Champion 1958, 1962, 1966, 1969, 1975 and 1981

He was the winner of many local and provincial tournaments.

Murray is still very active in the game, he can be found at numerous tournaments.

Murray is a quite individual who respects all horseshoe players, still a competitor and always willing to share his expertise with others.

ROBERT (BOB) LOUIS TIMOTHY LADYSMITH - HORSESHOE BIOGRAPHY

I first started playing in the back yard on First Ave and White Street. My brother Tom and I went to Comley's barn, where we picked up old horseshoes and mule shoes. Comley was a blacksmith, his building was up behind Lung Fungs. He had horses there and the old horse drawn ambulance was stored there. These horseshoes were not regulation horseshoes. Some of these shoes had no opening so you had to put them on the peg from the top. I was told these were mule shoes they used in the mine. The reason they had no opening is because there (the mule) feet wouldn't slide around. The pegs we used were just old galvanized water pipe. At that time we played 21 points. You throw two shoes each, and the way you counted if you had two ringers and your opponent had nothing you would score six points. If you had one ringer and your opponent had one it would be cancelled. With the other shoe if it was within 6 inches of the peg the closest to the peg would get 1 point.

The year we were playing on White Street was around 1936. Later on around 1940, I would go out to John Ryan's and play. John lived in the house where the Monkey Tree Clinic is today. John's son Len was mayor of Ladysmith at one time. John was Pat Ryan's grandfather. There were quite a few players who played there. They were mostly coal miners, Harry Mitchell, Jack Rogers, Ed Sanderson, Pete Brown to name a few. John Ryan got his horseshoes from the states. The name of the shoes were the Ohio Pro. They were regulation horseshoes, they had a 4 1/2 inch opening and weighed 2.5 pounds each.

My first tournament was played in Nanaimo around 1938.

Around 1936 there was a horseshoe pitch on the waterfront where Hayden's boat rentals used to be. It was down from the railway station, they called themselves the Rinky Dinks. Later on there were a few more pitches around town. The legion had two around the late 50's and early 60's. Some of the players who played there were Eddie Dewilde, Bill Radovich, Arnie Hall to name a few.

Around 1960 I built one pitch in the alley on Roberts Street. About a year later I built a proper one in my backyard. Len Copp and I decided to build some pitches. Finally one day we built 2 down at Transfer Beach Park. They were built by the old barbeque where the children's playground is now. I bought 2 pairs of horseshoes and left them at the concession stand. Anne Johnson was looking after the shoes, anybody that wanted to play would ask and to borrow them. It was mostly the older people who would use them. Just after it was

built about 1970 we had one small tournament. We soon found out there wasn't enough pitches. I went to the city to see if we could use a small piece of their land to build 12 pitches. At that time the park was just being fixed up. This was about 1971; Kaye Grouhel was the major at the time. The major and council met and had a meeting and approved the land. It had taken about 2 years to get the material and money together. Len Copp and I would have a raffle every month to help raise money. We sold tickets for 50 cents each or 3 for \$1.00, the prize was a Texas Mickey. We also got a donation from the Ladysmith Recreation department for \$1,500.00. We got lumber donated by some of the stevedoring companies. We got sand from Butler Lafarge in Duncan. I would haul the sand in my pick-up truck. I had to build everything in the backyard. By May of 1975 everything was in place. All I had to do was to haul it to the park. Don Graham and I and Jack McNaught laid the cement for the pitches. We had put in another five pitches under the trees above the others which gave us 17. The clubhouse came about a year or so later. It was made out of building blocks. How we raised some of the monies for it was, we got people to buy a block for \$2.00. Then the late Donald Kerr would paint there names on the blocks.

We had lots of big tournaments such as the B.C. Championship, Island Championships, Canadian Championships, International Championships, and Bathtub Championships.

We hosted the Canadian Championships at Transfer Beach Park August 13-14, 1977. We had 83 contestants. Len Copp our secretary and our wives out on a big banquet in St. Mary's Church. This was our biggest tournament, we had 12 pitches, the rule called for 18, so I had to put up six portables in the back of the existing twelve. We had some of the players in Canada, namely Elmer Hohl and his son Steven. Elmer Hohl was the greatest player I have ever seen. In this tournament he had 9 wins 0 losses for an average of 83.06%. His son Steven won the juniors with 5 wins and 0 losses for an average of 77.14%. Steven had the high game average than anyone in the tournament 96.19%. Steven is only 14 at the time. Elmer Hohl was from Wellesley, Ontario. He was world champion 6 times between 1965 and 1977. The first Canadian to hold that honor. He was also runner-up 6 times, Canadian Champion 19 times, Ontario Champion 25 times. Elmer received the Queen's Medal of Excellence in sports in 1978. He is a member of the NHPA Hall of Fame. Elmer passed away at the age of 68.

I was born in my grandmother's hotel on First Avenue and Roberts Street. It is where the Credit Union now stands. The name of the hotel was the Cecil Hotel.

Shoo-in For A Young Shoe Pitcher – August 18, 1969 Sports Illustrated

A flashy (but gifted) young man named Danny Kuchcinski triumphed over a batch of experienced (but careful) oldsters in the world horseshoe pitching championship at Erie, Pa., leaving behind him 35 dead ringers

Think of a quiet, green, nostalgic Winslow Homer painting mixed with a Mutt and Jeff cartoon and you get the flavor of the World Championship Horseshoe Tournament. At Glenwood Park in Erie, Pa., where this year's championship ended two weeks ago, the old-time, county-fair atmosphere was palpable as soon as one stepped inside: there was a plump, gray-haired lady sewing the names of competitors on shirts, a man selling 50-cent tickets on a raffle and putting the money in an old coffee can, competitions for women and children and even small boys perched in the trees looking down on the lighted field in the breezy midsummer night. There were six rows of wooden bleachers on three sides of the pitching area, crowded with rapt spectators, the men wearing suspenders, the women in old-fashioned, roomy housedresses. (There would have been bleachers on four sides, but one side was kept clear for the senior citizens' shuffleboard games.) On 18 pitches the 36 top horseshoe pitchers from the U.S. and Canada—in horseshoe pitching the U.S. and Canada are the same as the world-tossed their shoes (maximum weight: 2♦ pounds) the regulation distance (40 feet) as if they were quietly re-enacting in a modern setting the game that used to be a favorite rural pastime wherever there were horses and blacksmith shops.

But the contemporary world kept crowding in on the picnic atmosphere as busily as a television commercial. When Danny Kuchcinski won the world championship two years ago at the age of 18, he hired a publicity agent. Danny is a local Erie boy, a left-hander, the youngest pitcher in 44 years ever to win the world championship. He was also the first horseshoe pitcher in history to acquire a public-relations staff and the first to demonstrate trick shots for Johnny Carson on the Tonight Show. Teamed up with Sue Gillespie, of Portland, Ind.—the youngest girl ever to win the ladies horseshoe pitching championship—he had an act (performed in sports shows in Minneapolis and Kansas City) in which Sue rested her chin on the stake and Danny pitched ringers just inches under her lovely features.

Last year Danny lost his title to Elmer Hohl, a sturdy, dignified, 50-year-old carpenter and farmer from Wellesley, Ontario, who represents the old order of things in the world of horseshoes as much as Danny represents the new. Hohl fired shoes at the stake with machinelike efficiency and a form that suggested the bowler Don Carter releasing a bowling ball. Danny delivered with a big back-swing and a soft, flowing follow-through. To become world champion you have to win a round-robin tournament of the 36 best pitchers (of the 5,000 members of the National Horseshoe Pitchers' Association), which means that you have to average nearly nine ringers out of every 10 throws for six hours a day, six straight days.

"You got to be tough to play this sport, baby," said Bill Rogers, who could also be called a representative of the new order. In fact, he claims to have introduced soul into horseshoe pitching. Rogers is a 43-year-old former professional basketball player who turned to horseshoes four years ago. During the winter he keeps in condition, working out by pitching horseshoes all by himself under a streetlight in a park on 125th Street in New York City, to the astonishment of policemen patrolling on the Harlem River Drive. Rogers says the notion that horseshoes is an old man's sport is ridiculous. "Horseshoes is a singular accomplishment," he says. "You've got to hit that stake yourself, because it sure isn't going to give you a break. When you hit it, you know you have sweated alone."

Other contenders had less of the sense of horseshoe pitching as solitary self-testing. "Even when the pressure is off," said Steve Fenicchia, "I'm still worried out there because I'm thinking about my pole bean plants." He pitches close to 80% (which means he averages 80 ringers for every 100 shoes pitched) but he is also an impassioned organic horticulturist, as well as the superintendent of the Cenacle Convent in Rochester, N.Y. His concentration on the tournament was reduced by his struggle to save his Italian pole bean plants from Mexican bean beetles. "Don't ever use insecticide on those little chocolate-colored critters," he told his fellow pitchers. "That's not nature's way." Just before he left for the tournament, he felt he had made a breakthrough. "I was getting them with a solution of garlic, peppers and vinegar," he said, "but now my only defense is the sisters' prayers."

He had a lot of time to think while he was throwing horseshoes on the pitch. A game (50 points) might run to 45 minutes or more. If each player throws two ringers with his two shoes there is no score. If one player throws two ringers and his opponent only one, the man with two ringers gets three points. If each throws one ringer (which rarely happened at Erie), the man who has thrown the closest shoe of the two that missed gets one point. (In case neither throws a shoe within six inches of the stake, there is no score, but that does not happen in world-championship play.) So points are added slowly, and games came down to scores in the 40s, with one three-point shoe becoming decisive.

One lost game the first day nearly puts a competitor out of the running. By the third day only the top three or four are still competing for the championship. Danny (who married Sue Gillespie the week before the tournament) was still undefeated. Hohl was in second place; he was upset the next-to-last night by Ray Martin, a durable contender who had finished in the top five the last five years but never won the championship. The final game between Hohl and Danny was for more than the world title. It was a generation struggle as well, a classic encounter between a master of the old-style, homespun, farmers' sport and a cocky, ambitious showman. "If you are any good at pitching at all," said Danny's bride, "you should be making \$20,000 a year. Even the putt-putt golfers make much more on a tour." Like most of the players of his era who learned to pitch in Depression days on the farm, Hohl plays purely for sport. He gave up several three-pointers early in the contest when his second shoe refused to hold the stake. (The first shoes pitched, landing in clay,

tend to stay put when they ring the stake, but when the next shoes land they hit iron and are more likely to skip off.) Hohl rallied to cut Danny's lead to 47-40 but came up short with his next shoe. That gave Danny three points, the game, the world championship, prize money of \$700, but probable auxiliary earnings of \$10,000 in sport shows. The little teenaged girl keeping score jumped up and down, and the kids climbed out of the trees to rush the winner.

ORIGIN OF THE BC HORSESHOE ASSOCIATION - BERNIE LEPPER

In 1962 the "Greater Vancouver Horseshoe Pitchers Association" was formed and the following year, 1963 this association was officially affiliated with the "National Horseshoe Pitchers Association" of the U.S. and most members in Canada at that time were from B. C. and Ontario. The state secretary's to the N.H.P.A. from 1963 to 1970 in B.C. it was Bernie Lepper and Ontario it was led by George Schummer and Ross Stevenson.

The officers of the "Greater Vancouver Horseshoe Pitchers Association" were - President Art Oakes - Vice President Harry Brock - Secretary/Treasurer Bernie Lepper.

Up until 1968 all "B.C. Championships" were held at the "Stanley Park Horseshoe Courts" in Vancouver, B.C. From 1968 to 1976 all "B.C. Championships" were held at the "Central Park Horseshoe Courts" in Burnaby, B.C.

The first meeting to organize the "B.C. Horseshoe Association" was held in April of 1970 in Vancouver at Stan Pachota's residence who was a member of the Greater Vancouver Horseshoe Club and later moved to the Vernon Horseshoe Club where he past away some years ago. Bob Blunt first president of B.C.H.A. moved to Vernon and was instrumental in starting the Vernon Horseshoe Club.

The first executive of the B.C.H.A. in 1970 consisted of --
Bob Blunt, President - Vancouver
Colin Butts, Vice President - Victoria
Bernie Lepper, Secretary/Treasurer - Burnaby
Frank Boon - Victoria
Stan Pachota - Vancouver
Rob Roy Gray - Rep from the Diamond Horseshoe Co.

Jack Adams wrote the first "Constitution and By-Laws" of the B.C.H.A. and was a member of the executive in 1974 and 1975 when he lived in Chilliwack B.C. In 1979 "Horseshoe Canada" was born with Jack Adams as President, reps from B.C. were Stan & Phyllis Dahl.

These are the horseshoe clubs that were members of the B.C.H.A. in the early years and their representatives of each club:-
Greater Vancouver - Bill Adams
Ladysmith - Bob Timothy
Victoria - Colin Butts
Port Alberni - Ken Wickwire

Cloverdale - Frank Stirling
Nanaimo - Jim Archibald
Quesnel - Tal Severson
Summerland - J. L. Johnston
Rutland - Dan Jaud
Prince George - Bill Dow

The first "B.C. International" was held in 1971 at the "Burnaby Horseshoe Club". The Diamond Horseshoe Co. sponsored the world Champion Dan Kurchinski to come to Burnaby for the tournament, Dan pitched 77.2%. This came about because Rob Roy Gray B.C.H.A. executive member was the rep for the Diamond Horseshoe Co.

The first of three consecutive "Canadian Championships" were held in B.C. The first was at the Burnaby Horseshoe Club in 1975. The reason this happened was the Canadian Association executive all resigned except Jean Markle, so she asked Jack Adams who lived in B.C. at the time to hold the "Canadian Championships" in B.C. Jack Adams and Jean Markle asked Bob Blunt the president of B.C.H.A. if he could arrange to hold the tournament on short notice at the Burnaby Horseshoe Club pitches. Bob Blunt took the challenge on and organized the tournament in less than three weeks.

That was the first "Canadian Championships" in B.C. followed by one more in Burnaby in 1976 and then on to Ladysmith in 1977 where Elmer Hohl attended fresh from the World tournament where he captured his 6th world title.

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE - SAM TOMASEVIC

I hope you enjoyed the above articles, interesting reading and certainly something for all of us to remember on the origins of our Association and the autobiography by Bob Timothy. I would like to thank Vince Herkel for passing along the article from Bob, he had sent this to me sometime ago and I was waiting for the right time to publish same in our newsletter.

The horseshoe season is well under way and almost all clubs have held at least one tournament. Attendance seems to be a little up from the past years. Was nice to see Cloverdale and Winfield add tournaments to our schedule.

The Western Canada Classic was held in Prince George, they had a lot of players from Alberta attend.

As a reminder the BC Championships entry deadline is fast approaching, August 21, 2012. If you have not sent in your entry and monies yet please do so as soon as possible. Entry form is included in this edition of the newsletter.

B.C. CHAMPIONSHIPS SEPTEMBER 01-02, 2012

**VICTORIA HORSESHOE CLUB
ENTRY DEADLINE – AUGUST 21, 2012
REGISTRATION FEE: \$20.00
JUNIORS FREE**

ENTRY FORM

NAME: _____ Horseshoe Canada # _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ **POSTAL CODE:** _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NO: _____ **Birth Date** _____

CLASS: CHECK ONE ONLY

OPEN MEN'S (18+OLDER) OPEN LADIES (18+ OLDER)

JR. BOYS (18 AND UNDER) JR. GIRLS (18 AND UNDER)

ELDERS MEN 30 FT (YOU MUST BE 65 AND OLDER AS OF JANUARY 1/2012)

REGISTRATION FEE: \$20.00 MUST ACCOMPANY THIS ENTRY FORM.

Dress Code: Horseshoe Canada/NHPA Standards, neat and tidy appearance. Your club shirt with last name on the back of the shirt.

CHEQUES/MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO: B.C. HORSESHOE ASSOCIATION. MAIL ENTRIES TO:

**BCHA
7987 GRAHAM AVE.
BURNABY, B.C. V3N 1V8
TELEPHONE: 604-525-2186**

ALL PLAYERS WILL PLAY SEPTEMBER 1 AND 2

OVERNIGHT PARKING AVAILBLE AT THE COURTS, SORRY NO HOOK-UPS.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY PLEASE ADVISE IF YOU HAVE ANY MEDICAL PROBLEMS:

SPONSORED BY THE B.C. HORSESHOE ASSOCIATION. HOSTED BY THE VICTORIA HORSESHOE CLUB.