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# ISCONSIN HORSESHOES



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### 2021 Fall Meeting Fun:-)

- Upper Left: Dan Newkirk—newly elected WHPA 2nd VP  
Upper Right— WHPA Officers as of Jan 1, 2021: Dave, Dan, John, Dobie, Sonia  
Lower Left- Kevin Brekke, retiring WHPA 2nd VP  
Lower Right- youngest WHPA member— Jazmyn Kildahl signing in with watchful eyes of sister, Lillyane and Grandpa Mel

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Date	Sanction #	Tournament	Location	Max #	Entry	Deadline	Contact
Dec 4-5	28-21-052	Deansville Open	Deansville	40	20	Nov 27	Gary Volz
Dec 11-12	28-21-053	Snowflake	Beloit	72	20	Dec 1	Dan Newkirk
Dec 18-19	28-21-057	Ho Ho Horse-shoe Tourn	Woneowc	36	15	Dec 4	Dave Volz
Jan 8-9	28-22-001	001 Tourney	Beloit	72	20	Jan 1	Dan Newkirk
Jan 15-16	28-22-002	Dance with Dobie	Deansville	40	20	Jan 8	Gary Volz
Feb 5-6	28-22-003	Deansville Me-morial	Deansville	40	20	Jan 29	Gary Volz
Feb 12-13	28-22-004	Valentines Tour-nament	Beloit	72	20	Feb 2	Dan Newkirk
Feb 19	28-22-005	Deansville/Beloit Challenge	Beloit				
Feb 26	28-22-006	Bring a Junior Dbls	Beloit		10	Feb 16	Dan Newkirk
Mar 5-6	28-22-007	Klash / Kerry	Deansville	40	20	Feb 26	Gary Volz
Mar 19-20	28-22-008	March / Penny	Beloit	72	20	Mar 9	Dan Newkirk
Mar 26-27	28-22-009	Birthday Bash	Woneowc	42	15	Mar 12	Dave Volz

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A sincere thank you to everyone who contributes to our WHNL in any way—pictures, proofing, articles, printing, mailing.... It takes a TEAM.



So, the fall State Meeting is over and we had a really great large turnout. Most exciting for me was seeing three of our younger WHPA members there and participating. That being said, I want to give a huge shout out to Lillyan Kildahl, Jazmyn Kildahl and Zach Secord. I hope we see all of you at the spring meeting as well. **YOU** are the future of horseshoes in Wisconsin and seeing you three there gives me so much hope for that future. I feel safer knowing that young adults like you will help us when we are no longer able to do this without you.

Well, this meeting brought with it a new 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President for the WHPA, Dan Newkirk of the Beloit Horseshoe Club. Welcome aboard Dan! We look forward to working with you as your excitement and love for shoes is infectious, and we know that we will learn so much from you! Be sure to congratulate Dan when you see him next.

In welcoming Dan, we need to say a huge THANK YOU to Kevin Brekke as he completes his terms as 2<sup>nd</sup> VP. Kevin has a life-long love of horseshoe pitching, and pitchers, that we have been blessed to have him share with us. He served the WHPA well, and as for myself, Kevin has always made himself available to me for questions, venting, or just for listening while I try to figure something out. I am eternally grateful for his knowledge and his willingness to share that knowledge with the WHPA members and the board. I can't say we will miss Kevin, because that kind of love and dedication doesn't just walk away, and I have no doubt that he will be still heavily involved with the WHPA as the years go on, and remember, he is always looking for scorekeepers.

With the Winter months finally approaching, our tournament schedules are down to the three locations able to host winter tournaments, so as you read this, can you please give a hand to those directors who make that happen? Dan Newkirk (Beloit) Dave Volz (Summit Ridge) and Gary Volz (Deansville) work hard so that we can keep pitching during the not-so-warm months. Thank you gentlemen so very much!!!

Lastly, I hope that the holidays bring you all joy laughter and love, and I pray that 2022 brings with it some much needed, and deserved, peace for us all.

See you in the pits!



### Behind the Mask . . . With NHPA Chaplain Ken Heinritz

You might say that pitching horseshoes is in the family's blood. Pictured in the lower left is my Grandpa Ervin Heinritz (pitching) & my dad, Roger Heinritz. Uncle Ronnie (dad's brother) also played. Of dad's children, Russ, Randy, Lori & I have pitched. But then 17 of dad's grandchildren (my nieces and nephews from 5 different families) have pitched. The memories that have been made have been wonderful. We're talking local, State and World tournaments. This includes 15 State Tournament division titles in the family & 7 World Tournament titles. I think Dad and Grandpa would be very proud of what the family has accomplished. It's difficult to say what will happen down the road but the past success will be forever etched in this writer's memory for a long time.

Does this wonderful sport of horseshoes make the list of things you are thankful for at this Thanksgiving time?

It makes my list ... Thank you Lord for the NHPA! Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

*"Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever!" I Chron. 16:34*



**2021 WHPA Fall Meeting Write up**  
**October 16, 2020 - Lake Delton**  
 Kevin Brekke

Call to order by President Dobie at 1:01pm.

There were 48 people in attendance. After the Pledge of Allegiance, there was a moment of silence since Chaplain Ken Heinritz was absent.

Secretary John Secord read the minutes of the 2021 Spring Meeting and were accepted as read. John also gave the treasurers report. The beginning balance was 5,302.24 and ending balance was 5,307.52. Accepted as read.

Dave Volz, 1<sup>st</sup> VP, reported Pitcher of the Year starts August 1<sup>st</sup> each year and you can find standings on the website under Awards. There is a link on the website, (Upcoming Tournament Pitching Schedules) where you can find the day, time and class you pitch in upcoming tournaments. There are three links for memberships. New members to Join, renew membership and a form for new or renewal members to fill out and send into John Secord. Fee of 1.32 to use eShoe to sign up electronically. You can print off a membership card on eShoe but it is no longer required because current membership information is available on eShoe. If you have changes to your contact information, please let John Secord know the changes so he can update. Dave Volz gets reports on the website and gave some stats on the number of site sessions, we've increased from 597 visitors in April to 1285 in September. Kevin Brekke asked for new members do they need to pitch 100 shoes and have an NHPA member witness and sign. The answer is yes. There is now a form on the website for the 100 shoe qualifying for new members or for pitchers moving to a different pitching distance.

Kevin Brekke, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP, mentioned that Glenn Bogschneider brought his collection of newsletters at the last spring meeting and that he compared to what was online already. A shout out to Penny Steinke was given by Kevin for her hard work in scanning in all the newsletters since 1986. Kevin found only eight were missing, and Glenn had the missing eight. Kevin gave the hardcopies to Dave Volz who will scan them in this winter. Kevin also mentioned that Kent Frailing is working hard to promote horseshoes in the schools in Mosinee. Currently horseshoes is a class in the grade school, and plans are in place to expand to the High School. Kent is asking for donations from pitchers to donate horseshoes to these programs. If you have questions or horseshoes for this, contact Kent Frailing. The Mosinee Club is also moving a building in the park by the horseshoe courts on top of a concrete slab that has already been poured.

Sonia Cook, 3<sup>rd</sup> VP, mentioned the Junior Scholar-

ship fund. As of April 17<sup>th</sup>, Liabilities were at 4,200, balance was 11,621.45. As of October 16<sup>th</sup>, current balance is 12,867.95, Liabilities are at 5,100. Sonia stated the raffle will continue next year and said thank you to individuals and groups that have contributed. Sold 1100 tickets and had 89 prizes.

Fred Lane our Marketing and Publicity Chairman was absent and did not have a report. Jeff Secord, Hall of Fame Chairman, recognized John Meyer as the current Hall of Fame inductee. The ceremony is a great event that occurs at state. In the spring another vote will take place for this honor. The nominees are on the website.

Dave Volz, Regional Director acknowledged the upcoming World Tournament dates.

2022 – Monroe, La - July 11-23 (more info after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year)

2023 – Lansing, Michigan – July 17-31

2024 – bids by January 1, 2022

Dave is working on the 2022 schedule, so he can order the correct number of patches. Dave will be entering the tournaments online at Eshoe. Dave mentioned you can use Eshoe to look for tournaments in all the states, something Gerald Harris is doing, going to as many states as he can this year finding out about them on Eshoe. Dave mentioned the great work the Tournament Directors do in getting their tournament information to Eshoe. He asked for and received applause for the Tournament Directors. Dave gave a recap of the World Tournament. Sixteen pitchers from Wisconsin, thirteen were adult pitchers: three were cadet/junior pitchers. In the Cadet Boys Championship Class, Conner Kildahl placed 2<sup>nd</sup>. In the Junior Girls Championship class Lillyan Kildahl fished 6<sup>th</sup> with Sarah Chaffee finishing 1<sup>st</sup>. This is Sarah's 2<sup>nd</sup> World Junior Girls title. She broke her ringer record of 80.53 percent with a percent of 88.71 and pitched a 100% game. On the adult side, seven of the thirteen adults were in the money placing in the top six: two pitchers took home a third place trophy- Gerald Harris and Cindy Castellano. Two pitchers advanced to the Women's championship class, Aleena Lepak placing 6<sup>th</sup>, and Penny Steinke placing 11<sup>th</sup>. At the Hall of Fame Banquet three Wisconsin pitchers received awards. Penny Steinke for a 90 percent game at the 2019 World Tournament; Fred Lane for the 2020 National Sanctioned League Director of the Year; Aleena Lepak for the Art Stokes Memorial. Stu Sipma NHPA President did not run for re-election. Gary Roberts ran un-opposed and is our new NHPA President. Barb Carson was appointed 4<sup>th</sup> VP and will also have responsibilities working with the regional directors. Dalton Rakestraw was re-elected 5<sup>th</sup> VP.

*Continued on page 7*

State meeting continued from page 6

Kevin Brekke mentioned that Fred Lane and he went to World not only to pitch, but to help with setup. Fred was in charge up IT setup and did a fantastic job. Kevin accompanied Fred and remembered from 2015 when John Resch and he went early to help with the setup. It is a great way to get to know the NHPA officers as well as others others involved with the tournament.

Jane Smith – Many thanks to those that contribute to the newsletter. Jane also asked for pictures to be sent in, they always help.

State Teams competition results. Jane mentioned this is the 33<sup>rd</sup> year. Jane read off the eight teams that signed up for the state contest among teams. Their position from 1<sup>st</sup> to last.

- Arkdale - 5 pitchers; 7.4 points; 1 Class Champion; 1 State champion
- Beloit – 14 pitchers; 6.4 points; 2 Class Champions; 1 State Champion
- Eau Claire – 12 pitchers; 6 points; 2 Class Champion; 1 State Champion
- Deansville – 10 pitchers; 10; 4.9 points; 2 Class Champions
- Marshfield – 8 pitchers; 8 pitchers; 4.75 points; 1 State champion
- Muskego, Fond du Lac, Close Doesn't Count – 7 pitchers; 4.7 points; 1 State Champion
- Stevens Point - 13 pitchers; 4.6 points; 2 Class Champions
- Summit Ridge – 19 pitchers; 4.5 points; 1 Class Champion

2021 State Tournament recap by Kevin Brekke – Kevin mentioned was Paul Wiese getting out of the hospital after a week with low oxygen levels from Covid-19. Kevin acknowledged the new pitchers at state this year, which there were 13: Josie Boehm, Josh Cone, Jason Hatlan, Dave Leckwee, Rich Lodor, Dennis Marquardt, Lambert Narlock, Scott Peckham, Brenda Price, Kalena Quaid, Jim Schraufnagel, Justin Schultz, Patrick LaBarge. We had 110 State Tournament contestants. Kevin also acknowledged Mel and Sonia Cook for their years of work with the Junior Raffle; as well as the people who help with scorekeeping. Thank you. Hats off to Dan Newkirk and those that helped with setup. A very special thanks to those that contributed to the pur-

chase of new computers. It makes setup with the computers a lot easier. Special awards: John Meyer for Hall of Fame; Player of the Year (POY) to John Meyer, Jill Peterson and Tom Steinke, Kevin Brekke. Most Improved Adult Kalena Quaid and Junior Conner Kildahl. Special thanks to all those who helped Saturday morning to help with the wet courts and leaves on the courts. Also special thanks to Gary Volz for setting all the computers up ahead of time even if he could not be at state this year. Thank you Gary!

John Secord did the drawing for the Each One Reach One contest. We had 38 new members this year that had a sponsor. We give out two \$25.00 awards and five \$10.00 awards. They went to in order: Dave Volz, Jerry Schoeder, Dave Volz, Rich Brockway, Dobie Gutweiler, Beloit Horseshoe Club, Rich Brockway.

Jeff Secord spoke about Team World. Because of Covid, this tournament has not been held for two years. Team World is on for 2022. Hopefully, we will get a good turnout. Jeff spoke to John Meyer about maybe piggy backing his singles tournament with a new three-person team event on Sunday. Would need a minimum of four teams with a cap of 133 percent. Jeff was able to get four teams and it was a huge success. Jeff is planning on it again for next year.

Election of Officers – President Dobie Gutweiler ran un-opposed 2<sup>nd</sup> VP – Kevin Brekke ran against Dan Newkirk

Both spoke why they thought they would be a good fit for the job. Kevin spoke on his accomplishments the past six years and where we have come the past six years. Dan mentioned he is willing to work with the board and willing to learn. After the ballots were counted, Dan Newkirk is our new 2<sup>nd</sup> VP. Congratulations to Dan. Dan will serve from January 1, 2022 to January 1, 2024. Thank you, Kevin for your work as our WHPA officer.

Bid for 2023 State Tournament – Eau Claire was the only bid and will host for 2023.

Kevin Brekke had the three sets of NHPA trading cards if someone wanted to look at them.

Meeting ended at 2:20.

Next meeting will be April 16<sup>th</sup> at Lake Delton



**Arkdale Doubles Results**

Ray Groskinski

Class A

Jim Larson	6	0	54.44
Lonny Trangsrud			48.89
Ken Jaeger Jr	4	2	52.78
Martin Papesh			42.22
Jill Peterson	4	2	38.89
Eugen Pribnow			53.33

Class B

John Drexler	6	1	41.43
Ed Hack			23.33
Jim Schraufnagel	5	2	23.81
Jerry Schroeder Sr			30
Dusty Deurr	5	2	32.85
James Deurr			20.48



**Don Goldsmith Doubles**

Dan Newkirk

Class A

Jim Huckabee	5	1	35.83
Tammy Newkirk			58.33
Zak Schwartz	4	2	37.5
Cliff Shave			33.33
Dick Perkins	2.5	2.5	37
Leonard Razim			50

Class B

Jeff Gustafson	5	0	31
Dan Newkirk			30
Dave Volz	3	2	31
Rick Weller			27
Tom Bird	2	3	4
Bruce McLinn			46

Class C

Gary Glover	3	1	13.75
Joe Koch			22
Russ Brockway	3	1	27.5
Jason Hatlan			7.5
Jillian Jordan	2	2	5
Aaron Jordan			11.25



**Earl Paulson Classic**

Dan Newkirk

Class A

Penny Strinke	4.5	.5	64.5
Tammy Newkirk	4.5	.5	61.5
Rowen Swick	2	3	49

Class B

Roger Ehlers	5	1	42.5
Kalena Quaid	4	2	35.83
Kevin Brekke	4	2	34.58

Class C

Scott Linhart	4	2	25.42
Patrick LaBarge	3	3	20
Gary Glover	3	3	18.75

**EP Classic**

Pictures top right, middle, lower right.

Class A:

Rowen, Penny, Tammy

Class B:

Rayna, Kevin, Roger, Kalena

Class C:

Patrick, Scott



**New Member Welcome**

Kevin Brekke

Every so often the excitement of a new member excites me, and reinforces my love for the game. Such is the case for new member Dale Matteson from Walworth. I met him at the Darien Cornfest in August. We helped him with the 100 shoe qualify and form for getting sanctioned. He has called a couple of times with questions and will start league in Beloit tonight and is signing up for his first tournament in November in Beloit. He is an Elder pitcher and has his own cycle business. If you see Dale at a tournament sometime, please welcome him. By the way, he averaged 30 percent.

Welcome Dale.

**What's New?**

Jane Smith

WHPA / NHPA members receive a membership patch every ten years they have been a member. We have several members receiving this prestigious patch this year: John Secord - 50 Years; Wayne Franzen, Jane Smith-40 years; Larry Danielson, Bob Kallstrom – 30 years; Brandon Benzing, David Carter- 10 years. This is additional proof that our Horseshoe Family is FOREVER!!

We would like to welcome Dale Matteson, Matt Moore and Marshall Narlock to our WHPA. They will receive a complimentary issue of the WHNL and a warm welcome to our Horseshoe Family. Please greet them with a smile when you meet them at league or tournaments.

Our WHPA family still needs and appreciates extra prayers and positive vibes to those facing health, social, physical and mental issues. Check out the CaringBridge site for updates on our members willing to share their story. Cards, text messages, phone calls are always welcome and bring smiles to many.

**Deansville Singles**

Gary Volz

Class A

John Meyer	5	0	66.5
Eugene Pribnow	4	1	58
Kerry Morris	3	2	58.5

Class B

Dustin Duerr	5	2	39.29
Gary Volz	5	2	35
Al Holloway	5	2	26.43

Class C

Mark LaBarge	7	1	28.75
Russ Brockway	6	2	32.5
Mitchell Uttech	6	2	17.92

# Summit Ridge Fall Singles

Dave Volz

Class A

Eugene Pribnow	5	0	61
Larry Grabowski	4	1	57
Bun Carley	3	2	61.5

Class B

Mike Cone	4	1	48.5
Rich Peterson	3	2	48.5
Jill Peterson	2.5	2.5	44.5

Class C

Greg Smith	4	1	40.5
Susie Erickson	3	2	43.5
Rick Weller	3	2	37

Class D

Joel Ramsdell	5	0	37
Edwin Pulsfus	4	1	31
Justin Schultz	3	2	30.5

Class E

Russell Kozlowski	5	0	36
Dan Newkirk	4	1	32.5
Lambert Narlock II	3	2	27

Class F

Rich Brockway	4	1	31
Robin McDonough	4	1	29.5
Sandy Anderson	3	2	20.5

Class G

Russ Brockway	5	0	26
Zak Rodriguez	4	1	22.5
Aiden Weller	3	2	19.5



**October Fall Singles**

Dan Newkirk

Class A

Tammy Newkirk	6	1	61.79
Dick Perkins	5	2	47.5
Jeff Gustafson	4	3	49.29

Class B

David Carter	5	0	31.5
Dave Quaid	4	1	33.5
Tom Steinke	2	3	27.5

Class C

Rich Conrad	4.5	.5	19
Gary Glover	3.5	1.5	15.5
Carl Nyman	3	2	19.5



Class A  
Kerry, Tammy,  
Dick, Jeff



Class B  
Tom, David, Dave

Class C  
Gary, Rich, Carl

**Blast From the Past**

Dave Volz



**Sports**

**Bestul wins again in World Tourney**

PLEASANTON, Calif. — Debby Bestul of Eau Claire won her second straight and record fourth overall World Horseshoe Tournament championship in the junior girls' division Saturday.

Bestul needed a playoff to defeat Alana Johnston of British Columbia, Canada, who threatened very strongly to take Bestul's crown away from her in her last year of competition as a junior.

"I felt a lot of pressure because this was my last year and I was trying to win it before going into the women's class," she said.

Bestul, 17, and Johnston tied with 4-1 records in the finals, setting up a playoff where the first to score 40 points wins. Johnston grabbed an early 15-point lead before Bestul roared back to win 40-29.

"Yeah, I was scared," said Bestul. "She got a pretty good lead

on me there." Bestul had ringer percentages of 57.5 during regular championship play and 62.1 during the playoff. She qualified for the finals with a 66.5.

Johnston's percentages were 47 during regular play and 57 during the playoff.

Three other area contenders competed.

Anna Harms and Ron Brownell, both of Mondovi, failed to qualify in their respective divisions while Curt Bestul, Debby's father, was still in preliminary competition in the intermediate division.

The win netted Bestul \$500 that will go into a trust fund, which she can claim on her 18th birthday. Including past winnings, Bestul said she has accumulated nearly \$2,000.

Next season, Bestul will leave the juniors class to compete in the



**Debby Bestul**  
Fourth World Horseshoe title

women's bracket. Right now, her percentages are good enough to qualify her for the women's championship division, but probably wouldn't get her past preliminaries, she said.

"I'll just have to keep practicing," she said.

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This is also the time of years some of our family has the option of escaping the winter weather for warmer climates. Safe travels to those venturing south and pitching horseshoes OUTSIDE in the sun ☐

We know we have a very talented association. Feel free to share your talents with us whether it be promoting shoes, wood working, writing, storytelling, cooking, baking, traveling, volunteering in your community. We all have lives outside of horseshoes. Let's share.

Let's do what we need to do to keep ourselves and others healthy. We do not need to judge, just take care of ourselves and immediate family.

## Fond du lac Team Event

Jeff Secord

Team tournaments are nothing new in Wisconsin. They have been a staple on the state schedule since the Pitchin' Palace kicked off the Can-Am in 1985 and Green Bay hosted the first version of Club Team at the Watering Hole around that same time. However, there hasn't been a team tournament in Wisconsin since 2019 with the cancellation of both Team World and Club Team for 2 consecutive years due to COVID-19. Waiting for team competition until 2022 seemed too far away to wait. That's where the idea to host a team event this year in Fond du Lac came from.

The tournament was a late add to the state schedule in late-May. The intent was to host a one-day version of Team World for pitchers that miss being part of a team event. To maximize the number of teams we could take, we lowered team size from 4 players per team down to 3. We also removed restrictions related to affiliation (club/state) or pitching distance (40' pitcher requirement) or age (open to cadets & juniors). We wanted to ensure no "Super Team" could be formed to cruise through the event so we added a limit of 133% combined ringer percentage, based on e-shoe averages from June 30, for each team captain to have an opportunity to build a competitive team.

Only 4 teams entered but that was just enough to make it an event to play. One of the best parts of our team tournaments is the opportunity for captains to determine match-ups each round. Each team had that opportunity against each opposing team since they faced each other twice in the prelims due to the low entry size. This meant the coin toss gave the winning captain the ability to decide match-ups on either the first or second time they meet that opponent (very similar to football teams choosing to defer receiving the kick for the second half). This also meant that each captain was guaranteed to be able to make match-up decisions for exactly half of the prelim rounds.

The teams were so evenly matched that no captain was able to put together a strategy to "sweep" a round 3-0. There also was no single player that could boast to win every prelim game or be "shut-out" and lose every prelim game. Amazingly, there were only 2½ wins separating first place (Three Amigos with 9 wins) from last place (Throw, Drink, & Repeat with 6½ wins)

going into the final prelim round.

This meant that every team had a mathematical chance of being the #1 seed for the finals going into that final prelim match. Anyone who has experienced the final rounds in Team World knows how exciting those final games of the tournament are. They are the epitome of the adage that, "Greatness is not how many ringers you can throw but is how many ringers you can throw when the game is on the line."

Scorekeepers were provided for the finals rounds so true cancellation scoring was in effect. The first finals round had #2 seed Beloit Ringers (9 wins) vs #3 seed Summit Ridge (8½ wins). The match-ups in the finals are determined by performance in the prelims - 1vs1, 2vs2, and 3vs3. The 3vs3 match had Kevin Brekke vs Dave Volz. Kevin won 31-21. The 2vs2 match had Jim Huckabee vs Rick Weller. Rick won 32-22. The match would be decided in the 1vs1 match of Tammy Newkirk vs Bun Carley. Tammy had a 12-6 advantage at the halfway point. This is where Bun stepped up and threw 13 ringers in the last 20 shoes to take the game 29-12. Summit Ridge advanced to the final match against #1 seed Three Amigos (11½ wins).

Bun Carley handled Kerry Morris in the 1vs1 matchup winning 44-21. Ray Groskinsky stepped up for the Three Amigos in the 2vs2 match against Rick Weller and pitched his highest ringer percentage of the day (60%) winning 40-12. This left all the marbles in the hands of the 3vs3 match between Dave Volz and Russ Brockway. The game went back and forth with Russ taking an early lead and then Dave stormed back to have a 24-12 advantage at 28 shoes pitched in the game. These two pitchers were the last to finish so all eyes were on this game with 12 shoes to go. Russ must have liked the added audience as he poured on 5 ringers in the next 10 shoes to take a 28-26 lead with 2 shoes to go. The tournament championship was on the line with 2 shoes to go and a 2-point difference in the game. Russ had first pitch and, with all eyes watching, he put on 2 ringers to seal victory for the Three Amigos.

It was an amazing finish for the tournament as greatness was on display in the form of Russ Brockway pitching 7 ringers in the last 12 shoes of the final match to seal the championship for his team. This might be an event that gets back on the 2022 schedule!



## “The Cruel Shoes

by Justin Kern

### The Greatest Games That No One Else Saw,

#### Vol. 2: Dunkirk 2011

In horseshoes, it isn't always the pitchers who bring us together or the ringers that we remember most.

On that – this Fall, I lost my dear grandmother, Maxine R. Kern, 90, of Dunkirk, New York, after a brief illness, and who had a full life, with many laughs and stories. For the better part of my youth, I grew

up in Dunkirk, around Maxine and so many other members of my family. That goofy, frustrating and hyper-realistic version of growing up in western New York – far different than Downstate and NYC – meant plenty of gatherings and time at parks with horseshoes as a central activity. Which brings me to a day of epic ringers and decent trash talking amid family, friends and associates in 2011 for Maxine's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday at Point Gratiot.

Point Gratiot Park is named for a U.S. Army engineer from the War of 1812, the war called a “tie” – a win, loss or draw is certainly debatable when we're talking about battles of life and death – and one that pockmarks so much of this part of western New York. (The phrase “Don't Give Up the Ship” comes from this oft-overlooked war with the British, one applicable to much in life.) The park itself in Dunkirk is sliced along the shale on Lake Erie in scenic fashion, one perfectly partly sunny in summer and punished by snow in winter. And for the history of my memory, this park has always featured horseshoe pits. Each pavilion features a pit and, at least as of a few years ago, there was a central slew of pits, often dominated by some of the same Camaro driving shirtless dudes who graduated high school with my dad in the late 1970s.

Naturally, this was the ideal park for family reunions, quinceaneras, Sunday Fundays and my own high school graduation, where I was able to slip in an underage beer by sneaking to an outlying pit to toss shoes with friends. The park was the logical choice for my grandmother Maxine's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday bash. She, quintessentially of an era in Dunkirk. She, always loving a chance to be outside with her family. Maxine, named for a silent movie star and theater chain, who was stoutly of old Polish-American stock. And a mom and wife of so many silly men who loved to spend their days and drinks over things like horseshoes.

At Maxine's 2011 birthday gathering, we had a

horseshoe pit perfectly placed near the grill and beer coolers. My dad, Al, was on top of the charred steaks and I was lined up as the runner – for more beers, extra napkins, etcetera.

When we reached a lull in serving and with Maxine content around grandbabies, siblings and distant relations, Al asked simply: “Horseshoes?” We paired up and proceeded to challenge any family, friend, attendee and Camaro driving stranger within reach of our pavilion. And I'll tell you, we were on. If he had cancels, I had leaners. If I had ringers, he inched out whatever else someone tossed. We took out newcomers, seasoned uncles and curious siblings. Questions from the losers: Had we planned this? Were we plants? No matter, we hit 21 and they weren't even close.

Then ... The Rivals. Marky and Kevin are brothers, and cousins to my father. Marky was a regular at this park and Kevin spent a good amount of time pitching horseshoes during his rarely-discussed military deployment “Out West” in the 1980s. Al and I were white-hot. The perfect time for this family comeuppance.

You still have to play, and ours was a back-and-forth affair. Other family members gathered to bring advice, accolades, better disses. For dad and I, it was all tuned out. This was big time. The 2011 Maxine Kern Dunkirk Horseshoes Invitational, as I recall talking it up. Two-on-two, four-on-the-flour. Matching ringers and similar slumps. But all our work to bring our best shoes, plus drinks and steaks, did little to slow Marky and Kevin. In fact, and perhaps you've run into this, they seemed to grow in precision with more meat and Labatt's Blue. A pitcher's Gatorade! It came down to a win-by-two ringer cancel. And as I threw my last shoe, it clanged away from Kevin's killer three-pointer. Literal cheers and groans from family, including Maxine.

For Al and I ... defeat. That losing feeling, a diminished outcome except with its sting. Resigned to the glory of a dessert BBQ steak, the agony of cool-down loss beers.

You don't realize the ticking clock and the value of now, too often, until it's too late, to paraphrase Bukowski. But it's not too late if you still remember. I won't soon forget these fun games. What brought us together – at this park, for fun – was centrally my grandmother Maxine. And she never tossed a shoe.

Earlier this spring, those same relatives, Marky and Kevin, lost their own mother (Maxine's sister-in-law), Joanie, a character who loved polka and “a Seagram's and Coke” until the end. And we were able to catch up at Maxine's reception and Mass this October.

Rest in Peace, Maxine, and my deep gratitude to all of you who have lost someone who brought you closer to each other and this game in the past year.



## Russ Burns

Kevin Brekke

Russell W. Burns was called home to our Lord on Tuesday, November 2, 2021. He was 85. Russ loved to travel with his wife Bonnie, and together they traveled to 48 states, lower Canada, Mexico and the Bahamas. They were married 45 years. Russ was an avid bowler, and in 1987 joined the UAW horseshoes, and in 1989 joined the Beloit Horseshoe Club. Russ pitched in 26 World Tournaments and won his class at world in 1989.

What stood out to me about Russ was not his stature, but his heart. At the funeral family and friends recounted the love Russ showed him, and he cared and took time for them. He gave the best hugs and took time to listen. Someone once said love has a speed, and it's slower than you are, which reminds me of Russ.

On the horseshoe court you knew you were going to have a tough match if Russ was in your class. In later years Russ could not drive, there was no shortage of people that volunteered to give Russ a ride to and from the courts. I know, I was one of them, what a privilege it was. Those years even at 30 feet Russ had a hard time getting his shoes to the stake, and often one or two shoes would be leaning in front of the stake. Russ would always stay after league night and pitch cut-throat with whoever was there, which most of the time included me. No matter how far Russ was behind, he always made a game of it. I miss those days.

But the most important thing about Russ is that he loved God and people. This love was the motivating factor in everything he did, and everyone who met him knew that. Even in his obituary the last words were John 3:16. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life".



## Diana Falkenberg

Penny Steinke

Dianna Falkenberg of the Eagle Horseshoe Club passed away on October 1, 2021 at the age of 59. If you have ever been to the Eagle tournaments, you would have probably seen Dianna running around and helping with the food concessions or with the many raffles of the weekend. She enjoyed being around people and taking care of things. She had an infectious smile and laugh which made her an instant friend. She was very talented in the kitchen. She made delicious dishes, which she shared often with her neighbor Tom Steinke and his family. Her cookies and breads are surely going to

be missed! She loved to share her treats with friends, co-workers, and neighbors. During covid, she also made lots of face masks for others as she was a talented seamstress. Dianna also had a huge bell collection, which was on display at her service. She collected bells over the years and also got many as gifts from friends and family. People were invited to take a bell home in remembrance of her. Our condolences go out to her husband Joe of almost 30 years and her daughter, Marisa and the many other family members and friends who miss her dearly.



## Willis David

Sonia Cook / Jane Smith

The Marshfield Horseshoe Club has another member pitching in the Stars. Willis David's top award was a NHPA World Class Champ. He also judged many State horseshoe events. He also participated in several World Tournaments. Willis had a delightful sense of humor as did his brother Dan. Deepest and sincere sympathy to the David families.



**Willis W. David, Sr.**

January 28, 1930 - November 21, 2021