

**HORSE
TALK**

with
Janice Neufeld



It seems to be a little-known fact that the North Okanagan has a top "California" style horse training facility within easy reach. The Dick Witbeck Training Stable on Realm Road just off Highway 97A is offering well qualified instruction to riders in training for horses.

Dick Witbeck and his wife Bev are recent arrivals in the Okanagan, having moved here from Stockton, California, in 1979. They had visited B.C. several times before this and after a very successful clinic and schooling show in the Sports Arena in Kamloops, felt that there was a great need here for the skills he had to offer.

The Witbecks now have property near Armstrong, on which they have built a fine, practical training complex, can handle about a dozen horses at a time for training. Clinics for horses and riders are held regularly and they hope to schedule a series of schooling shows next season so that horses and riders can gain experience "in the pack" without having to enter Class A shows in distant areas.

Dick grew up on a ranch in Colorado where his family ran large numbers of both cattle and sheep. A lot of horses were required for the ranch work so, at an early age, Dick was breaking horses at home and, while still a teenager, went on his own, supporting himself solely on his horse training ability. He worked for many large ranches and horse breeding/showing operations throughout Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, and California. He is largely self-taught, but, if it is true that experience is the best teacher, he certainly has plenty of that.

He has been the feature speaker for leading horse organizations in several States and helped establish, and wrote for what is now the largest all-breed horse publication in the nation, "California Horse Review". As a certified teacher, he taught a horsemanship class for college credits at San Joaquin Delta College. He was the original planner and manager of Saddle City in California—a total horse complex.

Horses are accepted at the Witbeck Training Stable for a minimum of 2 months since Dick's policy is to train a horse so when it leaves it is "something special." "I am not a horse stumper," says Witbeck, "a 30 day training session is simply not sufficient to get more than just the basics established in the horse." When he travels to other areas for 7 day clinics he always returns for a follow-up clinic and can thereby better keep the horses and riders on track.

There are presently 2 apprentices with government sponsorship working with Dick. This program is a first in this province and quite unique. Contact Magazine is doing a feature article on this because of its involvement with youth employment. However, he finds it rather frustrating that his establishment cannot be classed as a regular agricultural enterprise when he is one of the few who can take 5 acres and make it a business, a livelihood, and employ 2 full-time staff.

Dick finds many aspects of the equestrian business here to be very different from that in the United States. He feels that one of the big reasons that we are lagging far behind the U.S. in this area is our petty, narrow attitude toward breeds, riding styles, and types of competition. A spirit of disunity and monopolizing actions here hinder the progress of the whole horse industry. He finds he is missing the professional etiquette and cooperation that he was used to.

However, Dick's main satisfaction in life is to help other horsemen and women. He stresses that there are no age limits if the desire to learn and the love of horses is there, you are neither too old, or too young. "There are good horses in every breed," states this versatile trainer, and he feels that we are lacking big open shows such as are popular in California. These could do much more to unify the horse programs than the exclusive breed shows. From what he has observed, the quality of horses here is just as good as anywhere else and he would like to see riders and trainers stay and build up their business rather than migrating to where things seem more promising.

LOOK BACK FIVE YEARS

OCTOBER, 1976
Vernon Lodge Hotel has an old, dignified trophy sitting on top of its trophy case. The Pat Hartney Trophy, symbolic of senior horse supremacy in B.C. had not been presented since 1969 when it was misplaced and turned up three weeks ago and was presented to the victorious Tigers.

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SUMMER GAMES HEADQUARTERS

Harold McDonald, left, president of the 1982 Greater Summer Games Society receives the keys to the old Smith House from Vernon Mayor Niel Davidson. The 32

Avenue location was called ideal by McDonald, and will serve as the society's headquarters for organizing the games which will be held in Vernon. (al Brunet Photo)

Panthers third in UBC tourney

The VSSS Panther Boys Volleyball team placed third out of 32 teams in the UBC Annual Invitational Tournament last weekend. The squad lost out to KLO 9-15, 12-15 in the semi-finals, who went on to beat Maple Ridge in the finals.

In the first round play on Friday, Vernon beat Mennon Educational Institute, 100 Mile House, and Port Coquitlam. In second round play on Saturday, Vernon downed George Fringie.

Queen Elizabeth, and split games with Mission. Larry Olson, of Vernon, was named to the first all-star team of the tournament.

Tuesday night, in League play at Rutland High, the Panthers lost to KLO 10-15, 14-16, beat Penton 4-15, 15-8, 18-16, and downed Rutland 15-5 and 15-11. Next action for the Panthers is on Thursday, when they face George Elliott in exhibition play.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Royals win exhibition games

The VSSS Royals Volleyball Team had two exhibition matches on Monday. They downed Normak 15-11, 15-9 and beat Westside 15-5, and 15-11.

In league play on Tuesday at KSS the girls beat Rutland 15-2, 15-9, downed KSS 15-9, 15-4, but lost to their rivals, Penton, 15-2, 15-15, and 12-15.

The squad is idle until next Tuesday, when they head to KSS for more league play.

BOTTLE DRIVE
The Vernon and District Pony Club is making an all-out canvass of the city on Saturday, Oct. 17 in its bottle drive. In

order to raise funds for their many activities with their horses, the young people will be gathering bottles, jars, cans and newspapers for recycling. Please be ready for them starting at 8:30 a.m. or leave your recyclables out to be picked up.

VINTAGE CAR MEETING
The ladies auxiliary of the North Okanagan Chapter of the Vintage Car Club of Canada will hold its regular meeting tonight at Irene Bieller's home. The address is 3504A - 24 Ave. Since this is the last meeting before the annual meeting, members should attend to nominate next year's executive members.

**Youth marks
1981-82 Lakers**

By RUSS NILES
Daily News Writer

The coach of Vernon's entry in the B.C. Junior Hockey League's Interior loop says local fans should not write off this year's edition of the Vernon Lakers on the basis of its performance in the first five games.

Gord McBeth said in an interview Tuesday, he has no doubt the team will be a much improved version of the 1980-81 Lakers which managed only eight wins in 36 outings.

Lakers are currently one for five including 7-1 and 9-1 losses to defending champion Penton Knights.

McBeth is quick to point out that in two of the losses, the margin was only one goal.

PATIENCE NEEDED
"Hopefully people will be patient," he said, "another three or four games and we should be playing well. I don't think there is any way Penton is going to beat us that badly again."

Youth and inexperience are the hallmarks of this year's Lakers team. McBeth said the average age of his players is just over 17 years old and noted Penton's average age is 19.

"We're starting right from zero. The kids are just not used to playing in this league," he said.

Another thing that has been weighing the Lakers down is a roster biding with 27 players. **CONFUSION EXISTS**
The first five games were actually an extension of training camp pre-season confusion with line shuffles and position changes.

"We're still evaluating some FIGHTS THOMAS CLEVELAND (AP)—The opponent for heavyweight boxer Jimmy Young in the Nov. 6 World Boxing Council match in Pittsburgh will be Franco Thomas, promoter Don King announced Monday. Young, ranked 11th by the WBC, will meet Thomas, ranked 10th, on a four-light card headed by a Larry Holmes-Rinaldo Snipes heavyweight championship bout. Also featured on the card are Michael (Dynamite) Dokes against George Chaplain and Randy (Tex) Cobb battling Bernardo Mercado.

of the kids and we're planning a few changes," he said. The axe fell on three players at Tuesday's practice. Aron Armstrong, Tom Roy and Taylor Sebastian were all released.

McBeth said that by this time next week the Lakers roster should be pretty well set at 19 or 20 players.

ESTABLISHING TEAMWORK
Following the final cuts, McBeth said emphasis will be put on establishing teamwork.

Vernon has a crowded schedule in the next week. The Lakers travel to Revelstoke Thursday, and get a chance to avenge Monday's loss to Penton with a trip to the Peach City Friday.

Their next home game is Sunday at 7 p.m. at the Civic Arena when they entertain the Revelstoke Rockets.

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Notice

Vernon Fish & Game Rifle Range Closure

To facilitate construction for raising of the City of Vernon Sewage Reservoir, the following rifle range closure shall be put into effect MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1981 at the Vernon Fish & Game Club Rifle Range.

**Rifle Range closed Monday thru Friday
Rifle range open Saturdays and Sundays only**

The rifle range closures shall remain in effect until further notice and applies to all club members and/or the general public.

Vernon Fish & Game Club

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