

HISTORY OF CLUBS ON TEXADA - PART 2

The first reported “sports” competitions were the Sunday afternoon horseshoe games played in front of the old hotels. However, by the 1950’s, Texadans were into team sports in a bigger way.

The 60-foot high pile of tailings from the Marble Bay mine was levelled in 1951 to create the Van Anda ballfield. Off-work loggers and community volunteers used 7 bulldozers, 4 power shovels and 8 trucks to fill in the swamp (photo). One power shovel, left overnight, disappeared by morning into the murky depths and had to be dismantled and pulled out in pieces! In less than a week Van Anda had the foundation for a ballfield to rival Blubber Bay’s.



The Texada Athletic Commission was established in 1953 to organize 6 adult softball teams as well as clubs for children. Island organizations were pleased to sponsor the teams with names such as Texada Ironmen, the (women’s) Blubber Baybees, the JF’s (also the FJ’s!), Elks and Legion.

Lack of good TV reception (until 1958) meant more evenings open for community activities. Youngsters could join Scouts, Guides, CGIT, practice marksmanship with the Army Cadets or go sailing with the Sea Scouts in their 27-foot boat.

The Texada Teen Town Association held Friday night dances in the new (1957) community hall in Gillies Bay. A reel-to-reel tape player blasted out the hits.

Horse enthusiasts established the Saddletramps club which hosted gymkhanas featuring the boot, handkerchief and barrel races.

The TV series *Sea Hunt* inspired two Texadans to glue together homemade diving suits and start the Texaquatics diving club. Their famous “Raptures of the Deep” cocktails enlivened many seafood barbecues.

Texada clubs included the arts. The Rock Island Players made their 1963 debut with the comedy *Kempy*. When the power quit half-way through, Act II had to be performed by lantern light.

In Blubber Bay the Arbutus Community Club helped organize concerts, maypole dances and lessons in painting and Chinese cooking. The 18-member Limedusters “swung their partners” at their first square dance in 1956. Summer hoedowns were held in the tennis court under the stars.

Despite the distractions of modern multi-media, the spirit of community survives in the many clubs that still exist on Texada today.