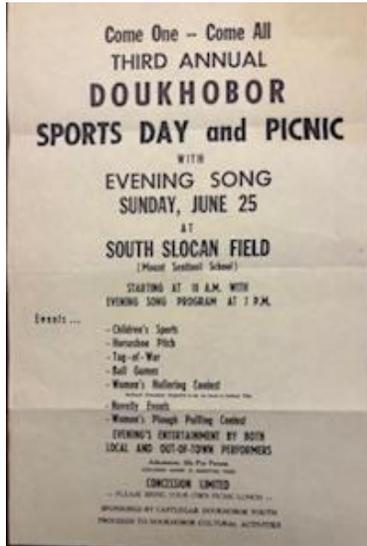


DOUKHOBOR SPORTS DAY (Final Draft for Elmer Verigin Blog)

(A Unique Vintage Doukhorbor Event Sponsored by the Doukhorbor Cultural Association (DCA))

After a review of the Doukhorbor Cultural Association (DCA) Minute Book, the first Doukhorbor Sports Day was held on Father's Day, June 21, 1970.



An original advertising Poster was located for the Third Annual Doukhorbor Sports Day posted on the left. This suggests that the First DCA Sports Day must have been held in the year 1970.



The DCA perennial choice of Father's

Day would confirm that the poster on the right would take place in 1980 as Sunday, June 15, was in 1980. Although the location is stated as South Slocan Ball Field, the actual name was Campbell Field. One can smile that the "committee" responsible for advertising, failed to note the year of the event.

The DCA had membership that was an equal distribution of the three (3) distinct Doukhorbor Societies that operated in British Columbia in 1970. This organization was constituted following Doukhorbor Youth Conferences in 1969 and 1970. The basic premise was an attempt to encourage collective association in a positive manner. Assembling as a "Fun Day" was recommended and generated by about twenty (20) young families. The best research that the Writer was able to achieve was that eighteen (18) consecutive years of family fun continued until the DCA became intricately involved in the Whatshan Lake Retreat

Music Festivals that began in the year of 1999, coinciding with the centennial of 7,400 Doukhorbors migrating to Canada from Georgia in Russia.



Note the program highlights listed on the posters was only part of what took place. The idea worked

well and attendance increased, year after year with 'word of mouth' advertising. This undated photo was a partial crowd attending the evening program.

Competitions included:

1. **Nail Driving** an eight (8) inch spike into a log with ‘regulation hammers’ in relays. The finalists then competed. Many of the Attendants were practicing Carpenter Tradesmen and so this was a popular event. Fairness and inclusion were respected and this event was also separately held for women.
2. **‘Ladies Plow-Pulling’**,



When Doukhobors first immigrated in 1899, the virgin lands required cultivation, while the men became involved in building Railways to generate income. teams of women were involved in pulling plows as horses were also not available. So this event was partially nostalgic as it was fun, competitions that were readily participated and enjoyed by spectators.



The grounds at Campbell Field were suitably prepared to make it easier for the Ladies.



Participating teams were judged by the straightness and depth of the furrow as well as time to traverse a predetermined distance.

After several Sports Days, Slim Koochin and George Cheveldave assembled a ‘plow on wheels’. Unfortunately the judges could see the unfairness and lack of adherence to ‘regulation equipment’ and thus rejected this “assembly” from competing.

3. **Concession Stand**

The Concession Stand was dated; however, the DCA assisted the local volunteers to improve the facility later in the years that the Doukhobor Sports Day was held. This was the original Concession Stand with the DCA Sports Day. Note the prices of goods for sale. Very affordable as a Family Event. The Peace Burger was a creation from within the DCA membership, as vegetarianism is part of the Doukhobor understanding.



4. 'Sergio Potato Fries' on the right side. Here the 'real' Serge Plotnikoff is busy preparing a batch of fries after seasoning with his 'secret choice of spices' (well maybe just pepper and salt). Jim Laktin is the 'Sous-Chef', Violet Plotnikoff is providing her opinion (which



side needs more frying)

to her husband Serge who 'allowed' his 'Sergio Fries' franchise to be used at no cost. Notice the adherence to Interior Health protocol by the staff. The DCA started with one 100 pound sack of potatoes but needed to add another, in later years.

The dated Kootenay West MP, Bob Brisco "dropped in" to peel the onions and assist the event.

5. Watermelon-Eating contest was popular with the teenagers and children as there was no entry fee and a large piece of water melon could be consumed by the participant.



On the left, competitors are in one line so that the judges can anticipate winners who need to identify themselves by holding the rind over their heads. A panel of judges decide how fully eaten the piece may be. All judge decisions were final with vouchers to the Concession Stand

lessened the Sports Day requirement for cash.

On the right are two (2) teenagers getting ready for the contest.

The judges usually keep their distant as juice and seeds "flew through the air".



6. **Flea Market**



Of course, there was always a need for a Flea Market. Early morning 'Browsers' are looking around while the tables are being set up.

7. Log Sawing Contest pitted pairs using a Crosscut Saw to saw through a log. Some of the older participants had the woods expertise, were better coordinated and easily outclassed their younger competitors.

On the lower left, Joe Nazeroff teamed with Mike Zoobkoff on the right while Larry Sapriken watches closely and times their successful cut.



8. Tug O' War. It is always exciting to see teams of twelve (12) take opposite ends of a long rope to see who the strongest team is. Again, a unified team, pulling together, will be successful.



9. Ladies Hollering Contests were very popular as the public soon realized which women got her say in the family. Notice the Judges standing behind the contestants, out of the way of deafening noise.



Younger contestants seemed to be able to have a greater volume as they are bolder.



10. Sack Race. Younger participants in this popular event. Frustration is evident as the participant loses his hold on the sack.



People at the Sports Day were always willing to participate in all these varied events.

11. Grass Skiing. This event required teams of three (3) to coordinate their movement to race between two (2) points. It was fun to participate and watch as well.



12. Bingo was popular to the elder, less agile people who could sit and participate.



The venue was treed for shade. A temporary tarp cover helped keep the other more vulnerable seniors.

The Bingo booth was filled steady and enjoyed by many.



13. Sunflower Spitting contest was an absolute necessity at a Doukhobor Event and so there they were all competing for the best distance a shelled sunflower seed can fly. There were no shortage of competitors as can be seen in this photo



14. Obstacle Course. No photos available.

15. Outhouse Race No photos available

16. Pillow Fights No photos available.

17. Greasy Pole Climb No photos available.

18. Fish Pond No photos available.

19. Balloon Blowing No photos available.

20. Horeshoes No photos available.

21. Water Transfer Competition.

Full pail of water on one side must be transferred to a pail on the other side. Participant with the most water retained in the second pail, at the end, wins.



22. Egg Toss partners start at arm's length, toss the egg and take a step back at the command. Partners with a solid egg at the end wins. Sometimes messy but fun.

23. Children's Races were always fun for all young age categories.



First, Second and Third

Ribbons were awarded to winners. The smiles on children's faces as they proudly showed off their proof of participations, was very satisfying to the DCA Organizers.



24. Egg and Spoon race that requires delivering the egg to the other side and partner returning to starting point without losing it off the spoon.

24. Wheelbarrow Race



25. Fastball One time Fastball Teams played competitively at Campbell Field. Jack and Alex Voykin with Alex Cheveldave contacted these former players to play a game against an 'ad hoc' team volunteering from the crowd. No shortage of spectators to enthusiastically watch the former players compete against a 'Challenger' team. Just a old time, good time Participaction Event. John J. Verigin Sr., found his former Castlegar Cubs uniform and enjoyed a game with his former team mates.



26. Evening Talent Night with the Konken Family offering their professional talents on the right.



On the left, the talent is Tim Fominoff , John Saliken, Nell Sookroo, Mary and Mike Perepolkin



Just some good music playing and singing for entertainment.

Mike Wennechuk brings his professional Music Training from the Ukraine on the right.



Partial Kootenay Mens Choir participated. From L to R Russel Verigin, Mike Zoobkoff, Peter Picton, Mike Varabioff, Bill Nichvolodoff, Walter Markin, Elmer Verigin, Joe Nazaroff and Paul Samsonoff.



Myra Koodrin shared some of her songs.

Lifetime friends bring their harmony L to R are:



Gertie Konkin, Nora Laktin, Elsie Campbell, Marie Balshevski





The DCA UNCHOIR (a name dedicated to DCA enthusiastic members who sang from their hearts)

Left to Right are: Walter Demoskoff, Elmer Verigin, Peter Picton. Lawrence Popoff, Larry Sapriken, Bill Plotnikoff, Paul Koodrin, Mabel Verigin, Mary Plotnikoff, Bill Voykin, Kathy Popoff, Edna Sapriken, Ann Chursinoff, Violet Plotnikoff, Mary Picton, Mary Cheveldave, Irene Tamelin, Ann Zibin, Margaret Elasoﬀ, Marilyn Verigin, Joe Podovnikoff, Fred Chursinoff, Alex Cheveldave, Serge Plotnikoff. Missing are Lorne Tamelin, Lawrence Verigin.



Peer and Elsie Rezansoff were not present the year that the Unchoir performed but they were very much participants in other years.

27. Cleanup Committee



Part of a clean up committee. L to R Serge Plotnikoff, Walter Demoskoff, Elmer Verigin, Lorne Tamelin and Fred Voykin on the left.

“..Whew! We did it again! Am I ever tired!

Are we going to do it again next year? We need to get more help!

...” L to R Betty Zarikoff, Irene Tamelin, Edna Sapriken, Mary Plotnikoff and Marilyn Verigin on the right.





More of the hardworking Crew L to R Mary Plotnikoff, Katie Laktin, Annie Chursinoff, Marilyn Verigin, Irene Tamelin, Pat Picton, Mary Picton, Elmer Verigin and Ann Demoskoff.

28. Acknowledgements:

1. *DCA Minutes Books, records*
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3. *Marilyn Verigin, photos sorting*
4. *Iskra Co-Editor, StephanieSwetlishoff*
5. *Doukhobor Sports Day History:*
 - a. *Mary Picton*
 - b. *Lawrence and Kathy Popoff*
 - c. *Peter and Elsie Rezanooff*
 - d. *Fred and Ann Chursinoff*
 - e. *Jim Laktin*
 - f. *Allan and Evelyn Markin*
 - g. *Nona Kucher*
 - h. *Lori Woodhouse*
 - i. *Tamara Verigin-Burk*
 - j. *Kimball Verigin*
 - k. *Perry Samoloyoff*
 - l. *Robert Popoff*
 - m. *David Popoff*
6. *Members of the DCA that organized and participated in the Sports Day Event*
7. *All the avid participants in the Doukhobor Sports Day*

29. Comments from some of the DCA Organizers and their Children in 2026

1) Popoffs

- a. **David** – “...enjoyed: Bingo, outhouse races, plough pulling, seed spitting, peace burgers and meeting all the valley girls...”
- b. **Robert** – “...enjoyed Peace burgers and the softball games in which he participated...”



2) Laktin

Jim — *“...The DCA Sports Day on Fathers day was always a special day for our family. Although the preparations usually started the week before with getting the grounds and concession ready, we did look forward to this event.*

You see, when Katie and I got engaged we made a deal between us. I came with a USCC background. I was a member of the Union of Youth executive. Katie and her family had recently moved to Grand Forks from Agassiz as members of the Reformed Doukhobors. Although our parents on both sides totally accepted our union, we vowed not to let religion interfere with our lives and we would carry on as Independant Doukhobors. We joined the DCA.

The DCA Sports Day became a very special event. Here we could all come together, regardless of our backgrounds. Everyone was welcome, including our non Doukhobors neighbors. And boy did they all come.



3) Verigins

a. **Elmer** — *“...As a child, living in Pelly, the Pelly Doukhobor Society used to stage a yearly Family Day, where they would have childrens events, concession stand and picnics. They were fun days with adult ball games. I could not wait for that event to take place every year. They stopped for whatever reason. The DCA Sports Day brought back positive memories for me. Too bad that nobody wanted to carry on after the DCA went on with other things...”*



b. **Marilyn** — *“...My memories of the DCA Sports Days bring me heartfely Peace. The fact that all of the DCA members were dedicated and committed to cooperate in an unbiased atmosphere, revealed th true meaning of Doukhorism. We learned to respectfully listen to each other as we planned, prepared and accomplished our mission. To this day we are still being thnked...”*



c. **Nona** — *“...My earliest memories begin at the horseshoe pits. Men arrived carrying their own cases of horseshoes, determined to win and proud to show their skill. There was something serious and ceremonial about it, like tradition mattered and everyone knew their role.*



Pillow fighting on a log stretched between two trees was always a hoot to watch. Looking back, it probably wasn't the safest activity, and it's certainly something we'd never be allowed to do nowadays — but at the time, it was pure laughter and fearless fun. Then there was the fishing pond... oh yes, the fishing pond. Somehow, I always ended up volunteering there for hours. Whenever the little ones wanted to fish, I made sure there was already something on the hook. It was sweet watching their excitement, even if working that booth wasn't exactly fun.

Baseball games were my favorite to watch. They felt like the heartbeat of the valley — a gathering place where everyone came together, cheering and sharing the moment.

The food was always so good, even though I never noticed at the time that there was no meat. The usual fries, hotdogs, and hamburgers weren't there. Instead, there were Sergio's, kvas, and peace burgers. Those foods were authentic, and they've stayed with me as some of the most memorable tastes of all.

More than anything, it was our dad who taught me the lesson that has lasted a lifetime: no matter what, the show must go on. Every time it rained and people worried the one-day event would be ruined, Dad would do his rain dance — and somehow, miraculously, the skies would clear.

I carry that lesson with me every day. To believe in a good outcome, to keep moving forward with hope, and to trust that when you manifest something with intention, it often finds a way to happen.

This is what I remember. This is what remains...”

d. **Lori:**

"...Opportunity for all of the kids in the DCA to be together

Adults all had the same jobs every year and loved being a part of everyone working together (loved seeing Uncle Lawrence and I think Fred Chursinoff & Pat Picton with their aprons on collecting money at the front gate)

Ball game was always exciting, sitting their eating spits with everyone cheering

Kids races for ribbons and a few coins in an envelope (Mom may have some of the ribbons somewhere – I may be able to find some if we want to take a picture of them)

Collecting garbage and pop cans at the end for 25 cents a bag to buy stuff in the concession

Every year the weather was "iffy" and you would dig a hole, say a few words and spit in it, cover it up and rain never bothered us!

Fantastic memories that will indeed last a lifetime!!!..."



e. **Kimball** – *"...I was quite young in the early years so most memories are not super specific,*

just that it was always a fun day and seemed like everyone enjoyed it. I have flashes of things but also think that it's probably from pictures. The women's hollering was always a highlight especially when the old ladies would literally come out of the their knee highs, blood boiling. Fred Voykin parking people where cars probably should not have gone. Peace burgers, Sérgio's, the singing on the stage. Ball games, the red feet candies, freezies. The times it rained and the show went on. Plough pulling. Some vivid memories of all you volunteers standing around at the end of a very long day in the concession area sipping and singing..."



f. **Lora** - *Yes, the first one I went to I was put in the kitchen with the Douk ladies. I was put*

on grilled cheese rotation. There were many instructions to follow, but I did my best. lol

Also, I entered the hammering nail into log competition and I won. And then I do remember there were survivors of Chernobyl there it was moving. I want to say this was 1991..."



g. **Tamara**- *"...The DCA sports Day was something to always look forward throughout my whole childhood and then in later years where I was fortunate enough to have my partner, Kyle enjoys it as*

well. This was such a part of all of our lives. The weeks before were filled with planning and prepping. I seem to recall there were many "safety meetings". The mornings were always early

getting to the site. From the start to the finish, there was so much excitement by all. I remember the children's events with the fishing pool, three-legged races, flour sack races and egg toss. Ball games

were always a hit, with my memories of Uncle Russel and what a phenomenal ball player he was. All the adult activities of ladies hollering contest, which always made everyone laugh, to the slippery pole

with the money at the top, watching it get buttered up and how challenging it was for someone to get to the top. The watermelon eating contest that I recall participating in and didn't eat watermelon for a

few years after. I couldn't wait to get old enough to participate in these events. The concession was always something to look forward to too. I can still taste the peace burgers. When we were old enough to help out, we

received many a lesson on the does and don'ts of how to properly cut the vegetables and the perfect layering to complete the perfect burger. The talent show was always a special but sad close for the day as I knew this was the end of

the fun for another year. I can still hear Sarah Demoskoff in one of her last show signings, "Grampa, Tell Me About the Good Old Days", and her passion with every word. The closing of the day never seemed to end with laughter and sharing

of stories by all the DCA. I would ponder what it would be like as an adult to have such incredible friends to enjoy the fruits of your labor and friendship with. The memories are forever etched in my mind. So I am very grateful for the

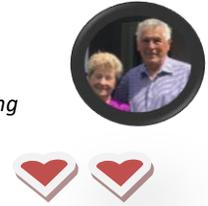
dedication and commitment that the DCA did to bring this event to all the people and families who had the pleasure to enjoy the true spirit of a grassroots event that was truly one of a kind..."



4) Chursinoffs

a. Fred & Ann:

"...Fred and I were very happy to be part of the DCA. It was an opportunity to learn cooperation, patience and respecting others opinions. The Sports Day was an idea to bring people from different parts of the community, to a place where we can have fun getting along. Where else would someone be able to get fried potatoes, cucumber quass and Peace Burgers! We loved setting up for the Sports Day !!!!



5) Markins (I texted Evelyn and asked if they would comment)

a. Allan: *"...I remember the initial discussions about putting on the sports day. There were plenty of skeptics and naysayers: "too much work;" "we won't be able to do it;" "nobody will come;" "logistics too complicated." In the end we took a chance and everybody was glad we did. The sports day turned out to be a roaring success. To this day this stands as a testament to what can be done through communal effort, an aspect of Doukhobor life now lost.*



And who can forget the work of our "parkers"...I think they were Fred Chursinoff, Lawrence Verigin, and Lawrence Popoff. These folks looked after security as well. There were dozens of cars parked safely amongst the well-treed grounds, and we marvelled at how well organized these guys were.

Perhaps the most memorable aspect to me was seeing members of rival Doukhobor factions sitting on the same bench enjoying animated conversations as they feasted on those juicy peace burgers. Those were optimistic times when some of us felt that Doukhobor unity was within our grasp.

I remember long lineups at the concession stand and frying many pounds of onions, savoring the aroma that filled the entire playing field in South Slocan. The atmosphere was joyous. Families roamed the grounds.

Many games were played in friendly competition. Folks were able to forget their troubles. Their smiles served as ample evidence that the Doukhobor Sports Day was a rousing addition to Doukhobor life.

A negative experience for me was trying to sing without a sound system from a makeshift stage. There were requests for Mule Skinner Blues and Jenny Jenny. I sang them but I think I was mostly shouting, not singing. Still, it was fun.

It is important to note that, consistent with Doukhobor values, we left the playing field and surroundings in pristine condition, hauling away all the garbage and even making improvements to the facilities. I remember feeling quite proud of what we had done.

Unfortunately, not long after the first couple of events Evelyn and I moved away to Calgary where I undertook graduate studies. It was sad to leave, but we have many pleasant memories of our association with the DCA and the sports day. Many thanks for the reminder and the opportunity to share some thoughts about those heady days gone by.

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- b. **Evelyn:** *".....It was an exciting time planning a Doukhobor Sports Day . I recall the animated discussions with many ideas and suggestions and the laughs we had as well the seriousness of organizing. Everyone pitched in and volunteered wherever they could. Although my memory is lacking but I think I was involved with children's races such as sack, three legged, potato on the spoon etc. as I had some experience with the school district track meet. I do recall ordering ribbons for the winners, blue, red, white.*

I also helped with adult contests of plowing , sunflower seed spitting and hollering. I recall writing down names of contestants. These were so much fun. Of course, so many things like the plow, had to be sourced. Everyone knew someone or some business where we could collect all that was required. Everyone pitched in and helped taking shifts at the concession where we marveled at the creation of the peace burger which I believe was originally going to be a mushroom burger but grew into the now famous peace burger. The venue itself had/has many memories for me because, as a child-teenager , we attended many May Day celebrations put on by the South Slocan community. One of my favorite places there was on the swings and teeter-totters. I believe that some of our men worked to repair a few of these so that children could enjoy them again. Think I even took a swing for old times sake. The area with trees made it a fun place for the children to play.

Back then we were young and full of ideas and energy . We were good at problem solving and I marvel at what we managed to create and carry on for several years. Unfortunately, we had to move away and leave the good times behind. We are grateful for having had the time we did, as those are some of the best memories from our time in Castlegar and the DCA.



6) Rezansoffs

- a. **Elsie - Peter** *and I had the privilege of belonging to the Doukhobor Cultural Association. We enjoyed working together with like-minded people, most of whom were our dear friends already. We took part in and supported the various projects and initiatives. One of the fondest memories is that of the annual Doukhobor Sports Day held on Father's Day. Although it was a huge undertaking it was so rewarding for all those involved and for the entire community. Not to mention the event was really a lot of fun. 'Many hands make light work' and that's what we all did to ensure the day/evening was a success.*

Peter's *favorite post was frying Sergio potato fries. One never gets tired of the flavourful aroma of fried potatoes. I recall being at the Peace Burger station. Long before plant-based veggie patties were available, the fried mushrooms and onions in a bun was a delicious vegetarian delight. Peter also took part in a few of the events, his favorite being the watermelon eating contest.*

The DCA Sports Day *became a very popular event. There was great camaraderie among the committee members and with the community which strengthened friendships, fellowship and made for lasting memories.*



Lorraine: Howard and I only recall attending the sports day once many moons ago. I think before we had children, so we don't really have any comments. Thank you for including Peter and Elsie and for all your efforts

- b. **Perry Samoyloff:** "...Growing up as a young kid in a Doukhobor community, I was exposed to many cultural events as well as events organised by community leaders. There were tobogganing parties and skating events in the winter. We would all get together and enjoy these winter sports with our friends and parents. They would end up at the Ootischenia Hall where the parents had prepared tubs of hot chocolate and very tasty pizza buns. The Hall has now been sold and the owner has put on other events that will add to the community. In the summer we had a lot to do as well. There were organised sports such as hockey, baseball, and swimming lessons. Our parents were always involved in coaching or supporting or taking us on road trips. The highlight for me were the two sports days at the USCC Youth Festival and the DCA sports day at the Campbell Field in South Slocan. The DCA event was huge; it had something for every age group and ran all day and evening long. We were exposed to far more kids our age and our parents got to listen to performances or play men's softball. The organizational work involved was noticeable to us young kids. The DCA team had a lot of help and there were key adults who ran the sports contests with warmth and care along with lots of enthusiasm and cheering. My claim to fame was winning their watermelon eating contest; I was "pretty good not bad". I won it every year until I got sloppy and let a Wasilenkoff from Shoreacres break my winning streak. I liked the sunflower seed spitting contests and would search for the most aerodynamic seed in my bag of SPITZ. The human wheelbarrow races were fun. I'd grab my brother Lawrence, who was lighter than, and turn him into the "barrow". At the start of the race I'd lift him up and just ran to the finish line. Lawrence only had to pretend his hands were doing any real "wheel" work. The potato sack races were a hoot as well. People were hopping and tripping as they all miserably tried to get to the finish line. One year, I had a plan to win. I grabbed two sacks and stuck a foot in each. At the starting line I pretended there was just one and I was ready to hop. "Ready Set Go" and I was off hopping for a bit. Seconds into this facade, I separated my legs and began running to the finish line with a sack flapping on each leg. I did it for a joke and didn't get the ribbon for pushing interpretational boundaries of the spirit of the race. There were other races as well. One of the key events was the "Tug-o-War". This was serious business! People worked hard at their roles and the crowd definitely cheered on their favourite teams. I'd watch the teams form and then join the team that looked like they could take it. Naturally with my weight; I'd be asked to be the anchor man. There are so many great memories of the DCA Sports Day. As I grew up, and inspired by the DCA energy, I also organised events for my community wherever I was. I never stopped thinking about the community spirit that we were bathed in by the DCA group and other Doukhobor elders that helped with our passage through life. Thanks to DCA, our parents, and many others that gave their time to us youth!!..."



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