

# HeyBlue! Online

## THE CORONAVIRUS EDITION

# 2021

### 2021 SEASON ON THE HORIZON

We are normally approaching clinic season in BC by this time of the year, but not so in 2021. As the calendar changed from 2020 to 2021 we are still in the midst of the pandemic but there are signs of light at the end of the tunnel. Things will be different again in 2021, there is no doubt. However, there is great hope that by some point this summer we will be back to playing and umpiring baseball under more normal circumstances.

First up will be clinic season. More on the specifics of clinics can be found elsewhere in this issue. Suffice it to say that this year's clinics will be unlike any before this. But that's ok. The clinics will still happen – although they will be virtual in all cases. Once we get through clinic season our hope is that we can start umpiring again in late spring with the modified mechanics we utilized last season and by some point this summer we can return to the regular mechanics you are used to.

We thank you for your patience. None of us asked to be in this position and we certainly have appreciated everyone's willingness to adapt to the new normal. We look forward to seeing you all on the field again this year.

-BCBUA's Executive



### AGM Report

The virtual AGM took place in fall with a new format and was widely considered a success. A few glitches occurred which caused a 2nd Special Meeting to take place in January to finalize the acceptance of the Financial report. If you are a BCBUA member in good standing you will have access to the financial documents through the web portal.

Separate department reports will be available elsewhere in this issue.

Elections took place at the AGM as per the bylaws. The following people were elected to the board.

Scott Eckardt—Vice President

Les Maerov—Secretary

Brad Jones—Area 2 Director

Gary Webber—Area 3 Director

Thomas Brock—Area 4 Director

Vacant—Area 6 Director

Darcy Rysz—Area 8 Director

The remainder of the executive remained unchanged as they enter their 2nd year of 2 year terms.

### **BCBUA AWARD WINNERS**

**DOUG HUDLIN**  
**DISTINGUISHED SERVICE –**  
Phil Bourgeois

**ABE SHAPIRO MENTORSHIP**  
**AWARD –** John Pentland

**GEORGE CONNELLY**  
**BUILDERS AWARD –**  
Gord McFarlane

**RICHARD CHRISTIE AWARD**  
**– UNSUNG HERO –**  
Jim Van Meer

**CHUCK BLAIKIE AWARD –**  
**OUTSTANDING**  
**CONTRIBUTION**

BCBUA awarded the entire  
Education Committee with  
this honor for their tireless  
work on revamping the  
education package in 2020.

The Education Committee is:  
Rhonda Pauls – Chair,

Brad Jones, John Pentland,  
Troy Carmont, Sean  
Weatherill, Nick Van Dyk,  
Phil Bourgeois, and Kyle  
Anderson

The remainder of the normal  
BCBUA Awards were not  
presented in 2020.

Photos and write-ups on the  
individual winners are  
available for viewing on the  
BCBUA website. Check it out!  
Congratulations to all the  
recipients!



### **Secretary's Report—2020**

**By Les Maerov**

Total Membership for 2020 was  
1331—a decrease from the total of  
1618 in 2019.

There were a total of 48 clinics  
completed in one form or  
another... either in person or  
online. There was 1 High Level  
clinic completed prior to the pan-  
demic shutdown. The National  
clinic, Umpire Academy and  
Advanced clinics were cancelled.

It is unknown how many members  
or clinics we can expect to have in  
2021 and this will largely depend  
on the state of the pandemic, the  
restrictions and health orders, and  
the number of registrants in  
baseball on the whole.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT—2020** **Financial Period Ended September 30**

BCBUA Revenues Reported: :\$82,850.00

BCBUA Expenditures Reported: :\$39,215.20

Total profit/loss: +\$43,634.80

Total overall cash position of BCBUA: +\$81,024.00

It is important to note that even though BCBUA  
showed a large “profit” on paper and that we show a  
large surplus in the bank account, BCBUA expects  
to show an equally large “deficit” in 2021 given a  
number of factors regarding Covid and a move from  
in-person clinics to a new Virtual Clinic platform  
and the costs associated.





## FROM THE OVAL OFFICE

### -President's Report

At the risk of starting this report in the same manner as every other report you will read today, 2020 sure has been full of learning for us. However, I will also tell you that your leadership team here has done an outstanding job of adapting and managing the changes that this year has brought.

First up is your board of directors. The board has met at least once a month since April, and in several months twice. Even the members who don't use technology had to adapt to using Microsoft Teams and Zoom in order to do their jobs.

The level of communication and action required of the BOD has been greater this year than in any other I can recall. Decision-making and implementation of changes needed were enacted swiftly.

I cannot say enough about how proud I am of this board, and the level of integrity and commitment to the membership it has embodied throughout this pandemic. It has been my absolute privilege to work with this team under what have been very challenging circumstances.

The education committee has done some really good work converting to online clinic. Despite tight timelines, pandemic protocols, physical distancing requirements, and required collaboration, they were able to move our education delivery from an exclusively in-person clinic format, to a completely online platform.

This was nothing short of a miracle in my opinion. I want to highlight John Pentland who so generously gave of his videography skills to help us make this happen, and Nick VanDyk, without whose programming and website expertise we could not have had such an organized and accessible form.

We had some UIC's really step up. They knew that in some cases their new LI umpires had not gotten a mechanics clinic or any feedback on their practice from online. They had no idea about our new modified mechanics



*BCBUA President Rhonda Pauls*

and so they built and administered modified field sessions for them and carried on with the informal mentorship of these young officials when they finally got a chance to see a field. These are people who probably wanted to get onto the field themselves but chose to support our new members first as their priority. This organization is full of servant leaders, and I am so thankful for all of you.

I would like to thank Baseball BC, and specifically David Laing for his leadership as the Executive Director of our PSO during this pandemic. The revolving door of changing regulations and constant updated communication that he has had to keep up with has been challenging to say the least.

*Continued below....*

On behalf of the BCBUA, I want to commend David's diligence. We always had the most current information for our sport thanks to his hard work.

There were many things we couldn't do this year. For most of us, that meant not officiating baseball. It's the sport we all love and have missed over these last months. But what I can say I have missed the most – and has been reflected by many of you in our conversations, is our umpire family.

We will keep our heads up and greet 2021 with whatever it throws at us, because we learned this year that we can handle just about anything. What I ask is that you all stand with us. Support us as we continue to work on your behalf. We have invested ourselves wholeheartedly for our members and will continue to do so. We hope you see the value in what we do, and to stay the course – whatever that may be.

-Rhonda-



## GEARHEADS—

### For Those Who Can't Get Enough By Brad Jones

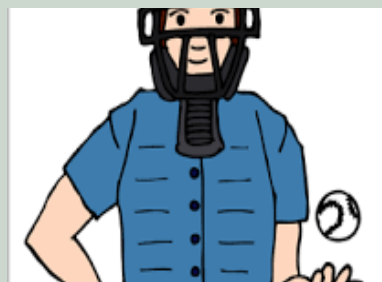
As the craziness of 2020 comes to an end, we, as umpires, can hope that things will change for the better, and we are back on the field in 2021. When that happens, have you checked your gear and made a list of what will be needed to be changed or upgraded by next spring.

If major gear ends up on your list, All-star has a Christmas lineup for you by making a big splash in the GearHeads world with the introduction of their Cobalt line of protective gear.

Following, All-star's trail-blazing Mag mask, the Cobalt line brings a trail-blazing and initiative set of protective gear with a new plate helmet (cap), chest protector (CP) and shin guards (SG).

The Mag mask has the hit of the market last year and become a leader by offering a molded (2-piece) magnesium mask that only has two welds at the ear plates. The funky cage has tapered tubing that is designed to assist in the dispersion of the force from a direct blow to the head. Complementing this, the Mag's over-sided mask pads complete its distinct look and gives it a thumbs up for being a light, protective and cool looking lid. All-star added a companion to the Mag with the Cobalt Skully, a short-brimmed helmet that fills the niche of umpires wanting a hard-shell cap for their traditional mask without be a safety hazard.

The biggest concern of longer brimmed batting and coaches helmets is that when there is a blow to the mask, the cage will transfer the force to the brim of the helmet and then to your head and brain. The Skully, with a cool, flat-black gritty finish, has a short 2-inch brim that brings separation from the helmet to the cage of the mask that will eliminate the force transfer.



Also, it has removable, washable pads that can be adjusted and changed. It comes in four sizes: small (6  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 7), medium (7 to 7  $\frac{1}{8}$ ), large (7  $\frac{1}{4}$  to 7  $\frac{3}{8}$ ) and extra-large (7  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 7  $\frac{5}{8}$ ). It is retailing \$60 US.

Comparing the Skully, to the Un-cap hard-shell liner for traditional caps, I would have to give the thumbs up to the Skully. The un-cap did not fit well to my head and kept falling off when I took off my mask. In contrast, I find the Skully comfortable and firmly sits on my head and does not move when taking off my mask.

Some have suggested going to a neoprene mask harness for the Skully, but I find my normal harness does not slip on its textured finish.

Continued below....

*Gearheads continued....*

While the Skully will be a major player in my bag, the biggest chatter of the Cobalt line has been spent on the Cobalt Chest Protector. This CP has been called a game changer, as it takes its lineage from the holy grail of CPs, the Riddell Power. The Power has been long valued for its design and innovation at the time, but Wilson was able to turn the Power into the Avro Arrow of CPs through legal laws suits over patents. Sadly, Riddell had to cease making the Power and its value and legend has driven its value to about \$800-\$1,000 US on the re-sale market.

The All-star Cobalt CP morphs the Power into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and finally gives GearHeads a low-profile CP that gives fully adjustability and customization. The pre-curved shoulder sections ensure proper clavicle protection, and the memory-forming hard armour will give a better fit to umpires that bulky CPs lack. The major innovation in this CP is the patented padding system that is designed to venting the CP on hot days on the dish. The Cobalt CP also has optional pit pads and lower extension to give you the options to get the right fit.

*Continued next page*





### *Anderson takes helm of Level 3*

Kyle Anderson, Area 9 Director, has stepped in to the leadership role of the Level 3 program of BCBUA. The Prince George resident takes over from the retiring Bill MacMillan who left the post in fall following 23 years as the Level 3 co-ordinator and 25 years on the BCBUA board. Anderson himself is a level 3 umpire with aspirations of moving into the National program. He will take over a robust program that has shown tremendous stability from the years of stewardship of Bill MacMillan. His contact information is available on the BCBUA website.

### *UICS to receive assistance*

BCBUA also announced at the AGM that local UIC's around the province will receive additional assistance in completing their umpire training programs this year. Due to the pandemic, in person class work will not take place and will instead be moved on line. Mechanics sessions and training will take place in person with Area Reps and qualified BCBUA instructors. Additional resources will be provided to UIC's for ongoing learning throughout the season.

### **MEMBER REFUNDS UPDATE**

Due to the pandemic most of our youth members didn't get an opportunity to either take clinics or get onto the field in a meaningful way last season. For some people it was their first year as members. To that end, the BCBUA determined that refunds were in order for all youth umpires 14 years old and under, and any brand new members.

The BCBUA Board refunded almost \$7,000 in member dues to those youths who applied through the process in 2020. Additionally, any umpire who was 14 and under in 2020 will automatically have their paid membership rolled over to the 2021 season at no further charge. Much work (and expense) is incurred annually to provide a high quality experience to our membership and to that end we have done the best we can to mitigate losses to umpires while allowing our association to remain solvent in the upcoming seasons.

### *Gearheads Continued....*

At \$180 US, the Cobalt's only concern is its location of the lower buckles for the harness. Many are concerned about the possibility of the lower plastic buckles breaking from a hard shot to them. However, you can go online and find a fix for this concern with some strapping and Chicago screws.

Finally, the Cobalt line complements the low-profile CP with low-profile shin guards. These SGs snug your legs with a memory forming hard-shell protection while being designed to give good ventilation during hot days.

The biggest feature of these SGs is the weight of a pair of these guards. Coming in three sizes (15", 17" and 19"), these SGs weight between 2 to 2 ½ pounds per pair and are retailing at \$100 US. As you see, lots of gear choices on the market today!



### **Baseball Canada News.....**

Across the country, Provincial umpire leaders are busy working towards the 2021 season. The 5 portfolios all report substantial work being completed on various projects. Grassroots indicates that online level 3 materials will be ready for release this spring on the new Baseball Canada platform. Instructor Development Portfolio reports that all Caravans have been put on hold until next winter due to the pandemic... but also that work continues with ongoing training packages for supervisors as well as the development of the Sr Course Conductor Pathway Program.

High Performance has plans for a new National umpire clinic which will be piloted in Kamloops in spring 2022 and will feature up and coming umpires in the National program—a first for the country.





## **SUPERCLINIC 2021 –**

### **Umpiring Across Canada !**

A new Superclinic format will be available this spring for all level 3 umpires across the country. In a revolutionary partnership between the country's two leading education programs, BCBUA and Baseball Ontario have partnered to offer a virtual Superclinic experience to our membership in 2021!

It's the first of its kind and will allow umpires to maintain their level 3 qualifications by attending a clinic once every three years. Further, the quality of instruction and materials may even be better than an in-person clinic due to the tremendous new platform which will be utilized to deliver the materials.

There will be several topics for umpires to choose from, it will include instruction from BC and Ontario's finest instructors, as well as MLB umpires who will make guest appearances throughout the 4 hour clinic. Already confirmed are: Stu Scheurwater, Mike Muchlinski, and Tripp Gibson, as well as some

of their colleagues. You will get to hear straight from MLB umpires what is going on in their heads as they make calls!

Superclinic 2021 is the first ever clinic which will be offered across the country and there will be several dates you can choose from, so pick the date that suits you and register on the BCBUA website. The cost is just \$50 per person.

Clinic dates are: (subject to change)

*March 6—9am*

*March 14—9am*

*March 20—1pm*

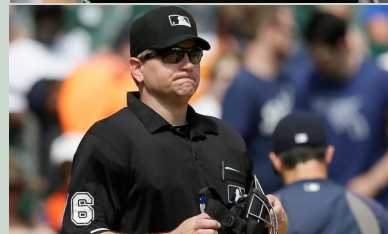
*March 28—1pm*

*April 11—7am*

*April 17—7am*

*April 25—9am*

*May 1—9am*



### ***Level 1 and 2 Clinics go VIRTUAL for 2021!***

The BCBUA has announced that all level 1 and 2 clinics will move online for the 2021 season due to the pandemic. This is a first for the BCBUA! As of this printing, a new platform is being finalized whereby students will register online for a clinic as per normal, and take their entire class session online instead of meeting in person at a clinic site.

Mechanics will hopefully continue to be taught in person at a future date, and following provincial health guidelines when it is safe to do so.

In the meantime, check in with your local UIC to see when clinic dates online will take place and visit the BCBUA website to register. We are all looking forward to this exciting delivery method!



*BCBUA Life Member Lorne Raymond*



### *From The Chief's Desk—Provincial Supervisor Report*

In 1995, Bill MacMillan was at the annual Superclinic in Vancouver when he approached then-Provincial Supervisor Howard Chapman about creating a spot on the BCBUA Board of Directors for an Area Director position for the Kootenay region of the province. Howard had that power in those days. That event came to be at the fall AGM.

I would hardly imagine that Bill figured he would still be on the board in 2020—some 25 years later. However, after a quarter century as the Area Director for the Kootenays he is. Or should I say, he was. Bill retired from the board at the fall AGM, marking the conclusion of the longest consecutive term of any BCBUA board member in history.

Bill served in several different roles on our board, the most prominent being as the Level 3 co-ordinator, a position he held for most of those 25 years. Our level 3 program is one of the top programs in the country thanks in no small part to Bill's diligence over the years.

You probably didn't know this. Our Discipline Policy, Appeals Process, Supervisor Guide Book, Evaluators Program, and a boatload of the Superclinic and Educational programs we use today were spearheaded or authored by guess who? If you guessed Bill MacMillan you'd win a prize.

Many of the bright ideas we use today for Mentorship, Giving Back, Grass-roots development, and participation of our National umpires were authored by and came directly from the long conversations Bill and I had during our hours-long drives from the Kootenays to Kamloops or the Lower Mainland for BCBUA-related business and meetings. So yes, you have Bill to thank for that too!

Bill rarely missed a board meeting over the years. And certainly in the last 10 years or so he had become a really key member of the board, often providing clarity of historical import to conversations and decision making, and helping steer the board into making the right decisions instead of the wrong ones.

He helped me be a better supervisor too. He kept me from making an ass of myself more times than I care to count. He showed me unwavering support. He became like a father-figure to me in baseball and for that I am eternally grateful.

Bill, we wish you well in the future and hope for nothing but enjoyment in your retirement with Patsy, your family, and your grandkids. We will miss your input and your contributions, and certainly your sense of humour and wit. But we know you are just a phone call away when we need some of that sense of direction we are sometimes lacking.

Take care and good luck!



**Bill MacMillan—aka Eager Beaver**

And speaking of authoring... My favourite tv show as a kid was Magnum PI. During the show there was an ongoing hypothesis by Thomas Magnum that his co-resident of the estate they inhabited, named Higgins, was none other than author Robin Masters. An accusation that Higgins always denied.... That is, until the last show in the series where Higgins admitted he was indeed Robin Masters.

How that relates today is that some of you believe that Bill is author Eager Beaver from our newsletter. I for one have believed this to be true as well. And upon his retirement, Bill admits

that this is in fact the case.. he IS none other than Eager Beaver.



***Don't fret! Eager Beaver is just on holidays. He'll be back in the next episode of HeyBlue! Online!***

# PCBUA YEAR—END BALL GAME

Submitted Article

Despite a rainout of the originally scheduled event, 20 PCBUA umpires were joined by 4 friends of PCBUA to partake in a fantasy baseball opportunity as the group played an intra-squad game on the diamond at historic Nat Bailey stadium on Saturday [October 3rd](#).

Two teams made from 21 players were managed respectively by event organizer Corey Klein and PCBUA President Phil Bourgeois.

Joe Mallinson led things off for Team Bourgeois, while wearing a working prototype of the special protective gear specifically designed to counter Joe's penchant for attracting baseballs to him, particularly in the head area. The display prompted rumours of a potential new line of protective umpire gear based on the successful prototype.

The game remained scoreless until the bottom of the 2nd inning, when a potential side-effect of Mallinson's new equipment took him in the wrong direction while fielding a fly ball, turning a likely fly out into a leadoff triple to start off the inning. Team Klein did not squander the scoring opportunity and subsequently pushed the run across to take a 1-0 lead.

Bourgeois sparked an immediate response for his team in the top half of the 3rd, lacing his own leadoff double over the left fielder's head, eventually scoring to tie the game at 1.

The next notable action came in the top of the 5th inning. Chilliwack UIC Mark Luknowsky, who was likely the busiest on-field umpire in BC in 2020, showed the value of seeing pitches and having game reps by registering a 2-out, RBI single to give the visitors a 3-1 lead as part of a 2-run inning.

Team Klein responded in kind in the bottom half of the 5th, putting 2 runners in scoring position. A swinging bunt generated an overthrow, which was coupled with spectator interference by former co-Supervisor Troy Carmont, and resulted in a 2-run response to tie the game at 3.

A bit of fatigue and sloppy play in the next couple of innings resulted in Team Bourgeois scoring 3 times in the 6th, and once in the 7th to take a 7-3 lead into the final at bat for Team Klein, and Mallinson toed the rubber to try and record the final 3 outs.

It wasn't going to be that simple for Mallinson, who couldn't recall it ever being so difficult to throw a ball 60 feet before. Team Klein put together a scrappy inning, narrowing the gap to 7-5 and advancing the tying run to 1st base, before the final out was recorded for the nerve-wracking victory.

Pat Cascio acted as the BSU and Gilles Verret was the Plate Umpire, using the BCBUA-approved COVID-19 mechanics. Both turned in a quality umpiring performance.

Of note, Trevor Sharpe struck out on an eephus pitch from Andrew Brock, which MIGHT have been recorded at 50mph. It certainly was not going to break a pane of glass. Trevor made up for that by throwing out a stealing Nick Van Dyk at 2nd base to end the 6th, despite Nick's protestations that he wasn't tagged in time. Replay (and this writer) both state otherwise Nick; you were out!

PCBUA would like to thank Alex Gibbons, David Johnson, Zachary Chapman, and Andrew Brock for participating and helping with much of the pitching duties. As well as the various high-quality photography performed by Samantha Chapman.

We also need to recognize David Laing and Baseball BC, who provided the teams with equipment & uniforms, and I know they offered to support the event in a variety of other capacities as well. Being able to look like teams for this special occasion was a nice bonus.

Finally, the event would not have been possible without the efforts of coordinators Corey Klein and Troy Carmont to make sure that we put on both a memorable event, while staying safe within the restrictions placed on us by the COVID pandemic. Thank you both for your efforts!

## ROSTERS:

Team BOURGEOIS— Phil Bourgeois, Scott Barden, Yuhan Chen, Wes Fung, Alex Gibbons, David Johnson, Mark Luknowsky, Joe "The Ball Magnet" Mallinson, Trevor Sharpe, Brad Woof, David Wong

Team Klein—Corey Klein, Shawn Bird, Andrew Brock, Thomas Brock, Mark Bodwell, Zachary Chapman, Preston Lee, John Ryu, Errol Tollentino, Nick Van Dyk





















Joe “The Ball Magnet” Mallinson