

2021 HBPA Board Elections

Trainer Nominee Bios

Dated: August 5, 2021

Betts, Nancy - incumbent

Nancy is an active owner trainer at Hastings. She is hands-on in her work and has experience working at other North American tracks.

Freeman, Mark

Mark is a newer trainer whose interest was sparked first on the ownership side and then his enjoyment working with his horses on the backstretch.

Heads, Barb - incumbent

A resident of Aldergrove, BC with over 40 years of racing experience, Barb is a Trainer owner who has grown up with the industry.

She has trained for 35 years and have been fortunate to be raised in a family of owners and trainers, parents Cy and June Anderson and brothers Rob and Mike.

During those years I have raced in British Columbia, Alberta, Washington, California and Arizona and was fortunate to experience all aspects of racing in different jurisdictions. I feel our industry has been challenged for so many years and will need strong unity to fight to sustain and help grow this amazing sport.

Henson, Steve – incumbent



Steve has been an active trainer at Hastings and other North American tracks for many years. He is very dedicated to the industry and the people who work within it and has been the point person for the HPBA's benevolence and care programs.

“I have been in the industry for almost 50 years, a board member for the past 15 years. Currently vice president. I am on the board for every, body not just myself and have an open-door policy on most issues. I will help where I can”.

Leaney, Patty



Patty has done it all in horse racing. For her first ten years she was a jockey, exercise rider, and groom and for the past twenty-four years a veteran trainer. Patty’s whole thirty-four-year career has been at Hastings racecourse. Horse racing has been not only her passion, but her sole source of income as she has successfully raised a family on her own.

Patty is dedicated to every horse that she trains, including one of her horses that she has cared for and trained for over 27 years! Patty believes that each horse’s welfare comes first and that shows up in her training methods, ensuring that each horse is fit and sound before entering a race. This dedication is reflected in the fact that Patty has the best wagering return (ROI) of any trainer at Hastings Park over the past five years.

As part of her commitment to horse and rider safety Patty is focused on the condition of the track. She has been actively involved in the improvements to horse health and welfare over the past years and will continue to champion the safest and fairest racing surface for Hastings Park now and in the future.

And finally, and perhaps most importantly Patty seeks cooperation between all parties. Horseman’s groups need to work together and be open with the membership, so everyone is informed and able to participate and contribute toward enhancing the viability of horse racing.

You will not find a harder worker than Patty, as she and her daughter (Jaymie) work with their horses for over 75 hours a week. Let’s put that energy to work for Hastings Park!

Racing is at a critical juncture, supporting new hard-working directors like Patty is crucial to the successful future of our industry.

Neigel, Tara



I have been involved in thoroughbred industry for close to 20 years. My passion grew the more time I spent in racing. I found a sense of community focused around the thoroughbred. The HBPA and Thoroughbred Ladies Club contributed scholarships to my education at Simon Fraser University. I felt the support of the horseman and veterinarians in sharing their profound knowledge and heard their cheers winning my first races. I have also been heavily involved in the sales of retired racehorses to their new careers. Watching OTTB's flourish is as satisfying as crossing the finish line first, one of the greatest feelings.

We are at a turning point in our industry. There has been a slow and steady decline in trainers, owners, breeders, and the horse population to where we are today, but this sport can be revitalized.

First and foremost, we need open lines of communication. Communication between the associations and operators in a positive and forward-thinking manner. As importantly, communication with the horseman is crucial. We can achieve this through weekly HBPA newsletters, an updated and current website with meeting and financial minutes, open online forums, and regularly scheduled meetings.

Secondly, we need to promote our sport. This can be accomplished through several avenues namely advertising, social media, and corporate sponsorship of important races to increase purse value and enhance the venue for spectators and owners. Ticketed events such as the Deighton Cup have also been well received. The HBPA could promote a few ticketed events for revenue and exposure throughout the racing season.

Lastly, we need to build our backstretch.

In addition to a fresh horse program and breeder incentives, we need incentives to bring in new owners to the game. This can be through financial incentives and events that promote horse ownership. It's also crucial that we work towards more racing days and a longer meet. With the racing season becoming shorter and shorter, we have lost exercise riders, grooms, hot walkers,

jockeys, valets, and gate crew. Even with providing accommodations, longer term employment will make the industry more attractive again.

On a final note, we have a few trainers with most of the owners and horses. The small stable has mostly been eradicated. It is the same trainers with multiple horses competing amongst themselves. Incentives could be offered to build the smaller stables. As well, placing Hastings Racing Club horses in smaller barns would help build those small stables and give the clubs greater attention. In addition, various levels of syndicate ownership could be offered congruent with a fresh horse program.

A commonality between everyone at Hastings Racecourse is that we are passionate about our sport and thoroughbreds. To move forward we must bring fresh ideas, positivity, and tenacity. We won't always agree on what's best, but I believe if we are unified in our efforts we will succeed!

Snow, Mel - incumbent

Mel is an active and experienced multi-generation trainer who has been vocal in his support for horseracing for years. He has worked with the Board with his focus on track conditions and jockey recruitment.

Topouzis, Demetris

Demetris has been an active owner and advocate for horseracing and Hastings for many years. He is dedicated to the industry and the success and enjoyment of his owners.

The Election Period will begin August 11, 2021, until September 10, 2021. The ballot will allow for 5 owner representatives and 5 trainer representatives to be selected.

Please contact Neil Stajkowski, Secretary-Treasurer HBPA-BC hbpaneils@gmail.com. and 604.831.8408 with any questions.