

gley at Nanaimo, 7:30 p.m., Surrey at Powell River, 8 p.m.; Victoria, 7:30 p.m.; Harness racing: Cloverdale Raceway — Wednesday/Friday, 7 p.m.; Saturday/Sunday 1:15 p.m.

# Olympic bid tests mettle

## Gentner's vision may land Games

When the Blazer Brigade is stepping forward to accept the credit for hosting the best-ever Summer Olympics at the closing ceremonies in a waterfront stadium on the shores of False Creek or Coal Harbour in August of 2008, few will remember where or by whom the idea was first presented.

Long forgotten will be B.C. Transit driver Guy Gentner of Delta, who wrote a six-page Olympic bid proposal way back in November of 1995 to get the wheels in motion. That was even before NBC had put together the blockbuster television deal that sewed up the Olympic rights for the Summer Olympics in Atlanta in 1996—except the '98 Winter Games in Nagano, Japan—continuously through 2008.

Gentner wrote his proposal for an ad-hoc group of old Simon Fraser University pals who called themselves the Fraternal Order of Visionaries. His was judged the best vision for '95 and he got a free dinner. With their encouragement, Gentner made a copy for NDP MLA for Delta, Norm Lortie, whose party happened to be in power at the time.

An election was looming in '96 and with NDP popularity sagging, the crafty Lortie thought it might be a good idea to have Tourism Minister Bill Barlee and Colin Gabelmann, minister of government services, take a look.

Even though the proposal was for an Olympic Games eight to 12 years in the future and there could be three changes in government running the provincial affairs, an Olympic bid might be just the antidote for all the negative publicity of the Nanaimo bingo business. Not to mention the stepping down of the premier.

Gentner's proposal was a bid for 2004, but with Atlanta playing host to the '96 Summer Games and Salt Lake City getting the 2002 Winter version, it was deemed unlikely the International Olympic Committee voters would look favorably on another North American bid. With the 1998 Winter Games in Nagano and 2000 Summer Games in Sydney, Australia, the

2004 and 2006 games were a good bet to go to the Eastern Hemisphere.

"We may be in this thing a little late for 2004," Lortie was to remark at the time. "Guy's a dynamic individual and I'm acting as a facilitator for him."

It might be remembered the Canadian Olympic Association supported Toronto in its bid against Atlanta and Quebec City against Salt Lake City.

There had been aborted Vancouver bids in the past. A group tried to drum up support for a Winter Games bid for Vancouver/Whistler in the early 1970s and short-lived balloon of an idea of a Seattle/Vancouver summer bid to co-host the Olympics was floated in 1994.

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The idea of announcing interest now in both 2004 and 2008 makes sense for a couple of reasons. First, it doesn't cost anything more than the cost of stationery on the premier's letterhead and his official stamp, and second, Vancouver will likely be the first North American centre to declare itself interested.

Both Barlee and Gabelmann were still on Christmas holidays Wednesday and unavailable to discuss how seriously Gentner's proposal is being considered in the halls of government.

While there is a Jan. 10 IOC deadline for a letter declaring an interest in bidding, that bid doesn't have to be completed and paid for until September of 1997 ... and that's for 2004!

Just think how many more Johnny-come-lately types can get on board and measured for their blazers if the actual bid is for the 2008 Games.

They'll be elbowing each other off the podium it'll be so crowded with self congratulators.

Two young Toronto Richman and Korn Freedman two NBA teams — the L. Cincinnati Royals — to Maple for a game on January 14. The range plan of bidding for an Toronto hasn't had pro basket — when the Huskies had on the league.

Eastern U.S. papers a former Lions quarterback J. traded from New England to Joe has a \$135,000 salary.

Wayne Volkmer of M failed in his bid to qualify for a golf tournament.



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**KENT GILCHRIST**



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Charlotte, 4:30  
prize medal  
dal, 4 p.m.,