

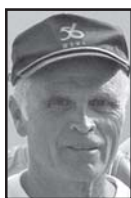
Photographer Thode receives Carl Porter Award

The first thing that came to mind when I heard that I was to receive the Carl Porter Award was that just to have my name mentioned in the same sentence with Carl Porter's is an honor.

The award itself is also an honor, a thrill and, I think, a bit of a stretch. There are many other deserving volunteers who help promote handball in various ways. Handball tournaments, for instance, run much smoother because of the volunteers. We owe all of them continued thanks. While they actually help the sport and the experience, my photos are an attempt to help with the memory of the tournament experience.

My volunteer effort since 1997 has been to give back to handball by taking photos of tournaments and, lately, putting them on DVDs, giving them to the USHA for the magazine and posterity and sending them to many of the players as a souvenir. I chose this method of giving back because it was an area where the USHA didn't have volunteers, and the USHA, as any non-profit organization, has limited staff and funding.

What I enjoy most is finding that one



Thode

non-action photo of family or friends that stands out and makes it all worthwhile. Each year so far, I've managed to find and capture that one that works for me. For others, it may be a different photo that makes them happy. I'm more than happy to have captured the moment for them.

But this paints a somewhat undeserved rosy image. The truth is that I was trying to find a way out of occasionally volunteering, and being commandeered, for the thankless job of refereeing. I figured that if I was taking pictures all day every day, I couldn't be tagged for refereeing. After years of countless days and weeks behind the camera and in front of the computer, I've had plenty of time to reconsider my choice. Maybe refereeing occasionally would have been easier.

I have always thought of the experience of photographing tournaments as a real fun pain in the rear. The tournament itself is the fun part. Taking photos is work, but it

can be fun. Through handball and my handball photography, I've made many friends all over the country and the world. That's priceless. At the end of each day at the tournaments, my snoremate, Mike Meltzer, a volunteer who assists at the tournament desk, helps ease the pressure of each day's shooting with his jokes and stories. But then there's the photo work on the computer when I get home. That's the pain-in-the-rear part. Still, I feel that it's worth it.

Photography has been a hobby since I was 12. I've had many cameras, and I've learned a lot. However, I had never photographed handball action before, except for a few shots in the late '60s. Knowing cameras and photography helped, but what helped me to get even better shots was that Vern Roberts taught me to look for certain situations that I wouldn't have considered. I see his influence in many of my photos.

I would like to place this award on my mantel, surrounded by my other awards and national trophies. Oh, that's right, I don't have any! Maybe Dave Dohman would give up some of his many national trophies!