



THE STICKY WICKET

FEBRUARY 2024



Those Pesky Hoops. What's the Latest?

What are Quadways and Why Do We Need Them?

The phrase "Eye of the Needle" was used years ago to describe the narrow gateway forcing camel riders to shed their worldly goods. Today, in our croquet, we thankfully don't have to shed our worldly goods, but we certainly know that getting the ball through the hoop feels like the eye of the needle. Particularly through a Quadway hoop.

Croquet wickets are evolving, among many changes in our sport. Note the early iron hoop from the Congo, wonderfully wide. You have probably noticed the difference in some of the wickets right here at NCC. On court 9, the Quadway hoops are slightly narrower and more difficult to pass through.



Superhoop

Currently, at NCC, on most courts we are using Superhoops, designed by **Danny Huneycutt**, and Quadways, originally made by Ray Atkins and manufactured in New Zealand. The Superhoops are made of stainless steel, have crow-like fins (feet) and are designed to be stiff for the sandy soil we have at NCC.



Old early hoop from the Congo. Very high and wide. Excellent for jump shots! Courtesy of National Croquet Museum

Quadway hoops are made of stainless steel, have square carrots (the parts below ground) and a bolt mechanism to make the width adjustable to fixed settings. As documented in Oxford Croquet, these hoops are the most difficult hoops to run when set in firm ground.

For starting players, getting through any hoop is a challenge, even intimidating. With Quadways they say the balls bounce off the uprights, and are unforgiving unless the shot is perfect. For the Club, that means all levels of play must be accommodated.

"Basically, Quadways encourage good croquet, offering a challenge for players. At NCC, we use Superhoops on most courts for club team play," says **Zack Watson**, NCC Head Pro. "But for tournament play, the Quads are becoming the standard, and for the future, if we are to compete at top levels, we must use the Quadways or some form of them." Here's where it gets really interesting. "I am developing a new wicket," reports Zack. "My design has longer carrots (below ground) and uses two, (rather than one) longer fins on each side to stabilize better in our sandy soil." Innovation is the creator of progress. Stay tuned!

Many tournament top players agree on the merit of tighter wickets. "I like the Quadways," says Champion **Randy Cardo**. "In a game with loose wickets a Six Wicket player can get all the way to the peg. Tight wickets in Association Croquet gives one a chance to get back in the game. Using the tighter wickets entices all players to become better, and games to be more challenging. But certainly, new players should have looser wickets to learn and build confidence."

The Quads are the new "Eye of the Needle." Today, we say to get through the Quadways, one must unload any fears and hesitations and, with practice, gently pass through the center of the hoop to score the point!



Quadway Hoop

Mary Galasso

*The Sticky Wicket is a publication of the National Croquet Club
700 Florida Mango Road, West Palm Beach, FL
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NC Club President's Column



Tom Lindley

My daily routine is to be present, listen to comments, and respond to questions. My monthly routine is to chair the Board's meeting. And the routine for both of those is to be the whipping post for anything that seems wrong. Fortunately, there is more. Once in a while I get to play croquet, and because the vast majority of our members are wonderful folks, I am happy to spend time with them.

My goal is to be a servant-leader. The roots of servant leadership are found in the Tao Te Ching and the Christian Bible. Servant-leaders achieve results for their organizations by giving priority to the needs of their colleagues and the group they all serve. Unlike authoritarian styles, servant leadership emphasizes collaboration, trust, empathy, and the ethical use of power. And it requires truly listening to and trying hard to understand the views of others.

The Club doesn't own anything or employ anyone. If I have, or hear of, a good idea or project, I must work on persuading others, and work on finding resources to make it happen.

I also want to help the Club and the CFA jointly develop a shared strategic plan. In that connection, I like two quotes: "Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood... Make big plans; aim high in hope and work." (**Daniel Burnham**). And "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood, and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea." (**Antoine de Saint-Exupery**)

At a personal level, I like "to wash the dust of this earth in droplets of dew," (**Basho**). I want to see things from both my own and others' perspectives, and retain a sense of wonder and joy while interacting with our members. Our members each have their own interesting perspective on croquet, our Club, and our world. I want to hear and consider each.

And at a club like ours, volunteering is essential as well as fun. Every member should volunteer for something, and because I believe that I volunteer not just on our Board but at many fun events.

I may not always attain a goal, but I do not want to stop reaching for mine. If you have any comments or suggestions, just catch me on the courts, in the clubhouse, or on my phone. And have fun playing croquet!

Tom Lindley, President NC Club Board of Directors



Editor's Note

Should Volunteering at Events Be Required?

Isn't That an Oxymoron?

Volunteering is the subject du jour. This time of year, as you probably know, corporate and organizational events provide a significant revenue stream for the not-for-profit Croquet Foundation of America that operates the NCC.



Mary Churchill

Many groups accept the NCC invitation to give free croquet coaching to their members usually, for instance, the first 1½ hour of the event at night along with cocktails. The lessons are provided by NC Club members who are enticed with a glass of wine, and an excellent dinner or lunch from Sandy James. The Volunteer Committee chaired by **Lynn Foley, Ned Fleming and Susan Langston** have done a great job of recruiting volunteer coaches, but here's the rub.

Some people are volunteering 10 and 12 times to make up for those who don't volunteer at all. The revenue from these events saves *everyone* money, and helps fund the many improvements and expansion planned for the NCC. What is fair? What are the options?

Should members have a choice? Volunteer three times during the year OR pay, say \$300, extra on yearly dues? Would we have fewer events?

- Should we advise new members that once they reach competency, they should expect to volunteer during the year?
- What about members who rarely come to the Club? What obligation would they have?
- Any other ideas?

What do you think? Talk it over. Contact a Board member. Write a letter to the *Sticky Wicket*.

Mary C. Churchill, Editor



January 2024 3rd Annual Women's GC Open at NCC



Priscilla Flowers, Mary Galasso, Cheryl Bromley

They came from near and far, Spain, Canada, Oklahoma, the Carolinas, Florida, and 17 from NC Club. All told, 72 enthusiastic, highly competitive women played in this very popular tournament. Friendships were renewed and new ones found. Testament to its popularity, again this year, the tournament had a waitlist of would-be competitors. Play during the Championship finals, according to Tournament Director **Cheryl Bromley** was "world class, as good as the Worlds."

"Thrilling" was the word used by those who watched the finals Championship battle between two friends from Spain. "This tournament was so well run and exciting," said Champion **Maria Jose Pailos** from outside Cadiz. "Everyone was so nice, I hope we can come back next year," the "we" referring to runner up, **Dominique Aranda**.



Priscilla Flowers, Jane Grandusky, Cheryl Bromley

The 17 stalwarts from NC Club competed well with **Mary Galasso** winning First Flight and **Jane Grandusky** winning 2nd Flight in the 3 ½ day games where endurance as well as talent is necessary for winners and non-winners alike. "We are so proud of our Club players," says **Priscilla Flowers**, Tournament Manager and Chair of the NC Club Croquet Committee. "This tournament will continue to add prestige and attract top players to the NCC in the years ahead." Even this year's grumpy Florida weather gave up its rain and clouds for sun and balmy breezes on Saturday and Sunday morning, a Hollywood ending. Congratulations to all!

Mary C. Churchill



Mary Galasso, Diane Waterfall, Nancy Sansalone, Jane Grandusky, Susan Langston



Tournament Champion Maria Jose Pailos, second from right and runner up Dominique Aranda with Flowers and Bromley.



Plate Winner First Flight Gay Cinque



Caryl Firth and Suzanne Turner



Priscilla Flowers, Diane Waterfall, Cheryl Bromley

Tips from the Pro



Zack Watson

Let's talk about follow through. I see a lot of players both beginner and intermediate who have fallen back into a punch style swing. We have all seen this.

The idea is that if you stop your mallet, you will be able to control the direction slightly easier. The reality is that with this type of swing, your muscles are so tight that any misalignment or nerves can quickly take you off target.

Instead, try and loosen up your body keeping your back slightly more upright, and let the weight of your mallet do more of the work for you. Carry your follow through straight past your target. If you can keep a loose swing and take out the twists, you will have a more reliable, consistent shot that will help all of your single ball shots.

Zack Watson, Head Pro



Special Olympics and NCC Doing Good While Having Fun

Eunice Kennedy Shriver, who had an intellectually challenged older sister, Rosemary, created the Special Olympics movement in June 1962 because she believed that children like her sister could benefit from having sports and physical activities in their daily activities. In August 1968, the Special Olympics was officially incorporated.

In 2012, the National Croquet Club, with assistance from the Palm Beach County Special Olympics Organization, began its program of Special Olympics Croquet Games for students who are intellectually challenged. **John and Carol Bannister** have been leaders of the NCC Special Olympics for five years, and have developed ongoing relationships with many of these teenagers.

Now they are looking for more croquet members to volunteer their time in helping and guiding these athletes in developing their skills playing Golf Croquet. The experience is rewarding. In particular it is heartening to see the athletes cheer for and encourage their fellow players when one of them makes a wicket.

32 athletes from four schools are playing this school season. Are you willing to help this program be a continued success it has been in recent years? Think about volunteering and you won't be disappointed. All Special Olympics Games are played on Wednesday from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon, two times per month from September to May. Please contact **John Bannister** at johnbannister1977@gmail.com Thank you!

The following is our schedule for the remainder of the season:

Wednesday, February 21st, Wednesday, March 6th, Wednesday, April 3rd, Wednesday, April 17th, Wednesday, May 1st

Lenore Orłowska

Bob Broadway Wows with His Shell Expertise



Bob Broadway



Thirty guests were lucky to hear our own **Bob Broadway** (also Club Treasurer) share his award-winning shell collection at the January 16th Dine & Discover luncheon.

On display were numerous rare shells that he and his wife Kay, have found on beaches and in, yes, garbage dumps—turns out a great place to find shells! Lunch consisted of, what else but stuffed "shells", and a cheesecake of pastry shells on the beach with a wave of whipped cream!

Bob had one special rare shell to give to the person who had a birthday closest to January 16th. **Janet Messina** was celebrating her 100th birthday on that day, and she received the rare shell. Each guest received a handmade (by **Kaye Broadway**) bag of shells to take home.

Jane Grandusky



John Bannister demonstrates basic strokes

SPOTLIGHTS

We are more than just men and women in white. We have lives.

Tom Cooper

**New Board Secretary
Everglades Club Croquet Pro**



Loretta and Tom Cooper

Tom Cooper, the new Secretary on the NC Club Board of Directors, began playing croquet in 1985 at the New York Croquet Club with his wife, Loretta. Now retired from business, Tom and Loretta are the croquet Pros at the Everglades Club in Palm Beach where they teach and organize the games.

“Croquet was always an important part of our lives,” Tom says. “We consider ourselves extremely fortunate not only because of what we have been able to do in the croquet world, but because croquet has given us an amazing array of friendships.” They raised their family of two children near the Green Gables Croquet Club in Spring Lake, NJ, and often came to Palm Beach for tournaments. Their two children who live in New Jersey come often to visit.

In 1985, Tom founded The Cooper Group, an advertising agency in New York. His business experience carries over now to the USCA where he is the marketing chair, coordinating croquet day for all clubs’ social media and websites. He also designed the logo for the USCA pins. “Tournament play is a great test of your playing ability and your ability to stay calm in tense situations” says Tom.

He finds NC Club Board work impressive. “The Board manages really well on behalf of the NC Club members. It’s easy to take notes, and I’m amazed at how much work must be done behind the scenes to make the Club run smoothly. I’m really honored to give back to the best facility in US croquet.”

Marianne Davidson

Yen Sullivan

**Childhood Survivor to Croquet
Winner. Let’s Not Forget
Businesswoman and Photographer**



Yen and Dick Sullivan

Yanchun Ho, nicknamed **Yen**, grew up in Beijing, the only daughter of university professors during a time of great upheaval in China when the Communist dictatorship under Mao Tse-Tung killed, exiled and tortured academics, elites, reporters, artists and any others perceived as threats to his authoritarian rule.

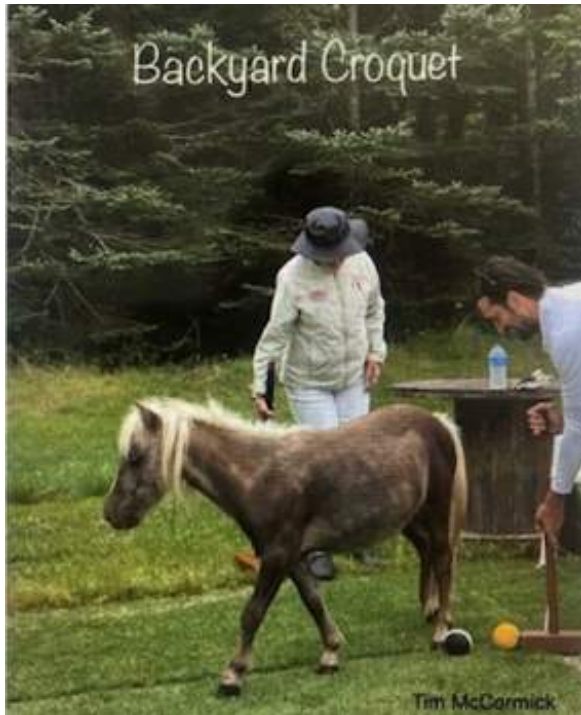
In her words: “During China’s Great Cultural Revolution from 1960s to 1970s, I was sent to a farm in Inner-Mongolia along with hundreds of thousands of school kids from Beijing. This happened because Chairman Mao thought the city kids needed to be ‘educated by workers, peasants, and soldiers.’ I spent three years in countryside before I was permitted to move back to Beijing.

“My father was jailed on the university campus by Red Guards, accused of being on the Capitalist Road, not the Communist road. Our home was raided by Red Guards who stole valuables and some of my Dad’s book collection. It was a lawless time. I was 11 years old. My brother and I were home alone during the day as schools were closed, however, our Mom was allowed to return home from her teaching job at nights to check up on us,” she remembers.

Having survived early atrocities, Yen graduated from university in Beijing with a degree in International Finance that led to two years working in New Zealand. She entered the United States in 1988 under a visa to attend and earn an MA from Kentucky University’s Patterson School of Diplomacy and International Commerce in Lexington. “I love the United States, and am grateful for free speech and other freedoms here that they do not have in China.”

After a successful career in consulting and business marketing, she retired from UPS Air in 2015 and married Dick Sullivan, a native of Louisville, who, luckily for us, had a second home in West Palm Beach. The rest, as they say, is history. Both Yen and Dick are excellent croquet players and outstanding members of the Club. Yen was a finalist in the 2023 National SW AR tournament, and in January 2024 won the First Flight Senior Masters SW singles in a very competitive field. Dick has won many honors including National Masters and Regional Championships.

Mary C. Churchill

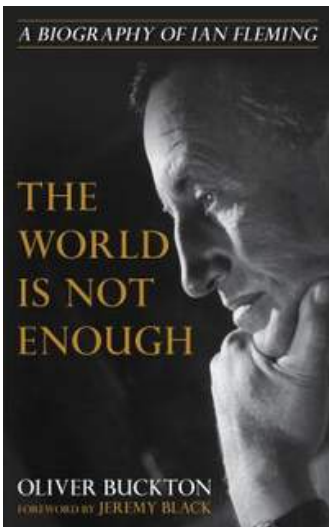


Practice practice practice!
 Courtesy of National Croquet Museum

OUR NEW MEMBERS

The Membership Committee and NCClub are happy to welcome our new members:

- Benedicte Jarlot
- Carl Johnson
- Dottie Anthony
- Gene Young
- Jim Creasy
- Jim Erwin
- Joan Ottenritter
- Ken Lovvorn
- Marvin Anthony
- Paul Kohlheim
- Rober Ottenritter
- Robert Treuhold
- Sandy Pew
- Sara Persons
- Susan Johnson
- Teri Young
- Trish (Paricia) Gorman



Dine & Discover

Come lunch with Oliver Buckton. Discover the man who created James Bond: the life, work and loves of Ian Fleming.

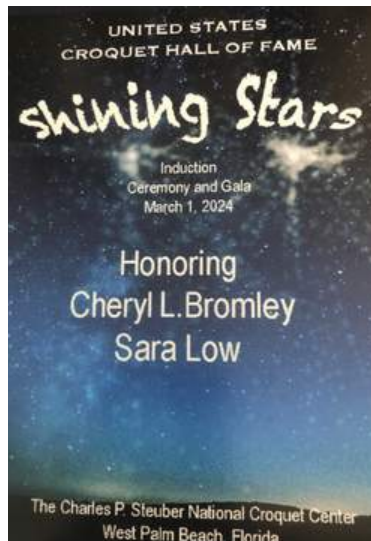
February 20th 12:00-2:00pm
 \$40 for lunch, lecture & gratuity.

Sign up on the Veranda or call 561-478-2300

2024 Hall of Fame

March 1st at 6pm, at the National Croquet Center, **Cheryl Bromley** and **Sara Low** will be inducted into the US Hall of Fame.

Info and RSVP at croquet.hof.gala@gmail.com



The Sticky Wicket notes with sadness the passing of our favorite cartoonist, **Lovejoy Duryea**. By way of remembrance, Lovejoy called in late December to ask if we could run one last cartoon that she drew from her hospital bed in Miami. We did. Thanks Lovejoy, Godspeed, and we know you went out with champagne flute in hand!



FRIENDS GIFT EXCHANGE
 Thursday February 29

Thursday February 29th at 5:00 bring a wrapped gift under \$20 value for our

FRIENDS GIFT EXCHANGE

We will open gifts and exchange gifts, have fun, hear music and eat cake.

ALL are welcome to join in the fun. **JOIN US FOR CAKE NIGHT!**
 Just come with your gift and be included in the **GIFT EXCHANGE**

For more information call:
 Marianne 561 346-1837 Maddy 561 379-7203