



THE STICKY WICKET

APRIL 2024



Civility Means Courtesy and Respect It starts With Each of Us



Franck Meunier

In an era marked by fast-paced living and cancel-culture digital interactions, our beloved Club serves as a sanctuary for social, fun games of croquet, and a respite from the hustle and bustle of our everyday lives. “We come here to play croquet to forget about all the issues in the world and in our lives.” says **David McCoy**. Central to the ambiance of any private club is the expectation of courteous, polite, and respectful behavior – in other words, civility. That is a fundamental pillar that supports the harmonious coexistence of our diverse membership, and is essential to preserving the club’s character and ensuring a pleasant experience for all. It dictates how members engage with one another, from exchanging pleasantries at the bar to engaging in respectful debates over a game. **A culture of civility fosters an atmosphere where every member feels valued and respected, irrespective of differences in experience, opinion, or background.**

Fostering a culture of civility cannot be solely the responsibility of the Board or other members; We cannot only expect “the others” to do the right thing. So, let’s think as “**It is not you, it’s me!**” Civility is not just a passive expectation—it requires an active commitment on our part. All members, individually, must contribute to the harmonious functioning of the Club. **Mike Gibbons** defines the essence of a well-functioning Club as “Ladies and gentlemen, serving ladies and gentlemen. That’s how we have to behave. Let’s leave our anger or bad mood at the gate.”

It’s important to acknowledge that it only takes a few incidents, an incendiary email or a too-hasty, snarky remark to impact the enjoyment of others. As the old adage goes: “If you have nothing nice to say then, say nothing at all”. **Civility, just like our game of croquet, is something that needs to be practiced** until it becomes second nature. Just think about this for a second: as we get ready to hit the ball, we always take a second to breathe to calm our minds and ensure a quality drive. **Demonstrating empathy, practicing active listening, and yes, sometimes, swallowing our pride and letting it go, can go a long way to fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie.**

Not only do we have an obligation to do the right thing ourselves, we owe it to our Club to call out and remind others who may be arguing, or rude, or complaining about others, etc., that their behavior is damaging the image of the Club – but let’s not use those words. Let’s use a simple “safe word” here to remind ourselves and others and **just say “civility,” when you observe negative behavior.**

By treating fellow members with kindness and respect, we cultivate meaningful relationships and strengthen the bonds of camaraderie within the Club. I’ll leave you with the words of **Maya Angelou: “It takes courage to be kind!”.**

Franck Meunier, on behalf of the Civility Task Force

*The Sticky Wicket is a publication of the National Croquet Club
700 Florida Mango Road, West Palm Beach, FL
Editor, Mary C. Churchill. Pagination, Franck Meunier
Reporters, Sheila Petersen, Mary Galasso,
Marianne Davidson, Lenore Orlowska-Warren.
Photographer, Yen Sullivan Board Liaison, Ruth Summers*

NC Club President's Column



Tom Lindley

This has been a month of overworking, so I simply share some news and puns. Puns quoted from Mark Ewbie, "The Stick Guy", at <https://markewbie.weebly.com>

IRS Audit: The US Internal Revenue Service, IRS, recently audited our Club for the 2020 tax year to determine in part whether it would be appropriate for the Club to continue as a 501 c 7. (A 501 c 3 is a charitable organization to which donations are tax deductible while a 501 c 7 is a charitable organization run for the benefit of its members to which donations are not deductible.) IRS audits can be scary and require lots of work, but this audit has been completed and its outcome is very good.

The Club gave voting rights to its social members and paid \$330 in taxes, there were no penalties, and we keep our 501 c7 status. Going forward, we can allow non-members to participate in Club events such as Dine & Discover or tournaments but when we do so we must both keep detailed records of each non-member involved and potentially pay federal tax on income from the non-members.

Court Scheduling: Scheduling courts is always a big issue at the NCC. Although the CFA owns the courts, it relies on the Club's rules for Club members' scheduling those courts. The Croquet Committee and the Task Force on Scheduling worked for most of a year and jointly produced a recommendation that the Board adopted. As of April 30, 2024, with only a few exceptions, each member must reserve his/her own court for that member's twosome or foursome. Members continue to be able to book up to two weeks in advance.

Fun Puns:

croquet is a simple game - not roquet science
croquet picket line - full of strikers
elegant player - mallet dancer

expired player - croqued
favorite food - croquettes
flirtatious player - croquettish

menace near water - croquedile
rowdy game needed a water-cannon

Tom Lindley, President, NC Club Board of Directors

Croquet Players Who Are Artists Show Their Work

Nine club members showed their work at the Club's first inaugural 'Pop Up' Talent exhibition organized by the Social Committee, **Pam Groh**, Chair. Paintings, drawings, jewelry and sculpture were on display.



Suzanne Turner, David McCoy, admiring award-winning art by Preston Stuart



Joan Therien



Lenore Orlowska-Warren



Gay Cinque with her jewelry.
Behind her, two paintings by Victoria Albrecht



April 2024 National Croquet Club Singles Tournament

Three days of glorious weather was the backdrop for the Club GC Singles Tournament. Thank you **Cami and Tate Russack**, Tournament Directors.



Alex Galasso Championship winner
Cami Russack, Brian Mitchell runner up



Fiona D'Aguilar, Cami Russack, Lynn Foley, Nancy and Jim Sansalone, Jane Grandusky, Susan Langston, Diane Waterfall



Susan Langston, First Flight Winner,
Cami Russack



C. Russack, Cookie Donaldson,
2nd Flight Winner



C. Russack, Jan Allison
3rd Flight Winner



Jim Sansalone, Mary Churchill, Tate Russack



Cami Russack, Lynn Epstein 1st
Flight Runner up



Nancy Sansalone, 2nd
Flight Runner up



Where are Those New Courts?

As you have likely heard, the plan is to raise much of the Dry Retention Area (aka Palm Courts) to ground level so we can fit in five new championship courts there and one by the pond.

Progress has been maddeningly slow in getting answers. First, we have to get Palm Beach County and FEMA to approve our plans to fill much of that area because **it is now designated a Flood Control Zone for storage of about 90,000 cubic feet of water.**

Complicating matters is the fact that our entire site is zoned residential. That means we are required to file for a variance to convert the back part of the property for use as proper croquet courts. It turns out that will require one or more public hearings after the basic plans are approved. An expansion of our existing parking and other changes are also required and planned.

A parallel initiative is underway to get the newly acquired, 2.23-acre adjoining property at 885 West Patrick Circle re-zoned for croquet courts and merged into our existing property. Plans are already drawn for four new, championship courts there, pending those approvals.



In addition to the architect and engineer involved on this project, we have retained a Land-Use firm as expeditors and a law firm specializing in zoning to help us through this process. They did the research and estimate we will need at least a further nine months to resolve all these issues and get the needed approvals.

We are doing everything we possibly can to speed along this cumbersome process, including a possible filing with Palm Beach County to rezone the entire property instead of asking for variances, but neither process will be speedy.

Bottom line -- Please be patient. We want those new courts as badly as you do, and we're doing our best to make that happen as soon as possible.

David McCoy, Chairman, Croquet Foundation of America

Who In the World is Hope Harmon?

Have you ever wondered, when glancing at the deadness board on court two, who is **Hope Harmon**? Hope Harmon died recently at the age of 91, but her legacy will always be part of the National Croquet Club.



Born in Esperanza in Mexico, Hope lived and worked in Arlington, Virginia and Texas for a great part of her life. How she came to play croquet is unclear, but play she did. She loved the sport and the players loved her. Hope broke the grass ceiling playing in many tournaments as a woman playing against some of the strongest male players in the croquet world. In 1996 and 1997, she won the U.S. Open International Rules "A" flight competition.

"Her playing was stellar, but what set her apart was her vivacious personality," says **David McCoy**. **Johnnie Mitchell** adds, "She had a big heart and if anyone needed a place to stay for a tournament or anything else, she welcomed them into her home,"

Hope had an advanced degree in medical engineering among other degrees, and created the only regulation grass croquet courts in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. If you are in the area, it's worth a visit if just for the view.

Hope Harmon was a generous benefactor and munificent donor to the National Croquet Club in the early days of the club's existence. She will be missed and remembered by everyone who had the pleasure and the privilege to know her.

Sheila Petersen





Calling all champions of kindness and compassion! Join us in spreading smiles by volunteering your time and love of the game! Whether you're passionate about lending a helping hand, sharing your expertise, or simply spreading cheer, there are plenty of opportunities for new or seasoned members. Volunteers needed!

Here are some opportunities to volunteer:

- **Visitors Clinics:** occur on Saturday morning. As a volunteer coach, you introduce the game of croquet (GC) to first-timers. For information, contact the Membership Committee or **Franck Meunier** at meunier.franck.100@gmail.com
- **New Member Clinics:** Brand new members are offered a series of free clinics (GC and 6W) to improve their basic skills and strategy. For information, contact the Croquet Committee or **Lynn Foley** at grandy3158@aol.com
- **Special Olympics:** for the 12th year, NCC has hosted the Special Olympic GC program for Palm Beach County at the Center. The kids are great and fun! Please contact **John Bannister**, johnbannister1977@gmail.com or 561 339 2081.
- **Special Events:** Club volunteers coach guests during the NCC/Sandy James events for a fun game of croquet. Sandy James meal included for all volunteers! Day and time vary,, depending on scheduled events. Contact **Susan Langston**, thelangstons@homesc.com for more information. Volunteer coaches needed for the following dates, especially This coming weekend and May 1.

Event Date		Time	#Guests/ #Coaches	Need
11-Apr	Thursday	2:00-3:00	48/6	3
12-Apr	Friday	6:00-7:30	325 (200)/26	12
15-Apr	Monday	11:00-12:30	195/24	9
29-Apr	Monday	1:00-2:30	48/6	4
1-May	Wednesday	6:00-7:30	390/30	22
2-May	Thursday	6:00-7:30	100/13	6

thank you

Special Olympics Athletes Enjoy a Day at NCC

Excitement, laughter and teasing were in the air as 37 Special Olympics athletes were treated to the annual Sandy James Productions luncheon following fierce competition on the courts. Each athlete received a medallion for competing in the games. Thank you, **John and Carol Bannister** for organizing this program. You are truly a friend to special needs kids. Thank you also to the 12 Club volunteers who coach the players.

There are two more sessions this year: April 17 and May 1. Please contact John Bannister, johnbannister1977@gmail.com or 561 339 2081.



Here's a Word from One of Our Favorites



Mary Shields, David Spivey

What first brought you to the lawns of the National Croquet Club at the NCC? For me, it was an invitation printed on a small card stating the date, time and location for a free lesson. I knew about the game of croquet because I had played it as a kid at birthday parties. However, I never had heard of a club that adults went to, to play the game. So, off I went to the croquet club not knowing what I was in for. I immediately fell in love with the game.

I joined on the spot and went home to tell my husband **Dave Spivey** the good news. His response was something like, "Are you kidding me? I would never do anything like that!" Fortunately, our son-in-law was over and he said he "wouldn't mind doing that." So, the rest is history. Dave went for a free lesson, joined on the spot, and came home and made his first mallet! Now, he makes mallets for others and we both enjoy playing in tournaments all over the USA.

Mary Shields, Former Newsletter Editor,

SAVE THE DATES

- April 17: Special Olympics Croquet Games
- April 25-28: USCA 9-Wicket Florida Regional
- Dine & Discover Lunch, Financial Tips
- May 2-5: USCA FL Regional 6-W Championship
- May 5: Getting to Know You (GC) Social Mixer
- May 11: Recognition & Appreciation Volunteer Brunch

Get Ready for NCC's Summer League GC Doubles Tournament

Attention Players and Volunteers

The Summer League, sponsored by the CFA and supported by the Club, is a hugely popular July/August croquet tournament involving many players from the community in addition to many Club members. In addition to being a foundational part of the CFA's mission to attract and engage "the general public," the League is a key source of new members for the Club. Up to 200 players participate, split between Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, ending with a big awards dinner!

Because of the diversity of skills (from first-time to championship-level players), with teams that can be comprised of multiple eligible players, sorting out the flights and other issues during the tournament is always a challenge.

And now, because the wonderful **Dick Brackett** (who started and ran the League very successfully for many years) is retiring, we need to find an experienced player to run it and other volunteers to help with management and coaching new players. It's a lot of work, but also a lot of fun!

If you would like to put your hat in the ring, please let **Marie Sweetser** and me know! We will be making a decision soon on who will run it.

Thank you!

David McCoy,

Chairman Croquet Foundation of America.

Victorian Tea Party



Franck Meunier



Barbara Perlman, Marianne Davidson,
Tea Party organizer, and Madeleine Singer



Diane Waterfall, Fiona D'Aguilar,
Simone Rousseau



Alex Galasso, David McCoy,
Mary Galasso

The Queen of Hearts Asked Alice to Play Croquet

Down the rabbit hole goes Alice to find the mysterious underground wonderland. Eccentric adventurous dreams ensue involving a Mad Hatter, a Hare and a risky game of croquet with the Queen of Hearts, who cries "Off with your head!" The mallets are flamingos, the balls are live hedgehogs, and Alice does keep her head.



Above ground, at NCC, we have our own version of **Alice in Wonderland**. The copper statue, donated by **Howard Sosin**, was given to him about 35 years ago. Transporting the statue from Connecticut, Howard had it placed on a proper stand and covered the cost for it to be installed at our club where it stands proud here in Florida, next to the pond, overlooking court 2. Is Alice wondering at those who play? At some of those shots, sometimes wondrous,, and sometimes, well, ahem!

When you get a chance, take a look at the detailed work on the legs and the back of the statue with the flamingo mallet and hedgehogs. "The statue, like croquet, is whimsical and serious at the same time," says Howard. But on our courts, hopefully, heads will not roll!

As you enter the front door at NCC, have you noticed the statues of the **Mad Hatter and the Hare**, also donated by Howard? Thank you, Howard!

Alice, is life a distorted reality or only a dream?

Mary Galasso

OUR NEW MEMBERS

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

Ahab Abdelwahab,
Mark & Ellie Bailey
Chris Darton
Lynn DeVault
Marc Glasberg
Kathleen Nickles
Jude Plum
Eugenia Revson
Rita Jasmin Saputra

USCA South East Florida District Championship



Ahab Abdulwahab
Championship winner



Michael Kolowich
First Flight winner

Players weathered the storms but had a wonderful time playing during the USCA SE FL District Tournament on March 22 - 24. Games were close. Games were tough. Thank you **Cami and Tate Russack** for managing a great tournament.

