



THE STICKY WICKET

MAY/JUNE 2025



2024-5 Season Volunteer Recognition Brunch

It's been a *Wicket* Good Year!

Why do you volunteer? Several attendees at the annual Volunteer Recognition Brunch had this to say: "I like helping people." "Helps me feel connected to other club members." "I like feeling useful." "I tried it once and found it extremely enjoyable." "Why sit at home?" A response not heard was "for the recognition!" And what a grand recognition it was!



Tom Lindley and SuperStar John Bannister

Franck Meunier, Membership Chair welcomed the crowd and stressed the fact that the Club would not function without volunteers. Board President **Tom Lindley** thanked the seven committees and six task forces all manned by VOLUNTEERS!

Recognition plaques were given to all volunteers who are rotating off their respective committees with a special thanks to **Priscilla Flowers** for her work as chairperson of the Croquet Committee who initiated Volunteer Recognition Day three years ago. Priscilla, in turn, thanked **Lynn Foley** and **Bob Broadway** for numerous hours donated to the New Member Clinic on Saturday mornings.

Franck Meunier highlighted the 400+ visitors the Membership Committee and other volunteers greeted in our Saturday Morning Visitor Clinic. Special Recognition was given to **Fiona D'Aguilar** and **Sue Varey** for their continual willingness to show up on Saturday mornings.

John Bannister thanked all volunteers who worked with the Special Olympics Program, with special recognition to **Suzanne Turner** and **Gerry Kagan**. (Continued Page 5)



Fiona D'Aguilar, Franck Meunier, Sue Varey



Gerry Kagan, John Bannister, Suzanne Turner



Lynn Foley, Priscilla Flowers, Bob Broadway

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Club President's Column

Urgent Appeal to Every Member



Tom Lindley

Our Club needs more lighted courts, but that takes money; the bids are several hundred thousand dollars. So far we have raised only about \$170K, from fewer than 10 members. This is a priority. We really want every member to donate something, even if that is just \$10 dollars. I have made two donations, and I am asking each of you, every member of our great Club, to make your tax-deductible donation now to the Croquet Foundation of America. Your donation can be in any amount, whether \$10, or \$50, or \$250, or \$5000. Just write on your check that your donation is For Lights and give or mail the check to the front desk or Marie.

The CFA is focusing on raising money for new courts, so you, our Club members, will determine whether we get more lighted courts.

I am keeping this column very short because I am asking each of you for something important for our Club. Please donate. Please. THANK YOU!

Tom Lindley



Summer Promises No Rest for the NCC Expansion Team

Courts, Lights, Parking: Here's the Latest

Courts. We passed the two Public Hearings with the Zoning Commissioners and the County Commissioners without comment or objection. Now the County is reviewing the Administrative Change proposed by our engineering consultants to raise the back five courts to one foot below the level of our existing courts, including the addition of a Pavilion beyond court 6 & 7 with bathrooms and an entertainment space. That application and plan must undergo staff review and approval by all of the affected departments. We are pressing to get early consideration.



David McCoy

Parking. To replace the current volume of water retention displaced by raising the courts, we must install 700' of 8' X 6' exfiltration trenches in the parking lot, so there will be significant construction there this summer. We are also expanding parking by 25 spaces in the north parking area toward the hedge.

Practice Court. Preliminary work on the ¾ size practice court by the pond has begun with property fence line cleared and trees trimmed. On completion, a new fence, screening hedge, and attractive plantings will be added. We are awaiting bids from two additional contractors, but we are finally underway! The first contractor's bid for the entire project came in considerably higher than expected, so we are seeking two additional bids.

Lights. Our second bid finally arrived, and it appears we may be able to light the interior eight courts within our \$300,000 cost target. There may be a backlog in getting the 30' aluminum poles needed. We are still investigating alternatives. Whatever the lead time, we need to have the money in hand, so please donate!

Many decisions are yet to be made, but we have a great team! **Vernon Pierce**, just elected to the CFA Board, is now leading the team and providing architectural plans and project management. Many thanks as well to **Randy Cardo** (construction), **David Kepner** (building), **Bob Broadway** (county approvals), **Derek Wassink** (engineering) and **Bob Smith** (landscape). In addition, we have a lawyer, a land use expert, and an engineering firm as consultants for our filings with the County, not to mention the surveyor, the traffic study firm, the irrigation company, the well drilling company, etc. – all this to move some dirt and grow some grass! Who knew???

David McCoy, CFA Chairman

The National Croquet Center Hosts the USCA Golf Croquet National Doubles/Singles Tournament Blazing Heat, Fierce Matches, Top Notch Play

Sixty-seven expert players from clubs near and far participated in over 450 games. Pros, seasoned players and amateurs filled the 12 courts at NCC this past week for a spectacular tournament.

The heat was on, literally and figuratively, as temperatures soared past 90° during the USCA sanctioned nationals at NCC in sunny Florida last week. Players battled not just the blazing sun, but also each other, as soaked white shirts and high stakes matches defined the intensity of the weekend. Each player was placed in Championship or First Flight. The competition was intense, the energy electric. Then came the lightning and a Florida rain delay causing a scramble to rearrange courts.

Winner of the Singles Championship was **Matt Essick** who bested Finalist **Tom Balding** in two out of three. The National Croquet Club stood proud as **Adam Peck** won First Flight and **Randy Cardo** took home the Championship plate.

The first two days of the tournament featured GC National Doubles with Club members winning some high honors:

- **Tom Cooper/Ahab Abdelwahab** won Championship plate.
- **Priscilla Flowers/Alex Galasso** won First Flight.
- **Kim Jones/Jay Carey** won First Flight plate.



Bev Cardo (USCA President), Alex Galasso, Priscilla Flowers, Elaine and Rocky Smith (TDs)



Kim Jones, Jay Carey



Adam Peck, Matt Essick

Thanks to the calm, competent leadership of Tournament Directors **Elaine and Rocky Smith**, the tournament stayed on track. "I love the croquet community," Elaine said. "The staff, the environment and the food at NCC was great. I look forward to the expanding event at NCC next year with more courts and more players."

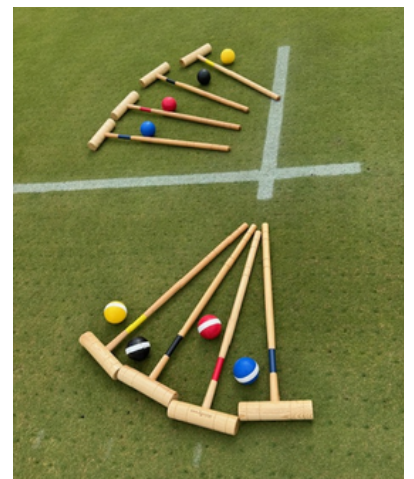
Thanks to **Beverly Cardo** for her poise and leadership as Tournament Manager. Thanks to the referees who volunteered their talent.

Mary Galasso

Special Olympics Players Take a Bow

The Special Olympics celebrated its very successful 2024/5 season with an Awards Luncheon to honor each and every croquet player, their teachers and their coaches. Everyone received an NCC drink cup, and players received congratulations and a certificate from organizers **John and Carol Bannister**. The festivities included a delicious lunch from **SandyJames** with the always-favorite, freshly baked, still-warm-from-the-oven, chocolate chip cookies.

This year saw lighter mallets and bigger wickets (very good for the ego!) with 32 players on Court 1, great times had by all. Congratulations to the Bannisters for their tireless work to provide fun and activity for the Special Olympics players, and to all volunteers as well. Those of us who help coach have come to know the players and enjoy the games. Next year, more schools.



2024-5 Season Volunteer Recognition Brunch (cont'd)

Lynn Foley, chairperson of the Volunteer Committee, expressed gratitude to all the Volunteer Coaches who helped out during NCC Corporate Events. Who knew we hosted 56 events, welcomed some 3,100 guests and manned a total of 745 volunteer hours!! Three volunteers, not members of the committee, were given special recognition and thank you gift baskets for their hours donated to these events. Thanks to **Richard Allen**, **Lucia Morales-Halaby** and **David Ekstrom**.

Last, but definitely not least, two members were recognized for all the past and present hours they have donated to the NCC. **Nancy Sansalone** was given the Special Recognition Award for the number of hours she has devoted to a variety of committees, task forces and members she has taken under her wing.

John Bannister was surprised by his **Super Star Award** for his past role as president (during trying Covid time), past and present leader of the Special Olympics program, and his innumerable volunteer hours to events, clinics and committees.

Members were entertained by Dreyfoos School of the Arts students **Marc Anthony** and **Kaury Verdieu** on their violin and cello. What a treat from **June** and **Bob Rochedieu**, and understandable why they have performed in other countries as well as at Carnegie Hall. Also entertaining was to see Club members dressed in colorful attire conversing in words that didn't include "clear, jump shot or wicket."

Special thanks to all who planned and prepared for the Brunch. It was a heartwarming day! No, we don't volunteer to be recognized, but much appreciated when we are!

Diane Waterfall



Clambake Celebrates Memorial Day at NCC



Finding the Perfect, Most Challenging Hoop

The Race is On – Court 9 Is Testing the Best

As one of the top croquet competition venues in the world, the National Croquet Center must have the most challenging hoops (wickets) for top notch tournament play. Better players need tight hoops. Our normal “Superhoops” are so easy for them that the first player to get control is likely to win. Even though the hoops are set almost to contact, the ball will still go through if it’s a touch off center. Not so with the Quadway hoop. Something about its unique design rejects the ball if it doesn’t hit dead center.

The top croquet clubs are all switching to this new hoop. We have 12 sets ready to use at the Center for the WCF World Championship in mid-October. The Quadway has a slimmer upright and a fatter, slightly rectangular base and that works beautifully in clay or well compacted soil. The uprights can be rotated in play to provide four different widths, and it has other unique features.

So, what’s the problem? Our soil is too sandy and loose to hold the wicket firmly for a sufficient period. Thus, they must be reset more often than Superhoops. The large hole made by its base, when repaired, leaves the soil less compacted. When the grass grows back, and we eventually come back to that position, the hoops no longer hold as well. This is a serious maintenance issue.

Michael Todorovich, **Kim Jones** who is an engineer, **Jay Carey** and I are on a mission to fix the problem. We are experimenting with all possibilities: adding fins on the Quadway base in various configurations to remain firm longer; find or invent a better hoop with new designs altogether that minimally disrupt the soil. At least two other croquet equipment manufacturers are also experimenting.

Meanwhile, don’t be upset if you see a variety of hoops being tested – probably on Court 9. And don’t worry if you hate hard-to-score hoops. For everyday play we intend to have certain courts using the new hoop and others continuing to have the current Superhoops, with the ratio and location set by your Croquet Committee. I remember when we switched from iron to Superhoops, there were many complaints about difficulty. Now, we all got better and they’re just fine. Court one, for the public lessons may have especially easy hoops to increase success and enjoyment.

David McCoy



Club GC Doubles Challenge Big Success

The pilot Challenge program that enables players to compete in a block with peers while scheduling their own times throughout the month was a big success. Organized by **Priscilla Flowers** and the Croquet Committee, this one was for GC Doubles.

We had two blocks of players, a kickoff party, and a Toast and Tally at finish. Winners of Block A were **Priscilla Flowers** and **Alex Galasso**; Block B, **Lynn Epstein** and **Michael Miller**. Fun and good competitions!

Mary Churchill



Mark Your Calendars: Social Committee Events



- Moulin Rouge **Movie Night** – Tuesday, June 3rd
- Pirate Croquet for **National Croquet Day** – Saturday, June 7th from 11 am to 3 pm
- **Independence Day Doubles** (GC & 6W) – Friday, July 4th from 3 to 7 pm
- **Independence Day Luncheon/Celebration** – Saturday, July 5th
- **Trivia Night** – Thursday, August 14th from 5:30 to 6:30 pm
- **Labor Day Luncheon/Celebration** – Saturday, August 30th
- **Movie Night** – Tuesday, September 16th (movie TBD)
- **Haunted Halloween** – Friday, October 31st from 5:30 to 9:30 pm, including GC doubles and costume contest

Please note that dates and times are subject to change based upon availability. Any changes will be communicated as quickly as possible.



OUR CLUB NEW MEMBERS

The Membership Committee and National Croquet Club are happy to welcome our new members:

**Letty Aronson, James Hawkins,
Constance Murrin, Cynthia Rice**

Like us! Follows us!

Do you want to be part of our Club community? The Club relaunched its social media presence. Like us! Follow us! Tag your pictures and comments. We want to hear from you!



Just scan (point your phone camera to the QR code)



Or go to following link:
facebook.com/nationalcroquetclub



Look for following handle:
@nationalcroquetclubWPB