



THE STICKY WICKET

NOVEMBER 2024



Club GC Doubles Championships



On Nov 1-3, the Club had an incredible weekend as teams came together to compete in the Club GC Doubles Championships!

In a memorable "battle of the couples" First Flight finale, **Diane & Rich Rose** faced off against **Susan & Scott Langston**. Both teams displayed wonderful sportsmanship, cheering each other on, and showing that camaraderie is key. In the end, it was the Langstons who took the 1st place title.

The Championships quarterfinals were particularly intense, with **Van Tassell/McCoy** edging out **Trower/Fleming** (6-5) and **Cooper/Ekstrom** advancing over **Rugart/Rugart** in a tight 7-6 finish. The finals were a masterclass in technique and strategy, with **Cooper and Ekstrom** ultimately taking the win.

(continued on page 9)



Bob Van Tassell, David McCoy, David Ekstrom, Tom Cooper



Susan & Scott Langston, Diane and Rich Rose



Conrad & Jodie Rugart, Bill Trower, Ned Fleming



Lucia Halaby, Lou Tyrrell, Jane Louise & Bob Smith



Jay Carey, Kim Jones, Lois Clay, Trudy Crowetz

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Club President's Column



Mind Your P's and Q's

We have an amazing number of activities scheduled for the 2024-5 season. What a club! I want to emphasize, however, that with all this activity, that we are mindful of our purpose: to have fun, to learn and to play with good sportsmanship. Most of you are.

Tom Lindley

But let's be open and honest about a problem we share. Incivility is rising among members of our great club. I repeatedly hear this complaint from you, our members. I ask all of you to make civility and respect for others a top priority.

Wikipedia reports that "our ability to act with civility is connected with our ability to understand our own emotions. . . discerning and recognizing our feelings can help us to evaluate the things that trigger us emotionally, and therefore become more aware of how we will possibly react and feel in certain situations."

This can be summed up by saying that we need to be aware of our own feelings and to respect the essential dignity of every other sentient being.

We need to treat others the way we want to be treated.

This does not require practicing Buddhism, yoga, or meditation. It simply takes watchfulness. We are aware of where the balls are on the court; we must be aware of where our emotions are, and how they are affecting our behavior and sportsmanship.

Croquet should be a fun game, so I'll close this sermon with two photos. Perhaps these can be the start of new understanding. Thank you!



Tom Lindley, President, Board of Directors

CFA Chairman's Column

The Story of Six New Courts and 4,000 Pages Slowly, Slowly, But Surely...



David McCoy

Well, the big question is, as always, "When are we getting our new courts?" Who knew it would take almost three years to move some dirt and grow some grass? Palm Beach County's Zoning regulations, however, are over 4,000 pages long, and we are operating several "businesses" and a club on a property that is zoned residential.

The good news is that we believe we can get approval just to build the courts while we wait for the approval to use them. Our lengthy efforts to get approval to raise the courts in the dry retention area to ground level were denied because County required us to store 95,000 cubic feet of water below the courts to be allowed to raise them. We were prepared to spend as much as \$300,000, but the bid came in just under \$1,000,000!

Bottom line: There will be five new courts in the dry retention area at its existing level and one court by the pond. My guess is that we will begin in December with court construction, excluding amenities, completed in late January. To actually play on the courts, however, the County is requiring public hearings from the neighborhood, another lengthy process that could take five or six months. Groan!

Meanwhile, we will proceed with other projects. We have already replaced the buckling tiles on the veranda with beautiful new porcelain tiles. New veranda furniture and a Donor Recognition Wall in the hallway are next on the list, together with a constant-on camera for viewing playing conditions at the Center, as seen from a mounting pole between Courts 6 and 7. This will also be used to broadcast and film tournaments and events.

There are many ways you can help: Sponsor a court with your name on one of the beautiful new court signs for \$35,000 or \$50,000. Great locations still exist. Sponsor one of our pending projects and get your name attached to that project. Sponsor or participate in one of CFA's fundraising tournaments (Snowbirds/Flamingos funds this month will be designated for replacing the shade pavilions on the courts). Be a Sponsor for the Hall of Fame Gala, or just come and participate. Make a year-end donation. Leave money in your will to the Croquet Foundation of America (totally painless).

David McCoy, Chairman, Croquet Foundation of America, Inc.

Welcome Back to the Most Prestigious Croquet Club in the World. C'mon, Let Us Brag a Little

We all appreciate how fortunate we are to live near and be a member of such a fantastic club. Right now, is the start of returning members to our beautiful facility. What better time to reintroduce our members to the wonderful things that are going on this year. The Committees, Boards, Pros, and Caterer have all been working hard to program some great things for us this year. This column is going to give you a glimpse of them.

"November 2024 greets us at the Croquet Center and starts the season," says **Marie Sweetser**, "and the calendar is packed with plenty of croquet." Whether to play, learn, or watch some of the best players, with practice, that could be you.

The **Croquet Committee Chair Priscilla Flowers**, welcomes members back for the 2024/2025 season! "If you've had a chance to play recently," she says, "you may have noticed the balls are brighter and have a nice crisp white stripe. Thanks go to Croquet Committee member **Michael Todorovich** who spent time researching and testing for the best balls for the club. He and Zack did their best to destroy the new Sunshiny croquet balls to no avail." Our thanks to the CFA for purchasing enough balls for all 12 courts. The biggest difference between the new Sunshiny and the old Dawsons is that the Sunshiny seem "livelier," especially for jump shots.

The dates for the Club Members Only Tournaments are: AR 6W Doubles November 15-17, 2024 and AR 6W Singles January 24-26, 2025; GC Singles April 4-6, 2025. The very popular Women's GC Open January 16-19, 2025 is hosted at the Club and open to nonmembers. Get ready for our 9th Annual Snowbirds vs Flamingos Games Nov. 12-13 open to any croquet player and a CFA benefit towards the court canopies. Wear your colors and/or feathers. The tie was broken last year so beware.

In addition, the USCA is having its Annual Senior/Master Tournament, Nov. 6-10 American Rules and Nov. 15-19, Golf Croquet. Players from all over the World participate yearly.

Our Pro in residence **Dick Scherf** gives lessons in techniques and strategy in golf and American six wicket. Big news! Head Pro **Zack Watson** is back! Sign up to improve your technique and strategies in all areas of croquet.

Our wonderful **Sandy James** caterer announces a new wine selection from Joe the bartender and new lunch items from Julio the chef. They have a great staff looking forward to serving us. Everyone back is admiring the new **beautiful white veranda floor**, one of the many ways the club will be enhanced this year.

The **Volunteer Committee chair Lynn Foley**, is looking forward to the new season of events. This year the delicious meal and drink from Sandy James will continue along with the credit you receive each time you volunteer. Check out the new white board on the wall across from the locker rooms where upcoming events are posted. All you have to do is add your name under the event you would like to coach. You can always contact a committee member with questions. The BIG event in November will be amazing. Wednesday **Nov. 14th, 6:30-8:30 with 600 guests**, 300 playing croquet, 150 at a time. Please sign up to coach.

Pam Groh chair of the Social Committee tells us the planned events. The Social Committee is open to new and innovative ideas so please feel free to send them to any member of the committee. There are other events under discussion so stay tuned.... details to follow. Sponsors are always welcome.

- Dec 15 - Holiday Party
- Dec 28 - Boxing Day
- Feb 13 - Death by Chocolate
- March - panel discussion - History of Croquet
- TBD - panel discussion, Women Hall of Fame
- April - Art Show

Some exciting new and innovative things are happening at the club this year. Bring families and friends!

Marianne Davidson

SPOTLIGHTS

The nominating committee has submitted two candidates for National Croquet Club Board positions, Vice-President and Secretary. Election by members will be in December but since neither is opposed, they are likely to be our new Board members.

Pam Groh Candidate for Secretary



Like many of our croquet members, Pam has several interests. Playing croquet, volunteering at the Club, training dogs, and enjoying her new grandchild.

"Suzanne Turner, a friend of mine, originally invited me to participate in a summer league at NCC. I loved it," says Pam with enthusiasm. "Since joining NCC, I have also joined The Sarasota Club and The Chesapeake Bay Club and participated in their tournaments. Playing croquet is exciting. Meeting up with friends and socializing in a fabulous setting is what draws me to this sport."

Dogs and Croquet are her two loves. Before croquet, Pam says she started taking classes with her dogs and fell in love with training and competing. She taught Puppy Kindergarten at Wellington Adult Education. Later, she advanced to competing in AKC Obedience Trials through the American Kennel Club with sheep dogs. Currently, she is taking classes and competing in an AKC Rally Course.

Volunteering is part of Pam's nature. At NCC she has generously given of her time volunteering for several corporate events and our Special Olympic events. She has been part of task forces, a member and chair of the social committee. Her vision is now focused on becoming Secretary of the Club board. "I want to see more people become aware of the joy croquet brings. We are fortunate to have NCC in our backyard; I want to be part of the future growth of our club."

Grandmother is a new role. She recently had one grand and is anticipating another. "Having a grandchild is the gift of life," she notes. "How wonderful this life can be." She has ideas to bring new life to our club and working in cooperation with our current President **Tom Lindley** and with new and current board members.

Mary Galasso

John Strasser Candidate for Vice-President



John has been a very active member of the Club, serving as Chair of the nominating committee the last two years, researching and implementing electronic voting, and serving on the bylaws and transparency Task Forces. He plays tournaments, singles only, golf croquet, but 6W and AC are beckoning.

John's roots are in the Midwest where he was very active in civic affairs and local politics. In Madison, Wisconsin, he was elected alderman for the City Council. "I was a newcomer and went door to door promising good governance and constituent service, so I beat a long-time office-holder," he says. "That is also what I promise if elected to the Club Board."

John met husband **Franck Meunier** in 1993 in Copenhagen where both were in university in Europe. Franck got a job in Chicago in 1995 and they moved there.

They don't have children, but they definitely have dogs. "When you are running for political office, dogs are a big attraction, so we got a 175-pound Newfoundland and a Great Pyrenees that got me a lot of votes. Now we have downsized to 110-pound Anatolian shepherds named Charles and Theodore. They are really lazy."

Franck's work as an executive for fitness companies brought them to Florida in 2017. Whenever they have time, scuba diving up and down the coast of Florida is a big attraction. Over the years, they have traveled extensively throughout the world.

What's his motivation to serve on the Club Board? "I want to focus on planning for the growth of the facility," John says. "When the new courts come in, we will have to grow the membership. Always keep asking what does membership want and need. Look at revenue streams for new opportunities. For instance, using the lighted courts last year has given us regular Tuesday and Thursday night games and socializing at the bar. Let's get creative on ideas like that, ideas that will benefit the CFA, the Club and SandyJames. That's the goal."

Mary C. Churchill

Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart. Elizabeth Andrew

HAVE A HEART. GIVE A LITTLE OF YOUR TIME. YOU WILL BE GLAD YOU DID!

The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away. Pablo Picasso

Yes, ladies and gents, let's start the season off with a rush of volunteers because volunteers are the lifeblood of the Club. Many of us already do. New members and old can meet new people through volunteering. It's fun and it's rewarding! Here are some opportunities.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS. For some 13 years, NCC has hosted the program to give special needs kids the opportunity to play a sport they can all enjoy. And they do! "The kids have a great time," says volunteer **Suzanne Turner**. "Laughter and camaraderie reign amid some truly great shots and some truly horrible ones—just like in regular games!" **John Bannister and Carol** have run this program for five years and would love some new recruits. December dates are December 4 and 20 mornings. Won't you contact **John Bannister** to help? Johnbannister1977l@gmail.com.



TOURNAMENTS. ATTENTION CLUB MEMBERS! NCC is seriously in need of people to help with Club Tournaments; we are on the verge of having to cancel several club tournaments if we do not get more people trained and/or willing to help run these tournaments.

If interested in learning about running tournaments, we invite you sit in on a tournament desk and shadow the team during one of the upcoming games.

Call or text **Julia Johnston** (561-441-9912) to discuss your options. And thank you.

This club works because of its volunteers.



EVENTS. The NCC will host dozens of events this year for outside organizations who are eager to come to the Club because, in addition to the social gathering, we offer a free croquet lesson. Volunteer coaches for the lesson are rewarded with a free SandyJames meal before the event and also some Pro Shop dollars. "The groups love the lesson, we meet people from all over the country, and it's always fun," says **Jane Louise Smith** who with husband Bob is a frequent volunteer. What's not to like? Call or write **Lynn Foley** lfoley3158@gmail.com or **Susan Langston** thelangstons@homesc.com and check the white board outside the locker rooms.

VISITORS CLINIC. Every Saturday morning, the CFA and the Club Membership Committee host a free introduction class to visitors in the Palm Beach area. "A lot of our new members do come from the Visitors Clinic" says **Franck Meunier**. For most of these visitors, this is their very first experience with the game of croquet. We are looking for GC players to be a coach. You do not have to be an expert player to be a coach. Just share your passion for the game and guide the visitors through the basics of croquet. It is a lot of fun.

Call or write **Franck Meunier** meunier.franck.100@gmail.com for more information or to sign up as a volunteer coach.



Halloween Brings Out the Kids in Us





Remember your first time? Ambassadors Wanted!

Message from the Membership Committee

Greetings!



As part of the Membership Committee's commitment to welcoming new members, we are exploring ways to ensure that one's initial experiences here at NCC are as positive and enjoyable as possible. With that in mind, we are seeking to update our Ambassador Program. We feel that if a new member has a "personal" sponsor/mentor/guide, his/her beginning experience and orientation will be that much more enhanced. We are looking for VOLUNTEERS who wish to be actively invested in seeing that a new member experiences the joys of croquet here at NCC right from the start. Volunteers should be friendly, welcoming, well versed in the benefits of club membership, and possess a desire to share the exciting world of croquet. Responsibilities would include:

- An introductory welcome phone call or email
- Assistance with booking courts
- Encouraging Sat morning lessons
- Personal invitations to our group activities (Wine and Wickets, Nite Owls, Monthly Sunday Mixer, holiday gatherings...) and attendance at Mixer when possible
- Occasional availability to play with new member if desired
- Introduction to other members, both new and veteran
- Follow up if seemingly not utilizing membership

The Committee feels that making a new member feel welcome right from the start and having ongoing conversations to maintain that positive experience, will only add to the newcomer's experience as well as promote camaraderie (and membership renewals)

Please contact the Membership Committee with any questions you may have and/or to say "YES, please consider me for your Ambassador Program". And Yes, snowbirds we need you!!
Contact Franck Meunier at meunier.franck.100@gmail.com

OUR NEW MEMBERS

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

**Flower Barbey, Josephine Bayard,
Alexander Berry, Karen Castle Gray,
Melanie Davis, Susu Day, Donna Emma,
Frank Ferro, Karen & Mark Harrison, Kim
Jones, Scott & Olivia Langston, FaithAnn
McIver**

Club GC Doubles Championships (cont'd)



Tom Cooper



Priscilla Flowers, Zack Watson



Lucia Halaby, Nancy Sansalone,
Lynn Foley, Lou Tyrrell



Susan & Scott Langston, Jane Louise & Bob Smith



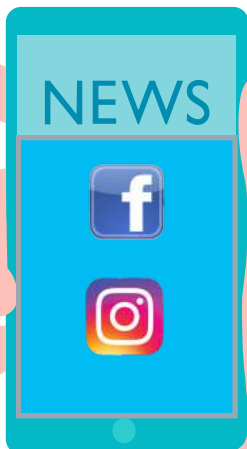
Rich Hayes, Tom Lindley, Bob Van Tassell, David McCoy



David McCoy

Like us! Follows us!

To better communicate with the members and communities, the Club has 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](https://www.instagram.com/nationalcroquetclubWPB)