



NEWSLETTER

GREETINGS V O M P C M E M B E R S



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The Incoming 2009 Board of Directors wants to take a moment and celebrate the accomplishments of the 2008 Board and their innovative contributions. Over 190 lunches were served at the Picnic & Petanque and the Oktoberfest events, something never before achieved.

A list of improvements as long as your arm by the Facilities Committee has set a new standard of Club Excellence.

The eye-popping www.vompc.org Web site, with its reservation wizardry and untold bells and whistles, was created by Treasurer Bill Thomson and places VOMPC on the highest platform within the USA rostrum of Petanque Clubs. And the volunteers! To them the Club owes its 2008 success. The 2009 board is looking forward to the ensuing challenge. "Season 09" promises to be extraordinary.

The Club's goal is to fill our courts up with people having fun. To that end we want to make it easier for our members to play in more tournaments.

We know that for triples events it's tough to get a team together. If you are a single player or even 2 people looking for a third, come to the courts at



9:30 am on tournament day and your Board will **guarantee** that you will play.

You'll be able to pick-up a team and if there is an uneven number, Board members will be standing by to fill up your team!

Spring Cleaning



Director Mayhem

It was a big day at the courts, 3000 pounds of fallen leaves trucked out, 5 tons of pea gravel spread, 250ft of irrigation placed, a new drinking fountain installed, 54 jasmine starts planted, 3 new redwood picnic tables christened, 3 old picnic tables anchored in place, club shed completely dismantled and re-organized, a new scoreboard installed, 800 pounds of nasty creosote ties removed, and multiple Mary's pizzas were consumed.

Many newer Sonoma names now have a vested interest in Sonoma's Depot Park. The Spring Cleaning Work Party this Saturday at the VOMPC maintained Sonoma Petanque Courts, threatened by rain, was a volunteer crew backed by a labor of love. In acknowledgement of their efforts, each participant received a Certificate of Appreciation signed by Mayor Ken Brown together with the Index Tribune's Editor-in-chief Bill Lynch. It was really a sight to behold.

A little known fact, the Sonoma Petanque Courts are leased to the Valley of the Moon Petanque Club for \$1 a year. The courts grew from grassy fields with the foresight of some early founders including Sonoma's John Bouldt as a result of Henry Maysonave's bequest of the property to the City of Sonoma. The VOMPC acts as stewards of the grounds, absorbing all site improvement and maintenance costs through their

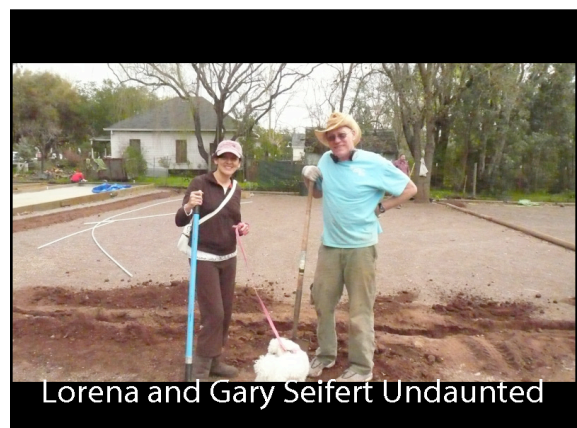
membership dues. All improvements that you see there are the result of thousands of hours of volunteer sweat and thousands of dollars in local donations all accruing to the City of Sonoma.

Initially conceived as an experiment in citizen operated public parks, the Sonoma Petanque Courts now serve as a model nationwide that other petanque groups present to their city councils as maintenance-free public use and beautification improvements.

You can see this year's extensive schedule of events at their website, vompc.org. In addition to the competitions, of which many are very casual lighthearted affairs, you'll see 3 large "Picnic & Petanque Events".

And no, you don't have to be a member to use the courts. We have Open Play Wednesdays where anyone who comes is supplied with balls and is guaranteed to play. Of course, it doesn't hurt to bring a bottle of wine with you!

Thanks indeed to this year's hardest working crew ever! Mike Cooper, Dave Brooks, Lee Hastings, Peter Wellington, Gary Seifer, Adair Hastings, Dick Nyquist, Hunt Sharp, Cliff Farrell, Bill Boyd, Bleys Rose, Renato Sotille, Peggy Silversides, Penny Bair, Phyllis Mosher, Joan Robertson, Shannon Bowman, Laura Anderson, Patrick Vaslet, Lorena, Hans Kurz, Teri Sirico.



Lorena and Gary Seifert Undaunted



Your 2009 Board of Directors has reelected me for another year as President and I have accepted the challenge. We have a Board that is active and dedicated to improving our courts, improving our events and introducing the game of Petanque to all who will take the time. We are initiating a new training program that will include an ongoing program for beginner/intermediate levels, as well as clinics to teach the finer points (and shots) of the game. We will be working with the PE Department at SVHS to conduct training sessions for students in the hopes of finding some stars for junior competitions. We will seek volunteers to help staff these efforts, so if you are inclined to help, please speak to a Board member. We have a great club, a great Board of Directors and I am looking forward to a great year of Petanque. See you on the courts.



*Mike Cooper,
President*

For me, the novelty of petanque has developed into my favorite pastime. I suppose that, because it is so easily accessible, its many layers keeps me entertained. Of course there is the challenge of the game itself that demands a creative solution for each ball I throw. The strategy changes like a chess game and I get to learn from people like Tino and Patrick who both seem to know how to swim with the current. Then there are the other things. The beauty and value of getting to build a City Park, friendships, a diverse supply of acquaintances, creating fun events, afternoon wines, cuisine for 100, and turning others on to these treasures. Each are worthy endeavors rich with rewards. There is so much there that it's hard to choose just one.



*Tom Bricca,
Secretary*

I have been playing Petanque for about fourteen years now, and there is many reasons why I have been playing for so long and no reasons why I should stop. I had no idea that one day when I would be walking to little league baseball practice that I would discover this hidden from the world game and that it would take me around the world as well. Due to the help of many I have been able to play and see some of the best petanque players in the world, shoot and point on courts in Thailand and France, and have some of the best times of my life. Thanks to the votes of our club, we will bring back the days of people packed courts and everyone just simply having a good time. I would like to welcome all and any suggestions from our members to provide a better club for all of us. My goals for 2009 are simple but not easy, One-Lets go play petanque and lets go have fun like the game intended us to. Two - Promote the game, to our past, current, and future members. Otherwise there will be no club and that simply cannot happen. Together we can make this possible, raise your glass to the year 2009 but no sips until its all over in 2010.



*P.J. Mallette,
Director*

Hello all, I have been a member of the club since 2003. I think I fell in love with the game almost the first time I saw it played, and I've been on a mission to become the best player possibly I can be ever since. Last year I had the chance to assist Mike Cooper in introducing our game to some high school students, I suppose it was that experience that led me to joining the board. That said, one of my goals for the club is to promote it to the youth. I am excited to try some new things and old things to get the best out of us for a fun filled petanque year.



*Narin Garrett,
Vice President*

I've learned a lot in the past year on the VOMPC Board of Directors. Mostly I've learned that nothing is easy and there are several ways of looking at every issue. I really enjoy playing Petanque on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 am and occasionally on Wednesday afternoons.

I really like the esprit de corps shown by everyone at our tournaments. I have had the unique opportunity to serve as the webmaster for the club website, and am still learning new things from member suggestions. Our club is a great mix of young and old, rich and poor, skilled and unskilled people. Let's work together for a great season.



*Bill Thomson,
Treasurer*



I have played petanque for about 2 years and really love it. The game is something you can instantly start doing at any level, and build skills and understanding of its complexities as you progress. The people who play in Sonoma are a great bunch of diverse characters - friendly, accepting and helpful - and the meets and parties are exciting and fun. I love being out there improving my game, and the camaraderie of all kinds of people, and I wanted to help out and contribute by being on the board



*Lee Hastings,
Director*

2009 will be my second year as a Board member. It has been a great pleasure to be of service to our fine club and our excellent members. Our current Board consists of a fine group of hard workers, which is good as there is plenty of work to be done in keeping our club running in top shape. I am very much looking forward to a full year of great fun in playing our game and socializing with everyone. Remember, in a down economy it is good to occasionally throw a high plombe to raise your spirits. Please remember to help keep our courts clean by picking up litter every time you play. Our courts are our second home and we want them to always look their best.



*Dave Brooks,
Director*

Picnic and Petanque Sundays

Tom Bricca

Image yourself on a lazy afternoon, having enjoyed a tasty wine paired with a delightfully presented BBQ picnic, chatting it up with friends and meeting new people with a come-and-go as you please timeframe and all the while a set of boules at your ready side. No pressure to play in this game or that and no pending threat of "If I lose...I'm out" or worse for many others, "I've got to stay here how long?"

Picture an informal gourmet day in the park where you are in charge of absolutely everything. An atmosphere where you can bring friends to a rare Sunday treat not readily found anywhere else. Inexpensive too we might add. You could choose to get into the mini-tournament, pick up a game, or keep right on relaxing and people watching in the grand Sonoma Style.

The club had such success with this picnic and petanque format last year, 190

lunches served at only 2 events, that we're adding yet another picnic affair that may well become the signature event of the year. The 140 member strong Home Wine Makers Club, (VOMDES), will be Wining us while we Dine them on July 25th to celebrate their annual picnic and help them kick off their humongous fundraising event for the SVHS Boosters on October 12th. We'll be inviting the Sonoma public to this Mixed Grill fete and petanque themed day to fill up our courts with people having fun.

Don't worry, you've got plenty of time to get into full picnic form if you plan to complete the circuit starting with the Lamb BBQ on June 7th the Wine Makers Picnic on July 25th and the Oktoberfest on October 3rd. These events will have capped attendance so I guess you'll have to hurry up just to unwind when the announcements start coming your way. We'll see you there!

Women's World Championships • Samsun, Turkey

By Erin McTaggart

In October two VOMPC members two members of the LAPC represented the USA in Turkey to compete in the Women's World Petanque Championships. Antonia Chavez, Erin McTaggart, Sandra Bonneville and Diana Jacobs donned their USA jackets and went to work. Their first pool included the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Monaco & Latvia. From the start Team USA was playing well...so well they won their first game against Monaco one of the toughest teams in the world. Despite Monaco's high level of play they couldn't fight the consistent shooting of LAPC's Sandra Bonneville. After finishing pool play with an overall losing record, Team USA found themselves in the Consolante even having beaten Monaco and gaining a win through a bye.

The Consolante was organized as single elimination meaning that

if you lose ...then you're out. USA's first game was played against Turkey II. As the host nation they, along with the previous World Champions are able to field 2 teams. Despite the 300 plus Turks there to cheer on their team, Team USA put up the good fight. The game lasted two and a half hours and was a true marathon event.

The one conflict that came up during the whole tournament happened in this game. Mary Albright, representing USA as a delegate, witnessed one of the Turkish players open a water bottle, take a sip and then dump water on her boule rag. Having a wet rag is illegal. This was pointed out to the Turk's coach, then pointed out to the head Turkish Arbite, and when the player was allowed to use the rag still, the one International Arbite (very few arbiters progress to the International level) was

asked to intervene. This finally resulted in the rule being properly enforced. The mistakes made by the Turkish player, Turkish coach and the arbite were more from lack of experience versus some devious intention, one would like to think.

This marathon of a game was also televised, with a camera boom and cameramen on the ground. It made it a bit more intense initially with the crowd and the TV, but then one gets into the game and focuses. In the end, Team USA team won that match, and advanced to play two more games, including a win against Norway before finally losing in the semifinals to Belgium. This resulted in a tie for third place in the Consolante, which is the highest level a team representing the USA has ever attained.

Overall, it can be said that at the International level of competition the strategy can be much more aggressive given that the players are much more consistent in their abilities to point and shoot. The ability to apply many different styles of throwing, rolling, maneuvering, and manipulating both the boules and bouchon, gives these players that much more flexibility to handle the terrain and get through, around and over any type of obstacle. Needless to say the matches were much more technical than the casual player is used to seeing.

It's experiences like this that give me the drive & motivation to continue to compete, in the US and around the world.

Below; Erin McTaggart, Mary Albright, Diana Jacobs, Antonia Chavez, Sandra Bonneville



**THE BIG TOURNAMENT IN THE BIG APPLE • BY BARBARA HALL**

Top; Joe Martin, Eric Bertin, JPS, Xavier Thibaud, & Ernesto Santos
Bottom; PJ, Alec Sweet, Eric Bertin.
watch as Ed Porto measure a point.



Top; A rare successful shot, in the inclement weather
Bottom; Erin McTaggart, Narin Garrett, & Barbara Hall

The opportunity to spend a Fall weekend in New York is tempting enough....Toss into that a weekend full of competitive petanque in the USA's biggest tournament of the year...Such an enticing mixture could not be resisted by 7 members of the VOMPC who traveled to New York to compete in the 2008 FPUSA World Championship Qualification Tournament, hosted by La Boule New Yorkaise. Making the journey were Narin Garrett, Barbara Hall, PJ Mallette, Peter Mathis, Erin McTaggart, Frank Pipal and Ed Porto. The weather was cold, but there was no rain as play commenced on Saturday morning.

Amid the symphony (or cacophony!!) of sounds from nearby 6th Avenue, fourteen (14) teams, with players from the states of New York, California, Maine, Florida, Pennsylvania, Oregon and Washington took to the petanque terrain in fabulous Bryant Park. This is urban boules at its finest. The focus and concentration needed to play and compete amid the sights and sounds of Manhattan, makes for a truly unique and unforgettable experience for any bouliste. Four (4) qualifying games were played that first day.

On Sunday, the top eight (8) teams were divided into 2 pools of 4. All 7 VOMPC players made it into Sunday's pool play.

At the conclusion of the pools, the only VOMPC survivors were Mathis (along with teammates Juan Garcia (Miami) and Mammary CouliBaly (Philadelphia) and Mallette (along

with teammates Ti Maes and Alec Stone Sweet (both of New York). In the semi finals, Team Mallette-Maes-Sweet emerged victorious, while Team Mathis-Garcia-CouliBaly were not. It was during these semi finals that the weather finally decided to cooperate no longer, as a cold rainfall ensued. Though both players and spectators alike were cold and soaked, spirits and enthusiasm were high for an eagerly anticipated final showdown between the team of Mallette-Maes-Sweet and the all New York team of Eric Bertin, Jean-Pierre Subrenat and Xavier Thibaud. The earlier rainfall ceased and everything was then set for the commencement of the final. Team Mallette-Maes-Sweet took early control of the final and were poised to claim the Championship with a score of 12-7 over their opponents. But the surge in play from Bertin-Subrenat-Thibaud proved to be unstoppable as the all New York team rallied to a 13-12 victory. It was a stunning comeback and victory for the New Yorkers, but many in the crowd (including this writer) were heartbroken for the missed opportunity for the VOMPC's Mallette.

Congratulations to Team Bertin-Subrenat-Thibaud. They are the National Champions and will represent the USA at the 2010 World Championships. Thanks to Ernesto Santos and Steve Ginsberg, of La Boule New Yorkaise, for organizing and running an outstanding tournament.



Calendar

Saturday, March 28

Season Opener 4 Ball Singles

Saturday, April 25

Sadie Hawkins, Select Mixed Doubles

Sunday, May 31

BBQ Lamb Picnic & Petanque

Sunday, June 7

NorthWest Regional Doubles

Sunday June 28

The Sonoma Cup, Select Triples

Sunday, July 12

Ravenswood Bastille Day, Random Triples

Sunday, July 25

Winemaker's Picnic Benefit

Sunday, September 27

VOMPC Club Championship, Select Triples

Saturday, October 3

Sonoma Oktoberfest, Picnic & Petanque

Saturday & Sunday, October 17-18

Wine Country Classic, Select Doubles

Sunday, November 4

Annual Meeting & Dinner, Casual Play

Saturday, November 7

George Pipal Memorial Tourney,

VOMPC vs. Willits



PETANQUE TRAINING

Intermediate and Advanced Now Available

The VOMPC would like to proudly announce Wednesday Training Day.

Classes will be offered on Wednesdays in the mornings and late afternoons.

Never heard of Petanque?

Come by Depot Park

Wednesday mornings and one of our players will be on hand to introduce the game to you.

For our other members who've progressed further along and but would still

like to learn more,

Wednesday afternoon we'll have a "club pro" on hand for beginning to intermediate

pointing and shooting,

strategy of the game, and

are just a few of the

things on the menu.

Want to know more? Come

on down to Depot Park and learn about the game we

love. Classes are free of

charge and there will be

local pro every week to help

you become a better player

with a better understanding

and love for the game.

CALL TO ARMS FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR THE CLUB



We need **really** your help in all capacities. From introducing our great game to others, to cooking, at work days, working the registration tables for tournaments, any and everything. Help us help you make the best of the time we spend together!