



THE STICKY WICKET

JANUARY 2024



New Years Eve Under the Lights



What an epic finale to the year! 24 fearless players embraced the chilly vibes to battle it out in the 2nd New Year's Eve GC Tournament. Picture this: a mix of croquet, lights, and a dash of neighborhood pyrotechnics—it was a blast in every sense! Hats off to the Social Committee and the one and only **Stephen Tasker**, our dazzling Master of Ceremony, for orchestrating the evening. Cheers to a fabulous event that kicked off the new year with a bang! Happy New Year!



Gay Cinque, Shaun Henderson



Marie Rittman, Anne Carr



Franck Meunier, John Strasser



Stephen Tasker



Ruth Summers, Suzanne Turner, Lenore Orłowska-Warren



Rich Rose, Diane Rose

*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 Peterson, Mary Galasso,**
Marianne Davidson, Lenore Orłowska-Warren.
Photographer, **Yen Sullivan** Board Liaison, **Ruth Summers***

NC Club President's Column



Tom Lindley

Task Forces (TF) can be very effective at efficiently accomplishing a lot in a limited time. They are not ongoing like committees. They focus on a narrow set of issues, and their volunteers are not too burdened. The Board has approved two new ones in addition to two previously approved ones on Court Availability and the Website Update.

1. Task Force on Civility. It will propose ways to stem the rising tide of incivility at NCC and within our Club with respect to both members and staff.

Leaders from other clubs also report increasing incivility, and we all see it in our society. But what does it mean to be civil? Civility is sometimes defined as courtesy or politeness. To me it is more. To be civil should also include demonstrating respect, respect for the individual dignity of every sentient being.

Recently, we have seen members in the NCC bar snap their fingers to call a waiter or, when speaking, "snap" at NCC staff. We have had members on courts arguing, at times loudly, about rules, or shouting across courts. We have had staff in the NCC office shout loudly at members. We have had members exchange emails that are less thoughtfully argued disagreements and more personal attacks. We now have the increasing use of cell phones on the lawns. Each of these, to me, illustrates one person not demonstrating proper respect for another person.

Of less importance but of note, many of these failures are also violations of our Club's rules. Most are not violations for which grievances should be filed, but most are violations that members should self-police, that is, members should read and comply with the rules because they are the Club's rules without needing others to enforce them. But we can use ideas from the TF on ways to reduce these and other forms of incivility.

The TF's report is due by May 1st. Its members are **Franck Meunier, David McCoy, Caryl Firth, Mike Gibbons, and Pam Groh.**

2. TF on Evening Play/Bar at the NCC. Purpose: For NCC, for SandyJames, and for Club to find/facilitate more open evenings at NCC that will, and must be, financially viable. This must include marketing, explaining, outreach beyond current members, financial analyses, addressing priority of events and tournaments, and work with several committees.

Schedule: Propose the process to achieve this to both CFA and Club not later than July 1st.

Members: **Marie Sweetser, Alex Galasso, Kat Robertson, Bob Broadway,** and a representative from **SandyJames.**

Tom Lindley, President, NC Club Board of Directors

Tips from the Pro



Zack Watson

A lot of people lose sight of what is most important when it comes to gaining consistency in hitting a single or two ball shot. There are a few things that you can do to eliminate a number of problems right off the bat to ease your pain.

We tend to focus on the location of where we want to go or where we want both balls to go instead of focusing on the ball that you are actually striking.

If you are able to strike YOUR ball the same each time, have your feet in the same position and swing straight through the center of your own ball all the way through to your target, you can eliminate 80% of your problems. If you can do these simple things correctly you can begin to develop some consistency day to day. The aim here is to eliminate as many things as we can from our croquet equation and build a reliable shot we can count on each day of the week.

Newly Elected Club Board of Directors



Newly elected members of the National Croquet Club 2024 Board of Directors:

- Tom Lindley, President
- Phil Robinson, Vice President (not in picture)
- Bob Broadway, Treasurer
- Tom Cooper, Secretary
- Caryl Firth, Member At-Large

SAVE THE DATES!

- January 16: Dine and Discover Luncheon, Shells
- January 12-14: 6W AR Club Singles Tournament
- January 18-21: 3rd Annual Women's GC Open Tournament
- January 31- February 4: Beach Club Invitational

New Deadness Boards Are Very Much Alive Waiting for Court Sponsors

Do You Know What They Are or How They Came to Croquet?



As you glance across the velvet swaths of the NCC lawns, if you are a Golf Croquet player, you might wonder what those odd-looking boards sporting squares of croquet colors amidst the pristine courts mean? Wonder no more. Any competent American Rules player will gladly tell you. They're "deadness boards." New ones were installed last year and now you see names attached such as the Snowbirds and Flamingos designating Court sponsors.

In the AR game, when a striker's ball hits another ball, you place your ball in contact with the ball you hit. Then you have two more shots to get through your next wicket, or to go hit another ball and get two more shots. If you fail to make your next wicket on that turn, however, the ball you are playing cannot hit any other balls struck in that turn for the rest of the game until you make its next wicket. You are DEAD on that ball, and you must mark that on the deadness board at the end of your turn. If you have hit all the other balls with that ball, you are "three-ball dead." If that happens with your other ball, you are 6-ball dead! GASP!

The origin of carryover deadness (or just "deadness") and deadness boards is more controversial than double taps. The origin is, in fact, total conjecture unhampered by facts. That conjecture brings together a wealth of reasonable data, however unproven, discovered by numerous croquet scholars and other "serious" investigators of the subject.

Herbert Bayard Swope, newspaper owner extraordinaire and socialite, picked up the game in England during the 1st World War. It is believed that Swope brought the concept of deadness home to his high society croquet playing friends on Long Island. Prior to that, there were no deadness boards of any kind. Deadness had to be remembered during play and the glitterati at Swope's grand Great Neck mansion would have been deeply insulted by the mere suggestion that they needed some sort of memory aid.

There is another clue, however. Although deadness was part of the game, the actual boards themselves did not exist until the 50's. Among all the croquet paraphernalia found and acquired by various avid collectors there was not a single deadness board predating that time.

With the creation of the USCA in 1977, formal rules and regulations were finally established including rules regarding carryover deadness. And now, the NCC deadness boards serve an important additional purpose. These boards honor Court Sponsors who have graciously helped support the Center. If you want to become a Court Sponsor and share in the history and the future of the NCC, speak with **David McCoy**, the Chairman/CEO of the not-for-profit Croquet Foundation of America that owns and operates the Center.

Sheila Peterson

Update on NCC Expansion



David McCoy

Because our property is zoned residential, we've had continuous delays trying to get County approval to add up to 10 new croquet courts, including four planned on our newly acquired adjoining property. That means that even after we meet all County requirements, we will have to have public hearings to get an exemption for any changes.

It's a very expensive project, and you can help. Become a Court Sponsor! Sponsor recognition signs are provided below those beautiful new deadness boards. Sponsorships are \$50,000 for signs facing the veranda and \$35,000 for the back courts. This is literally a "once in a lifetime" opportunity. Call, text, email or come see me! Mccoy1165@gmail.com

Dine & Discover: Happiness

If you missed the November luncheon, you might wish you hadn't. What's the number one tip for sustaining happiness according to the Harvard University Longitudinal Study on Happiness? Speaker **Max G. Anspacher**, author of "A Practical Guide to Happiness," reported that it's not eight hours sleep, or healthy eating habits or helping others, though those are important. The most important element contributing to happiness is to maintain your friendships. Socialize.

His three takeaways:

- **Nourish Your Relationships**
- **Want What You Have**
- **Be True to Your Own Values**

Need Volunteers for NCC Events

Frequently, the organizations take advantage of our offer of croquet instruction to introduce their members to the sport of croquet. These are fun events. The Club is asked to provide volunteer instructors who are given a free SandyJames meal prior to each event. If you can volunteer, please contact:

Susan Langston: thelangstons@homesc.com or
Lynn Foley: lfoley3158@gmail.com.

| DATES | TIMES |
|-------|--------------------------------|
| 1/15* | 12:45-2:15 pm |
| 1/17 | 12:30-2 pm and 7:30-9 pm |
| 1/23 | 2:30-4:30 pm and 5:30-7 pm (*) |
| 1/24 | 1-2:30 pm |
| 1/26* | 6-7:30 pm |
| 1/27 | 6-7:30 pm |

*large events requiring many volunteers

Social Committee Promises Lively 2024 Season

The NC Club Social Committee under the new chairmanship of **Pam Groh** has some ideas to share. "A survey is coming out in the near future from the Social Committee, the Membership Committee and the Croquet Committee," says Groh. "It will ask members which events they want at NCC, which events they have enjoyed in the past and, which events they anticipate participating in this year. Here we have a call to action, a chance for members to give opinions, ideas and to let us know what their interests are. Thank you in advance."

For starters, a Movie Night on January 30, 2024 will bring Momma Mia to NCC. **Scott Reiser** has created a dinner menu to enhance the Greek theme. For all the sweethearts, Valentine's eve February 13, 2024 will be the day for chocolate delicacies.

Groh is enthusiastic about several additional events already planned for 2024. The Dine and Discover Luncheon program which started off last year at NCC with momentum brings fabulous speakers into our club. The lectures are informative and give members an opportunity to bring guests upstairs for a delicious lunch and relaxed afternoon. The first two lectures of 2024 are:

- January 16, 2024, *Bob Broadway and Shells.*
- On February 20, 2024, *Oliver Buckton, author of an Ian Fleming biography, The World Is Not Enough*

Other members of the Social committee are: **Jane Grandusky, Lois Clay, Trudy Crowetz, Barbara Bailey** and **Suzanne Turner**. If you have some thoughts, be sure to buttonhole one of them.

As we move forward into 2024 with our New Year's resolutions, let each one of us bring out the best in each other and in our club. For many people, belonging to NC Club is as much about being social as it is playing croquet. "The true spirit of sociability is to allow others to shine."

Mary Galasso

OUR NEW MEMBERS

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

**Diane Rose, Rich Rose, Christine Casey
Gerald Dolezar, Babetta Ferris, Jim Ferris
Charles Werner**



Visit the National Croquet Museum at www.nationalcroquetmuseum.com



It was at this tournament that it became clear that official rules for the game needed to be agreed upon before tournaments could be played.

Mary Shields

Seen on TV!



Last May, Bravo's reality Franchise *The Real Housewives of Miami* turned their cameras toward us at the NCC, bringing croquet to the screens of nearly half a million viewers on Bravo, Peacock, and other streaming platforms. You can spot **David McCoy, John Strasser, Bruce Hindin, John Warlick and Franck Meunier** and the staff from SandyJames. This unexpected spotlight drew in 5 newcomers, who, inspired by the show, joined us for a smashing good time during our Saturday Visitor's Clinic.

