

2001 Schedule in the Works

Season Opens with a Select Triplette on February 24th

Something for Everyone—with Some New Twists!

Here's the PRELIMINARY 2001 schedule. *And it's a beauty!* (Full details will be included in the March newsletter.)

Sat. Feb 24 Season Opener Select Triplette (Rain date: Sun. Feb 25)

Sun. Mar 25 Four Ball Singles (with a Women's Division)

Sun. Apr 22 Mixed Doublette

Sat. May 5 Kids' Day

Sun. May 20 Member/Guest Select Doublette & Potluck Picnic

Sun. Jun 3 Picnic & Pétanque

Sun. Jun 17 Emperor Norton Handicap (Open Format)

Wed. Jul 4 Evening Potluck Picnic, Pétanque & Sonoma Fireworks

Sun. Jul 15 Bastille Day Grand Concours de Pétanque (Random Triplette)

Sat. Aug 4 Evening Picnic & Pétanque

Sun. Aug 19 Wine Country Classic (Select Doublette)

Sat./Sun. Sep 1-2 FPUSA World Qualifiers (Select Triplette)

Sun. Sep 23 MaTerre Club Championship (Mixed Triplette - Select) and Picnic

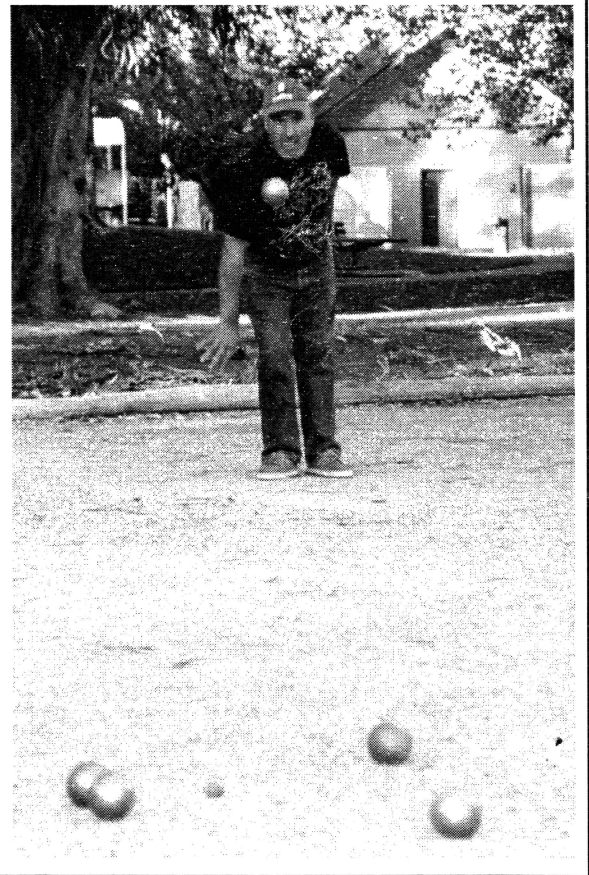
Sun. Oct 21 'Oktoberfest' Panaché

New League Begins on January 27th

If you're an avid boulist like Tino Lofaro, who loves to share his knowledge of the game with newcomers of all ages, or if you are new to pétanque, the VOMPC has just the cure for those mid-winter blues.

And it's free!

See Page Two and the special insert for all the details.



Inauguration, VOMPC style: the New Gas Range Soup, Bread 'n Brie to be Served at the Season Opener

Not particularly pleased with the inauguration this month in Washington, D.C.? Well then, just wait until Saturday, February 24th when the VOMPC will do a little inauguratin' of its own—that of our new twin-burner gas range donated last year by Bart Zachofsky.

Tom Noonan, D.A.S. (Doctor of All Soups) will prepare a tasty repast to "keep your boulies warm" during this first-ever February Season Opener.

The format is Select Triples. As usual, sign-up will close at 10am. Ten dollar (per person) entry fee will include soup, bread and brie. Raindate is the next day, Sunday, February 25th. **PRIZES & FUN will abound!**

Be a Sport and RSVP on the Hotline by Feb 21st! (707-258-3450)

Board Approves New/Vet League —and it's **FREE** to all members!

Outgoing President Ed Porto won approval for a club-funded winter doubles league at the November 7th board meeting. The league will pair veteran members and new members for a two-month season of friendly competition.

Ed will serve as League Director. Prizes will be awarded after the playoffs are completed.

Noting the success of last year's Mixed Doubles' League in the same time slot, proponents of the New Member/Veteran Member league saw no real impediments to its success. The Board was also delighted to offer a "freebie" to the dues-paying membership.

This league promises balanced competition. It's a chance for newcomers to learn from experienced players and get more comfortable in "real game" situations. Also, it allows the club's veterans to "strut

their stuff" (*Chuck Fleming, are you with this?*) while helping raise the level of play in the club. Best of all, it will be a great way to get to know other club members.

All current VOMPC members are eligible. "New Member" is someone new to the game in the year 2000. "Veteran Member" is everybody else. People may register in teams of two, but individuals without partners are also encouraged to sign on. Ed will provide match-making. He advises early registration to allow time to coordinate teams.

Registration closes on January 19th. The season opens on Saturday, January 27th and concludes with a playoff on Saturday, March 24th.

For easy sign-up, the enrollment form is on the flip side of the membership renewal form enclosed in this issue of the *Pétanque Times*.
Join today!

A Call for Volunteers

Last fall, four club members volunteered to donate their time and energy to the VOMPC by joining the three returning members of the Board of Directors.

Because of the growth of our Club and the amount of activities which are offered, there is a real need for club members to step up and take on a piece of the action.

If you can spare a few hours a month, please contact any of the board members. They need a helping hand in the following areas: League Directors, club apparel, website development, kids' programs, fund raising, food service, as well as any special interest items.

Winter "Wednesdays"

This past autumn, as the days got shorter and the air grew colder, a collective sigh was heard above the hub-bub of Sonoma plaza.

Was it the townsfolk's laments over the year's last Tuesday night market? 'Dunno. Perhaps people were discussing their upcoming holiday plans. Nahh! Rain-induced crush-kvetching? OK, there was a bit of that.

No, no. What the people were saying was "What are we gonna do all winter without Wednesday night Pétanque?!" You see, we all got used to seeing and playing with thirty or forty of our best friends every week, or sneaking in a league match perhaps, or half a bottle of wine.

"What's to do about this?", you may ask. Well, the answer has come from the grassroots of the Sonoma pétanquing public: *change Wednesday evening play to Saturday afternoons, and keep everything else the same: the games, the wine and, of course, our own good company.*

So, this Saturday ("this Saturday" is the first Saturday after you read this story) clubbers will vote with their feet for this calendar change and be at the courts for some spirited play.

'See you there! About 1PM.

...and if it rains on Saturday, we'll see ya on Sunday!

Mayo Gets 1st Fanny—AGAIN!

Byron Mayo continued his 'min-istreak' of first-of-the-year fannies. On January 1st he, Peter Wellington and Luis Velez administered the undue punishment upon a jet-lagged and sleep-deprived Ed Porto and his

O O P S ! — o u t o f r o o m

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Pétanque Times is a bimonthly newsletter of the Valley of the Moon Pétanque Club, PO Box 863, Sonoma CA 95476

Ed Porto, Editor/Publisher

Photographs (this issue): Ed Porto, Erika Schmitt, Karen Semerau, Bart Zachofsky

VOMPC 2001 Board of Directors

Frank Pipal, President

Dave Ogaz, Vice President

Gail StClair, Secretary

Randy Ellis, Treasurer

Directors at Large: Rick Bagel, Gerard Canabou, Renato Sotille

**Hey, Big John DesPois!
Come home—for a visit.**

Women Lead the Way in Their First-Ever Singles League

Holly Sammons, Grand Champion!

Eight of our wonderful women members took to the courts this past autumn for a harvest of fun and games. Judging by first impressions, this may be the beginning of a new tradition for the VOMPC.

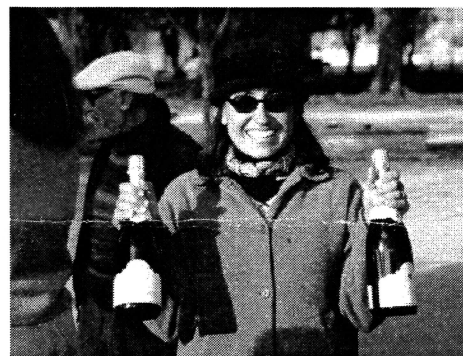
Play began in September and ran for eight weeks. Going into the playoffs, Karen Semerau was undefeated and the top seed, followed closely by first-year bouliste Holly Sammons (7-1). Erika Schmitt, another rookie sensation, was the best of the rest at 4-3.

The weather was crisp and clear on playoff day Saturday, November 11th. Table cloths and fine wines added a touch of class, befitting this select segment of our membership. Teri Sirico and Don Baumhefner, barbecued some delicious salmon and the rest of the ladies prepared potluck specialties which impressed their very discerning League Director. A small crowd of club members were also in attendance to take in the festivities.

The playoff proceeded as the season had progressed, with closely-contested matches. Karen cruised to the final with tough wins over Elizabeth Ogaz and Erika, only to suffer her only loss of the season in the final match. Holly survived the double-elimination, losing her first game to Erika, but she improved steadily as the day wore on. She defeated Elizabeth and then Erika enroute to her 13-1 (*that's not a misprint!*) victory over Karen to close out her triumphant season.

In the Consolante, the closely-matched field of Glory Glover, Barbara Hall, Teri Sirico and Lynn Woodward yielded a final which pitted Glory against Barbara. Barbara's pointing proved unstoppable and she prevailed in a lopsided win, 13-3.

At day's end, prizes were awarded to many of the contestants. And toasts were made all around, to a great season and a magnificent day at the courts.



The League: (top row) Erika Schmitt, Teri Sirico, Elizabeth Ogaz, Lynn Woodward
(bottom row) Holly Sammons, Glory Glover, Barbara Hall, Karen Semerau

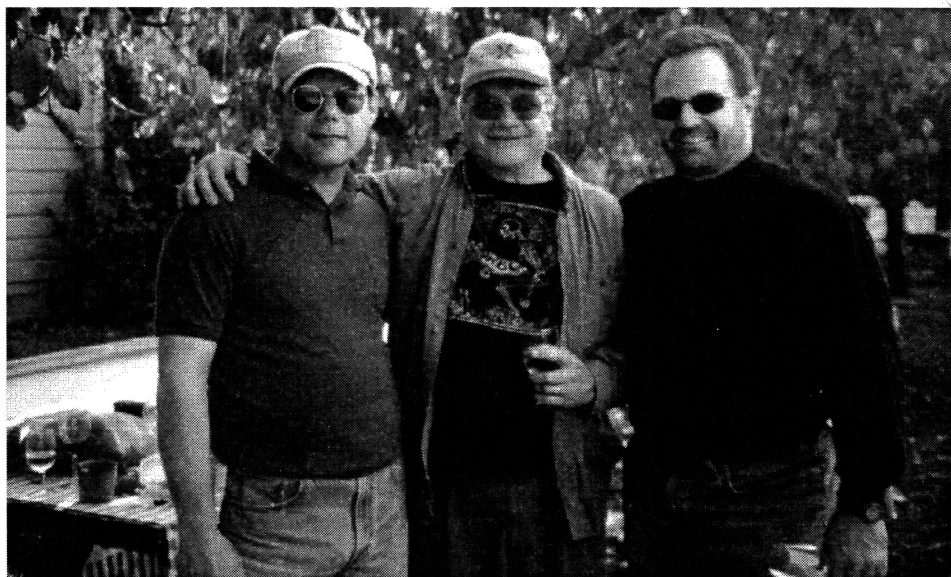
Pressing the Flesh at Preston

Willits and Sonoma Clubs 'meet halfway'

It was handshakes and hugs all around at the annual George Pipal Memorial Tournament (a.k.a. "The Willits Challenge") hosted by Preston Vineyards this past November 18th. For what is becoming a most genteel event for both the VOMPC and the Willits Boules Club, twenty-four pétanque enthusiasts travelled to the beautiful Dry Creek Valley in northern Sonoma County for a day of good pétanque and good cheer.

Ten hearty Willits players came down from their Northern sanctuary to meet their compatriots-in-boules from lower Sonoma. Seven VOMPC pairs showed up making for a club à club competition marked by good sportmanship and camaraderie. (Sentimental sojourner Bill Carter, once a Willits Club member, weighed in for our sister club with partner Pamela Stephens to even out the pairings. *This selfless act did not go unnoticed!*)

After the initial rounds, the top



VOMPCers Rick Bagel and Luis Velez mix it up with longtime Willits boulemeister and VOMPC member Eldon Moilanen (center).

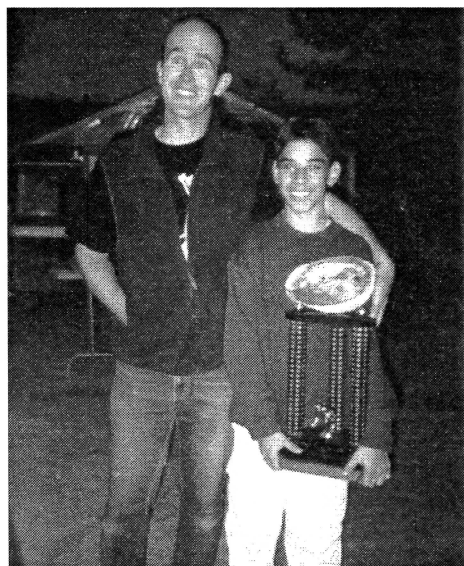
three pairs met for first, second and third place. Fittingly, it was Frank Pipal (pronounced "people") and Adrian Reyes who came away with the coveted trophy (designed and handcrafted by a renowned abalone diver) and a small pile of cash.

They survived a tough challenge by longtime boules addict-extraordinaire Eldon Moilanen and his cohort Jack Carrington, 13-12 in the final. Two other Sonoma teams,

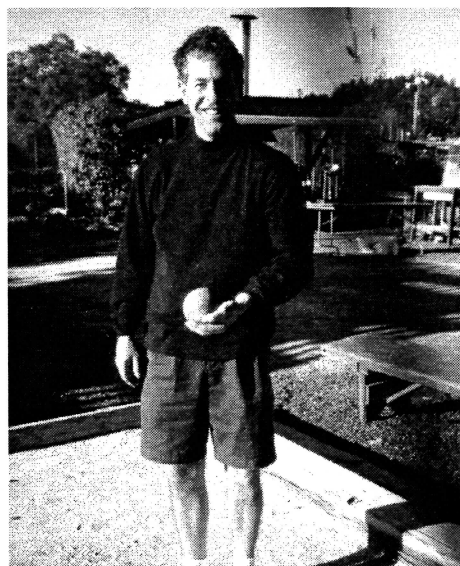
the winemaking Peters (Mathis and Wellington) and the returning team of Bart Zachofsky and Karen Semerau, captured second and third place, respectively.

It was a great day of friendly competition, great potluck food and, of course, the fine wines of Preston. Both clubs extend their appreciation to Lou Preston and his staff for their wonderful hospitality.

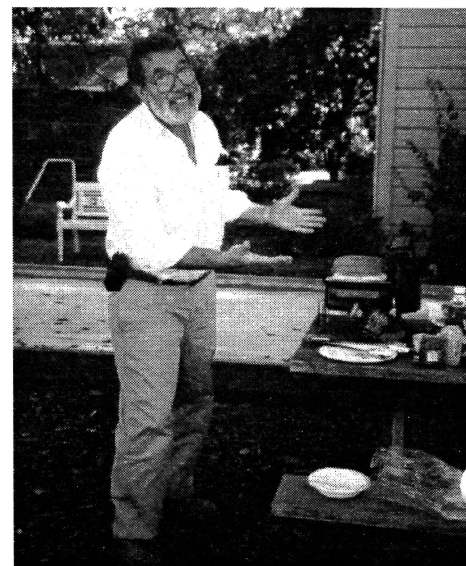
'See you there next year!'



Everyone was a winner, especially Frank Pipal and Adrian Reyes!



Ex-Prez Peter Mathis, living proof that pétanque brings out the child in all of us.



Bart Zachofsky's one-man hot dog show delighted the picnickers.

Semerau, Pierre on Ballot for FPUSA Board

Second-year club member Karen Semerau and veteran boulist Robert Pierre join current Councillor Mary Allbright of Lafayette as nominees to represent the FPUSA's Northwest Region with clubs in Sacramento, Nevada City, Oakhurst, Willits, Menlo Park, Lafayette, San Francisco, San Rafael and Sonoma.

Other Northwest Counselors, Louis Toulon and Bart Zachofsky, will be joined by the two chosen in the current election. Ballots are due from club boards later this month.

Karen has participated in and helped with many of our sister clubs' events over the past year. Robert is well known on the U.S. Pétanque circuit and is a regular sponsor of various clubs and tournaments, including the VOMPC.

The VOMPC extends best wishes to our FPUSA volunteers. May they do their club proud!

Oakhurst Pétanquers Hosted in Sonoma

FPUSA's Newest Club Hits the Wine Country

Cloudy and gray weather did not deter a hearty group of boulists from the town of Oakhurst (near Yosemite National Park) from making an appearance at our courts last December 10th. Seventeen visitors formed mixed teams with a similar number of VOMPC members for a morning of spirited play and lots of laughs. Many in the group continued the affair at Piatti's afterwards, with a gourmet lunch arranged by Mike Norton.

Both clubs exchanged best wishes and promises to visit again in 2001.



Self-portrait of Le Prez

From the President's Desk...

Great weather so far this winter has been a blessing for valley boulistes. With the upcoming New Member/Veteran Member League, and an early season

opener slated for February, let's hope that the rain we get comes in neatly packaged bursts that leave us with fine Wednesdays and weekends.

If that would help to keep the momentum going from last year, we'll have a great year of pétanque to look forward to.

Given the full and varied calendar in the works, we'll need more organizers, chefs and volunteers than ever. If you've never been on an event crew yet, make this the year to try it once. You'll have a good time and then appreciate even more the days when you can just be a "civilian".

In the time it took you to read this you could have picked up your boulebag and headed out the door for Depot Park instead. So...

I'll see you on the courts.
—Frank Pipal

In Memory

As we look forward to a new year, let us pause to remember two Club Members who passed away in 2000.

Jeanette Krauer
Barbara Stieper

VOMPC to Host the Grand Daddy of Them All!

It's Set: World Open Qualifiers in Sonoma

After considering submissions from around the country, the FPUSA Board of Directors anointed the Valley of the Moon Pétanque Club with the honor of hosting the 2001 World Open Qualifiers. This tournament is open to all current FPUSA members who meet the qualification and residency requirements. Competitors from around the nation are expected to descend upon our fair courts on Labor Day Weekend to contend for the right to represent the US in the World Open Championships in the Fall of 2002 (overseas location TBD).

The VOMPC's history of success in organizing and conducting large competitions was instrumental in securing the bid.

All club members are encouraged to participate. The format is Select Triples and the tournament will last two days. Details will be forthcoming in future issues of this newsletter.

Stay tuned!

VOMPC Board Notes

12.12.00

Sponsorship Committee members approved: Sotille, D. Ogaz, Mayo, Pipal (Mathieu, Chairman).

Schedule Committee formed.

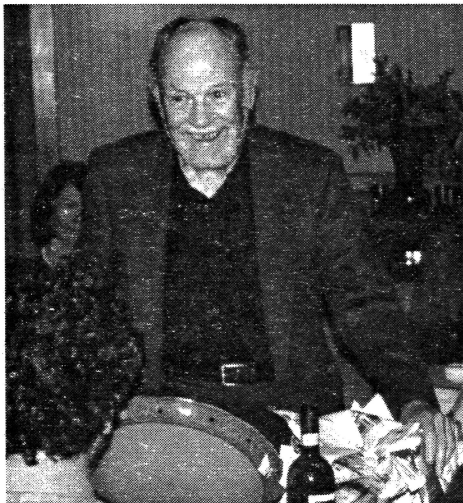
Letter of appreciation received from the Marin Hospice, in memory of Barbara Steiper.

The Board thanks Bart Zachofsky for his donation of the new grill.

12.13.00

Schedule Committee drafts 2001 event calendar.

Big Shoes to Fill



Byron was awarded a commemorative ceramic bowl, handcrafted by Nicole Hummer, at the Annual Dinner last fall.

Late last year, when I was approached to become the editor of the Pétanque Times, I was flattered by the compliment but taken aback by the fact that our good buddy, Byron Mayo, would be giving up his long-standing position of "Communicator-in-Chief." Like all of us, I had become accustomed to Byron's unique take and meticulous reporting on Club activities over the years.

While Byron's presence on the courts may actually increase (I would estimate by about six evenings in the coming year, due to six less deadlines to meet!), his presence on these printed pages cannot be replaced.

But the Petanque Times mailbox has an open door and, hopefully, we may see a guest appearance by the Maestro himself from time to time. By the same token, I encourage anyone who is so inclined to submit stories and pictures for our newsletter.

I look forward to the new and interesting developments at the VOMPC on which I may report to you all. And I hope to do justice to the tradition of our humble rag, which has been so well established by Byron.

So, thanks in advance for your patience.

'See you in the funnies! -Ed Porto

Members, Please send in your Renewal Forms and League Enrollments today!

Register Your Boules!

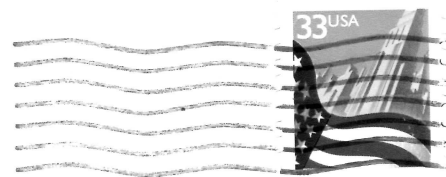
PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT

An idea whose time has come...

With the stroke of his pen (and some nifty page-layout) new President Frank Pipal has initiated a boule registry for all club members. In case your boules are misplaced or mistakenly put in another club members bag (*how could that happen?!), it will be easier to track and return boules to their happy owners.*

IT'S EASY—just send in the enclosed form with your membership renewal!

Valley of the Moon
Pétanque Club
P.O. Box 1738
Sonoma CA 95476



Byron Mayo
880 Oak Lane
Sonoma, CA 95476

P.S.—

*Watch the bulletin board at the courts for info on our **Annual SPRING CLEANING WORK PARTY!!***