

Competition Heats Up for VOMPC!

Tete à Tete, then it's the Second Annual Mixed Doubles

Two Good Ones on Tap for the Spring

The VOMPC will burst into Spring 2001 with two events geared to all levels of competition.

First up, on Saturday March 24, will be a Four Ball Singles tourney. Formerly the season opener, this event has attracted the best boulists in the Bay Area over the years.

It's a BYO-lunch affair which will feature an *Open* and a *Women's Division*, with a *Concours* and a *Consolante* in each track. There will be loaner boules available for those who need a fourth boule (Raindate is Sunday March 25).

On Sunday April 22, the *Second Annual VOMPC Mixed Doublette* (select) takes place. Arranging your own team is advised, but you can come early for on-site match-making.

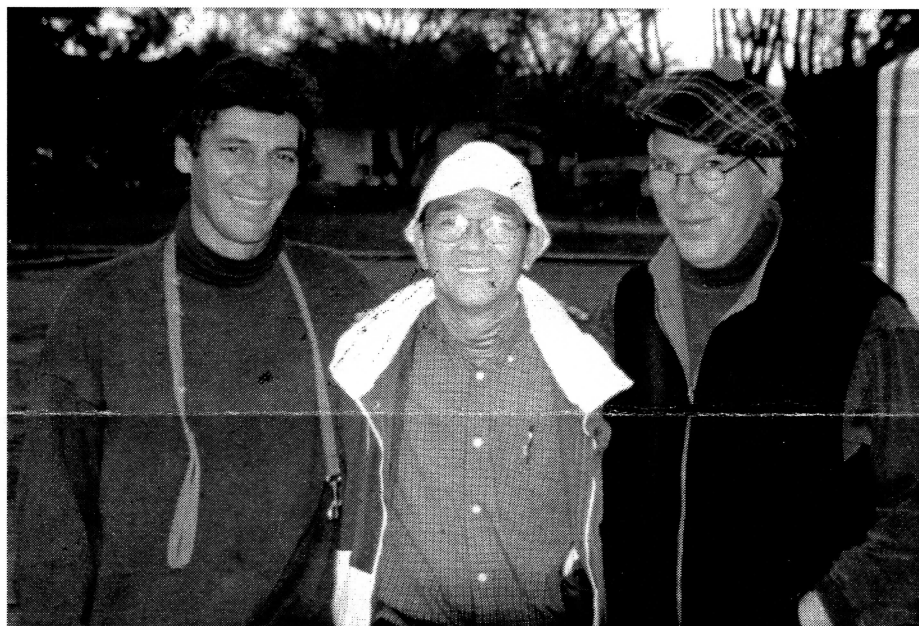
Showcase your culinary creations as potluck lunch will be the order of the day.

Signup for both events closes at 10am SHARP. Entry fees are \$7 for each event. 'See you there!'

FOR BOTH THESE EVENTS

ALL PARTICIPANTS MUST SHOW PROOF OF FPUSA MEMBERSHIP AT SIGNUP - NO EXCEPTIONS!

Season Begins with a Splash!



Winners! Tom Bricca, Andrew Loi and Frank Barsocchini were all smiles after their muddy march to victory in the 2001 Season Opener.

Feb. 25: Rained out on Saturday, but undeterred on Sunday, thirty players showed up with a fire in the belly to enjoy some late winter mud boules in the Season Opener Select Triplette. Tom Noonan donated, prepared and served a delicious bread pudding and corn chowder which delighted everyone. Tom Bricca had urns of hot coffee for all to swill and Frank Pipal brought on the cheese and a tasty hot spiced cider. Frank and Richard Bagel served as tournament directors.

Upsets and close contests were in no short supply in the opening rounds, as beginners challenged and knocked off a few veteran teams. The wet conditions enticed some players to seek out drier terrain at "Night Court," with mixed results.

It came down to four teams in the *Concours* and six in the *Consolante*. After waltzing to the finals with TWO consecutive fannies, Steve Sterbentz, Chuck Fleming and Bill Miller were thumped by the unholy alliance of John Bartkoviak, Jake Martin and Gerard Canabou, 13-4, in the *Consolante* Final.

(continued on page 3)

Wedding Bells Chime at the Courts! Members Celebrate

If it wasn't for the VOMPC, Erika and Michel might never have met! Pétanque caused their paths to cross, so it was only natural that the club courts were the scene of an impromptu party in their honor.

On January 20th, only a week after the knot was tied, delighted well-wishers brought a little of this and a little of that, making an appealing picnic spread to fête our newly wed pair.

Champagne corks were a-poppin' and a round of toast-making ensued. Tradition demanded a cake-cutting and Marco Ilaria's savory polenta creation offered a worthy stand-in.

As could be expected, festivities continued on the courts with a big "splash" and many games of boules.

Both Erika and Michel expressed their gratitude to everyone and were genuinely touched by the collective spirit and good cheer. The VOMPC wishes them much luck, health and happiness and a long and bright future together.

Saturday afternoons have become a popular time at the courts, but this one was truly the highlight of the winter!



© VOMPC 2001

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): Bruce Frigard, Tom Noonan, Ed Porto, Karen Semerau

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

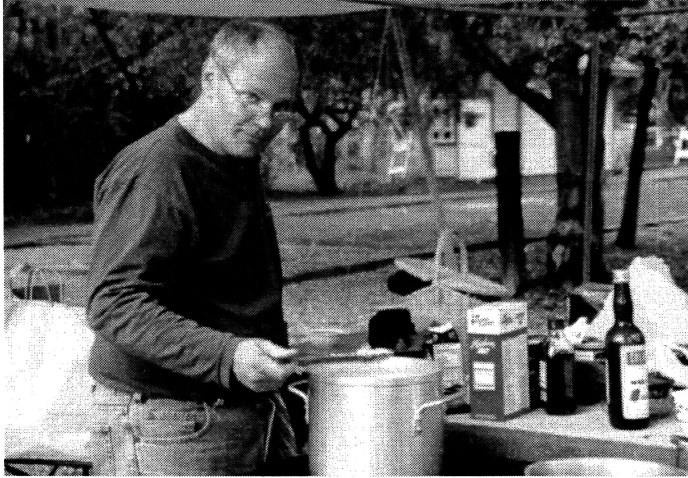
We're Looking for a Few Good Volunteers!

On Labor Day Weekend (Sept. 1 & 2), the VOMPC will host the annual **FPUSA World Championship Qualification Tournament**. This competition will determine the individuals who will represent the US in the World Championship of Pétanque, to be held in the Fall of 2002 in Morocco. The best players from around the country will be here and playing their best in this two-day competition. The Club will also be offering a parallel tournament, designed for those who wish to be in a competitive game, mixed with food and friends. This will be a great opportunity to see—or play against—the top competitors in the US.

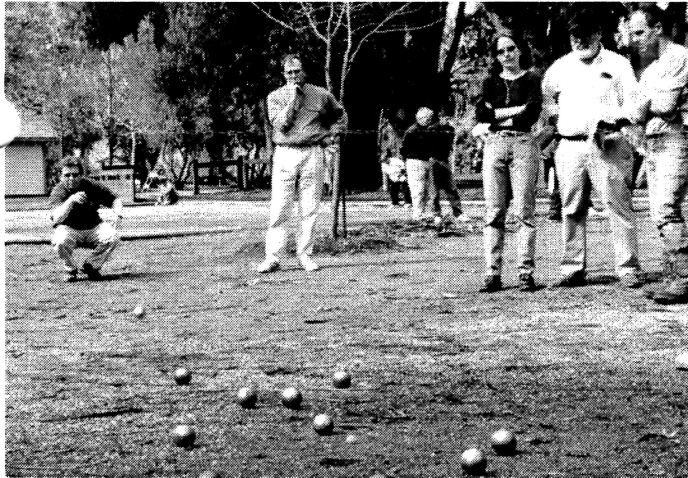
September 1st may seem like a long way off, but planning such an event requires lots of time and preparation. Frank Pipal is looking to put together a team of event organizers who will make this Great American Pétanque Championship a weekend to remember. Some specific areas that volunteers can choose from are Accommodations, Food Service, Hospitality, Tournament Direction, Court Preparation, Fund-raising (Raffles) and Apparel Sales. If you would like to help, **please leave a message on the hotline 258-3450.**

Season Opener (continued)

In the Concours, the winning trio of Barsocchini, Loi, Bricca met their toughest test in the opening round, defeating Bill Carter, Ed Porto and Peter Wellington, 13-10. They then bested Tuan and Raymond Nielsen and Robert Pierre in the final, 13-5.



The Soup Doctor made everyone feel good!



Bill Miller bears down for a point in the early going.



Bart, Pascal and Andrew enjoy the mid-day repast.

Carter, Porto and Wellington took third place over Pascal Gravier, John Krauer and P.J. Mallette, 13-11.

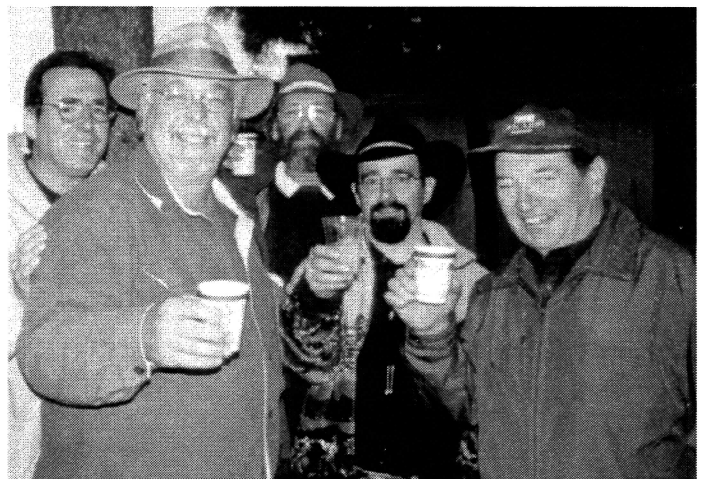
Hats off once again to Bart Zachofsky for his generous donation of the new gas range. And to Terry Boden for his gift of a (full!) propane tank. Thanks to these good old boys, *the VOMPC is cookin' with gas now!*



The tarps went up but the rain never came.



Who's closer?



No *CoffeeCo* coffee for this crew!

Good Going for New Members and Veterans

Seventeen Teams Competing for 2001 Winter/Spring League Championship

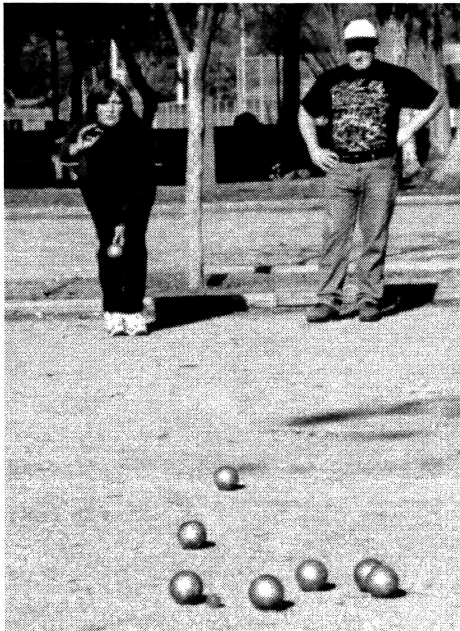
Thirty-four VOMPCers have taken to the courts this winter to compete in the first-ever New Member/Veteran League. Players of all ages and skill levels have been meeting

on weekend afternoons and have engaged in excellent play and good sportsmanship.

Division play started on January 27th and continues until March 18th. The season will end with a playoff day on Saturday, March 31st for both Concours and Consolante finalists.

As of press time, all bets are off in "Les Partisans" division, with Bill Carter and Michael Denton holding the tie-breaker over Peter Wellington and Erika Schmitt. In "Les Bouchonaires" division, Ed Porto and Mary Hutchinson are setting in a tight field.

Club members are invited to attend the playoff day on Saturday, March 31 at the courts. Play begins at 11am and there will be a potluck lunch after the first rounds are completed. *See you there!*



Holly Sammons finds the "sweet spot" vs. Tino Lofaro.



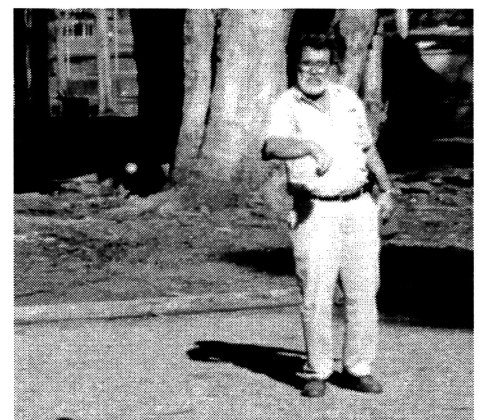
Cynthia Markson lets one fly with a classic release.



Luis Velez (r) looks on as John Bouldt gets the "de-liar" out on a close call.



Tino gives some pointers to teammate Patrick Sammons.



Bart Zachofsky puts a little extra 'ju-ju' on the boule.

LEAGUE STANDINGS

LES PARTISANS DE PETANQUE

Bill Carter/Michael Denton	4-1
Peter Wellington/Erika Schmitt	4-1
Bart Zachofsky/Teri Sirico	4-2
Frank Pipal/Cynthia Markson	3-3
Tom Bricca/Will Trood	1-1
Jacques Mathieu/Lynn Woodward	2-3
Barbara Hall/Marri Lemaire	1-3
Michael Hall/Jeff Miller	1-4
Elizabeth Ogaz/Sarah Ogaz	0-2

LES BOUCHONAIRES

Ed Porto/Mary Hutchinson	6-0
Dexter Tracy/Lisa Hoxie	1-0
Tino Lofaro/Patrick Sammons	3-2
Karen Semerau/Ralph Hutchinson	3-2
Luis Velez & Holly Sammons	2-2
Glory Glover/Jim Lavaroni	2-3
John Bouldt/Cliff Bond	0-4
Tom Noonan/Shelli Ashbeck	0-5

Work Party Set for March 17th!

It's time to get our courts in shape for the new season

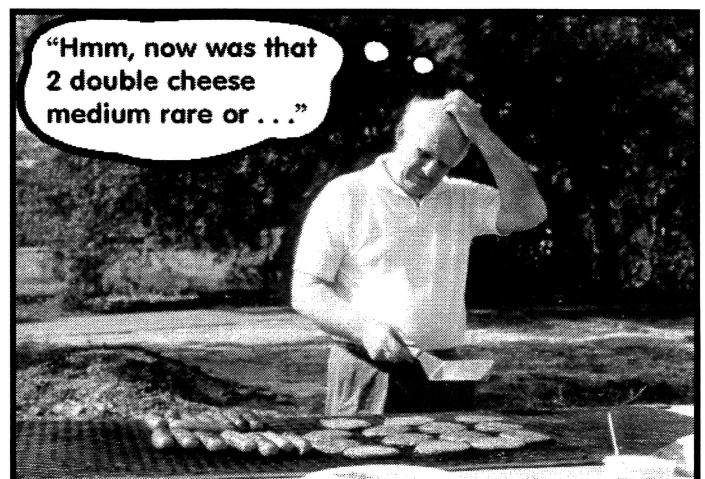
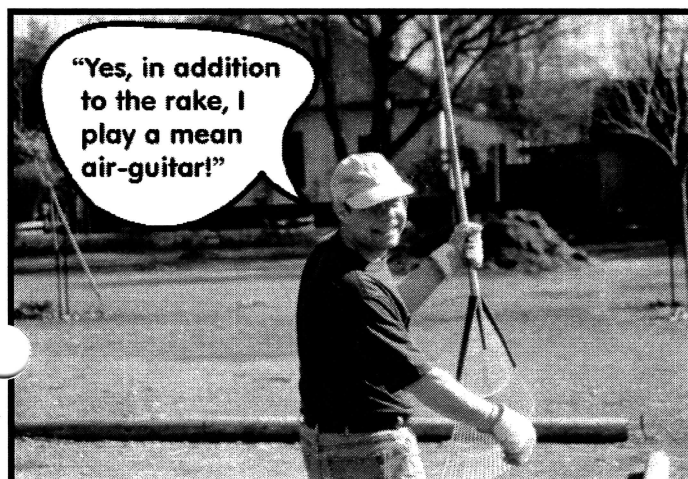
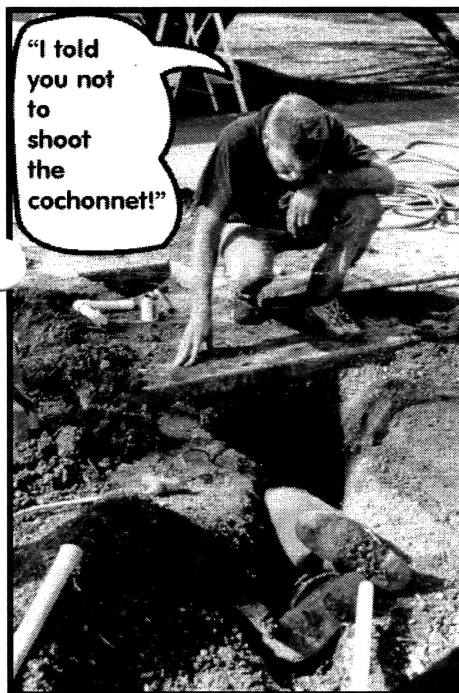
The Valley of the Moon Pétanque Club licenses the Maysonnave Courts from the City of Sonoma. In addition to the privilege of using this great public facility, we have the responsibility of maintaining and improving our portion of the park—at club expense. Every year about this time, club members are asked to contribute a few hours of their time

to help out on needed improvements and maintenance. The results are worth the effort, and it's lots of fun!

We'll start at 10am. Lunch will be served around 1pm.

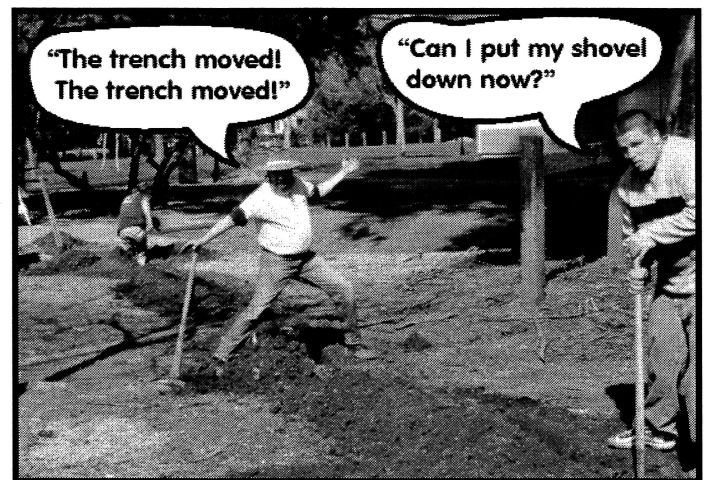
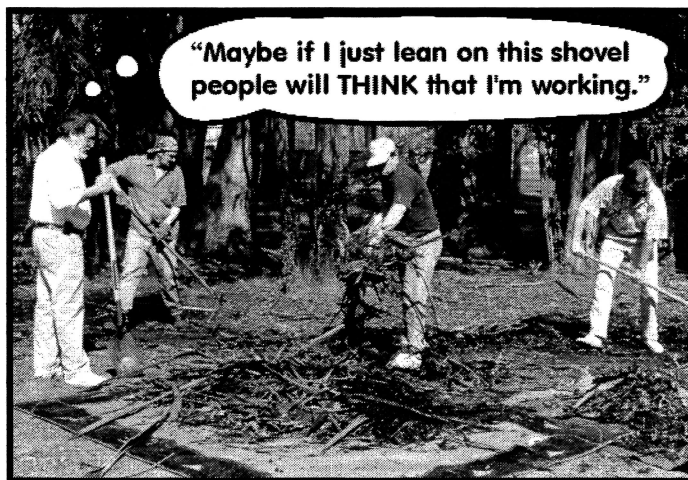
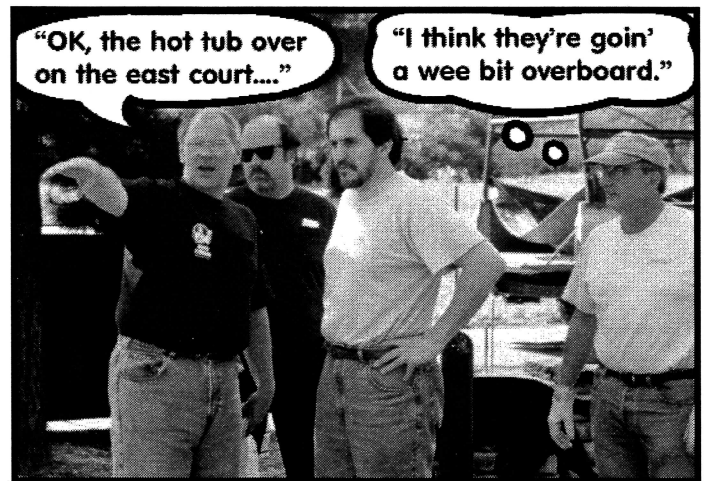
So, git yer rake, shovel or just your work gloves and come to the courts. It'll be a BLAST!

Candid scenes from last year's effort:



More Scenes from Last Year's Annual Work Party

When it comes to getting the job down, the VOMPC is a well-oiled machine!



of divots and données...

As winter winds down and spring heats up, you might notice the surface of the courts hardening. You may have also noticed the multitude of small craters left in the ground from boules landing in the soft wet clay over the winter months.

As a favor to our courts—and as a way to focus and fine-tune your game, pay attention to your landing spot (called a *donnée*, pronounced "doh-NAY"). It is legal (and optional), only for the team who's turn it is next, to "fix" the *donnée* of the *previous* (and *only the previous*) boule played, regardless of which team threw it.

Assuming that your boule makes a divot, it behooves the fastidious player to go to the spot and smooth it out a bit with your foot. It not only will aid your next boule if it lands there, doing this will slow down your game a bit and help you focus and "read" the terrain better. (Watch the veteran players do this sometime, and you will see it is quite a common practice.)

The side effect here is that there will be less divots in the hardened ground which can divert a well played boule, keeping our courts tournament-worthy and in tip-top shape.

Thanks!

VOMPC Board Notes

01.06.01

State of the Club report to the City of Sonoma (1.03.01) by J.Markson, E.Porto, F.Pipal. VOMPC paid \$1 to continue our licensing agreement with the City.

\$1500 approved for the newsletter budget est.

League survey given to D.Ogaz for review.

Court Improvements 'Wish List' drafted for submission to the Committee.

02.08.01

Sponsorship Committee presented a draft document establishing four areas which must be addressed by VOMPC when seeking donations and sponsorship. Practical details forthcoming.

Court Improvements committee reported a consensus to pursue a water fountain near the BBQ, picnic table(s), and installation of two more rammed earth benches. Shed improvements are needed before the season.

Discussion of planting trees on the courts tabled pending more information from the Committee.

League survey evaluated by Ogaz and submitted.

Pipal calls for Summer League proposals in writing to the Board for the March meeting.

Schedule of events approved pending some minor adjustments.

Kids' Day set for Sun 5.20. Free-to-Member picnic approved, date TBD.

Pipal to head FPUSA World Championship Qualifiers Tournament (9.01-02.01) Task Force.

Bagel, Pipal to run Season Opener.

Boundary boards approved for North, South & East sides of East Courts. Mathieu to contact City for approval.

New Members

The VOMPC would like to welcome:

Shelli Ashbeck

Nancy Hayes Bach

Cliff Bond

Jessica Misuraca

Judy & Mark Olivier

Olivia & Patrick Sammons

Will Trood

Welcome Back!

Byron & Jenni Nichols

Member/Guest Picnic & Tourney is Sat. May 12

Don't forget! Mark your calendars and recruit a friend or family member for a great day at the courts. The format is Select Doublette—you plus your guest—a great way to introduce someone to the Club.

Longtime club member Ken Stieper promises an extra-special feast!

See the enclosed Event Schedule. Menu and full details will be coming your way in the May/June newsletter.

Karen Semerau Voted into FPUSA Post

In January, second-year club member Karen Semerau was elected to represent the Northwest region of the FPUSA. She joins current NW Counselors Louis Toulon and Bart Zachofsky and re-elected Counselor Mary Albright of Lafayette.

Karen has travelled to many of our sister clubs and participated in their events over the past year. Club boards showed their appreciation for her good sportsmanship and genial nature with an overwhelming response. We congratulate her on this new opportunity and wish her much luck in the months to come.

"you talkin' to me?"

Prez Pipal says "talk to me"—on the **VOMPC Hotline**.

The hotline is a quick way to request information, leave a message or, most importantly, **make your reservations** for great VOMPC events.

When a tourney is nigh, don't be shy!

CALL 707-258-3450

Get on the blower and let your voice be heard! It makes it a helluva lot easier for member volunteers to plan and bring you a great day at the courts. *Thanks a million!*



From the President's Desk...

Elsewhere in this newsletter you'll see a call for help putting on the big tournament over the Labor Day weekend. Here's another opportunity for Vompers to

volunteer some time, but with more tangible and immediate returns.

In mid-February I was contacted by Whitney Evans of the Sonoma Valley Special Olympics. They are adding Bocce to their program this year and would like our help.

Please don't read this and get hung up on the word "bocce". Whether with a ball the size of an orange or the size of a grapefruit, it's about getting closest to the little one. In fact, it's all about spending time outdoors with other human beings.

The Special Olympics is for special human beings. Whitney has told me that the group is likely to include people of any age with disabilities that usually include some degree of mental retardation. He also told me that people who get involved usually find it to be one of the best things they've ever done.

We'll do it at the club courts on Saturdays from 1pm - 3pm, starting the 21 April until the 30 June. When we've got our group of coaches (I hope about a dozen, so we can cover with four or five each session), Special Olympics will send their bocce coach to teach us how it works. That will happen on April 14. I look forward to getting your call to say that you're in.

Please phone in your message on the V.O.M.P.C. Hotline, 258-3450.

See you on the courts, Frank

2001: "The Year of the Kid?"

The VOMPC experienced huge growth in the year 2000. Our membership is the very best in welcoming newcomers and showing them the game.

Another reason that our membership swelled to 177 (a US record) last year was our emphasis on club programs and tournaments which offered something for women participants. At the end of last year over one third of the Club membership was female.

While the Club remains committed to offering more "co-ed" activities, a small group of enthusiastic members, led by former President Tom Bricca and current Board Member Renato Sotille, are busy planning some events and programs for kids and teens for the upcoming season.

The first event is on our schedule: Saturday, May 20th, our 2nd Annual Kids' Day Picnic. More details will be outlined in the May/June newsletter.

Pétanque is enjoyed by youngsters in almost forty countries around the globe. The VOMPC is now committed to introducing pétanque to kids and teens in our community.

If you are interested in this youth initiative, please **call the hotline** for more information –and get involved!

Will 2001 be the Year of the Kid?

With a little help, we'll get there!



Marco Ilaria shows how. The Chambrone boys got a private lesson from the chef and promised to return for more this spring!

**If you see a
RED DOT, there
is nothing wrong
with your eyes!**

**It means that you
have yet to RENEW
your VOMPC
Membership
for 2001!**

**Please RENEW by
April 25th so that
you don't miss the
next newsletter.**

Valley of the Moon
Pétanque Club
P.O. Box 863
Sonoma CA 95476

Byron Mayo
880 Oak Lane
Sonoma, CA 95476

*See the special insert in this issue for your
complete **2001 VOMPC Calendar of Events!***

2001 Membership Ticker: 88